

Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School

Many Cultures, One Community

www.yiramalay.net

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The business of learning and growing

The start of Term 3 was again delayed by COVID-19; this time by a number of staff being stuck interstate. Through various quarantine measures we managed to get going, a little later than expected, and as such we have moved the last day of term out by a week. Students have taken this largely in their stride and gone about the business of learning and growing.

An exciting on-country experience for staff and students to Manning Gorge, on the Gibb River Road, was definitely an early highlight for students and staff. The group spent two nights away getting to know one another again, reconnecting around the fire at night and exploring the beautiful gorge during the day.

We welcomed two new staff this term. Sharon Coomerang is a Bunuba woman who has stepped into the cleaning and housekeeping role. Sharon brings extensive experience and skill into the role having previously worked at Kununurra Hospital where she was awarded employee of the month. Reggie Smith, an East Arrernte man from Alice Springs, joined the mentor team this term and has fitted in very well. Reggie is older brother of current school captain Rohan Watts and alumnus Renisha Watts, a 2020 graduate.

Kaylene Marr and Marilyn Oscar have played a leading role along with Stanley Shaw in developing and delivering the Induction this term. Supported by Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Kym Oakley, the team have made language lessons a part of every morning here at Yiramalay. Staff and students have been involved in learning key words and phrases initially and have been encouraged to use these in their day-to-day interactions.

It was delightful to have visits from Wesley staff members and their families this term. Amy Valent-Curlis and her family dropped in and spent time with us on country, at the Studio School. Amy even delivered a music workshop for the students. Rohan Chiu, SKR Wesmob Coordinator also dropped in for a cuppa and a chat with his family on their way through. It was great to catch up with these families and have them as part of the community for a short while. Amy's children reported that their stay at Yiramalay was their favourite part of the trip!

Planning is well under way for a busy Term 4, beginning with student travel from 11 October. The most significant event on the Term 4 calendar will be our graduation ceremony in Broome on Wednesday, 1 December.

Matt Watson, Principal



Images from Term 3

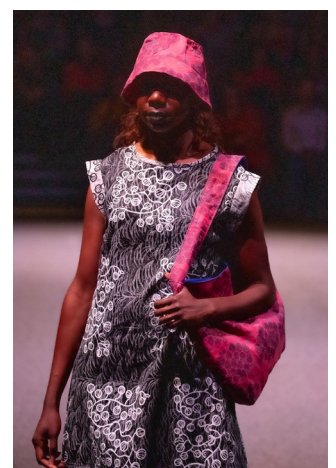
Country to Couture

In early August, the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair showcased their annual fashion parade, called 'Country to Couture'. I was lucky enough to walk in the runway show and showcase Indigenous artists and designers in the fashion industry. It was the second time I participated in the runway show. Being selected for this show and walking alongside other Indigenous models has inspired me to take a step forward in the modelling and fashion industry. I travelled to Darwin for the parade and I felt so nervous before the show and yet so excited hearing and seeing the music pumping, the flashing lights of the photographers, stage lights and the the audience applauding each designer's garments.

I want to thank the Friends of Yiramalay who supported my participation in this event, I feel very lucky to have people I have never met offer to help me make my dreams come true. Thank you also to Matt Watson and my teammates at the Studio School where I work as a Mentor; they support me and look out for me every day.

It was good to be in the Top End and showcase art in a different form. I hope my journey will inspire other Indigenous kids in the Kimberley to challenge themselves and step into making their dreams come true.

Kahlia Rogers (OW2016), Mentor



Kahlia at Country to Couture in Darwin

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.

A strengthening of spirit and culture

What a privilege it is to return to Yiramalay in the midst of the dry, with the sun shining, springs flowing, students taking full advantage of learning on-country and eagerly awaiting the weekend trips to town so they can play and cheer on others in Fitzroy's football league. I arrived back in Term 2, just in time to see Induction Group 45 graduate. I then spent the next few weeks getting to know our new local students, who are from the Fitzroy Valley and Gapuwiyak, as they transitioned into our Senior Years Preparation Program (SYPP) and our Senior Years Learning Framework (SYLF). We have since seen another group come through and begin to settle into the program and as I write this, Group 47 have just completed Day 2. As I watch these students take hold of opportunities here, I am in admiration of their willingness and courage to try new things, their resilience as they continue to rise to challenges, and their ability to make each other, and the staff, laugh along the way.



Images from Term 3 in Yiramalay

The days continue to keep us all busy. This week we began our first Bunuba Language lessons, lead by our TO and Cultural and Community Adviser, Kaylene Marr, and our Cultural Program Assistant, Marilyn Oscar. Whether in Biliga Mayaru or under the Ngiyali trees, the whole school has gathered each morning to learn and practice Bunuba language. These lessons have encouraged our students who join us knowing a variety of languages, to begin to share their language with others. This facilitates a greater sense of pride and a strengthening of spirit and culture. After many years working with Yiramalay in both the Kimberley and Melbourne, my list of highlights is long, and now longer, as I practice my Bunuba greetings, words and phrases each day, with students, staff and my family.

Later in the week, our SYPP students will become broadcasters with Wangki Radio and our SYLF students, who are studying their Certificate II through a Conservation and Environment lens this term, will participate in a Bunuba Dawangarri Community Workshop to discuss the government's intended management of the water in Bandarlngarri (Fitzroy River). In the days following, students will spend time with Elders learning about the seasons, bush medicine and art. We will finish the week with a colour run led by our Program Activities Coordinator, Rhett, before we wake up on Saturday morning and head to the East Kimberley for camp!

Eliza Barlow, Deputy Principal Teaching and Learning

I wear it over my heart

Recently I was gifted a Yiramalay pin – finally my chance to sport the pin after 3 ½ years of teaching in the program. The design is the familiar Yiramalay logo on an oval-shaped pin. I wear it over my heart, and it has taken on a special symbolism for me. The concentric circles mirror the layers of living and working remotely; the background is the colour of the ground we become accustomed to walking on daily; and the multi-coloured dots remind me of students and staff from different communities across WA and NT, as well as the Melbourne mob.

It is true I have started a teaching job in a different school, but I have drunk from the Fitzroy River, and I know I will return to the Fitzroy Valley, and will definitely return to travel that red dirt road back out to school.

Mary Zbierski-West, (Former Yiramalay) Teacher

The volunteer experience

Early in the year I joined the Studio School as a volunteer mentor together with my now-friend, Eva.

The whole Kimberley team welcomed both Eva and I with open arms and made it seamless for us to enjoy everything the school and volunteer experience had to offer. During local spring trips and school camps that are undertaken by students as part of the circles of learning, I've seen the beauty of the Kimberley in ways that have given me a new appreciation for Indigenous country and culture.

The students taught me how to cast a fishing line, make and cook damper and have helped keep me safe through teaching me traditional ways of how to respect dreaming stories and care for country. I'm forever grateful for the volunteer experience and I'd recommend it to everyone.

Te-Ru Ana Apiti-Civcic, Mentor



Mary at a workshop in Deby.



Te-Ru (center) with students and staff at Yiramalay

STEM at Yiramalay

We are coming to the end of a fabulous term and appreciating the wisdom of Aboriginal culture and their input into mining practices. As part of our SYPP program this term, we studied rocks in Bunuba country. In Bunuba culture, rocks and stones are sentient beings with spirits, that in most cases, want to stay just where they are.

At the beginning of this journey, we had a great start in our excursions into the nearby rock formations in the Kimberley. There were opportunities to head out for on-country activities and let our imaginations loose.

What was it like to be here, under the ocean hundreds of millions of years ago, with the 10-metre armoured meat-eating fish called Placoderm and marine life of sponges and plants all around? What was it like to look at the volcanic eruption millions of years ago and watch the molten lava cool down into lifeless black rock? To calmly witness the sandy sediments turn into hard zebra rocks. Old lime and sandstones uncovered shadows of past marine life, and in the quartz stones, students conceived ideas of the temperatures that forged their crystalline beauty.

At the end of our journey, we collected stones and rocks, dense time capsules that froze the earth's past activities from a long time ago. Back at school, Noelle and Devan continued their newfound passion for rock hunting!

Ariel Araos, Teacher



Noelle and Devan rock hunting at Yiramalay

One of the many great experiences at Yiramalay

In August, as part of the Personal Development circle of the curriculum and the NAIDOC Week celebrations, students and staff set off to Manning Gorge for a weekend of camping and fun. The trip fit well into the theme for NAIDOC – Heal the Country – and provided opportunities to build and restore connections and relationships.

We arrived at Mount Barnett roadhouse and set up camp before dark and made our way down to the river and had an afternoon swim. After a delicious barbecue dinner, students collected firewood and then sat around the campfire relaxing. These quiet, relaxing moments are so important for the wellbeing of our students and staff, they provide occasions for reflection and rekindling of relationships with others and with the country.

After an early night and an even earlier breakfast, we set off for the Manning Gorge hike, the heat of the day made the walk hot and tiring. Alonso won the prize for perseverance and resilience as he persisted with the walk despite wanting to go back at times. When we finally arrived, Alonso leapt down the cliffs like a rabbit and dove into the ice-cold blue water with a big 'I deserve this!' Facilitating safe occasions that build resilience, determination and stamina is a big part of the personal development program for students. It is in these significant moments that students grow to understand their capacity and build self-esteem.

As the weekend went by there were many learning moments for staff and students. On the last day of the camp, we set off in the trusty bus to Bell Gorge, where the day was spent jumping off the cliffs, with Wayne earning the title of somersault champion. After a bumpy, dusty, air-con free, three-hour car trip (with a few jumps at the Lennard River Bridge) we were back at Yiramalay. Tired and dusty but all happy. One of the many great experiences had at Yiramalay. Thank you to all staff and students who made this trip a delight.

Renae Carmichael, Teacher



Images from the Manning Gorge camp

Manning Gorge camp reflection

Students and staff from Yiramalay Studio School left Yiramalay on Friday, drove to Galvins Gorge, and had a swim there. Then we drove to Manning Gorge, we set up all our tents and went to the river where we went fishing. Some of our students caught three fish and a turtle. We ate the fish but let the turtle go. Everyone went swimming, enjoying their lives at the nice camp spot and the nice swimming spot.

On Sunday, we packed our tents and drove to Yiramalay. We listened to the music on the drive back. We were tired and happy.

Devan Wunungmurra, Year 10

On the weekend, the mentors and students from Yiramalay, went camping at Manning Gorge. They tried to leave early on Friday morning, but some boys and girls took too long to pack their stuff. They left Yiramalay just before 10am and headed to Leonard River for a quick dip. They jumped back onto the bus and I told everyone about the rock in the shape of Queen Elizabeth's head. They pulled over at Imintji Roadhouse to have lunch and then they headed off to Galvin Gorge.

Finally, they made it to Manning Gorge roadhouse and then we found our camp spot. We all had dinner and sat around the campfire. Staff and students went to sleep and in the morning, it was really cold. They started the one hour walk to Manning Gorge and we swam there for about three hours. They had great time fishing and swimming. It was paradise.

Juan Nyandi, Year 10

On Saturday morning, we drove to Fitzroy and past Wangkatjungka and Yiyili. We arrived at Halls Creek to have lunch and left at about 2.00pm and we arrived at the Bungle Bungle to set up camp. The next morning we packed up and travelled a couple of hours to War mun and got to the Wyndham turnoff.

We headed to Emma Gorge to have a swim, it was a two-hour walk in total, but it felt longer on the way back to the bus. We arrived at Home Valley Station and had a good look around. We set up camp, only to find out we were in the wrong spot. We had to move closer to the playground just after dinner. I had a cold the whole camp.

On Monday we participated in the Welcome to Country. We then chose between fishing or staying at the campsite. I went fishing and we caught some bait. We caught some catfish and headed to another spot. We saw a crocodile up close and it was scary. We were there for a few hours and the girls caught catfish and Rhett nearly caught a barramundi.

We stayed at Home Valley for the final night. We packed up camp and drove to Kununurra to do some shopping. We drove to Bungle Bungle caravan park and set up camp. The next day we headed back to Yiramalay. It was a great trip.

Alonzo Rogers, Year 10

After our trip to Home Valley Station a few of the students and staff stayed for another night at the Bungle Bungle Caravan Park so we could visit the Purnululu.

They went to the Bungle Bungle World Heritage. We went to Cathedral Gorge and we went inside and it was very open. We took a few photos and made a few noises and sung a song. We went for another drive and we fell asleep. We went to the Bungle Bungle Lodge and went for a swim in the pool. Rhett saw some old friends. The camp was amazing and we enjoyed it.

Rohan Watts, Year 12

Important Dates 2021

Wed 22 Sept	Last day of classes
Thu 23 Sept	Students travel home



Images from the Manning Gorge camp

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