

Petition

20 May 2015

To
Chief Minister
Adam Giles
GPO Box 3146
Darwin NT 0801

To
Bess Price
Minister for Local Government and Community Services
GPO Box 3146
Darwin NT 0801

To
Senator Nigel Scullion
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Prime Minister and Cabinet
PO Box 6100
Canberra ACT 2600

And an open Letter to anyone who is interested in our story

I am writing this petition on behalf of the Milingimbi Makarr Garma

The Milingimbi Makarr Garma is a legitimate decision making forum for the Yolŋu of Milingimbi. The Makarr Garma is constituted through the law and has jurisdiction for all things discussed in this petition. Makarr Garma is a foundation or a site. It's the actual ground that we practice on; the place where we practice our law and order. Makarr Garma is place, people and practice all in one. It is a public site where we can make decisions and fulfill contracts.

We are the constituted leaders and respected elders of the clans living at Milingimbi. These clans include the Traditional Owners of Milingimbi and the other clans living here. We govern the Yolŋu of Milingimbi through the Yolŋu law that is unchanging. We have been living under this law from the beginning.

We held a Milingimbi Makarr Garma on Tuesday 19 May 2015 to discuss some of the issues that are pressing concerns for us and our community. We petition you to hear our concerns and respectfully request you to engage with us and help us find ways to resolve and develop strategies to address these issues.

We are looking for basic control over our community, to be able discipline our kids with confidence and to work closer with police. We are seeking an ongoing dialogue with ministers and authorities at the highest level to work with us on these issues together. We know there no easy solutions and this will take time. We need to work on this from the ground up and not have more top-down solutions forced on us. We are seeking meaningful engagement to work through issues and to work together into the future.

The Milingimbi Makarr Garma has endorsed me to be the facilitator for future discussions. I offer my services and will help constitute the Milingimbi Makarr Garma to meet with you at a time to be arranged.

Yours sincerely,

Nākarrma (Mark Yinyi) Guyula

yinyi.mg@gmail.com

0467 095 650

About Nākarrma Guyula

- Liyadhalinymirr elder and ceremonial leader
- Coordinator and spokesperson of the Milingimbi Makarr Garma
- Spokesperson for the Yolŋu Nations Assembly
- Lecturer in Yolŋu Studies, Charles Darwin University
- Liaison Officer for the Northern Regional Council of Congress in East Arnhemland
- Board member of Aboriginal Resource and Development Services
- Cultural Adviser to Mäpuru Christian School
- Collaborator with Sharing Stories
- Member of the Milingimbi Local Authority

Following are the issues discussed at the Milingimbi Makarr Garma Tuesday 19 May 2015 and the attached signatures of those people of Milingimbi who support this petition. (120+)

Police/Law and order

Noise complaints

When we have funerals (that sometimes go all night) we expect Balanda to respect our culture and not complain and get the police to shut down the noise. When we have fellowship services in camps we want to be respected. In these fellowships we want to show our children our traditional songs and have gospel singing rather than learning bad things through contemporary music with its obsessions with sex and violence.

Entry into Ceremonial sites

We are concerned about police not respecting our sacred ceremonial laws. We need to develop a better working relationship with Police, together.

Children and discipline

We are looking for ways to discipline our children, we are afraid to give them a smack, (tough love). We need to clarify the difference between tough love discipline and wrong discipline (so they live a good life and don't get into early pregnancy, drugs etc). We are feeling disempowered with all these laws coming over us and we feel helpless watching our children go down a deep hole into a mess.

Drugs

We understand and support the Balanda law in this regard, if we can, we can try and help. If we talk together we can make agreements about how we can work together on this issue.

Husband/Wife problems

We have the systems in place to deal with these issues and we need to work WITH police, together.

Communication with Police

How can we trust Police when they only live in their station, and they are disrespectful in the way they treat people, chaining them up etc. We would like the Police to have more cross-cultural understanding about the way our culture works. We have been born into Yolŋu Rom (law) and Gurruṯu (kinship) and we have a system of law and responsibilities. We also have systems of dealing with wrong-doing and we have Magaya Rom (peace making law). We should be given a chance to sort things out ourselves first. When the police boat comes from Ramingining everyone stands still, wondering who is next, who is going to get in trouble. When Balanda [Police] walk in and intervene the trouble is not really resolved, a lid is just put on the hornets nest. We need a new agreement or a new way of working together, based on dialogue and agreements. Can we have a say about who comes here to do policing? Can we see their references? Can we deliver cross-cultural training at the highest level to the leaders of the police?

Homelands

We have concerns about the threats to our homelands. We see all sorts of news on the television that makes us worry. We want to be part of the dialogue about homelands and sustainability.

RJCP, Jobs, Training

People feel there are no real jobs and that their certificates are worth nothing. There seems to be no recognition of prior learning. With every new system that is introduced trainees feel they start all over again. Identification requirements (ochre card, white card etc) are only worth a few points and we always have trouble with our identification (or at least Balanda have trouble with our identification). For example, in the ALPA store everyone is known and what qualifications they have. With RJCP and Centrelink people have to start all over again. RJCP has rules that come from the top down.

The SIHIP (housing) did training and provided work (and some completed certificates) but every time a new system is introduced and the bar is raised again for Yolŋu.

We hear many negative stories about us and the way we might do things.

We recognize that we need to encourage our people to go into the Balanda places and find out what goes on and be prepared to learn. But on the other hand we feel that Balanda need to be prepared to find out about us as well.

Fishing rights, Rangers, Land management

Balanda laws are forcing us to behave in certain ways but we have been living here for many years and we know how to use our natural resources responsibly, We have been doing this for thousands of years.

Barramundi is our totem. We are related to this fish and we care about it in a deeper way than just protecting them. Through this we know how to care for this resource.

What are the new Ranger programs teaching our rangers? Is it all about Balanda rules and science or do they have a real heart for our Yolŋu ways?

Clinic and Health

We have had senior health bureaucrats asking us where is the Yolŋu voice in this community towards health issues. Little resources are used to support the Yolŋu voice that is here.

Why aren't the renal patients from Milingimbi back here in Milingimbi? Can't we bring the service that is being delivered in Darwin be delivered here at Milingimbi, so patients can be with their families and have opportunities to partake in community life and eat fresh food?

Education

Our children are going to school, or not. Our children are finishing school and there is nothing for them: no apprenticeships, no jobs, no post-secondary education. We send our kids away to boarding schools. We want to work on the curriculum together. There is too much of this government saying that WE know what is good for your children, but we also know what is good for our children, we need more dialogue here too. The gap in education is not about bringing our students into the mainstream and make us live like Balanda. We need to help teach our children who they are. 'Equality' or being the same is Balanda is only making the gap wider.

Court

Sacred Dilly bag needs to be taken off to go into Balanda court. Yolŋu understand if we are going to fight this higher law we are going to confront it with our own higher law. But the court ignores our law. We need more effort in working through customary laws and working it in with Balanda law. If a senior elder comes to court with his sacred dilly bag they are not recognized. What would happen if these lawyers come into our ceremony and see what its like? With Yolŋu we can bring the law and clans together and negotiate.

99 year lease

We saw this happen at Gunbalanya. We are still concerned about these. We are offered millions of dollars but will lose control of our land.

Aged Care

We have our aged people struggling in overcrowded houses. They are living in a situation that is very difficult for them because of what happens to a house when it is overcrowded. It difficult for anyone to take responsibility for the house subsequently they can be not ideal living conditions for old people. We need to negotiate plans to sort out this problem.

Council

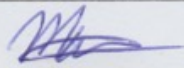
Local Authorities seem to be in the Councils pocket. We need an opportunity to say what we want without fear of reprisal or be under a law that is not ours.

Now with the council office we have to go in through the back way, the front door is closed. We need a Council Services Manager that joins into community life. We leave our homes to come into their spaces but they are not reciprocating.

To the best of my knowledge the Local Authority is constituted by the Government, it's not a Yolŋu structure. We have a law that works. If there is a Government that puts on this power then we will come to that space and participate [the local Authority]. We know that the Local Authority is in the Government's pocket. At the same time when we put a law here, then we expect Balanda to come and participate with us.

[illegible]

Name	Clan	Signature
Michael	Durrungga	Wutjara
Tommy	Gaykamanyu	Nipaway
Grace	Wulo Wulo	Dhamarrandji
Joe	Dhamarrandji	Gaykamanyu
ALFRED	Wahpaya	
EDDIE	GAMBARR	Gaykamanyu
JUSTIN	Durruminy	DHAMARRADJ
JOHN	Ganinyurray	Manyarray
KELVIN	Yirrindili	Gorgindili
Merryl	Nyikalaway	Cumitjindji
TREVOR	Wulumba	GANAMBARR
MERVIN	Namfjirny	GENDARRA
Leslie	Currandjiny	Currandjiny
GILBERT DAVID	Garrawarra	MABUBU
LESEY LADIAGAN	Gaykamanyu	LESEY
Frankie Munurrny	Marrkula	MUNUARRUNG
Milindirri	Gaykamanyu	Nellie Milindirri
Maminggaya way	Wanybarra	Edith
Allen Hanybu	Dhamarrandji	
LESEY MUDAKA		
Judy Ciawuki	Wanybarra	JUDY Ciawuki
John mayatjun	Garrawirrtja	Mudakun
Barry Laydjapan		Barry

Name	Clan	Signature
Mark GUYULA	Dambarrupuyi	
Clancy Bindirriy	Garramurra	
Brett Liyapan	Naymil	Brett Liyapan
ANDREW	BUYKUWANGU	
ITABU	DHAMARRANDSI	Itan Dhamarrandi
Dianna	Burrayaraway	
Danny	mardama	
Donald N. Gaykany	GUYAPUYNGU	DN Gaykany
RICHARD NAWIA	DHAMARRANDSI	R Nauri
BRENDON	GAYKAMANGU	WARRINYINBA
Jason	GOMAIRIZAYAWU	
Terence	Ste. nact	
Jocelyn Nalankaraway	Dambarrupuyi	Jocelyn Nalankaraway
Judy Buthungeliway	Djambarrupuyi	Judy Buthungeliway
Elvira Manybuna	Wangurri	Elvira Manybuna
Josh Galanawa		J Galanawa
DION MacLananby		DION MacLananby
Joe Wul Wul		Joe Wul Wul

Name	Clan	Signature
Jason Wanambi	Marrangu	Jason Wanambi
Joshua Wanambi	Marrangu	Joshua Wanambi
Margaret Matay	Djambarrpuyngu	Margaret Matay
Ada Nalinggi	Djambarrpuyngu	Ada Nalinggi
Betty Gilingari	Djambarrpuyngu	
Peter Rirripagan	Garrawarra	Peter Rirripagan
Elizabeth Gaminjapay	Gaykamarngu	Elizabeth Gaminjapay
Jamie Minimay	Gaykamarngu	Jamie Gaykamarngu
Elizabeth Wurrulga	Djambarrpuyngu	Elizabeth Wurrulga
Kathleen Wandsalawuy	Djambarrpuyngu	
Motiti		
Helen Motiti	Djambarrpuyngu	Helen Motiti
Mirand Goyula	Djambarrpuyngu	Mirand Goyula
Jmany Jawuki	Garrawarra	Justine M
Ray Wulumayr	Wanybarrnga	Ray Wulumarr
Richard Garapana	Gaykamarngu	Garapana
ROBYN	Wanybarrnga	GANUPAL
Keith BIBUMAWUY	Djambarrpuyngu	BIBUMAWUY
Timothy Bulummi	Djambarrpuyngu	TIMOTHY
Matthew Dharrgar	Djambarrpuyngu	MATHEW DHARRGAR
Stephanie	Dhamarrandji	Dhorrminy

Name	Clan	Signature
Marie Wangurru	Wangurri	M Wangurru
JONATHAN YALANDJA GUPA	Gupa	J. Yalandja
Harry Wirrimbits	Wangurri	Harry Wirrimbits
DAVID GAWURRYAWUY	Djambarrupuy	DAVID GAWURRYAWUY
DAVID DARRAWUK	Wangurri	DAVID DARRAWUK
Elaine Guymaliny	Gupapuyngu	E Guymaliny
ANITA DIENATHI	Dhalwangu	A. Dienathi
Edgar	Gupapuyngu	Edgar Gay
Sandra	Gamalanga	Sandra Rambatu
Naomi Cooper	Baker	Naomi Baker
Esther W	Wubulkarra	Esther Warrngayun
JOSEPH	GUPAPUYNGU	JOSEPH
Sabine Djalanwan	Gaykamayu	
Priscilla Guyula	Djambarrupuy	Priscilla Guyula
Joshua Bunbatsun	Wanambi	JO SHUA
Sharon Bidiwangu	Gupapuyngu	Sharon
Daisy Nakarran	Garrawurra	D. Nakarran
Stanley Mawulburra	Djambarrupuy	STANLEY
Ruth Gumarinya	Wangurri	Ruth Gumarinya
SABRINA	Malarra	SABRINA
Eddie Maymayun	Gaykamayu	MAYMAYUN
Margaret	Djarrwid	Margaret Djarrwid
Peter Mangyuku	Ganambarr	Peter Mangyuku