



Matthew Yunupingu puts the finishing touches to his art carving on the lid of his tuckerbox

Happy-go-tucky students motivated

By ELLIE TURNER

A TUCKERBOX university project in east Arnhem Land has drawn in construction students like moths to a flame.

Ralpa — Yolngu for “be motivated” — is a new training program at Charles Darwin University’s Nhulunbuy campus.

And lecturer John Crocker said that it was definitely living up to its name.

“Attendance has been great — the hardest thing is getting them to pack up the workshop and head off to their work sites for the afternoon,” Mr Crocker said.

Fifteen employees of Marngarr and Bunuwal community groups signed up for the eight-week pilot program.

This first course has a construction theme that mixes classroom theory, teamwork and workshop activities.

“Many have shown a high degree of skill and aptitude

“

Many have shown a high degree of skill

for working with wood,” Mr Crocker said.

“The tuckerbox project has allowed students to show their ability at hand carving, which is just fantastic.”

Students also will build a cubby house for the local childcare centre — and make shovels for the four-wheel-drive kits.

Graduates will work on house and school construction projects and help upgrade the Garma Festival site, at Gulkula, 40km from Nhulunbuy, after graduation.

Mr Crocker added: “We are still ironing out the minor details but it looks like we’ve got a winning formula.”