

Annual Report 2022

# Nawarddeken Academy



NAWARDDEKEN  
ACADEMY



**Our Academy and communities will work together to make our children strong in both Bininj (Indigenous) and Balanda (non-Indigenous) learning, so that when they leave the Academy, they have the knowledge, skills, and confidence that they need to make good life choices.**  
— Warddeken Homeland Communities



The Nawarddeken Academy logo depicts a hunter spearing barrk (black wallaroo) painted by Warddeken founder and patron, Bardayal Lofty Nadjamerrek OAM (1926 – 2009). Painted by Bardayal as a gift for his grandchildren in 2003, the original white ochre image can be seen on an escarpment wall two kilometres to the southwest of Kabulwarnamyo.

Front cover: When students are connected with Country the opportunities for learning are everywhere, including how to hunt, fish and gather food. Maureen and teacher Glenda throw a handline near a campsite on a joint Nawarddeken Academy and Warddeken Land Management bushwalk.

Right: Combining cultural knowledge and cutting-edge digital technology connects the deep past with the present. Damaziah uses an iPad to document his ecological and cultural learnings during a Bush Trip.

Back cover: Randy during an on Country maths activity at Mamadawerre school. Students used real life fishing harvest data to engage with mathematical concepts – weighing and measuring each fish, yabby or turtle caught, and then using the data to plot and graph species back in the classroom.

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This annual report was compiled by Georgia Vallance for Nawarddeken Academy Limited.

Design [rodeo.com.co](http://rodeo.com.co)





Tyson and Maureen welcome visitors to their community of Mamadawerre, where the school proudly commenced its first year of full-time education in term one this year.



## Welcome

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# The Nawarddeken Academy story

**The Nawarddeken Academy delivers a unique model of bicultural, community-driven education in remote Indigenous communities in west Arnhem Land. The Nawarddeken Academy was established in 2015 at the request of Elders of the Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area (IPA), who had long dreamed of their children receiving full-time education in their home communities.**

The idea of a learning place for children of the Kuwarddewardde (Stone Country of the west Arnhem plateau) began back in 2002, when eminent Professor Bardayal Lofty Nadjamerrek AO led a return of Traditional Owners to his Mok clan estate, Mankungdjang (Native Honey Dreaming). Despite the cessation of government funding for homeland communities, Bardayal and his wife Mary Kolkiwarra, their children, grandchildren and other family from across the Kuwarddewardde, together established the small community of Kabulwarnamyo. Deeply committed to caring for the Kuwarddewardde, in the early 2000s Bardayal and his supporters launched the Manwurrk ranger program, which later evolved into Warddeken Land Management Limited (WLML).

The Warddeken rangers, now one of Australia's most prominent ranger programs, were key to establishing the world's first customary fire and carbon offsets program – the West Arnhem Land Fire Agreement (WALFA). Since 2008, income generated through WALFA has been a major contributor to supporting Nawarddeken Traditional Owners to live and work on Country.

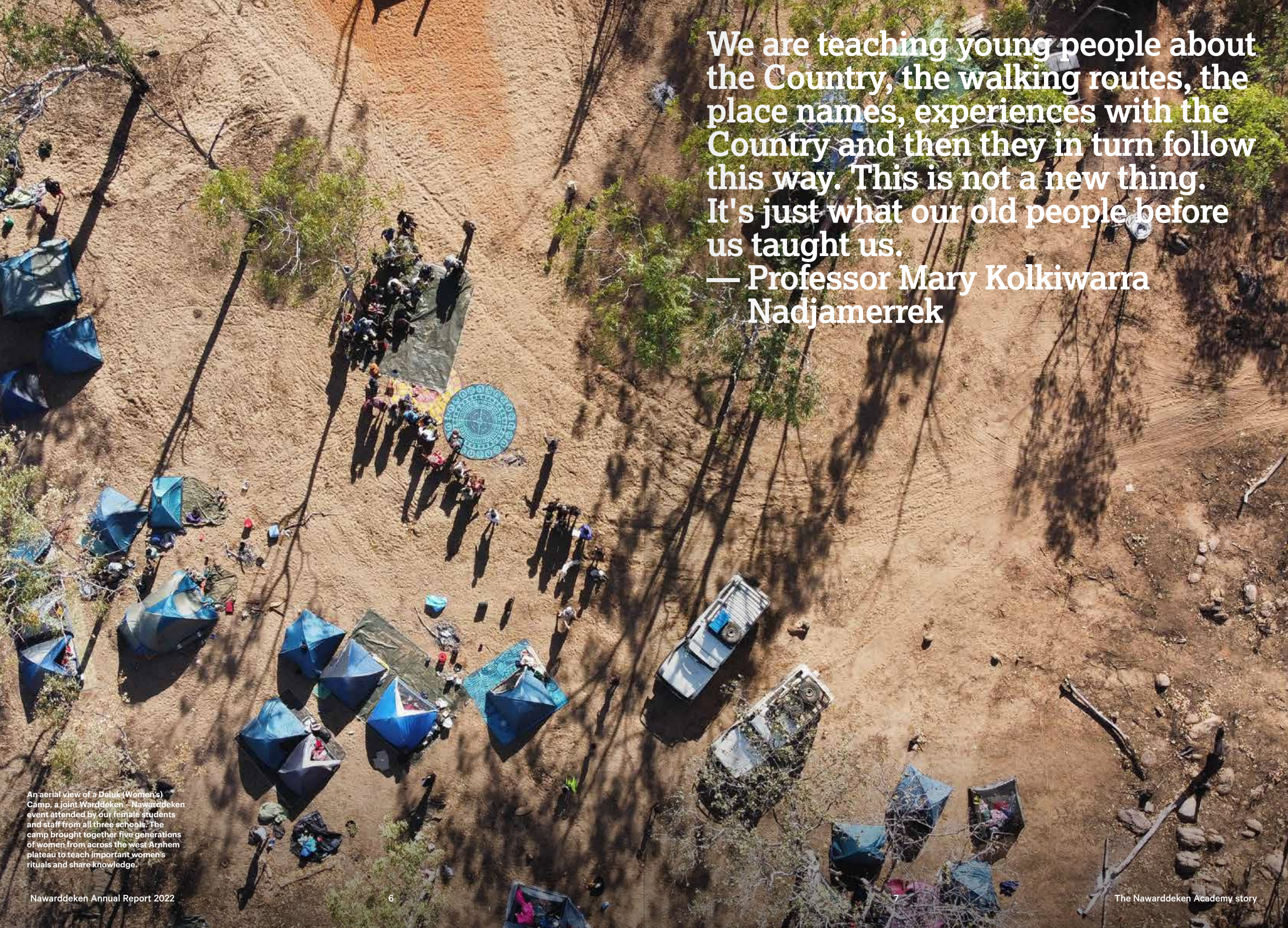
For many years, Warddeken rangers and their families lobbied for education to be delivered on Country, so they could remain living and working at homelands and not face the difficult decision of sending their children away to larger towns to access schooling. Elders and parents dreamed of bicultural education to make their children strong in two worlds, advocating across all levels of government to no avail.

The dream of full-time schooling in the Kuwarddewardde was realised when, with the generous support of the Karrkad Kanjdji Trust (KKT), the first Nawarddeken Academy was established at Kabulwarnamyo in 2015. In a scarcely resourced one-teacher 'classroom' under native cypress poles and a tarpaulin, full-time education in the Kuwarddewardde commenced.

Long-time Warddeken ranger and proud father Manoah Nawilil with son Eli in the Manmoyi ranger workshop. Most of our students have family members working with Warddeken, and many of them will transition into work in land and cultural heritage conservation. The close partnership between Warddeken and Nawarddeken strengthens this inherent bond between our organisations.





An aerial photograph of a Daluk (Women's) Camp. The camp is situated on a dry, sandy area with scattered green trees. Numerous blue and green tents are pitched across the site. In the center, a large, circular mural with intricate patterns is visible. A group of people is gathered around the mural. Two white utility vehicles are parked in the lower right quadrant. The scene is brightly lit, casting long shadows from the trees and tents.

We are teaching young people about the Country, the walking routes, the place names, experiences with the Country and then they in turn follow this way. This is not a new thing. It's just what our old people before us taught us.

— Professor Mary Kolkiwarra  
Nadjamerrek

An aerial view of a Daluk (Women's) Camp, a joint Warddeken – Nawarddeken event attended by our female students and staff from all three schools. The camp brought together five generations of women from across the west Arnhem plateau to teach important women's rituals and share knowledge.



The Academy's humble beginnings are reminiscent of building the community of Kabulwarnamyo and establishing the Warddeken rangers – each a seemingly impossible feat, realised by Nawarddeken leaders with the vision and commitment to overcome the scarcity of resources, funding, and the tyranny of distance.

After three years of steady growth and consolidation, Nawarddeken Academy Limited (NAL) was registered in 2017 as a wholly-owned subsidiary of WLML, and a Board of Directors was instated. To allow the school to formally obtain Independent School Registration, the infrastructure at Kabulwarnamyo School was upgraded to meet government standards, and passionate and sustained work by Bininj and Balanda staff and experts went into preparing an application and the necessary supporting documents. These extraordinary efforts were rewarded in late 2018 when Independent School Registration for Kabulwarnamyo was gained.

Seeing the opportunities and successes of the school at Kabulwarnamyo, rangers and Traditional Owners from Manmoyi and Mamadawerre requested Nawarddeken Academy Schools in their homeland communities, to provide year-round full-time education for their children. This appeal resulted in the NAL board resolving to support Manmoyi and Mamadawerre on their journey to independence. This resolution came to fruition with the establishment of two new Nawarddeken Academy Schools at Manmoyi and Mamadawerre, both gaining Independent School Registration in late 2021.

Registration has brought recurrent government funding that secures the financial future of the Academy and, more importantly, provides the children of the Kuwarddewardde with the education they are entitled to. Each Nawarddeken Academy School now operates with up to 20 students, two permanent qualified teachers and up to four casual Indigenous

teaching assistants who amongst other roles deliver the Indigenous Language and Culture (ILC) component of the curriculum. In addition to government funding, the Academy continues to have the financial and logistical support of both WLML and KKT.

The Academy represents both a deep source of pride and critical socioeconomic infrastructure for the communities. Communities have joint ownership of Nawarddeken Academy, actively overseeing the direction of the school and participating in the education of their children. Since 2018, NAL has employed 254 people, 212 of whom are Indigenous.

In late 2021, teachers began delivering an exciting new curriculum centred around the Kuwarddewardde Malkno (Stone Country Seasonal Calendar), where Australian Curriculum learning outcomes are delivered through the lens of seasonality and the deep cultural knowledge of the Traditional Owners of the Warddeken IPA. This unique curriculum model exposes Nawarddeken Academy students to experiential, place-based programs of learning, where Indigenous knowledge, language, and modes of teaching and learning are celebrated.

Thanks to the Nawarddeken Academy, our children are now receiving a first-rate education on Country. Our bicultural approach to education engages Indigenous leaders, rangers and skilled teachers. It encourages and supports communities to be actively involved in delivering their children's education.

The future of Bininj Nawarddeken depends on our kids learning to live, work, and thrive within two knowledge systems – by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to do just this, Nawarddeken Academy is ensuring that the future of west Arnhem Land is strong.



Above: Mitchell measures the height of spear grass, a seasonal indicator of the end of the wet season and the beginning of the dry season.

Left: Early Learning with Nicholas and Gregory.



It's never too early for wurdurd like young Lee to get painted up in ochre and learn kunborrk (traditional dance)!



**In late 2014, community members and Elders sat down to talk about what they wanted a school to deliver for the young people of the Stone Country, and the unique opportunities establishing a school on Country presented. These conversations, community consultations and workshops led to the development of Objectives and Guiding Principles that reflect the aspirations of Nawarddeken Traditional Owners. They provide a clear foundation for what the Nawarddeken Academy will achieve.**



## Objectives

- Support the social, cultural, emotional and physical wellbeing of every child
- Promote intergenerational education where families and communities share learning experiences to conserve Indigenous knowledge, languages and landscapes
- Empower young people to be strong and confident in western and Indigenous knowledge systems
- Preserve Nawarddeken languages and culture through bilingual and bicultural experiential learning
- Develop clear pathways for young Indigenous people of west Arnhem Land that match their aspirations and the aspirations of their families

## Guiding Principles

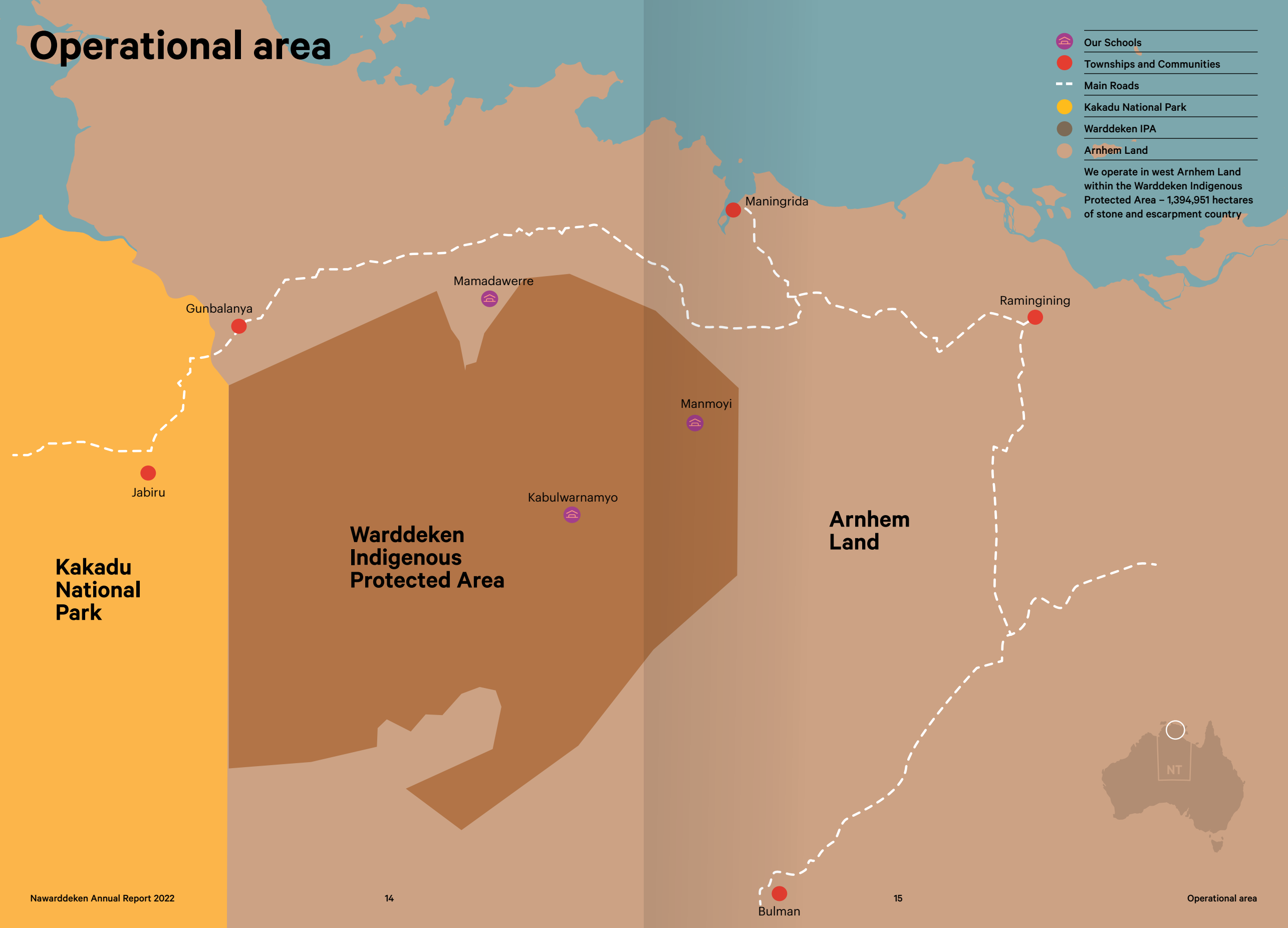
- Respect, and the ability to integrate customary modes of learning guided by our old people with a 'western' educational curriculum
- Facilitate a unique curriculum based on our land, language and culture, using formal and informal teaching and learning approaches, emphasising mental and physical health, while cultivating individual and collective respect and responsibility
- Incorporate flexibility, enabling continuous improvement and positive responses to changing circumstances
- Access all available technology to overcome the disadvantage of our geographical remoteness, and to ensure our resilience
- Recruit, support and retain high-quality staff underpinned by strong leadership and competent governance



# Operational area

-  Our Schools
-  Townships and Communities
-  Main Roads
-  Kakadu National Park
-  Warddeken IPA
-  Arnhem Land

We operate in west Arnhem Land within the Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area - 1,394,951 hectares of stone and escarpment country



**Kakadu National Park**

**Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area**

**Arnhem Land**



# Timeline

**2002**

Kabulwarnamyo community established by Bardayal, family and friends

**2005**

Manwurrk rangers established at Kabulwarnamyo

**2007**

Warddeken Land Management Limited formed

**2014**

Mok Traditional Owners share dreams of a Stone Country school with KKT supporters

**2014**

Senior Traditional Owners come together to discuss making a Stone Country school a reality

**2014**

KKT begins fundraising for a Stone Country school

**2015**

With Warddeken and KKT support, Nawarddeken Academy commences teaching at Kabulwarnamyo (under the auspices of Gunbalanya School)

**2016**

Early Learning program established at Kabulwarnamyo

**2017**

Nawarddeken Academy Limited formed

**2017**

Independent School Registration process commences (Kabulwarnamyo)

**2018**

Traditional Owners from Manmoyi and Mamadawerre formally request help from Nawarddeken Academy to achieve educational independence (March)

**2018**

Kabulwarnamyo School gains Independent School Registration (December)

**2020**

Consultations commence for Kuwarddewardde Malkno Seasonal Calendar and Curriculum

**2021**

Kuwarddewardde Malkno Seasonal Calendar launched

**2021**

Independent School Registration process commences (Manmoyi and Mamadawerre)

**2021**

Teaching Kuwarddewardde Malkno (Seasonal Calendar) Curriculum commences

**2021**

Manmoyi and Mamadawerre Schools gain Independent School Registration

**2022**

Early Learning program established at Manmoyi and Mamadawerre







# Bininj Kunwok

## Languages of the Kuwarddewardde

**Kundedjnjenghmi is the original language of the Kuwarddewardde, however, the majority of young Nawarddeken are not fluent speakers, instead speaking Kunwinjku, the more dominant language of the region. At Mamadawerre, Kunwinjku is the primary language spoken, given its location at the base of the escarpment. Additionally, some of our students have connections to other Bininj Kunwok languages such as Kuninjku, Rembarrnga, Dalabon and Maung.**

A concern shared across our communities by old people and cultural leaders is that younger generations are not learning or practising enough Bininj Kunwok languages. Nawarddeken Academy is therefore playing a critical role in reducing the loss of customary languages through the delivery of our bicultural curriculum.

At the behest of Traditional Owners, in 2023 we will be working closely with the Bininj Kunwok Regional Language Centre to create learning resources

and classroom activities to build and enhance students' proficiency in Bininj Kunwok languages, with a focus on Kundedjnjenghmi and Kunwinjku. This work includes the development of resources to support the teaching and learning of two endangered, specialised respect language registers – Kunbalak (avoidance/mother-in-law) and Kunderbuy (triangular kinship). These registers can take decades for Bininj to master, and so this important work must begin when our students are young. This exciting program will represent the first attempt to teach Kunbalak and Kunderbuy within the western education system.

We have compiled a glossary of Bininj Kunwok words commonly used at Nawarddeken Academy and found in this report.

Balabbala	Type of dwelling; Safari tent
Balanda	Non-Indigenous; European
Barrk	Black wallaroo
Bininj	Indigenous person; Male
Bobo	Goodbye
Bukkan	Learn
Daluk	Female
Djenj	Fish (generic)
Karribolbme	Teach
Kamak	Good
Kamak Rowk	Quality
Karldurk	Kookaburra
Kukku	Water; Freshwater place
Kunj	Kangaroo (generic)
Kunmayali	Knowledge
Kunred	Home; Community
Kundayarr	Pandanus (generic)
Kunwarddebim	Rock Art
Kunborrk	Dance
Kunwok	Language
Kuwarddewardde	Stone Country of west Arnhem Land
Larrk	Nothing
Ma	Okay
Malkno	Seasons
Manme	Food
Manrakel	Food and/or medicine plants
Manwurrk	Bushfire; Controlled burning
Mayh	Native animals
Mankung	Sugarbag; Native honey
Nawarddeken	People of the Stone Country
Wurdurd	Children
Yowayh	Yes; Agree



# Board of Directors



Conrad Maralngurra  
Chair



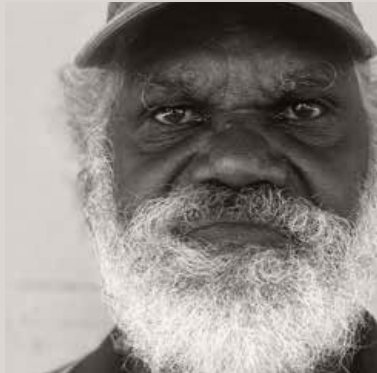
Leonie Jones



Mavis Jumbirri



Neil Leek



Kenneth Mangiru



Margie Maroney



Lois Nadjamerrek



Milly Naborlhborlh



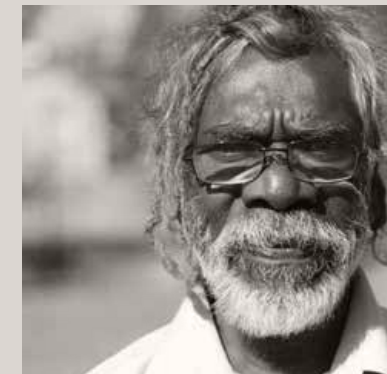
Eliza Nawirridj



Lorina Maralngurra



Danny Keep



Dean Yibarbuk

Nawarddeken Academy  
governance facilitators



# Board of Directors

## **Conrad Maralngurra Chair**

Conrad Maralngurra is a senior Traditional Owner of the Ngalngbali clan estate and resides in the homeland community of Mamadawerre. Conrad has worked as an educator, previously holding assisting teacher positions at Gunbalanya School and Mamadawerre Homeland Learning Centre. Conrad is multilingual, speaking Kunwinjku, Maung, Yolngu Matha and English. He is a talented musician who plays the didgeridoo and guitar. He has been a Director of WLML since 2013 and has previously been a regional representative on the Northern Land Council, a Director of Demed Aboriginal Corporation and a member of Norforce.

## **Leonie Jones**

With 40 years' experience working in Indigenous education in the Northern Territory as a teacher, principal, curriculum developer, HR manager and Regional Director, Leonie brings a wealth of skills and knowledge to the board. Leonie currently runs an educational consultancy that works to provide training, mentorship, and support primarily to principals of schools with Indigenous students. Leonie has dedicated her life's work to Indigenous education and is passionate about a child's right to access quality education, no matter where they live.

## **Mavis Jumbirri**

Mavis is a Traditional Owner of the Djrorrorlom clan and a leader of the Barunga and Manyallaluk communities where she resides. Mavis is experienced in governance, also sitting on the boards of WLML and Mimal Land Management Limited, having customary responsibilities for Country in both management areas. Mavis has worked for many years as a youth worker, facilitating back-to-Country trips and diversionary programs for at-risk youth. She is passionate about the education of the next generation of leaders.

## **Eliza Nawirridj**

Eliza is a Wurrik Traditional Owner for Mandedjkadjang in the north of the Warddeken IPA and began working with Nawarddeken Academy in 2015, leading the Early Learning program in Kabulwarnamyo. Eliza contributes weekly to the Bush Trips and has strong cultural knowledge of family kinship and the history of the IPA. Eliza has two young sons who are Traditional Owners of the Mok clan estate, and she loves going fishing with her extended family out on Country.

## **Kenneth Mangiru**

Kenneth Mangiru is a Traditional Owner of the Danek clan's Kudjumarndi estate and lives in Gunbalanya. Kenneth speaks Kunwinjku and English and is well respected for his cultural knowledge. He is an experienced board member, currently working at Njanjma rangers as part of a team responsible for environmental and cultural heritage protection. Kenneth has extensive governance experience, having been a founding Director of Warddeken Land Management Limited and sitting on the company's board since 2007. He is also a current Director of Adjumarllarl Aboriginal Corporation and Njanjma Aboriginal Corporation.

## **Margie Maroney**

Margie has worked as a finance industry professional for almost 30 years, at first with global banking organisations including Prudential-Bache Securities, Baring Securities and Hambros Bank. Subsequently, she specialised in corporate advisory work in the agribusiness sector, consulting to organisations including the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), AMP private investments, the Australian Primary Trust, plus a large range of government and semi-government bodies, and Statutory Marketing Authorities. Margie has been on the boards of Wool International, a range of Pooled Development Funds and investment vehicles, and was the inaugural Chair of the CSIRO Textile, Clothing and Footwear Sector Advisory Committee.

## **Lois Nadjamerrek**

Lois Nadjamerrek is a senior Traditional Owner of the Mok clan estate in which Kabulwarnamyo is situated and is a pillar of the Gunbalanya community where she resides. Reverend Lois Nadjamerrek is also an Anglican Priest in Gunbalanya at the Emmanuel Anglican Church and is highly respected in this role. Lois is passionate about providing safe and strong communities for families and children and works tirelessly in her twin roles as Directors of Nawarddeken Academy and Warddeken Land Management Limited to provide opportunities for Bininj people. Lois is also a Director of Adjumarllarl Aboriginal Corporation and is a member of the Stronger Communities for Children Reference Group and the Gunbalanya Housing Reference Group. Using her strong linguistic skills Lois also works closely with linguist Dr Murray Garde on the Bininj Kunwok Language Project.

## **Lorina Maralngurra**

Lorina grew up in Mamadawerre and is a Traditional Owner of the Ngalngbali clan estate, which is in the northern ward of the Warddeken IPA. Lorina completed her secondary education in Gunbalanya and was part of the 2016 graduating class. Since then, she has worked as a ranger with Warddeken and played a critical role in linking ranger work with the school, working closely with Board members and teachers to create a safe and strong place for students to learn and grow. She regularly takes students out on weekly Bush Trips, where she passes on cultural knowledge and important ranger skills. Lorina's dream is to see kids go to school every day out on Country and to grow up strong so they can have a better future.

## **Milly Naborlhborlh**

Milly is a Bordoh Traditional Owner of Manmoyi and has been working with Nawarddeken Manmoyi since it opened in 2021. She loves working with wurdurd, supporting them with their learning in English and teaching them cultural knowledge out on Country. Milly started working as a Warddeken ranger at 17 years of age and continues to engage in rock art and biodiversity conservation projects. Milly also loves fishing and camping with family and friends.

## **Neil Leek**

Neil has spent the past 35 years in Business Management at independent schools in Darwin, Alice Springs, Perth, and Adelaide. After qualifying with a Bachelor of Business from Curtin University, Neil looked for more meaningful employment than taking up pure accounting, commencing his new career in independent schooling in Darwin in 1986. Over the years Neil has built up significant experience in the many aspects of school operations including financial management, strategic planning, master planning and the development of new schools. Neil has been actively involved in the Associations of Independent Schools in the Northern Territory and Western Australia, Block Grant Authority NT Board, and Treasurer and board member of Baptist Care NT Limited and Foodbank NT.

## **Dean Yibarbuk – Board Facilitator**

Dean Yibarbuk is a Traditional Owner of Djinkarr, near Maningrida and of Yanjkobarnem in the Warddeken IPA. Dean was a driving force behind the development of the Djelk rangers and the establishment of WLML. Dean was the chairperson of NAL's board from its inception until 2020. He is currently the chair of WLML, co-chair of the Karrkad Kanjdji Trust and a Director of ALFA (NT) Limited, three not-for-profit organisations established to support a movement back-to-Country linked to critical conservation issues.

## **Danny Keep – Board Facilitator**

Danny is Managing Director of national consultancy company Business and Community Pty Ltd – an industry leader in building strong corporate compliance, governance and business principles for Indigenous organisations. With 30 years' experience in corporate leadership positions, Danny's focus has been to strengthen the management capability and governance of Indigenous Corporations and businesses across Australia. Danny has worked as a consultant to numerous state and territory governments, the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, Indigenous Business Australia and numerous Indigenous corporations throughout Australia.



# Thank you and farewell

We would like to farewell three special individuals, each of whom made exceptional contributions to Nawarddeken Academy over the years, and to whom we owe our utmost gratitude.

## Shaun Ansell

As CEO of Warddeken Land Management and Nawarddeken Academy during the conception and establishment of the Kabulwarnamyo school, Shaun took a leap of faith by developing Nawarddeken Academy as a subsidiary of Warddeken, and played a critical role in the journey to independence for all three schools. Without Shaun's vision and tireless pursuit of educational equity for Nawarddeken, we would not be where we are today.

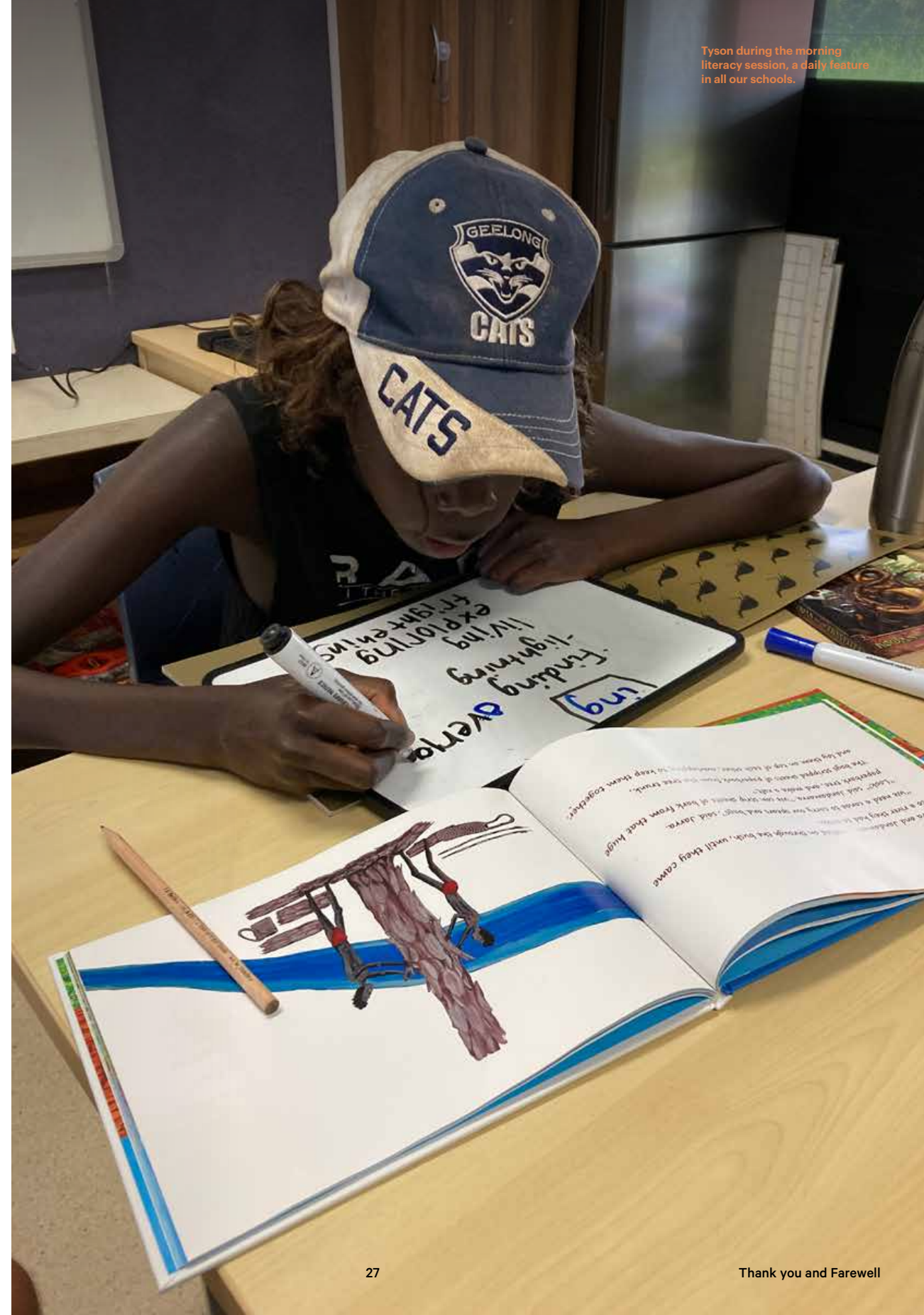
## Rick Tudor

Rick's history with the people and communities of the Warddeken IPA extends back many decades, and he was one of the earliest supporters of Nawarddeken Academy. As a key member of the sub-committee established to scope the feasibility of Kabulwarnamyo school back in 2014, Rick then transitioned to become a founding board member. Rick is one of the original believers in Nawarddeken Academy, and he played a vital role in turning an ambitious idea into reality.

## David Arthur

A decade after meeting Bardayal Lofty Nadjamerrek in 2007, David was inspired to support Bardayal's vision of children living, learning and thriving on their ancestral homelands. He started by providing strategic support for the registration of Kabulwarnamyo school in 2017, then joining the Nawarddeken Academy board in 2018. In 2020, David commenced his role as Nawarddeken Academy's Business Manager. David supported the Academy through the registration of all three schools, providing financial and strategic advice. His expertise enabled us to address the significant disadvantage remote indigenous students and families experienced and helped to ensure they receive the same quality of education as other children in Australia.

**Thank you Shaun, Rick and David for having the resilience, patience, heart and determination to help grow the Nawarddeken Academy to the company we are today.**



Tyson during the morning literacy session, a daily feature in all our schools.



# Chairperson's report Conrad Maralngurra



**2022 was a huge year for us – our first year running three Nawarddeken Academy schools full-time. This was a big dream of ours, and even though we always believed our dream would come true, we are still overjoyed that it happened so quickly.**

Thanks to lots of hard work – and some strong talking to people in power – the wurdurd from our IPA communities now have schooling opportunities equal to the rest of the country. Not only are they receiving full-time education – they are receiving a bicultural education, growing strong in Bininj and Balanda ways of knowing and understanding.

At Mamadawerre where I live, our teachers Cody and Mollie work with the community closely to make school fun and engaging every day. They even come on field trips and camping over the weekend! When I talk with Bininj from other communities, they tell me that the teachers from Manmoyi and Kabulwarnamyo work just as hard to make their schools exciting and engaging too. We are lucky to have Balanda working with us who care as much about our wurdurd as we do.

This year we worked together closely with Warddeken to run major cultural events, including a 60 kilometre bininj manbolh (Stone Country bushwalk), a kangaroo fire drive for yawurrinj (boys and young men) and a daluk (women's) business camp for yawkyawk (girls and young women). Weekly Bush Trips connected students with Dreaming sites, rock art galleries and endangered ecosystems such as anbinik forests. Professors worked with wurdurd to instruct them in making items of material

Under the tutelage of rangers, educators and cultural leaders, yawurrinj (young men) from all schools came together for a kangaroo fire drive – an endangered and specialised hunting event requiring knowledge of animal and fire behaviour, material culture and Bininj lore. This was the second such event held by Warddeken and Nawarddeken Academy.



culture and teach them to harvest and prepare bush food and meat. We think this is bicultural education at its best.

I hope you enjoy reading this report and are as proud as we are about what we achieved in 2022.

In 2023 we plan to build on this, and I'm really excited about the work we have planned to bring back endangered cultural song series of west Arnhem Land. Our wurdurd idolise the Nabarlek Band from Manmoyi, who build traditional song series into their modern music, and we are working together on the project. I hope through this work wurdurd will learn more about Bininj lore and feel confident to continue singing song series into the future.

*Conrad Maralngurra*



# Executive Officer's report

## Olga Scholes



Secondly, we saw the commencement of the Early Learning at Manmoyi and Mamadawerre, providing our youngest wurdurd (0-4 year olds) with a holistic start on their learning journeys.

Thirdly, the regional integration of the Kuwarddewardde Malkno; our place-based, seasonally responsive, culturally-driven curriculum, that is thematically linked to the Australian Curriculum. Our educators now have a regional framework that immerses students in a stimulating bicultural curriculum, celebrating the two worlds in which our wurdurd (children) walk.

Our revered Professors and Elders hold the past and the future of the Kuwarddewardde. The abyss left by the Elders who have passed is always felt deeply. Their vision and determination in ensuring the maintenance of strong intergenerational transfer of Kunmayali (Indigenous knowledge) is what motivates the next generation of Nawarddeken to encourage wurdurd to follow in the footsteps of their ancestors. An ageless teaching and learning process that is prioritised at Nawarddeken and is actively safeguarding the critical Kunmayali of future generations of Traditional Custodians.

Into the future, our company will continue to grade roads and carve new tracks to secure equality in access to Bininj-led education within the Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) and beyond.

Within our IPA, we will now focus on implementing plans to further develop the current Early Learning program, formalise

**I'm evermore humbled and inspired by the drive and dedication of the Nawarddeken Academy team and our community of partners and supporters. This year, we achieved milestones that, only recently, felt like pipe dreams.**

Firstly, our first full calendar year operating three schools. This achievement was marked by a momentous event in June, where hundreds of people from west Arnhem and from around the country gathered at Kabulwarnamyo to celebrate the registration of three independent Nawarddeken Academy Schools. Both Federal and NT Education Ministers attended and acknowledged the intrinsic value of what we have achieved. It gives hope to other remote communities and homelands as to what is possible. Educating the next generation of Traditional Custodians, now, has a bright future.

Elizabeth Bangarr, a senior cultural leader, demonstrates to Casey how to prepare bark for a dolobbo (bush drip torch).



the provision of Secondary Education and coordinate supportive transitions into engaging employment pathways for our older students. The development of infrastructure to provide enriching learning spaces will be a key focus moving forward.

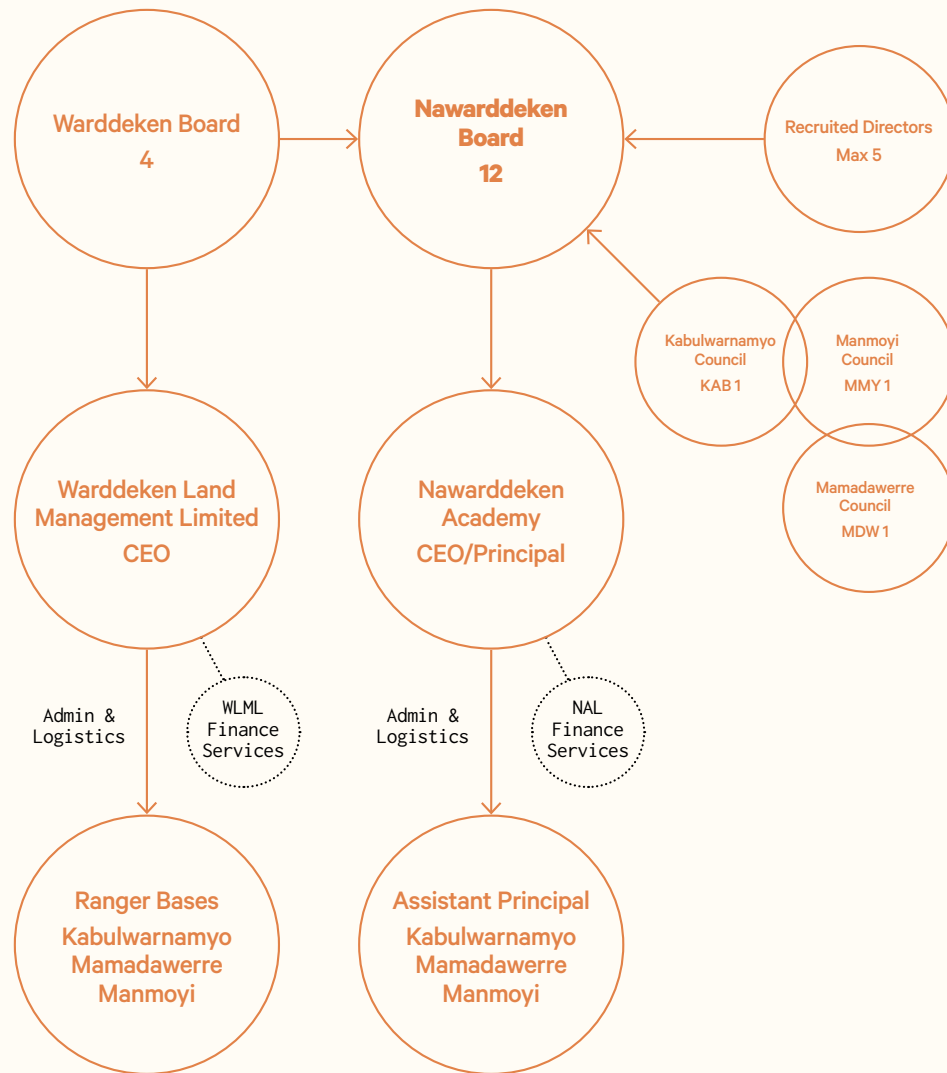
Traditional Owners from the Djelk IPA formally requested support from our Board to develop homeland schools in the Maningrida region so they too can access culturally-driven full-time education on Country. The Board was honoured to provide such assistance and a unique project is now in place auspiced by the Nawarddeken Academy to attract funds, explore feasibility and, in the future, set up an independent entity to conduct this important work.

My heartfelt thanks goes to all involved in this remarkable work. To our Bininj and Balanda staff: thank you for your tireless efforts and for inspiring wurdurd daily. To our partner organisations: Karrkad Kanjdji Trust, Warddeken Land Management, the Association of Independent Schools NT, Culture Tech, the Department of Education and the supporters who back this critical work: thank you for your belief and commitment whilst travelling alongside us on this journey. To our Professors, directors and rangers: to be part of such a team is one of life's greatest honours.



# Our governance

## Membership Warddeken Land Management



Nawarddeken Academy Limited Governance Model, endorsed by the Board of Directors in March 2021.

### Nawarddeken Academy Limited

The Nawarddeken Academy Limited (NAL) was registered as a public company limited by guarantee in August 2017. In November of that year, NAL was registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). This year, the board transitioned to a new structure and is now comprised of four Warddeken directors, three respective school council directors and up to five recruited directors. All members of the NAL board of directors are listed with the ACNC. In 2022, the board met three times. Term one, 2022 was our first full school term operating three registered independent schools under the Nawarddeken Academy. Our March board meeting saw the full implementation of our new governance structure.

### Independent School Registration – Kabulwarnamyo School

In January 2019, Nawarddeken Academy began operating as a Registered Independent School. This registration offered us the freedom to further customise education to the needs of the community, as well as secure ongoing funding to support our operation.

### Independent School Registration – Manmoyi and Mamadawerre Schools

In early 2021, applications were submitted to register two new independent schools in Manmoyi and Mamadawerre. Nawarddeken Directors and staff met with the Registrar to discuss the need for the new schools and the applications. We also liaised with the Northern Land Council and the Northern Territory Department of Education to secure the use of pre-existing infrastructure in both communities, for the purposes of education.

The Northern Territory (NT) Department of Education assigned a panel to assess the applications and advise the Registrar. In mid-September 2021 we were advised that both applications were successful, and commenced delivering education for the children of Mamadawerre and Manmoyi on the 29th of September and 18th of October 2021 respectively.

The approval of our three independent, community-led schools demonstrates the Northern Territory Government's ongoing commitment to the Education Department's Strategic Plan and Indigenous Education Strategy, ensuring students in the most remote parts of the Northern Territory have access to full-time education.



# Committees

**To ensure that the voices of parents and the local community are given primacy in the Academy's operations, there is strong Bininj representation on all NAL committees, as well as on the Board of Directors.**

## School Councils

Following the registration of two new schools and the implementation of updates to our constitution and governance structure, the Advisory Council to Nawarddeken Academy (ACNA) was dissolved to allow for the establishment of three respective school councils (Kabulwarnamyo, Manmoyi and Mamadawerre). This structure allows each school community to have a voice locally and to the Nawarddeken Board.

School councils meet regularly to:

- Discuss the curriculum
- Discuss events and operational matters
- Identify opportunities for culturally appropriate training
- Provide non-binding advice to the board
- Elect one director per school community to the board.

## Audit and Finance Committee

Following the registration of Kabulwarnamyo School, the board endorsed the creation of the Audit and Finance Committee (AFC) including four directors and three non-voting staff. In 2022, the committee met twice and continued to provide financial oversight and advice to the board and staff in the following areas:

- Monitor cash flow
- Review budgets for 2022
- Review and update finance policies
- Ensure all financial reporting and statutory requirements are met.

Ankudjed, the edible seeds of a pandanus plant, are difficult to extract from the plant. Students have been learning how to do this, making available to them one of the most commonly available bush foods.





# Our people

**Our team of highly experienced remote teaching staff includes six full-time teachers, a teaching Assistant Principal, an Executive Officer and 10 Bininj teachers (casual).**

In 2022, 97 Bininj with kinship connections to our students worked as casual educators or support staff. Our regular and casual Bininj teachers play an integral role in delivering education and translating curriculum content and concepts into Bininj Kunwok, the first language of our students.

We continue to work in collaboration with community Elders, cultural leaders and rangers, who assist in planning and

delivering teaching programs and are supported to do so through our partners Warddeken Land Management Limited and Karrkad Kanjdji Trust.

Our inclusive, kin-centric employment model celebrates family-based learning experiences, supports families to be actively involved in children's educational journeys, and ensures that the classroom is always a welcoming and supportive space for all our students.



## Cultural Professors



**Berribob Dangbungala Watson**



**Christopher Ngaboy**



**Janice Nalorlman**



**Margaret Nabalwad**



**Mary Kolkiwarra Nadjamerrek**



**Deborah Nabarlambarl**



**Josie Maralngurra**



**Leanne Guymala**

## Nawarddeken Academy staff



**Olga Scholes**  
Principal and Chief Executive Officer



**Karen Kehoe**  
Business Manager



**Melanie Cole**  
Learning Support Coordinator



**Tracey Page**  
Administration Officer

Conrad Maralngurra leads a bilingual class activity about the human body at Mamadawerre.



## Kabulwarnamyo team



**Adelaide Ford**  
Kabulwarnamyo  
Classroom  
Teacher and  
Literacy Lead



**Annie Cameron**



**Eliza Nawirridj**



**Jodi Vallak**  
Teaching Assistant  
Principal

## Manmoyi team



**Atef Rostom**  
Secondary  
Engagement



**Madeleine Logan**  
Manmoyi  
Classroom  
Teacher



**Melanie Yates**  
Manmoyi  
Classroom  
Teacher  
(terms 3 & 4)



**Michelle Bangarr**



**Milly  
Naborlhborlh**



**Ross Guymala**



**Colleen  
Nagurrurrba**



**Marlene  
Cameron**



**Jodie Bangarr**

## Mamadawerre team



**Ada Nabalwad**



**Cody Thomas**  
Mamadawerre  
Classroom  
Teacher



**Glenda  
Gurruwiwi**



**Lorna Nabalwad**



**Mollie Teale**  
Mamadawerre  
Classroom  
Teacher

### Community and family educators (casual)

Alexandria Namarnyilk  
Alfred Nalorlman  
Amaziah Nadjowh  
Andy Wood  
Anthony Billis  
Arijay Nabarlambarl  
Asheena Guymala  
Aspelita Guymala  
Benita Alangale  
Cammie Wood  
Carol Nayilibidj  
Chantel Nabalwad  
Charlene Bangarr  
Charlton Namundja  
Christella Namundja  
Cody Namundja  
Conrad Maralngurra  
Damazine Alangale  
Dean Yibarbuk  
Delvina Guymala

Denell Djumburri  
Deonus Djandjomerr  
Derek Guymala  
Dick Djogiba  
Dominic Narorrga  
Doreen Nayilibidj  
Drusilla Nadjamerrek  
Dylan Cameron  
Enosh Nadjamerrek  
Evelyn Narorrga  
Frankie Nadjamerrek  
Frederick  
Nadjamerrek  
Gabriella Maralngurra  
Gavin Bonson  
Jady Girrabul  
Jamie Billis  
Jayden Wurrkgidj  
Jenkin Guymala  
Jenny Nadjamerrek  
Jezariah Nabegeyo  
Nalorlman  
Jobie Managku

Jodie Bangarr  
Josh Namarnyilk  
Joson Naborlhborlh  
June Nadjamerrek  
Katra Nganjmirra  
Kayla Nagurrurrba  
Kaywanna Gamarrwu  
Leanne Namarnyilk  
Lesley Phillips  
Lorina Maralngurra  
Manoah Nawilil  
Maria Lippo  
Marshall Bangarr  
Mickayla Mardinga  
Naomi Nadjamerrek  
Paul Alangale  
Penelope Yibarbuk  
Peta-Anne Nalorlman  
Ray Ashley  
Recain Nabarlambarl  
Rhonda Nadjamerrek  
Rodney Naborlhborlh  
Sara Cooper Billess

Sarah Billis  
Stuart Guymala  
Suzannah Nabalwad  
Sylvaris Gumurdul  
Tahnee Nabalwad  
Tinnesha Narrorrga  
Vernon Garnarradj  
Vietta Bangarr  
Wendy Namarnyilk  
Zachariah Namarnyilk  
Zara Anne Nalorlman

### Early Learning Educators (casual)

Jean Burrunali  
Alexia Gumurdul  
Rosie Nabegayo  
Colleen Nagurrurrba  
Marlene Cameron  
Regina Wilson



# School Registration Ceremony

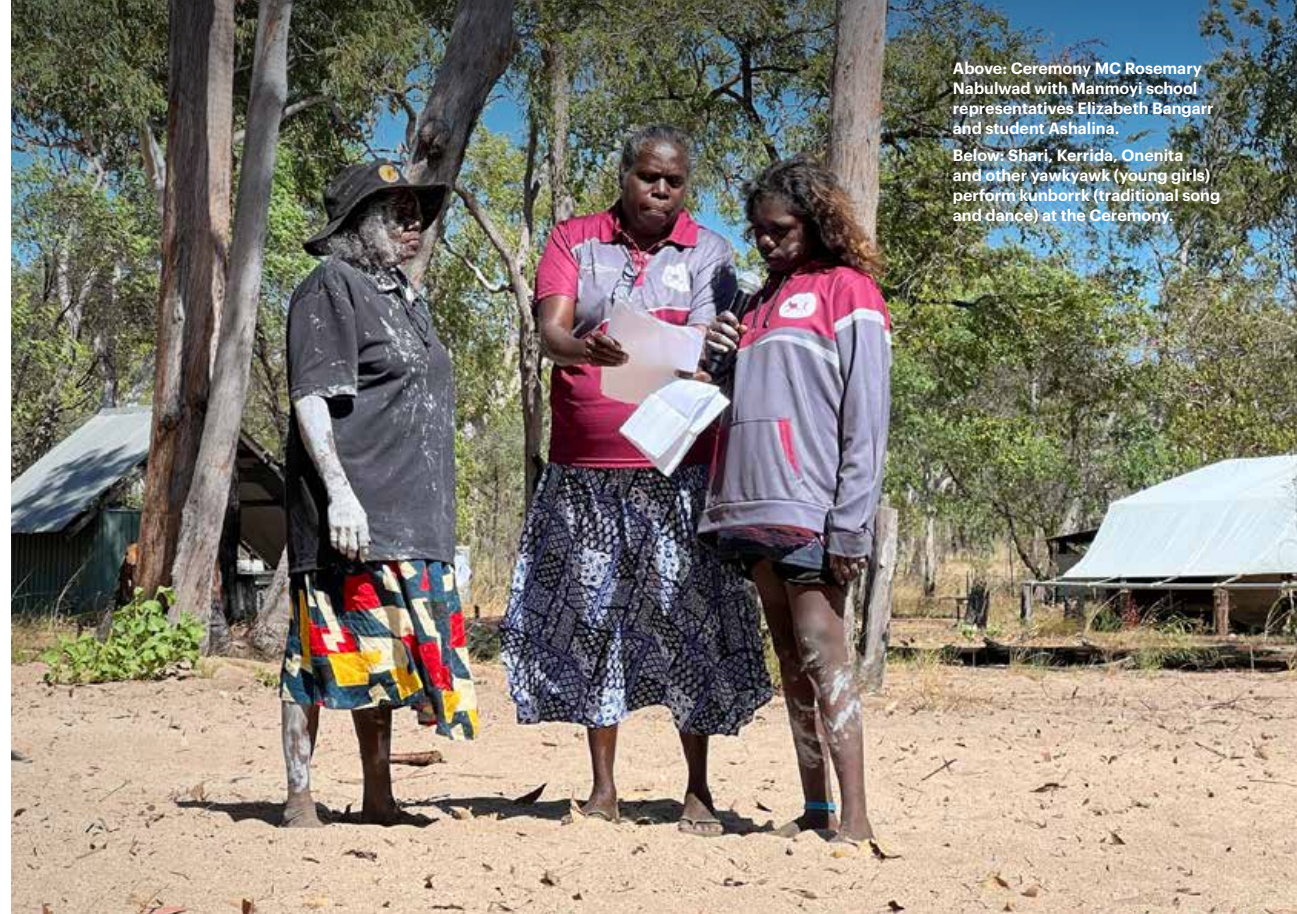
On June 22, hundreds of people including Nawarddeken students, families, staff, community members, friends and supporters came together at Kabulwarnamyo to celebrate the truly momentous achievement of registering three independent Nawarddeken Academy Schools.

The ceremony represented the culmination of years of hard work and determination and included speeches by Elders, students and rangers from each of the three communities. The ceremony was also the official launch of the Kuwarddewardde Malkno Seasonal Calendar and the associated Curriculum.

Students and their families performed kunborrk (ceremonial singing and dancing) to kuwarddewardde song-cycles, with young Manmoyi student Ambrose Phillips stealing the show with his powerful singing performance. A musical performance by Nabarlek Band of 'Lofty's Song' – their song celebrating the tireless efforts of Bardayal Lofty Nadjamerrek to establish Warddeken homelands, the ranger program and bring Nawarddeken together – was emotional for everyone.

In his first remote trip holding the portfolio, Federal Education Minister Jason Clare flew in for the celebration. After listening to speeches by community

leaders and taking a tour of the school, Minister Clare told the assembled crowd "If we want children to get an education which is cross-cultural, which helps them to learn the culture of their own community, but also get the tools they need to succeed outside their community, then schools like this in the most remote parts of Australia are really important". Northern Territory Education Minister Eva Lawler also attended the ceremony, voicing her support for the vision of the three communities "The Northern Territory government has opened its eyes and is very, very much welcoming seeing more schools like you, and more people who want to see their children educated on Country in two ways," she said.



Above: Ceremony MC Rosemary Nabulwad with Manmoyi school representatives Elizabeth Bangarr and student Ashalina.  
Below: Shari, Kerrida, Onenita and other yawkyawk (young girls) perform kunborrk (traditional song and dance) at the Ceremony.



If we want children to get an education which is cross-cultural, which helps them to learn the culture of their own community, but also get the tools they need to succeed outside their community, then schools like this in the most remote parts of Australia are really important.  
— Jason Clare, Federal Education Minister



# Parents and community

## New School Uniforms

In 2021, Kabulwarnamyo School selected a logo for their uniform – a Wakkewakken (native honey) spirit important to the landowning Mok clan, painted by the venerable leader Bardayal Lofty Nadjamerrek. The Wakkewakken is a distinctive spirit being with no legs and long fingers that allow her to reach into hives to access honey.

This year, artists from Manmoyi and Mamadawerre were selected to prepare logos for the new schools' uniforms. From Manmoyi, Berribob Dangbungala Watson drew a billabong scene centred around kawk (Rufous night heron) – a sacred totemic being with an associated Dreaming site. From Mamadawerre, young artist Micah Garnarradj drew a namarnkol (barramundi) facing head-down to represent an important Dreaming story from nearby the community.

Students and staff from all schools love their new uniforms and have been wearing them with pride.

## School Assemblies

Assemblies at all Nawarddeken Academy Schools were held regularly throughout the year, providing forums to share news and celebrate student achievements with parents and the larger community. Students work with educators to help plan and present at assemblies, sharing stories about their work. This has helped students build confidence in public speaking and develop a sense of pride in their achievements.

Assemblies are also an opportunity for students and members of the community to come together and perform kunborrk – ceremonial songs and dances. Assembly kunborrk performances encourage students to practice, and several yawurrinj (boys and young men) made noticeable progress in their cultural singing and dancing skills throughout the year.

In term three, Manmoyi School hosted a Celebration of Learning, where parents and family were invited to see the work completed by their children throughout the term. More than 40 children and family members attended the event and were welcomed by community leaders Michelle Bangarr and Sarah Billis, who stressed the importance of the school and thanked families for their support.

Schools also hosted community nights throughout the year, including community discos and movie nights.

## Newsletters

Schools continued to publish one to two newsletters per term, to share news with students' families and the broader Warddeken community. The newsletters are filled with photos and stories of events, programs and student learning and are a great way to communicate the incredible activities happening across three schools. Newsletters cover topics such as student learning and achievement, community events, ranger work and important announcements and dates.



Benita Alangale cuts a birthday cake to celebrate her son Alan.





Richard shares digital resources he's created with his great grandmother Professor Mary Kolkiwarra Nadjamerrek.

### **Bushwalk**

A major community highlight this year was when students from Mamadawerre participated in a two-week bushwalk alongside Warddeken rangers. The walk followed a bininj manbolh (customary walking route), travelling approximately 60 kilometres south of Mamadawerre, from Kurruwil in Madjawarr estate to Makkalarl in Yulhmanj clan estate. Bushwalks offer incomparable learning experiences, allowing students to engage with Country in an intimate and sustained manner, under the tutelage of their extended families. A high point of the walk was when students, families, rangers and Traditional Owners visited Kurdukadji Dedjbarlkarrhmeng, a famous Emu Dreaming site. The walk was an opportunity for intergenerational learning and introduced many of our students to new cultural sites and areas of Country.

### **Indigenous Hip Hop Workshop – YouTube song and video production**

Indigenous Outreach Projects came to Manmoyi in July to facilitate a workshop for students and families from all three schools and create a hip hop video about the Seasonal Calendar, and living in the Kuwarddewardde. The workshop was a joyful celebration of music, dance, and a wonderful opportunity for families from across the Kuwarddewardde communities to spend time together. The video was screened to the delight of everyone, and has since become one of the most popular videos in west Arnhem!

### **Rock Art Camp**

A Bim (Rock Art) Camp facilitated by Warddeken was held at Morlekarrang in Djordi clan estate in August 2022. Students and families from all three school sites came together to camp on the banks of the Mann River for a week of bim activities and cultural learning on Country, in collaboration with the Warddeken bim team and rangers.

### **Women's Ceremony**

In term three, female students from all schools joined Warddeken rangers and their extended families for a very special Daluk Kunmayali (Women's Knowledge) Camp on Djordi clan estate in the east of the Warddeken IPA. Camped atop an escarpment, yawkyawk (young women) learned about and participated in a secret women's-only ceremony, led by Elders, Traditional Owners and Warddeken rangers. This event was the first to focus specifically on women's lore and ritual practice.

### **Film-making**

The Storey Players visited each school to make a short film based on traditional stories of the sky, moon, stars and sun. Senior Elders guided the production, with students acting, recording voiceovers and designing sets for the films. Each school then had an opening night under the stars with the whole community and all films were launched online in December.

### **Bikes for Mamadawerre**

Thanks to a generous donation from KKT, students at Mamadawerre – who are all mad keen bike riders – were gifted with a set of bikes in term three, allowing students and teachers to enjoy bush rides regularly. Bike rides were a great way to start the school day and also proved a hit with Warddeken rangers, who loved joining in with the kids for a ride to local sites around the community. A particular highlight was riding to a mandudjmi (green plum) grove to harvest this delicious and healthy bush treat, which would otherwise have been inaccessible.



# Kabulwarnamyo School

Kabulwarnamyo community established: 2002  
 Warddeken ranger base established: 2005  
 School registered: 2018



Bardayal Lofty Nadjamerrek  
 Artist

I'm really supporting my dad's vision all the time; I'm carrying it with me. This is the important thing for us – to teach our kids not only in our Bininj culture but also in Balanda education. Both. We like to see that, so our kids can move forward both ways.  
 — Lois Nadjamerrek, Warddeken Director and senior Traditional Owner

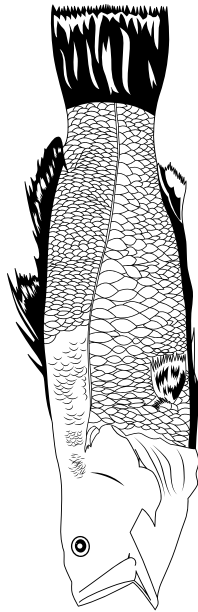


Miles completes a work sheet on the ancient Stone Country tree anbinik. Warddeken rangers have worked for over a decade to protect these at-risk forests, and students worked closely with rangers during a conceptual unit based around anbinik.



# Mamadawerre School

Mamadawerre community established: 1971  
Warddeken ranger base established: 2018  
School registered: 2021



Micah Garnarradj  
Artist

**It's a great thing in our life now all Bininj kids have full-time education in our outstations. There are no distractions, no violence and all the problems can be solved here.**  
— Conrad Maralngurra, NAL Chairman, WLML senior ranger and Director

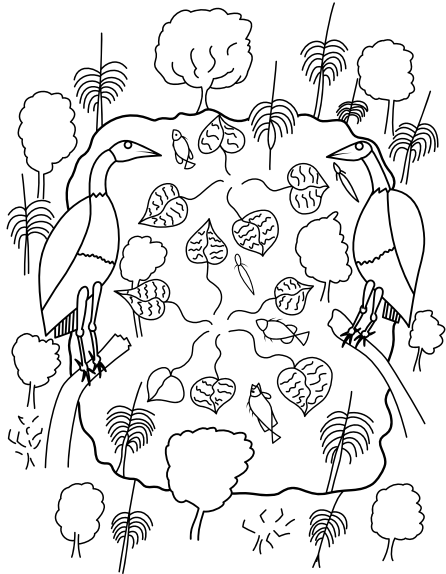


Mamadawerre students have used bikes donated by Karrkad Kanjdji Trust to explore the Country around the community - including to harvest green plums!



# Manmoyi School

Manmoyi community established: 1978  
Warddeken ranger base established: 2012  
School registered: 2021



Berribob Dangbungala Watson  
Artist

The old people are here now watching us and are very proud that we are here today learning about Country.

— Ross Guymala, Teaching Assistant and senior Traditional Owner



Marsari shows one of the species of bush potato she's learned to identify and harvest during Bush Trips.



# Kuwarddewardde Malkno Curriculum



**The calendar is about two-way learning because we need our kids to walk in two worlds.**

— Terrah Guymala, Warddeken cultural projects manager and Director

Professor Berribob Dangbungala Watson is a driving force behind the delivery of specialised cultural learning activities, especially material culture and bush skills and how these link to the Kuwarddewardde Malkno Seasonal Calendar.

**The development of the Kuwarddewardde Malkno (Stone Country Seasonal Calendar) was requested and initiated by Elders and community members from across the Warddeken IPA as a response to the rapid decline of cultural knowledge in younger generations. Although seasonal calendars exist for neighbouring regions, there was no comprehensive seasonal calendar for the Stone Country, where the resources, ecosystems and languages are very different from lowland regions.**

Using Bininj seasonal knowledge as the foundation, the Kuwarddewardde Malkno forms the epicentre of the curriculum and framework of learning at Nawarddeken Academy. With six Bininj seasons forming the teaching and learning structure of the school year, the culturally-driven curriculum runs on a three-yearly cycle centred around 18 unique conceptual units, each identified by Bininj Elders and leaders as critical. This pioneering curriculum allows us to coordinate and structure cultural learning priorities within a framework that drives and informs all learning experiences at Nawarddeken Academy.

Widespread consultations undertaken in 2020 by Warddeken (as part of a Plan of Management review process) allowed Landowners to provide extensive detail about what they want Nawarddeken wurdurd to learn. A series of further workshops identified elements of seasonally-specific Kunmayali (Knowledge) and Kunwok (Language) important for wurdurd to learn. This information was then clustered into themes and topics, ultimately leading to the creation of 18 unique conceptual units that comprise the Kuwarddewardde Malkno Curriculum.

Each of the three cycles of the Kuwarddewardde Malkno Curriculum is taught as six thematic units, each linked directly to the relevant Arnhem Land Plateau season. These integrated units unpack important seasonal indicators and explore customary stories, songs, skills, sacred sites and cultural knowledge prevalent in that given season, whilst explicitly linking this learning with the Australian Curriculum Key Learning Areas and Northern Territory Indigenous Language and Culture frameworks.

Work continues growing our database of mixed-media cultural resources for each conceptual unit, to support staff to deliver quality bicultural teaching and learning experiences. With much archival material repatriated, in 2023 a partnership with the Bininj Kunwok Regional Language Centre will enhance the development of new cultural resources designed for school-aged learners.



Right: Estella, Randy, Maureen and Chloe arrange seasonal indicators against the Kuwarddewardde Malkno.  
 Far right: Tyler Wood holding a kundjinem (paperbark dish) on a weekly Bush Trip.



**In addition to the seasonally thematic curriculum, a custom IT scope and sequence has been developed to enhance learning experiences by embracing a range of apps and software programs, whereby students are supported to use technology to tell their stories and create multimodal texts to share cultural knowledge.**

After receiving training in specific apps, students can create unique, individualised content from the KWWM curriculum to be loaded on the Kunmayali app and shared amongst the communities.

**Examples of such learning activities include the use of:**

- Garage Band to create soundscapes for different seasons for use across a range of different apps
- Sketches School for selecting and replicating traditional brush types and art forms in a localised context to produce authentic digital art
- Numbers to record water testing data on freshwater field trips with rangers, and translate data into visual interactive graphs

- Reality Composer to develop an Augmented Reality scene detailing the life cycle of a djaddi (frog) or kinga (saltwater crocodile) with commentary.

Designing, developing and implementing an entire curriculum around priority Bininj cultural and ecological knowledge has been an ambitious undertaking, and we are grateful to the Traditional Owners, educators and rangers who have made it a reality. Our first full year of teaching the Kuwarddewardde Malkno Curriculum has proven that the effort of all involved was certainly worth it, with our students now engaged in an innovative, thriving program of learning scaffolded around culturally important themes, knowledge and skills.



# Teaching and learning



Annie Cameron, Colleen Nagurrurrba and Marlene Cameron lead engaging activities for early learners at Manmoyi.



# Kudjewk

## Mid wet season

### Conceptual unit: Freshwater People Term 1: weeks 1-8

Michelle Bangarr and Marlene Cameron have been instrumental in establishing an Early Learning Program at Manmoyi.

**Kudjewk is a time of extended monsoonal rains and tropical storms. The river systems and waterways that interlace the Kuwarddewardde swell, waterfalls rush over escarpment edges, Country shimmers neon green, and all roads in and out of the Warddeken IPA are closed. This year the Kudjewk conceptual unit was Freshwater People, exploring how Nawarddeken have lived their lives along the rivers, creeks, springs and billabongs that criss-cross the Kuwarddewardde since the Dreaming.**

The unit incorporated learning about the water cycle, the different freshwater ecosystems of the Warddeken IPA, how to protect and monitor freshwater sites, and the plants and animals prevalent in Kudjewk. Wurdurd across the three schools engaged in learning activities centred around the seasonal indicators of Kudjewk – changes in the natural environment representing the commencement of the season. For Kudjewk, seasonal indicators include kabo (green ants) proliferating and manboyberre (white apple) ripening.







Above: Students collect sheets of paperbark from the riverbed to use in the construction of traditional shelters.

Below: Delsanto during morning literacy activities.

Above right: Bundy's artwork depicting wet season storms. Like a number of our students, young Bundy's totem is Namarrkon the Lightning Man, and this important element of his cultural identity is celebrated within the classroom.

Below right: Making fire is one of the most important bush skills to master – it's also a skill on the decline amongst younger people. At Manmoyi, students were mentored by cultural Professors to practice this critical Stone Country skill.



### Kudjewk Bush Trips and Cultural Learning Highlights

- Learning to make tea from kabo nests
- Collecting and eating fresh manboyberre (white apples) from around rivers and creek beds
- Students learned to make manbudbud (bush string) and how to play customary bush string games, using their fingers to manipulate the string and create pictures of things found in the local environment including mandem (water lily), flying fox and Namarrkon
- Students learned how to make and use fibre string for fishing and tying animal legs for cooking
- Wurdurd and rangers engaged in fishing activities that provided the opportunity to catch, measure, weigh and cook namarnkol (barramundi), burarr (Merten's water goanna) and ngalmangiysi (long neck turtle)
- Traditional stories this term centred around Namarrkon (Lightning Man) and kunwarddebim (rock art) sites close to communities where depictions of this important spirit ancestor are found



- Yawurrinj (young men) learned to collect wood for the creation of mako (didgeridoo) under the expert tutelage of Professors Berribob Dangbungala Watson and Christopher Ngaboy. Students learned to identify appropriate trees, where to find them and how to cut the timber. After working together to craft new mako, families taught wurdurd how to play
- Yawkyawk (young women) learned from senior women which tree to use to make kunkaninj (digging sticks) and how to prepare them
- Harvesting badjdjo (radish-like tuber) and dikkala (bush potato) with their new kunbarlkbu (digging sticks)!



# Bangkerreng

## Late wet season

### Conceptual unit: Kunred (Home)

#### Term 1: weeks 9-10



In the last weeks of term one, students observed a shift in the seasons from Kudjewk to Bangkerreng – the late wet season. A short season in the Bininj calendar, Bangkerreng is the time of nakurl (knock-em-down winds), which are the very last of the wet season storms. Students noticed derrko (dragonflies) filling the air and the flowering of anlerreleerre (holly-leaved pea flower), signalling the end of the rains and the imminent arrival of the dry season.

The conceptual unit for Bangkerreng this year was Kunred (Home), incorporating learning activities about the Kuwarddewardde homeland movement, customary Kuwarddewardde dwellings (occupation sites, bark huts and raised shelters) and Aboriginal Land Rights.

Students researched the history of the return to Country movement led by the venerable leader Bardayal Lofty Nadjamerrek. Wurdurd watched old recordings and used timelines and maps to help create and publish Keynote presentations explaining when and where Bininj returned to the homelands.



Above: Tyson carries a large sheet of paperbark on a Bush Trip.

Below: Charlene Bangarr encourages and supports Nisha and Marsari as they harvest bush foods.





Left: A kodbarre bush shelter under construction. Some students' grandparents and great grandparents would have camped in such shelters as young people.

Right: Bush string is one of the most utilitarian items in Nawarddeken material culture, used in the construction of fish traps, spears, string bags and bodily adornment. Susan and Mahalia learn to turn bark into one of the various kinds of bush string.

Below right: Students also learned from Professor Mary Kolkiwarra Nadjamerrek that bush string can be used to play games too! Mary taught Kabulwarnamyo students how to make a range of animals and figures using string and their fingers – games she played herself as a child.



### Bangkerreng Bush Trips and Cultural Learning Highlights

- Students worked with bininj and daluk rangers to build kodbarre (traditional shelters) from paperbark and branches, used for camping and protection from the elements when our Professors were children
- Identifying, collecting and cooking a variety of bush yams,
- Taking children and their families back out to Country not visited by members of Kabulwarnamyo before
- Kudjewk is also the time when rangers remove introduced weeds to the IPA. Students worked with ranger groups around the schools and community to identify and survey weeds and learn about control, management and removal/disposal processes.



# Teaching and learning highlights across our schools in term 1

**The commitment of the staff and the engagement of families and students in their learning is phenomenal. It's great to see authentic education on Country and I love being able to upskill staff and students to weave digital technology across all learning.**

**— Kiri Marschall, Culture Tech Professional Learning Consultant**

## Literacy

Reading and literacy are a huge focus of daily learning for Nawarddeken Academy students. Every morning during our literacy block, students practice both their oral English language and their English literacy skills. Kudjewk falls at the beginning of the school year, and with three schools now operational, much effort was put into assessing literacy levels and planning to support individualised reading and writing journeys for students.

Schools used the “Finding the Lightning Man” picture book by David Welch to support storytelling by Traditional Owners and Elders. Students learned which community members have Namarrkon as their Djang (Dreaming), and used bark paintings by local artists to interpret the lightning and thunder features specific to the Lightning Man spirit.

Literacy focuses this term included:

- Learning the sounds of the alphabet using lots of hands-on learning, repetition and reading apps on iPads
- Learning how to blend sounds so students will be able to read words

**Cyril with a kundjinem – a paperbark dish used to hold liquids, ochre, or slices of yam soaking in water, and also for ritual Welcome to Country events.**







Above: Ross Guymala leads a bilingual on Country activity.

Below: Elica and Agnes crush the root of mandjurdum, the 'yellow dye tree'. The crushed roots are boiled to dye pandanus fibre for the production of baskets and dilly bags.



- Students reading simple decodable books
- Taking part in rich oral English discussions using The Guardian Global News Photos of the Day allowing students to broaden their vocabularies and gain a deeper understanding of the world around them
- Early years literacy groups focused on learning English sounds, blending them and forming some basic English words
- Upper primary and secondary students focused on creating engaging texts.

### Maths

This term in maths students explored many new mathematical ideas, wherever possible integrating this learning with hands-on, on Country activities. Daily maths rotations allowed students to spend quality time with both Bininj and Balanda teachers, learning new concepts and refining known knowledge in Kunwinjku.

Maths focuses this term included:

- Building number sense and learning about big and small numbers
- Developing mathematical skills in measurement while measuring the height and length of anbedje (spear grass) out on Bush Trips
- Learning how to read an analogue clock – it was great to see students apply this to real life scenarios, including understanding what time they need to be back at school after lunch or letting the teacher know when they're late for letting wurdurd out for break time!
- Early years students worked hard to start recognising, reading and counting numbers one to five
- Middle years students started to skip count and connect this knowledge to addition facts
- Upper years students started reading and writing five-digit numbers and learning to add two-digit numbers with regrouping.

### Science

Within science this term we explored weather patterns in alignment with the Seasonal Calendar. A favourite activity was making rain gauges – every day students measured and recorded how much rain fell, and then graphed the collected data. Students also observed, identified and mapped bush foods growing around their communities.

### IT

Students this term had the opportunity to engage in online learning via Zoom with Culture Tech. On iPads, students followed teaching sequences scaffolded by an IT specialist, to develop their skills using the Book Creator app. Wurdurd were taught how to locate their community using Google Maps, insert the map and label their home and school buildings.

Students worked with experienced rangers to learn how to find and record bim (rock art) using data collection and mapping apps on iPads. The rivers this term were too high to go out on Country to find and record real bim, so rangers set up an amazing mock bim scavenger hunt around Mamadawerre! Older students were given the opportunity to work in the buggy, directing the driver using the GPS mapping program to find different markers around the community. Students worked in teams to locate markers on the map, find the mock sites and photograph them. Rangers also supported students to record information including the correct clan estate and what local flora and fauna are around the site.





Left: Lorna Nabalwad shows students how to use digital cameras to take clear photos of rock art. Students from all schools work closely with Warddeken's Rock Art Program to survey and conserve rock art sites.

Below left: Violet and Nicholas learn about invasive weed species and how rangers manage them.

Below middle: Dikkala, a favoured kind of bush potato.

Below: Students take maths skills out on Country, measuring the height of spear grass growing around the community.



# Yekke

## Early dry season

## Conceptual unit: Ngurrurdu (Emu) - Term 2



**Bu an-yungki, makka djal Bininj duninj ba-wokyimi like old people yiman ka-yime barri-yimi... Bulanjdjan-ni, ngal-Wurrbbarn-ni anekke.**

In the beginning, she (emu) was a human being and she talked, she was an old woman, old people, ... of the ngal-Kangila subsection and the Wurrbbarn clan.

**Ngali bininj-ni ngalu ngurrurdu borledkerrinj nahni birridolkang kungol, ngalih wanjh ngalebirri-bawong kukurlk ka-wake. Bulanjdjan ngal-Wurrbbarn.**

This emu was once a human being and... all the people here associated with her changed into animals. They flew up into the sky and they left her on the ground to walk around. Emu was a woman of Bulanjdjan subsection.

Ngurrurdu Djang, Emu Dreaming, is one of the most famous Dreaming sites in west Arnhem. During a bushwalk in the northern region of the Warddeken IPA, senior Wardjadjak Traditional Owner Priscilla Badari oversaw an increase ritual at the site, explaining to younger generations the relevant lore and protocols. Students with cultural connections to the site were supported to participate in the increase ritual, and will now be able to continue this important ritual into the future, ensuring the proliferation of emu in the Stone Country.

**In Yekke, the strong, cool dalukorro wind blows, drying up the Country and stopping the rains. Ankarnbirr (acacia oncinocarpa) shrubs flower, signalling the dry season has arrived, and across the Kuwarddewardde, Bininj start lighting small, cool fires – as they have done for countless generations.**

These Yekke learning activities centred around the sacred and culturally important Ngurrurdu (Emu), which have been growing fat over the wet from eating a wide variety of seasonal fruits and plants. Historically, as Bininj moved down from the rocky highlands and into the open savanna woodlands in Yekke, ngurrurdu were able to be hunted again. Ngurrurdu features heavily in Bininj culture – as a favoured food with strict cooking and consumption protocols; as the protagonist of one of the most famous Dreaming stories in west and central Arnhem Land; as the subject of rock art and contemporary painting; and as the topic of a morrdjdanjno ceremonial increase ritual song.

Throughout the term, students also learnt the seasonal indicator plants and animals of Yekke, such as andadjek (honeysuckle) and anmarlak (billy goat plum) from Elders and rangers. Wurdurd enjoyed exploring YouTube Yekke stories by cultural leaders Lewis Naborlhborlh and Neville Namarnyilk, and Bush Trips included intergenerational knowledge and skills transfer through identifying, collecting, and cooking a variety of bush yams.

Students at all schools studied the Greedy Emu story, which tells of an old lady of the Wurrbbarn clan whose selfish behaviour saw her left with wings that wouldn't allow her to fly, while other birds were given wings that allowed them to soar. Learning this extremely important story – not only studying the narrative but also exploring the places and clans associated with her ancestral journey, and the moral messages encoded in the story, was enhanced by two incredible locally-developed resources focused on this famous Dreaming story:

- A bilingual picture book written and illustrated by rangers from Manmoyi
- A film produced by Skinnyfish Music, acted by the community of Mamadawerre.



## Yekke Bush Trips and Cultural Learning Highlights

### Controlled burning

Older students from all schools spent time with Warddeken rangers on Country learning about cool early dry season burning practices. Students were supported to examine the curing of different habitat types and identify when an area was dry enough to burn. Rangers also taught students about plants that need to be protected from fire such as anbinik and Anlarrh (native cypress). Students were mentored in practical skills such as how to use drip torches and backpack leaf blowers to safely burn dry leaf litter and spear grass.

Fire management and the blending of customary and contemporary practice have long been the cornerstone of Warddeken's land management program and many of our students will go on to work as rangers who will need to be skilled in this field. Exposing our students to work opportunities, and to be mentored by experienced rangers is one of the strengths of working in close partnership with Warddeken.

### Anbinik forest site visit

Kabulwarnamy and Manmoyi Schools joined up with Warddeken rangers to visit an anbinik forest called Yidngarremarneng. Many Bolmo Traditional Owners from Marlkawo and Manmoyi joined the trip, and for some, it was their first visit to an anbinik forest on their Country. The visit started with a Welcome to Country by a ranger and Nawarddeken parent, Benita Alangale.

Anbinik (*allosyncarpia ternata*) are large, endemic rainforest trees that only grow in fire protected forests on the Arnhem Land Plateau. The protection of anbinik is an important part of the Warddeken work program. Rangers and students walked and drove around the anbinik patch, marvelling at the trees, which are the largest in the Kuwarddewardde.



Anbinik forests are an important source of mankung (native honey), which has powerful medicinal and nutritional value. Everyone was thrilled when some daluk spotted the small, black native bees around the trees – a sign that there is mankung and nabiwo nearby. After searching and locating the hive, students and families worked together to dig out the delicious honey – a wonderful way to end the day.

Left: Mankung (bush honey) is one of the most sought-after bush foods. Ross Guymala and Manmoyi students hit the payload and enjoy the sweet honey from a nest in a hollow log.

Below: Students kick up dust as they perform kunborrk (traditional dancing) alongside their families.

### Rock art surveys

Warddeken's rock art team regularly supports Bush Trips to rock art galleries that contain paintings or artefacts relevant to the season and conceptual unit; they also work with students to mentor and build skills in rock art survey techniques and conservation management. Some of our students have demonstrated a keen interest in rock art and we're grateful for our ongoing partnership with Warddeken to support their learning in this area.

This term, the rock art team took students on a survey of the escarpment that runs behind Mamadawerre. Staff, students, and rangers split into two teams and set off on foot for a day to the escarpment – an area not yet surveyed by Warddeken. The day was a success, with both teams finding and recording new rock art sites. All students were supported to use the tablets to record the paintings they had discovered, with the data then added to the Warddeken IPA bim database. In the classroom, students further explored and consolidated what they had found through writing activities.

Students visited an important manlabbarl (billabong) a short distance from Kabulwarnamy to harvest mandem (water lily corms). Bininj Teachers instructed students on how to use the different parts of the waterlily plant for cooking and drinking. The visit was also an opportunity to discuss the damage caused to bush foods by feral animals such as pigs and buffalo, and why the work of rangers in controlling feral animals is important.





# Teaching and learning highlights across our schools in term 2

Cooking freshly caught fish on the campfire – it's no wonder our students love being out on Country!

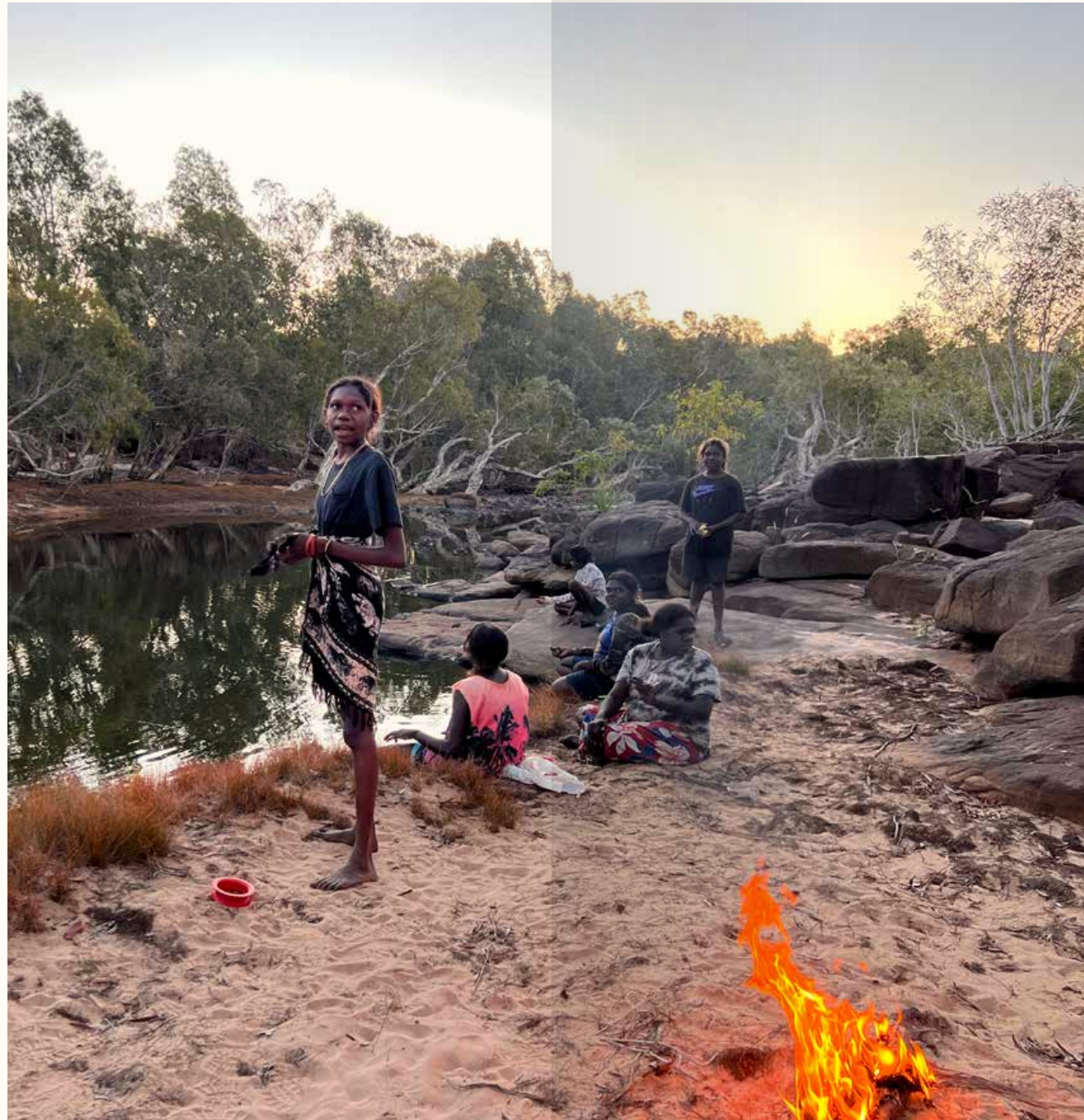
## Information Technology

Working with our partners at Culture Tech was a highlight this term, with engaging IT workshops held at each school. With the support of Culture Tech, students and staff learnt new and creative ways to use technology within the classroom. This ongoing partnership has increased everyone's abilities to learn and teach through technology.

At Kabulwarnamyo, students learned to use iMovie to create a short film about the history and heroes of the homeland movement in the Warddeken IPA, which can now be used as a teaching resource when this conceptual unit is taught again in 2025. Students also learnt to make GIFs and short animations in Keynote.

Students at Mamadawerre were able to incorporate the Culture Tech visit with a science unit on man-made and natural resources. Students designed and created floating devices down at the local waterhole and then, with the support of Culture Tech, enhance their designs on iPads, create augmented reality boats using School Sketches, and reflect on the activity by creating a movie using iMovie.

At Manmoyi students made a music video for a song written and performed by teacher Ross Guymala (also a member of the famous Nabarlek band) about the



Kuwarddewardde seasons. Students created drawings in Sketches School and animations in Keynote to create the music video, which has been shared across the Academy to assist students in learning the order of the seasons. Students also performed the song during the School Registration Ceremony in June.

## Literacy

At the Academy, we are passionate about oral and written bilingual literacy, and also passionate about current best practice approaches to literacy. Our team of educators are constantly striving to support students to grow and develop their confidence in language and literacy.

The Writing Revolution pedagogy supported students to learn the difference between fragments and sentences, the components of a sentence and how to write their own simple and complex sentences. Students practice reading their sentences in front of their peers to progress their public speaking skills.

Students are supported to increase their daily reading opportunities by positively engaging with rich literature within the classroom. At all schools, students are encouraged to read for fun, with appealing areas to sit quietly and enjoy a range of books.

Mamadawerre School was fortunate to receive 50 brand new books to add to the school library, by winning a Small Seeds Grant through Magabala Books, a First Nations publishing house. Students and staff benefited from having a range of First Nations written and illustrated texts to read and learn from every day at school.



The inaugural Mamadawerre School Fishing Competition was a raging success and led to 60kg of namarnkol (barramundi) being shared to communities across the IPA!

### Maths

Students worked on improving number sense, counting and shape during mathematics activities this term. Using new magnetic shapes resources proved to be a favourite activity, with students enthusiastically creating 3D structures using squares, rectangles and triangles of various sizes, and discovering their nets.

Staff, students, rangers and some lucky KKT donors took part in a Mamadawerre School Fishing Competition! Each team had an hour and a half to catch as many namarnkol (barramundi) as possible. Each fish had to be measured in length and weight using correct units of measurement, as well as documented using iPads. This was an incredibly fun way for students to transfer and consolidate their maths knowledge from the classroom into real life experiences. A total of 60kg of barramundi was caught and shared across the Warddeken IPA!

### Art

In preparation for the Independent Registration Ceremony, students helped create Nawarddeken Academy lino printed calico bags, spray painted Masonite boards for a Kuwarddewardde Malkno display, painted signs for display around community and assisted in upgrading and watering the school garden.

Students at Kabulwarnamyo worked with local traditional artists to create two murals for the school toilet block.







Above: Digging for yams is harder than it sounds – the holes required for harvesting long yams can go metres underground!

Right: Mitchell uses an iPad to document a rock art site at Kundjorlomdjorlom on his Mok clan estate.

Far right: Maureen engaging in a hands-on maths lesson at Mamadawerre.





# Yekke highlight

## *Bininj Manbolh – Bushwalk*

**A highlight for the Academy this year was joining Warddeken on their annual Stone Country bushwalk in the north of the Warddeken IPA. Students and staff from Mamadawerre School participated in a two-week bushwalk alongside rangers, Traditional Owners and community members – over 70 people in total! The walk followed a bininj manbolh (customary walking route), travelling approximately 60 kilometres south of Mamadawerre, from Kurruwil in Madjawarr estate to Makkalarl in Yulhmanj clan estate.**

We walked for a total of two weeks, carrying all our gear in backpacks, and received food via helicopter food drops. Bushwalks offer incomparable learning experiences, allowing students to engage with Country in an intimate and sustained manner, under the tutelage of their extended families. The walk enabled Traditional Owners and families to teach children on Country, show them an array of cultural sites and seasonal indicators, take part in traditional hunting practices and walk the route that their ancestors frequently travelled.

A high point of the walk was when students, families, rangers and Traditional Owners visited Kurdukadji Dedjbarlkarrhmeng, a famous Emu Dreaming site. The walk was an opportunity for intergenerational learning and introduced many of our students to new cultural sites and areas of Country.

The entire bushwalk experience was an amazing experience that the community will cherish for years to come. Back in the classroom, students spent two weeks completing follow-up learning, inviting rangers and Traditional Owners into the classroom to support activities in all areas of learning such as literacy, numeracy, science, and creative arts. This work was displayed in the classroom for families and community members to see.



Above: A group shot of the walkers before embarking on their 60 kilometre trek.

Below left: Tyson with a long-neck turtle, many of which were consumed on the walk.

Below right: Senior Wardjdjak Traditional Owner Priscilla Badari performs a Welcome to Country ritual for new visitors to her clan estate. This ritual introduces strangers to ancestral spirits, ensuring their protection and safety.





Left: The walk was an ideal opportunity for students to be immersed in cultural learning, and the timing of the walk in Yekke presented a chance for students to gain practical skills in fire management.

Below left: Wurdurd of all ages showed stamina, determination and confidence as they moved through Country.

Right: A visit to the famous delek (white ochre) mine at Madjangalkurr was the perfect reason to get painted up!

Below: Walkers, including students, carried belongings and bedding in backpacks to set up camps at sites along the walk route.







Above: Younger generations with connections to the Ngurrurdu (Emu) Dreaming site are shown how to move the stones back into the shape of an emu.

Above right: Conrad Maralingurra shares stories about rock art paintings discovered at a gallery along the walking route.

Right: Lorna Nabalwad cooks up a freshly caught kumoken (freshwater crocodile), part of the wide array of bush foods and meats consumed during the walk.

Left: Young Bundy sends out a radio call to groups of walkers with help from dad Zacharia Namarnyilk.



# Wurrkeng

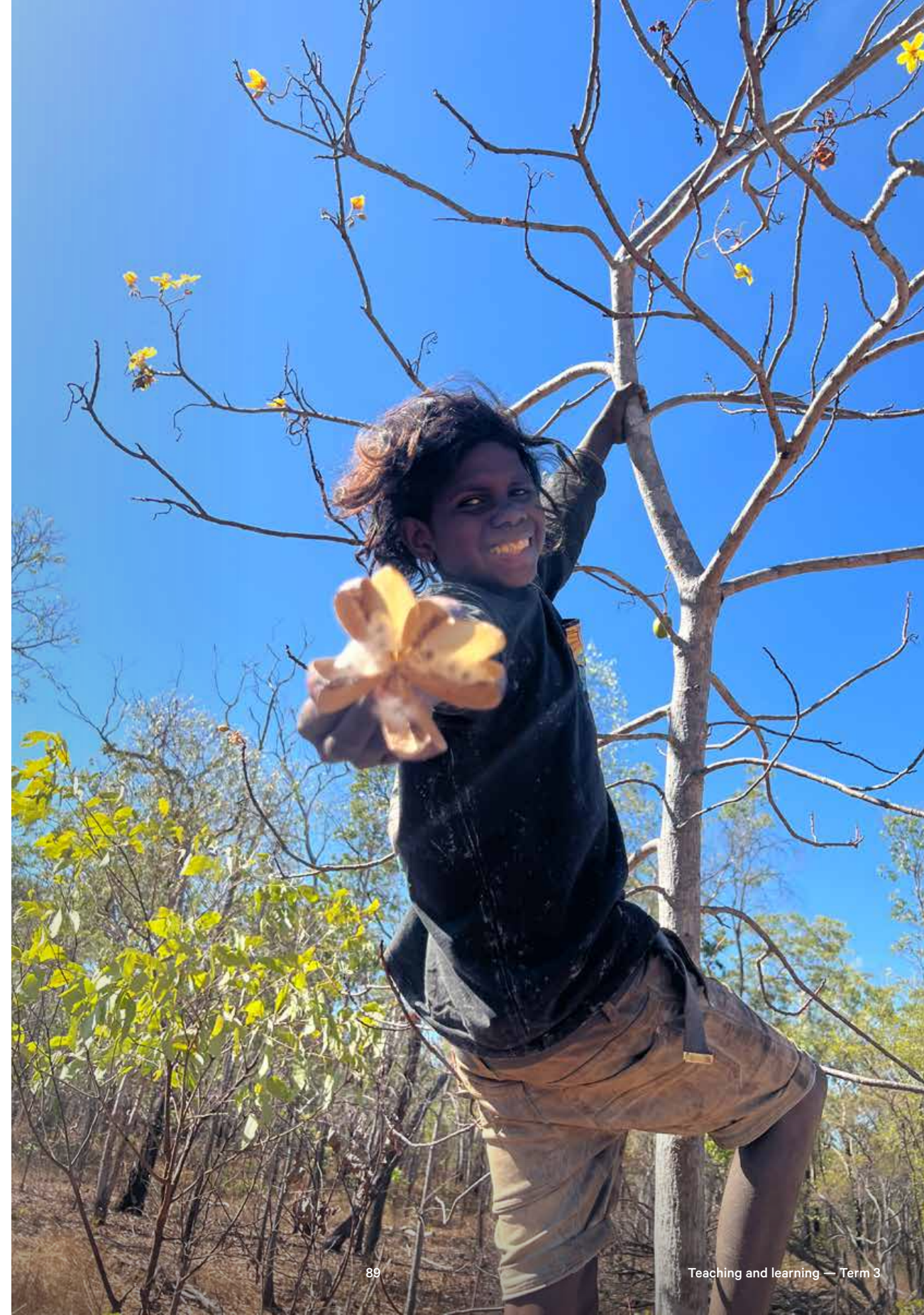
## Late dry season

### Conceptual unit: Ceremony and Respect Term 3: weeks 1-5

In Wurrkeng the Lidjalidja winds arrive, swinging from easterly to southerly and bringing with them warmer and drier temperatures. Students looked for pink anbarayalak flowers that indicate very dry conditions, and anbulkung (fern rhizomes), a specialised Stone Country bush food, to pound and roast for eating. Students from all three schools also participated in important gender-specific ceremonies – extended intergenerational knowledge transfer experiences around woman’s and men’s business – linking strongly to our conceptual unit of Ceremony and Respect.

Students investigated andjedj (yellow kapok) flowers, which indicate the best time to hunt for fat kunj (kangaroo), and created informative mini documentaries using the Clips App on iPads. These were then added to our Kunmayali App, building our collection of locally-developed resources and supporting learning across schools.

Delsanto picks andjedj (kapok flower) a seasonal indicator of the best time to hunt macropods.







Above: Camp fire yarning across generations at the Daluk Camp.  
Below: Elizabeth Bangarr and June Nadjamerrek explain to student Estella Nadjamerrek, and other yawkyawk and daluk, the rituals involved in women's business at the Daluk Camp.

**Homeland movement, together we stand  
Learning on Country, back on the land.  
— Cycles of the Land music video**

**Wurrkeng Bush Trips and  
Cultural Learning Highlights**

Female students from all schools participated in a Daluk Kunmayali (Women's Knowledge) Camp on Djordi clan estate in the east of the Warddeken IPA. Camped on an escarpment within walking distance to the Mann River, yawkyawk (young women) learned about and participated in a secret women's-only ceremony, which was led by Elders, Traditional Owners and Warddeken rangers.

Wurrkeng is the perfect time to find mankung (sugar bag, or native honey) and students learned how Bininj taxonomy recognises different native bee species such as nabiwo (honey found in the ground or hollow or rotted tree stumps) and lorlbban (honey found in live tree trunks with a short 'nose' entrance tube). Wurdurd went out with Warddeken rangers with shovels, axes and crowbars to dig up several large hives, with plenty of honey to be shared amongst students and the community.

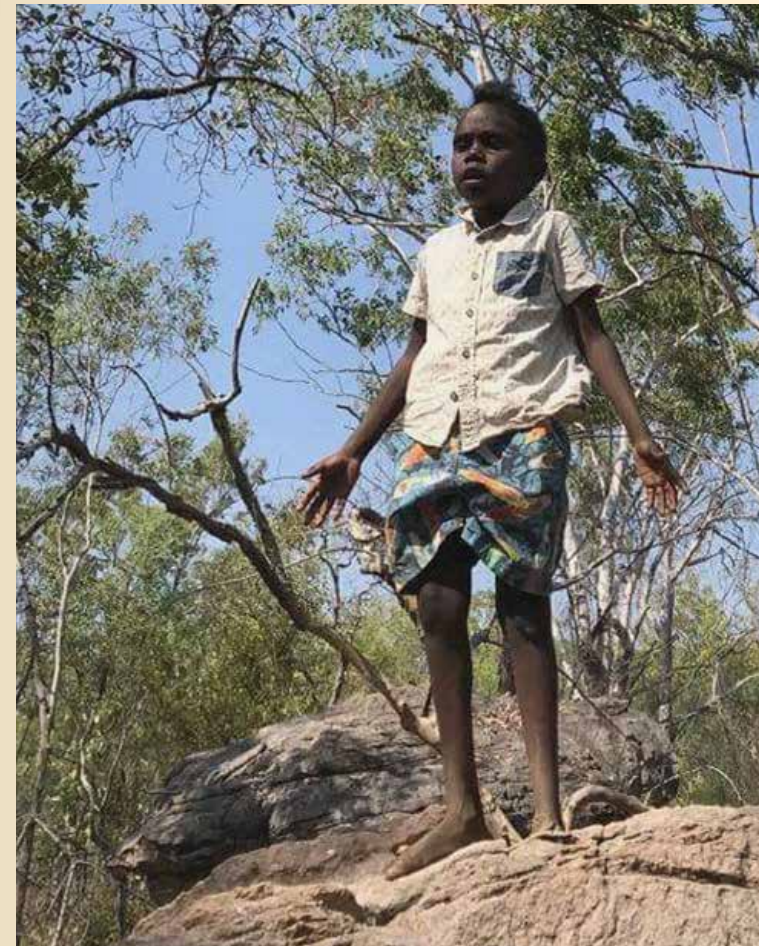
Indigenous Outreach Projects came to Manmoyi in July to facilitate a workshop for students and families from all three schools, creating a hip hop video about

the Seasonal Calendar and living in the Kuwarddewardde. The workshop was a joyful celebration of music, dance, and a wonderful opportunity for families from across the Kuwarddewardde communities to spend time together. The video 'Cycles of the Land' was screened to the delight of everyone, and has since become one of the most popular videos in west Arnhem!

Nawarddeken yawurrinj (young males) participated in a manwurrk kunjken (kangaroo fire drive) on Djordi clan estate in collaboration with Warddeken rangers. This was the first fire drive to be held in the Warddeken IPA for a decade and was a fantastic opportunity for our yawurrinj to learn from the Bininj Elders and senior rangers, who facilitated the event. Students learnt how fire is used to 'herd' kangaroos into a gully, where they become trapped and can be speared. In the lead-up to the event, students learned how to make spears and practised throwing them at targets to improve their aim.







Students and families from all schools came together to write, perform and record the music video *Cycles of the Land* - now one of the most popular YouTube videos in west Arnhem! Screening the hip hop video for the first time at Manmoyi was a highlight of the year.



# Kurrung

## *The hot season or 'buildup'*

### Conceptual unit: Communication

#### Term 3: weeks 6-10



Rossanna uses an iPad to sketch images for an animation about the seasons.

**Kurrung is characterised by extremely hot and humid conditions and the Walirr winds that blow. With the move into Kurrung, wurdurd collected anngohngo (pandanus fruit), breaking them open to extract the edible seeds inside, which were roasted and eaten. Kurrung is the time of year when clans from the Kuwarddewardde and beyond would come together for important regional gatherings such as initiation ceremonies, kangaroo fire drives and large-scale fish trapping events. Our conceptual unit celebrated this with the theme of 'Communication' – exploring the many modes of customary communication such as lettersticks, song-cycles and rock art as storytelling.**

Sightings of barrk and djukerre (the male and female black wallaroo) are always cause for excitement as the animals are notoriously shy and quick-moving amongst the rocks. This term, students spotted many barrk and djukerre, another important indicator of Kurrung, while out and about on Bush Trips.

In learning about important forms of customary communication, students engaged in song-line song and dance, and harvested wood to plan and carve their own mak or letterstick (message sticks).

## Kurrung Bush Trips and Cultural Learning Highlights

### **Kunborrk (traditional song and dance)**

Under the guidance of cultural teachers and leaders, wurdurd explored the song-cycles relevant to their community. The Nabarlek songline, of which the custodians are senior Bordoh Traditional Owners, was widely practised and celebrated during the recording of the Indigenous Hip Hop Project video and was also performed at a Rock Art Camp. Community members commented that it was wonderful to see younger wurdurd singing and dancing the song-cycles in and around the community in their free time.

### **Rock Art Camp**

In August, a Bim (Rock Art) Camp was held at Morlekarrang (Djordi clan estate) on the banks of the Mann River. The event brought together students and families from all schools for a week of rock art activities and immersive cultural learning on Country, in collaboration with the Warddeken Bim Program and rangers.

At Nakulkboy, students played 'bim bingo'. Given photos of individual paintings present at the site, students were tasked with locating and identifying each of the different paintings, using iPads to photograph them. Elders and Traditional Owners relayed the importance of the paintings and told stories around the significance of the represented animals. In teams, wurdurd then worked to locate the animals from the bim on the seasonal calendar and identify the season in which these animals were ready for tracking and eating.

In another game-based learning activity, students went on a nature scavenger hunt, linking science, maths, geography and history to the rock art site. Wurdurd searched for flowers and seeds from the seasonal indicator plants linked to the Kuwarddewardde Malkno, as well as for scats, footprints and/or bones of animals living in the local habitat. Students located evidence of human occupation in the area including fire pits and cutting stones,



and were awarded additional points for photographing naturally occurring 2D and 3D shapes.

A highlight for Bush Trips at Mamadawerre this term was working with senior Traditional Owner Janice Nalorlman to learn a Dreaming story that runs through Mamadawerre. Rangers and students combined for an experience of genuine intergenerational learning. Students documented Janice telling the story using their iPads. Once back in the classroom, students retold the story, sequenced the events that took place and planned out storyboards to create a stop motion video.

At Manmoyi, teacher Ross Guymala and ranger Charlene Bangarr took students out on a trip to Green Plum Djang (Dreaming), which has special significance to the landowning Bordooh clan. Ross shared the story about the green plum, which for many students is their Dreaming.

Professors Berribob Dangbungala Watson and Mary Kolkiwarra Nadjamerrek taught masterclasses about mak (lettersticks), knowledge about which is at risk of extinction. Mak were historically used in Kurrung as an invitation for clans to come together at certain locations for kangaroo fire drives, ceremonies and other festivities. The Professors drew diagrams of lettersticks, explained how to read them and told stories about how they were used in the past. Berribob, perhaps the most skilled producer of material culture in west Arnhem Land, took students out on Country to demonstrate how to carve a letterstick and then watched over them while they carved their own. Berribob also showed students how to make a djaberle (a yam-cutting knife made from the shoulder blade bone of a kangaroo). After he had finished sharpening the djaberle, students took turns using it to cut up potatoes, which they fried on the campfire and ate.

All of these students have connections to the Mok Mankungdjang estate upon which Kabulwarnamyo school is based. From left to right: Miles, Jai, Richard, Royce and Les.





# Teaching and learning highlights across our schools in term 3

## Literacy

Students engaged in learning activities around the concept of respect, reading the book 'Respect' by Aunty Fay Muir and Sue Lawson as an introduction. We explored the many different ways to be respectful – showing respect for Elders, family and stories; respect for stories, songs, plants and animals; respect for Country, and respect for yourself.

Activities and lessons around cultural respect were then delivered, with Bininj educators and cultural leaders supporting students to learn more about the elements of cultural respect that they are expected to follow, such as

- knowing and respecting avoidance relationships
- showing the right ways to behave to people in their family
- showing the right ways to behave while learning on Country, and
- recognising and using specialised respect language registers such as kunbalak, the mother-in-law respect register.

This term the Academy commenced teaching a program called Read Write Inc (RWI), a phonics program that helps all children learn to read fluently and at speed so they can focus on developing their skills in comprehension, vocabulary, and

spelling. The program was implemented with great success, with students rapidly learning new sounds, practising their reading skills, improving fluency with spelling and undertaking applied writing activities in structured 60-minute lessons each morning. RWI depends a lot on peer coaching and it's a pleasure to see students helping each other with their reading.

## Art

A range of creative arts activities took place in term three including real life sketching lessons and painting local animals found around the communities. Students from Manmoyi created an art project about the endangered narbalek (rock wallaby), which is native to the Stone Country. Teacher Ross Guymala – a member of the well-known Narbalek Band, named in honour of the macropod – shared the Dreaming story of narbalek and how they got their colour. Students used stencils, pastels and watercolours to create artworks featuring narbalek, which were entered into the Australian Conservation Foundation 'Wild at Art' threatened species art competition.

Above: Delsanto's Alyurr (Leichardt's grasshopper) artwork.

Below: Professor Christopher Ngaboy demonstrates to Alan the correct technique for holding and throwing a spear.



## Digital Technologies

This term, teachers across all schools observed that students had become more proficient in their use of digital technologies throughout all areas of their learning. This development is supported by integrating IT with Bush Trips – every week, students complete multi-media journals of their Bush Trips using the Book Creator app. These books include photographs, sound recordings, drawings and written reflections. Students have also learnt to use the Stop Motion app to create their own animations of black wallaroos, a seasonal indicator of Kurrung.

Culture Tech visited Kabulwarnamyo School in August, and with their assistance, students created a news-style short movie about the indicators of Wurrkeng season. This was filmed on Country at Nakaldurrk, with footage processed and edited back in the classroom.

## Sport

This term, Mamadawerre School made a strong connection with AFL NT and it was exciting to have them visit weekly. It has provided students with an opportunity to engage with external agencies, learn new skills and take part in positive outdoor exercise.





Left: Students and educators during a bushwalk.

Above: Mitchell's artwork depicting Namarrkon the Lightning Man.

Below: Students at Mamadawerre are keen AFL players and we've been working with AFL NT to nurture this enthusiasm.





# Kunumeleng

## Conceptual unit: Sky, Sun, Stars and Moon

### Term 4

**Kunumeleng is the season that brings some relief to the hot and dry Kuwarddewardde, with the arrival of the first rains of the wet season. In between sporadic storms, the season is hot, humid and bountiful, with many favourite plants fruiting.**



Teaching Assistant Principal Jodi Vallak splits her time between working in the classroom and providing leadership and guidance across our three schools.

**Nawarddeken Academy is great because my daughter Kerrida comes to school every day on her Country, and I can bring my little wurdyaw (baby) to FaFt and work at the same time.**

— Jean Burrunali, parent and Early Learning Program educator

Berribob and teacher Ross Guymala directed the movie with the support of the Storey Players, and students Marsari Naborlhborlh, Shenia Billis and Kayless Nawilil narrated the story in both English and Kunwok.

#### Kabulwarnamyo – Kundung Djang (Sun Dreaming)

A highlight of the school year was the visit from The Storey Players, an organisation that supports remote and outback schools that rarely have opportunities to participate in drama and storytelling workshops. Storey Players worked with Nawarddeken Academy students to turn significant cultural stories into short films, visiting each school to plan and create short films based on customary cosmological knowledge about the sky, moon, stars and sun.

Kabulwarnamyo School decided to make a short film telling the story of the sun and her child. This story is also known as the Sun Dreaming story. With outstanding acting performances from many students, the film was created in collaboration with Professor Mary Kolkiwarra Nadjamerrek and narrated by Kerrida Namarnyilk. Many students were previously unfamiliar with Kundung Djang, so the creation of the film was a wonderful way to provide an in-depth exploration of the story.

Elders and community leaders guided the production of the films, with students acting, recording voiceovers and designing sets and costumes for the films. When the films were completed, each school held an opening night under the stars for the whole community. The films will also become important resources for future teaching of this conceptual unit.

#### Mamadawerre – Newernwarre Nayahwurd (Two Brothers)

Schools produced the following films based on Dreaming stories about the Bininj cosmos:

Mamadawerre School studied the Dreaming story of 'Newernwarre Nayahwurd – The Two Brothers', which has a strong connection to Mamadawerre community. With the support of Warddeken rangers, 30 adults and 15 students travelled out to Kabbari, the site the story originates from, camping overnight. Creating the film was a phenomenal learning experience for everyone involved and a definite highlight of the school year for many students. Through filming the movie, students visited important rock art, went hunting, caught fish, turtles and freshwater crocodiles and heard the story told at the site to which it belongs, told by senior Traditional Owners of the area.

#### Manmoyi – Djabbo and Dird (Quoll and Moon)

Manmoyi School created a short movie called the Quoll and the Moon, which is based on a Dreaming story shared by Professor Berribob Dangbungala Watson.





### Kunumeleng Bush Trips and Cultural Learning Highlights

Students from Manmoyi visited the 'hidden' spring at Dakkayala, where they enjoyed climbing up over large rocks which, during the wet season, form a waterfall connecting the spring to the stream below. Bininj educators told wurdurd about the ancestors who still reside at the site, and shared stories from when the nearby area was an outstation. This Bush Trip occurred the day before the Mann River rose, cutting the community off from Dakkayala during the wet season.

Manwodberr and mandudjmi (the short and tall varieties of green plum recognised by Bininj taxonomy) and mandjarduk (red apple) grow prolifically in many locations during Kurrung, and with both being favourite bush foods amongst students, many Bush Trips this term included time for picking the delicious and nutritious fruits. In addition to eating their fill, students harvest extra supplies of the fruit to share with their families and communities back home.

With the long-awaited arrival of monsoonal rains in the last few weeks of school this year, finding freshwater holes for fishing and swimming, looking for burarr (Merten's water monitor) and dancing in the cool, fresh rain were also much enjoyed Bush Trips.



Above left: Shari glitters in gold playing the role of the sun in the *Kabulwarnamyo* movie.

Above right: Swimming in the rivers and streams that surround our schools isn't just good fun – it's also good for students physically and supports a deeper engagement with Country.

Below: Students engage in hands-on phonics activities to consolidate sounds learned during daily Read Write Inc sessions.



# Teaching and learning highlights across our schools in term 4

## Student Awards

This term we celebrated students who were recognised for exceptional achievement.

Three of our students were awarded the prestigious Chief Ministers Literacy Award:

- Maureen Namarnyilk for the most outstanding communicator in the community of Mamadawerre
- Ashalina Guymala for the most outstanding communicator at Manmoyi School
- Mitchell Ngaboy for the most improved in reading.

Student Ambrose Phillips won the 2023 Northern Territory Student Citizen Award. The award recognises students who show a sense of fair play, generosity of spirit, concern for others, cultural understanding, and involvement with the wider community. Ambrose was nominated because of his singing of the Nabarlek song series and his confidence in showcasing it. He was presented with the award in Darwin in January 2023.

## Science

With the Kunumeleng conceptual unit based around the sky, stars, sun and moon, students learnt Bininj constellations by stargazing, using the SkyView App. Students also explored western knowledge about the solar system, learned about terrestrial and gaseous planets, and investigated local traditional astronomy and connected stories. With the support of our partners Culture Tech, digital technologies were further embedded in the classroom, with wurdurd using iPads in learning earth and sciences content, developing 'soft' skills for generalisation across Apps, and creating work samples to show what they had learned for assessment.

## English

This term it was exciting to see students' English literacy levels increase with the implementation of the Read Write Inc program. Students became familiar with the routine of the program, quickly learning new sounds and building their confidence in the English Literacy program. Students especially enjoyed the opportunities to build words with magnetic letters and take on the role of the teacher during partnered reading activities.

Teachers noted that Read Write Inc has presented a great learning opportunity for Bininj staff, who have been able to support literacy learning by facilitating Read Write Inc group rotations within the English Literacy block every morning.

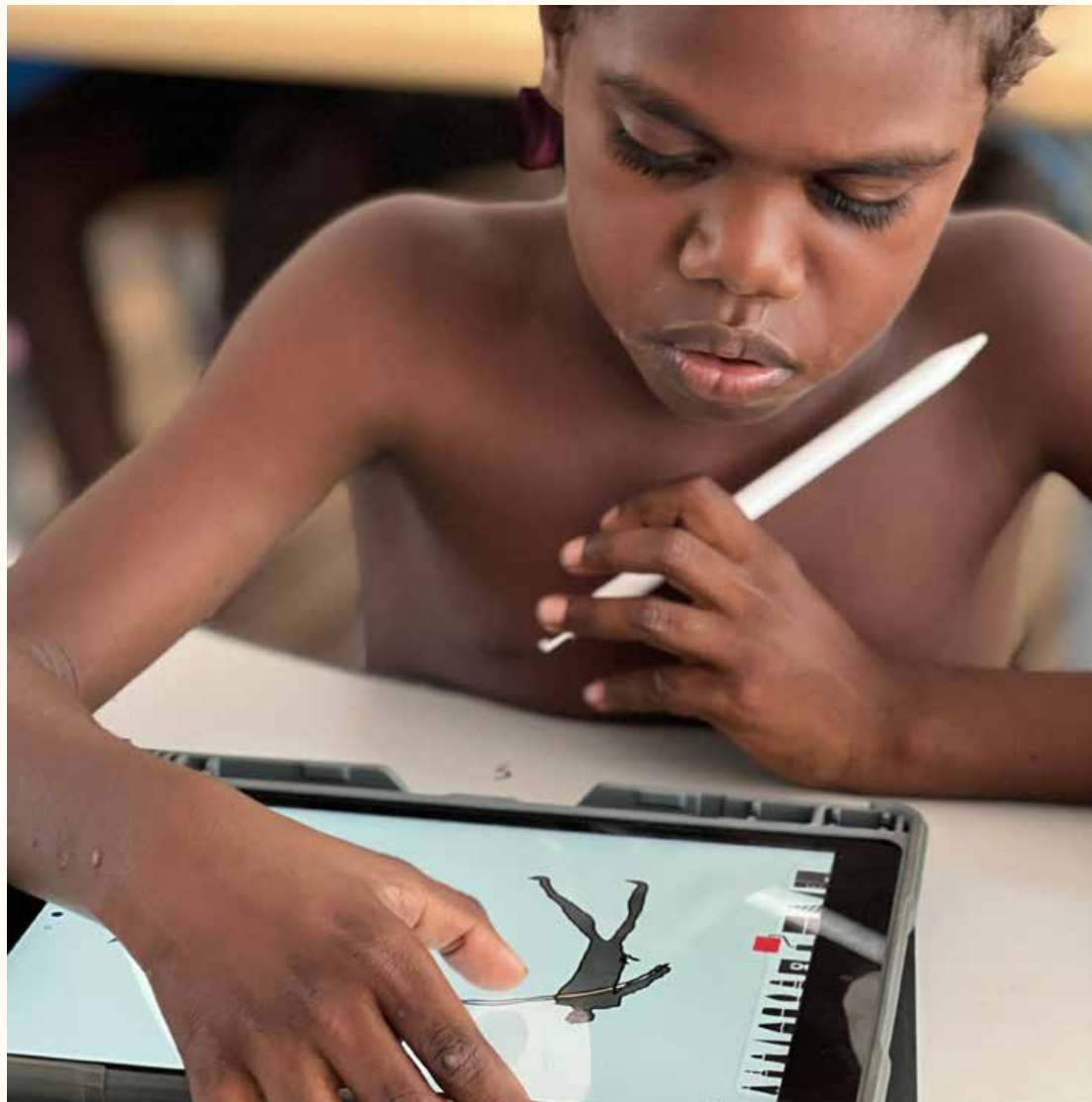


Above: We were all proud of Ambrose Phillips for receiving the NT Student Citizen Award.

Below: Students from Mamadawerre during the filming of the video Newernwarre Nayahwurd.







Above: Jai uses an iPad to sketch images of a hunter and spear.  
Below: Safe4Kids training at Manmoyi.



#### Safe4Kids training

This term Holly-Ann Martin from Safe4Kids spent two weeks at Nawarddeken Academy teaching wurdurd about protective behaviours. The teaching focused on safe and unsafe choices and early warning signs alerting to personal danger. Under the guidance of both daluk (female) and bininj (male) adults, students learned about private body parts and discussed what they can do if an adult hurts them. Wurdurd also identified people in their safety network that they can confide in to contact the police.

#### Secondary student engagement

One of the most exciting developments at Manmoyi School this term was the increase in the engagement of secondary school-aged students. This term saw a core group of four high school students begin attending school daily. They complete two hours of literacy each morning before spending the rest of the day doing STEM and art activities with the newly appointed secondary engagement officer. Creating formalised secondary education programs will become a priority for Nawarddeken Academy in 2023 and beyond.

#### Maths

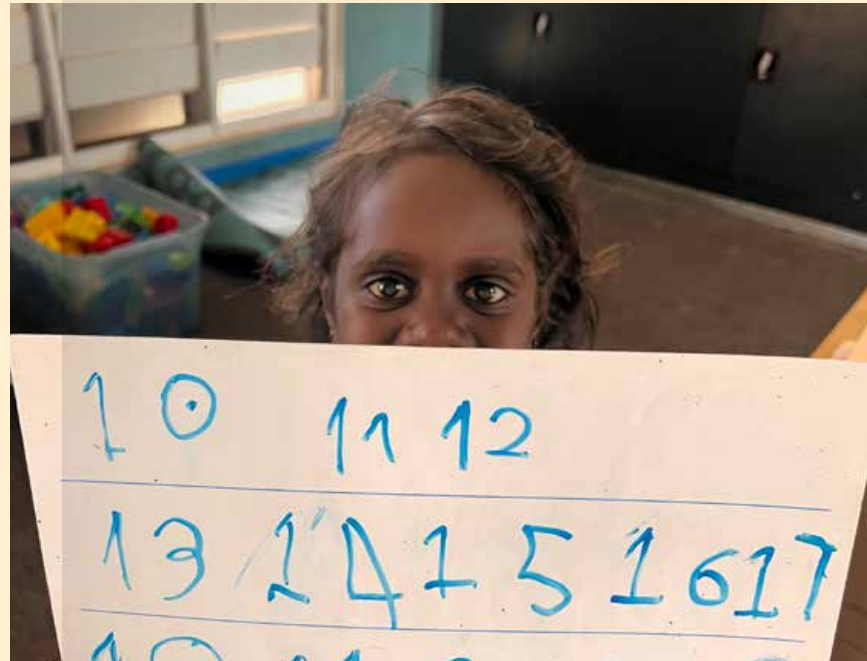
Both primary and senior students at Mamadawerre worked hard in maths this term to help analyse and interpret data from the 2022 motion sensor camera trapping program. Using real-time biodiversity data generated through Warddeken's Mayh (native animal) Recovery Program, students turned the data into an array of different graphs both on paper and digitally. Warddeken rangers, ecologists and senior students have used the school space to further interpret and discuss the findings as a team. Students thoroughly enjoyed using real life, relatable data in their maths lessons.

#### Digital Technologies

Teaching and learning through technology were a key focus at Mamadawerre this term. Students worked closely with Culture Tech to combine science, Bininj language and culture, and technology to investigate the solar system, stars and the sun through 3D imaging, linked to the seasonal conceptual unit.

Students also entered a Charles Darwin University Minecraft competition, where they had to design and build a new park for the university, with a strong focus on the environment and sustainability. Senior students completed 'passion research projects' using their own student laptops.





Above left: Estella, a secondary student from Mamadawerre, is a keen fisherwoman.

Above right: On your marks, get set, GO! Mamadawerre students and teachers have been making the most of the class bikes.

Below left: At Manmoyi, Alan learns all about the number six.

Below right: Sherry practices writing teen numbers.



# Karldurrk Early Learning Program

**The Karldurrk Early Learning Program (ELP) was established in November 2016 to care for and teach 0–4-year-olds in the Kabulwarnamyo community. The community named the program Karldurrk, which means kookaburra in Kunwinjku because the children are often laughing loudly. Excitingly, in 2022, ELPs were rolled out at both Manmoyi and Mamadawerre Schools.**

The ELP is delivered from 8.30 – 11.30am Monday to Friday during school terms, staffed locally and supported by Nawarddeken’s full-time registered teachers. Based on the Families as First Teachers model, the ELP aims to equip children with the social, cognitive and emotional skills they need to engage in learning. A secondary aim is to increase employment opportunities within communities, with the program staffed by a roster of daluk (women) who share responsibility for the planning and delivery of early learning activities.

Crucially, early learners also participate in weekly Bush Trips with Nawarddeken students. This time on Country offers our early learners experiences that support the development of their cultural identity, introduce them to customary knowledge and encourage traditional skills-based development.

During 2022, 15 early learners engaged with their mothers or caregivers in the Early Learning Program across the three schools.



Above: Our youngest learners helping preserve rock art sites by clearing weeds.

Below: Michelle Bangarr leads conversational reading for early learners Lee and Venton at Manmoyi.





We aim to deliver experiences that are hands-on and engaging for our youngest cohort of learners. At Kabulwarnamyo, Gregory learns all about Kudjewk, the wet season (above), and Shanika practices her fine motor skills whilst playing with Lego (right).

Above right: We are so proud of our Early Learning educators this year. At Mamadawerre, Lorna and her sister Ada Nabalwad ran a program of educational and fun activities for our littlest learners, both inside the classroom and during on Country learning.

At Kabulwarnamyo, the ELP continued to allow wurdurd to participate in play-based learning activities, develop their gross motor competency, introduce them to early literacy and numeracy skills, and encourage listening and speaking capacity. Free play is the other key component of the ELP, where wurdurd learn important skills in building positive relationships, resilience and problem-solving skills.

At Manmoyi, Michelle Bangarr and Marlene Cameron were instrumental in setting up everything early learners needed to begin their formal learning journeys. Michelle Bangarr is an experienced community educator who we are lucky to have on the team, and throughout the year she facilitated an engaging program filled with singing, dancing, playing and learning. Under her care and instruction, some of the younger children even learned to count – a very proud achievement. Early

learners were carefully supported on Bush Trips to engage in age-appropriate cultural learning experiences. For example, on one Bush Trip, Elizabeth and Charlene Bangarr taught early learners how to find the right timber to make digging sticks, and then helped them use the sticks to dig for dikkala (bush potato).

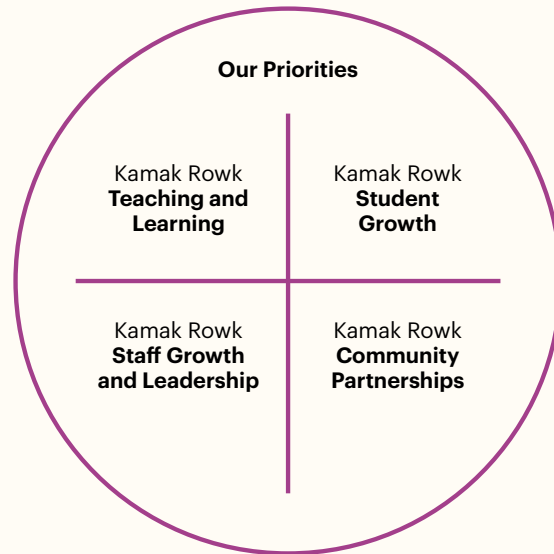
Early Learning at Mamadawerre was established with the staunch support of Ada and Lorna Nabalwad. The community is thrilled that young children are now able to participate in a daily program that promotes early numeracy, literacy and social skills within a culturally safe and supportive environment. Throughout the year, the Mamadawerre Early Learning Program continued to grow, with early learners taking part in daily activities that provided them with some of their first learning experiences using the seasonal calendar, such as identifying seasonal indicators and finding local plants and animals. Warddeken rangers built a temporary traditional shelter for early learners to play in during their daily playgroup sessions, with plans to build a permanent ELP space in 2023.



# Planning, evaluation and self-assessment

The Academy has three key planning documents, which together set out long and short-term goals – our Business Plan, Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) and subsequent Annual Operational Plan (AOP). Our framework of participatory evaluation and self-assessment provides important insight and direction in terms of student, family and community needs and aspirations. Our strategic planning is guided and informed by the company's objectives, vision, values and guiding principles which guide and inform strategic planning.

Within the SIP, Nawarddeken Academy has identified and endorsed the four primary goals to inform strategic planning, where 'Kamak Rowk' means quality in Kunwinjku:



At the beginning and conclusion of each year, as well as at the beginning of each term, whole-of-organisation planning occurs across all levels and through various channels, for example:

- The AOP is reviewed and updated to reflect the goals set out in the SIP
- Student, staff, parent and community meetings and surveys are conducted
- Planning meetings with Warddeken rangers and coordinators
- ILC planning with parents, rangers and community members
- Curriculum and program planning.

There are seven different species of native bee recognised in Bininj taxonomy, which students learned about and then created an illustration showing where each species builds its hive.





Showing young people the Dreaming sites and special places of the Stone Country is a key part of what we do. Getting out on Country – especially to more remote locations – is a logistical challenge, but we are committed to connecting our students with the living ecological and cultural landscape.



## Our 2022 priorities and achievements were:

- Finalising a Section 19 Aboriginal Land Use Agreement at Mamadawerre for the establishment and operation of an independent school
- Finalising and implementing a modification to our governance structure and our constitution to allow for the operation of three schools under one governing body
- Completion of the Kuwarddewardde Malkno and implementation of the first full year of the Kuwarddewardde Malkno Curriculum
- Continue developing innovative ILC resources through the use of technology, making them more accessible to Bininj and Balanda
- Completion of the three-year evaluation of the Nawarddeken Academy with Batchelor Institute, with the report already informing strategic planning
- Plan for the creation of a Nawarddeken Academy Monitoring and Evaluation Committee in 2023



# Nawarddeken Academy Evaluation

The Batchelor Institute research team and NAL community researchers worked together for three years to complete the evaluation.

**This year saw the culmination of three years' of collaborative research between Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, Nawarddeken Academy and the homelands of Kabulwarnamyo, Mamadawerre and Manmoyi, to assist the Academy to:**

- Learn from and develop our governance, academic and community engagement processes; and
- Determine what Bininj believe to be the outcomes and values of our work.

The evaluation team was led by Associate Professor John Guenther and Dr Robyn Ober from the Batchelor Institute, who provided guidance, training, support and academic knowledge to the team of community-based researchers.

Planning for the evaluation began in March 2018, and following the development of an evaluation framework later that year, and ethical clearance in 2019, an action learning process was implemented with a team of local Bininj community-based researchers – Conrad Maralngurra, Dean Yibarbuk, Terrah Guymala, Elizabeth Nabarlambarl, Serina Namarnyilk, Sarah Billis and Rosemary Nabalwad, with additional support from Christella Namundja, Lois Nadjamerrek and Michelle Bangarr.

The evaluation team engaged people from school communities in important discussions about the purpose of school, the way young people should be taught, what they should be taught, and the strengths, successes and challenges

associated with learning in the Warddeken homelands. Interviews commenced in September 2019 and continued through a series of planning – action – reflection cycles in each of the homeland sites until October 2021.

Overall, the evaluation's findings point to a range of strengths and opportunities for education in the Warddeken homelands. The evaluation reinforced the strong aspirations for education held by Traditional Owners across Warddeken homelands, and the expectation that the

Academy will support young people by being centred around local customary knowledge (kunmayali), learning in Kunwinjku language (kunwok). Findings emphasised strong and widespread support for cultural values derived from learning on Country.

The evaluation also highlighted the community's expectation to see Bininj remain in control of the direction of the Academy, and the desire to see pathways for young people to engage in work on Country and at school.

An observation made by the Batchelor research team is that the team of community-based researchers involved in the evaluation have grown adept at asking questions, and have thought through many of the deeper issues that underpin the questions. Our team of skilled community-based researchers, therefore, will continue to play an important role in raising questions and engaging Bininj in discussions about their aspirations and how to achieve them.







Bundy shows off his digital Mayh (Animal) Research Report on short-necked turtle.

## Key findings of the evaluation

- Respondents wanted to see parents engaged in children's education
- Respondents were looking forward to employment and job opportunities on Country
- There was an expectation that Bininj and Balanda should work together
- Respondents wanted to see Bininj in control of education
- Respondents wanted to see opportunities for assistant teacher training
- Many respondents wanted to see qualified Bininj teachers in classrooms
- Attendance at school was identified as a priority for children
- There was a recognition that financial support for the Academy was critical for its sustainability
- Respondents recognised the roles of Elders in intergenerational learning
- Respondents wanted to see a Bininj curriculum developed



# Evaluation questions and summary of community responses

## Q1) How does the Academy engage young people in learning?

From the perspective of respondents, the importance of Nawarddeken Academy as a homeland school was reflected in their belief in the importance of learning on Country, with a 'Bininj first' and both-ways approach. Also reflected in this belief is a view that Balanda teachers should respect Bininj language and culture and do all they can to learn from Bininj. Interviews indicated that the Academy's teachers are viewed as achieving this.

## Q2) How does the Academy support young people's values and aspirations (and their parent's) for their future?

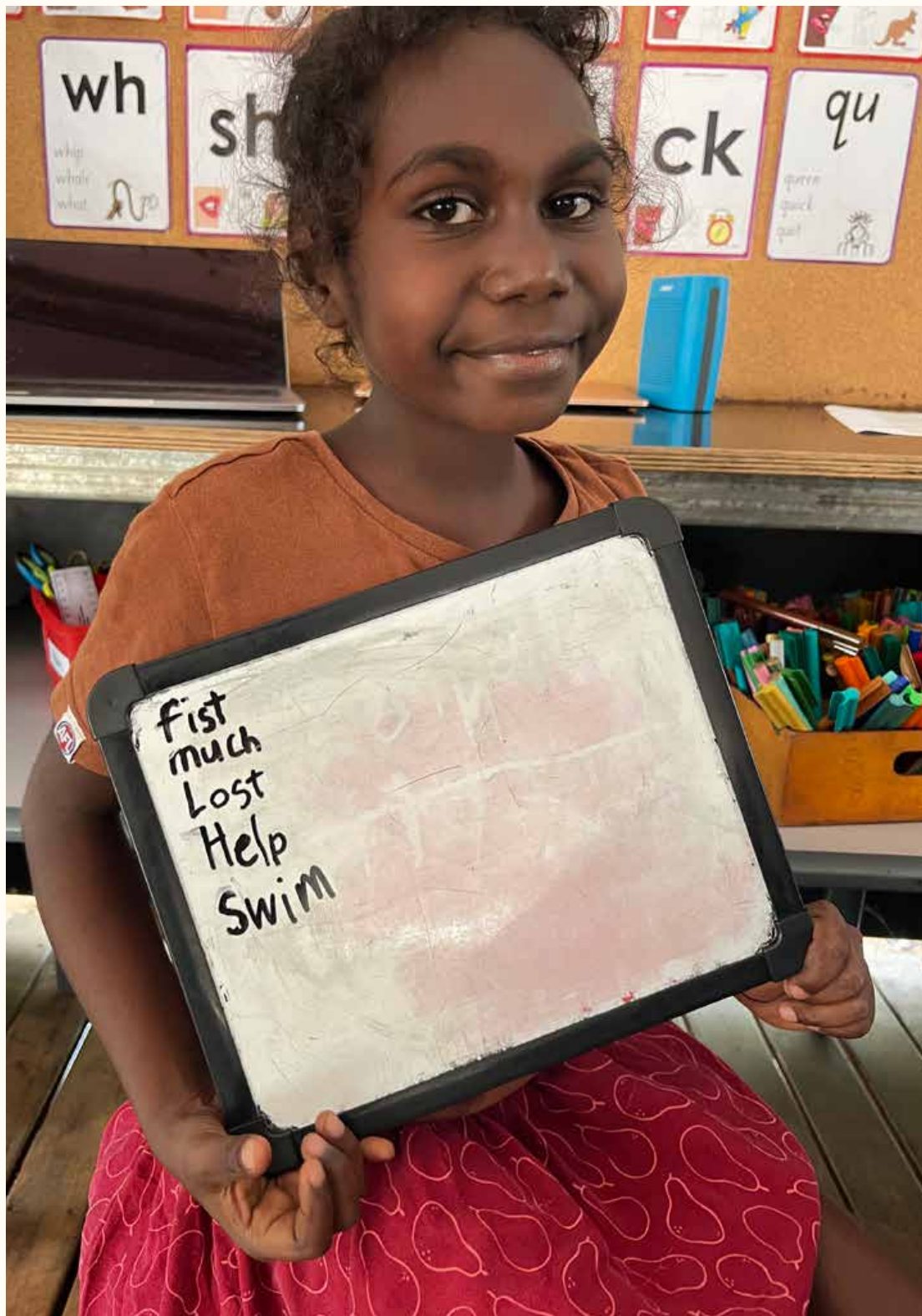
Among respondents, there was a strong belief in the need for supporting young people in their learning and, more specifically, to provide a strong moral and ethical foundation for them so they could make good choices in the future. Respondents gave every indication that this was being achieved by the Academy. It is reflected in the leadership of the school at a board level and also in the support offered by Elders.

Those values and aspirations are centred on the primacy of Bininj culture, language and knowledge, and the importance of learning on Country, with a view to later working on Country. Respondents emphasised the strong connection between Nawarddeken Academy and the work of Warddeken Land Management Limited, which creates opportunities for students to engage with rangers (many of whom are also parents) and take part in on Country work-related activities.

Sham painted up in delek (white ochre) during the bushwalk.







Shari practicing words using her recently learnt sounds during the daily literacy block.

**Q3) How can the Academy work effectively with key stakeholders (families, community and Warddeken rangers) to ensure that its hopes and expectations are fully met?**

One of the positive outcomes of the evaluation work carried out by the community-based researchers is that it created a space for conversations to take place about what education means, what it is for and how it should be delivered. In many cases, the initial responses to the questions posed by researchers suggested that community members had never been challenged to think about the issues raised. These conversations, therefore, unearthed new and important community feedback that will assist Nawarddeken Academy.

**Q4) What kinds of outcomes and shared values does the Academy aim to achieve and how well does it achieve these?**

The outcomes attributed to the Academy were grouped according to four main themes.

1. Instilling pride in culture and language
2. Making visible a pathway to working on Country
3. Modelling Bininj values
4. Focus on English and Kunwinjku literacy and numeracy

The extent to which the Academy has been able to achieve these outcomes and values varied, but in general, Bininj believe that there has been considerable progress made towards achieving these outcomes and aspirations.

The identification by Traditional Owners of these four key themes was an important outcome of the evaluation, and Nawarddeken Academy will build them into ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes.

**Moving forward**

Nawarddeken Academy has grown exponentially over the last five years. Working with communities and Traditional Owners, we successfully registered three new independent community schools that have brought full-time education to the Kuwarddewardde for the first time. We have also responded to communities and Traditional Owners by creating and initiating the teaching of the Kuwarddewardde Malkno Curriculum – a world-class cultural curriculum that is now the epicentre for student learning. These achievements are momentous and bring us immense pride, however, we also recognise that we must continue to grow and evolve in response to the aspirations of our Traditional Owners.

For this reason, we welcomed the final evaluation report, not only because it provided participative, evidence-based feedback on how Bininj feel about the work of Nawarddeken Academy, but also because the report identified where there is room for improvement in how we operate. As a proud Bininj-led organisation, we are always receptive to the feedback of our constituents, and we embrace opportunities for growth.

Strategic planning processes were immediately initiated to address some areas for improvement. This work will be augmented by the establishment of a dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation Subcommittee in 2023, to provide an ongoing cycle of self-assessment and improvement.



# Attendance

Attendance strategies are implemented and adapted throughout the year, and we continue to work collaboratively with community, families and Warddeken to develop further strategies speaking to the unique sociocultural context in which we operate.

## NAL Attendance 2022

	Kabulwarnamyo	Manmoyi	Mamadawerre
<b>Term 1</b>			
Number of students attended this term	17	20	11
% Attendance whilst in Community	100%	82%	98%
Core Students (attended more than 5 weeks)	8	14	9
Average weekly class size	6	12	7
<b>Term 2</b>			
Number of students attended this term	15	18	23
% Attendance whilst in Community	97%	74%	99%
Core Students (attended more than 5 weeks)	4	7	8
Average weekly class size	5	7	12
<b>Term 3</b>			
Number of students attended this term	19	30	26
% Attendance whilst in Community	98%	83%	99%
Core Students (attended more than 5 weeks)	5	13	13
Average weekly class size	6	13	13
<b>Term 4</b>			
Number of students attended this term	16	15	25
% Attendance whilst in Community	98%	89%	97%
Core Students (attended more than 5 weeks)	1	14	14
Average weekly class size	6	8	18

# Critical incidents

There were no critical incidents to report in 2022.

# Health and wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of the adults and children who reside in the communities in which we operate is a priority. In 2022, we continued to work with our communities, parents and service providers to focus on better outcomes in this area. We have developed a key relationship with Be You (Head Space) educators, Health Department clinicians and a private psychologist to support families in need.

## Safe4Kids Training

Safe4Kids spent two weeks at Nawarddeken teaching wurdurd about protective behaviours. The teaching focused on safe and unsafe choices and early warning signs alerting to personal danger. Under the guidance of both daluk and bininj educators, students learned about private body parts and discussed what to do if an adult hurt them. Wurdurd also identified people in their safety network that they can confide in to contact the police.

## Wellbeing and Inclusion Framework



In 2022 we began building a new Wellbeing and Inclusion framework. The evidence tells us there's a strong link between safety, wellbeing and learning, where healthy and supported children are more likely to succeed at school.

In September, three Bininj and three Balanda staff went to Alice Springs to visit Yipirinya School, Larapinta FaFT, and Sadadeen Primary to look at their work in wellbeing and inclusion. We were inspired to develop our own wellbeing and inclusion framework that would suit the needs of our students, families, and staff. A draft plan has been developed by Michelle Bangarr and Melanie Cole (Learning Support Coordinator) which received approval from our three Nawarddeken school communities.

The new framework is positioned around the marebu (woven fibre mat), the centre being founded on 'Relationships' that are at the heart of everything we do. The second ring is 'Engagement', understanding student challenges and encouraging positive behaviour; and finally, 'Responsibility', and providing early intervention, student assessment, and authentic two-way education.

New 'Learning Yarns' which support conversations between the families and the classroom have also been introduced to highlight student goals and progress with families. In 2023 we will build on this process to ensure there are community consultations and that the school values are represented, and a shared language is used. This final framework will then be translated into Kunwinjku.



# Professional learning and development

## World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education (WIPCE)

In September, three Nawarddeken Academy representatives attended the WIPCE in Adelaide. Our first time attending the event, we were inspired to hear stories from other Indigenous educators and proud to share our unique journey.

Dean Yibarbuk said of WIPCE, "This was a very important gathering to talk about education pathways, issues and challenges of education for Indigenous people around the world. It was a wonderful opportunity for our voice to be heard by governments around the world who sometimes assume that they know what's best for our children. Conrad, Robyn from Batchelor, Olga and I presented about the way we did our evaluation, training community-based researchers to do the research. This gave our researchers confidence and belief in their competence. Sharing our story on an international level was beautiful and important. Bicultural education is being researched by Bininj, for Bininj, in Bininj way. This highlights the need for more Bininj researchers to be conducting this work so that it's authentic and true to our individual visions and aspirations."

## First aid training

Ready to Respond First Aid delivered two days of first aid training to community members, Warddeken rangers, Nawarddeken staff and high school students. Mamadawerre students flew to Manmoyi for two days and Kabulwarnamyo drove in each day. Rangers and students working towards or with future ambitions towards a certification can add First Aid to their unit components.

## KKT fundraising

Mamadawerre students Estella Nadjamerrek, Maureen Namarnyilk and Tyson Maralngurra were selected to represent Nawarddeken Academy in Sydney at a KKT fundraising event, with their family members Conrad Maralngurra (current NAL, KKT and WLML board member) and Rosemary Nabulwad (current NAL, WLML board member).

It was the first time any of the students had visited Sydney and their first exposure to the behind-the-scenes work that goes into supporting their school. We were incredibly proud that our students overcame their nerves and practised their public speaking skills by talking in front of large groups of people at KKT events. Upon their return all students reported that it was a fantastic and exciting trip – they explored the city, ate new foods, visited the zoo and caught the ferry. Experiences such as this are major events for our students, and we hope to be able to support more of them to have similar opportunities.



Above: NAL Chairperson Conrad Maralngurra and CEO Olga Scholes with Education Minister and others at a Round Table at Parliament House.

Left: Dean Yibarbuk presents at the WIPCE Conference in Adelaide.







Left: Students Estella, Maureen and Tyson with Conrad Maralngurra and Rosemary Nabalwad at a photography exhibition in Sydney. The group travelled down to represent the Academy at KKT events.

Below left: NAL Chairperson Conrad Maralngurra, CEO Olga Scholes and Executive Director of AISNT Cheryl Salter in front of Parliament House.

Right: Wurdurd demonstrate that we're stronger together than we are on our own.



### NT Association of Independent Schools

Nawarddeken Academy Staff travelled to Alice Springs to attend the ASINT Conference to network with other independent schools across the Northern Territory. NAL staff were invited to present at the conference, and shared with other attendees an overview of the history and growth of Nawarddeken Academy, data around student attendance and engagement across the NT, a snapshot of the Kuwarddewardde Malkno Curriculum and the philosophy of our new Inclusion and Wellbeing framework.

### Parliament Round Table

We were extremely proud of CEO and Principal Olga Scholes, and Chairperson, parent and educator Conrad Maralngurra, who in October travelled to Canberra with Executive Director of AISNT Cheryl Salter, to participate in a Round Table at Parliament House. The Round Table was an opportunity to discuss how to address educational disadvantage with Federal Education Minister Jason Clare. The team from the NT brought knowledge and expertise to a conversation at the highest level of government, which we hope will be part of the catalyst for change in areas of educational disadvantage across Australia.



# Facilities and resources

In our first full year of operating three schools, much focus was centred on further preparing the existing buildings and classrooms at Manmoyi and Mamadawerre for learning. We are grateful to the Northern Territory Education Department for allowing us to lease these facilities, however, the classrooms have been used sporadically over the years with very little maintenance, and so significant, ongoing work has been necessary to upgrade these places of learning to be inspiring and supportive spaces.

With support from our partners at Karrkad Kanjdji Trust, a major capital works program was completed this year, upgrading essential services at Mamadawerre and Manmoyi schools. This large-scale project has markedly improved the learning environments of our two new schools, and included the following work:

## Manmoyi

- Build two balabbalas (teacher accommodation)
- Install solar panels for power, hot water and air-conditioning to the school
- Install water storage tank
- Update school buildings – full renovation of kitchen and teacher bedsit including electrical works, painting, upgrade doors etc
- Purchase and transport shipping container for storage
- The Manmoyi classrooms were upgraded with new flooring and cabinetry.

## Mamadawerre

- Build brand new school kitchen complete with white goods and appliances
- Upgrade solar system and install new air conditioners in both classrooms

- Installation of two new water storage tanks – at school and teacher balabbala
- Update underground cables from the workshop to the school for upgraded power supply.

With three schools operational, student resources were another priority in ensuring teachers from all sites had all they needed to dive into a year of full-time education. Given the remoteness of our schools, all resources must be planned for and transported on-site well in advance. Many hours were spent ordering stationery supplies for teaching and learning programs, specialised key learning equipment required for literacy, maths, science, geography and technology, art supplies, bush trip hardware, remote camping equipment, sporting apparatus, connected learning implements and tools for general maintenance.

To reflect growing student numbers, we added two new vehicles to our fleet – a new Toyota HiAce Bus and second-hand Troop Carrier. The CEO's vehicle was also replaced with a Toyota Fortuna.

Information technology resourcing was expanded this year, supporting educators to continue delivering a cutting-edge bicultural digital learning curriculum. Across each of our three schools we upgraded to a 1:1 iPad-student ratio, installed Apple TV and screens, and expanded online subscriptions for teaching/support of literacy and numeracy.

Above: The Mamadawerre team with the exciting new addition to our fleet – a Toyota HiAce 4WD minivan.

Below: The renovated and revitalised Manmoyi kitchen – which now doubles as a stunning multipurpose learning space.





# Karrkad Kanjdji Trust Report



**Karrkad  
Kanjdi  
Trust**

**The Karrkad Kanjdji Trust (KKT) was established by the Traditional Owners of Warddeken and Djelk Indigenous Protected Areas in 2010. Since then, KKT has continued to be led by Bininj in holistic fundraising that simultaneously supports the globally significant conservation work conducted by rangers, Elders and Landowners, and ensures that their families and communities are adequately supported to live on their ancestral lands and still have access to meaningful, Bininj-led education and employment.**

The formation and success of the Nawarddeken Academy remains a great source of pride for KKT and our supporters. We are thrilled to have been a part of yet another momentous year for the Nawarddeken Academy which, at the request of the communities, saw the Early Learning Program expand to include Manmoyi and Mamadawerre.

Like the Nawarddeken Academy, we are particularly proud to tell our supporters that the Early Learning Program places a great amount of importance on traditional knowledge and prioritises the role that kin play in the education of a child. We look forward to continuing our support of the Early Learning Program and seeing more families partake in the Families as First Teachers model.

Looking forward, we are pleased to share that we have secured philanthropic funding for the Nawarddeken Academy to start offering vocational training opportunities for older students, and expand to provide high-school education.

We are principally informed by the belief that Country needs people – meaning, to support Indigenous land management and conservation, we must also support people to live and thrive on Country. Therefore, the full-time, bicultural and Bininj-led education of Nawarddeken wurdurd will continue to remain a founding pillar of our fundraising.

Finally, as always, we'd like to thank all of our donors for another year of deep generosity and for their shared belief in the importance of safeguarding the health and future of the communities and countries of west and central Arnhem Land.



Teaching Assistant Principal Jodi Vallak and educator Annie Cameron discuss the Kuwarddewardde Malkno Seasonal Calendar with students at Kabulwarnamyo.





Bininj teacher Annie Cameron and student Mahalia dig for yams on a Bush Trip near Marikawo community.



# Financial report

## Highlights

### Operating Income

Nawarddeken Academy Limited received \$4,343,065.00 in revenue for the 2022 financial year.

Figure 1 shows the composition of total operating income for 2022.

Revenue was received from three main sources: Commonwealth funding (\$3,219,091.55), Northern Territory Government Funding (\$202,023.36) and Philanthropic funding (\$875,348.09).

Together, these sources represent 98% of Nawarddeken Academy's total revenue.

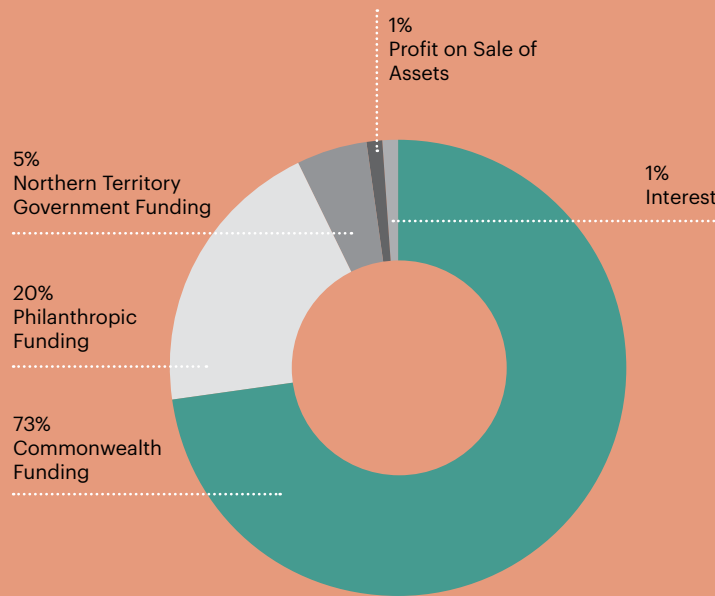


Figure 1

### Operating Expenses

Figure 2 shows the composition of total operating expenses for 2022.

Total expenses were \$2,834,964.00 – an increase of \$1,440,899 from 2021. This was due to establishing two new schools in Mamadawerre and Manmoyi in late 2021, and a generous grant from KKT for Capital Infrastructure investments and upgrades at these schools.

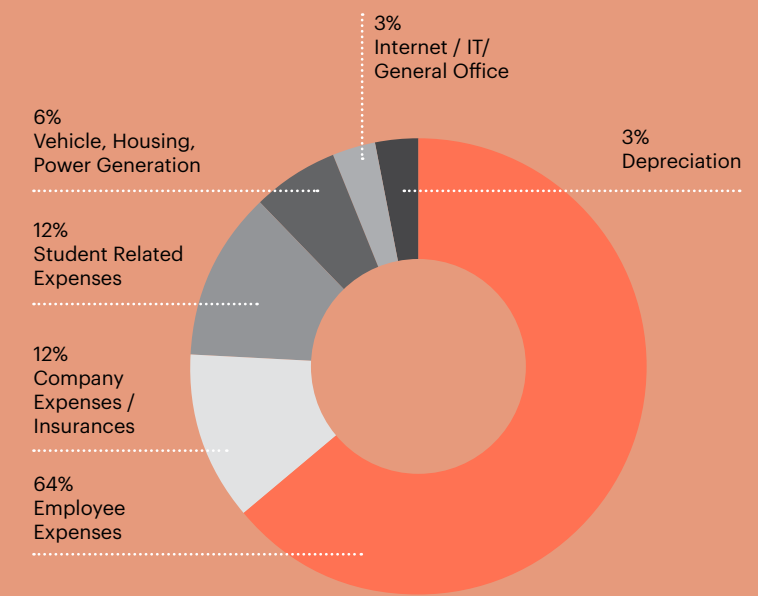


Figure 2

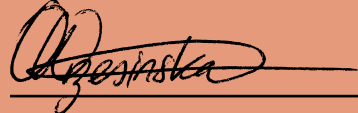


# Financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2022

We certify that the financial statements for Nawarddeken Academy Limited have been prepared based on proper accounts and records in accordance with the prescribed format, Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the Corporations Act 2001. We further state that the information set out in these financial statements presents fairly the financial performance of Nawarddeken Academy for the year ended 31st December 2022 and the financial position on that date. At the time of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render the particulars included in the financial statements materially misleading or inaccurate.



**Karen Kehoe**  
Business Manager  
Nawarddeken Academy Limited



**Olga Scholes**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Nawarddeken Academy Limited

## Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2022

	2022 \$	2021 \$
<b>Revenue and Other Income</b>		
Grant Income	4,225,273	1,977,464
Interest Received	6,288	–
Profit on Sale of Assets	40,314	–
Other Income	71,190	38,118
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>4,343,065</b>	<b>2,015,582</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>		
Accounting Costs	18,245	4,190
Advertising and Promotion Costs	15,018	2,980
Audit Fees	17,600	13,000
Bank Fees and Charges	528	403
Board Meeting Costs	104,915	670
Classroom Furniture & Equipment - Minor	20,142	44,729
Consultancy Costs	131,277	138,512
Computer Expenses	44,244	60,218
Depreciation Expenses - Property, Plant and Equipment	82,534	29,055
Depreciation Expenses - Right of Use Assets	12,759	–
Employee Benefit Expenses	1,772,185	721,551
Equipment & Furnishings Replacement - Minor	6,527	–
Hire of Motor Vehicles and Aircraft	55,503	106,452
Insurance Expenses	43,792	7,613
Interest Expense - Borrowings	6,318	3,202
Interest Expense - Lease Liabilities	7,222	–
Legal Fees	–	20,129
Motor Vehicle - Fuel & Registration Costs	12,953	2,409
Printing, Postage and Stationery Costs	21,392	13,070
Recruitment and Relocation Costs	41,790	–
Rent	5,416	11,455
Repairs and Maintenance Expenses	80,242	72,005
School and Community Engagement Activities	71,810	–
Student Costs	62,147	25,992
Subscription Fees	14,371	28,039
Sundry Expenses	9,704	16,948
Teaching and Classroom Resources	41,265	5,089
Telephone and Internet charges	11,659	9,406
Travel and Accommodation Expenses	123,406	56,948
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>2,834,964</b>	<b>1,394,065</b>
<b>Surplus/Loss for the year</b>	<b>1,508,101</b>	<b>621,517</b>
<b>Other Comprehensive Income</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>
<b>Total Other Comprehensive Income</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>
<b>Total Comprehensive Income for the year</b>	<b>1,508,101</b>	<b>621,517</b>
<b>Net current year profit attributable to members of the entity</b>	<b>1,508,101</b>	<b>621,517</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income attributable to members of the entity</b>	<b>1,508,101</b>	<b>621,517</b>



**Statement of financial position  
as at 31 December 2022**

	2022 \$	2021 \$
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,148,873	1,180,685
Trade and Other Receivables	53,436	41,169
Other Current Assets	58,274	48,264
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>2,260,583</b>	<b>1,270,118</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>		
Property, plant and equipment	1,232,420	372,561
Right of Use Assets	123,507	
<b>Total non-current assets</b>	<b>1,355,927</b>	<b>372,561</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>3,616,510</b>	<b>1,642,679</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Trade and Other Payables	379,860	166,133
Employee Provisions	93,585	37,618
Borrowings	69,083	86,172
Lease Liabilities	9,344	-
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>551,872</b>	<b>289,923</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>		
Employee Provisions	-	-
Borrowings	133,275	47,738
Lease Liabilities	118,244	-
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>	<b>251,519</b>	<b>47,738</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>803,391</b>	<b>337,661</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>2,813,119</b>	<b>1,305,018</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Retained Earnings	2,813,119	1,305,018
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>2,813,119</b>	<b>1,305,018</b>

**Our kids want to go to Nawarddeken Academy because they're on their homelands. They're comfortable in their environment and they feel safe. Sisters, brothers, cousins, all in the same classroom, learning together alongside their families. This is what we've fought so hard for.**

**— Michelle Bangarr,  
Nawarddeken Academy  
Director, Traditional Owner,  
parent and educator**





NAWARDEKEN  
ACADEMY