



# Arnhem

**MALARNDIRRI McCARTHY**  
Member for Arnhem

# N E W S



March/April 2011

**Welcome** to my newsletter featuring some of the great events and achievements from 2010.

Again we had record numbers of students completing their Year 12 in schools across the electorate.

We have SIHIP in full swing renovating and constructing new homes on Groote and at Ngukurr, and preparing to commence at Numbulwar and our Yolŋu communities. I am particularly pleased how the program is maximising local employment through on-the-job training programs.

I have also been able to secure a \$30 million job package that will provide sustained employment for up to 530 municipal shire workers over the next 3 years.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter and catching up with events and people from across the Arnhem electorate.

Malarndirri



**CLASS OF 2010** Irene Gayula and Alice Wanambi from Gapuwiyak School are just two of our fantastic students who completed Year 12 and graduated with their NT Certificate of Education. See the Class of 2010 on pages 4 & 5.



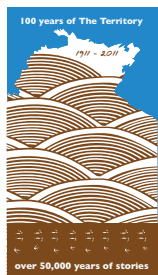
## Anindilyakwa Sea Rangers

Ranger Dawson Lalara at Rats Cove letting off a flare during his Coxswain training course. Read all about the important work they do on page 3.



## Home Grown Teacher graduates

The NT Labor government is determined to 'grow our own' teachers and educational workforce. Read on page 7 how proud we are of our assistant teachers at Ramingining School as they graduate preliminary studies designed to improve English literacy and meet stringent academic standards necessary for them to commence a Bachelor of Teaching.



## SURRENDER .. and acceptance

(Malarndirri McCarthy, NT Minister for STATEHOOD, launch of 2011 activities)

Celebrating 100 years since South Australia surrendered the Northern Territory to Commonwealth jurisdiction, and progress beyond Self Government towards full constitutional recognition as the 7th State of the Australian Federation. Read editorial page 10.

Centenary Logo designed by NT Artists: Yalmay Yunupingu, Jane Young and Chips Mackinoltz

## Stimulus spending boost for Arnhem Schools

Last year saw record spending in schools across Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt, with major new infrastructure either completed or under way in every community.

This investment is Labor's economic policy approach to the global financial crisis, caused by the collapse and subsequent bailouts of several American and international financial institutions in 2008.

In my electorate, that investment in vital infrastructure has meant:

**Milingimbi School** upgraded, new class rooms, new science centre that opens to a veranda and has information technology to support distance learning, and amenities for visiting teachers.

**Ramingining School** received 4 new classrooms and perimeter fencing, on top of previous investment in a new administration block and teacher housing.

**Bulman School** got an outdoor learning facility and a new early learning resource centre.

**Urapunga School** also received an outdoor learning facility and a library/classroom.

**Ngukurr School** was upgraded and repainted and a new classroom block built, in addition to previous investment in new teacher housing.

**Milyakburra School** upgraded grounds and buildings and a covered outdoor learning area constructed.

**Angurugu School** refurbished and a multi-purpose hall including covered basketball court, stage and classrooms.

**Alyangula School** received landscaping, upgrade of its information communications technology and a library extension.



*I was thrilled to join (L-R) senior elder Bobby Wunungmurra, Federal Member Warren Snowdon, ex-principal Shirley Nirrurranydji, acting principal Lindall Watson and the whole School community at the official opening of Gapuwiyak's wonderful new facilities.*

**Gapuwiyak School** upgraded, including communications cabling and perimeter fence, a science centre similar to Milingimbi which also include wet areas, and a multi-purpose pavilion incorporating covered sports area, stage and classrooms.

**Numbulwar School** installed a shade structure and play equipment, and a similar multi-purpose pavilion as Gapuwiyak that incorporates a covered sports/stage area and classrooms. This was on top of previous investments in a new library/language and multi media centre.

**Umbakumba School** was refurbished and a new classroom built. This was on top of an investment in 8 new teacher houses that has enabled teachers to move from Alyangula to living in the community.

## Anindilyakwa Sea Rangers

The Anindilyakwa Sea Rangers started in 2004 and took over responsibility for land management when Groote Eylandt archipelago was declared an Indigenous Protected Area in 2006, in recognition of its cultural and environmental significance and beautiful lands.

The Rangers work with many organisations, including Australian Quarantine monitoring bees and fruit fly. They maintain traps on the golf course at Alyangula, which have

small lures, and collect the dead fruit flies and send off to the scientists for analysis every fortnight.

They also work with Fisheries on patrol for foreign fishing vessels and illegal entry to closed lands, and currently on a snapper research program.

They collaborate with Charles Darwin and Queensland universities with surveys on reef, clams, coral and endangered species. It has shown Groote to have amongst the

highest clam population per hectare in the NT.

They study the Hawksbill turtle for 3 months each year, and currently have a 4 year research program on quolls, including catching, tagging, and measuring to try and understand why they are declining so rapidly on the mainland.

They also collect ghost nets off the beaches, and a multitude of other functions so important to the management and long term sustainability of the region.



Anindilyakwa Sea Rangers



Rangers Keith Lambert and Lancen Wurrawilya cut free a critically endangered Hawksbill turtle from a Ghost Net on an Umbakumba beach.



Hawksbill Turtle entangled in net

## Yugul Mangi Rangers

Yugul Mangi Rangers look after country in the Roper River region, and have a crucial role in maintaining and coordinating early dry season burn-offs with Traditional Owners, when country is still green and 'cool' fire burns slowly.

When undergrowth is burnt off effectively on a patchwork rotation every second or third year, it reduces the ferocity of late dry season 'hot' fires, causing less destruction of vegetation and wildlife. This is also good for our environment by emitting less overall carbon into the atmosphere and mimics traditional burning practices.

The Rangers also take on specific projects and are currently building and maintaining fenced off areas around Numerloori, Costello and Nulawan billabongs in conjunction with Australian National University and Greening Australia.

The project aims to monitor what happens when feral buffalo, pigs and horses are denied access and so far it has led to a significant improvement in water quality and more lilies and grasses growing around the billabongs.

The fencing/monitoring will continue over several years to improve the health of the billabongs and

encourage more bush tucker like wild rice, water chestnut, turtle and fish. I think it also provides an opportunity for small irrigated vegetable gardens or trapping of those feral animals for commercial sale or domestic slaughter.



Cherry Daniels has been with the Yugul Mangi Rangers since day one, so it was a big occasion for family and friends to help celebrate her retirement last October. She has been a wonderful inspiration, not only to the women of Ngukurr, but to all women throughout the Territory. Happy retirement Mum Cherry.

## CLASS OF 2010 - Home-grown Groote graduates & Record7@Gapuwiyak

I am just so pleased to be able to showcase students who achieved their NT Certificate of Education (NTCE) from schools on Groote Eylandt for the first time in 2010, with 3 graduates from Umbakumba School and one from Alyangula Area School.

Also Gapuwiyak School broke the record by having 7 students achieve their NTCE. Congratulations to those students and all our Year 12 graduates from across the electorate.



Malarndirri with Groote Eylandt's first home grown graduates from Umbakumba School (L-R) Andrea Wanambi, Hannah & Elsa Mamarika.

### Umbakumba School

**Hannah Mamarika** hopes to gain employment in office work and has been encouraged by her mentors to do further studies in business administration. She did very well in all her subjects and showed her absolute commitment by attending additional late afternoon and Saturday classes at the school (with Elsa and Andrea).

**Elsa Mamarika** is self confident and articulate in public speaking, although quiet in nature. She hopes to become a ladies hairdresser (which she does as a hobby) and get involved in the cosmetics and fashion industries. Her subjects included English as a second language, mathematics, science, jewelry making and computing.

**Andrea Wanambi** worked tirelessly during the year, passing 4 additional courses as well as her Stage 2 units. She achieved this with an attendance rate of 97% in semester 2, plus weekend classes. Andrea hopes to become a Health Worker.

A big thank you to their teacher Peter Cusbert who got the very best out of the girls, working with them weekends and school holidays, also Jo Skelton from the Polly Farmer Foundation, middle school teacher Brandon Bull, principal Adrian Conroy and former principal Alessa Fremmer (for believing in them).

### Alyangula School

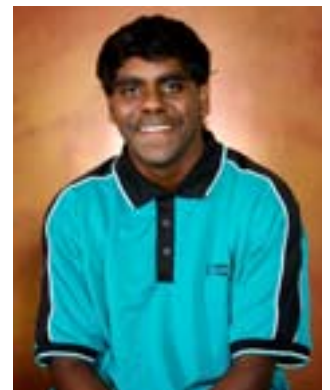
**Caitlyn Williams** - Alyangula School only began offering senior secondary curriculum in 2009 so it was an extra special celebration for Caitlyn as their first Year 12 graduate. She showed commitment, self discipline and diligence towards her studies, often working with NT Open Education Centre teachers via phone, email and video conferencing. I understand she is going to university this year to study Bachelor of Teaching.

*Caitlyn looking sensational at the NTOEC graduation dinner*



### Bulman

**Liam George** had been boarding at Kormilda College in Darwin since 2008 and last year graduated with his NT Certificate of Education, and I know everyone at Bulman is just so proud of his achievements.



(back L-R) Adam Wanambi, Hartley Wanambi, Benson Wunungmurra & Jerome Dhagapan (front L-R) Alice Wanambi, Irene Guyula & Marshella Marawili

### Gapuwiyak School

**Jerome Dhagapan** worked extremely hard at developing his computer skills and is looking for office administration work.

**Hartley Wanambi** is seeking to become either a ranger or start a mechanical apprenticeship.

**Benson Wunungmurra** is looking for further training this year to become an apprentice carpenter.

**Adam Wanambi** is interested in working in schools or with local government as a sport & recreation officer.

**Alice Wanambi** is looking to do an office traineeship in Darwin and hopes to go to university and do a degree.

**Irene Guyula** is applying for work in education, preferably as an assistant teacher.

**Marshella Marawili** is looking at further training to work in hospitality and retail industries.

I understand our Gapuwiyak graduates are also studying the road rules to get their driver's licence. They all love sport, the young men playing AFL in the Gapuwiyak competition and Alice, Irene and Marshella playing basketball.

## Numbulwar School



**Tianna Riley** moved from Borroloola to complete her studies which included digital photography, vocational education and a community project on heart disease and how to avoid it. She did work experience at Numbulwar Health Centre and hopes to secure employment in that area and study as a Health worker at Batchelor College.

## Milingimbi School



*Shannon & Pauline looking gorgeous at the NTOEC graduation dinner.*

**Shannon Gaypangaypan** achieved the top mark in Sustainable Futures subject for all the NTOEC graduates and excelled in Djambapuyngu grammar while studying Australian Languages. She hopes to pursue a career in teaching.

**Pauline Marrawuma** is a determined young lady that was able to balance her busy academic life with home life raising her young son Kenny, extending her studies in Australian Languages, Sustainable Futures, and Outdoor Education over 2 years. Well done Pauline.

## Ramingining School

**Arlene Wanybarrnga** made a significant impact with her contribution to an audio poster project called Yaka Ngarali (Don't Smoke) and a TV style cooking show using healthy food to avoid diabetes, and was invited to make presentations at an anti smoking forum in Nhulunbuy and a Chronic Disease Network conference in Darwin.

She emphasised how learning about these health issues in her own language enabled her to properly understand how bad smoking and diabetes were, and that was why she and her classmates did their projects in Djambapuyngu (a Yolngu language). Arlene is going to do an apprenticeship at the Ramingining Health Clinic while studying to become a qualified Health worker.



### Encouragement Award to Xena Gaykamangu



*Xena has one subject to complete this year to finish her Year 12 studies at Numbulwar School. Keep working hard Xena, you will make a fine police officer.*

*I applaud the huge effort students have put into achieving their Northern Territory Certificate of Education. The NT Labor Government is committed to ensuring all our teenagers have access to secondary schooling in their home communities.*

*If I have missed your son or daughter who may have been away studying at boarding school, please let me know so we can celebrate their success in my next newsletter. I am very proud of them all and want to ensure I acknowledge each and every one of them.*

## Every Child Every Day



*Darren, Gina and Arlene with their father Brian and mother Joanne - proud to have all 3 graduate.*

Arlene Wanybarrnga and her family come from a beautiful Homeland near Ramingining called Yathalamara. Due to cultural and family commitments, Arlene did her courses part-time over 2 years to achieve her NTCE. But she was determined to complete her studies, following in the footsteps of elder brother Darren and sister Gina who graduated in '07 and '08. I think it is just marvellous that their father Brian Yambal and mother Joanne Gaykamangu have encouraged them to complete their schooling. It is hard work but school must be **Every Child Every Day**.

## Milingimbi's Gatjirrk Women's Group

Respected cultural elder and teacher Elizabeth Ganygulpa, in collaboration with her friend Margaret Stewart, has interpreted a collection of stories of Yolŋu birthing and traditional child-rearing practices by women from Milingimbi and surrounding homelands of Langarra, Murrunga, Rapuma and Dhipirri.

They are putting these stories together to honour Elizabeth's mother, Beryl Mayanini Djakala, who spent 41 years as an Aboriginal Health Worker and sadly passed away in 2009. She was an inspiration to all women across the NT and was a tireless advocate for her people.

Elizabeth, Margaret and 37 other contributors from the Gatjirrk Women's Group are passionate in their commitment to improve the health and well being of young Yolŋu mothers and babies, and I'm looking forward to this book sharing the traditional knowledge and skills of these senior women from Arnhem Land.



*Judy Lirrinyin, daughter Melissa and baby grandson Antonio at Rapuma Homeland during the Gatjirrk Women's bush trips to discuss mums and bubs issues. This lovely photo is the proposed front cover of their book.*



*Gatjirrk Women's Group (L-R) Helen Ganalmirriwuy, Joanne Gulurrthu (kneeling), Margaret Rarru, Dora Manbangarr, Ruth Nalmakarra (obscured behind), Beryl Mayanini Djakala, Barbara Dhamany, Sandra Dhumi, Valerie Nanamiyalawuw (with scarf), Mavis Dhakayima (obscured behind), Judith Madupinyan, Lena Walunydjunal, Julie Gapalthan, Elizabeth Dhaburrany, Elizabeth Ganygulpa, Daisy Namamanatj & Margaret Stewart*

## Defence Force Indigenous Development Program

This initiative by the Defence Force is structured to provide skills and experiences needed for full time employment.

Based in Katherine, last year's participants came from Milingimbi, Numbulwar, Borroloola, Ramingining, Maningrida, Ti Tree, Urapunga and Alice Springs to do intensive literacy and numeric studies, first aid training, 4x4 driving skills, chainsaw operations and other work experiences to assist them build skills and self confidence.

The program's strong focus on key skills needed to gain employment presents them with a great opportunity to take advantage of the job opportunities opening up in the Territory Growth Towns, and to become future leaders and role models for our school kids.

It also gave them a taste of life in the Army so they know what to expect if they decide on that career path



*(L-R) Private James Woods, Private Vinnie Rami, Lance Corporal Danny Daniels, Private James Kruger, Private Warren Gaykamangu and Private Sebastian at their graduation day for family and friends at Katherine Rural Campus.*

(a tough gig that one, yes Sir). Congratulations to all the graduates.

## Ramingining educators graduate

I was thrilled to attend the graduation ceremony at Ramo in December for Shirley Nulumburrpurr, Rosita Gaykamangu, Jane Miyatatawuy, Sophia Yinakarrangar and Linda Wulamana to receive their Diplomas in Education Support, the first to complete this nationally recognised para-professional qualification in the NT.

Assistant teachers fulfil an important role in our remote schools and the NT Labor government is determined to **Grow our Own** teachers and educational workforce by supporting them to improve their English literacy and numeracy to meet the stringent academic standards of the Diploma.

They are now eligible to enrol in a Bachelor of Teaching at the Charles Darwin University, using technology to complete intensive studies delivered on-site at Ramingining over two years, as they continue to be employed as assistant teachers with their classroom teacher providing a mentoring role.

They will engage in lectures and do their studies during school time for one day per week and on the other 4 days put into practice the content that has been covered.



A special day for (L-R) Shirley Nulumburrpurr, Jane Miyatatawuy, (with Malandirri), Sophiea Yinakarrangar, Linda Wulamana & Rosita Gaykamangu graduating with their Diploma of Education Support

Gapuwiyak School also has assistant teachers Motij Mununggurr, Damien Guyula and David Wapit Mununggurr on track to complete their Diploma in Education Support studies this year.

### Diploma of Education Support

The Diploma of Education Support is run by Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education in conjunction with the Assistant Teacher Career Pathways Program. To become eligible, assistant teachers must first complete Indigenous Education Work certificates 1, 2 and 3.

Umbakumba School's assistant teachers Alexander Mamarika, Lazarus Mamarika, Merrilyn Bara and Ethel Mamarika and Angurugu School's LEEANNE WURRAMARRBA, are also on track to complete their Certificate 3 this year.

My best wishes to all our assistant teachers. Whatever stage you are working through in your professional development, keep it up, **you are our future.**



Congratulations to (L-R) Veronica, Sylvia & Richard

Ramo's graduation ceremony also featured Veronica Buninyburruwuy, Sylvia Gukuda & Richard Durrurrnga completing their Certificate 3 in Indigenous Education Work. They are now eligible to start their Diploma.

Traditional and contemporary *burgul* (ceremony) helped make it a wonderful day



# Ramingining Touch Rugby and Basketball

## Touch Rugby

Earlier last year some up and coming touch rugby players at Ramingining decided they would enter a team in the NT Titles to be held in Darwin in May.

Cameron Adams, with assistance from Geoff, Bruce and Joseph from Ramo School, marked out a touch field and organised training sessions.

The players developed and improved their skills very quickly, and those lacking the necessary motivation were removed from the team enabling others more committed to join. As part of the training they also did swimming, held barbecues and went hunting together.

During their trip to Darwin, I was pleased to have them camp in my electorate office for a few nights when accommodation wasn't available. Overall, it was a very rewarding experience and a good opportunity to show the rest of the NT the talent of players at Ramingining.

Having seen the team participate at the NT Titles, the regional manager for Touch Football Australia was

so impressed by the spirit in which the team competed, he invited them to compete in the WA State Championships in November, where I understand they acquitted

themselves well and dramatically improved their skills.

Congratulations to all involved and particularly Cameron and Joseph who looked after everyone on their trips to Darwin and WA.



*Ramo's Touch Team are hoping to compete in the NT Titles again this year*

## Basketball

Nadine Durrurrnga, Year 10 student at Ramingining School, wrote to me late last year about her class organising a basketball competition.

It had 10 teams and ran for 6 weeks with finals in early December.

Everyone agrees it was a huge success, with the whole community turning out to cheer on their heroes at the grand-finals, won by Yinydjapana (Dolphins) over Baru (Crocodile) in the women's division, and Lakers defeated Ngatili (Black Cockatoo) in the men's.



*Thanks to Geoff Guymer for organising photos*

Most Versatile Player for the ladies was Shannon Wagilak, and for the men it was Billy Wanybarrnga, with highest scorers for each division being Cherie Dhamarrandji and Ewen Wanybarrnga.

It is great to see students taking the initiative to organise community sporting competitions. Congratulations to all involved, and thank you to Austin Durrurrnga, Ronald Durrurrnga, Antonio Lilipyana and Lloyd Garrawurra for also writing to tell me all about it.

## New film about alcohol made by Groote Eylandt communities

Nine films have now been made on Groote Eylandt about a range of health issues including cannabis and mental health, tobacco sickness, nicotine replacement therapy and how to cope with stress and grief. The films are developed and spoken in Anindilyakwa (with English subtitles) and are based on local ideas. Anija is the latest release and tells the story of one family's struggle to deal with problems from alcohol, and was made for the Anindilyakwa Land Council by staff at the Groote Eylandt health clinics. I think they are marvellous, *five stars*. Contact Muriel Jaragba at the Angurugu Health Centre on 89876311 if you would like a copy.



Cast and crew of Anija: (L-R) Roy Bara (actor), Kylie Lee (producer), Muriel Jaragba (casting director, actor), David Hansen (director), Desley Amagula (actor – being carried)



## Sealed road for Umbakumba

I was just so pleased to drive to Umbakumba recently knowing that the next time I visit workers will be laying two-lanes of bitumen on that terrible road.

Work will begin in May and be completed early next year, and will make a huge difference for the quality of life on Groote, enabling residents to move between communities with ease, improving access to health, education and economic opportunities.

The road has been jointly funded by the Federal Government (\$9.5 million), the NT Government (\$5.5 million) and the Anindilyakwa Land Council (\$5 million) through its commercial business GEBIE.

Equally important, the project will provide up to 20 jobs for local people, contributing to the NT Government's *Working Future* policy direction by providing skills for our home-grown workforce.

*I caught up with Evette Nunggumajbarr and her beautiful daughter Jesephine Wurrawilya during my recent visit to Umbakumba.*

## Alyangula's elite athlete – Ryan Assan

Everyone at Alyangula Area School are abuzz with Ryan's achievements, so I asked Principal Coral O'Neill to tell us all about it.

*Ryan Assan has quickly established himself as one of the best 800 metre runners for his age in Australia. With little previous experience Ryan took the NT Schools Athletics Track and Field meet by storm in September and qualified for the Australian All Schools Carnival held in Melbourne in December. Despite it being his first athletics trip interstate, Ryan competed magnificently and shot to prominence Australia wide by finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> in the under 14 years 800 metres. His time of 2 min 6 seconds was 24 seconds faster than his previous best time. Ryan has now been invited to represent the NT in the Australian Junior Track and Field Championships to be held at the Sydney Olympic Park in March where he will again compete against the best athletes Australia wide. If he can perform to the best of his ability, there is a good chance that he will be recognised as an elite athlete Australia wide for his age group.*

Thanks for the information Coral, and good luck Ryan.



# SURRENDER .. and acceptance

(edited version of article from NT News on 1<sup>st</sup> January)

In 1911 – 100 years ago - South Australia surrendered the Northern Territory to the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth parliament was still in its infancy, having only achieved Federation in 1901, when the future of the unwanted expense and challenging landscape of the Territory was entrusted to it.

The Territory's long distances, extreme weather temperatures, the lack of transport and slow communications had prompted South Australia's case for surrender.

The cost of running the Territory was a major sticking point between politicians wrestling with what to do with this burdensome child in the north. Final acceptance included the Commonwealth agreeing to build a railway from Adelaide to Darwin, but as we know it took over 90 years to deliver.

In 1910, while southern politicians debated the future of the Northern

Territory, it mattered little to the people in the north.

Pioneering pastoralists, determined to build a future, faced the challenges of an isolated landscape. Mining explorers traversed the regions for gold and other rich minerals. The Chinese endured hardship and racism to escape poverty and forge a better life.

In my own home country in the Gulf of Carpentaria it was known as the 'wild times' where relationships between Aboriginal people and Europeans were rarely friendly, and for the most part were violent and fearful, with killings a way of life. It was similar throughout the Territory with the last recorded atrocity, the Coniston Massacre, in Central Australia in 1928.

In this Centenary year we need to reflect on our past, the good and the bad. But we also need to consider our future.

100 years of The Territory

Today the Northern Territory has two representatives in the Lower House and two Senators. Only 4 NT representatives out of 226 politicians in Canberra.

In this Centenary year do we care enough to strive to unite as one, with our many Indigenous and ethnic languages, religions and races to create a future we can all be proud to build? Are we courageous enough to call on our fellow Australians to work with us, to walk with us, as equals, to become the 7<sup>th</sup> State in the Australian Federation?

## Or are we to remain a people under surrender?

Malarndirri McCarthy MLA,  
NT Minister for STATEHOOD,  
January 2011

## Groote Eylandt Genealogies

### Dr. Velma J. Leeding

After many years of painstaking research, Velma has successfully published her 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of what Umbakumba people call "Our History Book". First published in 2002, this edition is an expanded history of names, moieties and totems of Umbakumba, Angurugu, Milyakburra and Numbulwar clans.

It has been a long journey for Velma since she first moved to Groote in 1974 as linguistic adviser for the Bilingual education programs. She has been living there on and off ever since, forming strong relationships with families and drawing on previous work by Fred Gray, Fred Rose, Judith Stokes, Callon Moore and others.

It has been a labour of love for Velma and all those who have assisted her, and is now an invaluable resource that documents the history and movement of the various clans. Special appreciation to Keith Hansen and Aminjarrinja Enterprises Aboriginal Corp for assistance with publishing costs so the book could be distributed free of charge to families. Copies can be purchased on-line at [www.batchelorpress.com](http://www.batchelorpress.com)



## Bulman & Weemol Festival

I am thrilled to hear Bulman and Weemol communities are to hold their first ever cultural festival on 8,9 & 10 July, with the theme 'The Cultural Heritage and History of our People'. They plan it to be full of celebration, fun and laughter and the foundation for future festivals.

Some of the highlights will be Sunset Fireworks displays choreographed to music for the opening and closing ceremonies, an extensive photographic display of their cultural heritage and history, and a Red Carpet Screening of *I, the Aboriginal (1961)* on the opening Friday night. This is a 'must attend' so I'll see you all there!



Willie Martin on a paperbark canoe in the late 1960s - played the role of Philip Roberts as a young boy in *I, the Aboriginal*

## Milingimbi Community Garden project

Last year Milingimbi School teacher Carl Leopold sent me a wonderful Power-point display put together by his senior students for their Sustainable Futures project.

They started with some history of Milingimbi (the Yolŋu word for settlement) on Yurrwi Island off the north east Arnhem Land coast. It was originally sited around the Macassan well which then was the only fresh water supply.

Senior elder George Pascoe told the students how it was originally a Methodist Mission and because of its isolation, needed to be self sustainable. So they developed a large fruit and vegetable garden and grew watermelon, lettuce, potatoes, taro, carrots, chilli, tomatoes, rock melon, paw paw, banana, pineapples, coconut, grapes, dates, peanuts,

mangoes, cucumber, Thai basil and even sugar cane.

The garden was very successful initially, but because it used flood irrigation, the water table came up



*Milingimbi students putting plenty of care into their community garden*

bringing salt with it, which polluted the Macassan well and the gardens failed.

So students studied sustainable gardens, learning how to mix soils,

plant and grow the vegetables.

The whole school became involved with each class looking after its own seedlings. An irrigation system was installed using drip and spray sprinklers on timers.

They put up 50% shade cloth over a greenhouse so the hot sun wouldn't burn the vegetables, and within a short time, from what I've seen in the Power-point display, the crop was bountiful and beautiful.

The School is going to continue growing fruit and vegetables and sell fresh to the community, and back yard gardens are springing up everywhere. **From little things, big things grow!**

I have suggested their next project be chooks, so they can use the manure instead of buying fertiliser, and of course fresh eggs taste better.

## Milyakburra Community Garden wins Smart Schools Award



Students and staff at Milyakburra School also have **green thumbs** developing a market garden and raising funds for the School by selling the produce to their local shop. Their project so impressed the judges at the NT Schools Awards last year that it won the Special Highly Commended Award plus \$5,000 for Excellence in Innovation in Indigenous Education.

Congratulations to everyone involved, and see their Blog at <http://milyakburra.edublogs.org> to follow progress.

*Everyone was thrilled Milyakburra won (L-R) Michelle McColm, Principal Kirsten Morey, assistant teachers Holly Yangtarrnga and Vernine Wurramara, Angurugu School Principal Kristie Lloyd & Alyangula School Principal Coral O'Neil. When accepting the Award Holly spoke in Anindilyakwa language of how proud she is of the children.*

## Ngukurr workers on-the-job training in construction

Ngukurr's SIHIP program is in full swing with New Future Alliance's 12 trainees recently completing their Certificate 2 in Construction.

They have been joined by another 8 Cert 2 graduates from the Roper Gulf Shire's CDEP crew who did their training on Shire projects. They are all now studying for the Cert 3 while renovating and building new desperately needed houses at Ngukurr and Urapunga.

At last we are starting to see the full benefits of this enormous investment by Federal and NT Governments flowing through: not just new houses, but real jobs with good wages for our *Home Grown* workforce.

*Roper Gulf Shire's CDEP workforce completed their Certificate 2 in Construction. Eight have now taken up full time employment with New Future Alliance on SIHIP building projects.*



# Gapuwiyak Culture & Arts exhibition

I was so proud to be involved with the official opening of the Gapuwiyak Culture and Arts Aboriginal Corporation in 2009, and last year I was again honoured to launch their first commercial art exhibition at the Territory Craft Gallery in Darwin.

The exhibition featured fine paintings, yidaki (didgeridoo), sculpture and the beautiful and renowned fibre art of the region, including works by 2010 National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards finalist Dolly Dhimburra Bidingal, Shirley Nirrurranydji, Jimmy Marrkula, Lucy Wanapuyngu and many others.

The Corporation is community owned and Chair Micky Wunungmurra and Deputy Chair Timothy Wanamayku explain it was established to support cultural practices, values and intellectual property of Yolŋu people living in the region.

There is a long and fascinating history of fibre art within Aboriginal society, both for ceremonial and practical everyday use, and Dr Louise Hamby of the Australian National University published her book *Containers of Power, Women with Clever Hands* last year detailing much of that history through northeast Arnhem Land.

Louise has spent a long time studying and supporting traditional art, and in particular working with the women at Gapuwiyak. She was also instrumental in highlighting the historical importance of Yolŋu leader Rraywala Mildjingi, who had been buried in an unmarked grave at Marrara cemetery, and who I did a short history about in my 2009 newsletter (page 7, available on my website).

Her book is just beautiful and full of wonderful photos, and is a fascinating study of culture and incredible art unique to Australia. Unfortunately in some parts of our country this art is being lost through cultural breakdown caused by poverty and substance abuse, hence the importance of corporations like Gapuwiyak Culture and Arts and Louise Hamby's publication.

I was thrilled to be presented with a copy of Louise's book from students at Gapuwiyak School when I visited last November, and recommend it as a beautiful present; buy 2 because you'll want to keep one yourself.



An example of some of the beautiful works available from Gapuwiyak Culture and Arts Aboriginal Corporation. See more at [www.gapuwiyak.com](http://www.gapuwiyak.com)



I was honoured to join artists and residents, and Yolŋu senior statesman Dr Gawirrin Gumana AO, at the opening of the Gapuwiyak Culture & Arts Centre in 2009.



Twined ochre basket, collected Gunbalunya 1947

Twined ochre basket, collected Alligator River 1895

Modern fibre art skills have been handed down from traditional Aboriginal society, as can be seen from these much older examples of the art on exhibition at the Australian Museum.