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GETTING YOLŊU BACK INTO BUSINESS

Our 4 year Arnhem Human Enterprise Development (AHED) program has identified over 40 industries that could be up and running in many different locations across north-east Arnhem Land; potentially hundreds of businesses. Getting Yolŋu back into business might be the big answer to so many of the social and economic problems that exist across the region!



FOREWORD

Four years ago [Why Warriors P/L](#) (WW) responded to a call from 15 leaders of different Yolŋu¹ families at Galiwin'ku, on Elcho Island, to come and work with them to help them start their own businesses. To do this WW deployed a non-profit pilot called the Arnhem Human Enterprise Development ([AHED](#)) project.

We asked these leaders, "Why should we (WW) come here and not to one of the other communities in Arnhem Land?" Their response was telling. One of them said, "See us all standing here, we all have business plans (paid for by [IBA](#)) but none of us have a business. We need someone like you or Tim (WW staff), who understand us, speaks our language and knows our Law, to walk beside us and teach us the steps".

For Yolŋu to get into business a little more is needed than a bureaucratic process of having business plans written up. We needed to work with the people on the ground in real life situations and face together with them the everyday challenges and blockages they face in putting their dreams into action. This we have done over the last 4 years.

This has allowed us to discover that many Yolŋu are born entrepreneurs and want to be in business. We have also seen that there are identifiable (mainly dominant culture) blockages that can be overcome.

This report comes at a time when many are looking for new ideas to fill the gap created by the closure of the alumina processing plant at Gove. Our AHED project was never designed to answer this crisis, but is part of a long-term commitment in working to empower Yolŋu people. Yet we have identified over 40 industries that could be up and running in many different locations across north-east Arnhem Land; potentially hundreds of businesses. Getting Yolŋu back into business might be the big answer

¹ Yolŋu: Yolŋu means human or humans, person or people. It also now means an Aboriginal person or people from northeast Arnhem Land.



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Richard Trudgen for Why Warriors P/L © March 2014

Contents

FOREWORD.....	2
Introduction.....	6
Executive summary.....	7
Part I:	11
Some background history	11
A reflection.....	11
Loss of their international trade.....	12
Natural Pearls	14
Economic refugees	15
Croc trade in trouble.....	16
The descent into welfare	17
Government the source of all wealth and wealth production	18
Part II:	20
Current Situation.....	20
The Balanda cultural “work thing”	20
What is a business?	21
Only a few have the picture	22
The Jobs situation today	22
Business opportunities everywhere.....	22
Businesses keep failing	23
A gardener who can’t sell his produce.....	23
“We are not paying twice”	23
Are there Yolngu businesses operating today	24
Part III:.....	28
What is needed to let Yolngu Back into business.....	28



Industry Ideas for Arnhem Land	29
Levelling out the Playing Field - Summary	33
1 Yolŋu Missing out on BASIC INFORMATION.....	33
2 Confusion about BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT.....	33
3 Sink or Swim in an ENGLISH SPEAKING WORLD.....	33
Un-stacking the Cards against them.....	33
1 Culturally APPROPRIATE BUSINESS SUPPORT	33
Levelling out the Playing Field	34
1 Yolŋu Missing out on BASIC INFORMATION.....	34
2 Confusion about BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT.....	35
3 Sink or Swim in an ENGLISH SPEAKING WORLD.....	36
Big difference in five years.....	39
Un-stacking the Cards against them.....	40
Culturally APPROPRIATE BUSINESS SUPPORT	40
The AHED Model	41
Enterprise facilitators.....	41
Entrepreneur apprenticeship model	42
Culturally friendly accounting service.....	44
Marketing Expert.....	46
Other WW personnel needs	46
Infrastructure needs.....	46
Conclusion	47
Appendix I.....	48
Yolŋu Matha Economic Word List:.....	48
Economic word list	51
Appendix II	68
Financial management solutions to incubate business development in North East Arnhem Land.....	68
Appendix III	72
Practical Needs for YOLŊU ENTREPRENEURS and Economic Development in NE Arnhem Land.....	72





INTRODUCTION

Building a Strong Economic Base for north-east Arnhem Land.

It seems only natural that to build an economically strong north-east Arnhem Land will require building a strong economic base for the Yolŋu² people. Their estates are dripping with resources and as we have found, with the right support, Yolŋu are very keen to get into business. If this support materialized the outcome would be massive, delivering major social and economic benefits to the whole north-east Arnhem Land and Gove region.

Despite what many people might think, Yolŋu do have an age-old business culture (Appendix I) that goes back many centuries and even tens of thousands of years. With the necessary information and support systems they could make good of their business culture and natural entrepreneurial abilities together with their in-depth living knowledge of the region and the resources that exist on their estates; which includes the intertidal zone of the Arnhem Land coast. Our experience has shown us that there is little doubt that with the **right** information and support Yolŋu could return to same very high levels of regional, national and international business activities they were driving, before it was stopped by government legislation in 1906.

[Why Warriors P/L](#) (WW) through our Arnhem Human Enterprise Development (AHED) program has been working with Yolŋu at Galiwin'ku over the last 4 years building different businesses that Yolŋu entrepreneurs themselves came up with. Some had been dreaming of the business they wanted for most of their lives; they just never had the dominant culture information and support to make it happen.

Our AHED program uses Enterprise Facilitators, who work with the people using an entrepreneur apprenticeship model to develop their businesses. This model has grown out of the last 4 years and other previous experiences allowing us to map the blockages that Yolŋu business owners face in their real life everyday experiences. These experiences have also shown us that when the right information and support are in place Yolŋu become very excited about getting into business. The response in fact has been so large that we have not been able to cope with it, within our limited existing resources.

Richard and Timothy Trudgen, director/owners of WW both speak the economic language of the Yolŋu people and have had a deep committed relationship with Yolŋu throughout their adult lives. Both have worked as community development

² Yolŋu: Yolŋu means human or humans, person or people. It also now means an Aboriginal person or people from northeast Arnhem Land.



workers and educators. Their community education has covered everything from HIV, chronic diseases, law, economics and governance. However, while they were doing this other education Yolngu kept asking for help to start their own businesses. Hence the AHED project was born. Both also have extensive business experience.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the Rio Tinto-Alcan announcement that it would be mothballing its Gove refinery there has been a lot of talk about how a strong economic base for the region could be created.

Strangely this is reminiscent of what happened in [1906-7](#) when the then South Australian Government stopped the Yolngu³ people from [trading internationally](#) with the Macassans from Makasar in Southern Sulawesi; a trade that had been in play for many centuries.

The effects on Yolngu were devastating. Coastal clans fell into debt, wars broke out between different Bapurru tribes. The Lamamirri, the land-owners of most of the mine site and Yirrkala, are extinct because of it. The last old Lamamirri died at Galiwin'ku in 1997 a pauper.

Djiniyini Gondarra tells of how his grandfather on his mother's side, the Lamamirri people, sat down under a small gum tree at "Little Bondi" and died. In his last days he lamented how he had been a businessman all his life, but without the trade with Macassar he could no longer go on as he was up to his neck in debt with other inland Yolngu.

Yolngu could not just move out to somewhere else; their homes were here, their investment was here; they had nowhere else to go. Some of them went to the mission stations at [Milingimbi](#), [Yirrkala](#) and [Elcho Island](#) after they were established. This meant living on someone else's lands. Many are still there today. Others in central Arnhem Land went south to the cattle stations. Only a few remained on their yirralka estates across Arnhem Land and survived with trading trips by [canoe](#) or overland to the mission station that was the closest.

Their survival on their yirralka estates was spurred along with the help of the Rev Harold Shepherdson in the 1960/70's. 'Sheppy', as the Yolngu called him, would fly to many of the Homeland villages and trade crocodile skins, shells and craftwork with the people for their essential supplies. Then it was decided under Australian law in

³ Yolngu: Yolngu means human or humans, person or people. It also now means an Aboriginal person or people from northeast Arnhem Land.



1972 that crocodile skins could no longer be traded. Overnight again the people lost an industry that they were totally dependent upon.

Business people in Nhulunbuy today can now relate to what the old Lamamirri man and many other Yolŋu felt when decisions outside their control took over their lives.

Between that time and now many factors have stopped Yolŋu getting back into their age-old businesses and being able to practice their business culture. Participation in any business activity requires a level playing field, which does not exist for Yolŋu or many other Aboriginal people like them in Australia, at the moment.

The trade that was once in the hands of Yolŋu people; pearling, trepang and crocodile skins, is now in the hands of other people. There are also a number of very basic things that make it very hard for them to get back into business.

Much of the history in this paper will be new to many non-Yolŋu people and yet to understand the way ahead means we sometimes need to know where we have come from. This paper tries to do that.

It is clear that Yolŋu have a business culture, anyone that says otherwise simply does not know Yolŋu or knows only the dominant culture stereo-typcasting that mainstream Australia has created, in relation to all Aboriginal people. See Appendix I

During the AHED project and in many other conversations had with Yolŋu over many years, we have identified over 40 industries that could be up and running in many different locations across north-east Arnhem Land; potentially hundreds of different businesses. (See page 27 below)

So what are the blockages stopping this from happening?

Create a level playing field

There are a number of things that make the playing field uneven for Yolŋu. One is they have little access to contemporary information in their own language. This has left them confused and locked out of opportunities that other Australians have open access too. So they need special information services delivering current affairs and specialised economic literacy and business development programs in their own language.

They also need to be able to learn English like anyone else would learn a foreign language rather than being forced to learn English without any formal constructed learning materials to learn from. At present Radio Australia delivers English learning lessons in Burmese, Chinese, Indonesian, Khmer and Vietnamese but no such programs are available for any group (different language groups) of Aboriginal people in Australia. They need formal English learning programs available on radio



and the web. Running any business in Australia is very difficult without a good command of English.

Business has changed since Yolŋu traded with Asia over 100 years ago. Now there are very high compliance and accounting requirements. Sometimes Yolŋu feel overburdened when they try starting a business. 15 people at Galiwin'ku had tried and got nowhere. There just seems to be so many things stacked against them getting into contemporary business.

Un-stacking the cards

Our program trains Enterprise Facilitators to work with the Yolŋu entrepreneurs as they learn the contemporary business trade. The model we deployed is like an entrepreneur apprenticeship. Most of the problems Yolŋu entrepreneurs face come from interacting with the "strange" dominant culture world. It is much the same as if a dominant culture Australian tried to set up a business in the Middle East or China or some other foreign country. Without a cultural broker/translator it would be almost impossible to succeed.

Enterprise Facilitators working with Yolŋu through the entrepreneur apprenticeship model overcome this problem, as they are dominant culture workers who also speak Yolŋu language.

The model deployed also does training on the job which Yolŋu love, because it makes so much sense to them. That is, they learn something and put it into practice at the same time.

Our model also requires the entrepreneur to get on with their business operations and employ professionals to manage business finances. This is where we run into difficulty every time. That is, it is very hard to find culturally appropriate bookkeeping and accounting services that can relate well to Yolŋu.

Our Enterprise Facilitators learn language and learn how to be bi-cultural; they learn that there is more than one way of looking at the world. Bookkeeper accounting services do not have these skills. Plus they come loaded with all the negative dominant culture stereotype naming of Yolŋu. Yet they are needed to work in a very close relationship with their Yolŋu business client if the business is to succeed. *This has become the major blockage in getting more Yolŋu into business.*

WW now want to set up an accounting office where the staff are fully trained in language and appropriate cultural ways of working with Yolŋu business owners. Part of this service is to also offer expert marketing services to these Yolŋu businesses and the region.

***The need for regional development***

It seems many governments have looked at moving Yolŋu off their lands to major population centers over the last decade. Noting that history seems to always repeat the same mistakes they will try to do it again in the future. The evidence of this ever working is very light on. In fact we know this only creates marginalized ghettos of people who have to turn to vice and lawlessness to survive. Just look at the problems with itinerants in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs at the moment. But Yolŋu on their own lands, where they are in control of their own lives, build strong, proud and resolute, lawful people.

Every cloud has a silver lining and maybe the silver lining for the Gove situation is that it will provide an opportunity to unleash the dynamic business power of Yolŋu right across the region, which will stimulate the whole regional economy.

Regional development on this scale would require extra services that can be based in Nhulunbuy. It will also mean that other industries will spring up in Nhulunbuy to support the growth industries that occur. Trade from these industries is likely to come through Nhulunbuy sea and airports; tourist, research and government officer visits will also increase. Government funding will also grow to support the infrastructure development needed. The flow-on to local businesses will be dynamic.

Unlocking the massive potential that exists across the region, getting Yolŋu back into business, has many large and lasting benefits not just for Yolŋu or the region but also for the Northern Territory and the wider nation. It could become an example of great national pride, where Indigenous Australians come in from the marginalized edge of modern Australian society and merge into the mainstream, maintaining their original Australian culture; a business culture that is as old as Australia itself.

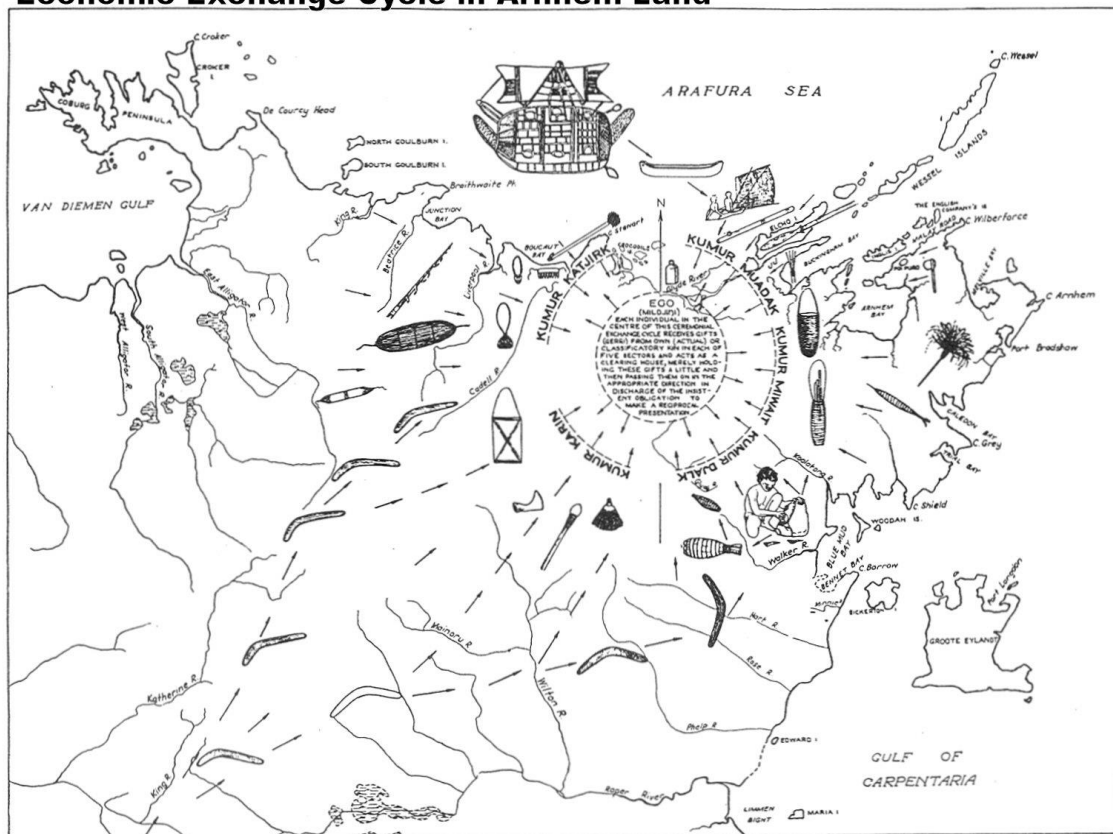
Note: Costing for this initiative has not been provided in this paper as we do not have the time or resources to do it. With help we could provide full costing.



PART I:

SOME BACKGROUND HISTORY

Economic Exchange Cycle in Arnhem Land



Donald F. Thomson, D. Sc.; MacMillan, Melbourne, 1949

A REFLECTION

The Donald Thomson map above from 1949 gives a quick glimpse at some of the economic activities that were operating in north-east Arnhem Land in the early 20th century. Within this area there would have been a least 60 Bāpurru tribes trading with each other. Thompson's book of 1949, *Ceremony and Economic Exchange*, also tells of how the rich economic life of Yolŋu⁴ people drove most interaction between them, as economics does in most normal functioning societies.

⁴ Yolŋu: Yolŋu means human or humans, person or people. It also now means an Aboriginal person or people from northeast Arnhem Land.



As Thompson noted, it is economics and the drivers behind and within the economic system that set people into a competition mode, to learn more and develop skills to be a step ahead of other clans and larger tribal groups around them. To be märrmirr,⁵ in a state of credit, with all those that you traded with was the key driving force in Yolŋu society.

In those times there was a clear belief that economic reward was down to each family, what they did or didn't do. It was what they produced and traded that would allow them to be in a märrmirr credit relationship with others around them.

However when outside forces intervene in any regional economic system and start setting the levers to their benefit and control, then the people within that region will suffer. This happened to Yolŋu. Their once thriving economic activity has been replaced with welfare. The more welfare that has descended on them the more life has made little sense in any quarter. The result of this today is low employment, little business activity, little use of massive resources, low selfworth and high selfharm and suicide rates, high morbidity and mortality rates, high levels of lawlessness and imprisonment and a general lack of interest in education and training.

LOSS OF THEIR INTERNATIONAL TRADE

It is well known that the Yolŋu and other Aboriginal people traded nationally within Australia for tens of thousands of years and internationally for at least 400 years. Yolŋu even visited Macassar and intermarried with the people from there.

This relationship thrived up until the South Australian Government changed the licensing requirements for trepang fishing stopping the Macassans coming into NT waters in 1906. Yolŋu would argue however that they were coming into their waters with permission and contracts in hand from them. But no one in the South Australian Government understood this relationship, so the centuries old trade between Yolŋu and Asia was destroyed overnight.

The main reason the trade was stopped by the South Australian Government was to try and let British citizens in on what was seen as a very lucrative trade with Asia. There are not a lot of records of this trade except what the South Australian Government collected.

⁵ **Märrmirr** (*märr: spiritual power, strength 1.*) (*-mirr: indicates possessive*) To be in a state of credit; being spiritually empowered because other people owe things to you, or because of 'good credit' standing in the community. See Appendix I below



The South Australian Government administered the Northern Territory, from 1863 to 1910. During this time they collected duties from the Macassans between 1882 up until Federation when the Commonwealth took control of all customs/duties collection.

The South Australian parliamentary papers show the value of imports that were collected. The duties for Macassan goods were levied only on 'Manufactured Tobacco' and 'Rice', although from a number of other records including Thomson above and the Yolngu oral, song and linguistic history, we know that many other items were also traded into Australia in large quantities including; knives, axes, nails (for fish hooks etc.), fish hooks, fishing lines, bottle glass, bolts of calico, blankets, string, scraps of steel,⁶ alcohol, swords and muskets to name a few.

The steel scraps were fashioned into spear heads by Yolngu and found their way across the country to the great Australian Bight where Basie Bates noted seeing them, "coming from up north".

There were many things also traded back to Macassar (or Makasar) in Southern Sulawesi. These included timber of various types, shells of the hawks-bill and greenback turtles, necklaces made from cowrie shells that the Macassans would 'point at and say manimani', [sounds like moenymoney]. Older Yolngu still call these necklaces manimani today. Yolngu saw the necklaces as very valuable because of what the Macassans would trade for them. [Cowrie shells](#) were used, as was tobacco, as a currency around the world for many centuries.

And of course there was the [trepang fishing](#) that was their core trade business to Macassar. Many of the Yolngu coastal yirralka estates contained shallow water where these big sea slugs thrived in large numbers and still do today. The Macassans would come and work with Yolngu to harvest the trepang under a djugu contract arrangement. Then they would process and dry them for shipping back to Macassar where they were sold to Chinese traders. The Chinese used the trepang in soups and other dishes.

Every year before the Macassans left for home with their boats full of goods they would sit down with the Yolngu tribal leader and the Yolngu Djungaya manager /

⁶ Thomson, 1949, p. 86.



lawyers for the yirralka estate they were on and renegotiate the balanydja⁷ payment required for them to come back and work the trepang beds next season.

There are no records of the quantities of trade that went out of Australia but we can get an idea of the size of the trade from the South Australian government records and we can see why the British traders wanted to be involved.

The South Australian tariffs on the incoming trade were levied at 1 penny per pound for rice and 2 shillings 6 pennies per pound for tobacco. The table below shows quantities of imports from Macassar during the 1890s and the value of duties charged on them. By comparison, all duties for goods imported to the Northern Territory from America in 1894 amounted to just £40 while in the same years the duties on Macassan goods totaled £375. And in 1898 only £52 from America, while the duties on 'Manufactured Tobacco' and 'Rice' from Macassar total was £299.

Table 1. Quantities and Tariff value of recorded imports into the Northern Territory from Macassar, 1894-1903

YEAR	RICE	RICE TARIFF (£)	TOBACCO WEIGHT (lbs.)	TOBACCO TARIFF (£)
1894	69,060	287	698	88
1895	30,240	126	264	33
1896	25,020	104	206	26
1897	46,440	193	372	47
1898	54,990	229	559	70
1899	54,132	225	480	60
1900	46,432	194	535	67
1901	49,332	205	518	65
1902	52,024	217	692	87
1903	66,438	277	903	113

Note: South Australian Parliamentary Papers have no figures for Import Duties for goods originating in Macassar after 1903 as the collection of duties was handled by the Commonwealth after Federation (1/1/1901).

NATURAL PEARLS

Along with this trade the Yolngu were also seeding and harvesting [natural pearls](#) for many hundreds of years. Many of these pearls are likely to have ended up being worn by the queens of Europe when you look at the old overland trade maps. Yolngu have no record of how many were exported to Macassar but Alfred Searcy, who for

⁷ Balanydja: A payment for goods or service rendered under contract. The payment received at the completion of a djugu contract is called 'balanydja'.



fourteen years from 1882 was Sub-Collector of Customs out of Port Darwin, for the South Australian Government noted:

Before our departure, four more proas arrived (Macassan boats). . . . All had numbers of pearls, which I had produced, or at any rate what they thought fit, for the serang [a Malay crewman on Searcy's boat] of the cutter informed me that those forthcoming were only the inferior ones, the pearls being divided into firsts, seconds, and thirds. One of the bottles shown, for there were three pint pickle bottles, the master informed me would realise fifteen hundred rupees in Macassar. I received reliable information that a proa the previous season had taken away thirty-five cattie-weight [21.2 kg] of pearls, no doubt the majority being inferior, but amongst such a quantity there were bound to be some of great value. The natives collected the pearls during the absence of the Malays [Macassans], for whom they saved them.

Yolngu not only collected the pearls; **they also seeded oysters and large clams with special sand to make the pearls grow.** This was done by working over their oyster and clamshell beds in a methodical way, returning to the beds to harvest from a particular section after a number of years. Knowledge of how to do this seeding still exists today among descendants of the Yolngu that participated in this trade. However they stopped seeding after the British boats moved in and started stealing the pearls and pearl shells from their oyster and clamshell beds.

It is clear that the 1906 Act of the South Australian government killed Northern Territory trade into Asia from the Yolngu estates. When the Macassan trade stopped the Bāpurru tribes went into economic meltdown. Wars broke out between them for unpaid goods and they have never really recovered from it.

With the Macassan trade gone the new British owned boats made life hell for Yolngu as they stole pearl and pearl shell from the beds that Yolngu had farmed for centuries. To settle any disputes the people were up against well-armed boat crews with rifles.

Then the next tragedy happened. Around this time it seems that the people of Arnhem Land were hit with the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic that swept the world. It was probably brought into Arnhem Land by the British owned Malay crewed boats. It seemed to affect mainly the coastal clans and in one generation many of the adults in some families died leaving only younger children to fend for themselves.

ECONOMIC REFUGEES

Yolngu started making trading trips first to the mission at [Milingimbi](#) after it was established 1923 and then later to [Yirrkala](#) in 1935. Others went to the mission on [Elcho Island](#) when it was established in 1945. More and more started to stay on at



the mission especially those who were a long way away from their estates. Some of the Bāpurru tribes from around Nhulunbuy area moved up to Milingimbi in the early 1920 as the trip for trade goods was just too far, taking many weeks of hard work. This meant living as economic refugees on other people's lands. Many of their descendants are still there today.

Only a few remained on their yirralka estates across Arnhem Land and survived with trading trips by [canoe](#) or over land to the mission station that was the closest.

This continued with the help of the Rev Harold Shepherdson who would fly trading trips out of Galiwin'ku from about the 1950's to many of the Homeland estates and trade with the people for crocodile skins, shells and craftwork. This was against the will of the Government Welfare Department of the day who wanted all Aborigines to be in a mission or government settlement to, "Learn the art of labour and industry".

CROC TRADE IN TROUBLE

However the crocodile skin trade was also in trouble. For a number of decades many "white" crocodile shooters had been working the coastal waters shooting any crocodile they could find. They had no thought for conservation and the need to look after and protect the breeding stock. From their point of view the bigger the croc was the better; a view that is still promoted by many in Darwin today that think it would be good to kill off the top of the gene pool by having trophy shooters kill off the big crocs.

Yolŋu have always had another view. According to their Maḍayin law any crocodiles larger than about 600 mm across the shoulders are considered breeders and should never be killed. Very big crocs are classed as holy and never killed. Yolŋu even had special ŋulurr wāŋa breeding places on the Yolŋu estates, usually large billabongs where no crocodiles of any size can be taken. These places have been proclaimed under their traditional Maḍayin law.

In this way Yolŋu have protected the gene pool of the strongest crocodiles and their breeding numbers for tens of thousands of years. When Yolŋu complained about the Balanda⁸ (English speaking Australians) crocodile shooters, the Government Welfare Officers told them that the Balanda crocodile shooters could go anywhere. They were told that Balanda did not need permission and if Yolŋu caused trouble for them Yolŋu would be taken to jail.

⁸ Balanda: Balanda comes from the word "Hollander", from the Yolŋu contacts with people from former Dutch colonies in Asia; and is used to refer to European or English-speaking "Western" person or people.



Thirty years of indiscriminate shooting of crocodiles by croc shooters from Darwin left crocodile numbers very low, and there was fear of them becoming extinct. So the Australian government decided, without any consultation with Yolngu that crocodiles skins could no longer be traded. So again in 1972 the people lost an industry that they relied on to survive; one *they* could have sustained.

THE DESCENT INTO WELFARE

Yolngu never discovered who or what had stopped the Macassan trade until about 1999 when I was doing community education with some of the clan elders. They had assumed that the world had just gone mad in some way, or that it had "Something to do with the Balanda out of Port Darwin".

On top of that the missionaries and government welfare officers and later thousands of other Balanda have kept on telling Yolngu over and over again that they need to, "Forget your old culture and learn the new Balanda way". They knew their old culture was to *namaŋamyun girri* produce things and *buku-djuŋkmaram* trade them. And they thought if there is no more production and trade then how and where does "girri things" and food come from.

Many started to think it must come from some supernatural origin/s if humans like themselves had no more hand in it. Maybe sweating and *buku-djuŋkmaram* trade and trading was out of fashion and the Balanda had another way. And that is why the Balanda keep saying to learn their way. But the Balanda never taught them 'their way'. And nothing they could glean about it made any sense. Their conclusions came down to; it seemed that the Balanda way was that humans no longer needed to work, that is hard work like they used to do. It also seemed that the Balanda way was secret and only known to a chosen few. Many Balanda did try to explain 'their way' but they used words that the Yolngu could not understand; maybe even this was part of keeping it secret, Yolngu thought.

To make it more confusing the people did see a resemblance to their old system in what some of the Balanda, like the missionaries, did. They traded some of the traditional products like trepang, shells and crocodile skins. They also grew gardens and traded craft and art objects from the people, paying them in tobacco as the Macassans had for many centuries. Some missions had sawmills and other industries like fishing and the people saw these operating on the basis of *buku-djuŋkmaram* trade. But at the same time the missionaries kept telling the people over and over again to forget their old ways and culture. All very confusing!

Then in the 1980's the government came in and just started giving money for everything. Even when the industries that used to work under the missionaries stopped, the government just put everyone on government payments. "Maybe this is



what the missionaries had been getting them ready for", they thought. Even the new Balanda teachers and government people also kept telling them to "Forget your old ways/culture and learn the new Balanda ways". When they asked all the Balanda that now came to their communities where they got their money from they would say that they, "Got it from the government". So maybe this was the 'new way'?

During the 1950s and 1960s many Yolngu received a good Balanda education, supported fully by their family and Bāpurru tribes. They were sent to school to learn the Balanda way and to discover the secrets of Balanda wealth. Many of these people died still not knowing.

GOVERNMENT THE SOURCE OF ALL WEALTH AND WEALTH PRODUCTION

However most Yolngu came to the conclusion that the Balanda way is for them to 'sit down and be fed by the government'. This idea is far more entrenched today than it was 40 years ago when I first came to Arnhem Land. Since the intervention, baby bonus, economic stimulus payments and the 100% increase in Balanda living and working on Yolngu communities from 2007, people are now more convinced than ever that the government is the source of all wealth and wealth production.

Before the intervention, life on Yolngu communities was very different to what it is today. Back then they had small local government councils. The councils were made of representatives from all the Bāpurru tribes. These councils would meet on a regular basis to do all the business in relation to what was happening and needed to happen on the community. Plus, before the intervention all Balanda who were not government workers had to get a permit from the local Yolngu land owners to visit or to live on their communities.

The functions of both local government councils in the hands of the people and the permit system allowed the people to know why different Balanda were within their communities. Now the people have no idea why so many Balanda are there. Many believe they are just there so Balanda can have jobs, they are all on government salaries, live in good housing and driving brand new vehicles, all paid for by the government. Maybe this is the way for Balanda to be wealthy?

Talking to many Yolngu teenagers about their future they express hopelessness. They say things like, "There are no jobs for us around here because we are black, only white people get jobs". Some say, "In the mission days the missionaries had faith in our parents they trusted them with responsible positions. That is not the case for us - we have nothing".

In the 1960's and 70s the people built all their own western styled housing. Now teams of very highly paid Balanda descend on a community and put up lots of



housing in a short time, then leave. Some Yolŋu were trained but now they are also unemployed as there are no more houses to build.

All these experiences and confused conversations with English first language speakers, both Balanda and other Aboriginal people, have led Yolŋu to the perception that all wealth originates from Government. They have also concluded that the Government and other Balanda control and have almost exclusive access to this wealth. They have no role to play in wealth generation into the future except to get lucky at cards or the casino or get to know a Balanda.



PART II:

CURRENT SITUATION

Although Yolŋu have a complete economic system that is quite complex, for most Yolŋu it is now relegated to a previous era. See Appendix I below to see some of the economic terms in Yolŋu Matha. Many younger Yolŋu people today however are no longer learning these terms because it is believed they are irrelevant as the world now operates on a new system, where Balanda or the government has all the power and is the source of all wealth. They are also not learning the English economic concepts, so they are being de-educated in that they no longer know the economic and business concepts like their forefathers and mothers did.

Many are also angry as to why the government will not share this wealth with them. "Why don't they just print enough money for all of us"? Petrol sniffing and lawlessness is at an all time high since the intervention in many of the communities. Talking to some of the sniffers, when asked why they sniff, they say, "Cheap drunk". Meaning it is a cheap way to get drunk. I ask, "Why do you want to get drunk"? They say many things with one theme, "We have no money." "Our parents will not give us any money". "The government is not worried about us". "We are nothing and have nothing to live for we just want to get drunk".

I attended one meeting that was organised by some Yolŋu parents. They had asked me to come because their young teenagers had been saying to them that if they did not give them money they would sniff petrol and cause trouble. When they told them they had no money the young people would not believe them. Many suicides are happening after the same threats are made to Yolŋu parents, "Give me money or I will hang myself".

When I ask young people if they know where money comes from less than 2% have any idea at all and what they do know is very basic. Many believe that their parents are useless because they could not gain access to the wealth (housing, vehicles, boats, holidays, etc.) that is seen to exist with most Balanda families, and pass this on to them. That is they cannot access the magic, or whatever it is you have to do to get access to the wealth.

THE BALANDA CULTURAL "WORK THING"

If you ask many young Yolŋu people, "How can you get a job"? They will say, "Get to know a Balanda and they will get you a job". The conversation is about the



Balanda power and secrets that only the Balanda can have access too. Many see a job as getting access to the money source that comes from government, not about being productive or selling your labour or skill in a contractual relationship so that the boss can "make money".

This is why many Yolŋu will get a job, turn up for a few days, then stay home thinking they are still entitled to the wage that was agreed on. That is, they have done what is needed to get the grant from the government for money to be paid to them for the rest of their life. The only "work" they may have seen in the whole exercise was getting the right connections to line up so they could get approved access.

Even if the job is working in a shop or for a mining company, most believe that the government is paying the shopkeeper and the mining company to do the Balanda cultural "work thing". This is why there are so many disputes and Yolŋu are now not employed.

It is not what the people know so much, as the many unanswered questions they have around the subject. Other Yolŋu have just stopped thinking, as it is all too confusing with nothing adding up.

WHAT IS A BUSINESS?

The same goes for starting and running businesses. Balanda say to them, "Why don't you start a business or something". But they have little or no idea how to do that. Many believe that the government should pay them to start and run some sort of business. That is, the government should pay for the building, vehicles, equipment and wages to start and run a business, for the rest of it's life, just like the government pays for all these other Balanda to have jobs that do not seem to do anything on their communities. There is little real understanding of what business means. In fact for most Yolŋu it now means some form of ceremony.

A young Yolŋu student had just completed a training course with the local mine. He asked me for a lift back to Yirrkala where he lived. I was going there anyhow so it was no problem. The course was set up to train young Yolŋu adults to be 'work ready' by the local mine. The trip was 13 km and so we had some time to talk. The conversation was in Yolŋu Matha, his language.

I knew he had done the course and so I asked him if it was any good. He said, "Yes it was great". What did you learn I asked him? He answered that they had taught him how to make a toolbox. I asked him, "Did they teach you about where the mining company gets its money from to operate". He responded in language saying, "No that is a holy story, or information only for you Balanda to have access to".



Right across Arnhem Land you will hear similar types of responses over and over again if you ask Yolŋu these types of questions in their language. People are not sure of the present reality around economics and trade and how to get into business or what is required to be employed.

ONLY A FEW HAVE THE PICTURE

Only a few Yolŋu have a more complete picture of where the true state of play is at in relation to the contemporary economic system. These are usually the older Yolŋu people who have continued with their craft and artwork and have been able to find a good outlet for their product. However, having worked with some of these people I know they have little or no real understanding of the government's role in things and many will still see things as described above. This has created great stress on many of the arts and craft outlets across Arnhem Land as people have very unreal expectations as to what and when they should be paid. Some outlets have lots of unsaleable product.

Some Yolŋu have had conversations with us⁹ or they have had access to the programs that were on Yolŋu radio around economic issues. We also run the Arnhem Human Enterprise Development (AHED) program that uses an entrepreneur apprenticeship model, where we get alongside Yolŋu who want to start some form of business and work with them over the establishment phase of the business. Part of this relationship is to train the potential businessperson in economics and business principals. However this has limitations as mentioned below.

THE JOBS SITUATION TODAY

There are less Yolŋu employed today than there were ten or forty years ago. Current employment programs are working for Aboriginal people who are English first language, but are not working for many other Aboriginal people like Yolŋu, who speak English as a fifth or sixth language. Training fails due to the language difference. So they miss out on getting jobs. They then have trouble holding jobs due to massive confusion around all the issues related to employment.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES EVERYWHERE

Everyone keeps telling them that there are no business opportunities on their communities or homeland estates. We have identified about 40 different industries (see page 27 below) from natural pearling to turtle conservation that could be

⁹ At one time I did economic literacy workshops; took me five years to get to most of the leaders across Arnhem Land for one workshop. One workshop is nowhere near enough to deal with the confusion that exists.



developed. The blockage is that Yolŋu do not have enough information about the modern world of economics, potential business ideas and how contemporary economic-business systems operate. Good access to information and culturally appropriate support will allow them to develop these home grown industries and the home grown jobs that will come with them. See below.

BUSINESSES KEEP FAILING

Many other businesses fail in Aboriginal communities because one Aboriginal person learns what is needed to run a business and gets it up and going, but their family members do not understand business needs. So they put unnecessary and unfair pressures on the business operator, leading to the collapse of the business. To overcome this support issue economic and commercial literacy needs to be taught to the whole cultural group.

A GARDENER WHO CAN'T SELL HIS PRODUCE

In 1982 a Yolŋu man started growing a substantial garden on one of the larger communities in Arnhem Land. His plan was to make a business out of it where he could sell his fresh produce to the local community. He was one of a group of Yolŋu elders where I had played a central role in getting him to see how economics, business and good development worked. These leaders were my teachers while I taught them.

Sadly though for over twenty years he has not been able to sell his sweet potatoes and other produce to his local community. The main reason being many of the local Yolŋu believe he is getting money from the government for his garden and all its expenses, even though he told them many times he wasn't. This same man however has traded red ochre from central Australia for \$20,000 per block and on-traded it in the local region with no problems getting payment. However his garden produce, being good and cheap, has remained unsold. The people expect him to give it to them.

"WE ARE NOT PAYING TWICE"

This same issue causes problems in almost every homeland store I have had anything to do with. The people believe that the government has provided all the goods in the store so they say to their local storekeeper, "We are not going to pay twice for it" (thinking that the government has already paid for it and sent it for the people).

The garden above fell into this same confusion trap. His neighbours refused to pay and believed that if he had any decency he would give them the food "that the government had given him for nothing". Yet when they wanted red ochre his



neighbours knew where it came from, they knew that the Balanda had nothing to do with it. They knew how he got it because it was part of the old trade and had not got mixed up with rations, welfare, baby bonuses, aged care food boxes, free meals at school, RJCP (CDEP) programs that supply gardening materials, equipment and seeds, sewing programs where all the material and sewing machines are provided, and the hundreds of Balanda on communities with jobs all looking very well off; all paid for by the government. So for the red ochre they would pay large sums of money or trade other goods for it without question, but not for the garden produce.

ARE THERE YOLŃU BUSINESSES OPERATING TODAY

Are there businesses operating in what you could call the YolŃu economy? Yes there are. Some businesses, as I have mentioned above, are in the trade for traditional goods that were exchanged in the traditional way.

However the biggest business now operating and growing in the "YolŃu economy" is the drug trade. This is because the drug suppliers are doing a very good job at educating YolŃu. Of course they are telling them lots of lies about how drugs will not hurt anyone and they are also threatening people that they will be shot if they say anything to anyone. Many of the big new four-wheel drives on communities are purchased with drug money.

YolŃu are natural born entrepreneurs and they love business. But there seems to be only three options open to them.

Option 1.

Do what the Balanda have told them to do. Forget their (economic) culture and just sit down like the Balanda welfare has taught them. Expect the government to feed everyone including the children and the old people; which was never part of traditional culture.

Some people are now also getting large royalty, lease or dividend payouts. Many of these payments are also mixed up in the confused understanding people have of "Balanda economy", where these payments are also seen as some form of welfare. In many cases these monies are also being squandered.

In most cases these payments are not being used to build businesses and employment on their home communities. In fact in many cases they keep the casino well-oiled and the public drunkenness and violence in Darwin at a high



level. They are not even being used to build their own personal housing¹⁰. This is due to another level of this confusion where most Yolŋu believe that it is the job of government to provide housing to everyone in Australia. Many believe that all Australians get their houses built for them by the government, even the very big expensive housing. Again, it is like the government is the source of all wealth for everyone. The only job is getting the right access to that source.

So option one is, that nothing changes and the people remain confused and inactive, totally dependent on the government purse; with all of its negative and costly outcomes.

Option 2.

Get in on the drug trade. This is easy as it mirrors their ancient trade and economic system in so many ways. Yolŋu do not have to understand any of the difficult English language in this trade, especially the academic economic language, as the suppliers are well versed in knowing how to communicate with Yolŋu. In fact these dealers are more versed than most of the other Balanda professionals that come and try to communicate with Yolŋu people. And the subject matter is very straightforward and simple.

A trader makes a buku-djug verbal contract with another trader; the dealers, who are out there making friends everywhere. They exchange the goods and make the payment on the spot.

Note: Many Yolŋu landowners in the past used the permit system to block or get rid of contractors (including government contractors) and Balanda that were making money on the side selling drugs or setting up drug supply networks; when there was not enough evidence or witnesses were too frightened to come forward. They cannot do it anymore since the Federal Government did away with the permit system in Aboriginal communities. So the dealers are in there everywhere.

Then the Yolŋu trader goes and trades the goods with at least 100% mark up with other Yolŋu. They usually only accept cash on the spot; instant returns. The Yolŋu know that the Government has nothing to do with these goods as the police are after them. They operate under the radar, no paperwork, taxes or any of the other things you have to do to run a business. They have very

¹⁰ Only one or two exceptions to this.



well resourced Balanda and in some cases English first language Aboriginal educators, schooling them in the whole trade.

At the moment "Cool Aid" is a large sale item. Both 'Food Zoo' Wild Raspberry powder cordial and sachets of Laga Kool-R's Raspberry flavour are being purchased in Nhulunbuy and Darwin. Yolŋu are buying the sachets for \$2 from Balanda traders, usually sold in a box of 10 for \$10, but being split by these Balanda traders for 'Yolŋu only customers' at \$2 a sachet. Yolŋu are then taking them into communities and homelands and selling them for \$4 each. This trade is not seen as a Balanda type business and falls more into the drug trade style of business, more like the traditional trade where there is a large market for their goods and it is cash on the spot.

Note: This product is eaten straight from the packet like a sherbet, giving Yolŋu real sugar highs. The local dentist tells us that he is pulling many baby teeth since the trade started about six months ago. The cost to Government down the line from this trade will be tens of millions of dollars; dental costs, diabetes, renal failure, heart failure, and the list goes on. Just like the drug trade above.

However as a business example: Yolŋu would have trouble getting "Cool Aid" direct without buying it from Balanda traders, as they have no knowledge of how the system works further back down the supply train to the manufacturer. Secondly they do not know how to get the required food selling licence or even that it is required.

Option 2 is what the future holds unless Yolŋu can get access to real information they can understand and culturally appropriate support so they can move into real, legal, healthy businesses.

Option 3.

The third option is for Yolŋu to "get back into real businesses". That is, for Yolŋu to get into legal businesses that create real jobs and that use the massive resources that exist on their estates. This will drive the need for education and training and will bring them back into the mainstream business world and give a real future to them and their people. Many Yolŋu will also return to their communities from places like Darwin because they now know that real wealth can come from developing their own resources and services and trading them.

Sadly this is the hardest option. First they will have to come through the confusion that is holding them back. We need to undo 80 years of incorrect information and conclusions they have come to. To do this they need to learn how the real economic and business world operates. Then they need to know



what type of things the market out there is looking for. After that they need to learn the steps required to work through setting up a business and keeping it running.

At first it will be much more economically rational and probably easier if their businesses are selling to the outside world (a basic economics principle involving the economic wellbeing of a community or society) and also due to the issues mentioned above; where people are having trouble selling products or even services to their own people. This will remain difficult until the whole Yolŋu community comes to a new understanding about where wealth comes from or how it is generated. They also need to see that government is dependent on the production of the people and not the other way around. This means they need access to a lot of information and need to have a lot of conversation where they can be intellectually convinced of the real situation in the contemporary world.

In short they have to return to how they did business in the past. But now business is very different from when they traded traditionally. Many Yolŋu who do start working through the economic issues with us say, "Why does the government make it so hard we just want to get into trading or running a business".

This is little different from anyone getting into something new; except that for Yolŋu, much of the information they need access to is in English. For them to understand it well they will need to be worked through this information in their own language, Yolŋu Matha. They'll then also learn much of the English used around running a business. But first they need to know that their traditional culture had it right and that the Balanda were wrong in telling them to forget traditional business.

As we have stated above it is no good just getting one or two Yolŋu up to speed in the belief that others will then follow their lead. The truth is, while others remain confused they will bring down or at least hold back any developing legal businesses.

Option 3 is really the only way forward, where Yolŋu people need to "get back to business" as it was before.



PART III:

WHAT IS NEEDED TO LET YOLŪ BACK INTO BUSINESS

As we can see from above there are a number of things that need to be addressed to let YolŪ back into business. Despite this we know that when the right training and culturally appropriate support structures are in place then YolŪ get very excited about getting into business; the four-year AHED project has shown us this. At present we have more YolŪ asking us for help to get into business than we can possibly cope with, given current personnel, infrastructure and resource levels.

Yet the potential for business amongst the YolŪ of Arnhem Land is massive. Below is a list of over 40 industry ideas that could be up and running in many locations across Arnhem Land. Different businesses operating as sole traders or family units could be developed around these industries; potentially hundreds of businesses. The industry list has been compiled from historical experience and contemporary analysis along with many conversations with YolŪ over a number of years. We have also added ideas that have come to us from our own research and ideas sent to us by others. The list assumes growth in towns across the region.

If only a small number of the industries listed below came into play across many sites in northeast Arnhem Land the result will be massive with positive social and economic outcomes for the whole region. If not developed by YolŪ, then the future looks as bleak as the past has been or even worse, as I believe that Arnhem Land will hit the same level of despair that is evident in many other Aboriginal communities across Australia. This will create a multimillion-dollar drain on the economy for decades to come; not to mention the human suffering it will cause.

As to whether YolŪ can get into business or not; it will depend on the response that will come from government and private enterprise to this proposal. YolŪ have not found themselves in the position they are today by themselves and so it will be difficult for them to reverse their situation without special dominant-culture help. A good, targeted response will go a long way to see YolŪ running businesses and creating their own employment all over Arnhem Land.



INDUSTRY IDEAS FOR ARNHEM LAND

Each of the items listed below has a much bigger story behind them that is not recorded here.

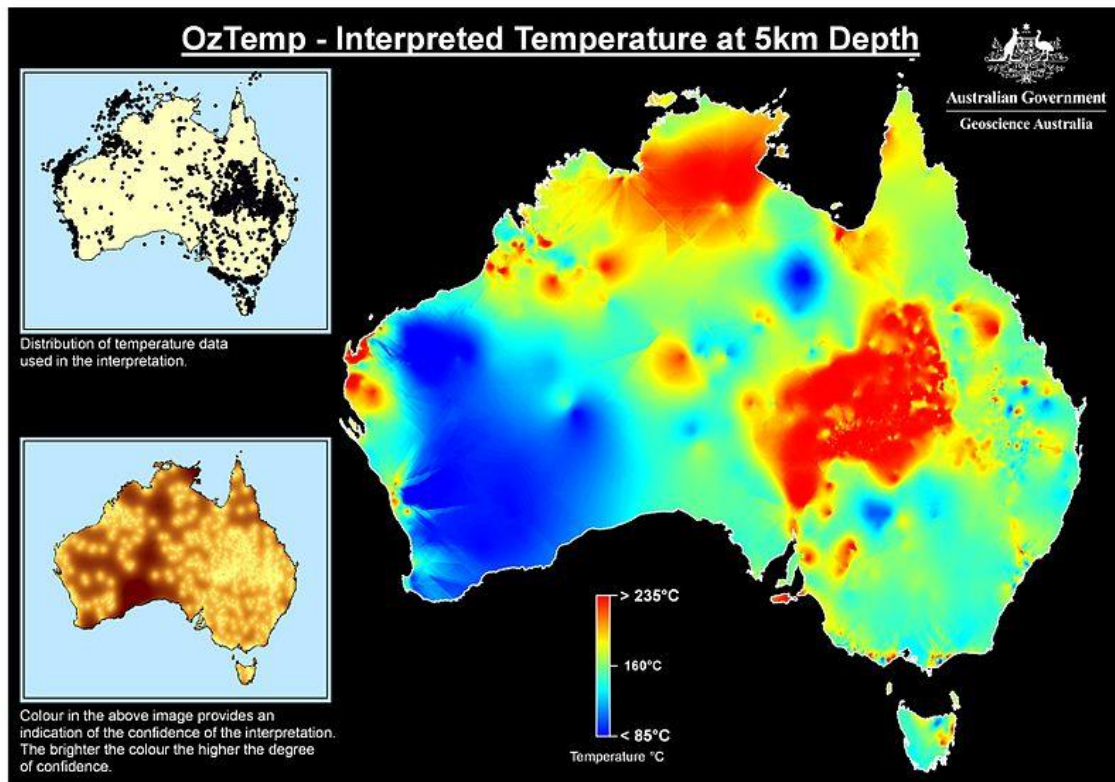
- [Natural](#) salt water [pearls](#), 300 million dollar industry and growing fast.
- Mud crabs, lobster, barramundi, sea fish, sea sponges
- [Oyster production](#)
- [Clams](#) could be a large burgeoning industry for both clam meat or the small blue crams for aquariums. Being researched and developed in Darwin at the moment ready to transport juveniles to locations along the Arnhem land coast. Worth \$200 each.
- Trepan fishing and curing, some species are now selling in Chinese markets for up to [US\\$2,950 a kilogram](#)
- Turtle conservation. Total numbers are dropping issues being drift nets ect, biggest issue is that Yolngu have stopped protecting and producing Turtle nests. Massive industry waiting to be born getting Yolngu back into conserving and producing turtle's.
- Free-range crocodile skins and development of a free-range croc skin market. Includes croc eggs collection. Croc oil distilled from the fat is \$200 per litre, 600 to 800 grams of fat on each animal. Fat is then distilled.
- Cypress pine - regenerating supply; timber for craft market (Golden Timber), weatherboarding, floor and wall timber. Veneer panelling with CLT below.
- [Kakadu Blue oil](#) distilled from residue cypress pine milling leftovers.
- Stringy bark - regenerating supply; timber for building, hardwood flooring blanks. Window frames and stairwells for Asia and national distribution. Cross-laminated timber, or [CLT hardwood panelling](#). [Wood Pellets](#), Professional clapsticks.
- Iron wood blanks for guitar fret boards. (international supply is gone and now looking at Arnhem Land). Small timber used for professional clap sticks.



- Bottled spring water, pure fresh water from special springs in Arnhem Land. 600 million dollar industry in Australia and growing.
- Paintings/weavings/craft expanded.
- Boutique modern crafts, including clothing and interior decoration.
- Carbon abatement under international carbon trading, cold burning/fire management; every estate across Arnhem Land.
- Fresh food, commercial gardens on communities and home lands.
- Cattle using existing wild herds.
- Chicken farms for regional production.
- Specialty wild meats caught sustainably (requiring legislative change or clarification of the interpretation of Indigenous right to wildlife use).
- Tropical nurseries, including cultivation of unique tropical species (climate change likely to increase demand for tropical decorative plants).
- Landscaping, tree lopping and garden maintenance.
- Develop non-diabetic, super-food fruits for healthy food market, sour fruits (traditional fruits) market.
- House construction and trades.
- Tyre fitting, and mechanical repairs.
- White goods and household appliance repairs.
- Regional IT services.
- [Buffalo exporting. Plus.](#) Buffalo trophy shooters for large bullhorns. Add-on wild pigs to the hunt.
- Cultural tourism.
- Eco and nature retreats.



- Traditional Law tourism.
- Tarpon fish tourism.
- Regional passenger transport solutions, including land and water transport.
- Traditional music (cultural education, videos in English).
- Contemporary traditional music, which has massive potential.
- Traditional rjathu bread or just produce the flour so chefs can produce their own products.
- Other traditional foods and herbal medicines.
- Stone spearhead production for sale as craft item.
- Native bee honey production. Native bee crop pollination.
- Clothing and retail shops.
- Mining, with genuine Yolŋu ownership and participation, across a number of potential minerals.
- Solar and wind power generation.
- Geothermal power from the hot [rocks](#) under Arnhem Land.



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Oztemp Interpreted Temperature at 5km Depth full.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Oztemp_Interpreted_Temperature_at_5km_Depth_full.jpg)
<http://www.brrmedia.com/event/113165/partner/theaustralian> Why Warriors P/L
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LEVELLING OUT THE PLAYING FIELD - SUMMARY

For Yolŋu to get into business they need targeted information and knowledge programs. These will include:

- 1 *YOLŊU MISSING OUT ON BASIC INFORMATION*
Solution 1. Create current affairs and news programs

- 2 *CONFUSION ABOUT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT*
Solution 2. Provide economic literacy for all Yolŋu
Solution 3. Teach economic English on Yolŋu Radio

- 3 *SINK OR SWIM IN AN ENGLISH SPEAKING WORLD*
Solution 4. Deploy formal English learning programs
Solution 5. Interactive eLearning English program

UN-STACKING THE CARDS AGAINST THEM

We also need to understand and dismantle the cards that Yolŋu find stacked against them. So they will need;

- 1 *CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE BUSINESS SUPPORT*
 - **Enterprise facilitators**
 - **Entrepreneur apprenticeship model**
 - **Culturally friendly accounting service**
 - **Marketing Expert**
 - **Other Why Warriors personnel needs**
 - **Infrastructure needs**



LEVELLING OUT THE PLAYING FIELD

Current employment programs are working for Aboriginal people who are English first language but are not working for many other Aboriginal people such as Yolŋu who speak English as a fifth or sixth language. Due to the language difference, training and information services fail to deliver. So they miss out on getting and holding jobs due to massive confusion around all the issues related to employment. And it is the same when we look at Yolŋu starting up a business. Information is power, but if you cannot access the information you are powerless to know where to start and what to do.

To create a level playing field, Yolŋu will need special information and language services in their own language. This would give them the access to information and knowledge in relation to getting into and staying in business equal to the information and knowledge the mainstream Australian community has through services in English.

1 YOLŊU MISSING OUT ON BASIC INFORMATION

Yolŋu are still missing out on contemporary mainstream information as most media they have access to is in English and they just cannot understand it. New research is done, ideas come to light, new laws are put in place, and the people have little or no knowledge of them. Even policy change and things that affect them are discussed without them being in the loop. Lack of information is devastating the people at every turn. People are missing out on the current conversations. Everything from economic development in the north of Australia, through to schooling and constitutional change or alcohol foetal [syndrome](#); they have little or no knowledge about.

Answer: There is a simple answer to this. Give Yolŋu access to quality information in their own language.

Solution 1. Create current affairs and news programs

Create current affairs and news programs in their language that can be played over the existing extensive [Yolŋu Radio](#) (YR) [network](#) and [online](#). Subjects covered would include economics, law/governance, health issues, plus other issues that the people want information about.

See a small sample of programs already [produced](#).

Also please see the urgent [Phone Scam](#) (not available March 17) radio program production job I was able to do with the help of a local NGO over Christmas 2013. With their help we were able



to produce 14 radio programs and give people the warning and information they needed to protect their bank accounts.

Needs: A supporter/s that will find us the money so we can cover the costs to produce and play these programs on air.

The programs will be produced by Richard Trudgen and Yolŋu co-producer.

2 CONFUSION ABOUT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Yolŋu are now very confused about employment and business issues. Most Yolŋu people could currently be classed as being economically illiterate. They need access to a good economic literacy program in their own language. Their language is more than capable of delivering the most modern economic concepts and information and can be used to quickly teach them the English economic terms and concepts. See Appendix I below.

Solution 2. Provide economic literacy for all Yolŋu

Produce radio programs that work through the development of current and historical issues in regards to economic literacy for broadcast on Yolŋu Radio and the web, and to share with other education initiatives like the [Hitnet Community Hub](#) kiosks.

This education needs to go out to the whole Yolŋu community so they will all pull together and support the business operators.

I repeat here. Many other economic development projects fail in Aboriginal communities because one Aboriginal person learns what is needed to run a business and gets it up and going but their family members do not understand business needs. So they put unnecessary, unfair pressure on the business operators. To overcome this support issue, economic literacy needs to be taught to the whole cultural group.

Solution 3. Teach economic English on Yolŋu Radio.

While developing the economic literacy programs in 2 above, also pay attention to teaching the economic English terms needed to operate in the workplace or in business. This could also go towards creating an online audio dictionary for Yolŋu adults, professionals and students to access.

Needs: Need money to produce and play economic literacy programs and economic programs over Yolŋu Radio.



Richard Trudgen and Yolŋu co-producer will produce the programs. We find no problems developing radio programs that speak of the economic issues that Yolŋu want access to.

3 *SINK OR SWIM IN AN ENGLISH SPEAKING WORLD*

On top of providing teaching of economic English terms and concepts as above in solution 3, Yolŋu also need to access English learning programs that are delivered to the whole Yolŋu population. These programs need to be constructed English learning programs where all the instructions of what they are learning are in Yolŋu Matha.

Some people say that Aboriginal people need to be forced to learn English. In most cases you cannot force people to learn another language. Forced language learning, like immersion, only occurs where one person by himself or herself, has to learn another language to survive. It will never work for whole groups of people where they continue to speak their 'heart language' every day. To learn a new language effectively and efficiently people need access to well-constructed formal language learning programs where the instructions are in their own language. This is why so many Aboriginal people across Australia now speak an Aboriginal-English. They have never had the opportunity to learn real mainstream English through access to formally developed programs.

Many people also think that schools will teach Yolŋu children English. But it is the same as the situation above; Yolŋu are not learning anything from school because they cannot understand the subject material and they are experiencing an extremely ineffective form of English learning.



In the illustration above the children are being spoken at, but they are talking to each other in their own language. So they will learn very little of the language the teacher is using, no matter how dedicated the teacher might be.



This is the same for Yolŋu children. They will be communicating to each other in Yolŋu Matha while the teacher speaks in the foreign language, English. If they are told not to speak their own language in class then they will use sign language to communicate with each other. In fact, across Australia where Aboriginal people once used sign language in public as a public language, it is now used in many places as a secret language and it is even called that by them. This is because it was the only way many Aboriginal people learnt to survive when they were forced by English speaking Australians not to use their own language.

So the children in the class above will not learn the language of the teacher unless they are offered a constructed English learning program that has instructions in Yolŋu Matha. Some will say that some schools provide English as a Second Language instruction ESL. However ESL is not good enough because the instruction needs to be in Yolŋu Matha so that the student can understand what it is that they are supposed to be learning. ESL in most cases puts the burden back on the student, where they have to struggle so much harder than if the student had access to a formal English learning course where all the instructions are in Yolŋu Matha.

It would be the same as if someone was trying to study something and simultaneously learn Yolŋu Matha with all the instruction in Yolŋu Matha. Even if the teachers were trained in YMSL (Yolŋu Matha Second Language), most people would struggle to learn anything and just give up. On top of this even ESL support is being removed from some NT schools in 2014.

Answer: Give the whole Yolŋu community access to formally constructed English learning materials. This can happen in two different ways.

Solution 4. Deploy formal English learning programs (on Radio)

The first way to do this is to produce constructed English programs that can be delivered through Yolŋu Radio.

Fiji and other countries around the world have done this for decades. Radio Australia also delivers English learning lessons in Burmese, Chinese, Indonesian, Khmer and Vietnamese but no such programs are available for any group (different language groups) of Aboriginal people in Australia.

These programs could also be made available on the Internet once the audio programs have been developed for radio, so Yolŋu or teachers could access them on demand for Yolŋu students.

Solution 5. Interactive eLearning English program.

Secondly, create an online interactive eLearning program where Yolŋu children and adults can learn how to read and write Yolŋu Matha and English online. Maths could



also be taught on this same platform. These are two essential skills for Yolngu to get back into business.

This program will bridge the gap in learning for all Yolngu people. It would allow Yolngu to overcome the very poor learning outcomes they are presently experiencing out of the mainstream education system.

Due to the fact that all the instructions and learning are in Yolngu Matha and English, it will even allow illiterate Yolngu to self-learn and catch up and go past their grade level reading, writing and maths skills.

Where the idea came from

We have been working on this eLearning program for over 7 years whenever we could get some small support for it. The idea originally came from an elder who wanted to learn maths. He could already read and write English well but just did not understand maths at all and found that he was getting caught out all the time when he did business with Balanda. So he was desperate to learn maths. I said to him, why don't you go to the local school and see if you can get a teacher to teach you. He said he had tried that and they had treated him like he was an idiot because he had trouble understanding some of the maths concepts. He then said we need a learning program like Yolngu Radio where we can understand what is being said. So I thought why not build an online eLearning experience that will work in their language, teach them to read and write their own language and English at the same time, plus teach maths so they are ready for employment and getting into business.

The first trial stage of this eLearning site has been created. To experience what is possible please go to <http://www.whywarriors.com.au/projects/yolngu-online-school/> or

When you [visit the site](#), open up one of the modules and put your cursor over the top of the words. If you have the sound enabled on your computer, you will hear the sounds of the words and the syllables in both Yolngu Matha and English.

Other English learning content can also be added to this same learning platform. For example, when developing the eLearning school portal above we also produced the first 100 simplest English words. There are 500 such words in this category that could be developed straight away. Please see module [No 4](#) in our eLearning portal.

In the same way open up one of the modules and put your cursor over the red number, word and then script box. If you have the sound enabled on your computer, you will hear the number, the sound of the word and then hear each sentence read to you. When we were producing this we realised that the



Yolŋu kids were also repeating the numbers. So unintentionally we were also giving them an exercise to help them learn to count.

Once the material in this program is developed it has a long life span and the same material can be accessed by thousands of people at will. As this resource is online individuals can self-learn whenever they have a chance, at their own pace and with no prior English language knowledge.

When we trialled this module we got very favourable results and learnt some pitfalls that will be edited out of the next level if we can get financial support for its development. Many Yolŋu parents thought that it was fantastic. Please see this video of their thoughts <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAKMuHZiP38>

Some of the things that Yolŋu parents raised in the video are in line to be built into the next version. Sadly though, because of lack of funding, we have not been able to deliver on their desire to build a full eLearning teaching program.

BIG DIFFERENCE IN FIVE YEARS

If we had the support to develop the above programs within five years many Yolŋu people would find it much easier taking simple English instruction in schools, at work, in medical and legal situations and in general interaction with the dominant-culture.

This would lead to less abuse experienced by Yolŋu people in these situations. Conflict levels would drop and the people would be much freer and more confident to interact with mainstream Australian society; further increasing their English language learning skills. When I ask Yolŋu teenagers around Nhulunbuy what they would like to learn on Yolŋu radio, at the top of the list is learning English. Many say they are very embarrassed about their English ability and therefore stay away from where they might need to use it. So they also stop learning.

When I am producing other programs for Yolŋu Radio I have always tried to develop programs for difficult English words, on the side, because I know there is such a high demand for understanding hard English words amongst Yolŋu listeners. This should be a central program that government pays for.

Needs: With the money in hand Why Warriors is ready to develop the program in conjunction with Radio Australia (using their material and adapting it) or someone else who has already produced an English learning program. We would organise the Yolŋu Matha instructions for the lessons.

Plus with the money we could continue to develop the eLearning platform.



UN-STACKING THE CARDS AGAINST THEM

CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE BUSINESS SUPPORT

It might be difficult for many English first language speakers to realize just how hard it is for Yolŋu to get a business idea up and going. Our experience has allowed us to see firsthand the frustration and blockages the people experience.

We knew from our other work with Yolŋu that there would be many extra cross-cultural and language issue we would have to work through with our Yolŋu clients that other dominant culture Australians establishing a business would not have issues with. On top of this we also knew that up to 90% of businesses that get established each year in mainstream Australia fail within the first year. With this in mind we need to establish culturally appropriate business support along with good business management models and practices otherwise we would not be able to get any sustainable businesses running in Yolŋu communities.

Culturally appropriate training material and experience

We already knew how to work in a way that would deal with the cultural and language issues that is a strong part of our corporate knowledge and practice. To this end we have, and are still developing, training materials and expertise to train others in this area.

Good business development model

For the business development model we started looking at the Ernesto [Sirolli](#) model used across the world to facilitate enterprise development. WW has a working relationship with the Sirolli Institute and Ernesto himself where he is using some of our cross-cultural communication knowledge in Africa and we have drawn on his expertise in business development.

The Sirolli model talks about the trinity of business. In that any business needs three key elements in the business model to be successful. One is the businessperson has an idea or a product or service that they want to sell to others. The businessperson should have some expertise in this area. This is their thing. Secondly the business will need marketing expertise. Thirdly the business will need good financial control and reporting.

These are the three basic functions that are necessary for any good business to succeed. Sadly most businesspeople are only good at one of these functions. Not many people are good at two of them and only a few rare individuals have the natural ability to cover the three areas.



THE AHED MODEL

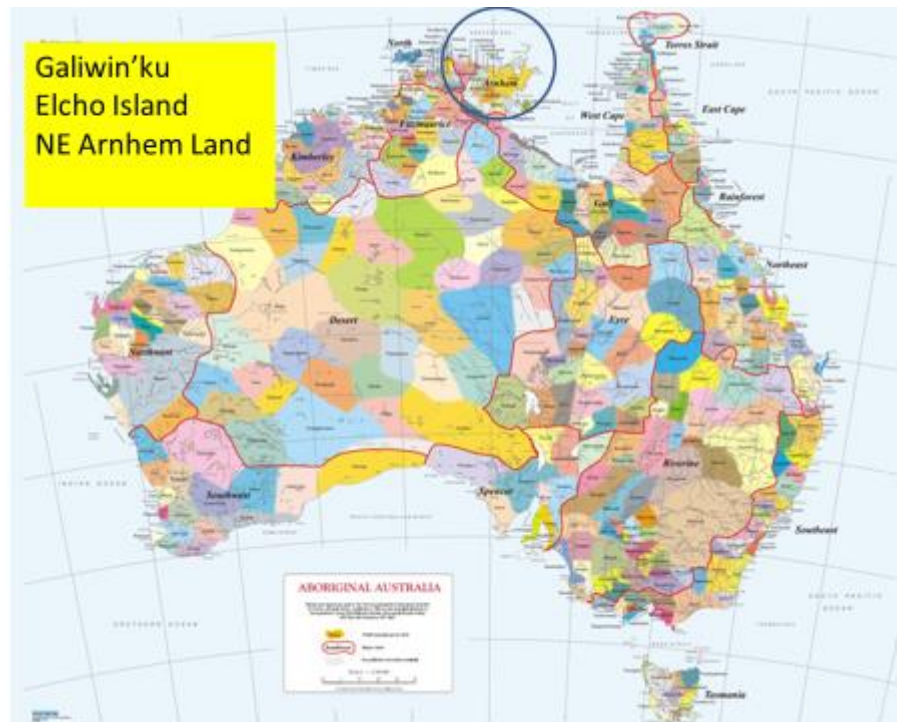
The AHED project model is a combination of the expertise that we bring through our corporate knowledge and experience around how to work in a culturally appropriate way and the Sirolli model and practice for sustainable business development.

What does this look like

We knew that Yolŋu people once traded both nationally and internationally. They have a complete economic language that can fully explain all the concepts of commercial business, trade and general economics. But the business world that now operates all around them has changed in a big way. It is not Aboriginal or Asian anymore but is a Western English system operating under an English legal structure. And the English that this system uses is almost totally foreign to them.

If Yolŋu people are going to get back into business and succeed they will need appropriate business support.

This is why our company [Why Warriors P/L](#) set up the Arnhem Human Enterprise Development ([AHED](#)) Project 4 years ago. The AHED team has operated at Galiwin'ku over this time.



Microsoft PowerPoint
Presentation

ENTERPRISE FACILITATORS

First we recruit and train dominant culture personnel to work alongside Yolŋu people to work with them through the different stages of developing a project. It is like an entrepreneur apprenticeship. We call these trained people [enterprise facilitators](#). These facilitators work with the client in a way where they do not take over the



project or let the Yolŋu entrepreneur become dependent. At all times the Yolŋu person must remain in full ownership and control of the business. Otherwise we walk away.

ENTREPRENEUR APPRENTICESHIP MODEL

Our service operates like an entrepreneur apprenticeship. Many Yolŋu have got ideas they want to develop into businesses but are not sure where to start or what is required for a modern business to operate.

Usually when they hear the requirements needed for the first time they become bewildered as everything they hear is in a language that is as good as foreign to them. It is the same in many ways if a dominant culture Australian tried to set up a business in the Middle East or China or some other foreign country. Without a cultural broker/translator it would be almost impossible to succeed.

Our team operates in this way, teaching them economics and business principles in their own language and English. The enterprise facilitator then mentors them as they put what they have learnt into practice. Plus helping them get through all the legal hoops and requirements they need to get started. Please see Appendix III below.

Learning on the job

The traditional learning model used by Yolŋu for many thousands of years is learning on the job. This method of teaching/learning also works best when communication is difficult due to different language and world-view issues. It places the learner in context with the topic that the teaching/instruction is occurring around. They can put into practice and consolidate what they are learning straight away.

Our facilitator team also speak their language, so the Yolŋu entrepreneur finds the whole process so much easier and they do not give up. In fact they get very excited.

In the first year of operation 30 different business ideas were presented to the facilitators in the AHED service without the facilitators' services being advertised.

Over the last 4 years AHED has provided services to 24 Indigenous clients/groups helping to establish economic enterprises (up to September 2013). Most of these clients are still in early phases of implementing their economic enterprise goals.

Current clients with economic enterprises under development:

- 2 operational sole traders (Business type: cultural and language consultants)
- 3 Enterprises in operation and receiving income (Business types: accommodation, social support services and education, market stall)



- 6 micro or sole trade enterprises being considered by local entrepreneurs (ie. boutique clothes, tyre fitting, mechanic, nursery, plant sales, retail sale of clothes)
- 1 small enterprise (taxi service)
- 1 agricultural cooperation seeking support to start commercial scale activity (2 farms including sewage reuse facility)
- 3 medium to large businesses in development towards start up (Business types: lease management and trade services, fishing and tourism).
- Portable sawmill purchased by WW and used to test the viability to supply broader NT market and replace overseas imports from local timbers.

Most of this material is taken from "Financial management solutions to incubate business development in North East Arnhem Land". See Appendix II below.

At our present level of services WW and the AHED team are not able to give the level of support to get all these businesses up and going and we are saying no to helping many other Yolŋu people.

More facilitators needed

For Yolŋu across the whole region to get back into business they need many more facilitators. At the moment we have two married couples on the ground at Galiwin'ku. They are all trained to do facilitation work and between them we have about one and a half positions on the ground with the other one and half in support roles. One of these facilitators also carries an admin/trainer roll, which takes him away for the full time facilitator roll.

To cover the region and have good business development happening we need;

- A. One more facilitator position at Galiwin'ku.
- B. Three in the Gove region
- C. Two for Gapuwiyak
- D. One at Ramingining
- E. One at Milingimbi

These facilitators would work in the main communities and in the homelands in their areas.

Currently Galiwin'ku is offering WW funding for another facilitator at Galiwin'ku, but the lack of accommodation is holding up the deployment of that position.



CULTURALLY FRIENDLY ACCOUNTING SERVICE.

However, the major obstacle of taking on more development projects at Galiwin'ku with existing facilitators is the lack of good culturally appropriate/friendly bookkeepers and accounting services.

As mentioned above a good financial control and information system is one of the key foundations of a successful business. If the accounting service is not available the enterprise facilitators get stuck sorting bookkeeping and accounting issues and not able to help new projects. We have tried everything to overcome this problem, including hiring accounting firms. However we have not yet found one that has the cross-cultural and cross-language skills to work with the Yolŋu entrepreneurs, and so again the enterprise facilitators spend too much of their time communicating between the two.

The other problem we have accounted is the negative attitude of some of the mainstream accounting services towards Yolŋu clients. They expect them to fail even when the accounting firm is not doing their job properly. Again our enterprise facilitators and volunteer bookkeepers have had to spend hours problem solving and recovering missing money that mainstream accounting officers have lost.

WW has also recruited and trained accountants and bookkeepers to fill some of these essential accounting roles for different Yolŋu businesses. Then our AHED facilitator team has continued to help smooth out the cross-cultural issues and communication problems that occur between these bookkeepers and accountants and the Yolŋu clients. Right now we need access to more culturally appropriate and friendly financial support to allow more Yolŋu business to come on line. Please see Appendix II.

Stopping more Yolŋu businesses from developing

The lack of bookkeeping and accounting support is holding up our development work at Galiwin'ku and is making it impossible for us to move into other communities.

The Accounting Service

We see this accounting service team consisting of a number of people, and that would grow as more and more businesses come on line. These will include a;

- A. Financial Manager – Business mentor/s
- B. Accountant/s
- C. Bookkeeper/s
- D. Office support staff
- E. Marketing Expert
- F. WW Manager

***Special training needs for the Accounting Service Team***

The people recruited into this team will need to come with the mainstream qualifications to do the job required by Australian standards. However WW will have to train these personnel so they can speak some of the Yolŋu Matha language, especially the economic and legal Yolŋu Matha. They will also need to learn Yolŋu worldview and history and be trained in cross-cultural communication and be bi-cultural in their manner and experience.

A. Financial Manager – Business mentor

The financial manager – business mentor: This person will play a central role in working with and training the Yolŋu entrepreneur/s around their accounts and budgeting, business planning and problem solving. This involves carrying out the role as a mentor and not running the business but working alongside the business owners. This person could be based in Gove, as there is a lack of accommodation at Galiwin'ku. If so they would need a travel budget.

The service would start with one person in this position and would recruit others, as they are required.

Due to the cultural and language training required, this person and the others will have to work through the establishment stage of this position. Consequently there will be extra lead-time getting them started.

B. Accountant/s

The main role of the accountant will be ensuring the accounts for each business are set up and kept up to date. They will also be responsible for doing the BAS and financial returns and getting the books ready for auditing. In some cases they may do the audits for the business. This will be needed until some of the businesspeople are trained to do their own accounts. However most will want a continued outsourcing support in this area just as most mainstream businesses do.

The accountant will need to have a good on-phone relationship with the Yolŋu client.

C. Bookkeeper/s

The bookkeeper role would be one of basic data entry. However due to the nature of the job in working with Yolŋu, who are still learning the technology that will be used to scan and send documents, there will need to be a close relationship between the business person and the bookkeeper as well.

D. Office support staff

The above mentioned staff will need an office support receptionist due to the ongoing training required and all the other extra conversation they will need to have with their Yolŋu clients. This person will also need training to be able to communicate well with Yolŋu on the phone.



MARKETING EXPERT

The third expertise that is needed is a marketing expert. For example any product that was produced for outside sale would need marketing expertise. We can give many examples of this if needed. This could be a person on site or a firm that is contracted to look at the marketing needs of some of the Yolngu businesses or the regional marketing needs.

OTHER WW PERSONNEL NEEDS

WW Manager

WW is hoping to recruit a manager for its own operations as well as the AHED project. It is hoped that this person would spend the first part of their time on the ground in Galiwin'ku so they would get some real hands on knowledge of the sort of issues that the company deals with on the ground when working with Yolngu clients. It is then anticipated that the person would join the team in Nhulunbuy and manage the operations from there.

INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

WW has the corporate knowledge and skill in how to work with Yolngu. The two principal directors of WW, Richard Trudgen and Timothy Trudgen, have worked in Arnhem Land for 33 and 13 years respectively. However WW has turned much of its profits back into the AHED project, which is a non-profit function. Due to this WW has not built the infrastructure or capital needed to expand this service.

Our top infrastructure priority to advance business development for Yolngu in the near future is to meet the housing and office needs at Galiwin'ku (see below) and then advance the roll out to other communities as funding becomes available.

Office in Nhulunbuy

At the moment WW has a small office in Galiwin'ku and a home office in Nhulunbuy. For this service to work we will need access to office space for up to 12-16 people in Nhulunbuy. This would also give space for some Yolngu trainees to be taken on.

The Nhulunbuy office space would be suitable for the WW manager, financial manager-mentor, accountant, bookkeeper, receptionist, 3 facilitators, 3 out of town facilitators or Yolngu business owner (visiting/training), trainer Richard Trudgen, and space for Yolngu trainees (approx 4). A maximum total of 16 staff.

Office equipment

WW also has no office equipment or capital to buy the office equipment for this service. Office equipment will be needed in the Nhulunbuy office, at Gapuwiyak, Ramingining and Milingimbi. This will include phone and computer equipment.

**Software**

Software will be needed to run the service. That will include accounting and other cloud based software or access licences.

Housing needs

Galiwin'ku. WW has one two-bedroom house and a single-bedroom demountable for accommodation at Galiwin'ku, with no office building. To get full capacity out of the team at Galiwin'ku we need capital to build two more houses and an office. We already have leases in hand for this development.

Note: The community is offering us money for another facilitator at Galiwin'ku but we have no accommodation to put that person in.

Nhulunbuy. In Nhulunbuy WW has access to one private house. We will need 9 more houses for the Nhulunbuy office staff and for our out of town facilitators when in town training and one PA position for trainer.

Gapuwiyak. Will need two houses and office space.

Ramingining. Will need one house with office space.

Milingimbi. Will need one house with office space.

All the above will need furniture.

CONCLUSION

We need to get Yolŋu back into business otherwise the future for them looks bleak. If this project were fully supported it could change the whole future not only for Yolŋu but for all who live and work in northeast Arnhem Land by boosting the region's economy in a long term sustainable way. This type of development would also bring positive social outcomes for the NT and bring good international PR result for the NT and Australian government and other companies that support it. It could also deliver a model and way of working with many other Aboriginal people throughout Australia that also struggle in this area.

There are no losers in this and the Nhulunbuy economy would be a big winner.

Richard Trudgen for Why Warriors P/L © March 2014, additions June14



APPENDIX I

YOLŪU MATHA ECONOMIC WORD LIST:

The following is a list of some Gupapuyŷu and Djambarrpuyŷu words that are used in the traditional economic system in Central to North East Arnhem Land by Matha speakers (Aboriginal language of Central to North East Arnhem Land). *This is my incomplete working economic word list and so should be treated as a draft document.*

Notes on word list

In the following word list the corresponding translations/descriptions occurring outside the bracketed quotes, are my translations and are the closest full meaning of the word or phrase that I could determine from the economic and legal sense.

Example; bāka-manyamak (*bāka: tail, lower leg; manyamak: good 1.*) A term used to describe a person with a good credit rating. If you know a person who will always repay his/her debt, then they are said to be bāka-manyamak Yolŷu.

Neither do they suggest that a particular word or term in Yolŷu Matha is precisely the same as a particular English word or phrase. Rather, I am saying as in all languages the moment you move from tangible words/terms where a term in one language usually means exactly the same in another language juxtaposed to the tangible object it is applied against, cognitive effective words or non-tangible terms can never completely be the same as they are influenced by so many intangible factors including world-view, history, semantic source and syntax. At times these meaning also changes in relation to the context they are used in.

Also over time these words or term can take on new meaning and use. The meanings I have applied here are the meanings that were given to me by the original group of elders I worked with. I have refrained from applying the meaning sometimes given today to these same terms as the contemporary use of them is many times being applied by Yolŷu who are economically illiterate and so the terms are becoming shrouded in mystery as to their real meaning. (I will speak about this somewhere)

As I have also mentioned that my original source of these economic terms was Donald Thomson. For interest I will also try to record his original spelling of the words and his meaning.

So the meaning I have applied to a particular words or concepts are similar to English words or concepts and my explanations seek to document in English the semantic envelope or word pictures that are brought to mind of senior Yolŷu men and women



when that word was used. Many younger and even middle Yolŋu people, especially Western Educated Yolŋu these days do not know their economic and legal terms or what is called the gurraray matha academic language. See below in relation to this subject.

So when I was learning the economic language I always relied on the meaning given to me by my original teacher.

The words and concepts recorded here are not my own, but have come from the people. Therefore there may well be word pictures brought to mind by particular words, which I - as a first language English speaker and a dominant culture world-view - am not aware of at this stage of dialogue. So the definitions may well be expanded at some later date.

It must be said that all translators, whether professionals or semi-professionals (like myself), have a degree of cultural tunnel vision. To overcome cultural tunnel vision I would get people to give me examples of how the word, term or phrase was used in different situations. This was so the semantic envelope or meaning developed in my understanding by seeing it from many different angles and applications.

When this happens I will ask still more questions of the particular speaker in how the term was used to clarify their particular understanding on the word, term or phrase as it was used. Until I hear again and again in dialogue the picture the Yolŋu speaker has in their mind. As part of the process I will also make suggestion as to how I now see this word, term or phrase being use in example that I then construct for my semantic understanding.

When I am sure that I have a clear understanding I will then check this understanding with a number of other elders as to their understanding of the term¹¹. The meaning I have recorded here is the meaning as understood by a number of different Yolŋu colleagues. This way I know/knew that the same meaning has a wide accepted application across north-east Arnhem Land. Only after through continual dialogue and re-checking in a great variety of experiences, can I be sure what a particular word means to a particular group of people.

Therefore in my attempts to translate words and concepts, I believe that I never have the right to say emphatically that I have identified its entire meaning. But at the same time I have a responsibility to do my best in dialogue to take the semantic envelope as it presents itself and match it together with the English words that create the same semantic envelope with any variations that may exist.

If my translation differs from that of other translators, this may be due to a number of factors including culture, experience, language knowledge, focus, cultural barriers

¹¹ Never do I betray who might of given me different versions of the complete



and many more. I am not saying that other translations are wrong - I have no right to say that. However I am prepared to say that until I am convinced otherwise by Yolŋu Matha speakers I feel the translations recorded here are accurate. It is a good thing to remember that in any language, even English or especially English, many words can have a great variety of meanings depending on their particular context it is the same in Yolŋu Matha.

Some Yolŋu Matha (*Aboriginal people's language of Central to North East Arnhem Land*) words can have more than one meaning, the hearer understanding the meaning according to the spoken context just like English.

In the following, where the meaning of the word is bracketed thus (----- 1) these meanings have been taken from the 'Temporary Gupapuyŋu Dictionary' by Beulah Lowe 1960. The understanding that has been conveyed to me by the people will follow unbracketed. The words listed on the left side of the page are of the Djambarrpuyŋu dialect. These words possess the same root words as the Gupapuyŋu dialect and in many cases are identical or differ only by the last letter or two of the suffix. The translations noted by '1', although originally applied to Gupapuyŋu words, have been taken below as equally applicable to the equivalent Djambarrpuyŋu words in these cases.

Where I am still not totally convinced of the meaning of a word, the meaning will be followed by 'mg?'. Where I have not been able to have the spelling checked by a satisfactory independent source and I am still not sure of it, the word will be followed by 'sp?'.

Where it is beyond any doubt that one of Lowe's translated meanings are totally irrelevant to economic concepts and terms, then only the more relevant translated terms are quoted from Lowe's translations. For example In relation to the term

manda-gumurr (*manda: they two; gumurr: chest 1.*) the word 'gumurr' is translated by Lowe with two meanings; (1) *chest*; (2) *shore*.

The writer does not disagree with the second meaning; however it does not appear in the quoted translation in this paper because it is irrelevant to the economic concept. In fact it could confuse the reader if they did not know that Yolŋu use the names of different body part to name the different features of the land like buku (face) is the name of a cliff face. Therefore in the example above I will only use the meaning for 'chest' that is relevant in the economic context. In this context gumurr manda or manda gumurr refers to two trading partners.

manda-gumurr (*manda: they two; gumurr: chest 1.*)
Two people who are in a trading relationship, literally meaning the two traders stand in an equal chest to chest relationship with each other. This relationship exists between any two people who have



a close trading relationship with each other; they are called, manda-gumurr or gumurr-manda.

In all other instances, the full translation is quoted from Lowe's dictionary including where they differ to my translation.

ECONOMIC WORD LIST

bäka-bakmaram (*pay back, take revenge 1.*) To repay something that is owed; Reciprocate payment in terms of trading (*yaŋra-bakmaram* is the term used at Galiwin'ku, with the same meaning). It is also used in to take revenge, to equal a wrong.

The term "payback" present a problem here as in contemporary Aboriginal culture it is seen as the way Yolŋu and other Aboriginal people resolved their disputes between themselves. This is not the way according to traditional law and the use the term *bäyarra'* below to reconcile the law when the Law has been broken.

bäka-manymak (*bäka: tail, lower leg; manymak: good 1.*) A term used to describe a person with a good credit rating. If you know a person who will always repay his/her debt, then they are said to be *bäka-manymak* Yolŋu.

bäkamirr (*bäka: tail, lower leg 1.*) (*-mirr: indicates possessive*) A term used with a product of trade or money that indicates it must be repaid.

bakurra (*robber 1.*)

bäki (*use, try out, borrow 1.*)

bakthun (*break, get hurt 1.*) usually means to break something, but when used in an economic sense it means to be without credit or in debt. Same as common English understanding of being 'broke'. Narra bakthun, I am broke.

balanydja A payment for goods or service rendered under contract. The payment received at the completion of a contract is called 'balanydja'.

ba!yun (*beg, cadge 1.*) Beg, cadge. Begging and cadging was seen in a very negative way thirty years ago. No respectable Yolŋu would



beg for help and money. They would always bäki borrow food and money and repay it as soon as possible. See note below.

bäpurru

(*clan group 1.*) *bäpurru*; A group of people incorporated by birth and ceremonial process. This group is based around the paternal line, that is, the father's people and his children. *Bäpurru* and the legal status of the *bäpurru* provide the clan group with many legal rights and responsibilities. It is the *bäpurru* that owns the surface land and water resources of a particular estate.

bäyarra'

(*pay, pay back, take vengeance 1.*) To repay debt you owe someone or another clan in a legal sense not a commercial trade sense, to pay a debt to society for an act of lawlessness, to reconcile the law. When used in past tense it means the person has paid his/her debt to society, the law is satisfied, their misdemeanour or lawlessness is forgiven and forgotten. **'bili' naji bäyarra'??** : he/she has repaid their debt to society and is reconciled and forgiven. The term *bäyarra'* can only be used when a sanction is applied through a legal process not as an act of revenge outside a legal process as in *bäka bakmaram* above.

Here I take a different position to Lowe above. however my understanding of this term has come out of thousands of hours in conversation with Yolŋu elders male and female around legal issues as we work to reconcile practical legal problems as they happened in communities in the court and between the police over the last thirty years.

bäythinyawuy

The 'profit' or 'left-over's'. *Bäythinyawuy* is what is left over after you have shared out the food you have gained through a day's labour to all those to whom you are responsible to make payments of *balanydja* (payment under a contract) of food or as *bäka-bakmaram* (repay someone).

In a company the *bäythinyawuy* is the profit after you have payed all your *rakuny* (debts) in relation to doing that particular *djugu* (contract). It also takes on the same meaning of profit after tax. Yolŋu also had a tax collection system. See ?? below

buku-djugu'

(*buku: forehead 1. djugu': contract*) A verbal contract. It needs to be noted though that a verbal contract is held as a highly enforceable contract under the *Maḏayin Law*. This is because an agreement given to someone while standing in a face to face relationship, for Yolŋu holds much stronger force at law than what is written on a piece of signed paper. This is because are working



from the position that a person's spoken word is held as truly honourable.

buku-djuḷkmaram (exchange 1.) To trade. Other words used for trade in East Arnhem Land are 'buku-bäyarra' and 'buku-rommarama' (Gupapuyŋu). This is the term used for trade between two bāpurru (clans) through a buku-djugu' (verbal contract). Yolŋu

buku-djuḷkthun (*buku: forehead, face; djulḷkthun: go on, go ahead, go first, pass by 1.*) To do something with the aim of restoring credit.

For example; if the owner of a gārul (*place where yams grow*) was to catch an outsider stealing yams from his gārul, then the owner might suggest that the only thing that the thief can do is to 'buku-djuḷkthun', to make a payment, to restore the lost credit due to the act of stealing someone's property. In this way the thief can be bāyarra' (reconciled) according to the law and not be märrmiriw (in debt).

Bulpu

Is a dhulmar mulka batji the dilly bag that help the string with white feather on it. Dhulmar mulka batji are like the title deeds of a particular Yirralka estate. Carried at special times like a flag of a nation in ceremonial times or times of trouble. If money is put in it, it become Yäkumirr (Literally; with name) when an object becomes Yäkumirr it becomes very preshurus article owned by one group of people.

Burpu'

the name of a vine that grows up around other trees and strangles them. Has a sap that burns. It other meaning is wicked and deceitful. A person who comes over very well but can be very deceitful, the qualities a person who deceives or misleads others, typically on a habitual basis. Burpu', yalmirri and dhukabadi same meaning.

dhäkay- ŋäma

(*feel - sorrow, sick, touch 1.*) In an economic sense the term means for the receiver of a gift to recognise the good intent of the giver, intent, which places the giver in credit and the receiver in debt. The dept

dhapinya

(*generous 1.*) Generous.

Dhapinya ŋayi yurru nhudup-mirri sp?? Generous with the intent to deceive



- dharrpal** (*taboo, sacred 1.*) Sacred and priceless; 'couldn't buy it for many millions of dollars'. Can also be used to hold onto something in a greedy way. If someone else uses the term against you by calling something you have dharrpal, the word is not given its real meaning, but used more as a 'sling-off' to say you are making it dharrpal so no one else can touch it.
- dhäruk waṭaṅu** (*dhäruk: word; - waṭaṅu: denotes ownership 1.*) The owner of a contract, contractee who has the authority to direct the work being done.
- dhathala** (*ready and waiting 1.*) Ready to be picked up. If someone is making something under djugu' (contract) for you, when they say it is 'dhathala', then it means you can go straight over and pick it up because it is ready to be picked up.
- dhulmu-mulka bathi**
(*dhulmu: deep-of water, grass, bush;*) *mulka: dry; bathi: (dilly bag 1.)* meaning: dhulmu: a large deep "symbolic chamber", mulka: in this context is a safe place at law, bathi: dilly bag. The dhulmu-mulka bathi is the sacred dilly bag, which symbolises the public 'constitutional law' of a bāpurru (tribe/clan??). This 'constitutional law' gives a particular bāpurru its legal authority.
- It is the dhulmu-mulka bathi that gives each bāpurru the power and authority, through the Maḍayin Law, not only to expel foreigners but also to seek reparation for damages or restitution for theft from their 'yirralka' (estate). The dhulmu-mulka bathi, sacred dilly bag of a bāpurru are considered holy and priceless.
- One role of the dhulmu-mulka bathi is to proclaim into existence a chamber of law, where all citizens of all clans are protected upon their entry into that proclaimed area. This occurs regularly at all funerals and other ceremonies. It can also be used in a time of war as the flag or colours of a yirralka (estate) to convince the soldiers of that estate or group of estates to defend to the death if necessary, their homelands. At this time the dhulmu-mulka bathi are carried in the front line with the warring soldiers.
- dhul'yun** (*build 1*) Hammer, construct, build
- dhumbaḷbal** designated public road under Maḍayin law. The trading roads or tracks that criss crossed Arnhem Land dhumbaḷbal dhukarr mala; dhumbaḷbal special legal roads/tracks dhukarr road track mala group or collection of things. Dhumbaḷbal dhukarr mala public



roads and trading tracks that crossed over private yirralka estates that anyone could travel on under the protection of Madayin law. If any stop or assaulted a traveller while on a dhumbaḷbal dhukarr they would be breaking the law and held accountable for it.

(Dhungala Nurruwutthun) our dhumbaḷbal dhukarr mala are just like the Balanda roads (public roads) that anyone can drive on. On one can stop them because your Balanda law says everyone can drive on them. Under our (Madayin) law Yolŋu people who travelled on the dhumbaḷbal dhukarr mala were protected by Madayin Law in the same way. If anyone attacked a person travelling on the dhumbaḷbal dhukarr or tried to stop them they would be in trouble. Question; What would happen if they where stoped or attacked? The person or their clan could bring the issue to Nj̄arra' where the person causing the problem would have defend themselves and if it was found to be true the trouble maker would have to b̄aka-bakmaram make a payment to equal out the wrong. If they killed or hurt someone the would have to face a Makarraṭa (ceremony – peace making).

Yam---- said another word for it is dhurrbarubaṇu

- dhulŋuṇu** (belong to someone) Private precession
- djal-guwatjman** (*interfere, interrupt*) is also used in the positive sense as to intervene in something.
- djamalak** A special contract for entertainment. Djamalak-mirri Yolŋu entertainer. One comment was this came from Cap Stuaire area Yam...
- djambatj** (*good hunter (n & adj) 1.*) Djambatj; is the term applied to a good hunter, the one who gets his quarry with a single shot. These people display a high level of mastery not only in the actual hunt, but also in the manufacture and use of weapons, an intimate knowledge of their environment and a great knowledge of the inner thinking and ability of their quarry. They have the great strength, skill and discipline of a *warrior*.
- Djungaya** (boss, "manager", "Lawyer" [relation a person has to the ceremonies and lands of his mother's clan]). A Djungaya is selected by his mothers and therefore usually his wife's clan to be the manager of their estates and business dealing their will have with other clans. Therefore the will act as their manager, lawyer,



worker, policeman, correctional services officer. He will hire and fire of contractors to run different ceremonial procedures from the peoples parliament, having legislation drafted, run their educational and training institutions, maintain their production sites for animals, fish and bird species, organise the harvest of different crops and catching of large animals and fish.

Nurrungu Djungaya (Nurrungu.. first, ahead; boss, head, leader) The Nurrungu Djungaya the head Djungaya will usually organise and allocate work to other Djungaya (usually his brothers) that work under him. Many Yolngu men will espouse to become the selected Nurrungu Djungaya for his mothers people. His mothers and therefore usually his wife's people will select who will be the CEO type manager Nurrungu Djungaya for their clan.

djuy'yun (*send 1.*) When used in an economic sense and referring to the sending of a person, means to send a person with authority and purpose to do the work in a contract already in hand. *narra ga djuy'yun nhuna'* I am sending you two with authority; to carry out the work as set out in the *djugu'* (contract).

djuy'yunhamirr The owner of a contract who does the sending; the one with the authority to send. 'Yol dhuwal djuy'yunamirr, yol?' Who is this one with authority, because they are the *djugu' wataṅu* (owner/s of the contract) to send workers to do the job? Because they are the *goṅ djugu'mirr* (hand, contract, with; the contractor with the contract in their hand)

djugu' A legal agreement as in contract. Djugu' implies the full meaning of the English word contract. Djugu' is called *djuwu'* in East Arnhem Land.

Djugu' has four main parts to it the same as the English word contract has.

1. The *djama* (job) as it is explained by the *djugu' wataṅu* (contract owner/giver).
2. The job has to be done according to the directions given by the *djugu' wataṅu* (contract owner/giver) and or according to the Madayin Law. For example if the job is to make *nathu*, a traditional bread, then it has to be made according to the law proscribed by Madayin food production laws. That is it has to have the poison leached out of the nuts baked to the right consistency and rapped in paperbark (an anti bacterial anti



mould agent because of the tea tree oil in it) so it will not make people sick.

3. The payment balanydja as agreed between the two parties
4. The penalty for not applying 1. or 2. above or for not making payment when due.

There are both formal and informal djugu' (contracts). 'Marradjiri' for example, is the name of economic and diplomatic ceremonies and these are initiated by an item called 'madjapala'. This madjapala is the formal contract, djugu'. Whereas buku-djugu' (face to face-contract) is a verbal type contract just spoken between the two parties entering into the djugu'.

djugu' waṭaṅu *Djugu': a contract – (waṭaṅu: denotes ownership 1.)* The 'contractee'. The owner or initiator of a particular contract.

ḍupun (Hollow log (for didgeridoo or burial post,) greedy1.) Also spelt 'dhupun'.

Used in an economic sense meaning greedy. That is someone is seen as being very greedy if they are like a hollow burial post that can take the crushed bones of many bodies. A very greedy person or group of people who are so greedy that they will go to the extent of even taking from you what is needed to sustain life.

gaḷkitj-gaḷkitj (A person who breaks laws or does no work. Lawless, lazy1)

galṅa (skin, bark; *paper money 1.*) The word 'barrwan' is also used.

Gaḷṅarrayon To organise. To organise the family ready to harvest food that is in season to take the greatest advantage of it.. to organise the production of things that have been ordered by another clan.

gapu-guwarr-budap-wäṅa (*gapu: water; guwarr: something borrowed to be returned, wäṅa: camp, place, home, country 1.*) *budap: cross over.* An overseas trading country, another nations or territory where trade is carried out to or from.

girri (*things, vehicles, parts of the body 1.*) 'Goods' of trade or general goods items and things; all the different organs in the body. ??????Check second part of meaning



- goŋ-djugu'mirr** (*goŋ: hand; 1. djugu'mirr* Literally the one with the contract in their hand, the one who is contracted to do a job.
- goŋ-gurrupan** (*pass onto someone else 1.*) Example??? How it is used??
- goŋ-larr'** (*goŋ: hand; 1.*) (*larr': slice*) *goŋ-larr'* (*slice in the hand*) Shares as in the legal sense; If your clan had shares in a particular flint site or ochre pit you were known as being *goŋ-larr'mirr*, having a slice in the hand, *bäpurru* clans who had shares in particular sites are usually connected through *ringitj* (alliance).
- goŋ-manymak** (*goŋ: hand; manymak: good 1.*) Skilled worker; producer of goods, craftsman.
- goŋ-wayuk-mirr** shares, legal shares that a person or clan has in something. Like shares in a flint stone quarry or an oacha mine. Get other examples
- goŋ- waŋaju** (*goŋ: hand; waŋaju: denotes ownership 1.*) The producer; of an item or giver of a gift. The owner of the hand who produced the article; the manufacturer, producer.
- goŋ-yanyyuk sp??** (*goŋ: hand; ????????????*) A person who is *goŋ yanyyuk* is an inventor, someone who thinks or dreams up new ideas and can also bring the dream to full realisation.
- gumurr'manydji** *gumurr* (*chest*) *manydji* (*close friends*) Two close trading partners. Yolŋu men will work very hard to develop close trading *gumurr'manydji* relationships with lots of other Yolŋu men in neighbouring estates around their own estate. They will work at creating *märrmirr* credit type condition and relationship. Where the trading partner is in debt *rakunymirr* to you rather than you being *rakuny* in debt to them. That is where they are in a *märrmirr* credit relation to their trading partner. Trading partners are seen as very good friends that you would do anything for.
- If others are plotting against one of your *gumurr'manydji* you would risk your life and limb to let the know about such plans even if the plotting was coming from within your own clan.
- gumurr-djalk** (*southern area for gift exchange 1.*) The southern trading zone looking from *Ramingining* or *Milingimbi*.



- gumurr-gattjirrk** (*western area for gift exchange 1.*) The western trading zone looking from Ramingining or Milingimbi.
- gumurr-miwatj** (*eastern area for gift exchange 1.*) The eastern trading zone looking from Ramingining or Milingimbi.
- gunda-ṅamakuli'ṅu** (*gunda: rock 1 .*) (*ṅamakuli'ṅu: special, significant*) Gold or other very precious minerals.
- gurrutu-gurrupan** (*gurrutu: relation; gurrupan: give 1.*) To give to a close relative within your own bāpurru clan, there is no obligation to repay; like giving to yourself.
- gurrutumiriw** (*selfish 1.*) Literally a person without relatives. Meaning a selfish person who acts like he/she would not share even with their own relatives.
- lalkal** (*greedy*)
- linyu-gumurr** (*linyu: we (dual excl.); gumurr: chest 1.*) Him/her and myself are trading partners; excludes the person being spoken to.
- lukunyḍja** (*rich, wealthy 1.*)
- Luku-dhulaṅ** (*luku: foot, feet, toe dhulaṅ bark painting 1.*) Like a footprint in the sand of a person the Luku-dhulaṅ is the legal print that can be seen of a bāpurru clan. A crest as in a family or bāpurru clan crest. A crest on a letter head. Luku-dhulaṅ is the legal print that people can see of a bāpurru.
- Maḍayin** (*taboo, sacred 1.*) Maḍayin has not direct equivalent in English. The Maḍayin is a complete system of law including the rom (*general term for law*), together with the legal symbols and song cycles, which encode the law, including the chambers of law as they make and encode law and or to settle disputes.-----
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- madjapala** An instrument of order that is used to formalise a formal contract to initiate marradjiri. (Called mayawala' in North East Arnhem Land.)
- makarraṭa** (ceremony – peace making)
- manda-gumurr** (*manda: they two; gumurr: chest 1.*) Two people who are in a trading relationship, literally meeting chest to chest. This relationship exists between any two people who have a close



trading relationship with each other; they are called, manda-gumurr or gumurr-manda

manimani

(necklace 1.) necklace made from cowrie shells. The name come for the fact that the Macassans would look at "point and say manimani". They were very valuable to trade with them.

marangum

(pay back debt 1.) marangum; To make liable, to put under an obligation.

When the giver of a contract – refer to the one who makes the initial offer in a contract situation, in words that translate to English as the 'owner' or 'giver' of the contract, *djugu' waṅṅu* - enters into a contract with another, then that contract owner is *marangum-mirr* liability with, liable to '*balanydja gurrpan*' pay give for the goods or services provided under the contract.

For example, I have used *marangum* to explain legal agreements like 'hire purchase', where the vehicle on hire purchase belongs to the giver of credit until the last payment is paid. The receiver is '*rom marangumamirr*'. That is, the person entering into the hire purchase agreement who receives a vehicle or boat, is liable until that contract is paid for in full. This liability exists because of the law in the contract.

dhä-marangum

(pay back debt for having eaten or smoked something tabo 1.) As in the meaning above the person is liable. And if someone has said slanderous things about another person, as in slander their mouth has made them liable, as in slander.

mel-marangum

(clear someone who has seen a sacred object for the first time 1.) *mel-marangum*; literally your eye become liable have seen something of a holy sacred nature.

That can be someone who has seen a sacred object for the first time and they must now make a payment to the owner of the object for that experience as they are *mel-marangum-mirr*. This happens when a person is invited to *ṅärra'* chamber of law and are shown the sacred legal emblems. Or it can be someone who seen something that they should not have, then what they have seen has placed them in a state of liability.

rom-marangum

(rom: general term for law; marangum: to make liable) A person or a *bäpurru* tribe/clan who is *goṅ-djugu'mirr* has a contract in hand has a contractual liability. Also if there is *rom* law that makes the person or the *bäpurru* tribe/clan liable under that law then they are *rom-marangum-mirr*. (*mirr* or



mirri; EXISTential, Proprietary: full of, possessing, with, having, - turns nouns and verbs into Adjectives)

In an incorporated company or association where legislation requires the company or association to do something it can be said that the company or association is rom-marangum-mirr. For example the Australian law requirement to collect GST and keep all the Tax invoices for expenses, pay superannuation, abide by environmental and or discrimination laws or pay tax if required are all examples of a company or association being rom-marangum-mirr.

wana-marangum (*wana: arm; mara `gum: to make liable*) If a person hits someone with his or her hand or arm, or with something in their hand the assault that occurs puts them in a state of liability as in physical assault. Assault!

ṅamaṅamayunmirri (*get ready*)

ṅamaṅamyun (*make*)

ṅamathama (*1 • make better; make good; make right. 2 • get ready; prepare. adv. properly.*)

märr (*spiritual power, strength 1.*) The spiritual power or force of strength that is imparted to an article of primary production or a manufactured product, or a service provided. In all cases märr is produced where ever sweat is produced. It is a person's 'sweat' that transmits the worker's spiritual power märr, or force of strength märr into the article or service.

There is no equivalent term or concept in English. Märr is different from birrimbirr human spirit or nhaywanu SP?? soul.

Märr is like a spiritual energy force that all humans have and when a person works at something that force or spiritual power is transmitted to the article produced or the service provided. The more effort used to produce the product or the service the more märr the article or the service contains. This happens whenever food is produced and harvested, things are made from raw products, or when an article is obtained and then value is added to it, or whenever a service is carried out.

Whoever then receives that product or service also receive the persons märr or spiritual power which builds up in them. As the spiritual power builds up in the receiving person their own märr



or spiritual power is decreased. They become mähr-miriw without spiritual power. *Miriw (without, lacking, no feelings)*

As other people's mähr build up in you your mähr is depressed and a person can feel sick and even die.

Per quote "This mähr will increase to dangerous levels if not discharged through reciprocal trade or payments". (

marradjiri (*pole used in ceremony, - not sacred 1.*) Name of economic and diplomatic exchange ceremony, initiated by the formal contract 'madjapala' (explained later on in text). (Called 'mādarri' (*sp?*) in North East Arnhem Land.)

mähr-dälthirr (*To trust, accept in good faith 1.*)

mähr-djipthun (*To trust, accept in good faith 1.*)

mähr-djul'kthun (*disbelieve, take no notice of 1.*) mähr djul'kthun; to usurp someone's or a group's authority; to take away a person's or a group's legal authority to trade, so that they are seen to be in a state similar to being bankrupt with negative credit rating. (*mg?*)

mähr-garrpin (*to worry about something 1.*) mähr garrpin; To worry about not being able to repay your debt or debts. This leads you to spending all your time worrying about how you are going to repay and may lead to you becoming sick and even to death.

Your mähr spiritual power is depressed and you are trying to work out how you can repay the people you own so you can get out of debt and discharge the mähr of other people that is growing up in side of you.

mähr-girri'mirr (*mähr: spiritual power, strength; girri': things, vehicles, parts of the body 1.*) (*-mirr: indicates possessive*)

This is what you can call an article or produce if its value is questioned. 'Is that article or produce cost/worth anything?' ('Yow dhuwal mähr-girri'mirr': yes this article here has value). If you acquire something that was produced by sweat and has mähr, you will have to give girri' (something) in return for it, otherwise you will be in debt.



märrmiriw	<i>(märr: spiritual power, strength 1.) (-miriw: indicates without)</i> To be in a state of debt; being spiritually disempowered because you owe things to other people and their märr is building up in you.
märrmirr	<i>(märr: spiritual power, strength 1.) (-mirr: indicates possessive)</i> To be in a state of credit; being spiritually empowered because other people owe things to you, or because of 'good credit' standing in the community.
märr-rrupiyamirr	<i>(märr: spiritual power, strength-; rrupiya: money 1.)</i> As above, if the value of an article or produce is questioned you can say something is märr-rrupiyamirr. That is, this article or produce was produced by sweat and therefore has märr. This märr will place the receiver of the article or product in a position where they will be in debt if they don't pay for it by money.
miḡurr	Value.
miḡurryun	<i>(to value something very highly and refuse to let anyone borrow it. 1.)</i>
miḡurrmirr	To be of value
miḡurrmiriw	To be of no value.
mulwaṯ	A Yirritja term for a person's more valuable assets.
mundhurr	<i>(gift, present 1.)</i>
ḡali-gumurr	<i>(ḡali: we (dual incl.); gumurr: chest 1.)</i> We two, you and me, are trading partners.
ḡamaḡamayun	<i>(make 1.)</i> To make or produce.
ḡamatham	<i>(make better, make good, make right, get ready, prepare; properly (adv.) 1.)</i>
ḡarra'	<i>(special taboo ceremony, shade place containing ceremonial objects 1.)</i> , a chamber of law, a place where law is maintained and made, taught and where disputes at law are ruled on. Functions much like a parliament or court house and a place of teaching all in one. Each Bärrpurru and rringitj has its own and there are also top dhuwa and Yirritja that represents all the dhuwa and Yirritja ḡarra'.



- nyindirraṅ nyindarraṅ** (*sp?*) This is the highest form of contract giving. It is a formal contract, sealed by the giving of a maḍayin object from the contract giver to the contract receiver. The giving of this object seals the contract in law. This form of contract is used to lease land to other bāpurru (*clans*). (*mg?* - still checking).
- ṅuthan** (*grow 1.*) To grow.
- ṅuthanawuy** Concerned with the growing of something. (*mg?*)
- rakuny** (*dead 1.*) When this term is used in an economic sense, it is used to explain feeling of being in debt, or the state of debt itself; feeling like a dead body without spiritual power, spiritless. (ṅarra rakunymirr: I am like a dead body, because of my debt, or I am with a dead body because of my debt, or like the English; I have a heavy debt hanging around my neck.)
- ralapiny** peal
- ringitj** An alliance. A ringitj (alliance) can take on different forms and be economic and/or political and or to do with the conservation of particular species of fauna and flora. Any one bāpurru (*clan*) can be part of a number of different ringitj alliances, each alliance existing for different reasons.
- However whilst a bāpurru may be part of numerous ringitj, their primary ringitj is concerned with land. In this case the Ringitj is an alliance of *bāpurru* of the same moiety—a nation of clans. Up to six clans can make up one of these nation alliances. These nations can be spread over a great distance with other clans of other *ringitj* located in between them. This means that the clans of one nation do not have a common boundary with the other clans of the same nation. A bāpurru owns the resources on the surface of their land and in the waters, whereas ownership to the subsurface is held by the ringitj. In the whole of North-East Arnhem Land there are approximately sixteen nation groups. Each nation of land-owning clans shares a common constitution/law base. Each of the nations also has a common army for protection of each *bāpurru* estate within that nation. The ringitj must also give consent to any leasing out of bāpurru lands through nyindirraṅ sp? (*a contract given to another bāpurru*). The existence of this ringitj gives each of the bāpurru economic and political advantages in trading together and through combining their military and political strength.



The next most important ringitj alliance is the alliance that names the trade track where clan members of a particular clan can travel along these trade tracks and stop over night on a temporary basis only on another clans lands within a ringitj wanga sp? (alliance, place or home). These ringitj wanga are like embassy sites where the traders are protected under the Maḍayin Law so that the owner of the particular estate can do them any harm. These ringitj trade tracks and safe havens allowed free trade through Arnhem Land.

rom

(*law, custom, habit, way of life 1.*) General term for law.

rringji

(*costly, expensive 1.*) This term is very difficult to explain in the English language. At the time of writing the previous edition of this paper, it seemed the word somewhat equated to the English term 'valuable'; Yam..... a watch or a steel pocket knife are rringji valuable

some through equate it to a higher level of value.

'Rringji' is a much wider concept than the adjective 'valuable' and is closely connected with the concept 'märr' (*spiritual power or strength*).

English terms are yet to be identified, which adequately explain its full meaning. Some of the concepts implied in its meaning include the following:- preciousness; the invaluable quality that exists with a precious relationship, either between parent and child or other relation, or between very close friends; an inherent quality in a system of justice; holiness; laws that have been passed to create real peace and harmony amongst people; the basis on which a strong trading relationship is established, trust is so deep and strong; an inherent quality that exists both in the origins and foundations of the universe and in its continuing existence (i.e. operation of natural laws), which can never be destroyed, and in the supporting foundations of a large buildings (and other things) where the building would not and could not stand without these foundations. These things would all be described as being 'rringji'.

rrupiya

(*money 1.*) Money used by the Macassan people when they traded in North Australia. Macassan money.

walal-gumurr

(*walal: they; gumurr: chest 1.*) Groups that are trading partners.



wätha	(poor, having no money 1.) having no money or things to exchange
wat̥nu	owner
wäŋa wat̥nu	wäŋa camp; home; place; country. wat̥nu owner; Land owner.
wäwun	(<i>promise 1.</i>) An oath, a sworn oath as in an oath given in court.
wetj	<p>Something that is given as 'mundhurr' (<i>a gift</i>) and not as an article of commerce or trade. But you cannot refuse to take it. It needs to be something that you would like to keep or have for yourself e.g. a spear, axe, shirt, knife, or some kind of food; but because the desire to build the relationship is stronger, you therefore give it to the other as wetj. You would tell the other person it was 'yän wetj' (<i>just a gift</i>). A ceremonial object would never be given as wetj, as this would be too valuable.</p> <p>The people who would be given wetj would include those in a <u>manda-gumurr</u> (<i>trading partners</i>) relationship, from other clans, close friends and relatives. The giving of wetj in a <u>manda-gumurr</u> relationship is a true gift and is never paid for. It is like the public relations gift, the turkey at Christmas, or a gift to a business colleague on a special occasion. Märr is transferred with wetj and it puts the giver into a <u>märrmirr</u> state (<i>i.e. into a indebted relationship</i>).</p> <p>Wetj is never refused, even if it is seen as being a bribe or to get you into a position where you can't say 'no'. If this is the case, the receiver of wetj would try and give enough wetj back to the person so the initial receiver was not in a <u>märrmiriw</u> - i.e. disempowered debt type - position. So when the final request came from the giver of wetj for something special to be traded, the receiver is in a strong enough position to be able to refuse without feeling in debt.</p> <p>When wetj is given to a relative, it is to build up a close bond with that person. After the death of a relative you might contest the right to receive the assets of that relative you gave to, on the basis of the amount of 'wetj' you gave to the deceased relative throughout their lifetime.</p>
wuburr'	(<i>sweat, perspiration 1.</i>) In the economic sense wuburr', as in sweat or perspiration, is the key thing that adds value to the



production of an article or produce. It is wuburr' that releases the mǎrr (*spiritual power or strength*) of the maker or producer into the article or product. Because something is wuburr'mirr (*-mirr: indicates possessive*) it is a produced article or product that has a value. Therefore it will place the receiver in an indebted relationship unless it is:-

1. given freely as in 'yan gurrupan' or 'gurrutu gurrupan'.
2. paid for as in 'bäka-bakmaram' or 'ya`ara-bakmaram'.

(Wuburr' is called wowurr' (*sp?*) in Eastern Arnhem Land.)

Yaṅara-bakmaram (*yaṅara: lower leg, tail; bakmaram: break 1.*) To pay back something that is owed; to reciprocate payment.

yän gurrupan (*yän: only, just (for no reason), just (emphasis); gurrupan: give*)
Give just because you want to; give a gift with no direct obligations or reciprocation implied.

yäkumirri (*taboo*) processing a name. If something is yäkumirr it has been given a name of importance. This infers that it is an important object or place that belongs to the particular owners or owner. The name is usually a name of great significance to the group or to the particular owner. A name would be applied to a particular place of great significance to a group or to a family airlum.

Yirralka (place of birth) Estate. Yirralka to an area of land and sea that is owned by a particular bäpurru, paternal tribe, equivalent to the English word estate. Yolṅu use it all the time when referring to different clan and tribal estates.

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APPENDIX II

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS TO INCUBATE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH EAST ARNHEM LAND

Current Situation

- Indigenous enterprises in remote areas require quality bookkeeping/accounting and financial management services
- Acquiring a suitable bookkeeper/ financial manager and initiating financial record keeping practices is a major barrier to Indigenous people in Arnhem Land starting and maintaining economic enterprise.
- Where financial management services are acquired, this is mostly through outsourced services provided by mainstream bookkeepers. Usually sourced with the help of local mainstream culture individuals or local agencies. Bookkeepers generally have limited understanding of the special requirements and challenges of the operating environment; distance, cultural challenges around money and business/asset ownership, weather, literacy/numeracy levels, response times, technological limitations – which include the lack of technology infrastructure and confidence of Yolngu using the technology.
- Because of the critical need to access quality bookkeepers Why Warriors Pty Ltd has hired bookkeepers on a casual basis for a couple of clients in Galiwin'ku. But the extra work that this creates for [enterprise facilitators](#) to manage the communication between bookkeeper and local indigenous workers strains the capacity of our facilitators to support other clients in business development.
- Indigenous business owners in remote communities are often unable to maintain a good working relationship with bookkeepers and accountants because of communication failures and misunderstandings. This is due to both low levels of economic literacy, language and cultural differences. Another big factor is that neither are trained to enter the [grey zone](#) exists between the two cultures. So they simply fail to understand each other.
- Indigenous business owners/entrepreneurs require capacity building to build their confidence and understanding of basic business finances in order to be able to communicate with and manage their bookkeeping/accounting providers effectively.
- What happens at the moment is that the bookkeepers/accountants take over control from the business owners, or are not providing effective services – resulting in business failure, debt, loss of confidence in financial service providers or loss of enthusiasm/confidence to continue businesses.



- Day to day financial management for start up businesses requires on the ground support, with people available to answer questions and provide guidance for new/existing business owners - face to face rather than only telephone/email. While there is currently some business support in remote areas it is rarely provided by people with detailed financial management knowledge or expertise and we are not aware of any other services providers that have mentors permanently available in the local community.
- Requirement is for rigorous and best practice financial management coupled with an accessible (preferably within community) mentor/advisor with high quality training in the language and cultural knowledge of the region. Targeted, appropriate training and capacity building for business owners and staff is needed concurrently with this service provided through enterprise facilitators and financial mentors.

Current needs & Opportunities

Below are the needs identified in the Community of Galiwin'ku alone, based on Why Warriors Pty Ltd's clients using the Arnhem Human Enterprise Development (AHED) services.

- 30 business ideas present to facilitators in the first year of operation of the AHED service without advertising services
- Over the first 4 years we have provided services to 24 Indigenous clients/groups around establishing economic enterprises (up to September 2013). Most of these clients are still in early phases of implementing their economic enterprise goals
- Current clients with economic enterprises
 - 2 operational sole traders (Business type: cultural and language consultants)
 - 3 enterprises operating and receiving income (Business types: accommodation, social support services and education, market stall)
 - 6 micro or sole trade enterprises being considered by local entrepreneurs (Business types: boutique clothes, tyre fitting, mechanic, nursery, plant sales, retail sale of clothes,)
 - 1 small enterprise (taxi service)
 - 1 agricultural cooperation seeking support to start commercial scale activity (They have 2 farms including sewage reuse facility. 1 farmer has 40 in farming, have trouble going to the commercial level)
 - 3 medium to large business in development towards start up (Business types: Lease management and trade services, fishing and tourism).



Of the above, all operational sole traders and enterprises (7 in total) require access to better financial management services. And the 4 medium to large enterprises in the planning phase, will require accounting services, financial management and mentoring now or in the next 12 months. The help required includes budget management and capital investment to initiate activities or improve existing activities.

The AHED service in Galiwin'ku is unable to keep up with demand, and several additional opportunities have been missed. This is largely due to the difficulty of current enterprise facilitators having to manage communication with bookkeepers and accountants as well as helping to start and mentor business owners/entrepreneurs.

Financial Managers/Mentors are required to provide outsourced financial diligence while providing regular communication and training to improve skills of local Yolŋu management and directors in financial management. This is in addition to the business development and governance support provided by the AHED enterprise facilitators. A financial mentor placed locally in the Galiwin'ku community would also allow for the local employment and training of Yolŋu bookkeepers.

Case studies No 1.

One of Why Warriors' clients felt in the dark about the finances of their enterprise and requested help from AHED. In the process of investigating the enterprises financial position (in consultation with the client and while also teaching them how to read financial reports), we discovered a huge inconsistency in the financial reports across account periods. When the mainstream financial management service was questioned on this, the partner simply said that the recent reports were accurate. As they were unwilling to look into this issue, our volunteer Finance Facilitator stepped in on our client's behalf and audited the financial records, showing that in total a large 5 digit sum of income had been omitted from the records. It was clear that this was not due to dishonesty, but errors in managing different cost centres. However it did highlight the tremendous disadvantage of our clients communicating with their financial managers, and the importance of them having high quality support to understand the mainstream culture processes.

The Indigenous business owners were able to use the resulting profit to buy equipment for the business. The availability of our volunteer financial facilitator at the time was essential to providing an alternative for access to accurate information and support in this area. They continue to need support to improve communication with the financial manager, training in reading financial reports and would benefit from more independent financial management services, as current provider also has other interests in the business.

Case Study No 2.

Why Warriors Pty Ltd through the AHED project in Galiwin'ku helped a group of Indigenous women establish a corporate entity for Yalu Marŋgithinyaraw, an association of individuals providing community education, consultancy and research services. Bookkeeping and financial management was an area where members were very under educated. Along with workshops on business economics and financial systems with AHED facilitators, they discussed options for bookkeeping. Their first preference was to train a local bookkeeper, but this still required bookkeeping and financial management support in the interim. Yalu was



unable to identify an appropriate local to be trained and uses an interstate bookkeeper for managing accounts receivable/payable, BAS, reconciliation, reporting and payroll. Communication with this person limits the efficiency of the business. The Yolŋu have particular difficulty giving accurate directions to their bookkeeper and obtaining the information they need when they need it. AHED facilitators are thus required to mediate this relationship, reducing the opportunity to train staff in other areas. This leave Yolŋu staff unprepared and sometimes unsupported. Barriers arise that limit their capacity to deliver their services to contractors, solve governance problems and negotiate future contracts. Undue focus on financial administration currently draws away from focus on project delivery and outcomes.

All Yolŋu staff at Yalu are relatively well educated, and include some of the most educated individuals in the community. Despite this they initially had almost no accurate understanding of mainstream corporate and commercial systems and processes. This meant educating them from scratch. Initial workshops provided much of the necessary background to business structures, economics and processes for financial record keeping and reporting. However, as we have seen with other Yolŋu clients, this knowledge only becomes real with practical experience and re-enforcement training in the context of the workplace. Yalu is now in need of re-enforcement training in their financial processes and more advanced training in whole of organisation operations. They are currently undertaking governance training with the help of government funding.

The provision of a financial manager/mentor to ensure good communication around their finances, would gradually build confidence and efficiency within the organisation, while also freeing up AHED facilitators to support them in other areas of the business, leading to more effective delivery of project outcomes.

(Bookkeeper on average works 6 hours a week, but suspect he is under utilised, because of communication problems. AHED facilitators regularly spend 20 hours a week supporting staff and half of this would be admin connected with financial management and record keeping)

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APPENDIX III

PRACTICAL NEEDS FOR YOLŪU ENTREPRENEURS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NE ARNHEM LAND

This is a list of some of the different things that AHED Facilitators have had to work through, to overcome the Cultural Knowledge Gaps and language issues, while helping YolŪu entrepreneurs bring their vision to reality in getting their businesses established in north-east Arnhem Land.

Education & Training carried out by AHED Facilitators

Education and training session carried out by our Facilitators when working with new business entrepreneurs.

- Australian law history and present business structures
- Operation of Board and organisational Governance
- Australian political structures and elections
- Indigenous corporations
- Land leasing
- Rent

Different business structures

- Sole traders
- Companies
- Non profits

Taxation and Government Reporting

- ABN
- GST
- BAS
- Company tax
- PAYG tax
- Private tax
- ASIC
- ORIC
- Primary document care and requirements

Banking:

- Different types of bank accounts and how they work
- Making payments online two signatories
- Paying wages online
- Online banking operation

Insurance:

- Public liability
- Property, fire and theft
- Workers Compensation
- Professional Indemnity
- Freight insurance
- Superannuation

Office Equipment

- Phone, fax and Internet, mobile phones
- Photo copier
- Computers

Office operations

- Finding a volunteer to fix their office equipment and install IT
- Training in how to use a scanner
- Help to set up email accounts for general administration and bookkeeping
- Training in how to write emails
- Training in how to write letters
- Training in using a fax machine
- Training in how to do online shopping eg for stationary
- Setting up accounts with other organisations eg ALPA the local store
- Office systems
- Phone plans
- Calendars & Diaries
- Using Excel/Word
- Scanning & copying
- Internet research
- Basic computer navigation
- Software Security
- English literacy
- Driving skills & licensing

Other Issues

- Shipping costs and processes, plane and barge
- Irrigation maintenance
- Vehicle purchasing and maintenance
- Purchasing garden/farming, business equipment

Financial management:

- Making a whole of organisation Budget
- Making contract Budgets



- Understanding Profit and Loss reports
- Understanding Balance sheets
- Invoicing, credit note
- Petty cash management system docket book, receipt book, cash tin, record book
- Small sales management system
- Processes for paying bills and invoices
- Accountability
- Asset registers

Contracts:

- Understanding contracts
- Assisting with contract negotiations including proposals, work plans and budgets
- Consultancy rate

Ongoing Support and Resourcing

After we have worked through the training above the people still struggle with many of the English terms and procedures below. So many time we are called back to help the people work through the issues/procedures. Sometimes we called a number of times over the same procedure. If the instruction were in Yolŋu Matha they would have far less problems but they are not and so they need an English first language person to work through it with them.

Banking:

- Setting up accounts
- Setting up online banking access
- Activating tokens
- Making payments online two signatories
- Getting new people access to online account eg bookkeeper
- Solving problems with the bank

Insurance

- setting up accounts for Public Liability, Workers Comp, Supper
- dealing with problems with provider
- wage declarations

Financial management:

- Process of communicating with bookkeeper scanning and emailing of primary documents, email communication, skype communication
- Processes for making purchases within the organisation that are accountable to the board purchase authorities, purchase orders



Organisational Management support;

- Developing systems to manage staff, contracts, hours, work
- Support to solve problems and deal with grievances
- Staff meetings
- Board meetings
- Designating jobs and pay rates
- Processes for employing staff TFN declarations, Superannuation forms, bank details and contact details
- Understanding superannuation
- Understanding taxation personal, business, GST
- Petrol token management system
- Time sheets and process of ensuring accountability for hours worked and work done. Process of ensuring this consistent with available funds process of managing overtime.
- Leave processes
- Marketing and sales
- Structure of joint ventures
- Employer responsibilities
- Planning and reporting
- Funding sources for enterprises

Governance;

- Powers of an organisation
- Ownership of nonprofit organisation
- What the roles and responsibilities of board members are
- What is a constitution
- The process of fulfilling requirements under ORIC, such as general reports, Directors meetings, AGMs, applying for extension for AGMs
- The practical processes for fulfilling their requirements such as taking minutes in meetings and maintaining a minute book.

Networking & Liaising done by AHED Facilitators in the last 12mths

Again because the people are English 5 or 6th language they struggle in dealing with many of the issues below. Most would find it so hard that they would just give up. So part of our support in getting the business on a stable footing is to work through the issues with them; acting as cultural and language interpreters in many cases. Sometimes we have to go further and do education with the dominant culture service so they can understand where the people are at and therefore change the way they work with the people; so good outcome result.

- Finding sewerage reuse experts to give advice on using treated effluent to



irrigate fruit and vegetable crops.

- Networking with Power and Water, the Department of Health and other appropriate bodies regarding applications for reusing treated effluent.
- Providing support for the implementation of a Men's Shed grant.
- Researching appropriate irrigation systems for the expansion of Dingu Farm enterprise.
- Leasing with the Motor Vehicle Registry regarding commercial passenger vehicle registration and licensing.
- Locating possible sources for the wholesale purchase of plants from Darwin for a plant nursery enterprise.
- Researching barriers and blockages to enterprise progress e.g. getting information regarding land leases and royalty income released to clients from their land council.
- Networking clients with bookkeepers and financial managers as needed.
- Running free training workshops on topics such as governance, Indigenous corporation structures, taxation, land rights and budgeting.
- Mediating between clients and contracting partners.
- Liaising with ORIC.
- Liaising with Accountant.
- Liaising with ATO
- Liaising with Banks.

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