

Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School

Many Cultures, One Community

www.yiramalay.net

Edition 80 | June 2021

Our first Induction from Melbourne, since COVID-19 had stopped all student trips from Victoria, was finally able to go ahead and it was a beauty indeed. A relatively large group (29 Melbourne Year 10 students with five staff members) travelled up to Yiramalay where they were joined by five Indigenous students to become Induction 45.

The late rainy season had come to an end, the skies were clear and the Yiramalay students were excited to finally see the return of a noisy Induction mob with its energy, enthusiasm and the prospect of new friends. A final and important part of normality was returning to the Studio School's program and everyone (except possibly the chef) was excited about it.



Images from Induction 45

Over the next three weeks, Induction 45 walked, ran, stumbled, rode, drove and laughed their way throughout the Kimberley on many different adventures. The interactions around waterholes consistently proved to be the perfect ice-breaker between the whole Induction group. With the waterholes full, everyone enjoyed their daily swims. A trip to Tunnel Creek with Dylan Andrews of Bungoolee Tours had to be re-jigged to Jowie waterhole because the tunnel river level was still too high, but no one has ever been disappointed by Jowie. The 6-Mile swimming hole and cascades were running and delightful, while good old Yiramalay Spring was clear and became an almost daily after-school option.

Every single moment reminded me of all the ways this school fosters deep reconciliation.

Kym Adams, Induction 45 Leader



Images of Elders who support the program at Yiramalay

Culture, land and community

As we are making our way through 2021, we are steadily increasing the student numbers in our cohort with the induction process. An integral part of this process is the involvement of local Elders who offer invaluable cultural knowledge and the ability to place local and Wesley students on-country by affirming their cultural relationships to each other. Elders representing Bunuba, Gooniyandi, Nyikina, Walmajarri and Wankatjunga language groups who live in communities around Fitzroy Crossing often spend three days with our new students speaking about their own stories as well as giving lessons around skin groups, kinship ties and bush foods.

For the local students who are not from the Fitzroy Valley, this involvement provides a cultural safety net by ensuring that they understand the unique culture of the Valley, as well as often linking them through kinship connections that run across the country. It is always special for the entire school staff group to see how knowledgeable and comforting the Elders are when providing this invaluable information. Not only do the Elders enjoy coming out to Yiramalay and visiting their beautiful Bunuba country, but they bring a special energy to the school which all members of our community highly respect.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Elders Kaylene Marr, Marilyn Rogers, Camillia Rogers, Susan Hoad, Helen Malo, Edna Cheryl, Olive Knight, Mervyn Street, and Dylan Andrews for sharing their culture, land and community with us.

Toby Tracy, Community Engagement Officer

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.

Strong Women's Business Gathering In Derby

The Yiramalay girls went to Derby to spend the day at the Strong Women's event. While we were there, we joined in workshops like screen printing and painting with ochre. I also saw elders printing on t-shirts and I got to make one and bring it back with me. We listened to old people talk and tell stories about how they grew up and who their role models in life are and how they feel about being a strong woman. We were taking photos on the stage and with different people. We met new people while we were there, and I felt inspired by a lot of women there.

Jirrwirliny Jeffries, Year 11

Last week we went to Derby to attend the West Kimberley Strong Women's Business Gathering. We looked at different types of activity site set ups like print making calico bags, healing through creative expression, Yiriman Women bush medicine, and so much more. I saw so many people and also activity workshops in the garden. I heard the local elders talking about their stories. We listened to the strong women talking and also some calming music. We were excited to attend the West Kimberley Strong Women's Gathering. I felt proud to be there.

Niniesha Norman, Year 11

Last week all the Yiramalay girls and I, along with Mary, Sophie, Cimmy, Karly and Renae took a 3-hour drive to Derby attending the West Kimberley Strong Women's Business Gathering. Flic, Te-ru, Sophie, Jenna and Eva also joined us on the day of the event. We looked at all the different workshops that the women held, young, old, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal which were held in the Derby Civic Centre.

I saw how to screen print and learnt how to properly pour bush medicine and infuse it into oils and ointments. We listened to some of the other women's personal stories, where they come from, their skin names and language groups. We also listened to the women holding each of the workshops and followed their instructions. I heard all the women talking about where they come from and their families. The women leading the screen print workshop talked about how she's from Papua New Guinea but calls herself Aboriginal because all her family are.

Hiki-Lee Kinley, Year 12

Reflections by Yiramalay students on a trip to Jowie

We went to Jowie with the Induction kids. We looked at the big foot painting on the cave wall. I saw a fish in the water, rocks on top of rocks, tall trees and cave paintings. We listened to Dylan Andrews the Traditional Owner talk about his country and the history of the land. I heard it is a great fishing spot that's why I was excited to go there. We experienced the Kimberley heat first-hand when we were walking into Jowie. I felt happy when I caught a barra, I pulled it in to the bank when it came off the line.

Kyle Wurramara, Year 11

We went to Jowie with everyone. We looked at old paintings on the cave walls done by Bunuba ancestors. I saw paintings of the Wandjina and animals including kangaroos, crocodiles and fish in the cave. We listened to Dylan Andrews who is a local Bunuba man that gave us a tour and told us about Jowie and where Jandamarra was running from the settlers and where he was hiding in a gap of the hill. I enjoyed hearing Dylan tell us the story about the ancestors that lived there. I felt special getting a chance to go to a sacred place and learning about the history.

Wayne Watts, Year 11

The whole school went for a drive to Jowie to have a swim. I saw everyone swimming and fishing and it seemed like everyone was having a great time. I also saw rock paintings up higher on the rocks and some in a cave. We listened to Dylan Andrews, Bunuba TO (Traditional Owner) tell us stories about the paintings. It was good going back to Jowie again after two years, it's my favourite swimming spot. I'm sure everyone experienced an awesome, fun, interesting time, hopefully we'll go there another time this year.

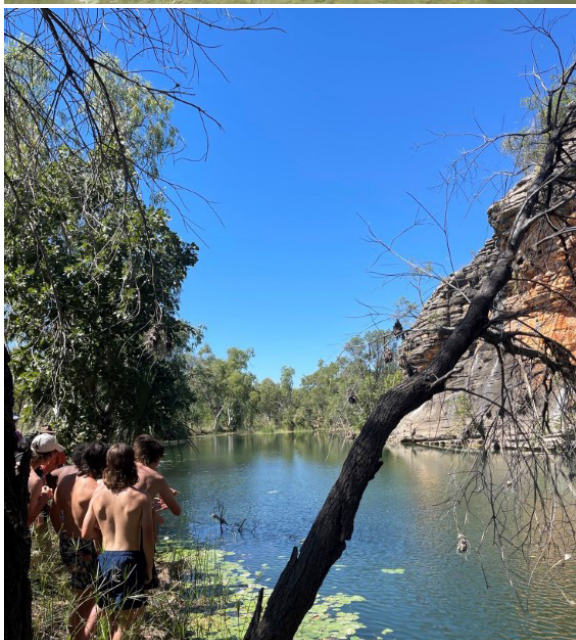
Rohan Watts, Year 12

Last week on Thursday we drove out to Jowie. We went with the Induction Melbourne students. We looked at the paintings on the cave walls. Then Dylan told us the story about the paintings on the wall. I also heard that Jowie is a sacred lore ground for Bunuba people. After that we went swimming in the waterhole, the water was very cold and beautiful, and I saw some little fish swimming. After that I felt alive!

Kelwin Unghango, Year 11



Images from Strong Women's Business Gathering In Derby



Images from the Jowie trip

Term 2 Melbourne Reflection

Coming back to Melbourne was difficult, I was not looking forward to the returning because I had some experiences in Term 1 that were hard, also the time difference and the cold weather! It was good to get back to face to face classes because I feel I learn a lot better in class but the workload at Wesley can be challenging and stressful.

Training and playing netball has been a highlight this term, it is an opportunity to stay fit and make new friends and I get to visit other parts of Melbourne.

I am looking forward to Year 12 next year and the formal and graduation. I am considering my options for study after Year 12 at the moment, I would like to do art and perhaps even study or work in the area of Indigenous health.

Tonheya McCormack, Year 11

My name is Tanika Sahanna, this is my second term in Melbourne and it has been surprisingly easier than Term 1 because I had experienced many of the challenges other than the cold weather, which I don't think I can get used to even if I tried.

This term I have enjoyed getting closer to some of the girls and going on the LIR activities every weekend. I have taken up art as a personal interest this term and it has made my Melbourne experience a lot easier as it relaxes me and helps me stress less about other things like study and being homesick.

I am looking forward to Year 12 next year and being part of the Class of 2022. The formal and graduation and all the other events that will take place next year makes me feel very privileged to be at the Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School. After I graduate I would like to put my creative skills to use and look at studying architecture or design.

Tanika Sahanna, Year 11



Images of Yiramalay students at Wesley College in Melbourne

Alumni reflections

My name is Coen Wright (OW2020) and I am currently doing the Aboriginal Orientation course at UWA which allows me to start a degree next year. I am also residing at a college across from UWA. My subjects include Maths, Creative Writing, Foundation of Studies and Aboriginal Voices. It has been a smooth transition for me as I have a lot of experience living away from home after spending 3 years in the LIR. I am very comfortable with living with other people here and made some new friends.

I miss a lot of the people from the Yiramalay program including Hannah and Matt. I would not be here if it was not for the care and attention I received during my time at Yiramalay. My advice to other students – even if you are not good at something, give it a shot, push through it.

I am very grateful for my experience at Yiramalay, it changed me as a person.

Coen Wright (OW2020)



Coen Wright (OW2020)

A new face

My name is Kym Oakley and I am a proud Malgana woman from Gathaagudu (Shark Bay, WA). I am excited to be join the teaching staff at Yiramalay. I am a passionate educator who enjoys teaching people about our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history. I have completed my Masters in Indigenous Languages Education and have spoken at two International conferences on language revitalisation and the part education plays in this process. I am currently writing and illustrating, a series of children's books in my language Malgana. My family and my culture are extremely important to me.

Recently, I have worked at La Salle College as the Aboriginal Education Coordinator. I have also completed guest lectures at Curtin University on Aboriginal Education and how to teach Aboriginal English as an additional language and/or dialect to students.

I am really looking forward to learning about Bunuba culture and making connections with staff and students at Yiramalay.

Kym Oakley, Teacher



Kym Oakley, a new face at Yiramalay

Induction 45 reflection

Yiramalay was without a doubt, an incredible opportunity, and an eye-opening experience. Over the course of three-weeks, we learned an enormous amount about the traditional owners of Australia and their history, culture, beliefs, and traditions, as well as the struggles and challenges they face.

We had the privilege to experience some of the local culture, a few highlights include taking part in the Welcome to Country ceremony, swimming in numerous beautiful waterholes, lakes, and rivers, painting and carving boab nuts, painting with renowned artist Mervyn Street, visiting the nearby town Fitzroy Crossing, learning a bit of the local language, and most importantly, forming connections with the people, both students and elders, who are a part of the Yiramalay community. This program is one of a kind and gives a new meaning to experiential learning. It was an honour and a privilege to be accepted into Induction 45 and this unique experience is one that I'm sure none of us will ever forget.

Laura Nayman, Induction 45

Day 6, 30 April Induction 45 blog

Today we were visited by two elders from Muludja community on the other side of Fitzroy Crossing. These two old ladies explained the significance of their seasonal calendar and how it is read and used. Marilyn, Susan and Lidi-alla treated us with their life stories and how they grew up on cattle stations and at mission schools. Then they took us on a walk around the campus and visited the different types of trees and bushes that are useful.

After the seasonal changes session, the elders helped us understand their skin group system which is used in Indigenous society to guide them with who are the right and wrong members of your tribe to marry. They also explained their arranged marriage system, called "promises". There are 16 different skin groups of both males and females with only specific ones being available to marry each group. We then ended the day by visiting the Yiramalay Spring for a swim.

Daniel Chiba-Lynch and Lewis Duggan, Induction 45

Day 11, 5 May Induction 45 blog

Today we spent a lot of time creating and observing art. In the morning we had a delicious breakfast (I personally really enjoyed the croissants). After breakfast we gathered over at the big tent and were lucky enough to be joined by a renowned artist currently going by the name MS, as a tragedy occurred to a young man in his community who had the same first name as MS, which has meant we are unable to say his name out loud for a respectful mourning period.

MS gave us a painting master class which was very enjoyable. He painted a scenic view of the local landscape accompanied by bush turkeys, which students replicated on their own canvases, some better than others. Afterwards we all walked to the Yiramalay Spring for a swim before we went into town to visit the Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency Aboriginal Corporation. It was amazing to see all the different paintings showcased. Dinner was good and afterwards we played basketball.

Georgie Lam and Bella Sallee, Induction 45

Day 18 May 12 Induction 45 blog

Today was the second last day that the Induction students would be at Yiramalay. This meant that we spent the morning finishing off work in our journals and completing our final reflections which were based on the challenges we had faced and what we had learnt over the past three weeks. After lunch, most people went to the Yiramalay spring for a swim which was a nice way to relax and in the afternoon, there was an opportunity to go horse riding for the last time on our Induction. After dinner, Maddie and I, along with a few other girls played with the toddler, Elsie, until it was time for her to go to bed.

Maddie Goff and Marina Elia, Induction 45



Images from Induction 45

Important Dates 2021

13 Jun	Induction Group 46 fly to Melbourne	23 June	Classes finish (Kimberley)
14 Jun	Queen's Birthday Public Holiday (Melbourne)	25 Jun	End of Term 2

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