STATEMENT FROM CHIEF MINISTER ADAM GILES

3 June 2013

The Territory and the nation has lost not only a great artist but also a significant cultural figure. The passing of Mr Yunupingu is a sad day for the Territory, Aboriginal culture and Australian music.

His legacy is that of a true bridge builder who strove for reconciliation through his music and by example.

Mr Yunupingu was an outstanding Territorian who gained international attention as the lead singer of the Indigenous band Yothu Yindi, which formed in 1986 and created a blend of rock and traditional Aboriginal music.

Mr Yunupingu was a leader for his community long before he received worldwide recognition for his music.

He was a pioneer in being the first Aboriginal person from Arnhem Land to gain a university degree when he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in education from Deakin University in 1988 that he then used to benefit his community.

Mr Yunupingu’s place as a role model for the Yolngu people was significant and his contribution was substantial in the education of Indigenous children when he became the first Aboriginal principal in Australia at Yirrkala Community School.

He strived to achieve better outcomes for Indigenous people and will be sorely missed, not just by the East Arnhem community, but by people around the world.

A great man has been lost far too soon.

I extend sincere condolences to his wife, daughters and family.

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