

1/88 Prince Street
Annerley Qld 4103
11 August 2016

Mrs Denise Bowden
CEO, Yothu Yindi Foundation
PO Box 42119
Casuarina NT 0811

Dear Mrs Bowden

At the Plenary session you asked for feedback on our Garma experience. I didn't respond because I felt I would not be able to express myself clearly, so I am providing my feedback in this written form. I felt extremely emotional during the five-day festival and am still processing these emotions.

A lovely lady from Sydney who I met at Garma felt similar emotions so we are trying to find ways in which we may provide support to aboriginal communities within our cities, she is in Sydney and I am in Brisbane. I can assure you when the campaign for Constitutional change commences we will be out there doing our bit; this change must succeed.

My experiences at Garma ranged from being:

Overwhelmed

By the generosity of the Yolngu community who invite large numbers of non-indigenous people onto their lands, especially after the non stop battles they have to fight to keep their lands for their own use.

Over awed

By the calibre of speakers at the forum, just incredible, I feel very honoured to have heard presentations by Galarrwuy Yunupingu, Marcia Langton, Mick Gooda, Noel Pearson, Pat Dodson, and Fred Chaney, yourself and others. Never in my lifetime would I have thought that I would be listening to speakers such as these people who are so dedicated to the welfare of their people and their lands.

Bunngul

Enthralled by the Bunngul sessions each evening because they were entertaining, thought provoking and evocative. Unfortunately I do not recall (a very common occurrence for me these days) the name of the Bunngul organiser but I would like you to pass on my appreciation for his efforts as well as those of the dancers.

Great catering

I enjoyed the food and when giving my thanks to the servers on the final day they informed me that they served meals in 3.3seconds, apparently someone had worked it out. Based on the feedback at the Plenary Session the waiting lines provided great networking opportunities. And if people complain that is really their own problem.

I especially like the idea of no nametags because I never knew to whom I was speaking, it could have bene a retired person or a CEO of an organisation; great approach and less work for you and your limited staff.

Accommodation

There appeared to be a shortage of blow up mattresses and sleeping bags so I was thankful that I packed my own sleeping gear but I do not know how others who arrived with me coped.

I was pleased to see the integration of indigenous and non-indigenous in the general camping areas. I loved listening to the laughter around the fires, a wonderful experience.

Organisation

Having worked in event arrangements, your team's organisational skills are amazing. There was not a hiccup from the time I arrived at the Gove airport late in the evening until my departure from Gove - a big pat on the back for you all.

Volunteer in 2017

I would be very interested in volunteering for the 2017 Garma, so I will keep an eye out for the Garma 2017 website unless you can offer an alternative option for my expression of interest.

Thank you all for the amazing experience you gave me, I will treasure it always.

Kind Regards
Carole Hamilton
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P.S: A SMALL CONTRIBUTION TO YOUR FOUNDATION IS ATTACHED.