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23

Annual Report

**GURRKURR NAYI GA MEL-GURRUPAN
NUNHI WANHA GA GANGURI NORRA**

The vine shows us where the yam is



ARDS
ABORIGINAL
CORPORATION

CREATIVE MEDIA & COMMUNICATION SPECIALISTS

About ARDS

ARDS recently celebrated 50 years of working with First Nations communities, government agencies and other organisations across the Northern Territory. Our skilled cultural and language consultants are uniquely placed to listen deeply to Yolŋu voices, to understand local aspirations and challenges, and to work in collaboration from a ground-up, community-based way. Our vision is for First Nations communities to be able to engage on equal terms with the wider Australian society, its organisations and systems. Our work involves “spanning the gap” that exists between mainstream services and the information they typically share, and the information First Nations communities want and need.

At ARDS, we don’t use “manager”, we use “djägamirr”; it means the person who looks over or cares for djämamirr mala (employees) and projects in a particular area.



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Chairperson Report

Yow nhämirr nhumanydji bukma yolju wala? Namakuji? Njarranydji yäku Gawura Wanambi. Mälkdji narra dhuwal Gamarran' ga Marraju dhuwal yoljunydji narra Raymangirwuy najambalkpuy.

Njurrunydji narra wurruku buku-gurruapan njuhinyndhi yoljuny mitjiny nunhi wala yukurrinan djingaryuny djäk corporation-gu. Buku-djakurraram yukurr nhumalany. Ga dhuwandji yukurr buku-djakurraram manapan yutan mitjiny nunhi nsuma wala yawungu manapirr dhipal ARDS-il.

Dhuwal nunhi dhungarra naji djulkthuny najimurrun, najimurr marggi nhakun manyak wirri yan dhungarra ARDS-ku. Najawathuny ga gumurruy marrawul gulku djämamirrin walalany Balandany ga Yoljuny ga najamamayuny djäma mitji malanyha. Ga rrupiya ma'marawul walalanbal.

Njarranydji chairperson djäk ARDS-ku ga wirri yukurr marr najathirr nhakun djäk, buku-djakurraram narra yukurr bukma nna staff-nha, Yoljuny ga Balandany. Dhuwanydji melkum yukurr nhakun najimurr ga najimurrun corporation märmirr yan.

Dhuwanydji narra wurruku waja djäkun bala yutan dhungarrawa nhakun warthurr biyak linygu yan djäma ga djämamirr mala Yolju ga Balanda rä-manapanmirriyi. Rambanji yan warthurr djäma, rrambanji yan warthurr djingaryurr djäk ARDS-ku. Bili warthurnydji gulkun' mirithirra ga bathalan djäma mala ga djämamirr mala.

Yow' dhuwanydji narra wurruku waja bukma nna buku-djakurraram nhäthin nsuma yukurrinhan djäma djälajumi ARDS-nur ga wunda narkunha najya dhuwal rumbal nna ARDS-nha. Wirrkinydji narra wurruku buku djakurraram najimurrun CEO nna, Wämut nna, Ben Grimes nna. Naji yukurrinhan djingaryuny wunda nrrthin djäk ARDS-ku. Yow', bilin' marrkapmirr wala. Djutjdutjnha.

Ma', djutjdutjnha bukma!
Gawura Wanambi

Hi all, Gawura Wanambi is my name, Gamarran' is my mälk, and I am a Marraju man from Raymangir. I am the chairperson at ARDS. I also work on many projects. I am involved in language work, creating my own Marraju dictionary. I am also a senior cultural advisor and facilitator.

First of all, I would like to thank those board members who finished their time with us. I also want to thank and welcome the new members who have joined us.

This past year has been a really good year for ARDS. We got many new staff, Balanda and Yolju, and we created many new projects, with more funding for those projects.

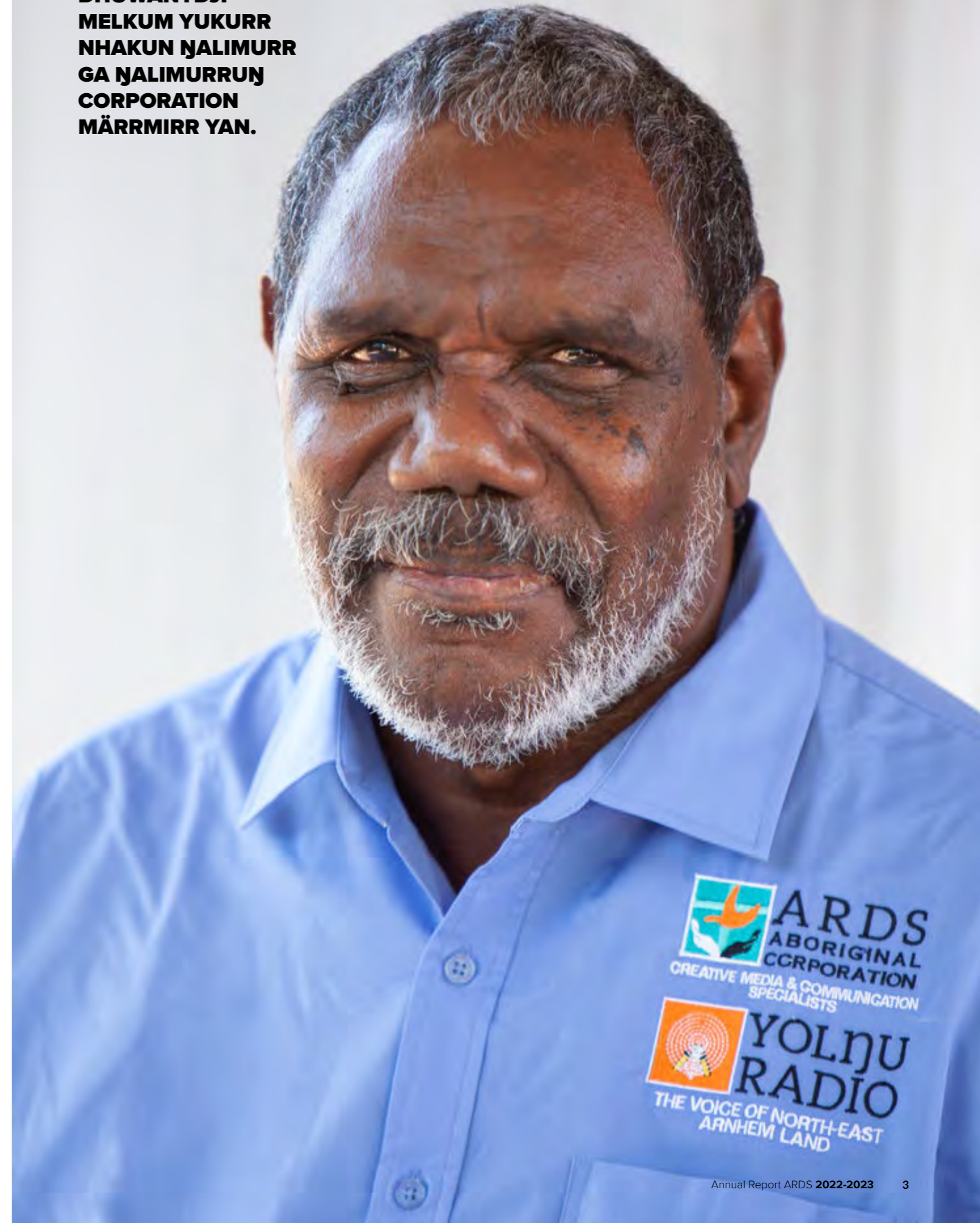
As the ARDS chairperson, I am very happy and want to thank all the staff, both Yolju and Balanda, for their efforts. We are solvent and in a strong position, thanks to everyone's hard work.

Now, looking ahead, I am hoping for another good year for our work and our staff, for Yolju and Balanda staff working together. We will stand together for ARDS. Next year will be another big year of many projects and many new staff.

So, finally, to the staff and board, I want thank you all for your work and for keeping ARDS strong. I also want to thank our CEO Wämut, Ben Grimes. He works very hard to keep ARDS strong. That's all for now. Djutjdutjnha.

“

**DHUWANYDJI
MELKUM YUKURR
NHAKUN NALIMURR
GA NALIMURRUN
CORPORATION
MÄRRMIRR YAN.**





...a reminder that all our work is for the benefit of Yolŋu peoples and communities, irrespective of which organisational hat we wear.

Ben Grimes
CEO



CEO Report

I'm pleased that this year has been another year of growth for ARDS. I'm particularly pleased that, as we grow, we've been able to keep our focus on our core values of who we are and how we do our work. This has been done through careful recruitment, planned inductions, and a thoughtful approach to what work we pursue and what work we say no to.

Linked to this has been a focus on internal language learning (thanks to the language team for organising our regular classes), and work on reviewing and updating our ARDS methodology for community education and development. This work is ongoing, but has reminded me of how much experience we collectively have, both from those who have shaped ARDS in the past, and those who are shaping the organisation today. I expect that the work that ARDS is doing internally on best-practice community education and development will also provide us with a strong platform to assist, influence and train other organisations doing similar work.

This year we've put a lot of time and effort into thinking about how we support and develop our staff, with the board identifying having long-term staff a priority for the organisation. In May, the board approved a paid parental leave policy, which also extends to casual staff. Our internal processes for staff assistance are being refined, with many staff accessing

and benefiting from the practical supports that come from working at ARDS. We're also putting a significant amount of effort into improving the way we think and work from a trauma-informed perspective.

From a senior leadership point of view, we've had two significant recruitments this year, with Cathryn Moore starting with us as the Community Development djägamirr (manager) and Dave Ray taking a lead role in Finance and Corporate Services. Both Cathryn and Dave bring a wealth of experience to ARDS, and we've quickly noticed the benefits of their energy and skills. Salome Harris has taken on the Language djägamirr position (together with Joy Bulkanhawuy) while Emma Murphy is on leave.

Another key theme of this year has been practical partnerships with other organisations, with a focus on on-the-ground work that's mutually beneficial to all involved. It's good to see the development of formal and informal partnerships with ALPA, Anglicare, Miwatj Health, Gorŋ-Däl, Yalu, Social Ventures Australia and Laynhapuy Homelands. These partnerships help to maximise the positive impact that ARDS can have, and also serve as a reminder that all our work is for the benefit of Yolŋu peoples and communities, irrespective of which organisational hat we wear.

As always, it's difficult to single out specific projects and activities for special attention.

On the Radio and Creative Media side, the East Arnhem Live 2022 festival was a huge event, bringing together the best of Yolŋu music from the region. The live AFL broadcast at the MCG and accompanying Dreamtime at the 'G mini-doco highlight how cultural and technical excellence go hand-in-hand at ARDS. The Community Development team continues to grow significantly, including continuing its excellent work in the mediation and dispute resolution space, deep thinking about how we do monitoring and evaluation, strong community input into better understanding around Yolŋu parenting, and some impactful work around increasing and understanding the benefits of using Yolŋu languages in health service delivery. The language team continues to grow as the language centre for Northeast Arnhem Land, with a huge amount of outputs across around a dozen Yolŋu Matha varieties. The team's capacity is also growing, as well as its size. We now have an approximately 15,000-word online dictionary and database available internally for ARDS staff, which reflects decades of language work.

Again, I thank the board for its continued active engagement and leadership. Many ARDS staff have commented in various ways about the confidence and benefits that we experience working under such consistent and strong Yolŋu leadership.

Bilin',
Ben Grimes (Wämut)

Community Development



Wayalwaja Marika, mediator and senior cross-cultural facilitator

A message from Cathryn Moore, Community Development team djägamirr



In the past year, the Community Development team has developed and grown, and we have focused on aligning our work with the priorities of Yolŋu communities and homelands.

I'm proud to have joined ARDS in April this year. I worked in Northeast Arnhem Land for three years before coming to ARDS. In that time, I had many opportunities to work with ARDS, and I always respected the integrity of its approach. Even amid a pandemic, the organisation remained committed to high quality cross-cultural communication centred on Yolŋu being empowered to live self-determined lives. So, I am grateful for the chance to join ARDS and continue learning from leaders and colleagues with such a depth of knowledge and experience. I want to acknowledge the leadership and support that Andrew Pascoe and

Janos Kerekes gave to the Community Development team in their shared role as djägamirr before I started – and of course to ARDS more broadly across many years. We are lucky that Andrew has stayed on, so we can keep benefitting from his knowledge and perspective. While Janos has stepped away to follow other dreams for now, we are sure the sounds of the yidaki will bring him back to Arnhem Land in the future.

The team has grown and changed in the past year. In the pages ahead, you'll see some new faces and familiar ones, too. I have found they share a passion for supporting Yolŋu-led initiatives and challenging parts of dominant

systems and culture that prevent self-determination. While some people have moved away for a while, I already understand that one of the special things about ARDS is people will always be gurruṯumirr (family) and connected, even when they finish their time as djägamirr (employees).

The djäma (work) of the Community Development team is truly diverse. As you will read in the stories shared by djägamirr, it spans health education, law and justice, two-way approaches to strength and healing for children and families, and initiatives to support effective

local governance and decision-making. I am excited by how much of our djäma starts with an idea or request from a local community. We hope to see even more of this in the coming years.

In addition to our focus on delivering important projects, we are always learning. In the past year, we have invested more time and focus on learning from and centring Yolŋu approaches to monitoring, evaluation and learning. We continue to explore and learn more about the "middle space" between the Yolŋu and Balanda worlds and challenge our assumptions about what that means for the way we do our djäma together, every day.

I hope you enjoy reading about the work of the Community Development team. It has been great to reflect on and celebrate our strong work across the year that has been, while we look forward to what the coming year holds.

Bilin',
Cathryn Moore

PEOPLE WILL ALWAYS BE GURRUṬUMIRR (FAMILY) AND CONNECTED



ARDS went digging for yams, and talked about how the process could be a metaphor for a successful mediation process.

Two-Way Approaches to Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

At ARDS, we are proud of the responsive, dynamic and high-quality work we do. We have always thought about ways to make sure our approach is working, creating meaningful outcomes and change. There are lots of reasons to do this: often, we have to do monitoring and evaluation, for project reporting. But, more importantly, we want to do it, and do it in a strong, Yolŋu-led way, so we can plan and adapt our work when we need to, to keep getting the strong outcomes for people, families and communities. On the Balanda side, this kind of work is called Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL):

- **Monitoring:** we continuously track a project, all the way through, to see how it is going.
- **Evaluation:** we learn from the data we are collecting, analyse it and make a judgement call about what that data is telling us. Is the project successful? Is it achieving what we thought?
- **Learning:** we think about if we need to make any changes. What is the story telling us? If it isn't going well, that's ok – what can we learn and do differently?

Of course, Yolŋu are always doing this; always thinking about what's happening in a family, community or project, what's working or not. We have always drawn on Yolŋu insight and knowledge when we plan and track our work.

This year we invested more time and resources to learning together about how and why we take this approach. We have also been exploring whether there are ways we can strengthen it, or better capture important reflections and insights. As part of this, we were very happy to welcome Melanie Williams to ARDS. Melanie has lots of experience working with MEL in other places. She has helped us take a deep dive into this area: bringing her knowledge of theories and practice and helping us contextualise these approaches through Yolŋu ways of thinking and doing. In practice, this has involved starting conversations about the whole life cycle of a project from a Yolŋu worldview.

Instead of starting with Balanda concepts, the foundational questions we ask ourselves - What do we hope this project will achieve? What will success look like? What tools will we use to measure that success? - begin with Yolŋu concepts, metaphors and terminology. Through discovery education, we take a participatory approach to building a shared understanding of these foundational ideas, and we keep validating and refining them in the course of our work.

Melanie's work helps to enhance the collective capability of our whole team in this unique, Yolŋu-led approach to MEL, so we have ways of talking about it that are appropriate and meaningful for everyone.



Our focus group workshops in Galiwin'ku and Nhulunbuy gave excellent feedback on designing and using health resources.

Case study: Closing the Gap Health and Early Childhood Partnership Pilot

ARDS partnered with Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation to evaluate the accessibility and use of Yolŋu languages in clinical and community health settings in Northeast Arnhem Land. In particular, we focused on the health resources we had developed, to see if and how they were being used in these settings, and how effective they have been.

Early in the project, we spent a lot of time identifying what information we would need to collect to properly evaluate the resources. Then, together with Miwatj Health, we ran a series of surveys and focus group workshops to find out about the current

communication methods and use of existing health resources in Yolŋu languages within Miwatj Health.

Participants in Nhulunbuy and Galiwin'ku were very engaged in these discussions. They shared a lot of ideas about good ways of communicating about health, and how we can work together better in the future to design and implement health resources in Yolŋu languages. In the next year, we will share the learnings from these workshops with our partners at Miwatj Health, and consider how we can collaborate to continue to improve health information access for Yolŋu.

We have learnt a lot through this project, particularly in terms of how we can collect the information we need to properly monitor and evaluate our work. Surveys helped gather views from Balanda, but much of our work focused on open-ended, storytelling-based evaluation tools, allowing the participants and stakeholders themselves (Yolŋu and Balanda) to drive the narrative and focus on what is important or what they feel comfortable to share. The unexpected findings and unprompted comments provide a richer understanding and enhance the evaluation in ways that just cannot be engineered!

Health & Wellbeing Projects

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

We have continued working with Miwatj Health and others to create new resources in Yolŋu languages, so that people can access more health information in their first language. This has included:

- Finishing a new women's health video resource
- Starting a men's health resource
- Creating an oral health pamphlet, which teaches the process of collecting and preparing munydjutj (green plum tree) for treating toothache
- Producing an animation about second-hand smoking
- Developing an audio resource about Yolŋu and Balanda ways of caring for somebody's emotional wellbeing and mental health.

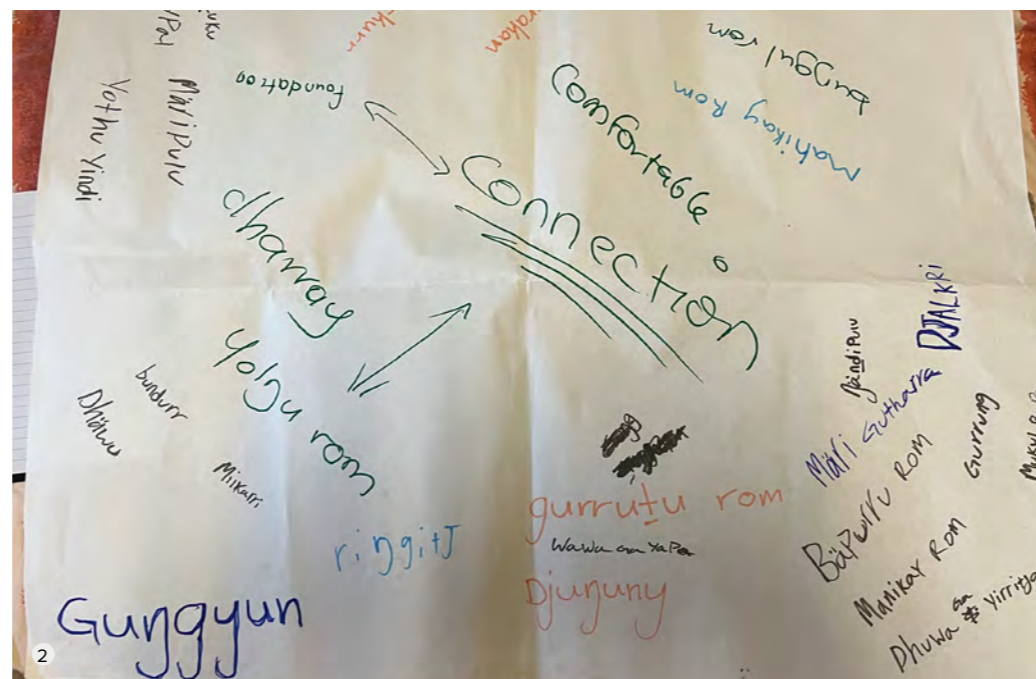


RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Our Respectful Relationships project continued this year. In August 2022, ARDS health educators and cross-cultural facilitators went to Yurrwi (Miliŋimbi) school and delivered workshops to the senior and middle school girls, using our Milly resource to talk about healthy relationships.

They also ran a session with the Learning on Country team about gurruṯu and a session with the Families as First Teachers (FaFT) group, using our Strong Yolŋu Families poster to talk about the different phases relationships go through.

The team returned to Yurrwi in March and delivered eight workshops to school students, working alongside the rangers. Students learned about connecting to one another through gurruṯu, and safe places and people to support them as they grow into adults.



1. A screenshot from our second-hand smoking video.
2. Brainstorm from our Respectful Relationships workshop in Yurrwi. March, 2023.
3. Our oral health pamphlet teaches about how use munydjutj to cure toothache.



A CCT workshop outside ARDS' Wuwarr training facility in Nhulunbuy.

Cultural Competency Training

This year marked the fourth year of ARDS' Northeast Arnhem Land Cultural Competency Training (CCT) program. We delivered 13 workshops to 216 participants, who came from many different NT Government departments, Aboriginal corporations and a range of other organisations working in the region.

A highlight for the team was delivering workshops at every public school in Northeast Arnhem Land, taking us to Galiwin'ku, Gapuwiyak, and Nhulunbuy (following workshops in Yurrwi and Raminginj late in the previous financial year). Another highlight was increasing the reach of our eLearn training program to more than 1000 participants.

We receive consistently strong feedback from participants about CCT's impact on their ability to work effectively in the region, and from Yolŋu about the flow-on positive impact this has for communities. Participants say they particularly value the opportunity to engage with senior Yolŋu facilitators, as well as build practical skills and learning strategies for language, Plain English and community engagement.

CCT is also an important source of independent funding that supports ARDS to do djäma that our board and Yolŋu communities see as priorities, without needing to rely on government.

Throughout the year, we continued to build and refine the content and approach of CCT workshops. In the year ahead we plan to make some exciting changes that will make the program even more accessible and responsive to the needs of organisations working with Yolŋu.

The team returned to Yurrwi in March and delivered eight workshops to school students, working alongside the rangers. Students learned about connecting to one another through gurruṯu, and safe places and people to support them as they grow into adults.

“THAT WAS THE BEST TRAINING I HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN. EVERYONE WAS ENGAGED AND ASKED GOOD QUESTIONS. I FOUND BETTER WAYS TO WORK WITH MY CLIENTS AND FAMILY, AND IT REMINDED ME TO ALWAYS ASK QUESTIONS. I LOVED IT.”

Workshop participant, 23-24 August 2022, Nhulunbuy.

“VERY ENGAGING THROUGHOUT AND A GOOD MIX OF VIDEO, READING AND ONLINE TESTS. THE MODULE LENGTH ALSO WAS GREAT. I FOUND IT VERY USEFUL AND WILL BE RETURNING TO THESE RESOURCES IN THE FUTURE.”

– eLearn participant, 3 February 2023.

Strong Yolŋu Parenting

We set up this project in response to a direct request from Gapuwiyak mala (clan) leaders. They told us that Yolŋu families needed support to understand more about how the Balanda child protection system works. Yolŋu need to be empowered to engage more openly and confidently with service providers, and we want Balanda to understand and respect Yolŋu ways of growing up djamarrkuŋi (children) and keeping gurruṭu and culture strong.

For this project, Melody, Milly and Martha have been visiting Gapuwiyak and the surrounding homelands, like Raymangirr. They work with Wuṭpurruṅu, our colleague who lives there. But lots of other people have been involved in this project too, making resources in Darwin or working with us when we visit Gapuwiyak. Below, Milly, Martha and Melody share more about this project.

We went to Gapuwiyak and spoke to parents about nhaltjan djamarrkuŋi dhu ṅathan ṅaṅḍiw ga bāpaw romgu – how children grow up through their mother’s law and their father’s law. It’s really good work sharing together: we learn from them and they learn from us.

Sometimes parents might feel like they’re the only ones that are struggling, but we are struggling too: we can share our struggles and support each other. When we share our hard stories, the young parents feel better about sharing their stories with us. Hopefully, after we leave, they spread the word about this work, telling others that they can trust us, that we are on their side and here to help in any way possible, to help them grow in a healthy way for their future and for their kids’ future.

We want the families to understand that we are there to work with them, to support them and to move forward. At first, they might be a bit shy or they might not fully trust us. But we explain what we are there for and then they feel uplifted.

Milly said: “Latju ṅarra ṅunhi dhuwal ṅayi djāma, bili ṅarra wiripu ga marṅgithirr, ṅarrakalaṅuwuy, ṅarraku gurruṭuw ga bukmak yolŋu. Through working on this

project, I have found ways to talk to my own family, as well as helping other Yolŋu families.”

Martha said: “This work is important: we get to stand in the middle, between the family and the white law, so we can help the family understand the Balanda law and the power it has over us. Like, if a mother is being misunderstood, sometimes people don’t talk to her about what’s happening: they just report that and the baby gets taken away.

“Through this project, we want to help everyone understand each other, and support Yolŋu families. Some Balanda don’t understand the support and help Yolŋu need. Yolŋu people have major trust issues and don’t really like talking to Territory Families or police - or even support workers. They worry about if children are taken away, because it affects everyone in the community, and also in other communities. But they like talking to us, to ARDS – to Milly, and maybe to me in the future.”

We have been listening carefully to what parents and leaders say they need. They want better approaches and engagement from service providers. But they also want better tools and resources that show Yolŋu knowledge and languages. So, we have been working together to make some of those resources.

Melody said: “I talked with Kylie Gatjarrawuy, who is an artist from the Djāpu clan. We worked on a children’s book together with Warrjira in the Darwin office. We started with this story and song: ṅunha Wāṅa Diltjijur (Little Cabin in the Woods).

“We wanted the story to be fun for children. We wanted it to have a hidden meaning, too. Kylie painted bright happy pictures, and some scary ones. Life can be both ways.

“People who looked at the pictures thought about different kinds of meaning. Through the story and pictures, families talked to us about how it feels when government workers come and take Yolŋu children away. They also talked about what a safe home looks like, and how Yolŋu families work together to give care and protection to children, even when things are hard or scary.”

“WE WANT THE FAMILIES TO UNDERSTAND THAT WE ARE THERE TO WORK WITH THEM, TO SUPPORT THEM AND TO MOVE FORWARD.”



Milly, Melody and Martha with some of the resources they made for the Strong Yolŋu Parenting project.

Yolŋu Peacemaking



HIGHLIGHTS

1. Networking and sharing the story of our service at the Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration's Indigenous Youth Justice Conference (Sydney, October 2022) and a gathering with other peacemakers from

across the Northern Territory (Katherine, May 2023).

2. Deepening and refining our focus on Yolŋu ideas about what "success" looks like in ARDS' peacemaking and dispute resolution service through

monitoring, evaluation and learning. You can read more about our approach on page 8.

3. Consistent growth in the proportion of hours worked by Yolŋu mediators, year on year.



We are excited that ARDS' current initiatives to support Yolŋu-led peacemaking are now in their third year. In the past year, we have expanded the range of services available to Yolŋu communities, and our team has grown.

The ARDS board has been very generous in its support of this service: board members in different communities have helped us make important links, meet the right people and build the profile of this work.

YOLŊU-LED PEACEMAKING

This year, we are reporting on three different areas of mediation and dispute resolution work at ARDS.

Youth restorative justice conferencing

ARDS can now support growth and healing for young people and those harmed through youth offending by facilitating youth restorative justice conferencing. We can receive referrals for young people involved in the criminal justice system (from the court or the police), as well as non-court referrals (from families, schools or other agencies). We hope to facilitate more work through this arm of our service in the coming year.

Family dispute resolution

This year, ARDS was one of nine Aboriginal organisations across Australia (the only one in the NT, and the most remote) to receive funding to support separating families through a family dispute resolution process. This aspect of our service allows ARDS to engage in deep learning about family separation and lasting solutions for Yolŋu families. To ensure we can safely and appropriately

facilitate family dispute resolution in remote settings, we are also upgrading spaces in Nhulunbuy, Mililjimi and Galiwin'ku, improving their safety and suitability to hold family dispute resolution conferences.

WE ACCEPTED 300% MORE REFERRALS INTO THE SERVICE COMPARED TO LAST YEAR

General mediation

Referral numbers grew significantly in our general mediation service – we accepted 300% more referrals into the service compared to last year. As Yolŋu become more familiar with us and our work, we also see more walk-ins and self-referrals.

Yolŋu peacemakers working through ARDS have supported Yolŋu families with diverse matters:

- Burial disputes
- Domestic and family violence, including questions around domestic and family violence orders
- Community violence
- Family tension, including separation
- Personal Violence Restraining Orders
- Criminal charges e.g. stealing, property damage, assault
- Estates
- Cultural recognition
- Land rights.

Our key priority for the coming year will be further strengthening our local capacity to be responsive and accessible to Yolŋu communities. We plan to do this through more recruitment, especially of Yolŋu peacemakers/mediators. As we grow, we will focus on having staff based in communities wherever possible, so we can develop deeper local connections.

1. Mayalil, Wayalwaŋa and Josh at the peacemakers' gathering in Katherine.
 2. Emma and Wayalwaŋa on their way to Katherine.
 3. Wayalwaŋa speaking at the Indigenous Youth Justice Conference in Sydney.
 4. Mediation team bush trip.

LAW AND JUSTICE GROUPS

Over many years, mala leaders in Raminginjin have engaged in discussions about local decision making, with a particular priority for law and justice. In May 2023, the NT Attorney-General Chansey Paech visited Raminginjin to meet with community members and mala leaders, as well as ARDS and the Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation (ALPA), who have been supporting local efforts. Leaders shared ideas and hopes for a local law and justice group. ARDS and ALPA have received some seed funding to continue supporting these local aspirations. We hope to facilitate more

ongoing support for the Raminginjin Law and Justice Group – as well as for other Yolŋu communities who hope to establish their own groups – in the coming years.

We have also been very involved in the development of the Community Court and Law and Justice Group guidelines, working to make sure that government policy properly reflects good ways of working with Yolŋu communities.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

In late 2022, ARDS and Social Ventures Australia teamed up and successfully won

a tender from the Aboriginal Justice Unit to review legislative provisions within the Bail Act 1982 (NT), Sentencing Act 1995 (NT), Juries Act 1962 (NT) and Parole Act 1971 (NT) that are unfair, discriminatory and/or detrimental to First Nations people. This is a significant body of work and is a key part of the overall NT Aboriginal Justice Agreement, which aims to improve justice outcomes for First Nations Territorians. The review identified dozens of areas where First Nations people experience different and more negative outcomes in the criminal justice system, and made recommendations for improvements to the legislation.



ARDS has been talking to mala leaders in and around Raminginjin about law and justice.



Ian Gumbula at Dabala barge landing.

Welcome Ian Mongunu Gumbula

Narra dhuwal yäku Ian, Mongunu Yolŋukurr, ga bäpuru narra Gumbula. Bäpuru Dayŋurr Gupapuyŋu. Ga wäŋa narraku Djirwirri. Ga narraku community Galiwin'ku ga Ngukurr.

My Balanda name is Ian, my Yolŋu name is Mongunu, surname Gumbula. My clan is Dayŋurr Gupapuyŋu, and my homeland is Djirwirri. I'm from Galiwin'ku and Ngukurr. I have done lots of different jobs, in Galiwin'ku and Ngukurr: in schools, with community councils, with ALPA and CDP employment programs.

Through the intervention times, I worked for the federal government as an engagement officer in Ngukurr. I also started working with elders to establish a cultural governance board, then worked in law and justice, and supporting young offenders going through the court system. I've also done research work with CDU.

I moved to Darwin in 2022. Gawura and Ben approached me to ask if I'd work with ARDS on Local Decision Making and law and justice.

I saw it was similar to what I'd been doing for a long time: it made sense, given my background. So, I agreed to come on board. I've been supporting different ARDS projects. In Nhulunbuy, we are working with wäŋa watarŋu (custodians) to help make strong plans for the future for that place. This work keeps me close to my grandmother's country and my waku's and yapapulu's country: it has been good because I already have all those connections.

I've also been working with the law and justice team, going out to Raminginjin. It has been great to connect up with my father's family there. We've been doing mediation djäma and also supporting people going through the court.

It's really important to work with communities across Arnhem Land, especially with leaders and emerging leaders. ARDS has a really great and flexible way of working and supporting staff, and I am looking forward to continuing my connection with all the staff, Yolŋu and Balanda.

Language & Resources

A message from Joy Bulkanhawuy & Emma Murphy, Language and Resources djägamirr

Language team-dhu dhiyal ARDS-ñur Yolñuy ga Balanday ñuli ga guñga'yun bukma communities Northeast Arnhem Land-ñur ga homelands-ñur. Ga mirithirr manymak gämurru' dhärukku märr dhu yuṯa djamarkkuḷi marggithirr ga ñuthan däḷthirr. Limurr ga djäma bala räli märr ga ñayi matha dhu ga dhärra ḍal, bitjana bili.

The language team at ARDS, Yolñu and Balanda, are working with all the communities and homelands in Northeast Arnhem Land. It's really important, work, so that young children can learn and grow strong. We work together so that the languages will stay strong always.

We have enjoyed more travel to different communities and homelands: Galiwin'ku, Raminginj, and some Laynhapuy homelands. The travel is two-way: we visit different communities from Darwin, and our colleagues in different places come to the Darwin or

Nhulunbuy offices too, or we travel between communities. We were really happy to recruit a new linguist to focus on building up and supporting language work from our Nhulunbuy office, working in the Laynhapuy and Miwatj regions: you can read more about Celeste below. Malñumba has also been busy travelling a lot for language work from her home in Mäpuru.

It's really important to stay connected across all the communities and homelands, and we want to do this more: this is how we get more ideas and feedback, hear from Yolñu about what they want, what changes they want to see in their communities, how we can look after our languages together.

It is now the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032), and we have been looking for more opportunities to celebrate and share Yolñu languages – why they matter, how diverse they are – with more people.

In November, some of us travelled to NSW to speak at the Languages Gathering in Terrigal. We were invited by the Aboriginal Languages

Trust to speak about how our languages connect us. It was really inspiring and helpful meeting other First Nations people and hearing their languages and stories. Even though we speak different languages and come from different places, we found something of ourselves in their stories; talking about our languages, we found ways that we are all connected.

We were really happy to share our languages, Rom (law) and our ideas. And while we are setting ourselves up as a language centre for Yolñu languages, we learnt a lot about other language centres, too.

As we reported last year, with multiyear operational funding, the language team can be more responsive and confident in how we plan and do our matha djäma (language work). We can take the time to finish projects slowly, the right way. And, more and more, elders, families and organisations are contacting us with exciting ideas for language projects and collaborations: it is great to be in the position to pursue some of these new ideas, work together with elders and organisations, without first having to chase funding.

In the stories and photos that follow, we share some of our highlights from this year, from our operational funding and also other grants. As well as these projects, we continue to support the work of the whole organisation, helping other teams with translation, resource creation and communication design. We also continue to offer our fee-for-service translation.

As ARDS has welcomed so many more staff, we have also been sharing our language teaching skills with our new colleagues: new Yolñu colleagues are learning how to teach their languages, and new Balanda and non-Yolñu colleagues are learning Yolñu languages.

Thankyou to the matha djämamirr mala for another year of hard, important djäma, and to everyone we have collaborated with to keep Yolñu languages strong.



Darwin staff practise speaking Djambarrpuyñu at one of our regular language sessions.

WELCOME BACK, MARTHA!

Martha worked at ARDS many years ago, then went away to have four children. We were really happy to welcome her back this year. She's been working with the Language team but is also a great help to many other areas of our work, such as on the parenting project, with the Creative Media team, and helping the office run smoothly.



“I came to work at ARDS because I want to help Yolŋu – give them the help I didn't get. Sometimes things escalate just because we don't understand each other. Instead of that, I just want to talk, show there are good people in the world who care about them. Maybe it's because I'm a bit more mature than last time I worked here, but I definitely have a greater appreciation for how important ARDS' work is, what a difference it can make.”
—Martha



One of our Marrgithirri Yolŋu Matha posters.



We are excited that our historical Gupapuyŋu dictionary is almost ready for release

LANGUAGE RESOURCES

We have enjoyed making our Marrgithirri Yolŋu Matha poster series: it is a great way to share and profile some of the many Yolŋu languages. So far, we have published three – in Djambarrpuyŋu, Gupapuyŋu and Gumatj, with another five in production. We also have a number of books in production, including an illustrated Gurraŋay (ancestral language) book for children, an illustrated Milkarri (Women's

Songline) story, and an historical Gupapuyŋu dictionary. Our Milkarri and Gurraŋay projects continue to document and share words and concepts frequently not being learnt by younger generations.

We supported the following Yolŋu languages:

- Dhuwal - Djambarrpuyŋu
- Dhuwala – Gumatj and Gupapuyŋu
- Dharu - Gälpu
- Yan-nharu
- Djinar
- Wägilak and Ritharrŋu
- Dhay'yi.

FIRST-LANGUAGE LITERACY TRAINING

We continued our first-language literacy training, building the capacity of our team and also teachers, translators and others working with and through their own languages. In late August,



Malŋumba, Bulkanhawuy and Kathrin spent a week in Galiwin'ku, where Yurranydjil and Maratja led a workshop. It was a great two days of practicing reading and writing and learning about spelling rules in Yolŋu languages. In December, people came into Darwin from Nhulunbuy and Yirrkala, Mäpuru and Galiwin'ku for four more days of literacy training. This was a very collaborative effort, with many skilled teachers and translators stepping in to share their knowledge and passion for good strong literacy practices.

Milkarri – Women's Songlines

Our Milkarri work continues to be a source of strength and pride to all the miyalk (women) involved. As well as workshops in Birritjimi as part of the Connection to Culture project (see below), we hosted a beautiful two-day Milkarri workshop in Darwin, at Nungalinya college. Women of different generations and clans came from across Northeast Arnhem Land, shared reflections about Milkarri and wailed and sung together.



Sylvia Nulpinditj, Creative Media co-djägamirr, facilitated the workshop, and said:

“ARDS-thu workshop gäma miyalkkurruwurrgu mala yurr Nungalinya College-ŋur ga ŋarra ŋunhi wanganydja ga guŋga'yun Milkarri workshop-ŋur. Ga miyalkkurruwurdja mala marrtji Galiwin'kuŋur, Yirrkalaŋur, Gapuwiyakŋur, Mäpuruŋur ga Darwin-ŋur ga romguny buku-luŋ'maranhamirr marrgithinyaraw Milkarri romgu märr ga walal dhu ga ŋayatham walalangalaŋaw walal djamarakuŋiw yalalaŋumirriw. Ga djämany ŋarraku ŋunhiliyi ŋarra dap'maram walalany rirrakay workshop-ŋur radio program-gu ga bulu interviewing ŋarra ga walalany.

“ARDS brought women together for this workshop at Nungalinya College, and I helped run the workshop. Women from Galiwin'ku, Yirrkala, Gapuwiyak, Mäpuru and Darwin came together to learn about Milkarri Rom, so that later they can take this to their own children, for the future. At the workshop, I was also recording their singing, and doing interviews, for radio programs.”

CONNECTION TO CULTURE

This multi-year project, part of a national pilot, provides opportunities for elders and younger Yolŋu in the Miwatj and Laynhapuy areas to come together for intergenerational language and culture learning. So far through this project we have supported Rirratjŋu, Gälpu, Gumatj, Djapu, Marrkulu, Wangurri, Maŋarrpa, Warramiri, Djambarrpuyŋu and Gupapuyŋu clan languages.

In 2022-2023, the project supported Milkarri workshops, bush trips and plenty of recordings. We also focussed more on outreach into the homelands, after the previous year working mainly in and

around Nhulunbuy, Yirrkala and Birritjimi.

In August 2022, we partnered with Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation, the Djalkiri Foundation, Miwatj Health and Country Connect for a three-day Connection to Culture camp. The camp connected youth to elders, with different school groups visiting the camp for activities and learning around emotions, wäŋa (home/country) and gurruŋu.

The Yolŋu Radio team has recorded stories in multiple clan languages and travelled to Dhälinybuy to interview Yirralka and Dhimurru Rangers about educating younger generations.



WELCOME CELESTE

Yow bukma! Ŋarra yäku Celeste ga ŋarra mälk Galikali. My name is Celeste and my skin name is Galikali. I grew up near Adelaide on Peramangk wäŋa.

I've been working as a community linguist since 2015. Before I came up to Darwin, I was working with languages all over South Australia. Before that I worked at Ngukurr Language Centre helping support languages from the Roper region. I learnt some Wägilak matha there and also learnt to speak Kriol.

I started working at ARDS this year in April. I am very happy to be working with the language team and I have also really enjoyed the opportunity to work with and learn from other teams. I'm having a really good time learning more Yolŋu languages, too.

Since I started at ARDS, I have been working in the Nhulunbuy office and the Darwin office. I've been helping language team djämamirr with their work and helping to make resources like posters, books, recordings and lessons. I've also been travelling to homelands in the Miwatj region, meeting lots of people and listening to how we can help keep clan languages strong.



A bush trip to share stories about bush foods and medicine with children.

Creative Media & Yolŋu Radio



Another day at the office for Yolŋu Radio legends Andrew Gurruwiwi and William Gumbula.



A message from Will Porter (Balaj), Yolŋu Radio djägamirr and Sylvia Nulpinditj & Lisa Kay, Creative Media djägamirr.

The past 12 months at Yolŋu Radio has been a period of consolidation and cultivation. We have welcomed back some familiar faces and we are happy to see more of our day-to-day operations led by Yolŋu staff. The station has been supported all year by a clear direction laid out by the board, with a focus on Yolŋu recruitment, training and development, and a sustained vision for the station to be a pillar of celebration for Yolŋu identity, languages and Rom.

This year, we've had success stories in the sanctuary of our radio studios, but we have also been out capturing stories in the red dirt – and even had djämamirr speaking Yolŋu languages on national television!



I would like to acknowledge the fantastic work of all the Yolŋu Radio djämamirr. In particular, I want to highlight the work of William Gumbula: under the guidance of long-time Yolŋu Radio broadcaster Andrew Gurruwiwi, William continues to excel in facilitating the operations of the radio station. I would also like to welcome back a long-time radio team member Zowie Bromot, who has taken on new roles as station photographer and scheduler of radio programming. These skills will now stay in the Nhulunbuy office for future djämamirr to learn. Baykali Ganambarr has continued to do a fantastic job for the station, this year focussing on his own program, Baykali Reviews. Baykali has reviewed sports, video games, music and movies, which has made for an incredibly unique and entertaining product.

One particular highlight has been Yolŋu Radio's continued partnership with the AFL, which you can read more about on the following pages/below.




We continued work on the Manikay Nupan - Tracking Songlines project, working to make our 40 years worth of clan song recordings more accessible. We are building an open-access cultural heritage library: this has involved meticulously and sensitively listening to everything in our collections, with the appropriate authorities, as we prepare to share them – and information about them – in a custom-designed database.

Other work of note was our live broadcast of the Luku Ngärra documentary at the Darwin Deckchair cinema, broadcasts of local football games, capturing stories at community festivals and facilitating radio workshops in homelands – which continues to be a top priority for the radio station.

I would like to thank everyone in the organisation who has helped Yolŋu Radio over these past 12 months. There have been a variety of contributions that have helped keep the station's foundation strong. Without your help our djäma would not be possible.

Bilin', until next year.

YOLŊU RADIO

THE VOICE OF NORTH-EAST ARNHAM LAND

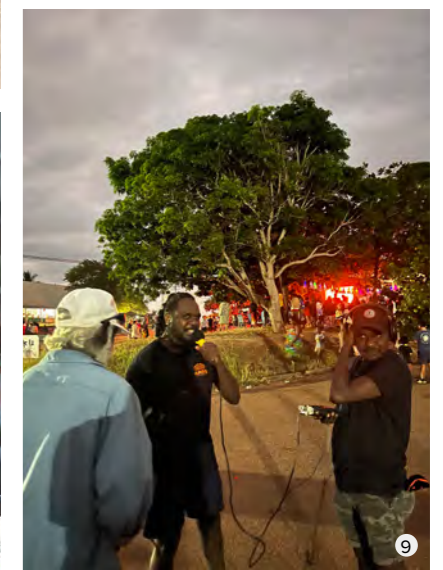
AFL

This year, we travelled south for the Dreamtime @ the 'G match. Four Yolŋu commentators called the match in their first language on Yolŋu Radio, in front of more than 80,000 fans. The team delivered a sophisticated broadcast, which received significant praise from both Yolŋu and Balanda. Creative Media co-djägamirr (and football commentator) Sylvia Nulpinditj had this to say about the experience:

"This project was a great opportunity to give the listeners a chance to listen to something they love in their own language, from their own homes. It was a great example of the team working very well together."

The team was busy before the game, with a photoshoot with AFL legend Lance 'Buddy' Franklin and a visit to the Channel 7 studios to shoot promotional footage to play between the broadcast. After the game, Baykali Ganambarr and BJ Mununggurr went to the winners' changerooms for a live-cross. The following week, the AFL asked our commentary team to head to Adelaide, to broadcast the Adelaide Crows v. Brisbane Lions game. Despite minimal notice, the team yet again delivered. I would like to commend our broadcast team for their professionalism, authenticity and enthusiasm throughout the entire project.

Another day in the office



1. Sylvia Nulpinditj, host of the Yolŋu Radio live broadcast at the Deckchair Cinema Luku Ŋarra screening.
2. Jean at Bukawuy Shed.
3. Interviewing senior rangers at Dhalinybuy.
4. Outside broadcast from the GAFL grand final in Gove.
5. Andrew Gurruwiwi running a radio workshop in Gän Gän.
6. BJ and Sylvia with Lance 'Buddy' Franklin at the MCG.
7. Baykali Ganambarr interviewing board member Beja Gondarra in Galiwŋku.
8. Wapit interviewing a Buffalo Boy/CDP djämamirr in Gapuwiyak.
9. Yolŋu Radio did roaming interviews at the Yarrapay festival in Yirrkala.

Fundamentals of Human Resources

ARDS is working on a series of animated videos that will introduce concepts about work. Targeted to new First Nations employees, the videos will cover topics like:

- Contracts and building relationships at work
- Pay rates and understanding payslips
- Employment types
- Tax and completing tax returns
- Superannuation
- Communication at work.

With the support of seed funding and input from stakeholders including ALPA, Mimal Land Management, Northern Land Council, Anglicare, and FairWork Australia, we are in the final stages of completing the first video. Videos will be available in Plain English, Djambarrpuyngu, and later in a range of other First Nations languages.

Illustrations in the background: Fundamentals of HR Episode 2 | Employment Types, Pay Rates and Payslips.

Corporate Services

A message from Dave Ray, Corporate Services team



I joined ARDS as the Finance and Corporate Services specialist in May. My work has focused on administering our finances, properties, motor vehicles and employment contracts, improving ARDS' business processes and managing our outsourcing arrangement with the Arnhem Land Progress Association (ALPA) for accounting services. I have been a chartered accountant for 25 years, and have worked mostly in

for-profit companies. I've also studied commerce, linguistics, German studies and biblical studies. I hope I can use some of these skills while working at ARDS, as well as my accounting skills. ARDS has grown significantly over recent years, especially in the areas of community development and law and justice programs. So, the Corporate Services team has grown, too: the team now has staff with expertise in business development, commercial processes and asset management. My recruitment was part of that growth, and I have really enjoyed looking at ways our team can support ARDS' growing size and the increasing complexity of its work.

The Corporate Services team is now able to better support djägamirr and other colleagues leading projects, particularly in submitting more compelling proposals and helping prepare financial and non-financial information for project reporting. As more people come to work at ARDS, the important task of looking

after everyone has also grown: from HR processes, policies and procedures through to the personalised care and support we provide staff going through hard times. Reflecting this, the Corporate Services team has focused on updating our systems, making them as clear and efficient as possible, while keeping in mind the linguistic diversity of our staff and how we work across so many locations.

We have expanded our motor vehicle fleet and we are building additional capacity for project delivery in some of our more remote locations, for example by upgrading our facilities.

We would like to thank our friends in the Consulting and New Business Team at ALPA for their accounting and administrative support throughout the year. This important relationship means our Corporate Services group can remain lean, so that ARDS resources can be dedicated to core activities rather than administration.



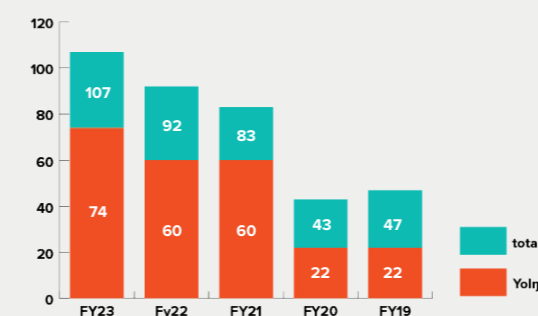
WELCOME FRANCIS!

Francis Diatschenko is a sound recordist and musician based in Darwin, Australia. He is a proud new member of ARDS' Creative Media team. Francis handles most of the sound recording and editing across many ARDS projects; supporting Yolŋu Radio, the Language and Resources and Community Development teams.

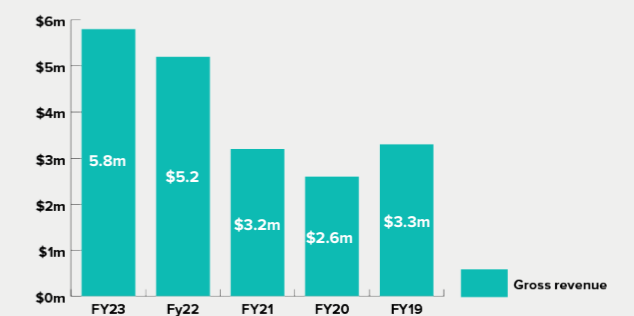
Previously, Francis lectured in music performance and theory and was the remote music VET trainer for Charles Darwin University. This involved designing and implementing remote music training across three regions in the Northern Territory.

He is a member of progressive rock group The Sheikhs and has collaborated and performed with some of the NT's most eminent musicians: Dr G Yunupingu; Balang T Lewis; The Djari project; the Central Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir and currently Andrew Gurruwiwi Band and Yothu Yindi. He has also worked on film sound projects.

Staff by year



Revenue





Outback Spirit tours

This collaboration between ARDS, Outback Spirit Tours and Journey Beyond continues to be a great success.

In the 2023 season (which spans the whole dry season), we delivered 75 inspiring Welcome to Country ceremonies and Women's Healing Experiences to tour guests on the Arnhem Land Wilderness Adventure Tours.

This project allows Yolŋu miyalk ga ḍirramu (women and men) work on something they are passionate about: celebrating and strengthening Yolŋu culture. The Welcome to Country ceremony and Women's Healing Experience both proudly show guests that Yolŋu gurrutu and Rom is still alive and strong in Northeast Arnhem Land.

The work takes place over May to September: during this time, every second day we are busy with ceremonies and healing. We employ more than 40 Yolŋu to do this work, including senior men and women: ḍirramu as clan leaders, songmen and yidaki players, miyalk as interpreters, healers and dancers. Whole extended families, including grandchildren, are involved, and Outback Spirit Tour guests continue to tell us they are deeply touched by the experience.



1. Lead songmen.
2. Dancer Geisha Gurruwiwi.
3. Children dancing.
4. Dancers Lindsay, Vernon & Yotjing Gurruwiwi.
5. Selma Gurruwiwi, Healing & bush medicine experience.

Supporters, Donors & Sponsors

ARDS would not be able to do our work without the support and contributions from many individuals, organisations and agencies. We thank everyone who supported and contributed to our work in 2022-2023, including;

Australian Electoral Commission
www.aec.gov.au

Australian National University
www.anu.edu.au

Australia Council for the Arts
creative.gov.au

Atomic 212
Atomic212.com.au

Aboriginal Housing NT Aboriginal Corporation
ahnt.com.au

Anglicare NT
anglicare-nt.org.au

Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation (ALPA)
alpa.asn.au

Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications and the Arts; Indigenous Languages and Arts
arts.gov.au

Australian Government Department of Social Services
dss.gov.au

Alcoa of Australia Ltd
www.alcoa.com

Australian Football League
afl.com.au

Buku-larrnggay Mulka Art Centre
yirrkala.com/buku-larrnggay-mulka

Charles Darwin University
www.cdu.edu.au

Community Broadcasting Foundation
cbf.org.au

Community Legal Centres Queensland
communitylegalqld.org.au

Darwin Community Arts Inc
darwincommunityarts.com.au

Developing East Arnhem Limited (DEAL)
developingeastarnhem.com.au

Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation
dhimurru.com.au

East Arnhem Real Estate
eare.com.au

East Arnhem Regional Council
eastarnhem.nt.gov.au

First Nations Media
Firstnationsmedia.org.au

Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation
laynhapuy.com.au

Maningrida Arts and Culture Centre
maningrida.com

Mimal Land Management
mimal.org.au

National Indigenous Australians Agency
niaa.gov.au

Northern Land Council
nlc.org.au

NSW Aboriginal Languages Trust
alt.nsw.gov.au

NT Health
Health.nt.gov.au

NT Police, Fire & Emergency Services
pfes.nt.gov.au

Northern Territory Government Community Benefits Fund
nt.gov.au

Northern Territory Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade
industry.nt.gov.au

Northern Territory Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics
dipl.nt.gov.au

Northern Territory Department of Attorney General and Justice
justice.nt.gov.au

Department of Education NT
education.nt.gov.au

Department of Chief Minister and Cabinet NT
dcm.nt.gov.au

Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities NT
tfhc.nt.gov.au

Community Justice Centre NT
nt.gov.au/law/processes/mediation/contact-the-community-justice-centre

Northern Synod, Uniting Church in Australia
ns.uca.org.au

Territory Therapy Solutions
territorytherapysolutions.com.au

The Office of the Hon. Marion Scrymgour, MP
aph.gov.au

Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation
miwatj.com.au

National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission
ndiscommission.gov.au

North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency
www.naaja.org.au

NT Primary Health Network (NT PHN)
ntphn.org.au

Outback Spirit Tours
outbackspirittours.com.au

Rio Tinto Alcan
riotinto.com/operations/australia/gove

Spots & Space
spotsandspace.com.au

Telstra
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WSP Global
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Published by ARDS Aboriginal Corporation ©2023
Thank you to all staff for their assistance

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ards.com.au

