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Cover Photo: GEBIE building trainees — see story page 5.
WELCOME

Message from the Chairman

It is with pleasure, as the Chairman of the Anindilyakwa Land Council, that I welcome you to the first edition of Ayakwa, an ALC newspaper published on behalf of the Anindilyakwa speaking peoples of the Groote Eylandt archipelago.

I hope you will find the stories — ranging from the celebration of achievements to important information for residents — both interesting and informative. The ALC is working within a range of partnerships — with the NT and Australian Governments, with GEMCO and other businesses and organisations — to try and secure a good future for our children and for our children’s children. This often requires some tough decisions, but hopefully they are ones that lead to better economic, social and healthy lives for us all.

I thank the Chairmen of our fellow land councils for their well wishes regarding the launch of Ayakwa, and those of the Federal Minister, Jenny Macklin. This newspaper is one method we are using to spread the word (ayakwa — talk) about some of the events and issues we currently face here in our unique and beautiful part of the world.

I hope in years ahead, more of our people will be able to enjoy reading it — the stories in English and Anindilyakwa, a simple pleasure for most Australians, but something impossible for many Aboriginal Territorians.

Tony Wurramarriba
Chairman, Anindilyakwa Land Council

Message of Support

I want to congratulate the Anindilyakwa Land Council on the first edition of the new Ayakwa newspaper.

I’m sure it will be a great source of information and good reading for the communities in the Groote Eylandt and Bickerton Island region — keeping local people up to date and involved.

In this first edition of Ayakwa, you can find out about important local issues including the new Regional Partnership Agreement, the signing of the township lease, preparation underway for new housing work, the GEBIE Green Ant Mab and Job Shop.

As well as what’s happening in the local footy.

Ayakwa can make a great contribution to community life putting a new focus on local issues, developments and achievements.

I know I’m looking forward to reading Ayakwa. It’s a good way to keep in touch with what’s happening in a great part of Australia.

Jenny Macklin MP
Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Ayakwa: Issue 01

Dalada

Editor, stories, photography:
Francine Chinn

Additional text and photos:
Thanks to Language Centre, GEMYDU, FoHCSIA, Arts and Cultural Centre

Design and Layout:
Claire Pallant Design

Printed by: NT News
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Our greetings and congratulations on the launch of your publication Ayakwa

The Tiwi Land Council, and our people recognise the importance of keeping Government, business, landowners and residents informed of developments in their country. Like you, we wish that more of our kids could read. These exciting newspapers about themselves are another reason for them to make a real effort for their studies.

This is a fantastic initiative undertaken by Anindilyakwa Land Council and we wish you all the best with your publication.

Best regards,
Robert Tipungwuti
Chairman, Tiwi Land Council

Hello and congratulations on your first edition of Ayakwa

On behalf of the Central Land Council I’d like to wish you luck for the future of your newspaper.

With so many pressures being placed on our people these days it’s important that we all, including individuals and organisations, be informed on the huge changes and challenges that we are facing in remote areas.

It’s good to see more Indigenous people taking control of the message that is being distributed to our regions.

I congratulate your land council on taking up this challenge and look forward to seeing the first edition and many more to come.

Lindsay Bookie
Chairman, Central Land Council

Nha-mirr bukmak (hello everyone)

On behalf of the NLC Full Council, and the CEO Mr Kim Hill — I congratulate Anindilyakwa Land Council on this first edition of their newspaper Ayakwa.

Ayakwa is a very important and valuable communication tool for all Anindilyakwa speakers because it gives you the power to tell your stories in your own voice — not only to each other — but to the entire world.

It is important that we all keep up with what is happening in the world so that we can decide whether we agree with it or not, and so that we can be part of the discussions and make informed decisions about our future.

There are many issues that Aboriginal people have to deal with — from the federal intervention and its multi-headed issues, to changes to CDEP and outstations, to the erosion of our human rights, and to what form a new national representative Indigenous body should take.

Equally, it is just as important to know when the next ceremonies will be held, who’s winning the footy competition, who’s just had a baby, and who’s caught the biggest fish.

The 21st century has seen rapid changes in the way the world communicates and how we all receive information with emails, the internet, and mobile telephones. All Aboriginal people have embraced these changes because it is fast, convenient, sensible and modern.

But Ayakwa will be available in places where modern technology cannot reach — and that makes it special.

I look forward to reading Ayakwa on a regular basis.

Djuk-djukna.
Wali Wunungmurra
Chairman, Northern Land Council

Ayakwa: Issue 01

Dalada

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Best regards,
Robert Tipungwuti
Chairman, Tiwi Land Council
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Members of the Anindilyakwa Land Trust after they signed the lease agreement — Lionel Jaragba, Murabuda Wurramarra and Russell Wurrwiliya.

Historic leasing agreement paves way for new future

In mid December 2008, members of the Anindilyakwa Land Trust and ALC signed an historic lease covering town areas on Groote Eylandt and Bickerton Island.

The lease agreement is effective for an 80-year period, through an initial 40-year lease with an option of a 40-year renewal.

ALC Chairman Mr Tony Wurramarra said the agreement marked a new direction for the local people of the islands.

Following the signing the Australian Government announced it will invest an additional $10 million in new housing and infrastructure for the towns covered by the agreement, on top of the $33 million committed under the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SHIP).

“I want to acknowledge the hard work of the ALC and our supporters in reaching this stage,” Chairman Wurramarra said.

“Through business and government investment in the coming years, we look forward to sharing our country within a relationship built on mutual respect and one that acknowledges our rights and knowledge as traditional custodians of this special place.”

The lease agreement makes it easier for public and private development of the town areas it covers — Lakelyamurramanja (Bickerton Island), Angurrkwa (Angurugu) and Ambukwamba (Umbakumba).

“With the upcoming construction of public housing that is tagged to this agreement, our people can now look towards starting to access services many other Australians take for granted,” Chairman Wurramarra said.

A joint statement from the Australian and Northern Territory governments said the signing also lends support for Indigenous home ownership and Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) is planning to hold local information sessions for those people who may want to buy their home.

The agreement follows extensive consultations conducted under the broader Regional Partnership Agreement between the Anindilyakwa Land Council and the Australian and Northern Territory governments which was signed in May 2008.

“Through the signing of these leases, we are looking forward to a more positive social and economic environment for our people,” Chairman Wurramarra said.

“We are all working towards a better future for our children and for their children to come,” he said.

The lease agreement paves way for new future development.

Speaking at the ALC Office in late February, Pat Watson, the man who holds all Aboriginal town leases, said the first step for Groote and Bickerton is to conduct registered surveys of town boundaries. Traditional owners and senior elders will have input and can help identify existing fences and property boundaries.

The ALC will set up a Consultative Forum made up of representatives from all of the town areas — Lakelyamurramanja, Angurrkwa and Ambukwamba, that will deal with issues arising from the leases. These may include decisions about what sort of service and businesses local people may want in their towns and how to attract these, as well as planning for the next ten to fifteen years.

Aboriginal Community Police Officer Betty Herbert with ALC Chairman Tony Wurramarra. Betty has been an ACPO around six – seven years.

“Sometimes it’s full-on but it’s very rewarding. I get to meet a lot of families.”

The Office of Town Leasing

The Office of Town Leasing has been set up by the Australian Government to oversee the operation of leases signed by traditional owners, such as the one covering town areas on Groote Eylandt and Bickerton Island.

The Office says although it is still early days, work is currently being done on a range of materials and a web site where people can find out more information.

Lionel Jaragba looks on as Murabuda Wurramarra and Russell Wurrwiliya sign the agreement.
New Permit system

The Anindilyakwa Land Council wishes to advise that the 2008 Recreation Permits shall be extended to Friday 3rd April 2009.

Applications for the 2009 Recreation Permits will be available from Monday 30th March 2009 and may be obtained from the Anindilyakwa Land Council offices located at 30 Bougainvillea Drive Alyangula.

Please note that new General Conditions shall apply to the 2009 Recreation Permits. A copy of the new General Conditions will be available at anindilyakwa.com.au from 13 March 2009.

The cost of the 2009 Recreation Permits are as follows:

- $30.00 (GST inc) per person aged 18 years and over;
- $20.00 (GST inc) per person aged between 15 and 17 years;
- Under 15 no permit required; and
- Permits are now issued per person and each individual must sign an application form.

Enquiries regarding the 2009 Recreation Permits should be emailed to permits@anindilyakwa.org or by contacting the Anindilyakwa Land Council on 8987 4040.

Major project to bring local jobs, training and housing

The largest upgrade of housing ever undertaken in remote communities in the Northern Territory is about to begin in the three major towns of the Groote Eylandt archipelago.

Jointly funded by the Australian and Northern Territory Governments, the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP) will spend $43 million on works in the townships. A condition of SIHIP is that long term township leases must be in place before work can commence, and a key focus will be to provide employment and training for local Indigenous people.

"When the program is finished, these Territorians will have new skills and training that will open the door to future job opportunities, including construction, delivering long lasting benefits for their communities," said NT Housing Minister, Rob Knight.

Queensland company Earth Connect Alliance has been awarded the Groote Eylandt and Bickerton Island contract and a SIHIP working group (SWG), made up of local community members, was set up late last year. It is working with Earth Connect on all aspects of the project and the Anindilyakwa Land Council’s Lyn Nash has taken on the role of Community and Relations Organiser (CARO) for the project.
GEBIE – Fixing Houses for Better Health

The GEBIE building trainees have been working hard on the Fixing Houses for Better Health (FHBH) project.

Funded by FaHCSIA, FHBH aims to improve living conditions in remote communities using a method known as ‘housing for health’ which recognises the link between healthy living practices and the quality and condition of housing.

“IT’s really good,” says Leonard Amagula. “With the boys there’s no problem, they’re always really kind and they’re really funny boys and we get along alright.”

“We’ve learned a lot. We had a Batchelor (Institute) person who came up. We had good understanding and communication. Just knowing how to handle the equipment, it’s important for me and the boys.”

“Our study is not really fast. If it’s slow it’s good for us, talk fast it’s misunderstood sometimes. So we tell them to talk slowly and that’s good for us to listen and understand.”

Leonard is also full of praise for ‘Ash’, their trainer Kevin Ashley Sainsbury. His body language tells us he’s been in a community before, before coming to Groote Eylandt,” says Leonard. “He understands Indigenous way of life and that’s the sort of a person we need, he has experience for the community and the people.”

Ash has worked in Wadeye and Gunbalanya. “The only thing I find with housing in these communities is the lack of maintenance,” he says. “It’s not from being destroyed, it’s from lack of maintenance — wet areas going to pieces, showers and that sort of thing.”

Get News

Leonard agrees there is a lot of pride in the work and condition of housing.

“The problem I find is the lack of consistency with training in communities. Like these guys need a good 4 years so they actually do a trade, not just a little bit of something and then another bit of something then at the end they have nothing.”

“It is rewarding when you see young fellas like these coming along and really taking it on board.”

“I’m very proud of them, these guys are going to build their community, that’s why there should be more programs like this for them. And more hands-on stuff. These guys are capable of doing a house up, especially with the right tradesmen behind them.”

“You need someone who’s reasonably switched on to their culture and knows how to treat them. I think that’s very important.”

Nineteen year-old Torrence Wurrawilya started out as a CDEP carpenter and, according to Ash, he can hang a door as quickly as his teacher. “When I go back home my Mum is always saying ‘Fix the door, fix the cupboards’. I work hard, I enjoy it,” says Torrence. 

“Ash told me ‘you can fix that door’. He showed me once, not twice. So it’s proud for me.”

The major messages we’ve been hearing in our consultations has been the need for culturally appropriate housing design and location,” Earth Connect’s Package Manager, Adrian Murphy, said.

“We’ve just had financial approval for early works and it will start with some preliminary refurbishment of 10 houses in all three communities.”

“We’ve visited every house and assessed what needs to be done, but with the funding available we will not be able to do everything that’s needed to upgrade all of the houses. So we’re looking at the best way to spend money in the most efficient manner. It will be based on need and merit.”

“There will be a mix of different construction methods, including steel frame and concrete block, though we haven’t signed off on any one design as yet.”

“The existing houses get a lot of wear. Sometimes you’ve got around 16 people living in one house and, as an example, you see the amount of use that bathroom gets, so it’s going to wear out faster than my home in Brisbane with five people living in it.”

There are plans to incorporate local businesses into the project and preliminary work will start in late April. This will be ramped up in May and June. The Earth Connect Alliance includes Construct Pty Ltd, WorleyParsons Services Pty Ltd, Force 10 International Pty Ltd, Greene & Associates Pty Ltd and Ostwald Brothers Pty Ltd.

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“IT’s from lack of maintenance — wet areas going to pieces, showers and that sort of thing.”

He’s also very proud of the trainees’ achievements.

“There’s no reason why some of these boys can’t go on to become good tradesmen,” Ash says. “They do a good job and they’re very neat with their tools. These guys actually really put their minds to it and do as good a job as they can.”

“The problem I find is the lack of consistency with training in communities. Like these guys need a good 4 years so they actually do a trade, not just a little bit of something and then another bit of something then at the end they have nothing.”

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The Earth Connect Alliance has been working with the SIHIP Working Group, local stakeholders and the ALC to:

• Talk to local people about the designs for new houses. They discussed:
  • What works in existing houses?
  • What does not work in existing houses?
  • New house designs.
  • Possible location of new houses.
  • Possible houses for early work.
  • Generate house plans based on community needs.
  • Review all houses for possible refurbishment.
  • Where new houses and infrastructure is being developed we have:
    • Looked for and recording important species of plants and animals.
    • Checked the soil is suitable for building houses and other infrastructure.
    • Looked at the natural drainage systems and water quality.

For further information about the SIHIP or the Earth Connect Alliance please contact Lyn Nash on 08 9987 4008.

Suggestions for design.

Please return comments to Earth Connect Alliance.

Earth Connect’s Package Manager, Adrian Murphy, will be in contact with families for more information.

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Regional Partnership Agreement

In May 2008 a Regional Partnership Agreement (RPA) was signed between the Anindilyakwa Land Council, the Australian Government and the Northern Territory Government.

It is the first RPA to be signed in the Northern Territory and forms the basis of ongoing funding and responsibility between the parties.

With the agreement, the Australian and Northern Territory governments have committed more than $25 million to address housing, education, law and order, health, employment, economic development and leadership.

Following the signing of new town leases in December 2008, the RPA is set to deliver:

- increased community safety by construction of police accommodation at Umbakumba and use of a sniffer dog drug unit;
- new houses to be built in the three townships within 2 years as well as repairs and maintenance on existing housing stock;
- an upgrade of health facilities;
- grants for a cultural centre and a local construction company;
- a new coordinated focus on jobs and training; and
- research to document the current state of the communities, to review education needs in the region and to consider further options for dealing with health issues.

With most of these goals either well underway or near completion, discussion around Stage 2 of the RPA has been progressing.

Over the past six months, in September 2008 and March 2009, FaHCSIA has held two leadership workshops for men and women from Angurugu, Umbakumba and Milyakburra.

The workshops are part of the Regional Partnership Agreement and the most recent one attracted 26 participants. Some of those who undertook the training in September were on hand to help.

The workshop included presentations from ALC Chairman Tony Wurramarba who spoke about the RPA, as well as three Groote Eylandt based East Arnhem Councillors and The Territory 2030 vision steering committee members.

Everyone was sad when the sister of one of the participants passed away, but this did not stop the leadership workshop from continuing and many people returned the next day to complete the course.

There is a lot of interest in further leadership workshops and this form part of Step 2 of the RPA.
Municipal and essential services audit

THE Australian Government has announced an audit of municipal and essential services in Indigenous communities. The eventual goal is to hand over responsibility for funding these services to the States and Territories.

Federal Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, made the announcement when detailing funding priorities for a $5.5 billion investment in Indigenous housing over the next decade.

 Aimed at improving living standards for families and children, the Northern Territory will receive $1.7 billion of the funds over the next ten years.

The Commonwealth will provide funding to 26 priority communities across the Northern Territory, north Queensland, the Kimberley region, APY Lands and NSW.

For more information, go to www.fahcsia.gov.au/nter

Housing Grants

APPLICATIONS are now being sought by the Northern Territory Government for housing grants under the Crisis Accommodation Program and the Community Housing Program.

Community organisations are being urged by Housing Minister Rob Knight to apply for funding to provide accommodation for people with special needs, and those in crisis.

“These programs enable community groups to get capital funding so they can purchase, upgrade or renovate accommodation to help those people who are in need,” says Mr Knight.

Enquiries and application requests can be made by emailing communityhousing.dlp@gov Pfizer.mau. Applications close Friday April 10

Art Centres benefit from ABA

TWENTY-FOUR Northern Territory Art Centres, artist workshops and gallery spaces will be expanded after the Australian Government approved almost $8 million in funding from the Aboriginal Benefits Account.

It is hoped the funding will open up access for artists to art markets, and strengthen links to the tourist industry. The two NT Art Centre associations — the Association of Northern Kimberley, Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (ANKAAA) and Desart (the Association of Central Australian Artists) — will be funded for the major works. Of ANKAAA’s 34 art centres operating in the Top End, 18 will receive over $5.7 million for infrastructure projects. These are located in the Tiwi Islands, Arnhem Land and Katherine.

Under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976, the Australian Government pays into the ABA an amount of money equal to the royalties paid to the Northern Territory and Australian Governments from mining on Aboriginal land. These statutory royalty equivalents are distributed by the ABA as follows: 40% is distributed among the four Northern Territory Land Councils — the Central Land Council, the Northern Land Council, the Tiwi Land Council and the Anindilyakwa Council — to fund operations required to carry out their statutory responsibilities to look after the land interests of all Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory.

30% is distributed, through the Land Councils, to Aboriginal groups and people in areas affected by mining on Aboriginal land via their royalty receiving organisations, and 30% is used for ABA expenses, grants to Aboriginal organisations and to supplement the operational funding to Land Councils.

For more information about the ABA, go to www.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/facsiinternet.nsf/indigenous/programs-abaa.htm

OBAMA ASKED TO INTERVENE

INDIGENOUS critics of the federal government’s intervention into Aboriginal communities have written to US President Barack Obama — asking from blackfella to blackfella for help.

The letter, from a number of Aboriginal leaders and activists across Australia, voiced strong opposition to the measures the Howard Government introduced with the stated aim to combat child sexual abuse.

Anti-intervention activist Barbara Shaw, from the Mount Nancy town camp in Alice Springs, said more than 20 statements were included in the letter, which was mailed to the US president in late March ahead of his first meeting with the Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

“We want him to be aware of what’s happening in Australia so the two leaders can sit down and talk about what’s going on with the Indigenous people in their countries,” Barbara Shaw told the Australian Associated Press (AAP).

“The intervention is not protecting our children,” she said.

“It is pushing Aboriginal people further below the poverty line and the new Rudd Government has not made any positive changes to the Intervention.”

Ms Shaw said it seemed clear that under the camouflage of child abuse and alcohol abuse, the agenda of the Intervention was a land grab.

In his statement to President Obama, the Reverend Doctor Djiniyini Gondarra from Galimin‘ku told the US President that successive Australian Governments had suppressed his “culture, land, law and people”.

“I am writing to you as a fellow black citizen of the world, to express my concerns,” Reverend Gondarra said.

“My people are treated with neither the rights of sovereigns or citizens of this country. We have been abandoned.”

Elected councillor of the East Arnhem Shire Council, Yananyi Mununggurr, included a letter from Yolngu clan leaders from February this year to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. The latter called for the NT Intervention into Aboriginal communities to be scrapped, and for Aboriginal people to be recognised in the Australian Constitution.

“There is certainly nothing dignified about losing your human rights as a human being, based on being an Aboriginal citizen,” the letter said.

“We are asking you [the PM] to stop the Intervention, protect our human rights and dignity and lead us to unity.”

The Rudd Government has announced it would not roll back the Intervention program, and will continue funding its law and order measures for the next three years.

Ms Mununggurr said she had also invited President Obama to visit her community of Yirrkala to meet with people who have been affected by the Intervention directly.
Dugong Beach Resort – gateway to our past and our future

Although the people of the Groote Eylandt archipelago have not encouraged visitors in more recent times, this has changed dramatically over the past few years.

The newly developed Cultural Centre and Dugong Beach Resort is a fresh chapter — here visitors can find contemporary stories in visual arts, dance and song blended with the natural beauty of the island and the ancient knowledge of the Anindilyakwa speakers.

The language Anindilyakwa is spoken by 14 clan groups that make up the two moieties on Groote Eylandt.

The Warnindilyakwa people were brought to Groote Eylandt on a series of song lines which created the land, rivers, animals and people and which named everything pertaining to the region.

Early cave paintings and rock art exist today recalling these journeys. They also reveal the rich contact history the Warnindilyakwa people had with Macassar and early explorers.

Culture, contact and ceremony continued to be recorded in the distinctive and highly regarded bark paintings that emerged in the 1920’s and thrived until the 1970’s.

The Art and Cultural Centre in the Dugong Beach Resort is a new chapter for art traditions of the Warnindilyakwa people.

Dugong Beach Resort is equipped with modern conveniences, including a large reception and restaurant, conference facilities and a large inground swimming pool, all connected by timber-decked boardwalks and landscaped tropical gardens designed to preserve the natural surroundings.

A separate ‘fishing village’— the Escape Sport Fishing & Wilderness Lodge — accommodates up to 24 guests in twin or double luxury safari-style cabins. Each is air-conditioned with ensuite facilities and has its own private deck complete with stunning water views. The Lodge is run by Australian Rugby League legend Andrew Ettinghausen.

Day fishing tours allow guests to experience the thrill of catching many different species – one day can be spent targeting Barramundi in estuaries; the next day targeting game fish such as the majestic Sailfish and the mighty Black Marlin offshore. Popper Fishing, Jig Fishing, Reef Fishing and Fly Fishing are all available from the resort.

Visit us and enjoy a truly unique cultural experience in a magical, tropical setting.

For reservations and bookings:
Toll Free: +61 1800 877 077
Phone: +61 8 8987 7077
Fax: +61 8 8987 7088
Email: reservations@dugongbeachresort.com.au

In January it was time to farewell and give a big thank you to Heidi Riedall as her time as Manager of the Dugong Beach Resort ended.

“Goodbye and thank you Heidi Riedall. In January it was time to farewell and give a big thank you to Heidi Riedall as her time as Manager of the Dugong Beach Resort ended. We extend a big and warm thanks to Heidi and John ‘Foxy’ Robinson for all the work and effort they have put in to helping us make the new resort a success,” ALC Chairman, Tony Wurrumarrba, said.

A welcome goes to Gary and Marcie who have taken over on behalf of new operators Metro Hotels.

Goodbye and thanks
Green Ant mob love their job

GEBIE’s Green Ant team work hard under a hot, steamy sun and love every bit of it — and they’re happy to let everyone know just how much they enjoy their job.

“We do mulching, pruning, gardening, slashing and mowing, cutting trees — things like that,” says Dave Murrungun. “We like working, because back at home it’s a bit boring. There’s nothing to do, so might as well get a job.”

The Green Ants, there’s up to six of them, started as a work for the dole program in January 2008. Once the program was finished in March that year, they all became full time employees with GEBIE.

“The best thing is being outside,” Alvester Lalara said, “and the pay.” Asked what his advice to other young people would be, he doesn’t hesitate in replying. “Get a job!”

The GEBIE emblem is the Green Ant, chosen because it is a social creature and a hard worker. It has been adapted from canvas artwork by Joanna Wurramara who is one of Groote Eylandt’s best artists. Joanna paints, carves and weaves still using a lot of the traditional ways.

The Green Ant yimurralya is used as bush medicine. The nest is taken from the tree, rubbed together and then placed in a bucket of water for only a short time. The water is strained into a clean bowl and this green ant medicine is drunk if you have the flu.

The Green Ant belongs to the Wurramarrba, Bara Bara and Durrila clans.

It’s In the bag . . .
Angurugu ladies have been making beautiful printed shoulder bags like this one by Hannah Wurraramarra.

The bags can be purchased at the Art Centre and the Angurugu library … or learn to make your own! Contact Kerri at the Art Centre.

Set up in December 2001, the Groote Eylandt Bickerton Island Enterprises Aboriginal Corporation (GEBIE) has blossomed over the past few years. Aimed at enhancing the economic and social wellbeing of Aboriginal residents and communities in the region, the new Groote Eylandt Job Shop is a major focus at the moment.

“The Job Shop came out of the Regional Partnership Agreement,” the group’s Business Manager, Dean Niesler, said. “We’ve been running pre-employment programs for the past four years, so there’s a good fit.”

“The Job Shop is now offering tailored assessment, education, training, job placement, mentoring and ongoing support. It means there are now a broad range of options for committed Indigenous job seekers.”

Some of the current social programs run by GEBIE cover school nutrition at Angurugu and Umbakumba, Angurugu Mental Health Workers, aged care, funeral services and ceremonies.

On the business side there is the Milyakburra store, Amuwarngka Cultural Tours, Green Ant Landscaping, GEBIE Construction, the Dugong Beach Resort, Anindilyakwa Art, ESS GEBIE which is contracted to GEMCO to provide services for the mess and single men’s quarters, and DELTA FM GEBIE which looks after housing maintenance and services for GEMCO housing in Anyanglula.

“GEBIE has progressed considerably since it first started,” Dean Niesler says. “It began as a small management group with the idea of providing opportunities for local Aboriginal members, and over the past three years I’ve been here, we’ve really seen these opportunities arise.

“All credit goes to the people who have been part of the GEBIE Committee — they’re now called Directors.

“It’s these people who have had the strength to drive GEBIE’s growth and I congratulate them for their vision.”

One of the upcoming projects creating a lot of enthusiasm is the new housing program.

“Our Construction crew are doing a great job with the Better Housing for Better Health refurbs, and we’re excited and hope to be involved in the new SHIP program.”

“The future is looking good.”
Protecting our unique land and sea country

Anindilyakwa Land Council’s rangers work to provide environmental services across 3,000 square kilometres of land and 500 kilometres of coastline around the Groote Eylandt archipelago.

Groote is a relatively well preserved and bio-diverse environment as it is free of many of the pests and weeds that are altering and damaging the Top End’s ecosystems.

In 2006 the area became the twentieth declared Indigenous Protected Area under an Australian Government program that supports Indigenous communities to manage their land for conservation in line with international guidelines.

It boasts an impressive and diverse ecosystem with over 40 mammals, 70 reptiles, 15 amphibians and 200 bird species. It includes a number of rare and threatened species such as the northern hopping mouse, northern quoll and brush-tailed rabbit rat and several species of marine turtles.

The Anindilyakwa Land Council acts as administrator for the Indigenous Protected Area, managing the land and sea country. Since its declaration, the ALC has focused on protecting traditional ecological knowledge of the area as well as cultural and visitor sites and marine estates.

We have built a number of successful resource management partnerships and a ranger workforce to deliver conservation outcomes. Today, Anindilyakwa IPA has 13 rangers funded through the Australian Government’s Caring for our Country program.

In addition to delivering vital conservation outcomes, Indigenous Protected Areas deliver a range of spin-off economic, health and social benefits through employment on country.

In early March, the Australian Government announced it will be providing $15.7 million over two years to support 22 Indigenous ranger groups in the Northern Territory working on land and sea management activities.

The Member for Lingiari, Warren Snowdon, said land and sea rangers play an incredible valuable role in preserving country and culture.

“The rangers are great community role models,” Mr Snowdon said. “We are committed to assisting Indigenous rangers protect the Territory’s pristine environment.”
More funding for Indigenous Tourism

The Federal Minister for Tourism, Martin Ferguson, told the fifth Australian Indigenous Tourism Conference, held in Townsville in late March, the country’s unique Indigenous cultures will play a greater role in future Australian tourism marketing.

Held annually, this year’s conference had a theme of ‘Many Tribes, One Country’ and focused on the environment, young people, business opportunities and maintaining culture.

“Tourism offers a unique opportunity for Indigenous Australia,” Minister Ferguson said. “It allows communities to showcase their cultures while maintaining and strengthening community identity in their local region.”

The Australian Government is keen to assist Indigenous communities to take advantage of tourism opportunities and to see both traditional and innovative Indigenous tourism products develop for the benefit of local communities and the tourism industry.

He announced the Australian Government would provide support to engage Indigenous people in the National Landscapes program - a partnership between Tourism Australia and Parks Australia that identifies Australia’s ‘exceptional natural and cultural experiences and promotes them in the international market’.

The funding will be used to assist Indigenous people in these regions to explore what tourism could mean for them and to provide an avenue for them to be involved in tourism.

“We today have more than 250 Indigenous tourism experiences in Australia offering international visitors — and Australians alike — the opportunity to learn about and experience Australia’s Indigenous cultures.”

“To further promote this market, the Australian Government will release the third edition of the National Indigenous Tourism Product manual next month. This will showcase approximately 200 Indigenous tourism experiences, including festivals, events, performing arts and cultural activities.”

“Last year, the Australian Government pledged that we would lead a national effort to close the gap in health and education and open economic opportunities for Indigenous Australians. This has long been a passion of mine and I am very pleased that my Department and Tourism Australia will be able to play a role in developing this important market segment.”

A new sign has been erected in Alyangula detailing the need for permits off the lease area, showing what places on Groote Eylandt are opened or closed to the public, recreational areas and warnings on swimming with crocodiles.

Ngakwurra-langwa
ŋgarnilmikirra

Our clan names

Moiety 1

Wurringkilyangba
Warnungangwurrkwurrikba
Wurrumaminyanja
Warnungwamadada
Warnungawerrikba
Warnungwijarrakba
Warnungwadarrbulangwa

Moiety 2

Warnindilyakwa
Warnungwamakwula
Warnungangkwurrakba
Warnungwamulangwa
Wurraliliyanga
Warnungwamakarjirrkba
Durila

Mamarika
Amagula
Wurraramara
Bara Bara
Wurramarrba
Wurraramarra
Durila, Wanambi

Fishing boats belonging to Escape Sport Fishing and Wilderness Lodge.
Bringing ancestors home

The recent return of ancestral human remains to Groote Eylandt, originally taken by the American — Australian Scientific Expedition to Aboriginal North Australia in 1948, has been an emotional journey ...

It all began in March 2008 when Thomas Amagula and Joaz Wurramara went to a meeting in Darwin about the repatriation of Aboriginal remains from international museums.

Laurey Richardson, FaHCSIA’s International Director based in Canberra, had been leading negotiations and listening to the concerns of Aboriginal people about the need to bring the remains of ancestors back home.

In particular, the Darwin meeting talked about remains from Gunbalanya and Groote Eylandt that were being held in a Washington DC museum.

They were discussing about how we were going to go about it and get them back — how we were going to go across to Washington to talk to the Smithsonian Museum,“ Thomas Anangula said.

Four of us actually went to Washington – Joaz, myself, and Donald (Gumurdul) and Alfred Nayingul from Gunbalanya.

In the middle of July, August we went to Washington to bring back the remains, but we were only able to bring back a few of the remains. We sat down with the Smithsonian bosses to convince them to bring all of the remains back, all of them. But they wouldn’t allow us."

Whilst in Washington, the four Arnhem Land men met with the Australian Ambassador Dennis Richardson, who has been talking with the Smithsonian Institute in the hope of having all of the remains returned. However only 13 came back to Groote Eylandt.

When we went to meet up with the Ambassador, the remains were waiting for us in the conference room,“ Mr Anangula continues. "And as we walked in we saw these remains and the four of us actually looked at each other.

"We went towards the crate and talked to those old people, ‘we’re here and we’re taking you home’. We had a five minutes silence the four of us.

"We greeted the remains, we said hello and we told the people we are here to take them home, ‘back to where you belong’."

Before we left Washington, we went to see the other remains that are left behind and we told them ‘we are coming back to bring you back home’. The four of us we were very, very upset for leaving them behind.

The four men, Thomas and Joaz from Groote Eylandt and Donald and Alfred from Gunbalanya, sat together for the long fight from the US to Sydney and then Sydney to Darwin. They were surprised to find their ancestors travelled in a similar way.

"We didn’t know the actual remains were packed together, from Groote Eylandt and Gunbalanya, packed together," Mr Anangula said.

And when we got back to Darwin, we found the remains of the two communities were travelling together. And we also travelled together to Sydney and to Darwin. As we were travelling back the four of us sat together and we said ‘Did you know that all of our remains travelled together as an Arnhem Land family’?

That’s why the remains from both communities are very special to us now. As we left Australia we didn’t know the four of us would link as families and the trip was a special trip.

"It’s one of the best experiences I’ve ever had and it links Groote Eylandt and Gunbalanya together, bringing remains back to our own country.

I like to tell my people what’s happening and for people to understand there is something that has been taken away from us over 60 years ago. It’s like the stolen generation to us. The families of those bones are still alive and the extended family are wishing that they all return and I want to see that happen.

"FaHCSIA has supported us and the Commonwealth Government, with the funding to bring back the remains, and I thank them for what they’re doing."

It’s not for my sake, it’s for the sake of my people."

The Anindilyakwa remains are now on Groote Eylandt and a major traditional ceremony is being planned for April/May to fully welcome the ancestors back home.

(Ambassador Dennis Richardson has continued negotiations with the Smithsonian Institute in the hope of retrieving all of the remains. The 1948 expedition collected more than 50,000 archaeological, ethnographic and natural history specimens from indigenous Australians’.)

1 Cited in: Colonial collections of portable art and intercultural encounters in Aboriginal Australia. Sally K May, Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, Australian National University, Canberra ACT 0200, Australia.
Violence not the answer...

The North Australian Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Service — NAAFVLS — offers support to survivors of family violence and sexual assault including children, young people and men and women.

“We’re here to help people who find themselves in violent situations,” Family Support Officer Rhonda Solien said. “We help people get their lives back on track. But really, what we all want is for people to learn that violence is not the answer.”

Although the head office is in Darwin, the organisation runs an outreach visiting service and there are locally based Community Legal Workers in major Top End communities. On Groote Eylandt these are Mildred Lalara and Hannah Wurramarrba.

NAAFVLS can be contacted by calling free toll 1800 041 998 or visit the web: www.naafvls.com.au

NAAJA calls on Rudd Government to honour funding promises

“Over the past five years NAAJA’s criminal matters have increased by 20% and our civil and family matters have increased by 90%,” CEO Priscilla Collins said.

“Yet in this time our funding has actually decreased in real terms.”

In 2007/2008 NAAJA lawyers attended to 7,418 matters. This excludes the additional number of clients NAAJA sees when providing mediation, welfare rights, advocacy and community legal education. Each individual NAAJA lawyer currently attends to around 280 new matters a year in addition to matters that continue from previous years.

“Our Solicitors have heavy individual caseloads and high workloads in comparison to other legal aid providers and they operate in culturally challenging and complex conditions,” Ms Collins said.

“Solicitors report very high work loads at all of our bush courts and our staffing levels only allow solicitors one day to prepare for court. This means many clients cannot be seen beforehand.”

“Adding to this load on bush courts is the 18 new police stations recently opened in remote communities. These have significantly increased NAAJA’s workload,” she said.

NAAJA Chairman, Norman George from Katherine, said the Australian Government needs to honour its commitments.

“We’re simply asking the Rudd Government to meet its 2007 election platform that states it will be ‘strengthening funding to Aboriginal Legal Aid Agencies’.

“The Government has committed to the NT Intervention. We ask they do the same to their election promises about Aboriginal Legal Aid.

“We need to be able to adequately protect the legal rights of Aboriginal people of the Top End. Surely that’s part and parcel of the Rudd Government recently committing to the United Nations rights for Indigenous peoples.”

ALC Chairman Tony Wurramarrba was recently elected as a new member to the NAAJA Board.

NAAJA – there to help

The North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) operates in North East Arnhem Land from an office located in Nhulunbuy.

NAAJA provides legal services in Criminal, Family and Civil Law and for one week every month, NAAJA lawyers attend bush court at Alyangula. It also holds civil clinics and runs a Community Legal Education program.

The NAAJA Office at Alyangula, located in Taylor Street, can be contacted by calling 8987 7132. Or contact the NAAJA Nhulunbuy Office: Franklin Street, PO Box 120 NHULUNBUY 0881

Toll free: 1800 022 823
Phone: 08 8987 1300
Fax: 08 8987 1344

Alyangula Court Dates

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(Left to right): NAAFVLS Family Support Officer Rhonda Solien with Community Legal Workers Hannah Wurramarrba and Mildred Lalara.

Senior Solicitor Ben Grimes talks to people outside Alyangula Court.
Australian Government supports UN Indigenous rights

In early April, Australia will officially back the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, reversing the Howard Government’s vote against it in 2007.

The decision to support the declaration, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007, was part of the Rudd Government’s election promises.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin told the ABC supporting the declaration is an important step towards closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

“We want Indigenous Australians to be partners in efforts to close the gap. For this to happen, we must recognise the unique place of Indigenous people in Australia,” she said.

“In supporting the Declaration, Australia will join with many other countries to show our respect for Indigenous people.”

Australia was a key player in drafting the declaration in the 1980s and 90s but the Howard government eventually chose to vote against it in 2007.

It was one of only four countries including the United States, Canada and New Zealand to do so.

The declaration is not legally binding and support can be withdrawn by future governments.

(Sourced: ABC News)

Treaty

Chief Justice Robert French has dismissed legal argument made by former Prime Minister John Howard against a Treaty with Indigenous Australians.

Howard argued a Treaty was impossible as Aboriginal Australia was not a sovereign nation. But Justice French said an agreement could recognize traditional law, prior occupancy of the continent and acknowledge those who have maintained traditional rights to the present.

Australia has so far resisted an agreement with its Indigenous people, unlike nations such as New Zealand and Canada and experts say the statement by Justice French is significant in the ongoing debate.

(Sourced: Sydney Morning Herald)
MJD — no blame, no shame, just hope

People with Machado Joseph Disease, or MJD, no longer need to be ashamed or to suffer in silence.

The MJD Foundation, launched in August 2008 on Groote Eylandt with the help of a $1.7 million grant from the Aboriginal Benefits Account, offers hope and support for those with the hereditary sickness that is prevalent amongst the population of Arnhem Land.

On Groote Eylandt, the MJD Foundation estimates there around 300 Aboriginal people at risk of the disease, which — once the symptoms appear — can be fatal from the age of five weeks to 29 years.

Up until it was confirmed as MJD in 1995, the condition had been known as ‘Groote Eylandt Syndrome’ and it created fear and shameful silence in those communities it struck.

"I used to have a lot of shame about it, even not mention it," says Gayangwa Lalara, who at 64 years of age is the only one of six children in her family who did not inherit the disease from her parents. She speaks on a DVD that has been produced to promote the work of the MJD Foundation.

"I wanted to keep it quiet, secret. It made me angry and hurt inside me."

"I thought it was just in my family. But when I saw more in the community, it made me feel more comfortable."

Gayangwa was so determined to help her people, she became Vice-Chair of the MJD Foundation, which has a message of ‘no blame, no shame, just hope’.

MJD is thought to have been brought to Australia through the trading relationships between the Yolngu people of Arnhem Land and the Macassar people of Indonesia.

MJD occurs because of a fault in a chromosome that produces abnormal protein. This in turn causes nerve cells in the brain to die prematurely. This damage, to the part of the brain called the cerebellum, firstly causes muscular weakness which progresses slowly and painfully over time to a total lack of voluntary control. Sufferers become dependant on care within ten years of the first symptoms appearing.

Children of those with the disease have a fifty percent chance of inheriting it. And for every generation it passes to, the sufferers become younger.

Gayangwa’s sister died from MJD fifteen years ago and since then she has cared for her sister’s two children. Her 14 year-old niece is already in a wheelchair.

Garth Nicholson, a Professor in Neuro-Genetics at the Molecular Medicine Laboratory and Anzac Research Institute, describes MJD as ‘the most cruel, long-term, slowly progressing, paralysing disease known to man.

It is more disabling than multiple sclerosis. It kills people slower than motor neurone disease,’ he says.

It has had huge economic and personal burdens on families and carers.

Helping launch the MJD Foundation last August, chair of the Anindilyakwa Land Council, Tony Wurramarriba, said it was important to raise money for research, equipment and services to provide the best care for sufferers and help others in other communities do the same.

"We will, and always will, continue to care for our people. Our community in Angurugu has led the way in forming this Foundation," he said.

Northern Territory Labor Senator Trish Crossin pledged to carry the message about MJD and the Foundation back to her political colleagues in Canberra. She describes the Foundation as a vital link for the people on Groote Eylandt to know they are not alone battling the day-to-day effects of the sickness.

Says Gayangwa: "We don’t want our people to suffer from MJD and die unnecessarily. I am pleased people now see the problems and want to help my people who are suffering."

"I am proud of the Foundation. I thank everybody for helping."

For more information go to www.mjd.org.au
Youth Development Unit
promoting health, good food, culture and respect

With cooking classes, art and craft activities, music, fishing nights and footy clinics - it’s all happening at the Groote Eylandt and Milyakburra Youth Development Unit (GEMYDU).

“We’ve been really busy since school headed back at the end of January,” Coordinator Kristyne Love said.

“And of course we’ve had a lot of grant applications to prepare, so the first few months of the year have been pretty full-on.”

Once a week Kristyne, Barbora Ramlah, Rob Clements from AFL NT and either Ramson Lalara or Esmond Jaragba fly over to Bickerton Island and hold classes.

“| hold the art class and we do tie dyeing, painting and clay modelling,” says Kristyne.

“Barbora teaches healthy cooking, Rob goes through the footy skills and either Ramson or Esmond teach music which includes traditional songs, guitar and drum playing.

“The two of them have also been taking young men out on hunting trips, learning to make fishing spears, hunting, practising paint up for ceremony and dance. It’s funded by the Australian Government’s Department of Environment and Heritage, and through these trips Ramson and Esmond target young men who don’t go to school or work. It also helps to keep culture strong.”

The Angurugu school also gets cooking classes twice a week with the aim of healthy eating and using bush tucker.

“The healthy cooking classes held at Angurugu and Milyakburra schools get young people to learn to cook with healthy food, low in fat and sugar, and to stop going to the takeaway shop so much.

“We use easy ingredients that can be purchased at the local community store and easy recipes the kids can make at home.”

The program is funded through Healthy Active Australia, Department of Health and Ageing, and runs for 12 months.

“Later in the year we plan to publish our own cookbook with recipes used in the classes.”

“Umbakumba update
Marpero Joe Wilson has been employed by GEMYDU as the new Program Manager for Umbakumba.

Umbakumba school have given him office space where he teaches art and music twice weekly and there has also been kite flying and fire dancing too.

He runs lots of community programs including jewellery making where the kids carve a mould, fill it with hot silver and make charms. Monday there is the popular community fishing nights. Families meet on the beach ready for a feed and the young men catch fish while the girls make damper.

Joe teaches music at the Sport and Rec shed on Thursday nights, helps the Anindilyakwa Rangers with the Junior Rangers and holds a Movie Night each week. He’s also been helping kids to fix old bikes the Police have given the Youth Unit and they are learning how to change tyres and chains.

Martina Thompson enjoys cooking.
BEEF CASSEROLE WITH FRESH VEGETABLES

You will need:
- 1 kg of beef (gravy beef, chuck, blade or chump)
- 2 onions chopped
- salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon of oil
- 2-3 fresh carrots
- 1 large broccoli
- 1 large cup of frozen or fresh beans
- frozen or tinned sweet corn
- 1 packet stock

To make:
1. Dice beef into squares.
2. Wash, peel and cut up vegetables in to small pieces.
3. Turn fry pan to high, add oil and cook meat until golden brown.
4. Add chopped onion and cook again until golden brown.
5. Turn fry pan to low, add stock mix and water as per directions on packet.
6. Add all the vegies to the fry pan.
7. Add salt and pepper, cover pan with lid and cook on low heat until meat becomes soft and tender.

Casserole can be also served with rice, pasta, damper or dumplings. ENJOY!

HOME-MADE DUMPLINGS

You will need:
- 2 cups of self raising flour
- 1 egg
- pinch of salt
- 1/2 cup of water

To make:
1. Put all ingredients in a large bowl and mix well together.
2. Boil a large pot of water.
3. Separate mixture into small pieces.
4. Carefully drop pieces in the boiling water.
5. Cook for 3-5 minutes.

Serve on large plate with casserole.

Music

A Battle of the Bands is going to be held after the launch of the new AFL competition on Sunday 5 April. It starts at 4pm and will include Eylannt Band, the Milyakburra Band and one other surprise act yet to be announced.

The footings for the new Music Rooms to be built at the GEMYDU offices have been laid at Angurugu. And as Ayakwa goes to press, the three demountables which will make up the studios have been loaded on to the barge and are making their way to Groote Eylandt! Funded by the Aboriginal Benefits Account, there’s a lot of excitement as we wait for the studios to open.

Driving

Around 40 young people from Umbakumba have signed up for a Learner Driver course to be held in April.

Culture

At Easter, Joe Wilson is setting off with six young men on a four day walk from Dalumba Bay to Salt Lake. All the young men are taking spears, woomeras and sleeping bags so if they want food they have to hunt or collect bush Tucker.

Dave Murrungun on drums (above) and Ramson Lalara plays guitar and sings (below).

School Sport – Healthy Life Style Carnival

A Healthy Life Style Carnival will be held on Friday the 24th of April.

It is for boys and girls under the age of 13 and who regularly attend school.

The carnival will be held at the Alyangula town oval and will offer a chance for all local area schools (Alyangula, Umbakumba, Angurugu and Bickerton) to come together and participate in a day of football and activities.

The main message is the importance of living a healthy and active lifestyle.

From the carnival, six children will be selected to represent the East Arnhem Region in the School Sport Under 13’s Exchange to be held in Darwin May 20-22.
Anindilyakwa Arts has been busy over the past few months, meeting deadlines for grants and preparing work for this year’s National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (NATSIAA) held in Darwin in August.

“Steven Bara and Felicity Wanambi from Batalumba Bay had their bird carvings nominated and displayed in the Telstra awards in 2005,” Kerri Enever, Anindilyakwa Arts and Cultural Centre Coordinator, said.

“This year we are entering pieces by Alfred Lalara and Alice Durrila from Angurugu community. So it’s been very exciting.”

The Centre has been growing from strength to strength since it first opened at the Angurugu Trust building in 2005. Set up by GEBIE and the ALC, it aims to support the cultural retention of stories and art styles unique to the Groote Eylandt archipelago.

In May 2008, they moved in to the new Anindilyakwa Arts and Cultural Centre opened at the Dugong Beach Resort, making it easier for visitors to enjoy local artwork and culture.

“The etched panels in the ceilings of the Centre are designs taken from art by Joanna Wurramara and her husband Donny Blitner,” Kerri said. “They were taken to China by the GEBIE representatives to have the roof panels designed and shipped across to Grote.”

Joanna Wurramara’s artwork featuring a dugong — her father’s mother’s totem — is the distinctive logo for the neighbouring Resort. The building’s art panels were designed by Senior Traditional owners, Murabuda Wurramarba, Jabani Lalara, Steven Bara, Alfred Lalara, Alice Durrila and Felicity Wanambi worked with them.

“It’s important for people to learn about culture,” Steven Bara said. “They like seeing our culture and paintings — it’s different to other places and they like that.”

Joanna Wurramara agrees it is good to have visitors share their culture. “We tell them the stories, we tell them and they ask us the questions and we tell them everything.

“They ask what we use on the brush, like we brush with someone’s hair, with long straight hair, and piece of cotton and put it around the stick.

“Some kids from school come here, we tell them stories too. It’s good.”

ALC Chairman Tony Wurramarba has not doubt about the importance of the culture of Anindilyakwa speaking people.

“The Traditional owners and country men of Groote Eylandt Archipelago wish to grow in community spirit by developing an infrastructure for other cultures of the world to see; by visiting, learning and sharing their experiences with us and each other on this idyllic beautiful island paradise,” he said.

Although there has never been tourism on Groote Eylandt the Anindilyakwa speaking people are keen to show off our way of life, our art and our history. The development of Dugong Beach Resort, through GEBIE, with the assistance of the Anindilyakwa Land Council, is helping to make our dream a reality.

“The maintenance of cultural identity is essential for the Anindilyakwa speakers of the Groote Archipelago.”

You can contact Kerri Enever from the Anindilyakwa Arts and Cultural Centre by calling (08) 8987 6266 or fax (08) 8987 6275 or email: anindilyakwaart@bigpond.com
ART & CULTURE

UPCOMING TOP END FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

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<td>Groote Eylandt AFL launch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Healthy lifestyle Carnival</td>
<td>24 April</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merrepen Arts Festival</td>
<td>29 – 31 May</td>
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<td>Barunga Festival</td>
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<td>Garma Festival</td>
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<td>Indigenous Art Fair</td>
<td>13 – 15 August</td>
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<td>NATSIAAs, Art Award</td>
<td>14 August – 26 October</td>
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<td>Indigenous Music Awards</td>
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For more information visit: www.topendarts.com.au

IN SEASON NOW

THE most favourite fruit we collect murungwena-manja, “in the jungle”, are midirridirra, “custard fingers”.

Some years these are prolific, some years not many.
They grow on a bright green, small leaved, sometimes bushy jungle shrub with thorns. The fruit resembles cocktail frankfurts in size and form, varying to smaller round fruit, and juicy paw paw-like in flesh, with seeds slightly larger and firmer than paw paw.
The skin is bright red and shiny when they are ripe, although we eat yellow-orange ones while still ripening.
The small seeds form a line down the centre of the flesh.
Birds favour midirridirra, knocking them to the ground. An insect also bores into the flesh leaving black spots on the skin that cause fruit to stay hard and a dry yellow colour.
During more prolific seasons midirridirra are collected by the billy, or plastic shopping bag. Collecting usually involves making tracks through murungwena, “the jungle”, becoming caught on akwararikaja akwa amakwurrirra “vines and thorny plants”, before we pick fruit from the trees. Sometimes the murungwena is extra thick, then yirru-rumungkwar dina mamudangkwa-langwiya “we crawl along the sand” under branches through tree tunnels to avoid prickles and trees.

From Book 4 of “Erriberrra-langwa” by Chris White

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www.skinnyfishmusic.com.au

Carvings made by Groote Eylandt families.

Steve Bara paints a carving (above) and (below) his painting about ancestors singing songs for the bara wind and dugong.

Groote Eylandt AFL launch
Alyangula Oval

Healthy lifestyle Carnival
Alyangula Oval

Merrepen Arts Festival
Nauiyu Daly River

Barunga Festival

NAIDOC Week

Walking with Spirits
Beswick Falls

Garma Festival
Gulkula

Indigenous Art Fair
Darwin Convention Centre

NATSIAAs, Art Award
Darwin

Indigenous Music Awards
Darwin

For more information visit: www.topendarts.com.au

UPCOMING TOP END FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

IN SEASON NOW

THE most favourite fruit we collect murungwena-manja, “in the jungle”, are midirridirra, “custard fingers”.

Some years these are prolific, some years not many.
They grow on a bright green, small leaved, sometimes bushy jungle shrub with thorns. The fruit resembles cocktail frankfurts in size and form, varying to smaller round fruit, and juicy paw paw-like in flesh, with seeds slightly larger and firmer than paw paw.
The skin is bright red and shiny when they are ripe, although we eat yellow-orange ones while still ripening.
The small seeds form a line down the centre of the flesh.
Birds favour midirridirra, knocking them to the ground. An insect also bores into the flesh leaving black spots on the skin that cause fruit to stay hard and a dry yellow colour.
During more prolific seasons midirridirra are collected by the billy, or plastic shopping bag. Collecting usually involves making tracks through murungwena, “the jungle”, becoming caught on akwararikaja akwa amakwurrirra “vines and thorny plants”, before we pick fruit from the trees. Sometimes the murungwena is extra thick, then yirru-rumungkwar dina mamudangkwa-langwiya “we crawl along the sand” under branches through tree tunnels to avoid prickles and trees.

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Keeping language and culture strong . . .

The following story has been supplied by the Groote Eylandt Linguistics which operates at Angurugu. It is funded by the ALC and encourages the maintenance, preservation and promotion of local language and culture.

“We’ve got a big project to put stories, recordings and images in to digital format,” Sibella Herbert said. “This means material will then be more readily available, not only to the Anindilyakwa speakers, but to a wider audience as well.”

Linguist Elizabeth Caldwell said the digitisation project is also a call for other story tellers to come forward.

“It’s a reminder of some of the really good stories and the really good story tellers, and it’s also a call for more story tellers to come forward and make a contribution to the rich collection of stories held at GEL.”

Rhoda Dugururru Lalara and Caroline Wurraramara

Yukwurrkwa akwa yingwa

Gula Lalara

“Nadjia, kwurruk, kwurruk, akwalyu-wa yakwaja,” niyama nakina yukwurrkwa.


“Kwurruk, kwurruk, yabuvalya-baba, kwurruk, kwurruk, yilikaja abawa angwarnda arrakubula,” niyama nakina.

“Ngwa, ngwa, ngilikaja maba-wa mamarrara, ngwa, ngwa, amungwulyumuda-wa akwurena, ngwa, ngwa, kaminarrangbina-yada,” niyama yingwa.


“Kwurruk, kwurruk, yirungmur-da yingwa, kwurruk, kwurruk, ningwurrmur-da kwurruk, kwurruk, wuburra amarnirna,” niyama.


“Ngwa, ngwa, ngwa, ngwa,” niyama.

Aburra wurrakina wurrkwurrkwa nuwangkarruma nuwawiyebenuma adidirrungwarna-ngwalu yuwurrakwulyamuda-murrupa.

“Kwurruk, kwurruk, ningkambarra ningena, kwurruk, kwurruk, karukwu nganja, kwurruk, kwurruk, dirnddirrka-murrupa, nungwurrka-murrupa, kwurruk, kwurruk, kabungiranga-murrupa,” niyama.

Story time at the Angurugu community library...

The Angurugu library and Groote Eylandt Linguistics like to have visitors from the local schools. Local ladies are happy to tell stories in Anindilyakwa and these children, from Angurugu school, listen to Caroline Damagilyuwa Wurramara who is always a good story teller.

Yukwurrkwa, the Frogmouth, and Yingwa, the Crow Gula Lalara

“Kwurrk, kwurrk, let’s go fishing,” said the frogmouth.

“Ngwa, ngwa, I don’t want to. Ngwa, Ngwa, I’m going to look for wild grapes,” said the crow.

“Kwurrk, kwurrk, we’re hungry for fish, kwurrk, kwurrk, let’s go to that rock at the point.”

“Ngwa, ngwa, I’m going to the paperbark trees, ngwa, ngwa, where there are lots of wild grapes, ngwa, ngwa, so that I can pick them,” said the crow.

“Kwurrk, kwurrk, I don’t want those wild grapes because they sting. Kwurrk, Kwurrk, you eat them by yourself. Kwurrk, kwurrk, I’ll eat nice cool things, kwurrk, kwurrk, like big green plums. Kwurrk, kwurrk, I’m going fishing, kwurrk, kwurrk, you stay here,” said the frogmouth.

“Ngwa, ngwa, ngwa, how many times do I have to talk? Ngwa, ngwa, you’re bad, ngwa, ngwa, you ugly face, ngwa, ngwa, frogmouth, frogmouth,” said the crow.

“Kwurrk, kwurrk, you black crow, kwurrk, kwurrk, you’re black, kwurrk, kwurrk, like ashes,” said the frogmouth.

They kept on arguing. Then they didn’t look for fish, they kept on arguing and they were getting hungry and the sun was getting higher and higher.

“Kwurrk, kwurrk, I’m hungry now, kwurrk, kwurrk, because of talking, kwurrk, kwurrk, you dirty mouth, kwurrk, kwurrk, crow, crow,” said the frogmouth.

They kept on and on. So all the crows arrived from round about and they all argued with the frogmouth. The crows were coming like honey bees.

“Ngwa, ngwa, ngwa, ngwa,” said the crow.

And so that poor frogmouth flew into the jungle and went into a big shady tamarind tree.

“Kwurrk, kwurrk, I’m frightened. Kwurrk, kwurrk, oh dear me, kwurrk, kwurrk, my mothers and my fathers, kwurrk, kwurrk, they could have helped me,” said the frogmouth.

They kept on and on until daybreak and then they couldn’t keep going and they all stopped.

That’s all.

Angarrakaka, Jungle Currant

Photo: Elizabeth Caldwell

Ena angarrakaka naluŋkuwarringinama muringwena-manja akwa ebulkewurringinama-manja.

Jungle currant trees grow in the jungle and in swampy areas.

Wuŋnumamayila nukaluybarinama amamanuwa amaningsa.

People eat the fruit.

Angarrakaka is a small, straggly tree which grows to 3 metres in height, but is often found on Groote Eylandt growing low. It has grey fissured bark, and dark green shiny oval leaves. The margins of its leaves tend to curl upwards, and the surface of its leaves are smooth but dimpled between veins. It flowers in November, with small yellow flowers in spikes. The small fruit are black when ripe, and are eaten raw.

AFL comes to Groote

Sunday 5th April 2009 is the big day for the launch of Aussie Rules Football on Groote Eylandt.

From 1pm Angurugu Oval will host three games showcasing local talent. An Auskick match will start the event, followed by an AFL Under 13s curtain raiser and then the highlight, the game between the local Aboriginal All-stars and the Miners.

Five-time Hawthorn premiership player and Brownlow Medalist, Robert Di Pierdomenico otherwise known as Dipper, will be a special guest on the day.

Robert Clements, the AFL Regional Development Manager who took the post over from Liam Brady in mid January, has had a lot on his plate.

"There's been a lot of excitement in the lead up to the launch and the new comp," he said. "It's been pretty challenging, especially as it's in a very new stage. Trying to organise the logistics and make sure everybody's happy with how it's going, it can be difficult but very rewarding."

The Groote Eylandt Football League (GEFL) will start with four senior teams. Training has been underway for a while with sessions at Angurugu on Mondays from 6pm, Alyangula on Wednesday from 6pm and Umbakumba on Fridays from 5pm.

"We had 26 townspeople show up at Alyangula the other night, so there's definitely a buzz around the place," the Alice Springs born and raised Clements said.

A GEFL Committee has been established to support the development and management of the comp and to ensure the game is played in line with other regional football leagues in the Territory.

Separately, a 20 week school competition, made up of U8s and U13s, is also being set up with teams to play every second week. Both the school comp and GEFL will start in the first week Term Two.

"There are great opportunities that can open up through AFL — socially, in terms of health and better well-being. A major aim of this competition, at all levels, is to encourage people to get off the couch and on to the oval."

"That can be difficult, especially for younger ones who may be following the example of older children who haven't been active. Elders are very keen to engage a whole generation and to encourage them to go to school and to be healthy. Footy can be a key to this."

Transport has been another headache to be overcome. Until the new Umbakumba Oval is finished, all games will be played at either Angurugu or Alyangula.

"Sport and Rec have been really helpful with troop carriers, but we'll have to set up a system of getting all the players to the games."

For the big day on Sunday 5th April, food and drinks will be available and activities will include a jumping castle for the kids, face painting, and spear throwing demonstrations.

A Battle of the Bands, featuring Eylandt Band, Milyakburra Band and one other, will be held straight after the big match.

Beach soccer is a favourite for Umbakumba school kids.
Sport at a Glance

Softball Program Launched

NT Minister for Sport and Recreation, Karl Hampton, has launched a new softball competition to encourage women in remote communities to participate in sport and recreation.

Funding of $66,000 has been provided to help set up the softball program.

“Indigenous women living in remote communities have said they would like more opportunities to participate in structured and regular sporting activities and softball was their preferred sport,” Minister Hampton said.

“This funding is vital to the success of the program and will assist with associated costs including training, travel and accommodation.

“The aim is to run the competitions over a three month period, with games played fortnightly.

“There will be an opportunity for either the winning team or a Shire representative team to participate in the Northern Territory Softball Championships in August 2009.”

NT Sports stars named

Aboriginal Olympic hockey star Des Abbott has been named the 2009 NT Sports Person of the Year.

Born in Darwin, the 22 year old grabbed the world’s attention scoring five goals for the Kookaburras in their bid for the bronze medal at the Beijing Olympics.

Abbott is captain of the NT Stingers in the National Hockey League and has been part of the Australian team since 2007.

The 2009 Junior Sports Person of the Year award went to tennis player Kassandra Dunser.

All eyes on Thunder

New NT AFL team, Territory Thunder, is set to shake up the Queensland League with their first match against reigning premiers Southport in Round 1 to take place on home turf at TIO Stadium Marrara on Saturday 4 April.

The Saturday 4 April game is one of five to be played in Darwin, with four other home games scheduled for Traeger Park in Alice Springs.

Although rocked by the surprise retirement of former North Melbourne AFL premiership player Shannon Motlop, the Thunder the outstanding leadership, experience and talent of Coach Michael ‘Magic’ McLean and Captain Jarred Ilett from St Mary’s.

Cats partnership

Ron Watt from Geelong Football Club is looking forward to working with the communities of Groote Eylandt.

He has started talking to Thomas Aramula about a program of visits between the Club including a trip to Geelong in the next few months by community members.

This follows the success of a player visit to Groote Eylandt last November. David Wojcinski (right) enjoyed his time so much, he’s planning to come back again at the end of the AFL season. The Defender said he would love to be involved as much as possible in the community.

There is a close connection between Arnhem Land and the Geelong Cats with Yirrkala’s Nathan Djerrkura a rising AFL star for the Club.

(Sourced Regional Partnership Newsletter)
Steven Bara’s painting of Groote Eylandt identifies some of the totems belonging to the 14 clan groups. Can you name them what groups they belong to?

**QUIZ**

**Questions**

1. What is the name of the Queensland company that has the new contract to renovate and build new houses?
2. Which of the FHBH construction trainees is really good at hanging doors?
3. What is the GEBIE logo?
4. When was the MJD Foundation launched on Groote Eylandt?
5. Who is Vice Chair of the MJD Foundation?
6. Who is the new Youth Development Program Manager at Umbakumba?
7. On what date is the Healthy Life Style Carnival to be held?
8. What is the name of the fruit, now in season, that is pictured on page 19?
9. When is the AFL launch to be held at Angurugu Oval?
10. What is the name of the Geelong Football Club player who can’t wait to come back to Groote Eylandt?

**Answer**

1. Earth Connect
2. Torrence Wurrawilya
3. The Green Ant
4. 30 August 2008
5. Gayangwa Lalara
6. Marpere Joe Wilson
7. Friday 25th of April
8. Mudirridirra (Custard Fingers, *Uvaria sp.*)
9. Sunday 5th April
10. Ron Watt