

Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School

Many Cultures, One Community

www.yiramalay.net

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Term 1 reflections

This term has been one characterised by adversity and challenge for the staff and students at Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School. But only in as much as adversity and challenge are a feature of any pursuit that is worthwhile.

Staff began the term making their way back from a well-deserved break, which in many cases was cut short due to WA border closures early in the new year. Few would question their dedication and commitment, in quarantine away from home, family and friends. Upon arriving in Broome, the amazing top end wet season introduced itself with highways closing and roads impassable. Once again, many of our staff were stuck.

Plans for students to travel to the school were adjusted and readjusted as we worked hard to identify a time and date, to get things underway. It was amongst these goings on that a group of nine new students from different communities were getting ready to join us at Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School. Students from Roebourne, Mt Isa, Derby and Fitzroy Crossing, boys and girls, all nervous with anticipation but eager to take this step. I commend and congratulate these students, as well as those who have returned to complete their Year 11 or 12 study. Each of these young people has made an important choice. A choice NOT to give up on their education or to leave their destiny in the hands of someone other than themselves. The students of Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School, where we celebrate many cultures and one strong community, all arrived on time and ready to learn. Although we were cut short by a week, due to flooding, the highlights have been many and the growth in the students has been obvious.

I must thank the amazing staff of this unique school for the way they facilitate this growth and the personalised learning of each young individual in our care. We are looking forward to another fantastic school term when we get under way in April with much to focus on including Reconciliation Week and another group of new students starting their Yiramalay journey.

Matt Watson, Principal



Images from Term 1 in the Kimberley and Melbourne

Growth and learning

The start and the end of Term 1 at Yiramalay has been challenging due to the weather, with the school starting and closing early. The term was still full of growth and learning for students and staff. Students have been doing lots of schoolwork and sport, balanced with breaks on country with Indigenous Elders and mentors, who have all played an important role in guiding these cultural experiences.

My leadership skills have been put to good use supporting teachers, mentors and students in the classroom, and I always look for ways in which I can develop professionally and help others and improve the program. Indigenous staff have been happy, working hard at inspiring and supporting students, while students have been busy getting to know the new induction group who have joined us, bringing a new energy to the school. Celebrating culture during Harmony Week was entertaining, with staff and students dressing up, sharing food and enjoying an evening of fun and games, a nice break from the routine of school.

With the weather improving, I am looking forward to the country being green and alive in Term 2, with waterholes overflowing and to bringing more cultural experiences such as hunting on country and swimming for our students to enjoy.

Kaylene Marr, Cultural and Community Advisor – Kimberley

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's first people and pay our respects to their elders both past and present as owners of this land where we stand.

On the same journey

Having completed Year 12 at Yiramalay in 2019, I have returned and work as a mentor at the Studio School, which can only be described as a weird and cool experience, both at the same time. I now appreciate so much more what teachers and staff went through to support me during the few years I spent at Yiramalay as a student. This lived experience as a student makes me well placed to support others who are now at Yiramalay on the same journey.

It has been the best wet season this year, with the rain bucketing down, the country is very green, and the Yiramalay spring and other waterholes are full and flowing, I have never seen it like this before. The highlights for me this term has been participating in afternoon and evening activities which has been interactive and fun and a great way to build relationships and connections with students and other staff.

Getting bogged is the only challenging event that I can think of in a term that was filled with many learning and mentoring experiences for me. I am looking forward to another great term and the next group of students who join us at Yiramalay.

Maxie Coppin (OW2019), Mentor



Images from Term 1 in the Kimberley



Live my passion

My name is Rhett McGill, and in January of this year I joined the Yiramalay team as the new Activities Coordinator. I'm a WA local from the Wheatbelt region and, well, I don't know at which point you're allowed to call yourself a Broome local, but I have lived and worked in the Kimberley region for six years. I have a great passion for everything outdoors, and what a better place to be than here to live my passion. I have worked as a career tour guide showing tourists this beautiful part of the country and have collected some amazing stories and experiences.

I am a lover of all things sport (go the Eagles!) and am well known amongst my friends as always planning activities, so the new role is fitting for me! I have joined the Yiramalay team to pursue my other passion which is working with youth and am building on my teaching and mentoring skills for my career in the future.

I am proud to be a part of the students experience of reconnecting with country and the longstanding impact the time at Yiramalay will have on all of them. I hope I can share my skillset and experiences and provide them with the foundations to pursue their passions too.

Rhett McGill, Activities Coordinator

Cook up a storm

Rain... lots and lots of rain...It seemed like it wouldn't stop for a while there. But it did, and what became clear was the absolute stunning beauty of the location I find myself working at. Rhett and I arrived to camp a few weeks before most of the staff and students came back and during that time, we spent many an evening sitting on the deck of our accommodation discussing the new adventure we had embarked upon. Little did we know how unique an experience we now find ourselves in.

It's been an absolute pleasure cooking for the wonderful staff and students of Yiramalay and the experience of learning about local ingredients from the Bunuba TO's Kaylene and Marilyn has been nothing short of amazing!

Moving forward, I can't wait to see some of the kids back in the kitchen and helping to cook up a storm!

Ray de Sales, Chef (extraordinaire)



Term 1 in Melbourne

Well, wouldn't you know it? The moment our five Yiramalay students arrived in Melbourne for the start of the year the weather turned rotten. Two days before, it had been 40°, but when they got off the plane it was only 15°. 'Kym man, it's freezing here' was to become a common morning greeting. But the two returning students, Jason and Banjo, and the three new-to-Melbourne girls, Tonheya, Tanika and Abby, proved they are a tough bunch. The very next day they were attending orientation sessions and they haven't missed a beat since. Every morning (no matter how cold) they get up, put on their uniforms and join the other boarders in the dining room for breakfast before heading off to their classes. Outstanding!

Some highlights so far: Banjo was elected his residence's Captain by popular vote, Jason won the tidiest room award from the Head of LiR, Tanika passed her first maths test with flying colours, Tonheya submitted all her homework assignments on time, and Abby moved out of her comfort zone and started individual drumming lessons. I could go on. It's not easy living so far from family and friends while doing all the work (and homework) that the Senior School teachers dish out, but they did it every day. These kids have been inspiring.

Kym Adams, Induction Coordinator and Teacher

Melbourne student's reflections

This is my first year here, I am currently 15 years old and in Year 10 and have already spent a term at Wesley College and living at Learning in Residence.

Home for me is Kununurra, a small town in the East Kimberley of Western Australia. I call this place my home because for most of my childhood I grew up there, camping, hunting, and fishing.

The things I love about Wesley College so far are the people, when I first came to this school it was quite frightening, but luckily the kind and accepting people here, made me feel like I was at home. Another thing that I love about the College would be the opportunities that are available to me. At my old school opportunities in many genres were quite limited, but coming to Wesley has definitely given me new hobbies and interests that I like a lot. Most of my help comes from either my Yiramalay teachers who support me and want the best from me, also some of the programs that LiR provided have had a huge impact.

Abby Gore-Birch Gault, Year 10

Firestarter

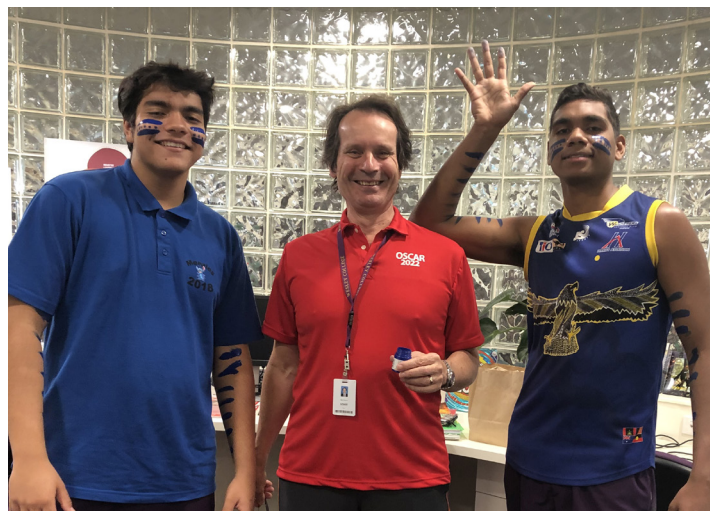
Recently, the Friends of Yiramalay organised a fundraising film night to support Yiramalay students and alumni. The film was a documentary *Firestarter – The Story of Bangarra*, it was a story of pride, heartbreak, adversity, and empowerment, and is told through the eyes of its artistic director, Stephen Page. It was, as always, with events organised by founding members Romy Moshinsky and Georgie Raik-Allen a sell-out.

Friends of Yiramalay is a group that includes parents, Old Wesley Collegians, supporters of Indigenous education and others who are interested in engaging with and learning more about the Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School, and the experiences and development of its students. Members are given opportunities to attend special fundraising events and tours while others become involved, offering their own professional services such as film editing, writing and introductions to philanthropic networks.

This very important support Yiramalay receives from the Wesley community speaks volumes of the impact the program has made in Melbourne. Yiramalay is now embedded into the fabric of the Wesley community, not as another program offered to Wesley students, but as a way to build understanding and create real friendships and move forward with reconciliation with our First Nations people .

If you would like to join Friends of Yiramalay please email us on friendsofyiramalay@yiramalay.net

Dawn Anderson, Foundation Support Officer



Images from Term 1 in Melbourne

Induction 44 reflections

I'm Miranda Brooking and I am from Derby. I came to Yiramalay to do Induction 44. My favourite thing about Induction was going on country to 6 Mile and talking to the elders and painting with them. We were talking with Mervyn (Street) about his lifestyle and his art, and how he started painting. I love being with this mob here, students and staff. I might go and see what Melbourne is like and try it out there. I am a SYPP student now and hoping to finish school here – I have my sister here to help and my brother Quilon is one of the mentors. It was a fun term and I like it!

Miranda Brooking, Induction 44

My name is Wayne Watts and I'm from Alice Springs. My uncle Rohan Watts came here to school and so I did too. My Induction was Induction 44 and it was good getting to know everyone real quick. It was fun doing things with my new friends, meeting new people and playing a lot of sport with everyone. The culture here is different to mine back home and that's interesting. Putting a rock under the armpit at swimming spots is not something we do at home. We do this thing at home called Wide Open Spaces where we get painted up and dance for tourists to welcome them to country. I grew up on a block just like it is here - but not far out of town, and we do all the same sort of stuff there. The boarding is good here because everything is fair!

Wayne Watts, Induction 44



Images from Induction 44 in the Kimberley

My name is Alonzo Rogers and I grew up in Fitzroy Crossing, in Junjuwa community. I have two siblings, a mum and dad, and a few dogs and one long-necked turtle. I came to Yiramalay for Induction 44 this term. I was nervous and excited. We went to the Yiramalay Spring, to 6 Mile, and the creek before 6 Mile. We also went to Derby for basketball and to the jetty there. We were meant to go crabbing but we slept in. As part of Induction we went to Geikie Gorge to swim, fish and look for bush tucker and bush medicine. We tried to go to Tunnel Creek, but we got bogged for three hours. We got the bus out of the mud and then we came back towards 6 Mile. I am having a good time here, I like having a laptop and Wi-Fi and the food is good. I met a boy from Alice Springs and his name is Wayne. He is a good friend – the best roommate ever! I was at Fitzroy Valley District High School before I moved to Yiramalay school. I like it here and it is better.

Alonzo Rogers, Induction 44

Hello, my name is Shannon Smith-Haynes and I am from Mount Isa, which is in the centre of Queensland. I am currently at Yiramalay Studio School and my experience with coming to the school has been welcoming. Induction 44 was very different for me from being home. I have been pushed out of my comfort zone, but I have seen stunning places that I wouldn't have dreamt of seeing back in my hometown. I have learned a variety of things about this culturally rich land. The main reason I came to Yiramalay was to experience my culture because I am a Bunuba woman and being here I have learnt so much more and am now more aware of my culture and bloodline. Even though my Induction was cut short because of the wet weather I have learned so many new things and had so many different experiences that I didn't know before or had even thought about. I would highly recommend coming to this school and experiencing what there is to offer.

Shannon Smith-Haynes, Induction 44

Important Dates 2021

18 Apr	Pick up students traveling to Melbourne	22 Apr	Pick up Kimberley students and travel to Yiramalay
19 Apr	Start of Term 2 Yiramalay Melbourne students	25 Apr	Anzac Day
19 Apr	Classes commence (Melbourne)	25 Apr	Induction Group 45 Depart Melbourne

The Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School is committed to keeping children safe.
Trained teachers deliver the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum to all students.