

Garma scaled back

Usual format in 2013, says foundation



A SCALED-BACK version of the Garma Festival will be run this year, due to the urgent need to upgrade infrastructure at the Gulkula site in far north-east Arnhem Land.

But organisers say the festival will return to its usual format in 2013.

The chairman of the Yothu Yindi Foundation which runs Garma, Galarrwuy Yunupingu, said in a statement that changing the format would enable the foundation to consolidate its important day to day work, while at the same time improving facilities on-site in readiness for the 14th Garma Festival in 2013.

The nightly bunggul (dance), the musical performances and other cultural activities will not run in 2012, however the Key Forum, which has been the core of Garma programming, will still go ahead.

A Yothu Yindi Foundation spokeswoman said the revised Garma Festival would run a month later than usual, on 1-2 September, and the topic for the Key Forum would focus



Bunggul (dancing) at last year's Garma Festival and, inset, Yothu Yindi Foundation chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu.

year between Yolngu traditional owners and Rio Tinto Alcan, and the 'massive mining boom' across Australia in general.

"We just wanted to get the message out that the Key Forum will still be held, and details will

we're constantly increasing she said was there was a need to take a long-term strategic approach.

The site will be getting a 'massive makeover' and expanding along the escarpment. A number of new venues will be built along with a permanent

to the 2011 festival, there's white ant damage through the kitchen and shelters and we've got to treat and control the weeds," the spokeswoman said.

"We're in our 14th year of the festival and we're experiencing

an occupational health and safety point of view."

Yothu Yindi Foundation general manager Denise Bowden said the board had made an important decision to develop better business practice.