

YOTHU YINDI
FOUNDATION

Garma

3 - 6 August



2018 REPORT

YUWALK LAKARANA - TRUTH TELLING

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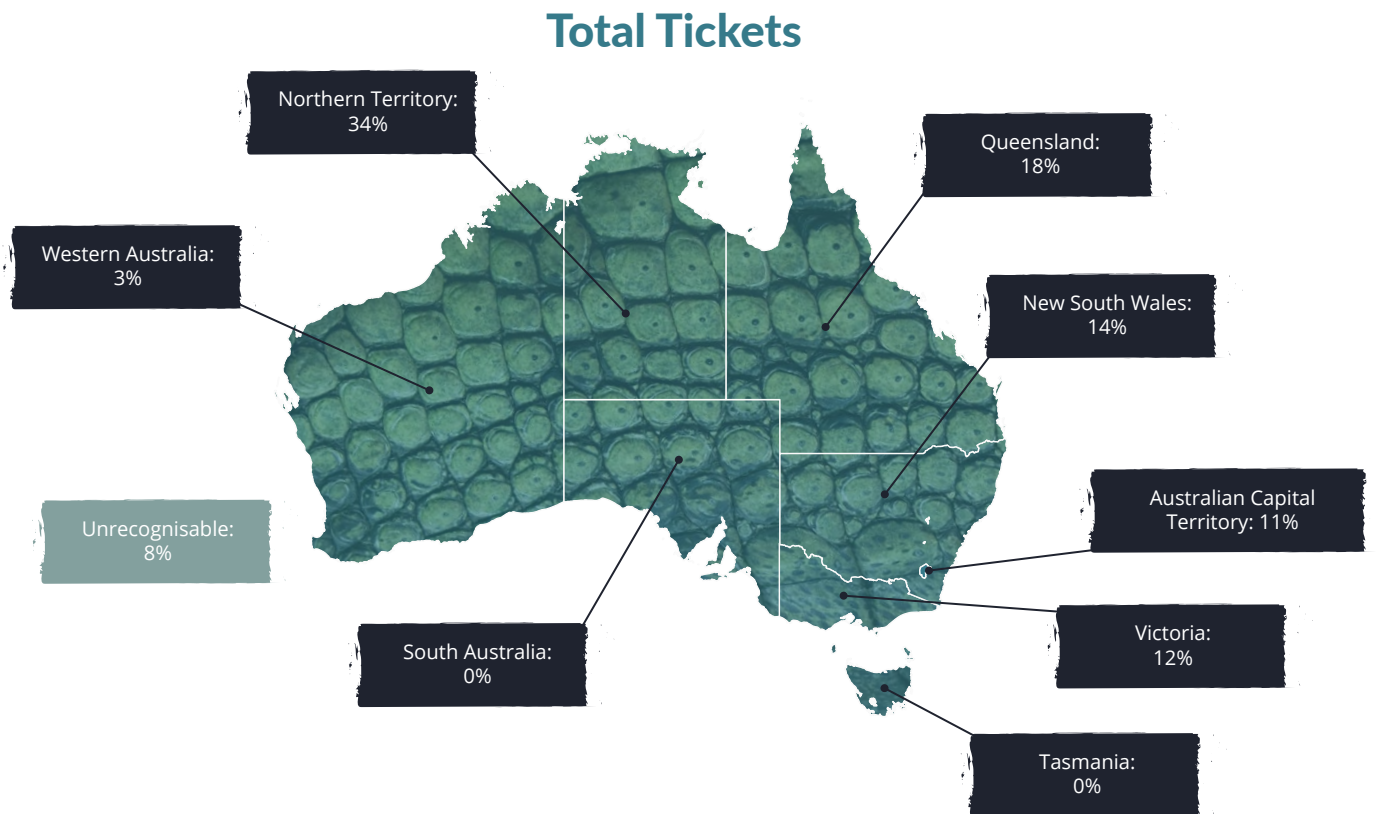


Garma2018



TheGarmaFestival

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The 20th annual Garma was again a sell-out. The Northern Territory was strongly supportive of this locally-driven event, and more than one-third of this year's guests were Territorians. We also recorded an increased attendance from Queenslanders this year, while Victoria and NSW were again well represented. A large contingent of senior public servants from the nation's capital accounted for a strong ACT presence.

Garma 2018 was a chance to reflect on past achievements, celebrate the tireless work of our Yolngu leaders, mourn the passing of loved ones along the way, and steel ourselves for the future. The theme of truth-telling – Yuwalk Lakaranja - resonated throughout the event, setting the tone for discussions in the Key Forum and challenging our audience to confront the unpleasant truths of Australian history.

Although Garma has grown to become an event of national significance in recent years, at its heart it remains a cultural celebration - a grassroots, community-driven gathering delivered by local men and women, and a meeting point for Arnhem Land families.

In keeping with Yothu Yindi Foundation's key priorities, education was again a central component of the event, which began with a day-long Education Fair and Forum. We celebrated the early successes of the Dhupuma Foundational Learning Program, which is designed to re-engage young people who have become disconnected from traditional educational settings.

The Youth Forum was again a hive of activity and noise, with CSIRO creating a bush laboratory to promote STEM learning, and journalists and producers from the ABC providing hands-on media training to the next generation of Yolngu journalists.

Morning tea 20th birthday celebrations underway, featuring the handsome Gumatj diamond chequered baru (crocodile) cake.



The nightly bunggul was again the number one highlight, as guests were drawn to the dancefloor by the call of the yidaki (didgeridoo) in the late afternoon. Some joined in the celebrations, others watched on, but all were mesmerised by the complex footwork of the male and female dancers painted up in their clans' traditional colours.

New and traditional artwork was on display at the open-air Gapan Gallery, which lit up the sky at night, as artists from five regional arts centres displayed their wares.

A strong presence from corporate Australia confirmed Garma's reputation as a meeting point for business leaders from a diverse range of industries, and this year's Corporate Dinner was a show-stopper thanks to a searing speech on truth-telling from Booker Prize winner, Australian author Richard Flanagan.

But as in previous years, it was the Yolngu men and women of Arnhem Land who programmed, managed, hosted and delivered our 20th flagship event. The Yothu Yindi Foundation continues to provide the Garma experience to bring our nation together, in the spirit of reconciling all Australians.

We hope you can join us at next year's event.

Denise Bowden Director of Garma
Chief Executive Officer | Yothu Yindi Foundation

OUR 2018 GARMA SPONSORS



Garma is held on a culturally significant site in very remote North East Arnhem Land within the Northern Territory, Australia. This event is achievable in part due to the generously afforded funding and in-kind support of these sponsors above.

By partnering with the Yothu Yindi Foundation to stage the 20th Garma anniversary, they demonstrate their understanding and commitment to this very remote Indigenous community, and play an important part in helping to carry the 2018 Garma message.

That message can sometimes be challenging and thought-provoking, but it speaks to unity and reconciliation.

We'd like to thank all CEO's and Senior Managers of the organisations and government departments that sponsored Garma. You've stuck with us as we built and forged our Garma campaign of Truth Telling – Yuwalk Lakaranga. On behalf of the Yolngu clan groups that have partnered with the Yothu Yindi Foundation to achieve one of our most successful events – thank you for trusting in our abilities, and we look forward to building stronger partnerships with you in the twenty years ahead.



Each Garma, Yothu Yindi Foundation photographers take thousands of images of the Gulkula grounds, but this image captures a significant moment in time.

Here on the bunggul (dance) grounds we witness a substantial youth presence. The djamakuli (young ones) are fully engaged in cultural practice, they show interest in ceremonial life, they value the learning they've been handed via a cultural curriculum.

This image is Garma in action at its best, at its most effective for future survival. It also reminds us of the significance of local ownership, of community drive, of family participation and grassroots direction.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	02
2018 Garma Sponsors	04
Table of Contents	05
Education and Youth Report	06
Youth Forum	14
Education Forum.....	15
Key Forum	18
Cultural Report	25
20 Years of Garma Stories	27
Corporate Report	31
Garma Media	32
Appendix 1	34

EDUCATION AND YOUTH REPORT

EDUCATING OUR CHILDREN: LOOKING UP TO THE FUTURE

Overview

Culminating in two standing ovations and powerful reflection from Djapirri Munungguritj at the final day of Garma's Key Forum, this year's education program gave a voice to a united youth - a voice that was heard throughout Garma and far beyond Gulkula.

Through the program's three key elements - Friday's Education Forum and Education Fair, and the three-day Youth Forum, educators and academics, ministers and musicians, elders and young people came together to debate, share, grow and highlight the urgency to focus on real outcomes for young Indigenous people.

Education Forum

Garma 2018 began and finished with a focus on youth. It was a powerful start with Yananymul Mununggurr, Yothu Yindi Foundation Board member, hosting a 'Truth telling in Education' forum.

Yananymul had a clear message for the audience; she wanted them to hear the voices that are drowned out in national discourse and learn about the programs which run quietly, making impact for young people, which receive little attention and shoe string support.

She was joined by senior Yolngu educators from the Yirrkala School - Yalmay Yunupingu, Rarriwuy Marika, Merrkiyawuy Ganambarr-Stubbs and Banpapuy Marika - for a panel discussion on educating Indigenous youth on-country, in their communities, and bringing their two worlds together.

The panel explored the options for parents who choose to send students away to schools interstate for their education, and the pressure that places on Yolngu people to keep living language and culture strong in the next generation.

They also discussed the benefits they have each seen in engaging local young people in education through their own language and through their own culture.

Yananymul explained "We talk a lot about the closing the gap in education. But we don't talk about the gap mainstream education brings to educating our kids. When our governments talk about our kids, they always talk about what they lack. They don't talk about the low cultural understanding of teachers and schools. We want excellence in education, choices for our young people and choices for families. We want our children to walk in two worlds, and we want our children to experience the best of both. But that can only happen when education strikes a balance, a two-way balance."

The Education Forum also heard from Selena Uibo, Northern Territory Minister for Education, who supported the panel's message. Minister Uibo said that her government was pushing a local decision making agenda, focusing on what communities want for their students and what the outcomes are for students. Focusing on early engagement, Minister Uibo said that the first 1,000 days of a child's life was critical for their growth and development, and that the government was committed to making sure they do the most for Northern Territory children at that early stage.

Local Independent Member for Nhulunbuy Yiniya Mark Guyula spoke from the heart about his personal education experience in the Yolngu school system. Mr Guyula told the forum he was taught by his kin until age 10, when he moved to a traditional local school and flourished in both Yolngu and western education. He put a strong call out for direct local funding for Yolngu elders and leaders to be empowered to take control of education decisions and outcomes for local young people.





Eunice and Dorothea speaking with our Youth

Education Fair

Friday took the theme of #NoBullying Day across the Garma site, a theme strongly embraced by young people participating in the annual Education Fair. To mark #NoBullying Day, students showed solidarity by wearing blue, coming together and taking a stand against discrimination.

Young people spent the morning with an on-country learning immersion. Open-air classrooms were set up in Gulkula's bough shelters, with students rotating through each 'Education Station' learning about Garma, this year's theme of truth telling, as well as exploring their own individual politics and wellbeing.

The youth were asked a mixture of questions:

Politics:

If you had the ear of the Prime Minister, what advice would you give him on Indigenous Australia?

As a young person does politics interest you?

What is the first thing that pops into your mind when you listen to Australia's politicians?

Learnings:

List classroom subjects that you would like to see more of?

What subjects are missing from my classroom curriculum?

What would I scrap?

Wellbeing:

What matters most to young people?

What matters least to young people?

These matters are out of my reach as a young person, but I would like to see them in my life

Garma's Theme of Truth Telling':

Why is it so important to tell the truth?

Uluru Statement from the Heart:

Do you agree with the Uluru Statement? Why or why not?

Some key insights emerged from this engagement:

- More funds to remote schools
- More opportunities to learn about different cultures
- Majority of youth support the Uluru Statement on Constitutional Reform
- Family & friends matter most

To mark Garma's 20th Year, students also joined the Garma family with a 20th Birthday Party and placed a time capsule to commemorate 20 years of achievement.





THE ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

GARMA 2018 SURVEY, SHELTER 2/6

WHY DO YOU AGREE WITH THE ULURU STATEMENT?

Because everyone deserves rights.

Because Indigenous people were here before the white people but the Indigenous have never gotten the same rights as the white people.

15 ♀ INDIGENOUS

Because everyone deserves equality - no other things about it.

15 ♀ INDIGENOUS

Because I'm Torres and I know that we deserve it.

15 ♀ INDIGENOUS

The original custodians of this land we share deserve to be included in the decisions that affect us all.

♀ NON-INDIGENOUS

I agree because it will help Australia big time to know about the culture.

In 1967 we were counted now we want to count in the Constitution.

15 & 17 & 18 ♀ INDIGENOUS

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard.

16 ♀ INDIGENOUS

Indigenous Australians deserve to be heard and listened to without hesitation, they are people and know more and different things about this this country. The government needs to recognise this and take it on.

17 ♀ NON-INDIGENOUS

That agreement to add the Indigenous to the Constitution and acknowledge them.

17 ♀ NON-INDIGENOUS

Because then with the voice from Aboriginal and white people can be used together to create a bright future for Australia.

14 ♀ NON-INDIGENOUS

I believe that all people should have a say and every person should be treated equally.

14 ♀ NON-INDIGENOUS

Because I believe no matter your race, religion or belief, everyone should be treated fairly and have a say in everything.

14 ♀ NON-INDIGENOUS

Making our own stories.

Absolutely! Indigenous Australians are the reason Australia is Australia! They are the backbone of this country and it really horrifies me that the government don't want them to have a voice in politics and everyday issues!

17 ♀ NON-INDIGENOUS

Because it is just human rights - there should be no reason to dispute it.

16 ♀ NON-INDIGENOUS

Because Indigenous people are people. They are part of our country and need to be heard and respected.

17 ♀ NON-INDIGENOUS

It is important for the Indigenous Australians to be able to have their voices heard, listened to and asked upon. They should be able to decide how they live their lives and be able to make important decisions that will actually impact the future of Australia.

Own country and story.

Because young Australians, Torres Strait Islanders and Indigenous people need to be recognised in the Constitution, we need equal rights.

14 ♀ NON-INDIGENOUS

I agree with the (previous) statement due to Aboriginal people not being treated fairly in the past.

14 ♀ NON-INDIGENOUS

I think it is shameful and embarrassing that we as a nation don't consider the traditional owners of this land as leaders. I strongly believe the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders deserve a seat at the Parliament table.

14 ♀ NON-INDIGENOUS

Our voice should be heard.

15 ♀ INDIGENOUS

We should be listened to what we say.

15 & 17 ♀ INDIGENOUS

Make our own rules and own decisions.

17 ♀ INDIGENOUS

The voices of Indigenous Australians need to be heard in order to progress forward as a nation. Communication between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is so poor currently. These people's voices in Parliament are so essential so that they are recognised and issues can be solved. We are not stagnant and shouldn't act like we are.

17 ♀ NON-INDIGENOUS



Garma YOUTH DECLARATION 3 AUG 2018

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YUWALK LAKARANGA - TRUTH TELLING

GARMA 2018 SURVEY, SHELTER 3/6

TROUBLE
WITH
FAMILY

PEOPLE TRUST
YOU MORE

HELP
EACH
OTHER

KEEP TRUST
WITH PEOPLE

TRUST
EACH
OTHER

YOU CAN GET
IN BIG MOB
PROBLEMS

FIX
PROBLEMS

TO KEEP
TRUST

MORE
TRUST IN
THE LONG TERM

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT
TO TELL THE TRUTH?

BETTER
FOR YOUR-
SELF

FOR GOOD
FRIEND-
SHIPS

LIES
HURT
PEOPLE

STAY OUT OF
TROUBLE

MAKE
THINGS
BETTER

TROUBLE
WITH
POLICE

WHOLE TRUTH
IS BETTER
THAN WITH-
HOLDING
SOMETHING

TRUTH IS
EASIER AND
QUICKER

FIX FEELINGS
WITH EACH
OTHER

MY POLITICS

GARMA 2018 SURVEY, SHELTER 4/6

IF YOU HAD THE EAR OF OUR PRIME MINISTER WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE HIM ON INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA?

Create more programs empowering indigenous youth to take on leadership roles.

17 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

Put yourself in their shoes.

17 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

Stop treating them differently.

15 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

Rights for indigenous women.

17 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

Environment first.

15 🗳️ INDIGENOUS

Make sure what you say is truthful and not just say what the public wants to hear.

14 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

More funding for health.

15 🗳️ INDIGENOUS

Support remote communities.

15 🗳️ INDIGENOUS

What may seem the best might not be.

14 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

More funds to remote schools like Nhulunbuy High School.

14 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

Spend money - defend, project, to provide employment.

17 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

They have dreams and aspirations too.

17 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

Stagnant nations do not progress.

17 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

To give them the opportunity to participate in politically related things.

14 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

More funds to help kids wanting to follow their dreams.

15 🗳️ INDIGENOUS

More involvement with the TSI and north sea Islanders.

15 🗳️ INDIGENOUS

More opportunities for remote Australians on terms of education.

15 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

More engagement in controversial decisions.

14 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

More funds to remote schools / Clontarf Foundation.

14 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

Listen!! You have much to learn from them.

17 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

Domestic violence, rape, underaged sex and pregnancy are all very relevant.

17 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

Stereotypes are ingrained in our society and they are hurtful.

17 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

Treat us equally (racial and sexual equality).

16 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

Environment before corporate.

16 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

More engagement with people of Australia.

15 🗳️ INDIGENOUS

Opportunities for Indigenous (example may be airforce) empowerment through education.

17 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS

Take more care of traditional land.

15 🗳️ INDIGENOUS

A seat at the political table.

14 🗳️ NON-INDIGENOUS





Garma YOUTH DECLARATION 3 AUG 2018

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MY WELLBEING

GARMA 2018 SURVEY, SHELTER 5/6

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOUNG PEOPLE?

WHAT MATTERS LEAST TO YOUNG PEOPLE?

FAMILY INDEPENDENCE

VOLLEYBALL STEALING

FRIENDS FREEDOM

JOBS TV RULES

EDUCATION CHILL TIME

SCHOOL TAXES FINANCE

LOVE SUPPORT EQUALITY BELONGING

DRUGS OLDER PEOPLE

BEING HEARD FUN SLEEP

POLITICS NEGATIVITY

RESPECT POSSIBILITY SISTER
FROM ADULTS

ALCOHOL MINECRAFT

TIME TO RELAX

SOCCER UNDERAGE DRINKING

JOBS FOOTBALL HORSE BEACH HAPPINESS
OPPORTUNITIES RECREATION OF OTHERS

SOCIAL MEDIA WAR
SMOKING

DAY OFF FOOD SPORT FUTURE

HOMEWORK

WELLBEING MUSIC COMMUNITY HEALTH

BEING AROUND
SADNESS

MONEY HAPPINESS FACEBOOK A VOICE

ANIMALS COUNTRY NIECE & NEPHEWS

RELATIONSHIPS

BEING TAKEN CARE OF HELP OLD PEOPLE

GETTING MARRIED



Garma YOUTH DECLARATION 3 AUG 2018

YOTHU YINDI
FOUNDATION

MY LEARNING

GARMA 2018 SURVEY, SHELTER 6/6

WHAT SUBJECTS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF?

- | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Cultural activities | Ab(original) History | Horse and Anzac stuff | Health |
| Aboriginal studies | Science | English and writing | Geography |
| Interaction between both Aboriginal and Australian kids | Spelling | Local Aboriginal languages | Road Ready |
| Yolngu Matha & culture | Art | Social / Human rights issues | Bilingual classes |
| Maths | Art of around the world | Closing the Gap | STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) |
| Modern History | Music & Songs | Languages | Criminology |
| History | Leather work | Home Economics | Life Skills |
| History but not by correspondence | IT Media production / powerpoint / iPads | Drama / Performing Arts | Survival skills |
| | Free time | Physical Education (in higher years) | Australian Stories |
| | Anzac Ride | Religious Studies | Sex Education |

WHAT SUBJECTS WOULD YOU ADD?

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Cultural Studies | Computer | classes | STEM |
| Horses | Writing | Agriculture | Drama |
| Leatherwork | Diversity | Business | Wellbeing |
| Football | Respect | RAP (Religion and Philisophy) | Performing Arts |
| Arts | Sexual health education | Advanced mathematics (not via correspondence) | History |
| Music | Indigenous studies | Legal Studies | Criminology |
| Dancing (contemporary / traditional) | Life skills (taxes, banking, gardening) | Biomedicine / Sports Science | Media / Communications |
| Design | Languages (bigger range) | Human Biology | Australian History |
| Indigenous History | Photography | | Examples for our learning to be more relevant to us |
| Bullying | Social / Human Rights | | |

WHAT SUBJECTS WOULD YOU SCRAP?

- | | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| Science | Humanities | Languages from other countries - there is plenty of Aboriginal languages to learn | Personal Learning Plan (PLP) |
| Maths | Analysing novels in English | None but I think subjects should be more readily available | Nothing |
| Geography | Interactive Distance Learning (IDL) | | Nothing - there just isn't enough |
| History | I wouldn't scrap anything but more subjects should be available | | |
| Violence & Bullying | | | |
| Health | | | |





YOUTH FORUM

SPONSORED BY CSIRO



More than 100 young men and women from three states took part in this year's Youth Forum, including students from the Rawa School in Western Australia, St Columban's College in Queensland, Nhulunbuy High School, Nhulunbuy Christian School, Galiwinku's Shepherdson College, and Hermannsburg's Ntaria School.

The Yothu Yindi Foundation ran the three-day youth forum program, supported by Madge Fletcher, the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Program, and Yolngu elders. Designed by Festival Director Denise Bowden, under the direction of the YYF Board of Directors, this year's program brought together a combination of science, music, storytelling, leadership and on-country learning to build both knowledge and relationships in a vibrant, creative and most importantly safe space.

Miwatj Health set the tone for the three days, beginning with a traditional Raypirri Rom.

Through this cleansing process, young people were welcomed onto country by Yolngu elders and immersed in local Yolngu culture. The CSIRO, this year's Youth Forum sponsor, put a science lens over the program, co-creating workshops with Yolngu elders that engaged students in STEM learning by blending traditional and new science.

The NT Music School, a long-term partner in the Youth Forum space, captured Garma's theme through their hands-on workshops. The team used Yothu Yindi's song Treaty to connect students

to truth telling, and using the beats of the song, students re-mixed and wrote their own lyrics.

Journalists and producers from Garma's media partner, the ABC, provided hands-on media training and digital storytelling workshops in what was the most exciting and innovative addition to the program this year, helping the students to find their voice and teaching them how to share it.

The Northern Territory's Children's Commissioner provided an engagement platform for their youth justice program, which included tough conversations about current and topical youth issues. This had a high impact on students and drew our youth closer together.

Students arrived as strangers and left as friends, forming close bonds, Indigenous and Non-Indigenous, growing and learning together on the sacred Gulkula grounds.

The final word belongs to participant Maximus Hill, from St Columban's College, who best summed up both the experience and the impact.

Maximus said: *"What I've gone through is amazing. It's a good place to be in, and it gives you a good heart. The Youth Forum is important because we need to learn how to connect with each other, connect white and indigenous together on indigenous culture – and we can learn from each other. I don't want to leave, I want to stay here a lot longer, because when I'm out here, I'm happy - I feel real proud of who I am."*

EDUCATION FORUM

DHUPUMA FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING PROGRAM

The Yothu Yindi Foundation was delighted to provide the Key Forum with an update on its ground-breaking Dhupuma Foundational Learning Program, which began earlier this year in north-east Arnhem Land.

The realisation of a long-held dream by Yolŋu elders, the program is delivering a unique curriculum aimed at local students who have become disengaged from traditional education settings.

The first intake comprised eight students aged between 14-17 years who live in the communities of Gunyangara, Birritjimi and Galupa on the Gove peninsula.

YYF chairman and Gumatj leader Dr Galarrwuy Yunupingu said the new program was the culmination of many years of hard work by Yolŋu leaders.

“Education is at the heart of everything we do, and the creation of a special centre for education and culture in northeast Arnhem Land has been a vision of YYF since its inception in the 1990’s,” he said.

“It recognises that a well-rounded education is essential to personal development and growth and realising one’s potential.”

The Dhupuma Foundational Learning program was created in partnership with the Northern Territory Department of Education.

YYF CEO Denise Bowden said the program would provide pathways into further education, as well as opportunities to develop job-specific skills training through vocational programs that will ultimately lead to sustainable employment.

“We have always aspired for our young people to have the foundational skills needed to properly shape their futures, to be role models, and balance the Yolŋu and Balanda worlds,” she said.

“The program is weaving together an education in Yolŋu cultural traditions along with a more mainstream curriculum that emphasises literacy and numeracy skills.

“I want to pay tribute to Dr Yunupingu, members of the YYF board, and other community leaders in northeast Arnhem Land for their vision, persistence and hard work in making this dream a reality.”

Foundational learning involves the development of functional literacy and numeracy skills in the mainstream curriculum, as well as developing leadership in the areas of local Yolŋu cultural knowledge and tradition.

It also includes the teaching of skills essential to maintaining good overall health, including tools to monitor social and emotional wellbeing, and other important basics such as time-management skills.

The program, which operates on a ‘Collective Impact’ model, was co-designed by community leaders and members of YYF, with input from participating educators and students.

The CEO of the NT Department of Education, Vicki Baylis, said providing remote students with access to more flexible learning opportunities was a key part of the Northern Territory’s Indigenous Education Strategy.

“This flexible approach to boosting student engagement and learning outcomes complements the range of pathways already available to students across the Territory,” she said.

YYF Program Co-ordinator Peter Solly said the partnership approach had been integral in creating a holistic, culturally appropriate and responsive learning environment.

“The important foundational work has been about developing strong relationships with the families, others schools and stakeholders,” he said.

The local Gumatj Corporation is also playing an important role in ensuring the program reflects the needs of its students and the local community.

The Dhupuma Foundational Learning Centre is one plank of YYF’s vision to create a Garma Institute at Gulkula, a modern-day bush university that replicates the success of the Dhupuma College which operated during the 1970’s.

Dhupuma College – Dhupuma means ‘looking up and ahead’ - was a transitional and residential college for Yolŋu people and a substantial educational complex servicing the specific needs of Indigenous students across Arnhem Land.

[WATCH: The Dhupuma Foundational Learning Pilot](#)

YOUTH FORUM FOCUS: FINDING YOUR VOICE - DIGITAL STORYTELLING WITH THE ABC

One of the exciting success stories from this year's Youth Forum was the digital storytelling workshop, co-created by the ABC and Yothu Yindi Foundation. The half-day program hosted by ABC journalists, producers and executives, including from the youth-orientated Behind The News current affairs program, saw participating students learn how to tell a story using a digital platform. Armed with iPads and their experience, the ABC team shared their skills and knowledge about what makes a good story, how to tell a good story, and how to film and edit it. Over the course of an afternoon students broke into groups and recorded their own 'Garma story', filming interviews, pieces to camera and overlay vision. With mentoring from the ABC team, each groups' story was edited into a news package, with an official screening on the final day of Garma at the Key Forum. This was a proud moment for the students to see their stories on the big screen, but equally as insightful for the older generations of Garma to see the power and promise of empowering the voice of the youth.

For the ABC's Director of Television David Anderson, it was the two-way learning experiencing between students and the ABC team that surprised him the most. David and reporter Dan Bouchier worked with three boys from the Rawa School in Western Australia to capture their Garma story, including their arduous three-day journey to Gulkula. David describes the transformation that happened throughout the afternoon, from a quiet group of students and ABC journalists, to a group of storytellers who formed a new relationship.

[WATCH: The ABC'S Education & Training during Garma Festival 2018](#)

ABC Director of Television David Anderson explained: "What had changed was the way the students were talking to us. They were talking as storytellers. Talking about where they lived, what it looked like, what it smelt like, what it felt like. We're going to stay in contact with the school, and organise some sessions over Skype and looking at having our Behind the News head out to school and community and continue this learning and relationship. This experience for me was unexpected. For the students, I believe they gained confidence from the workshop - an understanding that their voices are important and their story is important, and there is a way they can share it. For me, I learnt something from the boys about their perspective of the world, why they were at Garma, what it meant to them. It's not something I could have read or watched, I needed to experience it. Being part of this program is something that I will remember for my entire life. My focus is now, how can we make this bigger, how can we make this better, how can we scale this."



YOUTH FORUM FOCUS: CSIRO - INTEGRATING TRADITIONAL SCIENCE AND NEW SCIENCE

This year's Youth Forum sponsor, the CSIRO, took a unique approach to engaging students in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) learning, working with Yothu Yindi Foundation and Yolngu elders to create a program that melded traditional science and new science together. As technology and IT disrupts more and more industries, STEM skills have been identified as vital for the jobs of the future. To engage the young minds of the Youth Forum, the CSIRO created a fun and informative bush laboratory which saw students take a hands-on approach to STEM and find a new love for science. The Yolngu elders were vital to the success of the program, starting each discussion and workshop with a focus on traditional science, including a dyeing workshop with traditional materials gathered from the Gove Peninsula. The CSIRO team then expanded these conversations and experiences to modern science, engaging students in STEM learning such as aerodynamics through levers and rockets workshops.

For Jessica Stimson, an Education Projects Officer with the CSIRO, co-running this program with Yolngu elders was the decisive factor in achieving success and awakening in the students a newfound curiosity for STEM. She described how some students were unsure at first - but after a few hours were leading experiments, shooting rockets 30 metres into the air and looking at ways to improve aerodynamics.

Jessica explained: "What was really amazing was having the Yolngu elders and Yolngu women being part of a program that prepares young people for the jobs of the future. For us at the CSIRO to experience some of the traditional Yolngu science, such as the dyeing, was incredible. But for the young participants - it was game changing. Starting a science conversation with Indigenous culture, linking back to their home and their culture, and then integrating traditional science and new science together, was incredibly impactful. We are all so grateful to the Yolngu elders and to have a chance to learn from them and help share their knowledge at the Youth Forum."



The way forward...

For the Youth Forum's 100 plus young men and women, there is nowhere else in Australia they would have the opportunity provided at Garma - to come together, learn on-country, and form a powerful bond. The value of being invited onto the land by the Yolngu families, and Yolngu values, traditions and education being woven into every aspect of the program has proved to have a powerful impact.

"Garma has changed my life. Garma is hot, at home it is windy, but listening to Garma makes me feel like I'm at home."

Isaac, Rawa School, Youth Forum participant

"It is amazing how much of an impact this event can have, the Yolngu people are so friendly and so willing to share their culture, they don't judge you if you get it wrong, right, they want to pass on their knowledge, and we must understand that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity."

Kealey Gibson, Nhulunbuy Christian College, Youth Forum participant

"For us coming together - we're all just kids coming here to learn something new. Whether it's about our culture or someone else's culture, we're all in the same boat, we're all away from home."

Vashti Beetson, St Columban's College, Youth Forum participant

"A huge highlight for me has been seeing the growth of the kids from the first moment they walked into the forum. All of the kids have transformed in different ways. A lot of the local kids have mingled with those from different states and different schools and have been able to build strong connections and further that tradition of being part of Garma."

Rhian Miller, AIME mentor, Youth Forum Leader

ENGAGING OUR YOUTH - A YOUTH VOICE - DJAMAKULI LEARNING YOLNGU WAY





KEY FORUM

SPONSORED BY UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE



The Key Forum conference has become one of the most important components of Garma in recent years, a chance for the nation's Indigenous, political, business and philanthropic leaders to gather together and discuss the challenges – and opportunities – facing Indigenous Australians today.

With 'truth-telling' the theme for this year's gathering, talks were once again dominated by the vexed issues of Constitutional Recognition, the push for an Indigenous 'voice' to Parliament and Treaty, alongside sessions on remote health and YYF's push for an overhaul of funding aimed at addressing Indigenous disadvantage.

At Garma's opening on Friday, the Uluru Statement from the Heart was read out in both Yolngu Matha and English, bringing some in the audience to tears as they reflected on the frustrating journey toward substantive and systemic reform.

Senior ceremonial leader Djunga Djunga Yunupingu spoke of the fire that had been lit at Uluru and the commitment of the Yolngu people to its agreed outcomes: an Indigenous voice to Parliament, a Makarrata commission for truth and reconciliation, and a process towards the signing of Treaties.

He also spoke powerfully of the shared gift that awaited a truly reconciled nation.

"At Uluru, the Yolngu people gave a fire to the Anangu and they lit it at the heart of our nation, spreading it to all our people, and to all Australians," he said.

"I carried that fire for Galarrwuy Yunupingu, our leader and now the fire has burnt back to Galarrwuy and to us. And Galarrwuy has told us to raise the flags and show the ancient sovereignty of the land.

"Our ancient sovereignty is here, just like it is said in the Uluru Statement. It is here and it is for all Yolngu people to appreciate.

"But we want all people to walk with us – two laws, two people, one country. We have the gift for the Australian people if you want it. And if you do recognise us, walk with us, travel with me, to a Wayathu, which is a beautiful place for the future."

The following morning, surrounded by members of the Dilak Council, Yothu Yindi Foundation Deputy Chairman Djawa Yunupingu gave a hard-hitting speech which echoed the call for the unity and urged the Government to recognise "the truth" of Aboriginal sovereignty.

He asked: "So how long do we have to wait to get this right?"

"Another Committee? Another Hearing? Another Meeting? Another Prime Minister? Galarrwuy has dealt with eight Prime Ministers, if you can believe it.

"So, can we blame him for crying when the Uluru Statement is read to him and he knows it has been rejected? After all he has done? Do we blame him for being frustrated?"

"I understand because I know how it feels and it feels no good.

"But in the Gumatj world we have a saying that is 'Look up to the Future' and that saying was given to us by Murayana and by Mungurrawuy.

"So, we are going to believe in ourselves and work to get fairness and justice for all Aboriginal people?"



Mr Djawa Yunupingu, YYF Board of Director

“When you think about these issues yourself, try and think about my Aboriginal and Islander brothers and sisters who have had so much taken from them.

“Please think about those people who, for no fault of their own, but by the hands of the nation that has been built on their soil, find themselves without land, without language and without ceremony.

“It is the truth that these things were forcibly taken from them, without their agreement or their consent.

“Think about that truth, when you hear the yidaki tonight and you watch the perfect movements of the dancers, and listen to the songs of my people, as you witness our Constitution in action.

“And please think about what is fair to them.

“And let’s see if together we can find a pathway where we can all be included in the nation’s Constitution.

“Let there be a person who puts up a light and says, ‘here, come with me, there is a better way’. This is how it must be now and forever.

“Let there be a Prime Minister who does that!”

Cape York leader Noel Pearson also spoke powerfully about the importance of a constitutionally-enshrined First Nations Voice, saying it was a life-and-death matter for those fighting to retain and strengthen cultural traditions.

“For our young people, I urge you, for the First Nations fighting to retain their culture and identity, to sustain their communities and build a future for their children, this is a life and death matter. This is no muck about on Twitter. This is more serious than

social media. This is about the existence of people in the future,” he said.

“This is about self-determination, not of the individual but of the tribe. We have a grave responsibility for tribes. Whether the people have a chance or not is up to our wisdom or stupidity.

“I urge young people to remember what self-determination is: it is the hard work of dialogue and discussion and consensus and patience so that we come to a common decision.

“We need a constitutional voice for the First Nations, a position from which we can never be shifted, a position from which to negotiate with all of the moral and historical power which is ours by virtue of the possession of the land for more than 60,000 years.

“We’ve got to create a bridge, and it’s got to be pinned down in the most fundamental law of the nation where power resides.

“Without it, we will get pushed around. Without it, the question will be deferred once again. Without it, we will enter into some prosaic discussions about what’s always called that one-eyed hobbyhorse of Australian policy: everyone’s favourite discussion about how it is that we might lift the indigenes from their misery.

“We’ve got to come to terms with how ancient Australia survives in the new. We didn’t do it in 1901; we didn’t do it in 1988; we didn’t do it in 2001. Will we be able to do it, or at least commence the process, in 2020, the 250th anniversary of that troubling sea voyage up the east coast of Australia?”



**KEY FORUM FOCUS:
YOTHU YINDI DILAK COUNCIL (YYDC)**

This Council comprises Yolngu leaders representing the 13 clans of the region, which plays an important role in local governance and leadership.

It is a locally preferred governance model that has authority and authenticity in the Yolngu world.

The Council is the perfect mechanism for local decision-making and empowering Indigenous communities, taking responsibility for determining home grown Yolngu affairs.

The Yothu Yindi Foundation has been working with Yolngu organisations, family and clan groups over the past four years to promote this preferred regional governance model to the Commonwealth and Territory governments, and to the Northern Land Council.

All have acknowledged the authority of the Dilak Council structure and its place in future regional development.

This work attempts to replicate a similar Yolngu governance structure of the past that was effective for local decision making, once referred to as the Yirrkala Dhanbul Village Council.

At the commencement of Garma, the Dilak met with Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion, who described it as a Cabinet-style meeting ‘nation-to-nation’.

“It’s a story of hope. If we can do it [here] then it is possible for every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nation,” he said.

“One of the most significant agreements we came to was that we would work out how the governments of both our nations would be able to work closely together.

“The structure of those governments may appear to be very different. But in reality, it was people who were representatives of their nation sitting down and deciding, not only structurally but in a very practical sense, how we could work together.

“If we could do it at a level of nation to nation, then it’s possible for every Aboriginal nation ... to have a crack.”

Members of the Dilak Council were introduced to the Key Forum audience, with each giving a brief explanation of their background, their clan groups, and their vision for their communities.

Wundjil Marawili from the Madarrpa clan:

Good morning. Wundjil Marawili and I come from Blue Mud Bay. A small outstation call Baniyala located at Blue Mud Bay and my tribe is Madarrpa. Wundjil is the youngest brother of Djambawa Marawili, some of you here today may know Djambawa, so Wundjil is his youngest brother.

Mungarrapun Maymuru from the Mangalili clan:

Morning ladies and gentlemen – my name is Graham Maymuru – Mungarrapun. I come from a place called Djarrakpi. It’s the song you heard this morning that’s my totem, connected to this land. So I am Mangalilii I am the second eldest tribe of the Mangalili clan, some have passed away a long time ago now, and I am the second eldest of a man called Baluka – he’s my elder clan. My main purpose is to connect the unity. Last year in Australia – what we need to do is unite one another, harmony, all. Thank you.

Bundy-Bundy Wunungmurra from the Dhalwangu clan:

Good morning to you all. My name is Wesley. My place can’t be mentioned because of someone passed. Connected to the Gumatj people because I am their grandfather of second grandfather from one of our ancestors. I am one of the second leaders of the Dhalwanngu because certain people that carry the knowledge of the old people. One of my Gumatj people – Galarrwuy – they all my grandsons, but I am not really older than what they are – my guthurra. And my father is their grandfather. It’s a long story – but it goes all the way up . To explain it will take two or three hours. Thanks.

Djunga Djunga Yunupingu from the Gumatj clan:

Morning everyone. Most of you know me. I spoke yesterday. I am the high priest of Galarrwuy and second senior clan leader for Gumatj. I come from here Gulkula, and Ski Beach. Thank you.

Djawa Yunupingu from the Gumatj clan:

Morning. I am Djawa I am the Deputy Chair of the Yothu Yindi Foundation, Deputy Chair of Gumatj Corporation. I like the title Deputy Chair. I do come from a very famous family as you all know. My leader is sitting up here with me, Galarrwuy. It is



good to be up here with the Dilak council by the way these people have the utmost respect from our people, leaders in their own right. Getting to talk to one another at this stage and find solutions and what we can do better – our sisters and brother. These people hold the power of their own.

Watching Wunungmurra from the Dhalwangu clan:

Morning. I'm just new. I can't believe I'm Dilak and I'm young. Anyway this is my first time and I'm learning about the Yothu Yindi foundations activities. I'm really shy, it's my first time talking in public. I know that old man over there is my guthurra. Because his other name comes from djalkamy.

Mudy-Mudy Burrawanga she comes from Gumatj Burrarrwanga.

"She is a senior lady she cries, for ceremonies, she teaches and tells special stories about the past, so she is here as senior person. She will now give some demonstration for you and may be this will bring you to tears, but stay calm!"

<Mudy-Mudy sings to a huge round of applause.>

And now I'd like to introduce **Linda Wunungmurra**. She can't speak, so I'd like to speak for her. Linda Wunungmurra comes from inland of Arnhem bay which is called **Gurrumurru** – a special place to her and us. Us, me, Djawa and Galarrwuy we are the backbone of that country. We are the backbone and this is our mari. Gurrumurru is our mari and we are connected to mari gutthura. Linda is a senior person.

Now I'd like to introduce **Yalkany Ganambarr**. Yalkany is a senior person of **Naymil** and **Dharrtiwuy**. He is a ceremonial man, along with his brother Wilson, who is not well. So Yalkandy is taking his place. He's been on the bunggul grounds and his brothers singing and dancing. He is a ceremonial man, number one ring leader. Dhalwangu on his mother's side, is why he's special. Like a yothu, like a child, so there you go.

Djapirri Mununggurritj from the Gumatj clan:

Good morning all. I'm already feeling emotional. To hear the voice of the old lady singing. But what I'll tell the audience, that the three Gumatj clans symbolise the body of the crocodile. The head part of the crocodile is the escarpment – which is the Yunupingu's. Between the head and the tail – is the Burrarrwanga people. And the tail bit is my family which is Mununggurritj which makes up who we are as Gumatj people of this land. Being from a very young age, I took up leadership at a very young age. But my journey is to see a reconciled Australia in 20/40 years - that is my aspiration, my vision, my passion, thank you.

Yananyumul Mununggurr from the Djapu clan nation:

My mother is Gumatj, coming from the Yalnwanly clan group. But they are the same, connected with the Yunupingu/Burrarrwanga/Mununggurritj. My father comes from the Gumatj clan nation as well, he's one of the many grandsons of Yunupingu himself, so I'm, like, in the middle. That's where I come from. I strongly stand for the rights of Yolngu people, for Yolngu to take and manage their own affairs, take control of what we want to achieve. We've always been under the microscope and Yolngu are struggling and still talking with governments at both levels for what we want to achieve for the benefit of our people. I've been working and advocating, health, wellbeing, education, housing, you name it – learning on country, rangers program and I also advocate for the homelands as well as I am connected to homelands, my great grandmother is from Gan Gan and she's a Dhalwangu, so I have Dhalwangu people and Yilpara, Djarrakpi. I have connection with people. I know I understand the history of my culture of my mother's culture, their law, their language. I sometimes speak my mother's Gumatj language, as well as my father's language. I know where we come from, I understand the law of the land, the culture, the language, and I practice it. I dance to the songs of all the clan groups both dhuwa and yirritja and I know the songlines and the stories that go with the songlines when it comes to connecting to country. It is very special for me that I am a Yolngu person with many connections. I'm also a granddaughter of a Nyamil Dharrtiwuy person. I am gutthura for Ganambarr mala. That's where I come from as well, my grandmothers side of the family, my grandfathers, my mothers and m fathers. It's a complex system. You may see me as one person but I have links, and I am very proud of that.



The recipients of this years Yolngu Heroes Awards

Yolngu Heroes:

Presented to the senior ladies of The Healing Place, Dilthan Yolngunha, Graham Maymuru, and Djawa Yunupingu, this year's awards came from a strong community nomination process. The most important factor of these awards lies behind the notion that Yolngu nominate their own candidates in order to understand the depth of community endorsement behind the tireless work that our locals undertake. There isn't a lot of recognition of their efforts, so the Garma platform showcases what Yolngu Heroes are doing on the ground throughout the year, not just during the Garma Festival.

The nomination process is managed and coordinated by the Yothu Yindi Foundation, with the endorsement YYF Board of Directors. This award seeks to locate those who are the back bone of their community, who work tirelessly on a daily basis, and who go about their business to give back to their families, contribute positively, and use their energy to progress their community.

The Dilthan Yolngunha senior women healers have been recognised as carrying the legacy of the late Gulumbu Yunupingu's work at The Healing Place. Here, the ladies extract the resources of the bush pharmacy to provide natural methods of curing sickness or ill health. The senior women have been responsible in handing down and transferring that information to the younger generation, maintaining

and retaining the knowledge locally. Dilthan Yolngunha operates outside of the Garma Festival period, but during our annual event, the senior women invite female guests of Garma to visit their healing sessions, and if they chose to, join in or observe some of the healing activities. The five senior women healers awarded hero status this year were: Nyapanyapa Yunupingu, Dhopiya Gurruwiwi, Dorothea Yunupingu, Dela Yunupingu, Eunice Marika.

Graham Maymuru and Djawa Yunupingu were the remaining two recipients of the Yolngu Heroes awards, and the work of both men is fundamentally important to the progress of their communities. Both men have been positive influences on their peers, and they've contributed back to their communities via a number of economic development projects, sporting initiatives, leadership opportunities and through their involvement in ceremonial practices. The role of senior male Yolngu leaders is very important, and goes a long way in building the confidence of younger males with leadership potential in the future. Both men are mentors, and they have brought the community along with them in their endeavours to build a strong foundational anchor at a local level.



KEY FORUM FOCUS: TRUTH-TELLING

In a speech that received a standing ovation, Arrernte man and former Central Australian ATSIC Chairman **William Tilmouth** spoke of the devastating personal toll he felt as a member of the Stolen Generations, having been taken from his home as a child and sent to Croker Island to live and attend school.

In addition to losing their language, culture and identity, Tilmouth said the Stolen Generations were also disconnected from the land rights and native title processes, and he feared the same thing would happen with Treaty and Constitutional reform.

Here is William's speech:

Firstly, I want to recognise the traditional owners of this beautiful country and your ancestors. I recognise the old people who are our past and present and the young people who are our next generation and future. To distinguished and special guests.

My thanks to the Yothu Yindi Foundation for having me and the Children's Ground team here today.

This year Garma is about truth telling. I will share some of my truths.

My key message today is this. Don't keep creating a foundation for our children that is fragmented and fractured. But create a foundation that is solid and grounded in the depth of our heritage, spiritually, culture language and identity.

As opposed to what is now more of the same. The tired, worn-out, tried and tested forced and failed policies of assimilation and yesteryear. A system designed by colonisation to disempower us to fracture us and our families. Designed to take and whittle away at everything that we held close and that defined us as a people.

I have a good command of English but I cannot speak my own language

A system designed to favour the oppressor and to keep the oppressed down and dependent on the meagre rations and handouts. To divide us giving preference and voice to some and not to others.

It is up to all of us to think seriously about what we are doing, why we are doing it and how we are doing it.

Our kids don't need to be fixed. Our kids need to grow up as Aboriginal children with rights and opportunities, with a voice and the ability to control their own destination.

I am mix-matched – a creation by others who decided they knew what was best for me. I am a product of assimilation. I am a product of being denied my identity, my family, my country, culture and my language.

In the west I am a success. I was the kid who came good – became a model working citizen, living in my own home, paying my rent in advance, hiding my identity and keeping my relatives at a distance.

What you see today, you might think is acceptable – but to me it's not. Why? Because I have spent a lifetime, along with my brothers and sisters, trying to rebuild and recapture all that was stolen and denied us.

The tragedy of all that is that not one Aboriginal person escaped the policy that was then and still is in the mindset of decision makers today.

Assimilation is just a heartbeat away in everything we aspire to achieve as a people. There are too many sorrys and not enough truths.

I have a good command of English but I cannot speak my own language. I have grandchildren but I was denied my mother and father.

Sometimes I don't know where I belong or where I'm going – or who am I? That is a question that you are left with: Who am I?

Coming here was hard for me, coming back up north. I was stolen and taken to Croker Island. Minjilang and its people hold some of my fondest memories as a child. There was heaps of nature but very little or no nurture. Notwithstanding the efforts of the cottage mothers who had to spread their love over 12 or so distraught children each.

Leaving Alice Springs was hard because I still cling onto home. I am the sum of my experiences and my experiences are such that my life doesn't have the cultural integrity and grounding that it should have.

I'm not recognised in native title. I'm not recognised in land rights.

When my father's traditional lands were given back, my brother and I were not even notified of the ceremonial handback. The apology meant nothing to me – there are too many sorrys and not enough truths.

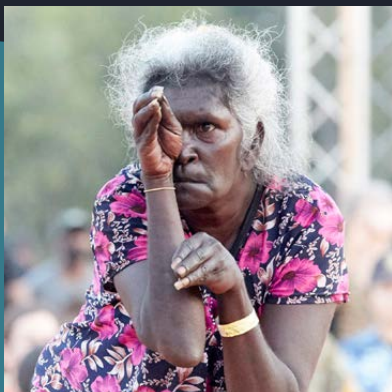
I get the chance to speak here because I have made the English language my friend and people feel comfortable with that. But what does it mean to have a voice, if that voice is not really heard or understood?

We are talking about constitutional change. Recognition in white society. Legislative changes that has to happen. The Uluru Statement from the

Heart is the collective statement from our people across nations. There should be no debate. What has been asked for is clear.

These days my energy is on lifting the voice and governance of the grassroots. Where the answers lie.

At Children's Ground, we see what can happen when you are culturally empowered - a whole community, family and kids are mobilised into taking ownership and control and being a part of their own destiny."



The Faces of Garma

CULTURAL REPORT

Overview

Although much of the media coverage of Garma centres around the political and policy discussions of the Key Forum conference, at its heart Garma remains a cultural celebration. The over-riding artistic and cultural mission of the Yothu Yindi Foundation's flagship event, Garma, is to provide a contemporary environment for the expression and presentation of traditional Yolngu knowledge systems and customs, and share these practices with our guests in an authentic Yolngu setting. These traditions have nurtured the Yolngu clans for millennia and endured for tens of thousands of years. The preservation of this extraordinary cultural heritage is essential, and by celebrating these traditions, Garma helps maintain and strengthen them for future generations. The key ceremonial and artistic elements of the program are traditional miny'tji (art), ancient story-telling, manikay (song), and bunggul (dance), and include the *Dilthan Yolngunha (Women's Healing)* program, which is led by senior Yolngu women. Garma guests can also participate in language workshops that teach them the basics of the local Yolngu Matha dialect, and emphasise the importance of preserving one of Australia's unique languages.



GAPAN GALLERY

The spectacular open-air Gapan Gallery was once again a popular feature, showcasing artwork from five regional arts centres: Bula'Bula Arts Aboriginal Corporation, Buku-Larrnggay, Elcho Island Arts, Gapuwiyak Culture and Arts Aboriginal Corporation, and Ngukurr Arts Aboriginal Corporation. A number of independent solo artists also displayed their wares, such as Dhambit, who presented her shelter with an enormous display of colour and energy.



BUNGGUL

The nightly bunggul is undoubtedly one of the high points of Garma. As the sun sets on Gulkula, members of the 13 clans perform ceremonial dances accompanied by the yidaki (didgeridoo) and the bilma (clapsticks). Each dance tells a different story, an ancient expression of ritual knowledge. Here, the youngest members of the community learn from their Elders, their eyes fixated on the feet as they try to learn the complex steps of each dance.

CULTURAL WORKSHOPS

Senior Yolngu men and women again ran a series of cultural workshops during Garma, offering guests the chance to learn different aspects of the Yolngu cultural tradition, including basket-weaving, spear-making, instruction in the Yolngu Matha language, and sessions explaining the complexities of Yolngu kinship and gurrutu. These workshops provide guests with a fully immersive experience in a part of Australian life rarely seen or understood outside of remote communities.



CULTURAL FOCUS: SHARING CULTURE AND KNOWLEDGE THROUGH MUSIC

Sponsored by the Arts Northern Territory Community Arts Festivals, Garma's prestigious music program brought together 132 musicians from 18 different acts this year. For the first time, musicians took part in a unique skills-sharing program, which changed the dynamics of the acts both behind the stage and on-stage. The program was designed to facilitate two-way learning, with successful groups such as Queensland's OKA sharing their experience and knowledge gained from touring internationally. However just as important was the role of up-and-coming local acts, sharing musical tricks and tips – as well as language and songlines.

The program was broken into two sections, half theory and half practical. Each morning musicians got together to talk about a wide range of topics, from song rights to touring schedules. They then moved into practical sessions, with musicians coaching each other on everything from how to tune a guitar quickly on stage, to different techniques used for vocal warm-ups. In the afternoons, groups paired up for band-to-band sessions where acts worked directly with another band to learn and connect. This gave younger musicians the opportunity to spend time with senior, successful musicians, to see the discipline they have applied to their careers, and what's needed to get there.

For Ahva Dub, the Yothu Yindi Foundation's Garma Music Program Director, the most exciting outcome of the sessions was watching the musicians grow. He explained: "As soon as we had the first session at the first workshop, you could just see, it just changed the way all the bands interacted. It's helped the musicians build and reflect – and it's changing their shows, they are adding new elements, the output of quality of performance and experience has really lifted. In previous years, each band has hung out in their own silos, focused on when they are playing, but now it's like they are one big family. What I'm looking forward to is seeing some of the young people taking part in this program today, owning and running this program in the future."

Musician Dhapanbal Yunupingu was a leader and participant in the Skills Sharing program. She praised the immediate impact of program: "*We have been sharing skills, sharing our knowledge, and sharing our culture through music. I really think that I will grow as a musician from this program. I learnt how to connect more with an audience while on stage – and I've been trying that out. We've all come together and we've been able to share laughter, love and happiness. And to work with other women and support female musicians has been really special. We've really made a family.*"



20 YEARS OF GARMA STORIES

BELOW ARE SOME REFLECTIONS ON GARMA AND ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY, CAPTURED AROUND THE GROUNDS OF GULKULA DURING THIS YEAR'S EVENT.

1. **DHAPANBAL YUNUPINGU** Musician
2. **ELLEISCHA SIZER** age 10, Djap Wurrung /Gunditjmara
3. **FRED CHANEY AO**
4. **PROFESSOR MARCIA LANGTON** Melbourne University
5. **CATH BROKENBOROUGH** Executive Lead Indigenous Engagement Lend Lease
6. **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR JANE FREMANTLE** Melbourne University
7. **CRAIG HOLLYWOOD** CEO Short Back and Sidewalks
8. **JOE WILLIAMS** The Enemy Within
9. **DAN BOURCHIER** ABC
10. **KAREN MUNDINE** CEO Reconciliation Australia

1. DHAPANBAL YUNUPINGU MUSICIAN

"I have been to every Garma. The 20th anniversary was a little bit emotional for us as a family. The theme this year is truth telling, so I'll talk from my heart for this one.

I was there at the very first ever Garma. I remember when Galarwuy and dad brought us here, and they were standing on the Bunggul ground, and they said - this is the Garma site, this is where the festival is going to be. We were only little. Dad picked his camp. My uncles picked their camp. There were five white fellas who came. There were no tents, two cars, and a BBQ.

Our chef slept next to the back of the ute in a swag. Thinking about that, and coming here, it's like wow. It's really grown.

This year has been an emotional Garma for us, missing our family, missing our father Dr Yunupingu, and thinking about him on this day, he is with us right now in spirit. On the first day I was invited to sing at the Youth Forum and I sang one of dad's songs. It was the first song he wrote when he started working at the school, it was called Mainstream. Dad always used to talk about the salt water and the fresh water coming together, which means the Garma. That song is connected to education and how education has brought us together to where we are now.

Something else that has been special this year is doing the milkarri (crying songs/ceremony) with my aunties. That particular songline is special for a Yolngu woman to learn and to care about, it's same like the men singing, women sing it differently, with their heart, with their soul, with their spirit. When their tears run down their face, it's real and they're letting their emotions out. That's what Garma is this year - it's healing for me, for all of us

Garma to me means Yolngu and Balanda working together, sharing values, sharing culture, and walking hand-in-hand for the future.

People will come every year and go back to their homes with their stories, with their experience, with their love, with their joy, with their happiness - with what they have learnt here. They are going to go back and tell to their family and next year maybe we will have more people coming here and being part of Garma."



2. ELLEISCHA SIZER AGE 10, DJAP WURRUNG /GUNDITJMARA

"I have learned so much at Garma, my mum is teaching me a lot here and I get to meet and listen to all her friends and the other elders. Here everyone is trying to help others understand this is Aboriginal country and how important that is."

3. FRED CHANEY AO

"Garma is a weekend of renewal really. It's a wonderful connection to a splendid part of Aboriginal culture. I'm reminded of the strength and resilience of Aboriginal people and that's always encouraging. If you work in this field there is often lots to be discouraged about and I just find Garma is a reminder of how good Aboriginal people are if you give them the space to be themselves.

Going forward, I suppose my big hope for Garma would be that the really important lessons that come out of each of these weekends will be carried forward more powerfully into the broader Australian community.

It's all very well to leave here feeling revived and encouraged but you want that message to go out to the widest possible audience. I was really encouraged that last year the Yothu Yindi Foundation did follow up work on the Commonwealth distribution of funds. We'd had good discussions on that for two Garmas. Carrying that forward into the public realm, carrying that forward to the Productivity Commission, into the inquiry, that's the sort of thing I want to see expanded under Garma."

4. PROFESSOR MARCIA LANGTON MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY

"I've been coming to Garma since 1998. Nancy, myself and some other people from the old Northern Territory University where we all worked back then, set up the first Key Forum here before there were any facilities. So the first Garma was a little experiment and we ran the forum in and around an army tent with stretchers as our seats and we invited people out to give key papers and talk and that turned into the Key Forum it is today.

For me, personally, what I love about Garma, what I noticed is that the young Yolngu see Balanda or non-Yolngu sitting around watching the Bunggul and - they were surprised! Surprised that outsiders loved their culture because they didn't know that... they saw people that loved their culture so it kind of changed the way young Yolngu people saw themselves in the world.

The point of Garma is two way learning. So Yolngu want to teach us their traditions, philosophies, ideas, culture and in return they expect us to be reciprocal. It's been a wonderful journey in that way and I think that's the great benefit of Garma.

With culture at its heart it gives people the opportunity to have meaningful dialogue. As that dialogue has grown out into many topics, the Key Forum has grown to be quite a sophisticated event.

Then you have the Youth Forum and the other activities, the music, the art, and so I believe, on some ranking it is one of the top festivals in the world. It sits in the top 10 in the world and I think it deserves to be in the top 10 because of the total immersive experience it offers.

It has become a kind of hot house of culture, creativity, intellectual life and where a number of Aboriginal leaders have come and presented key new ideas and debated them here.

In 20 years, I hope that it's entirely run and organised by Yolngu and that all of our dreams and visions for the Dhupuma College, foundation learning programmes, closing the gap in educational and health outcomes. I hope that all of the visions of the Yothu Yindi Foundation are achieved."

5. CATH BROKENBOROUGH EXECUTIVE LEAD INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT LEND LEASE

“Garma is a chance to get together with lots of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across the country who all come to this place to share. It’s about the sharing of information, of experience, what’s happening in community, what’s working, how we’ve progressed from year to year. A chance to make connections and relationships to advance what is happening.

Why do we bring our people to Garma? Because an experience in community, a really immersive experience, can really motivate people. It is part of their cultural awareness journey, their learning and their education. Also to connect to people on a one on one level makes it real and helps the issues to come to life. That helps them go back in to the day to day life and be motivated to have the personal touch to take action.”

6. ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR JANE FREMANTLE MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY

“I have now been to Garma for 16 years, and I keep coming because it is a chance for me to recalibrate and I’d learn so much more from the voice of the people which is not in the text books and not on the media it was the people of the land talking about what was important to them - environmentally, economically, health and sustainability.

The next 20 years? I feel we are actually on the cusp but it’s up to us - non indigenous - to be there and do it. So with my students I ask them to go back, with the good evidence they have now, and revolt against this apathy and racism and challenge people who would say we don’t need to do anything further.

I always leave feeling refreshed but after 20 years I’m sick of hearing the same conversations and words. We need action!”

7. CRAIG HOLLYWOOD CEO SHORT BACK AND SIDEWALKS

“Garma has gone beyond what we could have expected. From this festival, we would now like to look at representing our charity in local communities. We have spoken to a few people from Corrections and we want to get into that. We want to be someone and something that is going to provide some form of change. And going into spaces such as domestic violence or incarceration... making someone feel good for 20 minutes might the difference between having a great day and a not so good day. (Garma) has opened a door and we want to come through it.”

8. JOE WILLIAMS THE ENEMY WITHIN

“For me Garma is about relationship, connecting with local people, cultural immersion. For our people we have traded and shared for thousands of years, so that’s what I am doing. Sharing my story and gaining other people’s wisdom.

For me it’s about being on the ground and connecting to this beautiful place, and the spirit in this country, and the wisdom and the knowledge that the old people and the local people carry.”

9. DAN BOURCHIER ABC

“This is such a crucial point getting together of people from all walks of life. The work that Denise and the team that put this together do inspire conversations that are not happening anywhere else. This is the place we come to talk about who we are, where we are, where we’ve come from and crucially where we are going.”



10. KAREN MUNDINE CEO RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

“You can talk about Garma being about a conference and it is to an extent but what I see more and more is that cultural demonstration of what does coming together look like, what are the conversations that need to be had and how the Bunggul is part of that – not just Western ideas of a conference. The women then come back with their organisation because they have been able to share their cultural experience with others.”

FULL TRANSCRIPTS OF THESE INTERVIEWS CAN BE FOUND IN APPENDIX 1.

The Faces of Garma



CORPORATE REPORT

ENGAGING CORPORATE AUSTRALIA: IMMERSION & PARTNERSHIP

The Garma Corporate experience continues to grow and has become an increasingly important part of the event, bringing together business leaders from a diverse range of industries. Our corporate guests are thirsty for the cultural immersion and knowledge-sharing which takes place at Garma, and are asking us how they can transform the lessons and insights they glean at Garma into positive outcomes after the event has concluded.

This year the Yothu Yindi Foundation hosted more than 30 companies and government agencies at Garma 2018, with a total of 350 participants. While most corporate groups are return visitors, many individual corporate attendees are first and only time visitors.



Organisations that attended Garma 2018:

Rio Tinto, Qantas, Telstra, ABC, Northern Territory Government, Australian Government, CSIRO, University of Melbourne, Seaswift, Australia Post, both the University of Sydney and Flinders University, the Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council, Woodside Energy, Secretaries and Heads of Commonwealth Government agencies, MMG Limited, Ernst and Young, Origin Energy, Department of Defence, Apple, Energy Australia, Reconciliation Australia, Lend Lease, McKinsey & Company, Charles Darwin University, Energy Australia, The Healing Foundation, ANZ, NAB & DEAL



The Garma Telstra Corporate Dinner Saturday evening was widely hailed as our strongest ever.

Attendees were greeted by hosts and asked to step outside their comfort zones and “choose their conversation”, selecting from the topics of Truth Telling, Reconciliation, Education and Economic Development and being seated at tables based around those topics, rather than in their corporate groups. This reinforced the key themes of Garma and also brought a new energy to the event.

Author and keynote speaker Richard Flanagan seized the audience attention with a searing oration speaking to the heart of truth telling. From unearthing the truths of his own Indigenous heritage, he warned us that the world is being undone around us, and Australia “will fail as a nation if it cannot find a way of admitting our Indigenous people, and with them, our continent's extraordinary patrimony: 60,000 years of civilisation”.

WATCH: 2018 Garma Telstra Corporate Dinner Key Note Speech - Richard Flanagan - booker Prize winner & internationally celebrated Australian writer

The night closed with another new innovation; an auction of a Larrakitj artwork from Yirrkala artist Wukun Wanambi. This added some energy to the later stages of the evening and helped raise funds for YYF's local Yolngu education programs. Congratulations and a special thanks to Sam Hayward who is now the owners of Wukun Wanambi's Larrakitj.

Airnorth & Seaswift have invested a great deal in Garma Festival.



GARMA MEDIA

The Yothu Yindi Foundation would like to thank the following media outlets for their coverage of Garma 2018 and their continued commitment to Indigenous issues: the ABC, The Australian, Sky News, The Guardian, Australian Associated Press, NITV, National Indigenous Times, and Koori Mail.

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APPENDIX 1

GARMA 2018 TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS

FRED CHANEY AO RECONCILIATION ADVOCATE, FORMER POLITICIAN

Fred, how long have you been coming to Garma?

I really couldn't give you an exact figure but it's probably a decade. Probably at least 10.

So you've been coming to Garma for a decade, what do you like about coming to Garma? Why do you come every year?

Well, I think it's a weekend of renewal really. It's a wonderful connection to a splendid part of Aboriginal culture. I'm reminded of the strength and resilience of Aboriginal people and that's always encouraging. If you work in this field there is often lots to be discouraged about and I just find Garma is a reminder of how good Aboriginal people are if you give them the space to be themselves.

What does Garma look like in 5 to 10 years' time?

I hope there will be lots more stories of triumphs, if you like. Of Aboriginal people particularly getting out from under government and being able to do their own thing. I think there is going to be an ongoing need for Garma because the Aboriginal nations are very diverse, their circumstances are very diverse and this place is a reminder of what was and what can be. So I think I've given up trying to predict the future, to be quite honest. I think it will just go on developing organically.

I suppose my big hope for Garma would be that the really important lessons that come out of each of these weekends will be carried forward more powerfully into the broader Australian community.

It's all very well to leave here feeling revived and encouraged but you want that message to go out to the widest possible audience. I was really encouraged that last year the Yothu Yindi Foundation did follow up work on the Commonwealth distribution of funds. We'd had good discussions on that for two Garmas.

Carrying that forward into the public realm, carrying that forward to the Productivity Commission, into the inquiry, that's the sort of thing I want to see expanded under Garma.

That would be my hope for Garma, that the powerful lessons, whether about education, employment, economic development are carried forward into the broader community very effectively.



Fred, how long have you been coming to Garma?

This year is the 20th year of Garma. How long have you been coming to Garma?

I've been coming to Garma since 1998. Nancy, myself and some other people from the Old Northern Territory University where we all worked back then, set up the first key forum here before there were any facilities.

So the first Garma was a little experiment and we ran the forum in and around an Army tent with stretchers as our seats and we invited people out to give key papers and talk and that turned into the Key Forum it is today.

What do you think is critical about Garma?

So Garma means open Ceremony, so it's essentially a public ceremony and the Bunggul every afternoon is the heart of Garma. For me, personally, what I love about Garma, what I noticed is that the young Yolngu would see Balanda or non- Yolngu sitting around watching the Bunggul and becoming tremendously excited and clapping wildly, and the young people were into rap and hard rock and stuff and they were surprised! Surprised that outsiders loved their culture because they didn't know that. They felt that because of the history of this area that people hated them and their culture but at Garma they saw people that loved their culture so it kind of changed the way young Yolngu people saw themselves in the world.

For many years I brought my students from the university, as a formal educational exercise I actually registered courses at my Universities and brought them here. Young people love talking to young people.

So they became very familiar with the key people and the key organisations and they volunteered in the early days and talked to people. They had to do their essays on something and so Yolngu Rangers and other people working here were bemused that young University students were so interested in their work and their culture and so it was real two way learning.

Which, of course, is the point of Garma, right, two way learning.

So Yolngu want to teach us their traditions, philosophies, ideas, culture and in return they expect us to be reciprocal. So it's been a wonderful journey in that way and I think that's the great benefit of Garma.

With culture at its heart it gives people the opportunity to have meaningful dialogue and so. As that dialogue has grown out into many many topics, the key forum has grown to be quite a sophisticated event.

Then you have the youth forum and the other activities, the music, and so I believe, on some ranking it is one of the top festivals in the world. It sits in the top 10 in the world and I think it deserves to be in the top 10 because of the total immersive experience it offers, the variety and the access to Yolngu people and culture, and many other Aboriginal culture from this region and others in the area.

Because of this word has got out many important people come here and it's become a kind of hot house of culture, creativity, intellectual life and where a number of Aboriginal leaders have come and presented key new ideas and debated them here.

The other great thing about Garma is that because we are all under ceremonial rules here we have to behave ourselves, speak to each other nicely, no fighting, it's a safe place where we can have an honest and open discussion as long as we are respectful of each other.

I'm not surprised that this year's topic is Truth Telling as Yolngu elders often say to me "spit it out, tell me the truth, tell me what you're thinking". I think this is what Australian civic and political life needs, some truth telling.

What should Garma look like in another 20 years?

I hope that it's entirely run and organised by Yolngu and that all of our dreams and visions for the Dhupuma College, Foundation learning programmes, closing the gap in educational and health outcomes. I hope that all of the visions of the Yothu Yindi Foundation are achieved.

What has Garma meant to you and the impact as you reflect back on the years you have been coming?

We'll I have been coming for 16 years. I started coming when I worked at the Institute for Child Health Research and that was when I was working in maternal child and health and I was invited to come over and I participated as a speaker.

In those days it was very different. I remember sitting on panels and feeling uncomfortable that I should be listening not speaking.

So I've kept coming because the reason for me is to recalibrate and I'd learn so much more from the voice of the people which is not in the text books and not on the media it was the people of the land talking about what was important to them - environmentally, economically, health and sustainability.

I then went to Ormond College to set up their Indigenous program.

I was funded to bring eight students to Garma to challenge their world view, to shake them up, to leave them with more questions than answers. We continue this program and Trinity College also came on board.

I come here because I need to remember this is about the Aboriginal people and I need to step back and listen and learn.

This year I see a sense of hope. Last year was devastating and I left with a sense of absolute disparity. Proper had worked so hard and they had their hearts ripped out. Coming this year and hearing Noel Pearson talk about an element of hope was incredible.

Ian Anderson's words about really listening to the people and the change in the close the gap framework so that's its one that comes from the ground up and listens to the communities then it becomes a joined up program and he sent out a challenge to every government department saying - you have all got a responsibility not just PM&C and I'm going to hold you to that.

I feel we are actually on the cusp but being there it's up to us - non indigenous - to be there and do it. So with my students I ask them to go back, with the good evidence they have now, and revolt against this apathy and racism and challenge people who would say we don't need to do anything further.

I hope we can bring it back a bit to be more about the people.

I always leave feeling refreshed but after 20 years I'm sick of hearing the same conversations and words. We need action!

DAN BOURCHIER ABC

How many times have you been here and why do you keep coming back?

This is my 7th year and I remember my first time here sitting under a tree and being shown how to crack a crab efficiently and eat it under a tree and in those days, there was a rough edge to it, like a diamond yet to be polished. For me its about coming together on someone else's country and I hope they see that I'm doing what they have asked, which is to listen with an open heart and open ears and to do my job to report that to the rest of the nation to let them know what are the conversations that are happening here. This is such a crucial point getting together of people from all walks of life. The work that Denise and the team that put this together do inspires conversations that are not happening anywhere else. This is the place we come to talk about who we are, where we are, where we've come from and crucially where we are going.

We have a mix of people that come here and thinking more broadly, do you think Garma is relevant and important? I'm thinking about the cultural side of it.

I think it's more relevant now than ever and as you know the sad picture of Indigenous affairs in Australia where so many of us have lost that crucial connection to country because of what was out of our control things that happened many decades ago. This is a part of the country where those things don't happen, where those connections are strong and unflinching, and we get to see that and experience it. We get to sit with Djapirri and hear her stories and in that sense, we learn about our stories and who we are about how we fit in. It's like the puzzle piece that fits neatly into the gap that has been sitting there for so long. So, I think that now Garma is more crucial than ever and when we talk about the fractious politics of Australia around Indigenous affairs the nature of the political debate it is important that we have a place where we

can say 'listen, stop! We are going to do more listening than talking and we are going to sit and reflect and think about what is being said and have a holistic conversation not one that is dominated by the partisanship of both sides of politics but one that is driven by policy and about community involvement.

What do you think Garma should look like in another 20 years?

In 20 years I hope I'm still seeing you and the elders and leaders who have guided me and so many others. I hope we are still sitting around a campfire sharing stories and experiences and learning. I lament that we might still be talking about some of the challenges that we are still talking about today; about major discrepancies in health outcomes, about incarceration rates, health, education. Everywhere you look the gap doesn't seem to be getting any closer. I hope in 20 years we are talking about the big picture. I worry in 20 years the answered question of Constitutional recognition, of becoming a more reconciled nation still won't be answered. If that is the case I know 1 thing, we will be doing it with good humour and a sense of optimism and keeping on telling that story and having that conversation. We know this is not a conversation you or I started but one that has been going for decades and decades and suspect it will be for some time. We must make sure we carry that baton with a firm grip and that we are ready to pass that on to the next group of young leaders.

We have met some of those at the Youth Forum. There are here amongst us, around the country. Teenagers and young people who have got something to say. We must be ready to listen to them and make sure that our ears are open to them as young people and hear how their vision meshes with ours and meshes with the future vision of our nation.

KAREN MUNDINE CEO RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

Can you tell me about your time at Garma?

The RA women's group at Garma has been coming for 10 or 12 years. It's been really important to let people experience what we talk about when we talk about Reconciliation. Bringing a group of women together is a very special experience. Getting senior corporate women to come together with senior Yolgnu women I think special and important things happen. It has allowed us to demonstrate to the ladies the issues and concepts we talk about in Reconciliation and to move it away from being all about jobs and procurement and those business-related things. When we talk about sovereignty and Aboriginal ways of doing and thinking the Gumatj people demonstrate this so powerfully, this is what it's about.

You can talk about Garma being about a conference and it is to an extent but what I see more and more is that cultural demonstration of what does coming together look like, what are the conversations that need to be had and how the Bunggul is part of that – not just Western ideas of a conference. The women then come back with their organisation because they have been able to share their cultural experience with others.

We are a safe place for the women to unpack things they have experience during the day, conversations that have been had during the day and to ask questions.

You would have seen changes over the years. Do you think Garma is still relevant?

Definitely. I've seen growth and a sophistication within Yolgnu society and Gumatj community around how they conduct their business. What I've also seen is a confidence of sharing that more and more. What I would like to see going forward is that we almost don't have the Western part of the conference, but we do it full Yolgnu way. I love that Yolgnu people embrace visitors and really draw people into the Yolgnu way of doing and being. I absolutely foresee that in years to come that this continues to be a really important forum where we continue to have the important conversations.

Tell us about the Skills Sharing program?

Garma this year has been amazing, especially the skills sharing program so that other young people can learn from each other, feel more confident, talk more confidently about their stories and what their songs are about. I think it's a great program, especially for the new comers.

We have been sharing skills and experiences, our journey, our lives and what made us want to be a musician, what's our passion, just sharing. The feedback from the ladies, it was great to have a girl band on stage at Garma this year.

Sharing skills, sharing our knowledge, sharing our culture through music. Also with other singer song writers coming into Garma. It's been great to work from them and to learn about their music journey.

How many times have you performed at Garma, and what's it like this year?

I've been to every Garma, I've performed at three (2016, 2017, 2018). Having the skilled shared program for the first time. Because of our music and lifestyle, we've come together, shared our culture, music is important to express our feelings and how we live in our community and how we live.

Through music easier to spread the message about our culture.

This year's workshop, our first ever skilled shared workshop, it's been amazing, it's bringing us together, sharing.

I had tips coming around for all of us, all the people who have been around the world – from how to tune a guitar quickly, to how to be on stage and connect with a crowd. I did that yesterday on stage and I learnt it at the workshop.

I really think that I will grow as a musician from this program.

What have the musicians gained from the program?

We've been able to share laughter, love, happiness.

The musicians I've been working with... it's all about sharing our culture, sharing our music, everything – especially with the ladies – in the Yolngu ways where the men do the songlines in their way, for the women, they do it with their feelings, they have to let it out

I was talking with the female musicians and we had a discussions and we talked about our experience and our feelings, and how music has changed us – not in a white fella way – but you have the Yolngu in yourself. It's about expressing your feelings.

We are all staying in touch.... If I'm in Melbourne and need a guitarists.... I'll know who to contact.

We've made a family. It's a safe environment.

Tell us about 20 year of Garma?

I have been to every Garma. The 20th anniversary was a little bit emotional for us as a family. The theme this year is truth telling, so I'll talk from my heart for this one.

It was a really emotional Garma for us, missing our family, missing our father Dr Yunupingu, and thinking about him on this day, he is with us right now in spirit.

First day we kicked off on Friday with at the Youth Forum and they invited me to sing one of dad's songs. That song was the first song he ever wrote when he started working at the school, it was called Mainstream. It was really special for me to sing that song on the special 20th anniversary for all of us to enjoy. Dad always used to talk about the salt water and the fresh water which means the Garma, I spoke about that at the Forum to the young people. The song connected to education and how education has brought us together to where we are now.

I think it's really important for us, for Yolngu people to stay here, and learn both ways, that's what Garma is here for, to learn.

What is the impact of Garma? And Garma 2018?

People are coming from interstate, from overseas and coming here so they can learn our culture so they can take it back home to share with their friends and their family.

I think it's a really amazing year for everyone at Garma.

Last night on stage, I felt really great, REALLY GREAT, yeah.

I felt connected to the audience, I can hear my brother yelling out, which made me feel really good inside, that there's family supporting me.

It's a joy.

That's the other thing, I've been doing the milkarri (crying songs/ceremony) with my aunties, and that particular songline is special for a Yolngu woman to learn and to care about, it's same like the men singing, women sing it differently, with their heart, with their soul, with their spirit – they just put it out.

When their tears run down their face, it's not fake, it's real, because they are thinking about their loved ones who have passed away, and they're letting their emotions out – it's a healing emotion, that's what Garma is this year – it's healing for me, for all of us.

Yesterday's session... 200 people... it was special.... These amazing women were acknowledged for what they do for us.... They invite everyone to come, experience, learn the songline which goes back for thousands of years, we don't young people to have no culture.

It comes from the heart – they're saying come, learn. Every time I'm working with them, I'm learning about the songlines, where it comes from, bring it into my music, with permission from the Elders to talk proudly and strongly about who you are, where you come from.

What was it like to be at the first Garma?

The first ever Garma was held here. I was there.

I remember when two of my father's Galarrwuy and dad brought us here, and they were standing on where the Bunggul ground is now, and they said this is the Garma site, this is where the festival is going to be. We were only little. Dad picked his camp. My uncles picked their site.

The first ever Garma there were five white fellas who came here... no tents... two cars... and a BBQ.

Our chef slept next to the back of the ute in a swag

Thinking about that, and coming here, it's like wow. It's really grown.

Lasting memories that I hold... there have been a lot of families from a lot of communities who have come here. And some of them have passed away. And their memories will always be shared. They have special announcements about people who have passed away and come here for so many years. And those people will be always remembered. That's a special part about Garma, acknowledging people for the work they have done and their time.

What does Garma mean to you?

Garma to me means Yolngu and Balanda working together with values and sharing culture, and walking hand in hand, for the next future.

I'm feeling a bit sad, hopefully see you mob next year at Garma, but it's been really good.

People will go back to their homes with their stories, with their experience, with their love, with their joy, with their happiness, with what they have learnt here and they are going to go back and tell to their family and next year maybe we will have more people coming in.

Can you tell us about the Skills Sharing program?

Ahva: This year's program is almost exclusively NT musicians, with one OKA who is visiting from Sunshine Coast who are a successful international act. They are part of the Skilled Sharing program, there's a big market internationally for Aboriginal music, but not everywhere is easy, so they are getting learning. It's the first time we've run the Skills Share program.

It's about our local bands sharing their knowledge and experience, as well as local culture, two-way learning. It's the first time, it was really good, we have a session every morning – broken into two parts with four different topics... so half theory and half practical, the band managers and leaders can figure out next stage... then song rights with, APRA song rights discussion, Phillip was great at facilitating.

Practical stuff has been brilliant, we've done drum tuning, guitar tuning tricks, vocal warm-ups, how to get the most out of your crew... the type of skills that take time learn.... And harder learn in remote areas in terms of performing in more metros areas.

It's making musicians build and reflect – and it's changing their shows, they are adding new elements... the output of quality of performance at experience has lifted.

What has been the impact?

Ahva: As soon as we had the first session at the first workshop, you could just see, it just changed the way all the bands interacted. In previous years, they have all been in their own silos, focused on when they are playing, but now it's like...they're a family. Band-to-band sessions each other afternoon where a band works directly with another band to learn and connect... discussion on touring... it's like touring where bands are collaborating more.

Lauren: It's harmonious backstage, they've built strong relationships, invited people to come on country, to tour together, I think those relationships will continue to build long term... for me. For me, seeing the youth engaged is really important. We have 14yo drummers performing who are well supported. Seeing their confidence grow and them grow throw the fostering of other musicians in priceless.

Ahva: The young musicians are seeing the discipline some successful musicians have applied to their careers, and what's needed to get there. How they have achieved goals. All of the bands here have been chosen because they're good role models, they know that it's not just a couple of people in their musicians showing them the path... it's successful and senior musicians.

It promotes a bigger family feel, and I think being able to do the acoustic stuff this year has generated a relaxed feel.... Not just big bands at night, we've had solos in the morning... people have been enjoying getting the stage experience.

Every year we have about four bands who show up who we didn't expect. And they are well loved.

AE – How many musicians are at Garma this year?

Ahva: We have 132 musicians here and 18 acts.

Lauren: Garma is known as festival that respects, pays, feeds their musicians, and pays well, and is easy to deal with.... it's a big notch in their belt. People are proud to play at Garma.

Ahva: There is something prestige about playing at Garma. People are proud.

The crowd have received the music so well, we highlight the local bands, the visiting bands are brilliant, the local bands, the families all support their family bands, it ties in a lot with the Bunggul... traditional songlines woven into contemporary culture.

Lauren: It's a big thing, seeing contemporary music preserving culture. It's very important.

Ahva: For some of these bands, being able to do contemporary music with some of their traditional songlines, there is strong encouragement, Garma is seen to really support that.

On Saturday lunch, Wild Water (Darwin band) and Eylandt Band... had a jam... connected from school and prison programs... reinvigorated program

Lauren: It's been wonderful to see Dhapanbal taking on the MC role and seeing her growing and owning that stage... and seeing that develop into her performance

Ahva: We are proud to continue to develop female talent...

Ahva/Lauren: Look forward to seeing these young people who are part of the program today... owning and running this program.

Tell us about your experience with the Youth Forum's digital storytelling program?

We ran a program around media skills, to have a bit of fun and teach media skills to learn how to tell a story using a digital platform. We wanted to teach the young people to think like a journalist and learn how to put a story together. At the start, everyone was pretty quiet, we broke out into groups, and throughout the session the young people started to open up.

Dan Bouchier and I worked with three boys from remote WA, they travelled three days to get here, they had a great story to tell. We talked about the fact that the best stories are personal stories, and they decided that their journey to Garma was a great one. They started to come up with the elements of their story, Jake talked to getting here, and Silvani and Isaac talked about what happens at Garma

They filmed themselves, we worked with them on how to film, how to talk in their interviews, and they wrote them down and sat in groups to do the filming themselves – interviewing each other.

What they said was really quite amazing, it was moving. You really need to see it to understand. Silvani told me about his experience at Garma at the first time, the coming together of so many people and how it made them feel like home. He also talked about the fact that he spoke two languages.

Isaac talked to me about how Garma changed his life. These young people are 11-12. He felt that the coming together of people, and from other families, is something they have never done before. The experiences were heightened by the fact it did take three days to get here. About sleeping on Cable Beach as part of their journey through to Broome. You could see that he was genuinely happy.

So we recorded all three, so they could watch their vision, we knew they were really into it. They were then really enthusiastic about getting out to record the vision they needed to put their stories together.

They used the dust on the Youth Forum vehicle to draw a map of their journey from WA to Garma and recorded it, it was all spontaneous. We recorded an aunty doing Raypirri, dig painting, dancing, they did this really quickly, we quickly edited and when they came back from lunch they got to see their story. When they saw the story they had put together, they were elated by it, they were so happy to what they had created. Then, they wanted to do more.

What was the impact of the program?

What had also happened was that we had formed a new relationship. What had also changed was the way they were talking to us. They were talking as story tellers. They were open, talking about where they lived, what it looked like, what it felt like, they really enjoyed the youth forum.

I could see that youth forum was a happy place, a space place.

The youth forum is just for young people, it's their space, but you can see that everyone who walks past can see that something awesome is happening in there. That they want to get in.

After the session, when I showed our colleagues the video the boys had made, I became quite emotional at the end. Especially Isaac's story at the end.

Can you explain the two-way learning that occurred?

For those boys, I think they will head back with something they won't forget. They are going to want to do it more, they have learnt new skills. Whether they know it or not, the story telling skills they will take with them going forward. To pass that one, is a great thing.

For the ABC, I love the public purpose of the ABC, but this is something you don't do to take to Australians as this is what we do as a service. For me, this is something that you do with a community, that is. Being part of this program is some that I will remember for my entire life.

I found the teacher and we are going to stay in contact with the school, and organise some sessions over Skype in and talk to them, we're looking at having our BTN team head out to the Rawa School and community and follow-up to maintain that ever.

I find from an ABC perspective, we're focusing on engagement a lot. And that engagement is to make sure as a public broadcaster that we're engaging with all Australians, with all communities, to reflect all the cultures we have, and you can't do that unless you actually get into those communities. To travel out, and not to cover a story and leave, but to get in there and really understand a community and what's important.

My role is Director of Television, and Radio National networks, and we do have a focus on diversity and we

do have a focus on reflecting all cultures, it's certainly got me thinking... to listen to the perspective of a child is different from that of an adult and that cuts through pretty quickly... these young men who are future leaders that they feel like they are empowered, that they feel like they are an advocate, that they feel like they can talk to people about different things, giving them confidence to tell a story.

The confidence they had from the workshop from telling them their voices are important and their story is important, and this is a way of recording it, and hopefully they keep doing it. I hope they encourage people to do it, this experience for me was unexpected. It's a good program, but I was never sure how it was going to go. It's always dependant of people telling their story. It doesn't matter who you are, it's always dependent on people telling their stories.

I just didn't expect for it to be as personal as it was. I learnt something from these boys about their perspective of the world, why they are here and what it means to them. I could have read anything in the program, but to experience that through the youth forum, I would have never understood that as well.

So I want to go back and do it again. I'm thinking, what can we do next year. How can we make this bigger, how can we make this better, how can we scale this.

As you leave Garma, your first Garma, how are you feeling?

I feel quite privileged and humbled to be here and to be part of this.

I think so many orators have spoken and given me a perspective that I didn't have before I attended Garma.

I leave with a greater sense of purpose for tackling those real issues and how to make improvements and what role I can play. Whether that's with the ABC or outside of the ABC, it's all about responsibility. I feel a great sense of purpose leaving Garma. I'm sorry to be going, but I leave wanting to come back.



ALLY EDUCATION PROJECTS OFFICER, CSIRO

Can you tell us about the CSIRO Youth Forum program this year?

CSIRO has sponsored the youth forum this year, and as part of that we are running STEM workshops for students and that includes links to traditional knowledge, and links to western science – levers, aerodynamics, rockets, natural dyes, exciting things we can engage the kids in science with.

We worked with YYF to develop this program, engaging the Yolngu elders to combine the program.

We had some students on the rockets, asking if they like science, and relating it back to things they are interested in and could understand, and by the end of the day they were so engaged and shooting rockets 20-30m in the air, they were really excited and wanting to test ideas, “what if we change the fins” “what if we increase the water” “what if we make it a bigger bottle”.

It's really exciting to see that shift from being unsure to being really engaged in what's going on.

What's the aim of the program?

STEM skills are vital for the jobs of the future, and right now, not enough students across Australia Indigenous and non-Indigenous are taking up STEM education. One of our key focus areas is engaging kids in STEM at a young age and keep them engaged all the way through – so that they have the skills they need for the jobs of the future.

Unfortunately Indigenous students are underrepresented in STEM education and STEM skills, we are hoping to increase.

What has been your experience working with the Yolngu elders?

We had such a wonderful opportunity working with the Yolngu elders as part of this program, the Yolngu women opened the program with a Raypirri Rom and they were part of our session in the afternoon.

We are so grateful to learn from them and to have them share their knowledge with us is fantastic. I hope we can come back and build on this program, build on our partnership, we can make this bigger and better.

JESS STIMSON EDUCATION PROJECTS OFFICER, CSIRO

Can you tell us about the CSIRO Youth Forum program this year?

I've been running the levers and dyeing workshops, trying to engage the kids in traditional knowledge and leading that to science. It's about engaging the kids through Indigenous culture; engaging the Indigenous kids, linking back to their home and their culture and things that they know, and building from that – integrating traditional science and new science together.

It's what amazing to have the Yolngu women being part of a program that prepares young people for the jobs of the future. For us at the CSIRO to experience some of the traditional Yolngu science, such as the dyeing, was incredible.

It was really good for the kids and for the CSIRO – it was a real eye-opener.

We were doing the lever experiment which is about linking back to the traditional Yolngu spears. We had a group of kids who came down and weren't really keen on doing it. So we started off by giving them the hands on... get in there... and then we started discussions...

As one of the Youth Forum leaders, can you tell us about your experience?

I've been overseeing the forum, making sure the youth forum runs successfully, that they kids are happy, enjoying it and that they are understanding the theme of Garma and why we're here. The kids have been amazing they have been accepting one another, getting along, respecting one another, most importantly they have been connecting with one another and the theme of truth telling to tell their stories.

What have been the highlights?

Huge highlight is seeing the growth of the kids from the first moment they walked into the forum. They were in their own individual groups, they weren't engaging with other schools, but now you can't even tell which school people are from. They are all intermingling.

Last night we had Joe speak to kids around the campfire, although it was a bit confronting, it bought them all closer together. That was one of their highlights because they were able to be themselves and express that.

What have you noticed about the participants?

All of the kids have transformed in different ways. A lot of the local kids have mingled with those from different states and different schools. The schools that come and travel have been able to build connections even stronger and further that tradition of being part of Garma.

I feel like all of the kids have made the most of this experience. Hopefully they will take this back to their schools and their communities.

For non-Indigenous kids, it's incredible, not everyone gets this opportunity. They genuinely feel really privileged to be here and experience the rich culture, the rich diversity, and just to genuinely be human and be with other people who have similarities, who have difference, and when you're in in this forum there is nothing different about anyone. We are just human, we all just want to be here. We want to celebrate our culture, we want to learn and more importantly we want to share that.

The music has been impactful this year, there's something special about communicating in different forms of art. It's been great for the kids to verbalise their thoughts and feelings through song and instruments.



VASHTI BEETSON ST COLUMBAN'S COLLEGE, YOUTH FORUM PARTICIPANT

Tell us about your Garma experience?

I'm a Wiradjuri and Gubbi Gubbi woman. It's my first Garma, I've loved it and connecting with everyone. The best part has been connecting with people. You have to be open to get something back. If you're open, you'll learn new things, make new friends, and stepping outside of your comfort zone.

What has been the best part?

For us coming together – we're all just kids coming here to learn something new. Whether it's about our culture or someone else's culture, we're all in the same boat, we're all away from home. Highlight – I really clicked with one of the aunts who reminds me of my grandmother, and being able to dance with her and connect with her was my highlight.

What do you leave here with?

I leave here with new friends, we've all added each other on Snapchat. It's been great taking every opportunity that's been given to me.

KEALEY GIBSON NHULUNBUY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE,
YOUTH FORUM NON-INDIGENOUS PARTICIPANT, 14YO

Tell us about your Garma experience?

The best thing about Garma is the cultural experience we have with the Yolngu people, it is amazing how much of an impact this event can have, the local people are so friendly and so willing to share their culture, they don't judge you if you get it wrong, right, they love to show, they want to pass on their knowledge, and we must understand that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity

Coming here for the past three years has been the most amazing experience I've ever had.

What has been the best part?

It's been an amazing journey knowing that I've learnt so much more about our Indigenous culture, it's an amazing feeling to know that I've learnt so much more about this culture.

What do you leave here with?

Forming friendships as part of the youth forum is amazing, we all have so many friends now.

CSIRO program was amazing... I loved trying out the rockets, learning about how to create the pressure And learning about music and Yolngu beats was amazing that's been given to me.

ISSAC RAWA SCHOOL, YOUTH FORUM PARTICIPANT

From ABC video created as part of digital storytelling program:

Garma festival is about fighting for rights, passing on rights to the people. Garma has changed my life. Garma is hot, at home it is windy, but listening to Garma makes me feel like I'm at home.

Tell us about your Garma experience?

Garma is a once in a lifetime experience, the Yolngu culture is different to mine, I loved it. I loved meeting the young Yolngu people and kicking the footy with the young kids. The people here, to see how they're keeping their culture strong, and going on with traditions to this day, it's just amazing, it's a once in a lifetime opportunity.

What do you leave here with?

I don't want to leave, I want to stay here a lot longer, because when I'm out here, I'm happy, I feel real proud of myself, and to be here. We've even had a girl from Denmark here, she's never seen anything like this before. I leave with new friends.

Why is Garma important?

This is important because we need to learn how to connect with each other. Even if we connect white and indigenous together on indigenous culture – and we can learn from others. It's a pass and parcel things – we all need to connect with each other. What I've gone through here is amazing, it's a good place to be in, it gives you a good heart as well. You go away with a happy feeling. Being here.

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