“It is through our ceremonies that our lives are created. These ceremonies record and pass on the laws that give us ownership of the land and of the seas, and the rules by which we live. Our ceremonial grounds are our universities where we gain the knowledge that we need. The universities work to a moon cycle, with many different levels of learning and different ‘inside’ ceremonies for men and women: from the new moon to the full moon, we travel the song cycles that guide the life and meaning.

It is the only cycle of events that can ever give a Yolngu people the full energy that he or she requires for life.”

Galarrwuy Yunupingu AM, 2008
Yothu Yindi Foundation Board of Management

Mr Galarrwuy Yunupingu AM
Chairman

Ms Djapirri Mununggiritj
Treasurer

Mrs Denise Bowden
Chief Executive Officer

Ms Yananymul Mununggurr
Director

Mr Balupalu Yunupingu
Director

Mr Djawa Yunupingu
Deputy Chairman

Mr Barayuwa Mununggurr
Director
Executive summary

We Yolngu of North East Arnhem Land have an unbroken and unbreakable connection with our land, have maintained the integrity and discipline of our laws, traditions and ceremonies and consistently demonstrated passionate and determined leadership, locally and nationally.

We value education and instill education into our children so that our laws and traditions are passed on, and our children grow into adults with mastery of our intricate cultural life and kinship system as well as a deep knowledge of the geographic, botanical, meteorological and environmental world around them.

Yet our young people disengage with the Northern Territory Government education system which is run by seemingly foreign institutions and does not allow for the integration of Yolngu philosophy and tradition within a Yolngu-controlled environment and lacks a formally accredited curriculum. As a result, school attendance numbers are falling, impacting on the education and employability outcomes of our young people, and our health and welfare more generally.

We understand the importance of balancing the two systems – and should we achieve that balance we will create an education and knowledge system that will unleash the potential of our young people.

Our Yolngu corporations have created jobs in the mining, forestry, pastoral, environmental and civil sectors; and we have professional and administrative positions filled by non-Yolngu people – we seek a pipeline of education that empowers our young people to take these positions as a normal progression of their lives, and to be skilled and equipped to do these jobs: we want the next generation to be able to choose a career path when they have the basic educational skills to make that choice.

The Garma Institute is the Yolngu-led solution to this complex problem.

The Garma Institute will provide local leadership and a coordinated, regionally embedded education model, supporting a Yolngu-informed curriculum across the education lifecycle: Early Childhood through to Primary, Secondary, VET and Higher Education level studies. The model would provide the foundations for a Yolngu-led knowledge economy, that has:

- Access to a Yolngu-led and informed curriculum across the complete education lifecycle
- On country and locally coordinated education programs, centered at Gulkula
- The transfer of Indigenous cultural knowledge, including to non-Yolngu institutions who will orbit into the Institute for student course-work
- Improved education and employment outcomes for the Yolngu community

The Garma Institute will oversee Yolngu educational development in NE Arnhem linking the clans of the region and partnering with dedicated non-Yolngu education institutions. The Institute has global potential as a leader in Indigenous knowledge recognition and in maintaining ancient Yolngu knowledges systems within the Australian nation.
1999 Garma Festival

- Dr Galarrwuy Yunupingu AM, the Chairman of the Yothu Yindi Foundation, delivered the Garma Maak (pictured).
- The Maak is a declaration from Yolngu leaders to the vice-chancellors of Australian universities.
- It was an invitation to Australian research and education institutions to partner with the Yothu Yindi Foundation in the development of Yolngu-informed education. To engage with Yolngu traditions, acknowledge Yolngu systems of knowledge as the rightful intellectual inheritance of the Yolngu. To recognise Yolngu knowledge traditions as living systems that require rational thought, empirical observation, formalisation, experimentation and formal education. To work with Yolngu to advance respect for the diverse Australian traditions and knowledge.

Yothu Yindi Foundation

- Yothu Yindi Foundation (YYF) is a nationally and internationally recognised Yolngu-led organisation that has undertaken extensive research and planning over the past 10+ years to establish the Garma Institute in North East Arnhem Land (NEAL), Northern Territory.
- Support for the modelling and establishment of the Garma Institute is the subject of this high level business plan.
PROPOSAL

The Garma Institute is proposed as a Yolngu knowledge and education centre, based at Gulkula, the Garma Festival site, and focused on the integration of Yolngu knowledge and education systems and Western knowledge and education systems.

The Garma Institute will be the institution that balances the education landscape in NE Arnhem as well as providing VET and Higher Education components of a Yolngu-led and informed ‘education pipeline’. The Institute will be a centre-point for the holding and sharing, research and recognition of Yolngu knowledge, and the development of Yolngu leaders. Its reach will extend across the NE Arnhem region and students will be drawn into education that is suited to their needs.

The Garma Institute will develop a Yolngu curriculum, with principles that can be exported to other regions, and which will be formally accredited. With this scope, and guided by the experience of YYF and its Board of Directions, the Institute has global potential as a leader in Indigenous knowledge recognition.

It will also be the keeping place for repatriated secret sacred objects and materials.

CONSULTATION

YYF has:
- The support of the Yothu Yindi Dilak Council
- Engaged in a long and comprehensive consultation process over the past decade to ensure the Garma Institute aligns with the priorities and needs of the local community.
- Been in constant dialogue with stakeholders from the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments, the private and public education sectors, philanthropic partners and corporates as the vision for the Institute has evolved.
- A record of success with the annual Garma Festival and in projecting Yolngu viewpoints nationally and internationally

"Yolngu family drive & investment is central to the Garma Institute."

Djawa Yunupingu, 2012

"I would like to see learning at Gulkula. Women's space would be valuable."

Eunice Marika 2012
The *borum* is the reward, the end result of a functional system – the fruit. With their *djalkiri* and through *yangara* all Yolngu will have what they need to steer their future, be role models and balance the Yolngu and Balanda worlds – to enjoy the *borum*, the fruits of their hard work.

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**1 Borum**

**Vision**

*硼乌 is the reward, the end result of a functional system – the fruit. With their *djalkiri* and through *yangara* all Yolngu will have what they need to steer their future, be role models and balance the Yolngu and Balanda worlds – to enjoy the *borum*, the fruits of their hard work.*

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**2 Yangara**

**Purpose**

*Yangara is the trunk on which things rely. It is creating the core experience so students that attend, participate and learn in education, by:*

- Having a Yolngu-led and informed curriculum across the complete education lifecycle
- Building on country and locally coordinated education programmes
- Balancing Yolngu and western knowledge systems
- Achieving improved education and employment outcomes for the Yolngu community

Providing the tools for each child to be their best – as Yolngu people in the modern world, comfortable as Yolngu – proud to be Australian.

---

**3 Djalkiri**

**Principles**

*Djalkiri is the root: the foundation from which everything rises:*

- It is a Yolngu driven, governed and led programme
- It is an education delivery model embedded in the region
- It is a culturally responsive and supportive environment
- It is a curriculum co-designed and co-delivered with Yolngu
Context: Existing vicious cycle blocks opportunity

**Solution:**
Quality Yolngu-led and informed curriculum across the education lifecycle. Intellectual Property retained by Yolngu

**Lack of coordination**
- Multiple education, government and community agencies
- External top down control
- Short-termism – electoral cycles and education provider commitment

**Solution:**
Creating a customised approach to link Yolngu leadership and knowledge systems to future educational success

**Poor attendance**
- Regional Indigenous school attendance rates are plummeting
- Public system rates for term 3, 2019:
  - Early years 39.1%
  - Primary 43.9%
  - Middle 37.5%
  - Senior 34.3%

**Solution:**
Yolngu vision, creation: education owned, driven and retained on country

**Poor foundation skills**
- Lack of capacity for employment and building community wellbeing
- Refusal to engage in non-Yolngu systems of education and knowledge

**Solution:**
Build around the core foundations of 60,000 years of Yolngu Indigenous knowledge and philosophy

**Lack of motivation**
- Missing leadership, discipline and commitment to education
- No value placed on western education
- Lack of confidence in life

**Teaching barriers**
- Cultural gap to delivering effective education and training outcomes
- Ineffective curriculum
## Garma Institute: establishment & operating horizons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institute element</th>
<th>Establishment horizon (2021–2026)</th>
<th>Operating horizon (2026–2031)</th>
<th>Partners</th>
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| **Yolngu Knowledge**       | • Infrastructure constructed  
• Co-design curriculum across the knowledge systems for Yolngu and Balanda students  
• Research and collaboration modules  
• Intellectual property control & retention  
• Curriculum accreditation  
• Measures and evaluation in place  
• Library and keeping place  
• On-country subject delivery | • Design of Yolngu-specific curriculum  
• Co-design curriculum across the knowledge systems for Yolngu and Balanda students – ongoing  
• Research collaboration | **Confirmed**  
University of Melbourne  
**Relationships with:**  
Charles Darwin University, University of Sydney, University of Western Sydney, Flinders University, | **Confirmed**  
Dhupuma Studio Schools  
University of Melbourne  
Apple Australia  
**Potential**  
Mining Training Centre  
Bachelor Institute  
Melbourne Indigenous Transition School  
Clotarf Foundation | **Confirmed**  
University of Melbourne  
**Potential**  
AIATSIS | **Confirmed**  
University of Melbourne  
Yolngu networks | **Confirmed**  
University of Melbourne  
Yolngu networks |**Potential**  
AIATSIS |
| **Secondary and Adult VET** | • Coordination of VET training offerings  
• Training aligned to regional economic needs  
• Co-design of curriculum  
• Delivery of Foundational studies  
• Vocational education and training  
• Establishing pathways to employment  
• Setting targets  
• Agreed measures of evaluation | • Transition pathways for diploma to degree options  
• Co-design of curriculum  
• Pathways to tertiary studies  
• Pathways to employment  
• University modules using Garma Inst as a base for delivery of subjects, research, masters and PHD programs. | **Confirmed**  
Dhupuma Studio Schools  
University of Melbourne  
Apple Australia  
**Potential**  
Mining Training Centre  
Bachelor Institute  
Melbourne Indigenous Transition School  
Clotarf Foundation | **Confirmed**  
Dhupuma Studio Schools  
University of Melbourne  
Apple Australia  
**Potential**  
Mining Training Centre  
Bachelor Institute  
Melbourne Indigenous Transition School  
Clotarf Foundation | **Confirmed**  
University of Melbourne  
**Potential**  
AIATSIS | **Confirmed**  
University of Melbourne  
Yolngu networks |**Confirmed**  
University of Melbourne  
Yolngu networks |**Potential**  
AIATSIS |
| **Yolngu Heritage**        | • Repatriation of Yolngu cultural heritage  
• Donald Thomson Collection Research collaboration  
• Library research centre  
• Skills training  
• Employment pathways established | • Repatriation (Staged approach-ongoing engagement and digitisation)  
• Exhibitions  
• Skills training | **Confirmed**  
University of Melbourne  
**Potential**  
AIATSIS | **Confirmed**  
University of Melbourne  
**Potential**  
AIATSIS | **Confirmed**  
University of Melbourne  
Yolngu networks |**Confirmed**  
University of Melbourne  
Yolngu networks |**Confirmed**  
University of Melbourne  
Yolngu networks |**Confirmed**  
University of Melbourne  
Yolngu networks |**Confirmed**  
University of Melbourne  
Yolngu networks |**Confirmed**  
University of Melbourne  
Yolngu networks |
| **Women’s Healing – Dilthan Yolngu’nh’a** | • Cultural business modeling  
• Infrastructure constructed  
• Co-design curriculum | • Business model operational  
• Employment pathway  
• Training delivery | | | | | |
The Gulkula site has been chosen for a range of cultural and practical reasons:

- The site of the annual Garma Festival
- Cultural significance as a Yolngu ceremonial, gathering and coordinating space
- Strong support from traditional owners
- Provides a culturally responsive and supportive environment
- Practical learning opportunities (sawmill, mining training centre, and vocational opportunities located onsite)
- Dilthan Yolngu’nha, the Women’s Healing Place is located onsite
- Accessibility to main NEAL towns (Nhulunbuy and Yirrkala), main road and Gove airport
- Existing infrastructure and facilities onsite

40km’s from Nhulunbuy township
10 minute drive from Nhulunbuy airport
1 hour flight ex-Darwin
1.5 hour flight ex-Cairns
Benefits / Return on Investment

Investment in the Garma Institute will

✓ Integrate education system
✓ Deliver curriculum and learning programs that meet the education needs of Yolngu people, both applied and academic
✓ Improve educational outcomes by including and recognising Yolngu knowledge throughout the education life cycle
✓ Provide education aligned with the region’s existing and future industries
✓ Build the capability of future Yolngu leaders by facilitating the transfer and recognition of cultural knowledge and traditions
✓ Be a key education platform facilitating the transition of the region from a mining to a knowledge economy
A fair teaching, to a fair standard of schooling, to a fair qualification for what they want to be as young men & women. That’s what we want.”

Galarrwuy Yunupingu AM, 2010