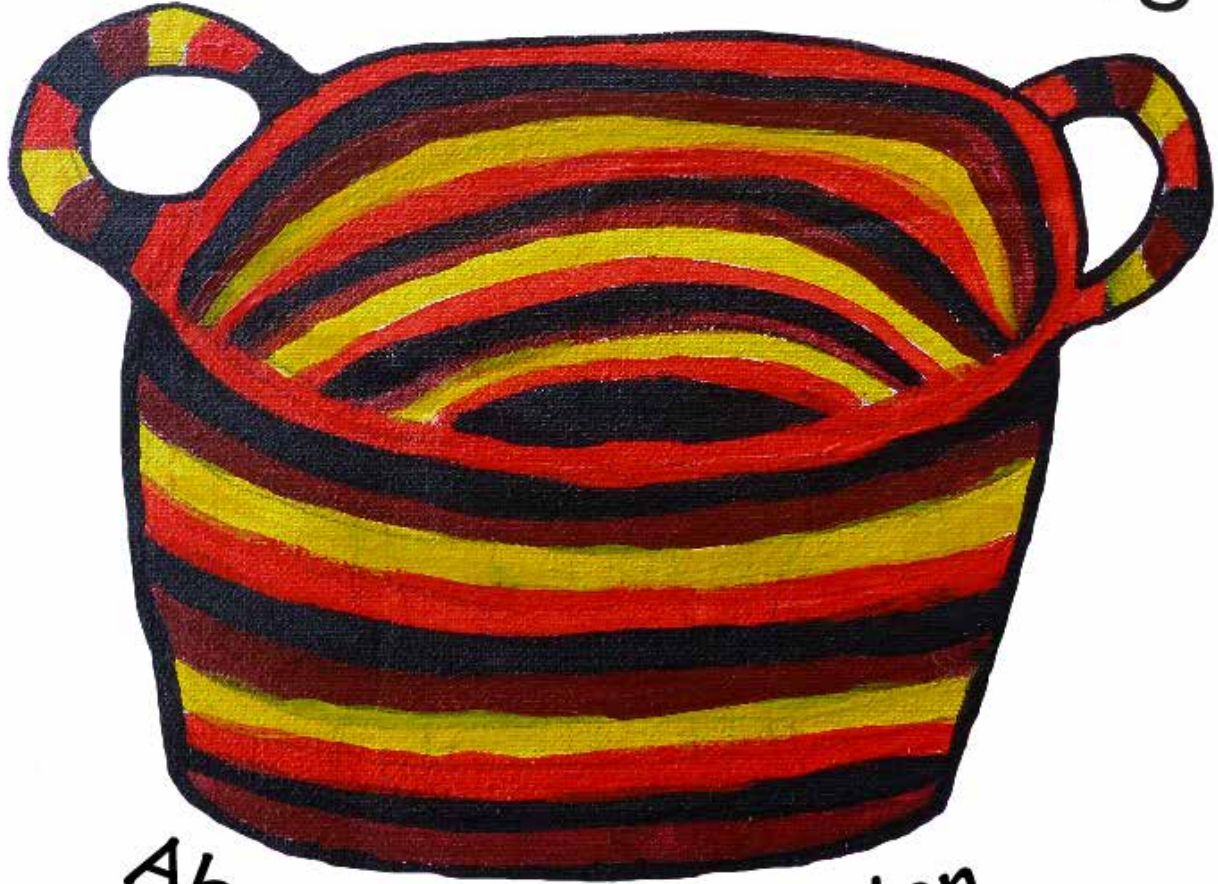


Nyälka Milingimbi Women's



Aboriginal Corporation

The story of the development of the Nyälka Milingimbi Women's Aboriginal Corporation.

A report on a project of the Indigenous Governance and Leadership Development project 2013-15

Yolŋu Leaders: Gwen Warmbirirr, Rebecca Nunydjulu, Jessie, Linda Wanaŋ, Janelle Guyir'kuyir, Ganygulpa, Judy Lirrinyin, Farrah Gumbula

DRAFT

Facilitators: Juli Cathcart, Trevor van Weeren and Michaela Spencer

Background story

The NT Government funded the Northern Institute from Charles Darwin University to do Governance and Leadership work in five communities including Milingimbi.

The project planned to

- Better understand Aboriginal and Western governance systems and arrangements
- Develop new ways of supporting and growing knowledge and skills in governance and leadership
- Find better ways for Aboriginal and Western governance systems and arrangements to work together

After meetings with individuals and groups we agreed one of the projects we would start working on was looking at Governance through the process of exploring the idea of developing a women's Corporation at Milingimbi.

Meetings about a Women's Group or Organisation in Milingimbi

Wednesday 28th May 2014

Present: Gwen Warmbirrri, Linda Wana, Janelle Guyir'kuyir, Rebecca Nunydjulu, Gwendoline Banbaniwuy Yalukunbuy

Contacted but unavailable: Rose, Elvera, Judy Lirrinyin, Ganygulpa

Facilitators: Juli Cathcart (Northern Institute, CDU) and Merrilee Baker (Healthy for Life Coordinator, Milingimbi Health Centre) (Trevor van Weeren, NI, CDU for a short time)

We talked about possible pathways for incorporation:

- To make a new corporation just for women
- To maybe grow Gatjirrk Corporation to become an umbrella organisation for the festival and other areas including a Women's committee, Men's committee, Youth committee etc



Back L-R: Juli, Wana, Merrilee. Front L-R: Guyir'kuyir, Katelyn, Banbaniwuy, Warmbirrri (Absent: Nunydjulu)

We also talked about the new RJCP women's group and women's centre. We talked about activities they are doing and what the purpose of the RJCP women's centre is.

We decided that these are hard questions and a good starting place would be to talk about the AIMS and OBJECTIVES of this women's group.

Then we can work backwards to see if this women's group will fit with other groups and organisations in Milingimbi or needs to be separate.

Trevor left the meeting so we could talk freely and the women brainstormed these ideas:

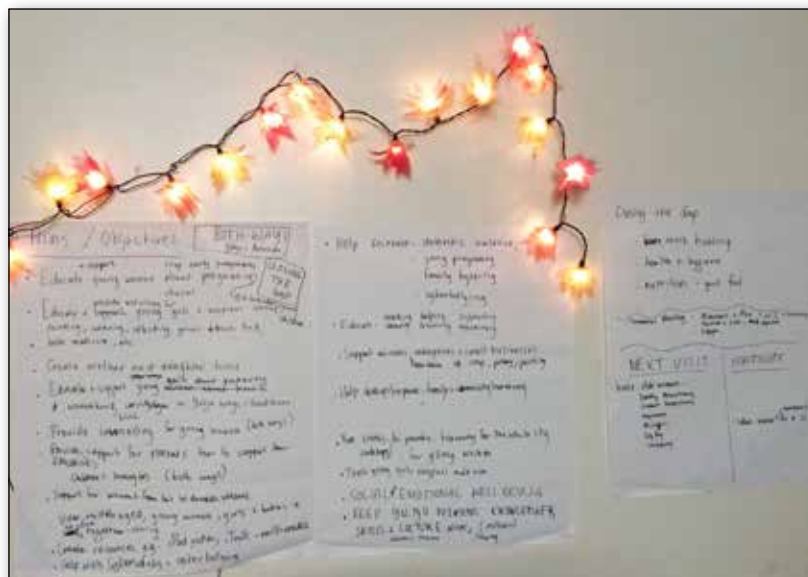
Ideas from the Aims and Objectives brainstorm:

- Educate and support young women – to stop early pregnancy, learn about pregnancy, make good choices, and learn about looking after babies and young children
- Educate and provide activities from young girls and women like hunting, collecting bush food, weaving, bush medicine etc

- Create mother and daughter time
- Educate about and support young girls during puberty and moving into womanhood, birth etc in both Yolŋu and Balanda ways
- Provide counselling for young and older women
- Educate and support for parents how to support their children and youth
- Support for women and families in domestic violence situations
- Create opportunities for women or all ages – from Elders to babies – to work together
- Create resources, e.g. video, digital, multi-media, Apps etc - by using and for use on iPads
- Help with cybersaftey and cyberbullying
- Help decrease domestic violence, young pregnancy, family fighting, cyberbullying etc
- Develop and support women's enterprises and small businesses
- Help develop and improve family and community harmony
- Run events/workshops for young women that promote harmony for the whole community
- Teach young girls raypirri rom
- Improve social and emotional well-being of women
- Keep Yolŋu women's knowledge, skills and culture alive and strong (women's business and ceremony, milkarri)

We agreed to meet again the next afternoon to share these ideas with other women and keep working.

Juli and Merrilee agreed to try to group the ideas from the brainstorm and to use these to write some draft objectives.



Thursday 29th May 2014

Present: Gwen Warmbirrri, Linda Wanan, Janelle Guyir'kuyir, Ganygulpa and Judy Lirrinyin

Contacted but unavailable: Rose, Maureen and Elvera

Facilitators: Juli Cathcart (Northern Institute, CDU) and Merrilee Baker (Healthy for Life Coordinator, Milingimbi Health Centre)

Reviewing and sharing the ideas from Wednesday

We shared the ideas from the brainstorm with Ganygulpa and Lirrinyin, who were happy with these.

The NPY Women's Council

Juli and Merrilee showed the website of the Naanytjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Aboriginal Corporation based in Alice Springs.

The NPY Women's Council started in 1980 so it has been running for a long time and is a good example of a strong women's organisation.

Next we looked at a video of the NPY Women's Council Chair and Coordinator talking about the NPY Women's Council.

Then Juli showed the NPY Women's Council Objectives and the Guiding Principles as an example.

NPY Women's Council Aboriginal Corporation Objectives

The central objective of the corporation is to relieve the poverty, sickness, destitution, distress, suffering, misfortune or helplessness among the Aboriginals of the NPY (Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara) communities and, for the purpose of advancing this central object, to:

- provide a forum for NPY women to discuss their concerns;
- assist and encourage the representation and participation of women from the NPY region on local, regional and other relevant bodies;
- help individual women and girls to achieve further training, education and employment;
- establish, provide and or promote services to improve the health and safety, education and general well-being of people in the NPY region;
- establish, provide and promote the artistic and cultural interests of NPY women;
- promote and support the achievements and authority of NPY women;
- gather and provide information about issues of importance to NPY women and to the broader community;
- promote and encourage the law and culture of NPY women;
- support and encourage other women and organisations who work towards similar aims.

Guiding Principles

ngapartji ngapartji kulinma munu iwara
wananma tjukarurungku - respect each other
and follow the law straight

kalypangu - conciliatory

piluntjungku - peaceful and calm

kututu mukulyangu - kind-hearted

tjungungku - united

kunpungku - strong



A Milingimbi women's group or organisation

We looked more at the NPY objectives (on orange paper) and the ideas for the objectives for a Milingimbi women's group or organisation (on blue paper).

We saw how many of the ideas people had for the Milingimbi women's group were also covered by the NPY objectives.

We kept discussing the ideas.

We talked about how the women's group could be a first port of call for women in Milingimbi.

We also talked about how we could publicise or market the women's group so everyone knew about it.

Then we talked about the next steps and homework.

Next steps and homework:

1. Think about a name for the Milingimbi Women's Aboriginal Corporation.
2. Ask women to write about the history of women's groups in Milingimbi to include in the Preamble of the Rule Book.
3. Think about and start activities for women like a 'Baby's Book'.
4. Think about going to Alice Springs to visit the NPY Women's Council and 'Edge of the Sacred Conference'.
5. Talk to older women and other women about a Milingimbi women's corporation – spread the word.

We also need to:

6. Discuss and agree on DRAFT objectives.
7. Look at ORIC 'questions to ask yourselves' when you are drafting objectives.

Friday 30th May 2014

On Friday, Juli and Merrilee looked at the ideas from the Milingimbi women and put them into groups.

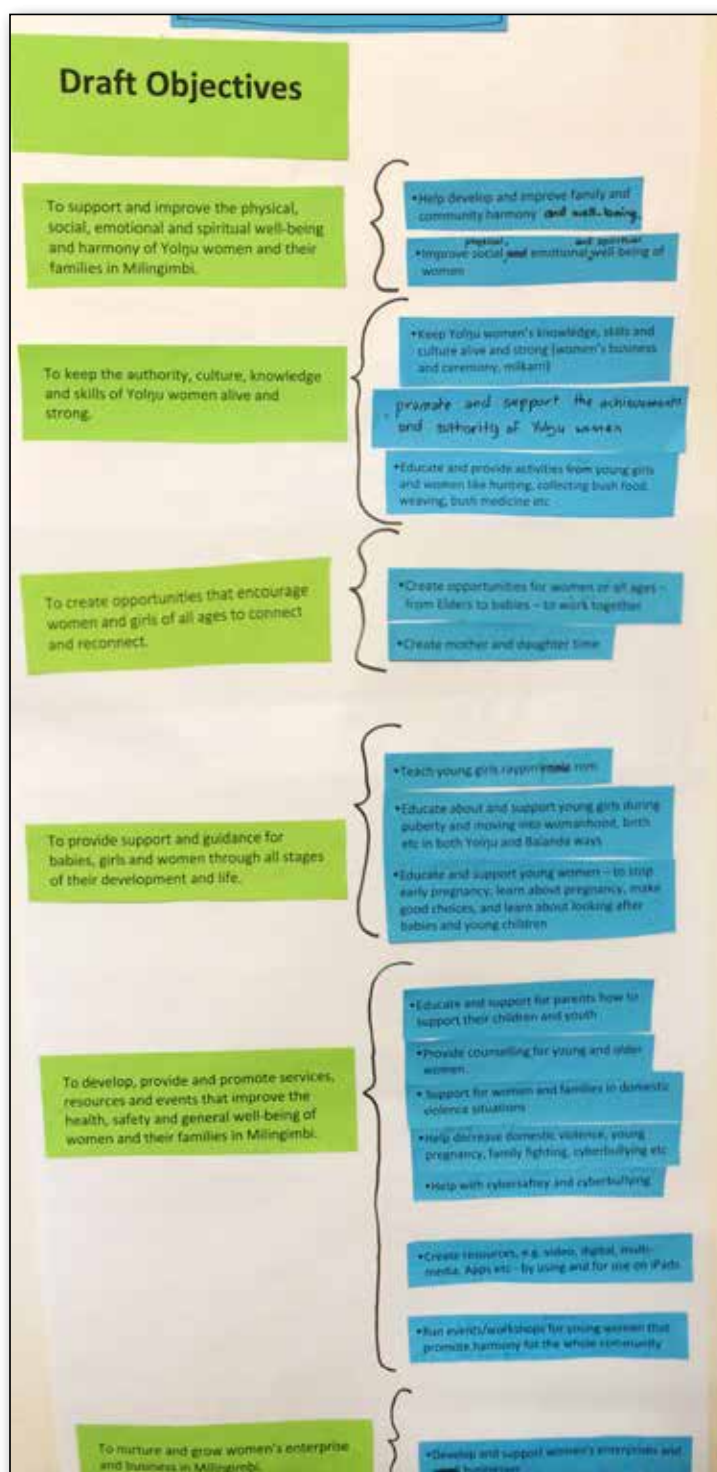
Then they wrote some draft objectives based on these groups of ideas.

DRAFT Objectives	Brainstormed ideas
To support and improve the physical, social, emotional and spiritual well-being and harmony of Yolŋu women and their families in Milingimbi.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help develop and improve family and community harmony• Improve physical, social, emotional well-being of women
To keep the authority, culture, knowledge and skills of Yolŋu women alive and strong.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep Yolŋu women's knowledge, skills and culture alive and strong (women's business and ceremony, milkarri)• Promote and support the achievements and authority of Yolŋu women• Educate and provide activities from young girls and women like hunting, collecting bush food, weaving, bush medicine etc
To create opportunities that encourage women and girls of all ages to connect and reconnect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create opportunities for women or all ages – from Elders to babies – to work together• Create mother and daughter time
To provide support and guidance for babies, girls and women through all stages of their development and life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teach young girls raypirri rom• Educate about and support young girls during puberty and moving into womanhood, birth etc in both Yolŋu and Balanda ways• Educate and support young women – to stop early pregnancy, learn about pregnancy, make good choices, and learn about looking after babies and young children

<p>To develop, provide and promote services, resources and events that improve the health, safety and general well-being of women and their families in Milingimbi.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate and support for parents how to support their children and youth • Provide counselling for young and older women • Support for women and families in domestic violence situations • Help decrease domestic violence, young pregnancy, family fighting, cyberbullying etc • Help with cybersafety and cyberbullying
<p>To nurture and grow women's enterprise and business in Milingimbi.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and support women's enterprises and small businesses

They put these onto coloured paper and made a wall chart to show the women.

Merrilee will share this with everyone.



Meeting - Thursday 23rd October 2014

Jessie Smith Park 3.30-5pm

Present: Rose Laynbalaynba, Gwen Warmbirrirr, Elizabeth Ganygulpa, Jessie, Farrah Gumbula, Gapalatha Julie, Julie's daughter, Mundhu Ganambarr, Rebecca Nunydjulu, Sandy (Anglicare), Gwenda Baker (writing a book about Bapa Sheppy)

Contacted but unavailable: Waymamba, Dorothy

Facilitator: Trevor van Weeren, NI, CDU Note taker: Michaela Spencer, NI, CDU

We met at Jessie Smith Park to continue talking about a Women's Group in Milingimbi.

As an introduction to the meeting, Rose said a prayer and told her story of her families relationship to Milingimbi. Trevor also introduced the work that some of the women had already done with Juli, Merrilee and Trevor talking about a Women's Group in Milingimbi, and read out the Draft Objectives that had been created at the last meeting.

Draft Objectives:

- To support and improve the physical, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing and harmony of Yolŋu women and their families in Milingimbi.
- To keep the authority, culture, knowledge and skills Yolŋu women alive and strong.
- To create opportunities that encourage women and girls of all ages to connect and reconnect.
- To provide support and guidance for babies, girls and women through all stages of their development and life.
- To develop, provide and promote services, resources and events that improve the health, safety and general wellbeing of women and their families in Milingimbi.
- To nurture and grow women's enterprise and business in Milingimbi.

We talked about these objectives, and some of the ways in which a Women's Group might support young children, young mothers and young couples in Milingimbi.

Jessie talked about the old women's group that was helped by Doreen Lawton, and the activities they did. We talked a little bit about the Alice Springs trip. We talked about problems with disciplining children, young couples, and the involvement of police. Ganygulpa talked about how it was a spiritual problem not just a Balanda and Yolŋu problem. We also recognised that an organisation would not solve all problems overnight, and that it was a big job.

We also talked about whether we should continue working towards building and nurturing a Women's organisation in Milingimbi. It was suggested that that this was a good opportunity, and that we would keep talking and working together and see what we might be able to achieve.

We discussed the idea of a steering committee, like having 2 representatives from every camp, and other ideas. In the end six women volunteered to be on the steering committee. It was suggested that at a later date four elders may also be asked if they would like to join.

Steering Committee:

1. Rose Laynbalanyba, 2. Rebecca Nunydjulu, 3. Jessie Gaykamaŋu, 4. Julie Gapalatha, 5. Gwen Warmbirrirr, 6. Farrah Gumbula 7. Judy Lirrinyin, 8-10 To be appointed

We agreed that we would meet again week Tuesday 28th October starting at 3.30-4 pm to run a workshop to catch-up new women, and to work on the next steps we could take.

Workshop - Tuesday 28th October, 2014

We held the workshop at the Government Engagement Building. The purpose of the workshop was for the steering group to take the next steps in the journey of making a Women's organisation for Milingimbi.

Present: Farrah Gumbula, Judy Lirriyin, Julie Gapalatha, Rebecca Nunydjulu, Rose Laynbalaynba, Gwen Warmbirriri, Mundhu Ganambarr. Contacted but unavailable: Jessie

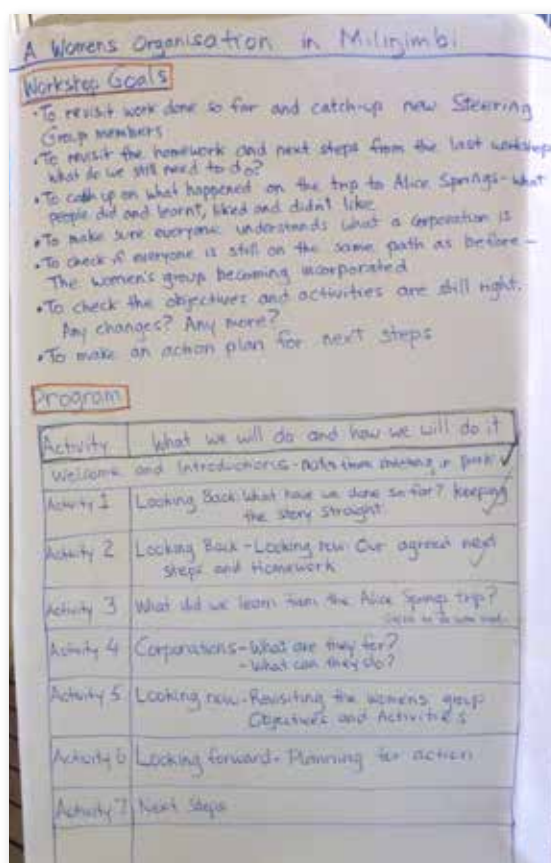
Facilitators: Trevor van Weeren (NI, CDU) and Michaela Spencer (NI, CDU)

Meeting start: 5pm

Workshop Goals

- To revisit work done so far and catch up new Steering Committee members
- To revisit the homework and next steps from last workshop and see how we went – what we still need to do
- To catch up on what happened on the trip to Alice Springs – what people did and learnt, liked, didn't like
- To make sure everyone understands what a corporation is
- To check if everyone is still on the same path as before – the women's group becoming incorporated
- To check the objectives and activities are still right. Any changes? Any more?
- To make an action plan for next steps

Workshop Program	
Activity	What we will do and how we will do it
	Welcome and introductions
Activity 1:	LOOKING BACK: What we have done so far? Keeping the story straight
Activity 2:	LOOKING BACK – LOOKING NOW: Our agreed Next Steps and Homework
Activity 3:	WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM THE ALICE SPRINGS TRIP
Activity 4:	CORPORATIONS – WHAT ARE THEY FOR? WHAT CAN THEY DO?
Activity 5:	LOOKING NOW – REVISITING THE WOMEN'S GROUP'S OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES
Activity 6:	LOOKING FORWARD – PLANNING FOR ACTION
Activity 6:	NEXT STEPS?



We looked at the notes made from the meeting the week before, in Jessie Smith Park, and agreed that they were a good account of what happened, and that they can go into the book which holds the story of this group and our discussions.

Rose talked about some of the things the group could support women and children to be doing.

- Sitting with kids and going crabbing
- Can take them camping for a night to Dhippiri or (Rapama)

- Can sing with the kids, tell bush stories, look for and cook proper food
- Learn about traditional dances
- The whole community can sit down quietly and learn
- Not just one boss, but everything level
- It can be relaxing, get the stress off your back
- Learning bush medicine, and teaching kids how to make bush medicine
- Teaching kids how to cook traditionally, and helping the community to eat well

Rose also talked about how there was a crisis in the community and that we could start something good. Then slowly step-by-step bring in elderly women.

There were also some other ideas:

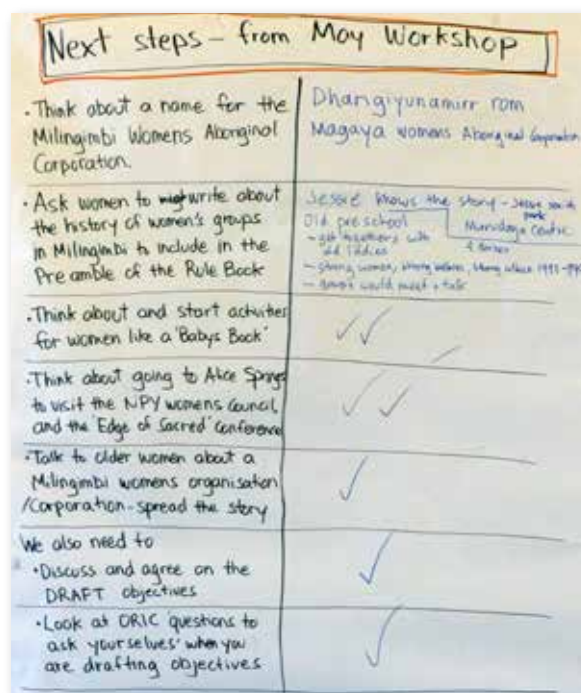
- Could transfer the work-for-the-dole people in the existing women's group over to the work being done by this group. People working for RJCP don't get paid, they just get their Centrelink payments.
- We can help this work because we can help with the governance and corporation work, to help people develop and take control of women's work which they would like to do.
- Judy, Lily Roy or Rose are the best people to start making baskets. They can make little ones to start with, and hang them up. Can go out to the airstrip, the islands or Dhippiri to collect pandanus, and roots for making yellow and other dyes.
- Can talk to Warwick the ranger about getting a boat for 1 day's business.

Activity 1: LOOKING BACK: What we have done so far? Keeping the story straight.

We went back to retelling the story from the May workshop and shared how the group had looked at NPY Womens group to get an idea of what other womens groups are trying, we shared the story of their principles, which they have made available to everyone via their website.

Activity 2: LOOKING BACK – LOOKING NOW: Our agreed Next Steps and Homework

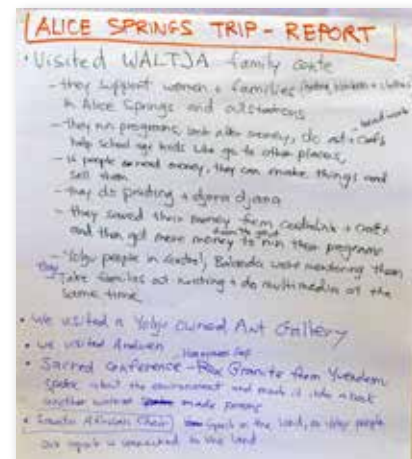
Then we looked at the homework from the last workshop, there was discussion about a name and a picture, this is still on going. The history of Women's groups in Milingimbi was discussed - Jessie is the most knowledgeable, what to do with this is still unsure until we involve Jessie. We could 'tick-off' all the other items of homework because they had been done, or were an activity for later in the workshop.



Activity 3: What did we learn from the Alice Springs trip.

We started discussing the Alice Springs workshop and writing down what had happened and what people learnt. There was a lot of points we made about the WALTJA womens association visit and people started thinking again about ideas for Milngimbi. Gwen agreed to finish off the report.

We decided to finish at 7.30 and we all agreed to continue the workshop program on Thursday at the same times.



Thursday 28th October 2014

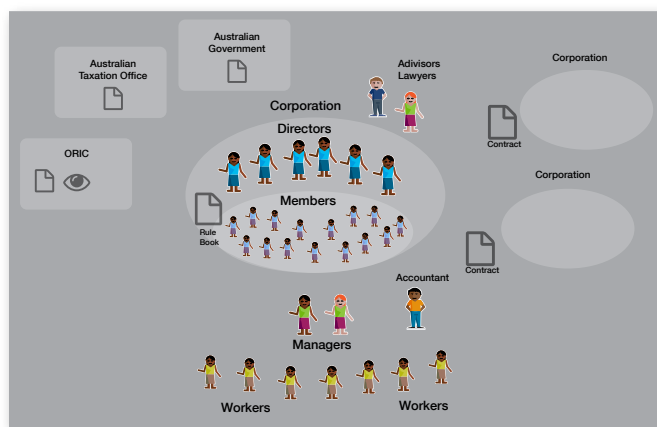
On thursday afternoon we continued with our program.

Present: Farrah Gumbula, Rebecca Nunydjulu, Rose Laynbalaynba, Gwendolyn Banbaniwuy, Gwen Warmbirriri, Mundhu Ganambarr.

Facilitators: Trevor van Weeren (NI, CDU) and Michaela Spencer (NI, CDU)

Activity 4: Corporations – what are they for? what can they do?

Trevor projected a picture of an idea of how a corporation works. He talked about a corporation as a legal 'body' with the same rights as a person. He also explained its general structure, and how there were a number of members of the corporation, and then a smaller group who were chosen by the members to be the directors. A question was asked about how often the directors of the corporation needed to meet, and while this might vary we thought that a directors meeting may be held every 3 months.



We also talked about how lawyers and accountants might help with the legal and financial side of the corporation's everyday functioning, and how once a corporation was registered it was able to be recognised by bodies like government and other corporations.

We also talked about how corporations can 'talk' to each other and make partnerships and agreements.

Then we went through the steps for an organisation to become a corporation with ORIC, the Office of the Registration of Aboriginal Corporations.

Activity 5: Looking now – revisiting the women's group's objectives and activities

We worked with the list of 'brainstormed ideas' and 'draft objectives' which had been developed at the first workshop for a Women's Group which had been facilitated by Juli, Merrilee and Trevor. Writing new ideas down on pieces of card, we thought about whether all of these activities mapped onto the objectives already outlined, or if we needed any new objectives.

We came up with some good new ideas, and found that they could be added to the objectives we already had. We

Steps to Registering an Aboriginal Corporation	
To register a new Aboriginal Corporation you need to take the following steps...	
STEP 1.	A group of people decide to form a new organisation.
STEP 2.	They form a Steering Committee
STEP 3.	The steering committee meets and works together to... <ul style="list-style-type: none">Fill out an Application to Register a Corporation FormDraft the rule book:<ul style="list-style-type: none">NameVisionValues or Guiding PrinciplesPreambleObjectivesMembersDirectorsDecision-making processes
STEP 4.	When the Draft Rule Book is finished the steering committee (and other interested people) hold a General Meeting to prepare documents for the registration of the Corporation <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Take accurate Meeting minutes to record the meeting2. Make an Attendance List of everyone at the meeting3. Sign a Resolution to endorse the draft the rule book4. People sign up to be a Members of the Corporation, then the members choose the first Directors5. The new Directors must sign Consent To Be Directors Forms6. All members and the directors fill out the Application to Register a Corporation Form
STEP 5.	The steering committee sends / emails 6 things to ORIC... <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. The Application to Register a Corporation Form2. The Rule Book3. The signed Resolution (Attachment A&B)4. The Meeting minutes of the meeting5. The Attendance List of everyone at the meeting6. The signed Consent To Be Directors Forms
STEP 6.	WAIT up to 28 days for ORIC to process and register the new corporation.

talked about how the only objective which may need to be added to the list was one which allowed the group to become registered as a charity, and agreed that this was a good idea.

Activity 6: Looking forward – planning for action

After having a break for dinner, we came back to the group and selected one idea which we would like to plan out and begin working towards. We chose 'promotion for the women's group'.

Trevor asked the questions What? Why? Who? Where? When? How? to help us think about the ways that we could begin promoting the Women's Group.

We watched a video produced by Anglicare which is similar to one we might like to produce as a group. Then we talked about what we might like to make to promote our own group. This included a You Tube video, a Yolŋu radio segment, a brochure and a Facebook page. We listed what we would need to do to make these things, including the images and information we would need and equipment we could use. We thought some more about what our name might be, what our logo could look like and about a motto for the group, and also listed people's names next to the jobs they would be responsible for.

Activity 7: Next steps?

When Trevor and Michaela next visit Milingimbi in the last week of November, we can continue putting into action the plan we developed around the promotion of the women's group.

In the meantime, there is some homework we can all carry out.

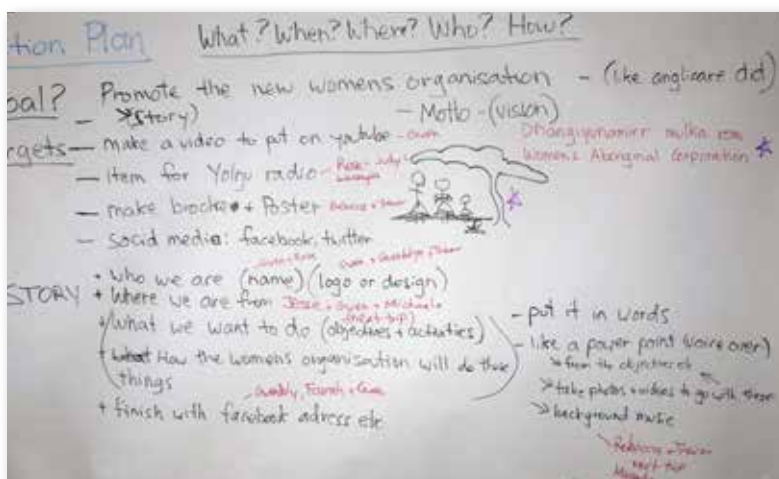
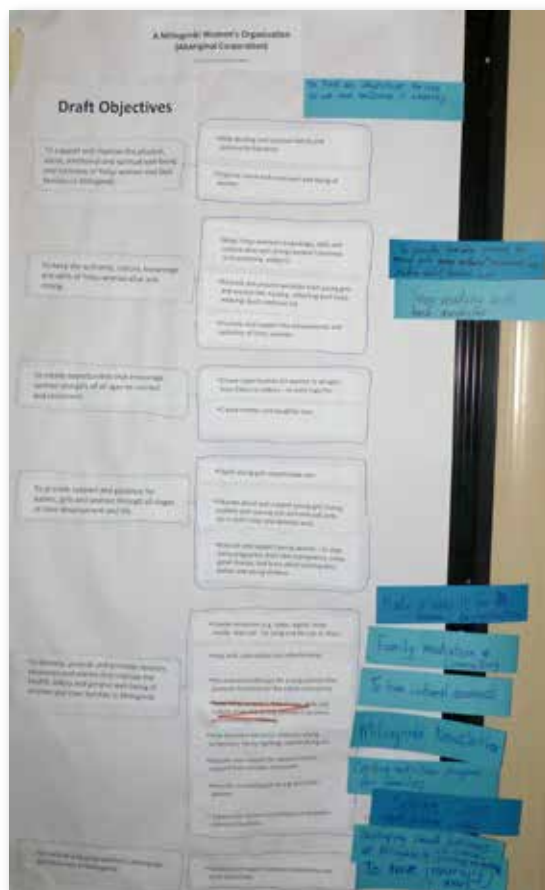
Trevor and Michaela will send through notes from the workshop to add to the book telling the story of the Women's Group which will be kept in Farrah's office

- Think about a motto/vision for the group
- Think about video and images to use in the You Tube video
- Try out some ideas of what to put in the story (script / storyboard)
- Share the stories with other women

Trevor asked if everyone was still happy to be going down this path, and working towards creating a corporation. Yes, everyone agreed this was still a good way to be going along.

Meeting finish: 8.20pm

A few days later Gwen got in touch with Trevor and said that Ganygulpa had spoken with her and they suggested a better name for the group would be Bathi Gurrukanhamirr.



Workshop - Thursday 27th November 2014

Present: Farrah Gumbula, Jessie Murarrgirarrgi, Rebecca Nunydjulu, Linda Wanaŋ, Janelle Guyir'kuyir, Gwen Warmbirrri, Gwendoline Banbaniwuy Yalukunbuy and Elaine Guymaliny. Mundhu Ganambarr was able to attend the last hour of the meeting.

Contacted but unable to attend: Judy Lirrinyin, Julie Gapalatha, Rose Laynbalaynba

Facilitators: Trevor van Weeren and Michaela Spencer (NI,CDU)

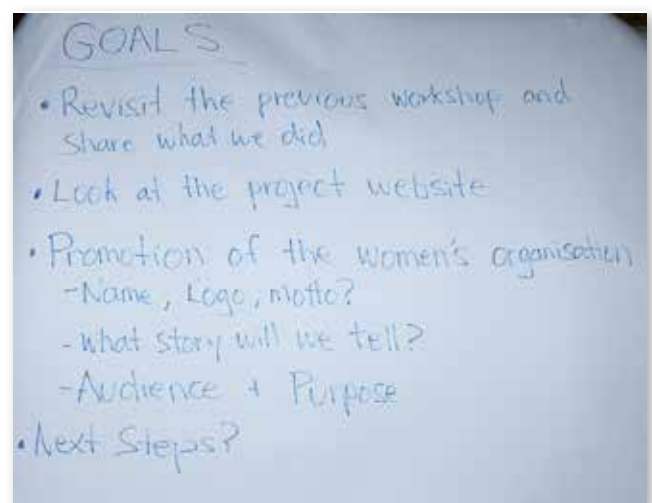
Meeting start: 4.45pm

We met at the GBM office to continue talking about a Women's organisation in Milingimbi, and to keep working on the promotion of the group.

At this workshop we were joined by Janelle Guyir'kuyir and Linda Wanaŋ who had been part of the group working with Juli and Merrilee, and by a new group member, Elaine Guymaliny.

Meeting Goals

- Revisit the previous workshop and share what we did
- Look at the Indigenous Governance and Leadership Project website
- Continue working on a promotion for the Women's Organisation
 - Name, logo, motto?
 - The story we want to tell
 - Audience and purpose
- Next steps



Revisit the previous workshop and share what we did

We looked at the report of the previous meeting so that we could remember what we did, and to let everyone know what happened. In particular, we revisited:

- The objectives of the organisation
- The picture of a corporation, and talked about the way the role played by directors, members, lawyers, accountants and the rule book, as well as how a corporation might relate to the government and other organisations.
- The plan for promoting the group, including a list of activities we wanted to carry out and who was responsible for each of them

Trevor also told the story of becoming incorporated as being a bit like a long journey that starts with crossing some water. He talked about the idea of the Yolŋu (the women's group) building a solid raft (a corporation) which will be able to carry us across together, past dangers and distractions. Could we imagine the raft being built from Yolŋu law and culture and also strengthened with Balanda law and culture (Corporate law) to help us navigate the future?

We talked about this story for a long time, thinking through what it means to work towards becoming a corporation.



Look at the Indigenous Governance and Leadership Project (IGLDP) website

There is a website for the ILGD Project. www.cdu.edu.au/groundup/igld. This site introduces the project and explains what it is about. It introduces many of the people involved, and the places – like Milingimbi – where work is being done.

Trevor asked the question: Can we put the story of the Milingimbi Women's Organisation up on this website?

This is so that other people, in government and in other communities can see the work that Women in Milingimbi are doing, how they are working together and what they are trying to achieve. Having this story visible to government may also assist funding applications that the Women's Group may make in the future.

After a lot more discussion, thinking through who would read the story of the Women's group and what purpose it would serve to be up on the website, we agreed that it would be OK for the notes and reports from previous meetings to be shown there.

Continue working on a promotion for the Women's Organisation

At the last workshop we talked about making a video promoting the Milingimbu Women's Organisation. Before this workshop Nunydjulu and Trevor had worked together to create an example of a video which would show current and historical pictures of Milingimbi with a voiceover.

We watched this video, and another video which has been made by several people at Galiwin'ku.

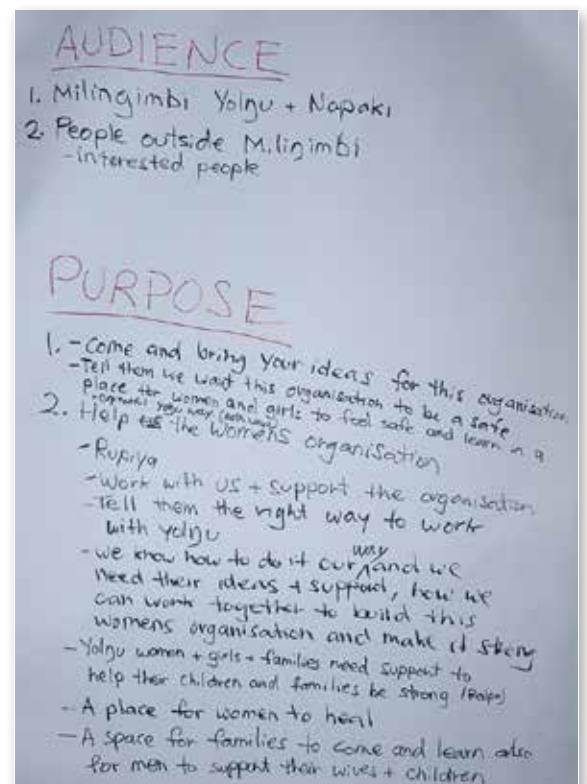
After dinner, we continued planning the promotion of the group. We thought about the 'audience' and the 'purpose' of the video, and listed these down.

Audience:

- Milingimbi Yolŋu and Balanda
- People outside Milingimbi – interested people

Purpose:

- Tell people to come and bring your ideas for this organization
- Tell people we want this organization to be a safe place for women and girls to feel safe and learn in a respectful Yolŋu way and also both ways
- To help the women's organization
- Help get access to Rupiya (Money)



- To welcome others to work with us and support the organization
- Tell the right way to work with Yolŋu
- We know how to do it our way but we need their ideas and support in how we can work together to build this women's organization and make it strong



- Yolŋu women and girls and families need support to help their children and families be strong and ralpa (disciplined)
- We want a place for healing for women and families
- Create a space for families to come and learn, also for men to learn how to support their wives and children

It was also suggested and agreed that...

- Warmbirrirr will continue planning what footage, images and stories will go in the video
- Janelle and Warmbirrirr can continue working on a script
- Nunydjulu and Janelle are able to use the iPad and video editing software (iMovie) to keep working on the video

A new name for the group: Nyälka

Warmbirrirr talked about how Nyälka would be a better name for the group, she showed us a picture she had painted of a basket for the logo.

We talked about how the basket was empty, but would be filled with stories and ideas from the women of Milingimbi, as well as how weaving this basket is also part of a healing process.

Trevor will add some text to the picture, on the computer, and send through ideas for a logo that we can look at.

New Steering Committee Members

During the meeting it was decided who would fill 3 more of the vacant seats on the steering committee:

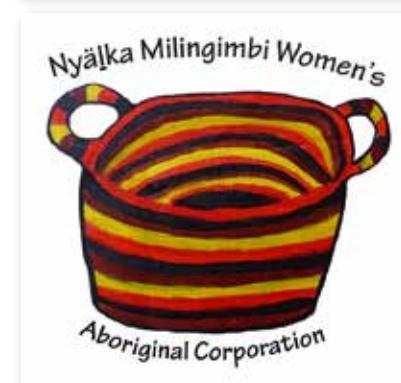
- Linda Wanan, Janelle Guyir'kuyi and Elaine Guymaliny

We now have 9 positions on the Steering Committee which are filled; and we talked about holding 3 more positions open for older women who may join us at a later date.

This was our last meeting for the year. We will meet again early next year when Trevor and Michaela return to Milingimbi

Meeting finish: 8.00pm

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Meeting - Thursday 16th April 2015

Nyälka Women's Corporation Meeting

Thursday 16th April, 2015

Present: Warmbirrirr and Nunydjulu

Contacted but unavailable:
Gayngulpa, Laynbalaynba, Jessie
Murragirragi

Facilitators: Trevor van Weeren (CDU)
and Michaela Spencer (CDU)

Location: Dhumdhum/ Adult
Education Building

This meeting was the first time we have come together to talk about the Women's Corporation in 2015. We recognised that the cyclone had caused a lot of disruption, and that it was not easy for people to attend the meeting this time.



The focus of this meeting was to:

- Recognise that there is only a few more months funding in the Governance and Leadership project which brings Trevor and Michaela to Milingimbi
- To think about what the next steps are for Nyälka
- Consider some opportunities for partnerships between Nyälka and other groups

Vision for a Women's Corporation in Milingimbi

We talked about whether this was the right time to create a Women's Corporation in Milingimbi. Are there enough people who are interested? Do the people involved have enough time to do this work alongside everything else they are also doing? Will there be a future for the group when the funding for the Governance and Leadership project is spent?

Warmbirrirr and Nunydjulu told us that they want to keep working on the Women's Corporation for Milingimbi, and they have a strong vision for what this group will be.

Nyälka will be a Yolŋu corporation that is being built from the grass roots. It is something that will belong to Yolŋu, it will not be an organisation which is imposed from above. It will be a Yolŋu corporation for Yolŋu, and for supporting women in Milingimbi.

We all agreed that with this strong vision, we can keep working together to build Nyälka, and to register it as a corporation which will be officially recognised by government and other organisations.

Possible partnerships

We talked about how it is difficult for a small corporation to succeed without help from others. If we join in partnership with other organisations, we can support each other.

There were several suggestions for partnerships:

- Nyälka might work with both the school and the clinic. In particular they might work together around early childhood programs
- Milingimbi may be chosen as a community which will host a childhood development program for 4 year olds called HIPPY. This program is administered through by the Brotherhood of St Laurence, and there is a possibility that Nyälka and Brotherhood of St Laurence may be able to partner with each other to run this program in Milingimbi

- Anglicare have developed a Play and Learn resource (PALS) for working with families and children in Milngimbi. There may be opportunities for Nyälka to form a partnership with Anglicare and to be involved or take responsibility for this working with families
- Margaret Stewart at the clinic is interested in working with Nyälka around the publication of the book 'Mother and Child'. When Nyälka are registered as a corporation, they will be able to receive grant funding to publish the book.
- There may be many other opportunities which arise...

Next steps for the corporation

We agree that it is a good idea to keep working on the documents which we need to complete so that Nyälka can be officially registered as an aboriginal corporation.

It is also a good idea to keep talking to people in the community, so that they are aware of the corporation, and can let us know if they are supportive.

We can also keep our ears open for other possibilities for partnerships for Nyälka

We have done a lot of good work already in creating a promotion for Nyälka. There is still a little bit more work to do before it is finished. It would be good to speak to some of the elder women in Milngimbi, and to hear some of their stories and wisdom. If we video them talking, we can include their voices in the promotion... and we can begin to fill up the Nyälka basket with stories and wisdom.

To do before next visit:

- We have created a poster/ survey about Nyälka and put it in the shop. This will help people to know that the corporation is being formed, and let them give their advice and ideas.
- Warmbirrri and Nunydjulu will keep talking to people about the corporation, in particular the elder's on the list we made
- Warmbirrri, Nunydjulu and Farrah will try to have a meeting in the library to finish the sections of the 'Rule Book' that we have not yet completed. We have the objectives, but not the vision and the principles written down.
- Trevor will send a copy of the draft Rule Book to help with this.
- Trevor and Michaela will keep talking to people about partnerships, in particular how we can work with the clinic (through Margaret Stewart and Kate Austin)

To do next visit:

- Trevor and Michaela will organise to have a meeting with Nyälka, the clinic and the school to discuss how we may like to work together
- Warmbirrri, Nunydjulu, Trevor and Michaela will go on the weekend to video some of the old women in each camp for the promotion
- Trevor and Michaela will organise a meeting of all members to officially elect a board of Directors
- We will complete all the paperwork so we can send it off and Nyälka can be registered as a corporation.

Trevor and Michaela will be in Milngimbi again 11th – 20th May, 2015.

We look forward to seeing everyone then!

Meeting Monday 18th May 2015

Where: Dhumdhum, Adult Education Building, 4.30 pm

Present: Gwen Warmbirrri, Jessie Muragiragi, Rebecca Nunydjulu

Facilitators: Trevor van Weeren and Michaela Spencer

We met for another meeting of the Nyälka Women's Corporation. We revisited the discussion of what a corporation was, and why we might want to create one in Milingimbi. In particular, Jessie talked about how it was important that what people knew and felt and wanted for the future in Milingimbi was able to travel to Darwin and be heard there, rather than the stories travelling the other way.



Then we looked at the Rule Book and some of the decisions still to be made before the Rule Book and Constitution for the corporation are complete (see below).

Name: Nyälka Milingimbi Women's Corporation

Vision: To be completed

Objectives: Listed in Rule Book

Members: Aged 15 years or over

Living in Milingimbi or homelands ONLY

Directors: To be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander ONLY

There will be 4-5 Yolŋu directors

There may also be a balanda mentor who will work closely with one (or all) of the directors



General meeting: To be held 11-1pm, 17th June 2015

A meeting for all miyalk mala

We talked about the Rule Book and about how it lays out the law or the rom of the corporation. This is a rom which stays the same, and which is independent of the individual members or directors of the corporation at any given time.

We also discussed whether the corporation should become a charity. We agreed that it should and agreed that our objectives should include a clause which identifies the group as a charity. Trevor mentioned that there are some lawyers who will work for Nyälka for free to check that this clause, and the rest of the constitution is correct. These lawyers will make sure that the Rule Book for the corporation is correct and can be submitted to ORIC. They may be happy to help with other things in future, however, the main responsibility for making sure that the corporation runs smoothly and for making sure the rules in the Rule Book are followed, lies with the directors.

We will hold the first AGM for Nyälka when Trevor and Michaela come back next trip. Warmbirrri and Nunydjulu will speak to the school principle and arrange to have some time off, and Trevor and Michaela we will organise to hire a car so we can pick people up. We will go around at 10.30 collecting people, and we will meet to have lunch and to elect the members and the directors of the corporation.

Meeting Wednesday 18th June 2015

Location: Dhumdhum, Batchelor Annex

Present: Helen, Gwen Warmbirrri, Rebecca Nunydjulu, Janelle, Ruth, Joanne Baker, Sandy Hyde, Trevor Van Weeren, Michaela Spencer

At this meeting we revisited the journey of the Women's Corporation. We recognised that the project supporting Trevor and Michaela's visits to Milingimbi would soon be finished, and that now was a good time to work out the next steps for the corporation.



Timeline:

- The first meeting for this group took place in May 2014. At this meeting the initial idea of starting Women's corporation was discussed. Over a number of subsequent meetings, the objectives for the group were decided on and a visit to Alice Springs to see another Aboriginal Corporation was organised.
- In October 2014 a big meeting was held in the GEC building. This meeting was attended by many interested women, and here we decided on the name and logo for the Corporation, as well as finalised the objectives and began planning a promotion.
- At the next meeting in November 2014 we continued to think about the work of creating a corporation, and Trevor drew the picture of a river which we had to cross and the long road which we would travel as we built this organisation. When looking at this picture, we considered questions about how we would stay safe on this journey, and what we needed to do if we were going to cross the river together.

Where are we now?

Many of the women in this meeting are also involved in a number of other programs which connect with women and children in the community. We created a list of these organisations:

- Nyälka
- RJCP Women's group
- Yuta Miyalk (Group at the school run by Anits/Janelle/Chloe)
- Strong Women/Strong Babies Program
- Nutrition Program (Shire/Health Centre/ Anglicare)
- Playgroup (Anglicare)
- FAST
- FAFT
- Family Support Program
- Art Centre
- Church
- Rec Hall

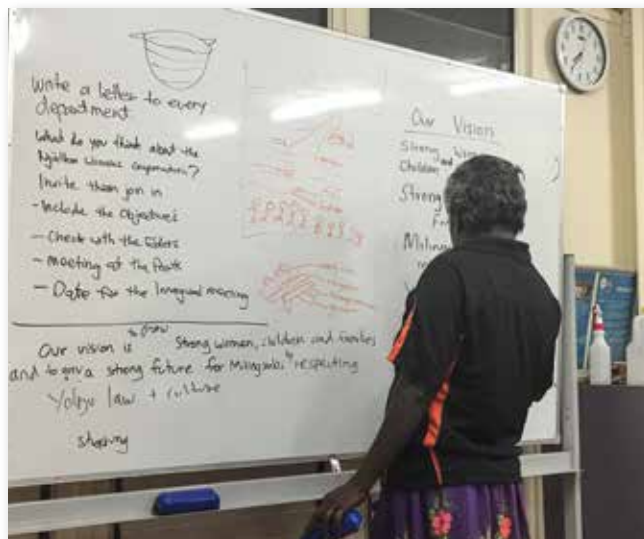


- Community members and senior elders

Keeping in mind this list, we now knew where we could go and speak to their women who may want to become involved in Nyälka, and also the people who we should keep informed about what Nyälka is doing, how it would like to work and what it seeks to achieve.

What can we do now?

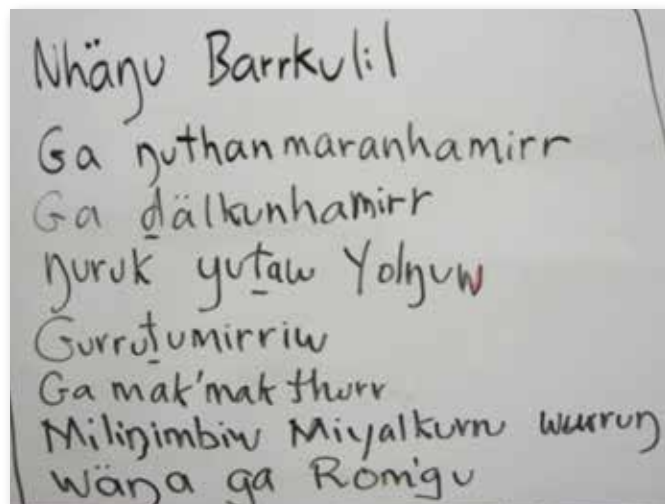
- Write a letter to every department asking them – ‘what do you think about the Nyälka Women’s Corporation?’ and include the objectives of the organisation.
- Part of what it will be important to express in the letter is that Nyälka is a group that is about Yolŋu knowledge and Yolŋu values.
- We can also check with the elders, have a meeting in the park and set a date for our Inaugural Meeting.
- Pamphlet: We can turn the story of everything that has happened as we have grown Nyälka into one document. This is something that can be shown to others, for example at the clinic or school, alongside the rule book to explain what Nyälka is about and what it is doing
- Motto: One idea for a motto is – ‘Strong Women, Strong Children, Strong Future’
- Vision: We worked together to create a vision for Nyälka which can be included in the rule book. This vision was written in English and Yolŋu matha.



Evaluation/ Road Map

We talked about where the project was now, and how we would evaluate the work we have done and the way in which Trevor and Michaela have come to Miligimbi to work with people at the grass roots. There were many different comments made by people:

- ‘Things are still rough at the moment. We have come a long way, but the corporation still needs a lot of polishing.’
- ‘We are still on a rough road and the road needs to be smooth, tell your Steering Committee to look for more help so we can practice this work we have started. You need to ask them for more money to come back and finish the road, even though that road is still rough, is there any way we can get a director (manager) in, while the road is still rough. Our basket is empty, we need someone here while you are not here.’
- ‘We have learnt about Governance, but as we go along we need to learn more. Sometimes Yolŋu people are being pushed down, they think that we don’t have governance and leadership here, but its there, it exists. There is a Balanda blanket covering us’
- ‘The work we have been doing started slow and is beginning to grow.’
- ‘The ideas we have need to be joined by others.’
- ‘We need to ask for more funding so we can continue smoothing the rough road.’
- ‘It would be good to have a director while the road smoothing is still in process’
- ‘Balanda will be a mentor, supporting the corporation.’



- 'This way you are working shows respect. It helps to make people feel comfortable and proud, not afraid. It is showing respect to the community so they can learn what is being taught. Not putting on pressure, listening and getting ideas, sharing ideas and knowledge.' It was suggested that the Women's group along with the Northern Institute were doing 'Bun'kumu dalkum' literally 'knees-make-strong' meaning it was helping people stand up confidently and with strength.

Other business

We also discussed the following

- Making a video of the story of the Women's Groups in the past
- What about the new Family Centre. It sounds like the Council will have 'cost-recovery' arrangement for the building. We could write a letter to the Council about how we might be able to use it. We should think more about this for next time? Even though we don't have a building we could do it in a Yolŋu way, outdoors.
- Hippy program, is it a good thing? Michaela had spoken with Brotherhood of St Lawrence and told what she had found out about the program. Yolŋu tutors would work with 4 year old kids for 20 minutes a day, five days a week. After some discussion it was decided there was already many programs running and the Women were not really interested at this stage.

Next meeting

Innagural (first) members meeting 3pm on the 5th August, 2015. A big meeting at the school with a sausage sizzle to complete the paperwork, sign up memberships and directors for the corporation.

