

Ramingining Q&A



Nän'thun ga
Buku-bakmarama

Questions & Answers

In May we held our first Q&A in Ramingining. It was a part of the 3-day Elder's Forum.

This is the story of the Q&A on the second day.

The Elders' Forum

The Elders' Forum was held at the Old Police Station in Ramingining. It happened over 3 days.

Day 1 - Monday 12 May

The first day was just for Yolŋu Elders and young people who will become Elders one day.

They talked about their dreams and visions, and about questions and worries, getting ready for Day 2. There were 25 people taking part.

Day 2 - Tuesday 13 May

On the second day, Balanda were invited to be part of a Question and Answer program, like Q&A on television. It was a great success with 45 people coming to take part.

We had 3 panels. We invited the Rev Dr Djinyini Gondarra to be the chairperson. He flew from Darwin especially to do this, but because the plane was a bit late, Joseph Smith chaired the first panel and then Djinyini took over for the second panel.

Day 3 - Wednesday 14 May

On the last day we talked about the questions which had been asked and thought about the future. 15 people came. Juli and Trevor from the GroundUp team at Charles Darwin University joined us too.



Matthew Dhulumburrk and Tommy Gānda preparing questions at the start of the day.



Tony, Waninymarr, Joseph & Danykuli on our first panel.

How did it happen?

Lots of people worked hard to make it happen.

Matthew Dhulumburk and Anthea did the planning and organizing. They talked with the Elders about the idea and got their support.

The police gave permission to use the Old Police Station and Ben helped to get it ready.

On the day Matthew coordinated and made sure the day ran smoothly. Anthea organized things with help from Alvin.

Ramingining Regional Council sponsored the lunches.

Dino and Joseph looked after the BBQ.

Ben from Bula'bula made the wonderful Q&A banner. The design for the screen printing was created by Bobby Bununggurr.

The school lent the mats and screen. They also brought year 10 students to take part.

Panel members came from the School, the Clinic, Bula'bula, ALPA, RJCP, the Police, the Rangers, the Regional Council and the Government.

Alistair King and Djiniyini Gondarra flew from Darwin to take part.

Questions & Answers

Here are just some of the questions and answers which were given. We have edited them to make them shorter. We also checked with people in case they wanted to make their answer clearer or add something.

Q How can the organisations in this town work together and with Yolŋu?

A

Deal with problems as they come up. Talk to each other.

Tony O'Leary - (GEC - Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet)

Respect, Listen and Talk to each other. Walking forward, side by side.

Frances Djulibin - Chairperson Bula'bula Arts

Recognise each other in good faith.

Albert Waninymarr (Chairperson - School Council)

Gunga'yunamirri (helping each other)

Ronnie Garrawurra (Night Patrol - Ramingining Regional Council)

Come to all the meetings, don't just send someone in your place.

Trevor Djarrakaykay

The Ramingining Elders and the police are working together. This is the way it should be. We will keep doing this. We also come to meetings and let people know what we are doing. This is really important.

Ben Schultz (Ramingining Police)

Q Can the clinic pick up people from Homelands when they need to come to the clinic?

Q What is the relationship between Dinybulu and ALPA?

A The clinic staff will always come in an emergency, but they don't have funding to run a taxi service when there is no emergency.

The clinic wants to work with families, both sharing the responsibility for our health.

After hours is also for emergencies only. The clinic has no funding for a 24 hours service like in a city. Most people understand this now and it helps the clinic staff to do their work well.

A Dinybulu Regional Services is a new company in Ramingining. It was set up by ALPA and it has a board of 4 members, 2 from Ramingining and 2 from ALPA. ALPA is looking after it until it gets strong enough to stand alone.

Dinybulu RS has a Section 19 Lease with the Land Trust on the old Resource Building and the mechanics workshop. It rents space to ALPA to run the store and RJCP. Dinybulu also has the contract to support Homelands.

Here are the correct legal words for saying this:

Dinybulu Regional Services PL is the corporate trustee for Dinybulu Regional Services Trust which holds the business Dinybulu Regional Trust.

ALPA is the sole shareholder of the company and the ALPA appointed Board are the trustees for the trust.

This structure was chosen so that in the future members of the Ramingining community could be brought onto the Board and into the ownership structure once the business is financially independent, has a strong business model and is sustainable. ALPA currently underwrites the business operations.

Q How does the new Mechanics Workshop charge for repairs?

A Dinybulu wants the Mechanics Workshop to last for a long time and not get into money trouble. To do this it has to have a strong money rom.

Dinybulu is making new signs so everyone will understand the charges. Always ask for a receipt and ask how the charges work.

Q&A

There were a number of questions about the Walking School Bus.

Djiniyini Gondarra said he fought to get Yolŋu employed, not Balanda, to help kids get to school.

Albert Waninymarr, one of the Coordinators of the Walking school Bus said:

Part of our job is sharing the responsibility. It's the parents job to get kids to bed and feed them. My job is going around quietly, not yelling. But we need your support.

Sue McAvoy, the School principal, said:

The Walking School Bus is really high up on my agenda. The people on that team are doing a wonderful job. Yolŋu are helping Yolŋu. If they are not doing that the Government will send in Balanda to do it. It is much better for Yolŋu adults to have control and help parents to get the kids to school.

Matthew Dhulumburrk:

We need to support our kids to go to school. The world is changing fast and in the world to come they need to have a strong Yolŋu education and a strong Balanda education.



Q&Concerns

Over the 3 days of the Elders' Forum lots of issues, questions and concerns were raised. Some of them got talked about at the Q&A. Others will be part of ongoing discussions in the future.

These issues included:

Funding in different departments. Bulabula told us it had lost a lot of funding it used to get from the Government. The Night Patrol is also losing funding. Sue (the School principal) explained that there were funding limits at the school and that was why some Yolŋu had worked for many years and were still tutors.

Support for sport in Ramingining was another issue. Young people would really appreciate more support to keep their sport programs running.

The police were asked about opening hours because they are often over at Milingimbi and not available here in Ramingining. Ben said he hoped this problem would get better in the future when there were more staff in Milingimbi.

People who worked with the NFA thought they would have jobs afterwards but now they are back in RJCP.

There are a lot of balanda coming in for Buffalo hunting. Where is the money going?

Let's keep looking for the answers to these issues and questions.

In the afternoon

The Rev Dr Djiniyini
Gondara OAM

spoke to us, from his
experience working
with both Yolŋu and
Balanda Government.



This is a summary of some of the things he said:

- We need to find ways to talk to each other. We need to de-mystify things and find the dhukarr, the paths that we can walk on together. We need more than consultation, we need dialogue.
- We have to get away from a welfare mentality. I am sick and tired of us putting our hand out to government. We need to understand the tax story and that it is a cake that is cut up. This money is moŋu. If you use taxpayers money wrongly you can go to jail.
- I have a dream for Arnhemland. I studied hard to understand Balanda, so we can understand each other, because we are missing each other.
- Government sometimes doesn't like me because I speak up. I say, 'The government is talk, talk, without action', but Senator Scullion talks with me. He consults me and I have some influence with him. I told him we had to have Yolŋu people employed in the school attendance programs.
- Education is very important for our kids. When we have a bāpurru, everyone comes, everyone understands what is happening, but when we come to the Balanda world we don't understand. This is why education is so important. It is the key. Send your kids to school every day. You have a strong desire for dhapi. What's wrong with having the same desire for an education, for school? We are missing out on that.
- In the Balanda world we have to study. Look at the African refugees coming here. They end up working because they study.
- Democracy is people power. We can use it. How do we clean up our community? Do we leave it to the police? No! We use people power.
- This is what the Yolŋu Nations Assembly (Yolŋuw Makarr Garma) is all about. We can't fight government all the time. Dependency and a welfare mentality is our biggest killer.
- When we misuse money, Government is watching and they ask, 'Are these people stupid?' We need to have a people's movement. People Power.
- Why can't we find a better way? We live on the richest country but we aren't putting in our hand.

But we can do it, we can use our people power, and we can educate our kids.

We would like to thank all
those who supported the Q&A:

The Australian Government (Office of the Prime Minister & Cabinet) and the **NT Government**,
through funding for the **Indigenous Governance and Leadership Program**.



Parliament House in Canberra



Parliament House in Darwin

This program is facilitated by the **GroundUp Team**
from the Northern Institute
at Charles Darwin University



And thank you to:



**Northern Territory
Police**

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