

12 December 2016

Denise Bowden  
Chief Executive Officer  
Director of Garma  
Yothu Yindi Foundation  
PO Box 42119  
CASUARINA NT 0810

Dear Denise

On behalf of Carers Australia I am pleased to provide the Yothu Yindi Foundation with a letter supporting the annual 2017 Garma Festival.

I have personally been attending Garma for many years while Carers Australia has hosted a group, providing employment for a Yolngu host, for the last two years. This year we took a delegation of 20 people, the year before we took 11 delegates. Each of these is engaged with us in our very important work.

Carers Australia represents Australia's 2.7 million unpaid family and friend carers who care for somebody requiring assistance because of disability, age, mental illness, chronic or terminal illness or dementia. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are overrepresented in caring responsibilities yet underrepresented in access to services and payments. We use the Garma experience to shine a light on all of those carers who should be recognised and supported yet often miss out.

Garma offers an intensely personal cultural experience where our delegates are able to engage, learn from each other and be immersed in the richness and strength of Yolngu culture.

We look to Garma as an example of policy development to government, of sharing across a national Indigenous platform, best practice business development from a regional grass roots approach, and reconciliation in action. Our past participants have expressed the profound effect it has had on their own corporate and personal journeys. Some of the feedback we have received from participants has included:

*Thank you so much for inviting me to Garma which was the clear highlight of my year. The experience was so important in providing insight into the leadership of indigenous people, their challenges and proposed strategies.*

*It was invaluable to observe and reflect on the similarity in some of the struggles that we experience, lack of recognition, disunity and segregation. It was also a salient reminder of all the characteristics our members have in common, isolation, lack of support and a deep desire for acceptance by society.*

*Matthew Wright, former CEP Australian Federation of Disability Organisations*

*The Garma Festival gives us an opportunity to relate without fear, with nothing riding on the outcome, and what a pleasure that is. May we all take a little bit of that away and emulate it in our daily lives.*

*Ian Cresswell, Research Director, CSIRO*

Each year the Yothu Yindi Foundation delivers a professional and world class global event. We have been fortunate to witness the continuing growth and innovation of the Garma program scheduling and look forward to another inspiring, educating and entertaining four days come August next year.

Our organisation is a proud supporter of Garma. We look forward to joining the Yolngu clans on their traditional ceremonial meeting ground at the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Garma event, hosted by the Yothu Yindi Foundation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ara Cresswell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ara Cresswell  
Chief Executive Officer