January to December 2025

BDM Law and Justice Elders Group

Celebrating BDM's work

BDM Law and Justice Group mala leaders work together to make sure that the Balanda legal system recognises Yolŋu Rom

The maŋal’, woomera, is a peace symbol. It is what our old people used. They pointed it towards people fighting. They held it up, saying “stop there and go in peace”. It meant that people were brought back together as a family. With the maŋal’, everyone becomes one family again, sitting together, sharing together.

The gara, spear, represents the man going out hunting for fish. The spear is bringing the mari djämamirr back to the community.

The bathi, dilly bag, is the place where we put all the information and the stories, and bring them safely to the community.

BDM mala leaders did lots of important work in 2025

Being part of Community Court. Sitting with the judge to give advice on the right punishment

Peacemaking

Helping people stay out of jail. Writing character references to support bail applications and sentencing

Talking to government about important issues

Getting a logo, uniforms, an office space and a car

Training

January and February

Getting to know the NAAJA lawyers Ganur and Issy



Peacemaking information session





BDM members meeting Judge McDonald to talk about setting up Community Court

March

Getting BDM uniforms









Training about the Community Court process



April

First Ramingining Community Court



BDM giving advice to the judge on the right punishment for mari djämamirr





May



Writing the Aboriginal Experience Report

Listening to a person’s life story and deciding what support they need

Checking in and helping people stay out of trouble



June



Second Ramingining Community Court

Signing the lease for a BDM office



July and August



Meeting with the Minister for Indigenous Affairs Malarndirri Barbara McCarthy to talk about community priorities

Meeting with Ramingining police and Judge McDonald to talk about the progress of Community Court



September



Working together - going to the EALYM meeting

Stopping fighting, peacemaking



October



Putting up the BDM sign outside the BDM office



Restorative justice training in Nhulunbuy



Using the story about the echidna to talk about feelings

November



Setting up the BDM office furniture





Writing reference letters to help people get bail

December



Getting the new BDM car



Working from the new office

Training with NAAFLS about DVOs



How BDM does its djäma

Yolŋu ganydjarr

Nayaŋu ḏälthirr

Rurrkrurrk yolŋu

Waŋgany dhukarr guŋga'yunamirri


Bindjiling Djagaginy Mabu
BDM