“Overall those with good education have better health, higher income, access to better employment……. We also know that a strong and proud family and a proud cultural identity are the foundations of good emotion, physical and mental health”.

Professor Janice Reid,
Vice Chancellor, University of Western Sydney
A pleasant and enthusiastic greeting from the kids of Yirrkala School kicked off the Garma Festival during the Yirrkala Open Day. The students opening dance performance was based on traditional celebrations where clan groups gathered for various reasons, such as galtha (coming together to form the starting point of a new venture), Garma (meeting of different clan groups), bapurru (funeral) or dhapi (coming of age ceremony).

Their graceful movements advance the childrens learning process through traditional bunggul (dance) and manikay (song) indicative of their own clan group. The children brought with them special items from their wanga (homeland) to trade with the other clans. They spoke in their own dharuk (language) and told their creation story.

After lunch the guests visit the Buku Larrnggay Mulka Art Centre. Buku Larrnggay means the feel of the first rays of sunshine to your face. This indicates our geographical position in the most easterly place in the Top End of Australia - Miwatj or the Sunrise country.

Mulka is a sacred but public ceremony and it also means to hold or protect. The patrons were given the opportunity of understanding more of the artists work and their worldwide reputation for excellence, having won many of Australia's major Indigenous art prizes.

One of the highlights was seeing the Nawurapu Bronze Mokuy sculptures. These skeletal forms in their original state of carved timber and painted with natural earth pigments were a sight to behold. These recent works were displayed at the recent National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards in Darwin and they've been acquired by the Queensland Art Gallery. This was a rare and unique opportunity for many collectors of the regions
artworks. The Co-ordinator of the Buku Larrngay Mulka Centre Mr Will Stubbs is an avid supporter of the Garma Festival. He states:

“It is vital that the knowledge, the cultural and historical memories of a new generation be supported, the [Garma Festival] projects are unique and thought provoking and have the proven capacity to significantly maintain capacity building at a local level”.

While visiting the art centre, guests also have the opportunity to learn more about the history of the region and the art movement. In the 1960s Narritjin Maymuru set up his own beachfront gallery from which he sold art that now graces many major museums and private collections.

Narritjin is counted among the art centre’s main inspirations and founders, and his picture hangs in the museum. His vision of Yolngu-owned business to sell Yolngu art started with a shelter on a beach has now grown into a thriving business which employs a healthy number of Yolngu staff.

The jewels of the collection are the two four metre tall Yirrkala Church Panels (1962-3) that have been described as amongst the most important Australian art in existence.
It is the afternoon on Gulkula soil, The Chairman of the Yothu Yindi Foundation, Galarrwuy Yunupingu officially launched the 2010 Garma Festival, south of Nhulunbuy, Northeast Arnhem Land. The 2000 strong participants to this, the 12th year of the festival focused on Indigenous education and training.

The Chairman's address to the gathering focused on “experiencing and sharing knowledge” with a new educational facility in the early stages of development. Mr Yunupingu stated that there is a generational gap of educated Yolngu who had missed the vital element of education as a result of the Dhupuma College closure in the 1980s. The Yothu Yindi Foundation have a new focus and ongoing priority to develop the Garma Cultural Studies Institute (GCSI). Indeed many of our festival programmers and artists were themselves former residents of the past Dhupuma College. It seemed fitting therefore that in our 12th year the Garma festival logo was that of the old Dhupuma College symbol. Mr Yunupingu unveiled the first concept drawings of this vision for the future and welcomed young and old to study the designs over the period of the festival. The explanation of the symbol below is simply titled Looking Up to the Future.

The college monogram which appears above comes from sketches by Bruce Manggurra of Numbulwar, a former student of the College. It depicts an Aboriginal man looking up at the bees which have made sugar bag in a hollow tree. The circular formation of bees symbolises the sun, whilst the lower circle symbolises a billabong or water-hole. The meaning is that Aboriginal people seek the sweet things and the necessities of life and the students of Dhupuma, if they are to achieve in the wider Australian society, must also seek for the good things and necessities of life through a full and varied educational program.

Image © Yothu Yindi Foundation
From left: Dutch replica map; Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu, Dutch Ambassador Willem Andreae and Madarrpa Clan Leader Djambawa Marawili. Images © Yothu Yindi Foundation

A nostalgic end to the official opening was the presence of the Dutch Ambassador, Mr Willem Andreae. The Dutch Ambassador provided an interesting historical portrayal describing the Dutch links with the Yolngu people of the east Arnhem region which dated back to 1623. In that year, the vessel *Arnhem* became the first European ship to skirt the west coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria. A touching end to the official opening, the Dutch Ambassador gifted Mr Yunupingu and Madarapa clan leader Djambawa Marawili of Blue Mud Bay a replica copy of the original map and its passage during the 1623 period. The replica map now graces the walls of the Yothu Yindi Foundation office in Darwin.

As the sun set over the rich bauxite land, the echoes of the clapsticks introduced the beginning of the Bathala bunggul dance troupes eager to display their dancing prowess for those that have waited patiently.

Guests gather for this particularly popular component of the Garma Festival. It is through the bunggul that the Yolngu stories, songs and imagery are most vitally safeguarded by Yolngu.
This preservation through the arts is an Australian national treasure, internationally acclaimed and cherished by those who’ve never experienced the privilege. So it is here we witness the ancient Bunggul that are accompanied by Manikay (song), Bilma (clap stick) and the Yidaki, the oldest instrument in the world.

This year the bunggul featured prominent dance groups such as the Gumatj, Yirrkala, Elcho Island, Groote Island, Numbulwar, Kununnurra, Ramingining, Mutijulu, Blue Mud Bay, Warruwi, Minjalang, Maningrida and Milingimbi.

Maxarrick Rogers, aged 3 from Numbulwar proudly displays his heritage as the Red Flag dancers perform at the evening bunggul. Many thanks to Floyd Rogers and Rivonna Bishop for permission to use this image.

Image © Yothu Yindi Foundation

2010 GARMA FESTIVAL NARRATIVE
After dinner, festival attendees followed a winding path lit by tea lights through a tall stand of eucalyptus to the Gapan Gallery where prints and etchings hang on white-washed gum trees. In the darkness the haunting sound of the yidaki (didjeridu) calls across its homeland as part of a traditional opening ceremony.

The printmakers and artists of Buku-Larrnggay work all year to create the works that this year featured more than 30 new editions of etchings. The print makers of Yirrkala are the only remote Indigenous people making their own prints from scratch in the bush by themselves.

Much more was available at the 2010 gathering. Most importantly this years’ Garma Festival locked in Yolngu managed programs, from the community grass roots base. This shone through in many ways, from the employment of over 250 Yolngu consultants, security guards, cultural advisors, performers, artists, and trainees. Special acknowledgement is extended to the involvement of Timmy Burarrwanga and his family who ran the Cultural Tourism Program through the Bawaka Cultural Experience business. The Cultural Tourism stream was coordinated by both Timmy, Laklak and additional family members with the background support of Mr John Morse. 2010 was the first time that this highly popular stream was delivered by a pure Yolngu-management perspective and the content reflected this in the usual Yolngu diplomacy and diplomatic flair. The Yothu Yindi Foundation is extremely proud to have worked in conjunction with the Bawaka team, and look forward with anticipation of continuing to finesse this very popular stream in 2011.

Music Stage Openings extracted Indigenous performers such as Shellie Morris, Tommy Lewis and Marwila line up to add the cultural flavour to the musical stage opening. The many clans
gathered this year at Garma are connected to their clan estates. This complex identity is reflected with the ownership and use of varying languages, designs, rhythms and movements held by the custodians. Only Yolngu of that clan and estate hold the rights to use specific designs, perform particular rhythms, dances and songs. The 2010 Festival focused on the intergenerational connection and rhythms of Manikays (song), and as always, we are proud to showcase so many young bands across the region in association with senior custodians and song men and women.

This years film works came from the community. The Mulka Project opened the film program with three new works, Rrawun, Garrangali and Biranybirany Dhapi. With all performers involved in the films also featured in other program areas, it was a great introduction to the men and women behind the music, lyrics and the importance of the many stories they tell through the preservation of language.

The concept of ‘fire circles’ were introduced this year to enable networking to continue well into the night. Ernie Dingo and Tom E. Lewis loosened up the travel knots by belting out some acoustic rhythms to enable all those gathered to unwind whilst soaking up the background silence of the bush ambience. The circle flowed with some very funny yarns and this allowed the gathering to develop close friendships and business networks between indigenous and non-indigenous.
The cool dew mist set upon the second morning at Gulkula with a hearty breakfast catered by Sodexho. This fueled participants interest in the Key Forum entitled: “New Directions and Yolngu Educational Institution: A new Dhupuma College”.

Professor Marcia Langton worked closely with the YYF Chairman, Charles Darwin University and the Yothu Yindi Foundation Steering Committee to form a structured Key Forum program. A large contingent of Yolngu children from the Youth Forum opened the 2010 Key Forum to a rapturous standing applause. The children filed into the shelter and were seated front and centre at this year’s opening.

The day officially commenced with the YYF Chairman opening the 2010 Key Forum, highlighting the regeneration of the Dhupuma College and the GCSI which would lay a very solid base of topics to cover over the duration of the Festival.

This years Key Forum Garma Dialogue was chaired by Charles Darwin University Vice Chancellor Barney Glover. Mr Glover was Master of Ceremony for this event which was an intellectual discussion between the YYF Chairman, the Cape York Institute Director, Noel Pearson and former NT Chief Minister, Shane Stone regarding Indigenous education and
training. The Garma Dialogued attracted much interest from many corporate groups that had travelled specifically for this occasion. Banking institutions, intellectual groups, reconciliation parties, large media contingents and political interest groups were all intrigued to hear much of the topic of conversation.

Highlights of the Garma Dialogue included:

- Consistently emerging themes such as the transformative power of education can assist in the delivery and content of education for indigenous people.
- Community control and ownership of educational facilities with an emphasis on setting the educational context.
- Indigenous culture needing to teach and learn in each individual language in a way that is culturally appropriate.
- A radical shift being needed in the delivery and content of education for Indigenous people.
- Success in education is a crucial component of achieving success in every dimension of life in health, employment, environment, economy and technology.
- Yolngu approach has been to attempt to equip young people for two worlds, equip them for excellence. Two way leaning involves the meshing of Yolngu and Aboriginal knowledge and mainstream western learning. Learning together.
- The importance of parents and leaders themselves talking about the importance of education inside their own family lives. There currently exists a culture of under achieving, which alternately creates huge disparity in the community.
- Excellence in education is the basis for economic empowerment. Achieving excellence should not be remotely associated with just education, that excellence
should be sought through every facet of every dimension involving not only Yolngu
life, but life in general.

- Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be included in the
Australian Constitution.

Special guest this year was Professor Janice Reid, Vice Chancellor of the University of
Western Sydney. Her association with Yolngu people in eastern Arnhem Land dates back to
the 1970’s when her work as a medical anthropologist allowed her the time to learn from a
community perspective first hand. Gulumbu Yunupingu was instrumental in ensuring that
Professor Reid be recognised as having been a particularly important influence in Yolngu
womens life in Arnhem land.

Presenting with the Chairman was the award winning Australian architect Greg Burgess who has
exclusively designed the first drafts of the GCSI. His architectural exhibition was displayed on
the stringy bark trees in front of the Key Forum. It demonstrated a reflection of an educational
institution through Yolngu eyes. The designs also reflect clear evidence of working within a bush
environ, incorporating this into the final design of the permanent educational institution.
It captured the dialogue of twelve years transposing western architectural design and the very philosophy of Yolngu and the Garma concept.

Federal Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin arrived to view the exhibition alongside the YYF Chairman, who walked her through the concept from design beginning to its current form. Minister Macklin strolled through the expo stalls noticing the high quality of expo stall holder information available to attendees. Most unexpectedly the Minister announced to the Key Forum a commitment of $2 million to the establishment of the GCSI. This injection of funding is explicitly devoted to the building of a learning institution onsite at Gulkula. This will draw on concentrated blocks of engagement with Australian universities, Educational Departments, government Ministers, Yolngu elders and Yolngu teachers. The announcement was favourably applauded. It was acknowledged that this was the Ministers’ third visit to Garma.

Minister Macklin stated how the festival at Gulkula had become “special to thousands of Australians”. The Minister stated that the Garma Festival has an impressive record of partnerships with academic institutions. The Minister explained how uniquely placed the GCSI would be to advance wider cross cultural understanding between indigenous and non-indigenous Australia. The Minister acknowledged the commitment and visionary leadership of both Galarrwuy and Mandawuy Yunupingu.

Topics to further explore outside the main forums were:

- The Mobile Dialysis Service. A new innovative mobile dialysis service with ongoing support provided by the Northern Territory Government and Fresenius Medical Care was trialled at the Festival this year. This foremost provision of dialysis services allowed for
some registered patrons an opportunity to experience the festival onsite without missing necessary treatments. The mobile service will also increase opportunities for education around renal disease. This project was generously sponsored by the Australian Government with additional funds provided by AMGEN Australia Pty Ltd.

- Mobile Learning Units. The centrepiece of DET’s presence was a new hospitality training van specially commissioned by Taminmin College. The $200,000 van is designed to deliver Hospitality courses in remote communities and will bring training to areas that were previously unreachable. It’s arrival at the Gulkula site made a massive impact on other festival goers. The 600km journey via a dirt road proved to be no obstacle for the mobile unit. Refer link for full visual:

- The Larrakitj Stage was this year repositioned on the edge of the escarpment next to the main kitchen and the venue profiled young emerging artists and solo performers whilst guests enjoyed acoustic lunchtime entertainment.

- Astronomy At The Point. One of the popular evening activities was an astronomy program presented by Gove Amateur Astronomers - a 40,000 year history in the stars.
Ian Maclean presented Yolngu stories of the Milky Way and history of Gulkula and the space race of the 1960s.

- Music. The emerging sounds of Dunganda Street blends a mixture of men from Ramingining and Milingimbi whose sounds permeated the Gulkula site. Their ancient rhythms of the song men and their new percussion all combined to produce their refined holistic performance. The B2m boys also hit the stage with squeals of delight from those keen to dance up a storm. The YYF Chairman launched his music CD ‘Mawundi Yumalil’ which is based on the songs and stories of the Gumatj clan group. Other emerging acts enthusiastically performed many more routine pieces for the crowd.
A balmy Garma Festival day was not quite enough to exhaust all festival goers. Nightly features were films and documentaries from a mixture of sources, including Message Stick Indigenous Film, such as Daniels 21st, Nin’s Brother, Barngngmn, Nundhiritbala, Shimasani, Reel Injun and Our Generation. A stand out element of the film nights was Our Generation, which won favourable accord from Festival participants. The venue post-screening was packed to capacity and the Q&A thereafter encouraged great conversation which many times lasted well into the midnight hour.

**Media coverage**

Garma 2010 was staged midway through the federal election campaign. The key forum was a lead instrument to place that of the Yolngu message, and the media strategy for Yolngu policy and leadership.

The media strategy involved early contact and engagement with a multitude of media agencies, alerting to the importance of this major Indigenous event and its exciting program. We offered up storylines and access to the necessary resources both visual and editorial to create pre-publicity and news angles for promotion and media coverage of the event.

A series of stories close to the event combined with some major features in national newspapers put in place the Yolngu message for Garma: “Looking up to the future”

YYF’s extensive liaison with federal Labor and the opposition led to the attendance of the Federal Minister Jenny Macklin.
YYF’s direct negotiations with the Australian Electoral Commission resulted in the first mobile polling booths being operational on the festival grounds at Garma.

A satellite base station was installed onsite and daily news footage was beamed out to the Australian commercial networks, Sky TV, Al Jazeera, BBC, TVNZ, NITV, ABC 24, ABC news, SBSTV.

Three stills photographers provided a suite of news pictures on a daily basis for inclusion with press releases distributed via AAP MediaNet.

**Media Response**

- 69 print articles
- 17 television items
- 38 Radio segments.

**Productions to date**

- NITV documentary (1 hour)
- ForrestWorks – Gumatj timber and furniture project. (12 minutes)

**Media coverage is not the only outcome.**

A real focus on what Yolngu wanted from the coverage of the festival was followed in 2010. In all, 4 major projects were identified;
- **Bunggul;** The camerawork and professional production elements applied to the coverage of the bunggul resulted in a new standard of excellence. Never before had such a forensic capture taken place. Each dance was covered by a multi camera shoot. Each camera was locked to the other, each operator under very tight instruction about the angle and the framing. The end result now that the editing is finalised is fantastic. It is possible now to release a DVD that features just the bunggul performances.

- **Performers;** An exciting strand which opened up in 2010 was a roving Yolngu reporter who had exclusive use of a camera crew to mingle and conduct interviews throughout the festival with Yolngu people. The footage captured from this exercise is amazing. People who have never been confronted by a camera or given an opportunity to discuss the meaning of certain performances were enthusiastic in talking with our roving Yolngu reporter. They skillfully fleshed out explanation of dance and music, views on traditional responsibilities, cultural exchange, skill transmission, knowledge sharing and the importance of building friendships and alliances. Again these interviews will form part of the broader Yothu Yindi documentary to be played on NITV.

- **Dilthan Yolngunha;** A very special request from Gulumbu was taken up to provide documentation of the Healing Centre. This involved early morning gathering of traditional herbs, nuts and medicinal plant life right through to the preparation of these resources for embalming of patients. We follow the administration of the treatment to a point and an interview describes all of the stages of the process. This production stands alone as a resource for Gulumbu and other senior women to use in conferences, public lectures or importantly to teach others.
• **Historic account of Dhupuma.** At the YYF Chairmans request, YYF have paid a great deal of attention to this story. We spent a great deal of time at the old site, swooping cameras across the ruins as a sequence to establish re-building and re-birthing an idea that is warmly remembered. A range of interviews including from Noel Pearson and Marcia Langton add to the podium speeches from Galarrwuy Yunupingu and the Federal Minister Jenny Macklin.

• **“Looking Up To The Future”** Is the title for the official documentary capturing a snapshot of the entire program for Garma 2010. This documentary draws on all resource material shot at the festival.

• **Release television footage to promote 2011.** A compilation of 10 minutes of best footage has been compiled ready for release in advance of the next Garma. This footage will also form the resources for website imaging and TVC production.

The Yothu Yindi Foundation wishes to thank all sponsors, friends and volunteers that assisted with the successful delivery of the 2010 Garma Festival. The specific dates for the August 2011 Festival will be available for public information soon. The Foundation would like to advise that registrations for the 2011 festival will be available in January. The online registration process will differ from previous years, and our website address is currently being prepared to assist you with a more fluid registration process. Please keep monitoring our website address:

www.garmafestival.com.au
Special thanks to:

2010 GARMA FESTIVAL NARRATIVE

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