



MALANDARRI FESTIVAL

ARTISTIC REPORT 2018

15th – 16th June 2018



Artback NT



Yanyuwa dancers performing



Contents

Introduction 2

Staffing 5

Pre-festival Activity 8

New Content 8

Dance Groups and Performers 11

Partnerships 14

Media Documentation 17

Catering 17

Funding 18

Challenges 18

Forward Planning 18

Malandarri Festival Director
Marlene Timothy opening the festival

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Front cover image:
Wandangula dancers
performing

Back cover image:
Laginda Sandalwood
dancers preparing

Malandarri Festival Artistic Report

Malandarri Festival is a special community led event celebrating both traditional and contemporary arts and cultural practices from the four clan groups living in Borroloola: the Yanyuwa, Garra, Gurdanji and Mara people. The festival, formerly known as DanceSite, is a part of Artback NT's Indigenous Traditional Dance Program (ITDP). ITDP was established to support the NT's artistic and cultural practices through inter-generational learning, strengthening relationships between Elders and young people and encouraging cultural leadership. The annual festival event is part of a range of ongoing artistic, mentorship and professional development opportunities throughout the year based in Borroloola and the wider Gulf of Carpentaria region.

The ITDP program has delivered DanceSite events in Alice Springs (2009) and Tennant Creek (2010 – 2012). ITDP is currently working with the communities of Numbulwar (2016 – present) and Borroloola (2013 – present), with each community developing a distinct engagement model in response to specific needs.

“*The Festival is important to learn to them young girls and young boys. That's why we put this song and dancing. For all the young boys and girls. So they can know themselves too.*”

— Marjorie Keighran

The 2018 Malandarri Festival built on the community led aspect of the event, with pre-festival workshop programs, greater lead in participation from local organisations and the engagement

of local production crew in a two-week training program with subsequent employment throughout the event. Over two nights of performance and one day of market place activity, the Festival was a vibrant celebration of arts and cultural practices with performances from local clans, visiting dance groups, bands, school choirs and international guests.

The aims of ITDP are:

- To assist in the coordination of an annual event that celebrates the diversity of traditional Indigenous dance in the Northern Territory, providing an exciting cross-cultural platform for audience and performance development
- To deliver remote community support that facilitates opportunities for arts and cultural performance and skills development within the region through a series of projects, rehearsals, workshops and events each year
- To provide further Territory, national and international performance opportunities where appropriate for the hosting community to establish business and professional development pathways.

The objectives of ITDP are:

- Sustainability of an annual event in the hosting community and its uptake in the region
- An improved overall understanding in remote Indigenous communities of the integral relationships between cultural maintenance and professional performing arts opportunities through participation in local, regional and national showcase events
- An increased awareness of the value of traditional Indigenous dance as an integral strategy in community wellbeing and a pathway to improved employment and further education and training for individuals, particularly disengaged youth





Dwight, Scott and Mervin from the production training crew



Josh, Eve and Marlene from the Malandarri Festival creative team

- The preservation of culture by traditional intergenerational learning methods that strengthen the relationships between Elders and youth and encourages cultural leadership
- The creation of pathways for cultural understanding, appreciation and respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia
- Undertake independent evaluation through:
 - Data collection
 - Qualitative and rich media
 - Structured feedback and review
 - Critical reflection
 - Regular, rich reporting

Staffing

Engagement of local staff continues to be at the core of Malandarri Festival. Artback NT recognises the importance of nurturing individuals and relationships as part of its engagement in remote communities. In 2018 the festival paid over 100 community members as performers, production crew, stage managers, front of house, security, caterers, bus drivers, cleaners and youth program facilitators.

Festival Director

Marlene Timothy is a local Yanyuwa/Garrwa woman from Borroloola who works for Artback NT and Waralungku Arts Centre. Marlene has been vital to ITDP's development and delivery in the region. She is an active leader within the Borroloola community and her presence on the ground reinforces the program's local commitment, ensuring that the program is community driven, of high cultural value and at a high production level. Marlene is now the Festival Director of Malandarri Festival and leads all community engagement in Borroloola to deliver the programs and projects developed by the ITDP team.

Project Officer

As part of planning for Malandarri's program future, Marlene Timothy identified Mara man Barnabas Timothy to be trained to work alongside her and support her in the delivery of locally based arts activities such as workshop programs, festival management, music development and cultural learning activities. For the 2018 festival, Barnabas took a key role working with the production team, managing the training participants and crew throughout the festival delivery.

“ Yeah well today, the song is going to be for the Devil song, came from long way away all the way travelling – I’m the singer with Nancy, Gadrian and Scott, my sister there Linda dancing with all the young people.

— Isa McDinny

Project Coordinator

Having worked with the Malandarri Festival since 2014 and Numburindi Festival since 2016, Eve Pawlik has expanded her role within Artback NT and is working alongside Marlene Timothy to deliver the extended ITDP program under the Remote Community Arts Program for Borroloola over the next three years. Coming from a background of Artist Run Initiatives, collaborative art practice and Indigenous Australian mentoring, Eve is passionate about connecting education and arts through sustainable engagement. Particularly valuable in 2018 was Eve's presence in Borroloola for three weeks in the lead up to and during delivery of Malandarri Festival, which ensured the coordination of the event was directly informed by and responsive to the artistic direction of the community.



Young Mara dancer preparing for dancing

Technical Manager and team

Joshua Grant hails from an extensive background in visual arts, live and recorded sound engineering and music. As Artback NT's go-to production guru, he has engaged with us on numerous projects through the ITDP and the Performing Arts Program. Josh has been key in the production of DanceSite in Borrooloola and its transition to Malandarri Festival as well as Numbulwar's Numburindi Festival. Since 2016, his role has grown to manage the pre-festival production training program in Borrooloola. For 2018, Peter Coulatti was contracted to assist Joshua during the production of the festival. This allowed more space for Joshua to mentor and work closely with the Borrooloola team, Barnabas Timothy and the production training crew Dwight Raggett, Mervin Simon, Scott Anderson, William Charlie and Leon Timothy. The team worked tirelessly during the two weeks leading to the event, learning the key production and technical elements of the Malandarri Festival.

Pre-festival activity

In the lead up to this year's Malandarri Festival there were a number of activities that engaged the youth and Elders of the community. Joshua Grant, Technical Manager, ran two weeks of production training which culminated in the festival. This was the longest the program has successfully run. Barnabas Timothy, Project Officer, nominated a number of local Borrooloola young men for the program to learn and work on the festival. The training was an introduction to setting up the technical elements of the festival such as production gear, managing a rehearsal space, mixing live sound, site design, prepping/maintaining music gear and stage management. During the two weeks, the art centre became a vibrant live rehearsal space for local musicians to prepare for the festival. The crew were invaluable throughout the festival and we hope to bring the program back on a more regular basis to cement the knowledge and skills gained during this year.

Whilst this training occurred, the song women from Yanyuwa, Garrwa and Wandangula were preparing their dance groups costumes, dancing boards, clap sticks and song rehearsals on the other side of Waralungku Arts. This is an important element of the festival, where the young people come to learn and participate in their cultural practices. Building on this, Jemima Miller's house became an evening rehearsal space for the Yanyuwa clan group in the weeks leading to the festival.

Artback NT and MusicNT's *Divas on Tour* Northern Territory tour kicked off in Borrooloola with a series of song and music mentorship workshops in the week before the festival with Borrooloola School's choir group and Early Learning Program groups. These workshops culminated in youth performances at the festival on Friday, while the *Divas on Tour* performed their full set on Saturday.

New content

A new element of the 2018 festival was the creation of a pop-up exhibition space at the festival site. This was on display for the opening evening and highlighted key works from Waralungku Arts artists: Marlene Timothy, Peggy Mawson, Jemima Miller, Marjorie Keighran, Danny Riley and Myra Rory.

Borrooloola School senior classes launched the Pop-Up Op Shop at the festival site, which was a fantastic success. The classes had been collecting donations for a number of weeks before the event and created a number of artworks and woodwork signs for the final shop display!

Borrooloola's early childhood groups: FaFT, Borrooloola School, Li-Ardubirri play group (funded by The Smith Family through Mabunji), Wunala Creche (run by Mabunji), Indi Kindi (run by The Nangala Project,) worked closely with members of the community to create costumes and artwork during the week leading up to the festival. They then opened day one's festivities with two songs; *Walamba Walamba* (Twinkle Twinkle), a Garrwa song written by Daphne Mawson, and *Barramundi Song* performed in English.



Suming Rupi performing



Samuel Evans performing with Malandarri Band



Malandarri Festival was incredibly privileged to host Suming Rupi, an Amis musician from Taiwan. The parallels between his story of Indigeneity and those of many Indigenous Australians was a strong connection point for Borrooloola. His music is sung in his Amis language and emphasises the need to share culture and keep it strong. He performed on Saturday evening and saw a fascinating response from the community who for many this was a first performance of its kind.

This year's key visiting dance group was from Doomadgee, excitingly this was the first time Borrooloola hosted performers from the community. Elijah Douglas has been working with his community and reconnecting young people back with their Gangalidda cultural practices through dance, language and song. Their performances on Friday and Saturday night were a highlight for many, with their range of dances drawing on humour, history, community and songlines from their region. There are strong connections between the families in Borrooloola and Doomadgee, so it was important for the communities to connect together again.

“ The old people been making these songs long time ago, when we were nothing and they bin teach us before they were gone, they were singing for us. My mum bin teach me all that song.

— Jemima Miller

Divas on Tour, presented by Artback NT, is a collaboration between Kirra Voller, Donna Velia, Shana Ray and Lynette Lewis Hubbard from MusicNT's Divas' program. The musicians launched their NT tour in Borrooloola at Malandarri Festival. *Divas on Tour* is an all-female contemporary Indigenous performance that celebrates the collective stories and sounds of these four

incredible women. The performers also ran a series of workshops within Borrooloola School and the culminating performances were a key highlight of the festival.

Dance groups and performers

Yanyuwa, Garrwa, Mara and Wandangula dance groups from Borrooloola and Robinson River performed at this year's festival. Due to the recent passing of significant family for Gurdanji, the clan group had a respect year from the festival. To acknowledge this significant loss, the festival was opened on Saturday evening with a performance by the Elder women from Yanyuwa, Garrwa and Wandangula. As in the past, each clan group supported one another in their performances singing, dancing and preparing the performers in the days leading to the main event nights.

Friday's evening focused on celebrating the young people of Borrooloola with opening performances from the Early Childhood organisations and Borrooloola School Choir. Friday's local dance performances emphasised young people from Yanyuwa and Wandangula. This is an important element for the continuity of cultural learning and exchange between Elders and young people.

Doomadgee's Laginda Sandalwood dance group performance was a highlight of both evenings. The incredibly strong emphasis on young people performers and of the process of reclaiming their history was inspiring.

This year saw five powerful local and external music performances from *Malandarri Band*, *The Sandridge Band*, *Keinan Appleby*, *Suming Rupi* and *Divas on Tour*. The exchange of culture with the international guests from Taiwan was especially important for the community, and acknowledging this significance the Taiwan delegation closed Suming Rupi's performance with the presentation of the Amis Music Festival Flag to Malandarri Festival Director Marlene Timothy.



Ryan Karkadoo performing with Sandridge Band

Dance groups and performers (including children)

Language Group	Dance Group/ Band	Location	Performers
Garrwa/Yanyuwa	Wandangula Dancers	Sandridge Outstation	29
Garrwa	Blind Mermaid Dancers	Robinson River/ Borroloola	16
Yanyuwa	Ngardiji Dancers	Borroloola	25
Mara	Mara Dancers	Borroloola	22
Gangalidda	Laginda Sandalwood Dancers	Doomadgee	22
All	Early Childhood Performers	Borroloola	20
All	Borroloola Choir	Borroloola	15
Yanyuwa / Mara	Malandarri Band	Borroloola	6
Garrwa / Yanyuwa	The Sandridge Band	Sandridge Outstation	6
	Keinan Appleby	Borroloola	1
Larrakiah / Wirangu, Kokatha, Mirning and Ngarrindjeri / Waka Waka, Mununjali, German and Czechoslovakian / Gurdanji and Yanyuwa	Divas on Tour: Kirra Voller, Donna Velia, Shana Ray and Lynette Lewis Hubbard	Northern Territory / Queensland	4
Amis	Suming Rupl	Taiwan	1
Total			167

Participants	Total 2018	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Performers	166	100%	0%
Production	20	70%	30%
Committee	10	100%	0%
Staffing including Front of House, Security, Bus Drivers, Workshop Facilitators, Cleaners, Stage Managers, Caterers	44	86.36%	13.64%
Volunteers	6	80%	20%
Audience	1013	80%	20%

Partnerships

Organisation	Type of Support
Waralungku Arts Centre	Office space, rehearsal venue, marquees, artist support and logistical support
Roper Gulf Regional Council	Funding, venue support, media support, staffing support, rubbish collection and drinking water. CDP program and Sports and Recreation program
Mawurli Wirriwangkuma Aboriginal Corporation (MAWA)	Funding, venue support, equipment, security lighting and vehicle
Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Association	Accommodation, vehicles, office space, staffing support and resources and equipment. Support from Safe House, Wunala Crèche, Li-anthawirriyarra Sea Rangers and Workshop / Nursery team.
Borroloola School and Family as First Teachers program (FAFT)	Workshop hosts, venue support, staffing support, artistic and youth program content
Indi Kindi (The Nangala Project)	Workshop facilitators, face-painting program and artistic and youth program content
MusicNT	Divas on Tour development
Bush TV	Filmography
TEABBA	Content development and radio broadcasting



Festival community marketplace Borroloola School's Pop-Up Op Shop



Divas on Tour running workshops with Borroloola School



Young people performers from Early Childhood, Indi Kindi, FAFT and Wunala Crèche programs



Borrooloola School choir performance

Media documentation

This year's Malandarri Festival partnered with Bush TV to document the full scope of activities that were happening throughout the festival. This involved interviews with key members of the artistic community, young people and Elders as well as workshop and preparation activities. Bush TV's Tom Hearn and filmmaker Sarah Jacquier worked with Borrooloola man Ryan Karkadoo to film the event.

Ben Bayliss Photography was the official festival photographer for the fifth year running. Now living back in Borrooloola, Ben also supported the Festival Gallery space for this year's event. Borrooloola School hosted VAMPtv who documented workshops with the Early Learning Childhood Program, Family as First Teacher (FaFT) and Borrooloola Choir Group. It was fantastic to have Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association (TEABBA) attend the festival and gather content to broadcast on their radio station.

The marketing campaign for Malandarri Festival primarily utilised the social media platforms of Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, as well as Artback NT and NT Tourism/Event listing websites to engage audiences on a local, regional and national level. This focus was in direct response to the remoteness of the festival's location, while making the most of the significant uptake of social media by people in Borrooloola and surrounding communities. All media content was produced by Marlene Timothy with support from Artback NT's Project Manager Eve Pawlik and Kate Rendell, Artback NT's Communications Manager. Throughout the event the 'live' updates on Instagram and Facebook were developed by Kate Rendell, keeping the buzz around the festival. We produced 13 Twitter posts, 42 Instagram posts and live story feeds and 18 Facebook posts across the Artback NT and ITDP pages leading up and during the festival period.

The marketing campaign also included the e-distribution of flyers and posters, e-invites, media releases, 'behind the scenes' posts of images and videos, live content updates and photo galleries. The festival coverage was picked up by a number of media outlets, with features in

NT News, Off the Leash, Perth Now, Katherine Times and radio interviews with both local ABC Darwin Radio, 8MAB-Voice of the Gulf, TEABBA Radio and National ABC Radio. The festival had 4 radio interviews and 5 newspaper articles.

Catering

There were a number of catering options available over the festival weekend. The key catering available for both evenings was managed by local food business Kapu-Ai who work on a number of NAIDOC, Borrooloola Show and Borrooloola Rodeo events in the local region. We also had Peggy Mawson hosting a bush tucker and bush medicine stall on Saturday night where fresh damper and kangaroo tail stew was available. Saturday evening continued the festival tradition of the free community feed for the performing dance groups, which was facilitated by Elizabeth Hogan and a number of local rangers from the Northern Land Council group. During Saturday, the catering team cooked the delicious feast in ground and bush ovens offering a range of chicken, kangaroo and local beef stew and roasted vegetables.

“ That one is dugong killer song – for when they go hunting, when the men go hunting. The song here from the dugong when they used to go and kill him – for eating – good to eat! That's how we bin grow up – we been grow up with that as our meat. We eat that Dugong and sea turtle and fresh water turtle, long neck and short neck turtle. That's how we bin grow up eating all the bush tucker.

— Jemima Miller

Funding

Malandarri Festival was made possible due to the generous ongoing support from our funders. Funding was successfully secured from NT Government's Department of Health – Alcohol Action, Harm Minimisation Unit (2018 – 2019), Arts NT, FestivalsNT, Mawurli Wirriwangkuma Aboriginal Corporation (MAWA) and Roper Gulf Regional Council – Community Grants. Artback NT also secured triennial funding from McArthur River Mine – Community Benefit Trust in 2017, to support the ongoing role of Marlene Timothy and the art and cultural program within the Borroloola region.

The NT Government Department of Health continued to be a major sponsor of the festival for 2018 – 2019. Therefore, at the forefront of our planning was support for strong community cohesion and positive capacity building. The increase in engagement of young people leading up to the event has been an important element of this. Festival planning also ensured that we continued to be an alcohol free event and that local alcohol vendors limited the amount of alcohol sales around the festival period.

Challenges

The festival has begun establishing a new performance site at the Borroloola Sports Ground. This meant that it was the first year working with the space in collaboration with Roper Gulf Regional Council. This brought about fresh challenges as the team established different production and site management methods to ensure the new space works best for the community. We are looking forward to further developing the festival grounds with permanent stage and performance sand, seating and landscaping over the next five years. An additional challenge for this year was managing the snap cold freeze and fog conditions that occurred over the festival period; for future years we will reconsider fire areas and resources to keep the community warm during the event.

There have been a number of significant losses of Elders and community members over the last couple of months, which resulted in Gurdanji taking a rest year from performing at the festival. This always has an impact for the community

and this year's festival was more reserved out of acknowledgment and respect for this mourning and Sorry Business. There were also invites extended to performing groups White Cockatoo - Djamarlak Bonginliny Bongiliny from Beswick and West Papuan performer Henk Rumbewas who were both unable to attend due to changing family and work circumstances. We are looking forward to their attendance at next year's festival!

Forward Planning

With the team always thinking to the future, conversations have begun on where the festival will evolve to for 2019 and beyond. There will be ongoing work in collaboration with the community and Roper Gulf Regional Council to develop the permanent festival grounds. New strategic festival partnerships will commence in the 2018 – 2019 financial year with the successful attainment of Arts NT Strategic Arts Program – Community Festivals funding. This funding will see Indigenous Festival Directors and key personnel from Borroloola, Numbulwar, Milingimbi and Lajamanu host visiting directors and attend a community festival in another community. We also are planning on developing a festival logo to embed the identity of this important cultural event.

“It's important to teach our children through culture to be strong.”

— Nancy McDinny

For next year's event, we have plans to bring in Polynesian dance group Nuholani from Melbourne, Fipe Preuss the Director of this group supported Marlene Timothy in managing the Malandarri Festival in 2017. Beswick's White Cockatoo – Djamarlak Bonginliny Bongiliny dancers and Doomadgee's Laginda Sandalwood Dancers will be sent invitations to perform with the Borroloola clan groups. There will be a range of pre-festival programs with young people and adults – such as Pallet Furniture Making, Dance and Production Training Workshops. We can't wait to see you all at Malandarri Festival next year!



Malandarri Festival Exhibition Space



Malandarri Festival team



Artback NT

Connecting people and place through
arts development and touring