



Jungala Kriss

WEAVING A FUTURE TOGETHER



After five years of delivering highly successful weaving workshops,

the Mapuru community in North Eastern Arnhem Land of the Northern Territory are planning to further develop their cultural tours in an exciting new business development.

Mid August, they took their vision closer to reality by completing a Stepping Stones for Tourism Workshop. "This is a really important step for everyone here" said Yingiya Guyula, a Yolngu bi-cultural consultant whose expertise assisted the Stepping Stones workshop. "The people at Mapuru already have years of experience in running tourism programs, but they want to go further, expand the programs

and gain greater benefit from having tourists visit the community" said Yingiya.

Mapuru is a small close-knit community of 140 people. Over the last five years, three generations of Mapuru women have delivered teaching workshops for tourists interested in learning weaving techniques from Yolngu women. These workshops are the centrepiece for the tourism venture that will involve all the families at Mapuru. New programs will be added over time, including programs designed for men and families.

The Arnhem Weavers workshop programs are unique in Australia, offering an opportunity for Yolngu and non-Yolngu to sit together, talk, laugh and learn more about each other. Visitors to the community can sleep in traditional Arnhem Land raised wooden platforms, and informally participate in community activities.

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DEET and Tourism NT funded and coordinated the workshop at Mapuru Homeland

OPERATOR PROFILE Kenbi Dance Group



The Kenbi Dance Group reformed in 2005 after a 15 year absence from professional work under the guidance of their mentor Steve Brown. The dance group is unique with the body painting, the rhythm and in the clothing they wear. The body painting designs are each dancer's individual art work, some of which has been handed down from their fathers as well as their own artwork.

The Kenbi Dance Group won an award for their contribution to Indigenous Music and Dance at the Northern Territory Indigenous Music Awards held in Darwin on 25th August. *Continued page 7*

KENBI DANCE GROUP

Performances: Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday nights commencing at 7pm. May – September.
Mandorah Beach Hotel
Bookings available upon request
Ph. 08 8978 5044



Calendar of Events

September

14-23 September – Alice Desert Festival, Alice Springs

October

20-23 October - Australian Indigenous Tourism Conference, Broome

29 October – 2 November - Savannah Guides School, Cape York

November

14-15 November – Northern Territory Government 3rd Indigenous Economic Development Forum

19-23 November – National Ecotourism Conference, Melbourne and regional Victoria

December

9 December - Around the Bush Campfire: Identity and Belonging, NSW

Partnerships & Pathways Forum

The Northern Territory Government is hosting the Indigenous Economic Development Forum 2007, 'Partnerships and Pathways' through the Department of Business, Economic and Regional Development. The Forum will be held on 14 & 15 November 2007 in Darwin and will focus on ways to build, support and strengthen Indigenous business partnerships and develop the capacity for Indigenous communities to participate in sustainable economic activity. For more information about the Forum, visit www.nt.gov.au/iedforum



Weaving a Future Together (continued)

Karen Young, Tourism NT, Marina Wangurra, Indigenous Tourism Business Hub, Yirrkala Dhanbul, John Greatorex, Charles Darwin University and Yingiya Guyula assisted Nicholas Hall to facilitate the workshop with 30 participants. Tourism NT and the NT Department of Employment, Education and Training funded the workshop (Flexible Response Funding) which enabled the Mapuru community to produce their plan. One of the Arnhem Weavers, Roslyn Malngumba said: "Our dreams of making a future for our children is coming true. This is the support we have been working towards".

"This is a premium cultural experience" said Nicholas Hall, facilitator of the Stepping Stones for Tourism Program. "There might not be a white towel on your bed, but this is as good as it gets if you want a complete Aboriginal cultural experience".

Families living at Mapuru are determined to make a healthy and economically viable lifestyle for themselves and future generations on their homeland and tourism is an important part of their future vision. The participants came together at the end of the workshop to make a statement about the plan they had written together:

"This plan is for the wellbeing and wealth of future generations. Creating jobs, education and keeping culture strong. We have already planted the seed. We are going to use this plan to make sure everybody is involved in helping our tourism business grow strong".



For more information about Mapuru visit: www.arnhemweavers.com.au

PILOT INDIGENOUS TOURISM HUB

Tourism NT, the Department of Business, Economic and Regional Development, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and Yirrkala Dhanbul Community Association Inc. have worked in partnership to develop a pilot Indigenous Tourism Hub in North East Arnhem Land. The Hub is based on the idea that a central business operation can effectively support a range of Indigenous tourism experiences. The Hub will link a number of homeland and family groups interested in providing tourism experiences. Marina Wangurra is the newly appointed Coordinator of the Hub at Yirrkala. She assisted with



the Stepping Stones workshop that was recently held at Mapuru including facilitating a lunch session to discuss Step 4 of the process "What do we want to share?".



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Got a question?

If you have any questions about this Newsletter or Indigenous Tourism in the NT, please contact one of our staff members listed above.

AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS TOURISM CONFERENCE 2007

The Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Committee Inc. (WAITOC) the peak industry body in Western Australia representing Indigenous Tourism Operators is delighted to present the Australian Indigenous Tourism Conference (AITC) 2007.



The Australian Indigenous Tourism Conference 2007 will build upon the foundations set at the past three conferences. These conferences have been overwhelming successes, with over three to four hundred delegates attending. The conference has achieved recognition as an excellent forum for those with a common interest in Indigenous Tourism to meet and form new partnerships.

The conference focus is on the environment, our young people, business opportunities and maintaining our culture. AITC 2007 will be held in Broome, Kimberley from 20th - 23rd October 2007.

AITC 2007 will address the key issues and needs that impact on Indigenous Tourism in Australia and the opportunities that exist for culturally authentic Indigenous tourism product, especially in the development; employment and training of Indigenous people which have a positive social and economic return to Australia and in particular regional Australia.

We are looking forward to showcase the Kimberley to the nation and the world with a large number of delegates expected to attend. Stretching over 900,000 square kilometres, Australia's North West is one of the world's last true wilderness areas. It's rich in Indigenous culture and history and boasts the highest density of rock art anywhere in the world.

I personally look forward to seeing you in Broome and hope you allow yourself some time to experience the magic of being in the Kimberley.

Maria Morgan
Chairperson, WAITOC

For full information on the conference, including registrations go to <http://www.aitc2007.com>

INDIGENOUS BUSINESS AUSTRALIA SUPPORTS WEBSITES PROJECT

Indigenous Business Australia and Tourism NT are undertaking a project to assist 10 operational and emerging Indigenous tourism operators develop and maintain their own websites.

The challenge for new and emerging Indigenous tourism businesses, like non-Indigenous businesses is attracting and maintaining a demand for the product and services they offer. Use of the internet for online travel bookings and as a holiday pre-planning tool is increasing dramatically. Therefore online marketing is an opportunity Indigenous tourism operators must be involved in. This is even more important for remote and regional businesses that do not have access to or the resources to market locally, interstate and overseas.

Focus on Funding Opportunities

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT,
EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Flexible Response Funding

The Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) through its Flexible Response Funding (FRF) Program is able to fund training delivery that meets the training requirements for Indigenous people living in regional and remote communities.

FRF does not cover wages for participants or capital equipment.

FRF allows for packaging of short training programs that meet the specific training needs of Indigenous clients and is delivered on site in the community. FRF supports accredited and non-accredited training that links into community projects and leads to employment outcomes, improved employability skills or enterprise development.

The objectives of the FRF Program is to provide training activities leading to or directly linking to employment of Indigenous people; Training to increase the employability skills of Indigenous Territorians; and Training to encourage Indigenous Territorians in undertaking further VET training and skill development.

Application criteria

The target groups for FRF are Indigenous people living in urban, regional and remote areas of the Northern Territory, who are 15 years of age or greater. Indigenous communities and organisations can apply for FRF assistance at any time of the year, by contacting the DEET Field Officer in their region who will provide information and advice regarding the processes.

For further information contact DEET Regional Operations on 8901 1335 or visit our web site. Field Officer contact details are contained in the application and guidelines forms.

<http://www.deet.nt.gov.au/training/indigenous/>

The development of websites, guided by Tourism NT staff, who have knowledge and expertise in tourism marketing, will allow Indigenous businesses access to a wider group of potential clients.

The development of websites for Indigenous businesses fits with Tourism NT's project - Indigenous Tourism Inbound Ready: Effective tourism product websites need to offer current, interesting information based on researching consumer needs. Sites need to showcase products and services, contact details and be interactive, ie. users can ask questions, give feedback or make bookings online. Websites can be a particularly effective promotional tool as they have the capacity to portray the experience of a tourism product that a brochure or advertisement can't.

Staff Profile – Maree Meredith Aboriginal Tourism Development Officer, Central Land Council / Tourism NT, Alice Springs



Hi I'm Maree, I have been with the CLC for the last two years and in April 2007 I moved into the role of the Tourism NT funded, Aboriginal Tourism Development Officer. My work with the Land Council is exciting and varied. Some may ask- what is the best part of the job?? It's quite simple. I get to service 771,747 kms³ of rugged red country, meet a diverse range of traditional owner groups and eat plenty of kuka marlu! Desert country and culture is paramount to Aboriginal tourism in the NT and I'm looking forward to sharing our story with you!

TJUWANPA TREE FARM

Tourism NT, Tjuwanpa Resource Centre and Tjuwanpa Land Management Group are currently working on an exciting new enterprise which will provide an opportunity for travellers on the Red Centre Way to offset the carbon emissions from their trip. The enterprise will use existing Tjuwanpa resource centre infrastructure, being a nursery and large garden area, to develop the trees over a 2-3 year period before development of a plantation. Tourism NT has commissioned a background report into the environmental issues which will need to be considered to develop the enterprise. The idea of carbon offset plantations is new to many of the traditional owners of the area, but demand from international markets is growing with recent research from the UK indicating that 5% (or 2 million people) of travellers were prepared to pay to have the carbon emissions from their holiday offset. The idea is that cars, buses and aeroplanes produce carbon into the air and trees absorb carbon from the air- so by planting trees travellers can ensure that their travel does not increase carbon in the air- a major contributor to global warming.

Territory Discoveries- the leading seller of travel within the NT- has made a commitment to support the enterprise by selling trees. Once developed, strategic marketing partnerships will be formed with key travel and accommodation companies in Central Australia.



Alice Springs Art Trails

Tourism NT is promoting niche market experiences to attract those travellers who want to combine their particular special interest with their holiday plans.

In Alice Springs, one itinerary is the result of collaboration between a local 4WD tour operator and a gallery owner in Sydney and visits remote Art Centres, emerging Indigenous tourism experiences. A key message behind all the Trails is that travel to the Northern Territory can contribute social and economic benefits to Indigenous people.



For detailed information go to:
<http://www.travelnt.com/en/experience/aboriginal-culture/art-alice-trail.aspx>



NEW ABORIGINAL CORPORATIONS LEGISLATIONS

New legislation affecting Aboriginal Corporations became effective in July 2007. The new Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 which was passed in Australian Parliament in October 2006 offers significant benefits in terms of governance, efficiency in reporting and establishment of new Aboriginal corporations and associations. A key change is that the legislation sets out new governance and reporting arrangements for small, medium and large corporations and associations, whereas previously, all corporations had the same arrangements. Also the new legislation sets out more clearly the duties of directors and chief executive officers.

Tourism NT staff have noted increased requests for support and advice around business structures due to the changes in local community government and CDEP. Many art centres which were previously administered through local community councils and CDEP are now looking to become separate businesses. At a recent staff development workshop run by Rob Burdon and Jude Torzillo, Tourism NT Indigenous Tourism Development staff received training on the differences between Pty Ltd Companies, Northern Territory Associations and Incorporated Associations and the new Registered Aboriginal Corporations and Associations.

A number of useful fact sheets and newsletters are available on www.orac.gov.au including a small video clip outlining the changes for community members. ORAC staff will be undertaking a series of training workshops after the roll out of the legislation.

AMUWARNGKA CULTURAL TOURS, GROOTE EYLANDT - UPDATE

Trent Wilkinson, Tourism NT has been providing support and guidance to family members from the newly created Amuwarngka Cultural Tours since the Stepping Stones for Tourism workshop that was conducted at Alyangula in December 2006. With the luxury cruise ship the Orion, scheduled to visit Groote Eylandt as part of the "Mysteries of Arnhem Land" cruise on 11 September, and the Dugong Beach Resort due to open in November, Trent along with Jo Hall from GEBIE and Ian Hutton from CDU have spent many days over the last few weeks with the family conducting trial tours and finalising many operational issues. As with creating any tours, themes and messages through interpretive commentary is extremely important. The visitor experience can be greatly enhanced through interpretive commentary as opposed to simply 'sight-seeing'.

Trent said "the art site just out of Angurugu is only small but is one of the greatest collections of 'painted' saltwater species I have witnessed". Creating interpretive commentary around 'saltwater' lifestyles is an obvious theme that also includes strong evidence of Maccassan presence over hundreds of years.

Within the week commencing the 27 August, Tourism NT funded and assisted with a visual 'stories audit' for Groote Eylandt. Video material gained from the audit will assist with maintaining culture by archiving many stories relevant to Warnindilyakwan culture for future generations. In addition some of the images and interviews will be ethically used in marketing Amuwarngka Cultural Tours and Dugong Beach Resort nationally and internationally.

Arnhem Land Art Trails

Tourism NT is continuing to promote Arnhem Land as a region rich with culture and art. The website (refer below) encourages art lovers to take opportunities to come and meet Indigenous artists, learn about remote art centres, compare Indigenous art styles, and add to their collection by purchasing direct from communities. The website features Art Trail itineraries that show the diversity in travel options in the Territory. For example, in Arnhem Land, art-lovers can travel by private plane, with a 4WD tour, or on an expedition cruise ship.



For more details go to:
www.travelnt.com/en/experience/aboriginal-culture/art-arnhem-trail.aspx



Amuwarnangka Cultural Tours (continued)

The coastal aesthetics of the Groote Eylandt Archipelago are some of the best in Australia, if not the world. However, it is still important that Amuwarnangka Cultural Tours are sufficiently assisted so that every possibility is investigated in order to create a sustainable enterprise.



Christopher Maminyamanja, Jo Hall, Ida Mamarika, Lena Mamarika, Matthew Wurrwawilya and Ian Hutton out and about on a trial tour.

AMUWARNGKA CULTURAL TOURS, GROOTE EYLANDT - RISK MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

Sharon Johnson, from Tourism NT, travelled to Groote Eylandt to conduct a risk management workshop for Amuwarnangka Cultural Tours on 22 and 23 August 2007.

Participants in the workshop included Ida Mamarika, Christopher Maminyamanja, Matthew Wurrwawilya and Lena Mamarika of Amuwarnangka Cultural Tours, Gilbert Marawili and Anton Wurragwagwa with Usha Castillon from the Anindilyakwa Land Council, Johanna Hall from Groote Eylandt and Bickerton Island Enterprises (GEBIE), Ian Hutton from Charles Darwin University, Wayne Cottle from Commercial Passenger Vehicle Branch of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and Trent Wilkinson from the Indigenous Development Unit of Tourism NT. The aim of the workshop was to identify hazards for the new tourism enterprise in both conducting their tours and their business operation.

Once the hazards were identified, they were assessed by everyone and solutions were written down. The next step is the risk management plan for the tour company and then to review it regularly, particularly once tours start up. Several activities are planned to help in the identification and assessment of risks for Amurwangka Cultural Tours on an ongoing basis.

Feedback from the workshop has been very positive especially in regards to the content, style of delivery and Sharon's ability to make everyone feel comfortable about a subject that is often regarded as difficult.

Sharon left the Eylandt with these words from Ida Mamarika, "Ngarringadanama nungkuwa kilawurradinama yangkurranga yirruwawa - we want you to come back to us."

stepping stones for tourism

The stepping stones are the steps Indigenous communities can take to think through the issues about getting involved in tourism and what makes a strong tourism business idea. The steps help to develop ideas further by looking at important issues. They also help work out how feasible an idea is.



From left, Christopher Maminyamanja, Ida Mamarika, Usha Castillon, Gilbert Marawili, Anton Wurragwagwa, Sharon Johnson, Lena Mamarika, Matthew Wurrwawilya and Ian Hutton at the Risk Management Workshop.

KENBI DANCE GROUP (continued)

The current dance group is predominantly from Cox Peninsula and the Outer Darwin Region. The group is made up of males, females, youth and a narrator.

Tourism NT supported the dance group earlier this year by providing funding for stage lighting and associated equipment.

With the support of Steve, the group are working hard to achieve their goals, these include:

- To achieve respect from the wider community
- To keep pride in our cultural heritage
- To teach the younger generation our stories, songs and dances
- To share the magic of our dreamtime through our corroborees
- To achieve harmony, well being and health.

Winning the award for their contribution to Indigenous Music and Dance at the Northern Territory Indigenous Music Awards confirms they are well on their way to achieving their goals.



Kenbi Dance Group at the official opening of the new Northern Land Council building in Darwin on 31 August 2007



Weaving at Mapuru - By Helen Roberts, participant in the June 2007 workshop

"Always hold it tight, like this" my teacher instructed solemnly, as she gripped the pandanus coils firmly between her first and second fingers, her thumb guiding the stitches into perfect alignment. "Always." I took the partly stitched basket from her and attempted the same, but my stitches would not settle in an even pattern and my progress was slow. Before long I was developing blisters on my fingers and my grip loosened. My teacher looked up from the other side of the outdoor classroom, where she was helping another student, and the reminder was repeated: "Always".



The students were a group of balanda, non-Aboriginal women, from Sydney, Canberra and Darwin, aged between 27 and 59 years, with a variety of occupations and western lifestyles. The group of eight of us set out from Darwin to remote eastern Arnhem Land to learn the art of weaving baskets from pandanus from the Indigenous women living there. As it turned out, we learned much more than that.

Mapuru is a homeland community in north east Arnhem Land. It is a 10-minute charter flight from Elcho Island and several hours by road from any shop, petrol station or medical facility. Approximately 100 people live in the community and all have a family connection to the country upon which they live. A number of Aboriginal languages are spoken here, with English studied at the learning centre. Mapuru operates its own small store as a co-op, but fresh food is rare and expensive, unless it is hunted.

The weaving workshops are coordinated by two elderly sisters, their daughters and granddaughters. They invite women to come and camp at Mapuru for a week and teach them the art and culture of pandanus basket weaving. The pandanus leaves are gathered from the surrounding country, stripped and dyed using a variety of roots, leaves and berries. The dried pandanus is woven into baskets of beautiful colour and many different styles and shapes. Traditional woven dilly bags with intricate patterns are also produced, with no need for needles or scissors.

Our group set off from Darwin early in the morning, travelling south via Katherine, then east for 600-kilometres along the Central Arnhem highway and, finally, north along a four-wheel drive access road to Mapuru, arriving late at night. We had brought our own food and camping gear, packed on top of the Troopie. Our camping area had been swept and firewood chopped, ready, for our arrival. We felt warmly welcomed by the community.

The following morning, as we boiled our billy, the women were spreading out mats under the traditional wood and bark shelter that serves as the workshop. Beautiful baskets and bundles of coloured pandanus were everywhere. The women sat cross-legged on the mat all day long, weaving their own baskets in between teaching, helping and advising.

When not weaving, we enjoyed refreshing morning and afternoon swims at the nearby waterhole, accompanied by several friendly local children. The gorgeous children followed us everywhere, eager to practise their English, to show us flora and fauna and to patiently teach us about the complex kinship system which describes and defines connections between people. They piled into the Troopie to come and collect pandanus leaves, hunt for mangrove worms and generally laugh at these balanda who couldn't go anywhere without hats, boots, cameras and backpacks weighing them down. At one point, when my mother was overwhelmed by the mangrove mud, one little sister led her to a hidden stream on drier land and helped her wash her feet.

Out on trips to the surrounding country, we caught a glimpse of the rich law and history of the land and the people. The women took us to a bubbling stream, which is a sacred and special place, and called out to introduce us to the country and the ancestors. They collected mangrove worms and offered them to us to try. "Don't be afraid" we were told, "it is my grandmother's totem."

One afternoon I walked to another campfire with my drum of flour and asked for advice about making damper. I lost count of the number of children who came to look at this balanda woman who didn't know how to bake bread. An opportunity for a lesson was not lost. It was explained to the children in their own language that I was learning, just as they should learn their numbers and their spelling at school.

While I kneaded the dough, I heard stories from my teacher. As a child she had walked across country with her parents, following the timber felling work. Her father was paid only in scoops of tea, sugar and flour. She married an 'old man' chosen by her parents and had five daughters. It was her vision for the future that the weaving workshops could grow into a real business, so that the women could work on their own land, bring up their children and grandchildren in a safe environment, with knowledge and pride in their own culture. Our damper was perfect. "Now you will be able to cook it anywhere," she announced, pleased with my progress, "even in an oven."

Back on the mats, while we practised the skills of stripping, coiling and weaving, we got to know each other. We practised the skill of connecting. Not networking, or texting, but sitting quietly together on a mat in the shade, sharing tea and learning from one another. Knowledge and laughter were freely and generously shared.

When it was time to go home, there were hugs and tears. We felt that we were leaving family. Back in my office, if I close my eyes, I can take myself to Mapuru. I see dark graceful arms reaching for brilliant green leaves, a palette of coloured pandanus waiting to be chosen and woven. I hear children calling out 'sister, look,' women laughing. I taste over-sugared tea and freshly baked damper. I feel connected.....

For more information about the Arnhem Weavers at Mapuru go to www.arnhemweavers.com.au