



# Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School

Many Cultures, One Community

[www.yiramalay.net](http://www.yiramalay.net)

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## An extraordinary year with extraordinary challenges

It has been an extraordinary year with extraordinary challenges. The pandemic that emerged earlier this year has had a major impact on the operations of Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School, as it has had on every school in the country. The way in which the staff of Yiramalay rose to the challenges of this pandemic was inspiring to witness. The manner in which our students handled the difficulties of remote learning was very moving.

It was a delight for me to watch the graduation of our Year 12s earlier this week. To have continued their education in the face of remote learning, and to have had the resilience and fortitude to complete their year, speaks volumes for their character and their determination. All of them have my utmost respect and I congratulate them on the completion of their schooling. I look forward to hearing what they do over the coming years.

Our graduates are not the only people leaving Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School this year. I would like to pay tribute to someone who has done wonderful work for the Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School, Felicity Pearson. Flick has been Acting Director for all of this year, and for the last term of 2019. Her passion for this school, and for its students, has been inspiring. She has worked tirelessly on behalf of the school and its students, and I would like to wish her all the very best as she takes the next step in her career.

I look forward to seeing our returning students next year and to travelling to Yiramalay!

**Nick Evans, Principal**

## Growing stronger, bigger, and better than before

There is never a 'typical' year at the Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School. In my 10 years with the school, I have never known one that hasn't been filled with joyous moments alongside significant challenges. This year has been no different in that sense, however, it has of course been so very different. 2020 has needed us to think outside the box, to be creative and innovative in ways we had only dreamed of in the past. To almost be on the other side of the coronavirus pandemic, or at least sitting more comfortably with the 'new normal', with 15 Year 12 graduates is testament to the resilience and determination of our community.

At a recent presentation I attended, *Positive Leadership - Anti-Fragility in Difficult Times* (via Zoom of course!), Tal Ben-Shahar, strongly made the point that it is critical that we create understanding within our organisations and personal lives and that it is indeed possible to grow from adverse conditions. Growing stronger, bigger, and better than before is achievable if you already hold a belief that recovery will be attainable. This is certainly the story of Yiramalay 2020. The remarkable optimism that the Yiramalay leadership team held all year that saw them working tirelessly to ensure that our students were receiving the best possible quality of education, no matter what the challenge or the circumstance, was truly inspiring. I take this opportunity to sincerely thank Kaylene Marr, Matt Watson, Felicity Byres, Monique Fewkes, Helen Grist and Sheryl Chaplin, along with our Student Wellbeing Coordinators, Fiona McKenzie and Brent Simons, for the energy they have given to our community. To our hard-working and amazing teachers, mentors, coordinators and ancillary staff, you receive our most sincere and heartfelt thanks for the attention directed towards the flourishing of our students both virtually, and in person. I would like to congratulate our Year 10s and 11s for their outstanding achievements this year and wish our very special group of Year 12s nothing but the best for their next steps; Corry, Tenisha, Memphis, Alena, Renisha, Calvin, Kelsey, Geromono, Shakaya, Thadius, Samuel, Coen, Mathius, Kyhona and Lizaria have made us so very proud.

I also recognise and appreciate the ongoing generous support and friendship of the Wesley College Council and College Executive, Friends of Yiramalay, Glen Waverley Learning in Residence, along with the Wesley, Bunuba and Fitzroy Valley communities, whose encouragement and well wishes have sustained us. Sadly, we say goodbye to Frank Concilia, Tegan Gluschenko and Ryan Ali-Akil from the Yiramalay Program; they are going on to pursue opportunities both within Wesley and beyond, at the end of 2020. The contributions of these three staff members to Yiramalay have been nothing short of outstanding and we wish them all the very best for the future.

As I myself prepare to leave Yiramalay after 10 years of service and Wesley College after 20 years, I would like to offer personal thanks to both Wesley and Bunuba for the privilege of this opportunity to lead. The experience has left its mark and I am most grateful for that. I congratulate Matt Watson for his appointment as Principal of Yiramalay, to begin in 2021 – the school could not be in better hands.

**Felicity Pearson, Director (acting)**

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.



Images from the 2020 Year 12 Graduation celebration in Broome.

## Year 12 student reflections

Highlights of my time at the Studio School have been graduating and going to Melbourne and the Kimberley to study. The most challenging experience was being away from home and the hard work it took being there. I'm hoping to get my drivers licence and a job next year. Thank you to all the staff for helping me through my journey at school.

### **Shakaya Warrie (OW2020)**

Almost everything during my time at the Studio School has been a highlight for me, especially living with friends at the LiR. My biggest challenge was waking up in the morning, that was a difficult thing for me to do. I plan on taking some time off and then exploring work options in my community. I'd like to thank everyone, teachers and mentors for their support. Kids should come to Yiramalay and try and do their best while they're here.

### **Kelsey Moody (OW2020)**

During my time at Yiramalay the highlights for me were going on Induction with Tegan and meeting Indigenous artists Mervyn Street. Coping with the loss of my Dad and being far away from Port Hedland, which is my home, were challenges for me. In the future I would like to find an educational pathway to study at University in Geelong. Thank you to all the staff and mentors for everything they have done to support me along the way, also Toby and Marte, thanks for the pickups.

I'd like to encourage everyone to get an education and stay at school to achieve your goals and follow your dreams.

### **Tenisha Badal (OW2020)**

My highlights at Yiramalay include finishing Year 12 with my Certificate II completed and spending time in Melbourne. The biggest challenge was going back and finishing Year 12 as I had some terms not at school because of COVID. In the future I would like to attempt a mechanical apprenticeship outside the Kimberley.

Thank you, Matt, for everything, I am proud to have finished this year.

### **Corey Brooking (OW2020)**

Going to Derby to play basketball with boys and making spears with Elizah and Corry were the highlights for me this year and the most difficult was the First Aid Course I had to do as part of my Certificate II. I hope to get a job next year to support myself and my family. I would like to thank everyone that was beside me, never letting me down in Yiramalay.

I hope to see everyone some time in the future – I am going to miss being at Yiramalay.

### **Memphis Hunter (OW2020)**

Going to Melbourne for the first time and spending a whole year there and watching the Year 12s graduate in Melbourne last year when I was in Year 11, were my highlights at Yiramalay. It was a challenge doing advanced studies in Melbourne and being the only Indigenous student in the class. I was nervous and didn't feel like I belonged there, although it helped having Hannah there. Next year I'm hoping to do nursing in an Indigenous community, and I have applied to do further study with Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

I would like to thank Hannah for supporting me in all my classes and pushing me when it was really challenging.

### **Kyhona Yakai (OW2020)**

Being in Melbourne and the LiR, playing pool and games were the highlights for me at Yiramalay, the most challenging thing I did while I was there was Induction. Next year I hope to try and get an apprenticeship to become a mechanic. Thank you to Brent, Ryan and Sean Cox for their help during my time here. It was good being in Yiramalay, I had a lot of fun.

### **Geronomo Gurruwiwi (OW2020)**



Year 12 graduates Shakaya Warrie (OW2020) and Kelsey Moody (OW2020) with family members from Roebourne



Year 12 graduates Corey Brooking (OW2020), Tenisha Badal (OW2020), and Memphis Hunter (OW2020)



Year 12 graduate Memphis Hunter (OW2020) with family members from the Kimberley



Year 12 graduate Kyhona Yakai (OW2020) with family members from the Kimberley



Year 12 graduates Calvin Gurruwiwi (OW2020), and Geronomo Gurruwiwi (OW2020) with family member Valerie from the NT

Kimberley Cup in Broome, Derby basketball and going to Melbourne were my best times at Yiramalay, the most difficult was doing work online with WIFI and IT issues. I am hoping to go to TAFE next year to study a Sport and Recreation course.

Thank you Brent, Jeremiah and Henry for everything!

### **Calvin Gurruwiwi (OW2020)**

Being able to connect with people and cultures from all over Australia and the world was one of many highlights of my time at Yiramalay. The emphasis on two way learning and on country learning helped me expand my understanding of my own cultural identity. The most challenging aspect of the program was getting used to the new Melbourne environment, learning new routines and adapting to new schedules.

Thank you to all Yiramalay and LiR staff for supporting me through my time in Melbourne and the Kimberley. Thank you also to Greg Wilms who pushed me to reach my potential, and Felicity Pearson and Matt Watson for always being there for me.

I am looking forward to studying Electronic Music Sound Design or Cyber Security at UWA, next year.

### **Coen Wright (OW2020)**

The entire boarding experiences in both the LIR and in Yiramalay itself has been a huge and significant highlight for me, it has really become my home and I will be extremely sad to leave, but I am extremely proud of who I have become while I have been at Yiramalay. I have had some amazing experiences and long-lasting memories and I have also made multiple connections with other students and staff.

Overcoming my anxieties, valuing my cultural identity and managing my mental health was challenging for me, also getting out of my comfort zone and gaining new friendships and relationships and being able to depend on others proved difficult at times. Next year, I will attend Melbourne Uni, where I hope to either study a BA or BA - Fine Arts, this will hopefully lead me into a rewarding career in an area that I am deeply passionate about.

I wanna thank, Matt Watson. This bloke is a someone whom I have grown to love like family. Words really can't express how much I appreciate all that he has done for me, he's been a solid rock for me in rough times and is constantly reminding me of my worth.

Thanks also to Hannah, she made the last two years of school work, boarding and everyday life so much better. I am also grateful to Julie who has been a mother for every student in LIR, especially Yiramalay students. She has always been there for me and I am so grateful for her love, help and overall amazing nature.

Thank you also to Flick, Dawn, Sheryl, Kym, Frank, Eliza, Tegan, Daisy, Ian, Koharna, Kaylene and sooo many more that haven't been mentioned here. I appreciate all of you and all that you have done for me over the years. To all the Mentors that have been a part of my journey in LIR I deeply appreciate everything you have done for me. And finally Sean, thanks for dealing my teen drama and attitude, it was never personal.

### **Alena Landers (OW2020)**

Playing footy while I was in Melbourne was one of the best highlights of my time at Yiramalay in Melbourne. In the Kimberley I enjoyed Industry Learning Week, I worked with Garduwa, a community sporting organistaion in Fitzroy Crossing and went out to a community for a sleep over and helped deliver a sport program at Yakanarra, which was a lot of fun. The time difference was the hardest thing for me to deal with. I had a lot of fun and have great memories of my time at Yiramalay.

I am looking forward to getting a job and working in my community next year. I would like to thank Matt, Flick and Brent for their support while I was at Yiramalay.

### **Renisha Watts, (OW2020)**



Year 12 graduate Corry Brooking (OW2020) with his mother, Cynthia from the Kimberley



Year 12 graduate Renisha Watts (OW2020), with her family from Alice Springs



Year 12 graduate Coen Wright (OW2020) with his family from the Kimberley



Year 12 graduate Alena Landers (OW2020) with friends in Melbourne



Year 12 student Lizaria Macale with her mother Denise from the Kimberley

## Industry Learning week

Term 4 was certainly jam packed with many different experiences for our students and one of these highlights was the Industry Learning Week. During the final weeks of Term 4, all Kimberley-based students participated in five days of Industry Learning, mostly placed at organisations in Fitzroy Crossing and one student in Broome. It was amazing to have so much support from the local community, providing our students with practical work tasks and guidance to further develop their skills and knowledge of what they have learnt in class. Through participation in the workplace learning program students developed and demonstrated increasing competence in the core skills for work, transferable or employability skills.



Images of students during Industry Learning Week.

There are many benefits of a workplace learning program. The organisations benefit by developing a realistic understanding of industry expectations and standards in young people, providing network connections where employers can recruit and providing a direct link to schools and the opportunity to make education more relevant to industry needs. For our students, we saw a growth in confidence, stamina, developing of positive relationships with local organisations and an appreciation of the skills required for working. In the lead up to the week the students learnt about Work Health Safety and the expectations in the workplace. The students were placed across a range of industries, so each had different roles and work tasks. I feel for those students who were working outside in the heat as it was extremely hot (38-40 degrees!) in Fitzroy Crossing. Special thanks to Fitzroy Valley District High, Nindilingarri, Baya Gawyu, Juniper Gardui Aged Care, Mangkaja, Marra Worra Worra (Housing, Café, Hardware, recycling and community development program), Garnduwa, Rangers, Parks and Wildlife and Tim Ismaili (Landscaping), who all supervised our students through the week. Without their support the week would not have been such a success.



Images of students during Industry Learning Week.

All the students did an amazing job and represented the school in very positive way! We travelled in and out of Fitzroy Crossing for the five days which meant early mornings and long days. To the students' credit, they got up each day with minimal complaint and filled in their reflection each evening at dinner time. Some of the supervisor's feedback has been exceptional and the students should be proud of their accomplishment. Each student completed different tasks at their respective work places and some of the skills they developed included: programming cameras for the rangers, filing documents and working on the computer, learning how to make beverages and different meals, customer service, admin tasks, caring for the elderly, visiting communities and assisting with delivering health programs and learning how to drive a forklift to name a few! Kelwin and Renisha, who were working with Garnduwa, went out to community for a sleep over when they helped deliver a sport program at Yakanarra community, which was a great opportunity.

It was such a valuable experience for our students, and we look forward to more Industry learning in 2021!

**Tegan Gluschenko, Career and Transitions Coordinator (acting)**

### Important Dates 2021

Mon 18 Jan	Kimberley site opens	Sun 30 Jan	Sunday program and Community
Tue 25 Jan	Australia Day Public Holiday		Mob Meeting to begin Term 1
Sat 29 Jan	Student pick-up	Mon 1 Feb	Classes begin

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