



Artback NT

Numburindi Festival Artistic Report

Thursday 19 – Saturday 21 September, 2019







CONTENTS

Overview 5

Pre-Festival activity 5

Program 8

Opening night 8

Second night 8

Closing night 8

Statistics 8

Dance groups and performers 10

Funding 10

Catering 10

Partnerships 12

Media and marketing 12

Challenges 12

Forward planning 14

Staffing 16

Indigenous Traditional Dance Program 16

List of images 18

Acknowledgments 19



OVERVIEW

The Numburindi Festival is a unique community-driven event that highlights the diversity of language, dance and song from the four clan groups living in Numbulwar - the Ngalmi, Nundhirribala, Murrungun and Nunggarrgalu Peoples'. Festival activity is particularly focused on inter-generational exchange and mentorship, with one performance evening dedicated to Numbulwar's young people.

The Festival is located in the remote Arnhem Land community of Numbulwar on the western coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria in the Northern Territory and is a part of Artback NT's Indigenous Traditional Dance Program (ITDP). Grant Nundhirribala, Numburindi Festival Artistic Director, ensures programming resonates with the community and directly supports the continuity of Numbulwar's cultural practices. The Festival also enables community capacity development through mentoring and the employment of local arts workers as well as a range of support and delivery positions. Future plans include developing the cross-cultural exchange between Indigenous clan groups in the Northern Territory and opening-up the Numburindi Festival to a wider audience, such as tourists.

This year's Numburindi Festival was held from Thursday 19 to Saturday 21 September, a week later than usual to accommodate the Mardayin Ceremony. Language, dance and song were celebrated with performances from Numbulwar clan groups together with broader family networks living in the Roper Gulf Region. The line-up of visiting musicians and dancers came from Groote Eylandt, Ngukurr, Katherine, Borroloola, Darwin and Melbourne. Audiences also travelled from Milingimbi and Yirrkala to enjoy the festivities of the three-day event.

Empowering the next generation through dance, music and culture, the Festival opened on the Thursday evening with a young peoples' Wungubul followed by Numbulwar School's junior and senior choirs and school band. This year young peoples' programming was expanded with pre-Festival music workshops, focused on emerging female musicians, delivered by composer, performer and creative entrepreneur, Jessie Lloyd. In an exciting conclusion, after many years of community planning, Numburindi Arts was launched on Friday.

PRE-FESTIVAL ACTIVITY

Roper Gulf Regional Council, Numbulwar office and their Community Development Program (CDP) team constructed a 30 metre windbreak behind the stage. For 2020 it is proposed a street artist will be commissioned to work alongside local community members to design a mural on the fencing, which will become a permanent feature of the Festival.

CDP also constructed fire barrels, bench seating and a permanent old people's shelter to make the site more comfortable for Festival goers. The Women's CD program supported the creative design of the site with the painting of official Festival bins, flags and stage banners.

In the week leading up to the event, Numbulwar School music groups rehearsed daily with female staff while mothers prepared the catering for the opening night. On Friday the school ran a sports carnival which also included a colour run where participants are showered with coloured powder at stations along the run. This was a fantastic way to end the school week and a great addition to Festival activities.

Festivals Australia funding enabled the school to host Jessie Lloyd, Missions Song Project, as the artist in residence to work with young women and students. Jessie ran a program of music and song writing workshops during the week leading up to the Festival, performing with the young people on Thursday's Youth Night. To have a strong female musician feature at this year's event set the tone for the Festival.



PROGRAM

For 2019, the Numburindi Festival showcased a dynamic artistic program during the days and evenings that was delivered by community members across generations.

OPENING NIGHT

In keeping with tradition, the Festival opened with the youth night, including a Mijburayung Wungubul (youth dance) and a range of music performances from Numbulwar School. The evening began with the young people performing from each of Numbulwar's clan groups Nundhirribala (Red Flag), Ngalmi/Manggurra (Gudarrgu), Murrungun (Dhaambulg) and Nunggarrgalu (A Gugu). This highlighted a beautiful exchange between the teaching from adults to young performers, opening the Festival with strength, vitality and lots of laughter.

Following the Wungubul were a range of presentations from Numbulwar School. New performances included primary school groups under the instruction of music teacher Jeff Aschmann, including a well-orchestrated set from the Numbulwar School Band with Principal Christopher O'Neill. Jessie Lloyd also performed solo and with the young people.

SECOND NIGHT

Friday saw Numbulwar School hosting a fun-filled colour run and sports carnival event at the Old Basketball Courts. A Gugu (Nunggarrgalu) and Red Flag (Nundhirribala) started the evening with a parade to officially open Numburindi Arts. Artist Lilian Joshua and local arts worker Rose Wilfred, together with Artback NT and Numbulwar Culture and Media Centre, had transformed the art centre exhibition space with vibrant displays of fish killa weavings, drawings produced by Numbulwar artists and photographs and video works produced by the Numbulwar Culture and Media team. Artist and Board Member Jangu Nundhirribala, artist Lilian Joshua and the Hon. Selena Uibo – MLA gave speeches commemorating the occasion. The evening hosted a Wungubul and saw an incredibly energetic and powerful line up with dance groups Red Flag, A Gugu, Gudarrgu and Wagilak. Unfortunately, Wurramara were unable to perform due to family funerals on Groote Eylandt.

CLOSING NIGHT

Saturday's programming included day time music rehearsals, community stakeholder stalls, youth basketball games and a free community bush tucker feed. The community had received Sorry Business news earlier in the day, so to pay respect to the families affected, Grant Nundhirribala and Emcee Cerice Farrell held a minute's silence.

The line-up for the final night of the Festival included youth dance groups from Ngukurr and Numbulwar and bands from Borroloola, Ngukurr, Groote Eylandt, Darwin, Katherine and Numbulwar. Bands and solo acts for the evening were NT Express, Marrayulyuliyin Wurragwagwa, Jeff Aschmann, Barnabas Timothy, Numburindi Reggae, Lonely Boys and Eylandt Band and dance groups Nundho Bloods, Mission Area Crew, Lil' Homies and Top Camp Boys. The bands showcased a unique contemporary sound that drew together reggae, funk and rock and roll, with lyrics in English, Anindilyakwa, Wubuy and Creole.

The Festival was incredibly privileged to have Marrayulyuliyin Wurragwagwa, the first rapper to emerge from Numbulwar, perform two recently recorded tracks with the Numbulwar Culture and Media team. Marrayulyuliyin performs in Yilila and with NT Express and is part of the film team that documents the Festival and ongoing media projects in Numbulwar. It was therefore very exciting to see his solo act flourish this year!

STATISTICS

Participants	Total 2019	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Performers	219	99%	1%
Production incl. Directors, Coordinators, Photographer and Videographers	10	66.67%	33.33%
Committee	8	100%	0%
Staffing incl. Emcee, Security, Bus Drivers, Cleaners, Stage Managers, Caterers	14	100%	0%
Audience	1,000	85%	15%



DANCE GROUPS AND PERFORMERS

Language Group	Dance Group / Band	Community	Performers
Nundhirribala	Red Flag Dancers	Numbulwar	45
Murrungun	Dhaambulg - Murrungun Dancers	Numbulwar	10
Ngalmi / Manggurra	Gudarrgu - Ngalmi and Manggurra Dancers	Numbulwar	32
Nunggarrgalu	A Gugu - Nunggarrgalu Dancers	Numbulwar	34
Wagliak	Wagilak Dancers	Ngukurr	29
Various	Lil Homies	Numbulwar	3
Manggurra/ Murrungun	Missionary Area Girls	Numbulwar	3
Various	Lil Crips	Ngukurr	5
Wurragwagwa	Top Camp Boys	Numbulwar	2
Murrungun	NT Express	Numbulwar	4
Nunggarrgalu	Numburindi Reggae Band / Katherine	Numbulwar	4
Yugul Mangi	Lonely Boys	Ngukurr	5
Anindilyakwa	Eylandt Band	Groote Eylandt	6
Wurragwagwa	Marrayulylyn Wurragwagwa	Numbulwar	1
Mara	Barnabas Timothy	Borroloola	1
Non-Indigenous	Jeff Aschmann	Darwin / Numbulwar	1
Various	Numbulwar School Band	Numbulwar	8
Various	Primary School Group Band	Numbulwar	12
Various	Jessie Lloyd and Numbulwar young people	Numbulwar	14
TOTAL			219

FUNDING

The 2019 Numburindi Festival was in the fortunate position to be delivering the second Festival of its three-year funding agreement with Arts NT, which has allowed for sustainable forward planning and security. A successful grant application to the Northern Territory Government's Community Benefit Fund (CBF) supported musical equipment resourcing for the community which will be used annually at the Numburindi Festival. Festivals Australia enabled performer, Jessie Lloyd, to deliver a Women's Music program including the facilitation of workshops, performances as well as documentation of the whole event.

Funding for the Festival and associated activities was also secured from Artback NT, Numburindi Corporation, Arts NT's Community Festivals and Strategic Festivals Grants, Member for Arnhem – Hon Selena Uibo, Tim Fairfax Family Foundation and Roper Gulf Regional Council Community Grants. In Numbulwar, we are thankful to have wide community support from individuals and significant local stakeholder partnerships which enable the Festival to happen annually.

CATERING

A range of catering options, including curries and stews, were offered in the evenings throughout the festival with stalls from John Terepo and Christine Smith, Numbulwar School and visiting families from Yirrkala. The Numburindi Store held a free BBQ on Friday evening and on the Saturday afternoon, John Terepo and Christine Smith and family provided the catering for the free community bush tucker feed cooked in their home Umu (ground oven). The Festival was incredibly fortunate to receive generous sponsorship from Numburindi Store of meat, vegetables, fruit boxes and water for the event.



PARTNERSHIPS

Organisation	Type of Support
Roper Gulf Regional Council – Katherine Office / Numbulwar Office, Night Patrol, Sports and Recreation and Community Development Program	Site production installation, stage, catering, staff, office resources, cleaners, Night Patrol security staff, decoration and site design/making and tables and chairs Funding for the Festival
Numbulwar School	Marquees, music equipment, accommodation, Wubuy Language Program videos, catering, music program content, production support staffing, Colour Run and Sports Carnival, Numburindi Festival music workshops
Numbulwar Homelands	Generators
ALPA Numburindi Store	Donation of meat, vegetable and fruit boxes and water for Community Feed and Youth Day Donation of award prizes for the young people's Wungubul Hosted community BBQ with store staff and managers
Numburindi Arts	Venue and staffing
Numburindi Corporation	Funding for Festival and staffing
Numbulwar Culture and Media (AiRemote)	Promotion and film documentation of Numburindi Festival

MEDIA AND MARKETING

As Numbulwar is a remote and isolated community, the value of social media platforms is significant. Pre-event marketing saw Artback NT and Roper Gulf Regional Council run a series of online stories through the website and social media (Instagram, Twitter and Facebook) to promote the Festival. Rebecca Renshaw, Communications Manager, Artback NT

worked remotely from the Darwin office to support the Festival. The Numburindi Festival is not an open event for the public therefore the marketing strategy prioritised general awareness of the Festival rather than attendance. An official Numburindi Festival flyer was designed by Artback NT Graphic Designer Oscar Waugh and was distributed across the Northern Territory. The lead up to the event was documented through social media channels with behind-the-scenes action shots giving the public a taste of Numburindi Festival magic.

During the event there were two media operators:

- Benjamin Bayliss, ITDP's photographer documented the Festival
- Numbulwar Culture and Media project had an incredible film crew working across the three days of the Festival and in the lead up documenting workshop activity.

Artback NT would like to thank Marrayulyuliyin Rudolph Wurragwagwa, Momo Lethan Nundhirribala, Wulhamburriyn Clifton Wilfred and Tony Gray on cameras and editing with support from Lhargi-aynbaj Ananias Nundhirribala in the editing suite at Numbulwar. The team also provided social media marketing across the Festival period with stills from each of the evenings released. This becomes an invaluable cultural and educational archive for the community that not only promotes the Festival, but ensures a linguistic, social and historical resource, recording cultural practices from the region.

CHALLENGES

This year Numbulwar had just come to the end of a three-month long ceremony, the Mardayin Ceremony. This impacted significantly on the movement of people throughout the Roper Gulf region as well as the energy of key clan Elders. Sorry Business on Groote Eylandt and in Numbulwar meant people during the week turned their attention away from the Festival.



FORWARD PLANNING

Conversations have begun to reconfigure the final music night of the Festival to refocus on young people and dancing. The team are looking forward to working the model we currently have to ensure there is more all community involvement in the planning stages before the week of the event.

A key part of this will involve pre-Festival programs in music and art. A visual arts program will run with a visiting street artist and community members to design and transform the 30-metre windbreak constructed at the Festival grounds. A larger scale project idea was planted this year with Jessie Lloyd running a workshop program with Numbulwar young people and women based at Numbulwar School. From this there have been discussions between Artistic Director Grant Nundhirribala and Jessie Lloyd about fostering a local community choir of adults and young people.

STAFFING

Artback NT supports local capacity building and employment opportunities for remote communities, and this year's Numburindi Festival continued to prioritise this.

Grant Nundhirribala is the Artistic Director for the Numburindi Festival and Project Coordinator for Numburindi: strengthening culture and country bush camp program. He is a significant cultural leader and songman in Numbulwar from the Nundhirribala clan group. He is the winner of six music awards, lead singer of the band "Yilila" and the Red Flag Dancers and has been a featured guest artist with the Australian Ballet Company and Bangarra Dance Theatre. Grant sings in Wubuy, Anindilyakwa, Kriol, English and Bahasa Makasar and he has performed regionally, nationally and internationally at festivals, concerts and events. Grant has been Artistic Director of the Numburindi Festival since 2016 and is the advisor on cultural protocols. His vision continues to ground the Festival locally, showcasing content that reflects the community. This year Grant was vital in coordinating the local and visiting performing groups, local staff, supporting and managing production and was co-Emcee with Cerice Farrell.

Eve Pawlik is the ITDP Project Manager and works alongside the Numbulwar community to develop and

deliver the Numburindi Festival. Eve has built strong relationships in the region, having been involved with ITDP and DanceSite Festival events in Borroloola and Numbulwar for a number of years. Working remotely from the Darwin office, Eve develops stakeholder relationships, manages logistics and funding alongside the community. On the ground, Eve assists the Technical Manager, Josh Grant to run the production elements for the Festival as well as coordinating the artistic program with Grant Nundhirribala.

Josh Grant is the versatile and highly skilled Technical Manager for the Festival. He has an extensive background in visual arts, live and recorded sound engineering and music. His work in the Territory involves tour management, production management, project co-ordination and festival production. With a particular strength and passion for remote Indigenous community festivals and arts programs, Josh has an ongoing relationship with a number of Arnhem Land communities to deliver workshop programs and festival activities. Josh has been engaged through Artback NT on numerous ITDP and Performing Arts projects and was key in the production of DanceSite in Borroloola, its transition to Malandarri Festival and Numbulwar's Numburindi Festival since 2016.

Numburindi Festival employed 100 local community members from Numbulwar as musicians, performers, cleaners, caterers and production crew. This important aspect of the ITDP model ensures that the Festival empowers community members to be active makers in the event. Roper Gulf Regional Council staff, including Municipal staff and the Community Development Program Men's Group, installed the production shipping container, stage, flag poles and sand. They supported bump-in including installing the stage, site design and production set-up and were invaluable as key activators in this year's Festival pre-production activity.

2019 saw the Numburindi Festival support the final stage of the Remote Indigenous Arts Workers and Festival Directors exchange project 'Festivals in Dialogue' with Keith Lapulung, Artistic Director, Gattjirrk Cultural Festival from Milingimbi. Keith has benefited from the experience and will be implementing learnings from the exchange in future directional planning for the Gattjirrk Cultural Festival.



ABOUT THE INDIGENOUS TRADITIONAL DANCE PROGRAM

Numbulwar has been involved with the Indigenous Traditional Dance Program (ITDP) since 2016 with the delivery of the inaugural Numburindi Festival. Since then, the relationship between Artback NT and the Numbulwar community has continued to strengthen and grow.

The Indigenous Traditional Dance Program (ITDP) was established to support the Northern Territory's artistic and cultural practices through inter-generational learning, the strengthening of relationships between Elders and young people and encouraging cultural leadership. For over a decade this arts and cultural community development initiative has been delivered in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Borroloola and Numbulwar.

ITDP currently facilitates simultaneous engagement with the remote Northern Territory communities of Borroloola and Numbulwar, including the delivery of the Malandarri Festival and Numburindi Festival.

The aims of ITDP are to:

- assist in the coordination of an annual festival event that celebrates the diversity of traditional Indigenous dance in the Northern Territory, providing an exciting cross-cultural platform for audience and performance development
- 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
- provide local, 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 within 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
- 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



LIST OF IMAGES

Gudarrgu (Ngalmi /Manggurra) and Dhaambulg (Murrungun) dance groups performing at the Mijburayung Wungubul (youth dance) on the opening night. Photographer: Benjamin WarIngundu Ellis Bayliss cover

A Gugu parade to the Numburindi Arts Opening. Photographer: Benjamin WarIngundu Ellis Bayliss inside cover

Red Flag Dancers performing. Photographer: Benjamin WarIngundu Ellis Bayliss 2

A Gugu and Red Flag Dancers opening the Numburindi Arts Centre. Photographer: Benjamin WarIngundu Ellis Bayliss 4

Lonely Boys from Ngukurr performing to a rocking crowd. Photographer: Benjamin WarIngundu Ellis Bayliss 4

Red Flag Dancers performing Aeroplane. Photographer: Benjamin WarIngundu Ellis Bayliss 6

The finish line, Numbulwar School Colour Run. Photographer: Benjamin WarIngundu Ellis Bayliss 9

Potato sack races at the Numbulwar School Sports Carnival. Photographer: Benjamin WarIngundu Ellis Bayliss 9

Numburindi Festival Director Grant Nundhirribala rehearsing with a young Red Flag dancer. Photographer: Benjamin WarIngundu Ellis Bayliss 11

Marrayulyuliyin Wurragwagwa performing. Photographer: Benjamin WarIngundu Ellis Bayliss 13

Community bush tucker feed. Photographer: Benjamin WarIngundu Ellis Bayliss 15

Jessie Lloyd conducting a music workshop with Numbulwar Schools young women. Photographer: Benjamin WarIngundu Ellis Bayliss 15

Eylandt Band performing. Photographer: Benjamin WarIngundu Ellis Bayliss 17

A Gugu (Nunggarrgalu) dance group performing Anngalbiya (Toothless Catfish). Photographer: Benjamin WarIngundu Ellis Bayliss inside back cover

Painting-up preparation with ochre clay. Photographer: Benjamin WarIngundu Ellis Bayliss back cover

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we live and work. The Northern Territory is home to the world’s oldest living culture – the first artists and storytellers. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.







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