



BANTHUNGURU-BURA: IMPACT REPORT

Indigenous Youth Leadership Training

NIAA, Ngurrangga Tours and Big hART

June 2020 - July 2021



Trapped
Chelsea Cameron
Hearson's Cove

We were walking along the beach and found a turtle that was stuck in a shallow rock pool. The tide was really far out and we were worried for the turtle. Clinton showed us how to hold the turtle properly, so it wouldn't be hurt. We were able to take the turtle into a bigger rock pool where it could wait until the tide came back in.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE NGARLUMA, YINDJIBARNDI, BANJIMA, MARDUTHUNERA, GURUMA, NYIYAPARLI, KARIYARRA AND OTHER PILBARA ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Participant C with her artwork "Trapped"



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1. Introduction

This report details outcomes from a partnership between NIAA, Ngurrangga Tours (NYIMARI PTY LTD) and Big hART delivering the Banthunguru-bura youth mentoring program for young people in Roebourne. This report details the On Country and Classroom Workshop Program between June 2020 – July 2021.

Through Banthunguru-bura, young people developed new knowledge around Aboriginal ecology and sustainability practices, visiting important sites on country. In doing so, participants were introduced to alternative career pathways such as cultural tourism, natural resource management, caring for country and ranger programs working with mentors from Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation, National Parks and Wildlife and the City of Karratha.

Central to Banthunguru-bura was confidence building and leadership for young people. Photography, film, audio and digital drawing engaged young people in learning moments and provided ways for participants to share their voices. Photography proved to be a popular medium for young people to document their own learning, and a decision with the cohort to present an exhibition of their photography work to the community was made. The exhibition acknowledged the new found skills and abilities of the young people and helped value their local contribution, resulting in re-engagement in the community and education.

2. Key Performance Indicators

Indigenous Employment

100% of the hours worked by the Primary Contractor were performed by an Indigenous person.

Employment Numbers

A total of 15 Indigenous persons were employed in the delivery of the program.

Hours worked – Indigenous Staff

A total of 742 hours Indigenous persons were employed in the delivery of the program.

Hours worked – All Staff

A total of 1,380 hours worked by Non-Indigenous persons were employed in the delivery of the program. All Staff total hours is 2122 hours.

Participation

41 young people engaged in the program, with a core group of 13 participants consistently engaged.

Implementation Quality

100% of stakeholders agree (68% strongly agree, 32% agree) workshops, on country trips and community events were well run. *Source: Internal Stakeholder survey*



3. Reach

41 young people engaged:

- Core cohort of 13 young people – 3 boys / 10 girls - individually mentored to build engagement and assist them to stick to the project and succeed, with wrap-around and personalised support.
- Program participation was accessible to all young people aged 14-18 in Roebourne and surrounding communities. All participants self selected for the program.
- Roebourne School, Roebourne Police Youth Officers, Juvenile Justice case workers, PCYC, Ngurrangga Tours, Big hART and key Elders identified young people who may strongly benefit from their involvement in the project and encouraged them to participate in the program
- Entire Roebourne High School student body attended several workshops and on-country trips

73 workshops delivered:

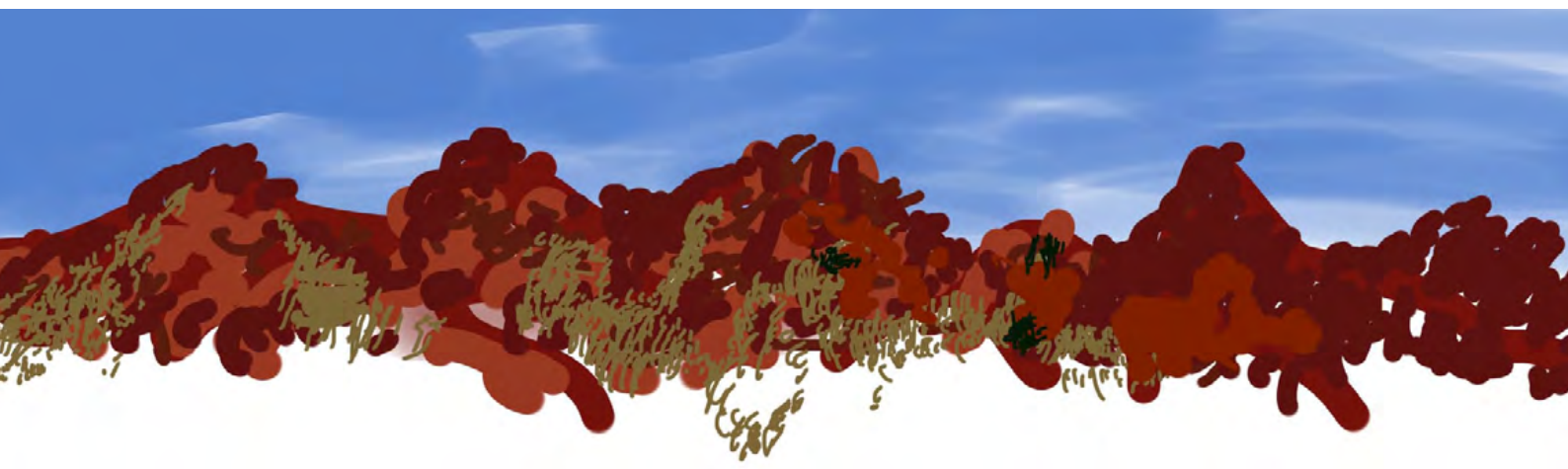
- Workshops delivered across culture, language, history, media, film, audio, photography, visual art
- Workshops delivered in partnership with **10 community organisations:** Roebourne School, Roebourne Police, Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation, Wirru-murru Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation, Mawarnkarra Aboriginal Health Service, PCYC, Yaandina Youth Services, Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi Foundation, City of Karratha and Department of Parks & Wildlife

15 on country trips and 3 events delivered:

- On country trips delivered and led by Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi cultural leaders
- *Our Ngurra* Photographic Exhibition attended by 80 community members

"This program is important for young people of Roebourne. They get to experience their culture and do it in a way where they're recording themselves and what they're learning. They're looking at it from behind a camera, seeing their Country from a new perspective.... All I ever wanted growing up was to be like my uncles, My Elders. I saw how strong they were, as people, as leaders, as Men, and I wanted to be exactly like them, to be able to know my culture and teach it." **Clinton Walker, Ngarluma Program Mentor**

Artwork: 'Murujuga' by participant





4. Impact

Education and Pathways

- Increased training and employment pathways – 20+ employment pathways created
- Two participants now undertaking paid part time employment - one young person delivering cultural tours for Ngurrangga Tours
- Increased entrepreneurial exploration i.e. e-commerce, intellectual property rights, content development
- Increased capacity development for local partner organisations to support and facilitate trainee opportunities for young people
- Increased school engagement - stronger attendance recorded at Roebourne School. Before the commencement of the program, 60% of participants were considered extremely disengaged from school. At the conclusion of the program, engagement has reportedly increased significantly.
- Work completed by young people on the program was recognised as part of schooling
- Two participants now completing high school through school-based traineeships
- Three participants re-engaged in formal education
- A junior ranger program for Roebourne young people has been successfully piloted
- Increased digital ability - participants continue to move from 'mobile only' to being competent using Drones, DSLR cameras, audio recorders, laptops, iPads, apps, graphics software programs and more
- Increased access - over 80% of Roebourne young people accessed the Digital Lab
- Reduced resistance to digital amongst participant families
- Increased uptake in digital activities by young women (higher numbers of young women are involved in programs compared to young men)

Safety, Wellbeing and Leadership

- Increased safety - analysis and evidence from Western Australia Police Force crime statistics showing a drop in offending in Roebourne
- Increased sense of purpose and opportunities to achieve
- Increased positive regard for young people - level of community recognition for young people who usually receive negative attention for poor behaviour
- Increased engagement in the community - spending time with Elders and on country
- Increase personal agency, resilience and wellbeing - analysis from participant questionnaires and interviews
- Increased leadership and positive decision making by young people - evidence from community feedback
- Increased youth leadership - youth presentations across forums including the Governor-General, Attorney-General of Western Australia, local council, community groups, philanthropists, corporate leaders, Children's Commissioners and Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
- Culture strengthened through intergenerational knowledge transfer - Seven Pilbara language groups involved: Yindjibarndi, Ngarluma, Banjima, Yinawanka, Kuruma, Nyamal, Marthudunera



Artwork: 'Trapped' by C

5. Case Study - C

We first started working with C, a young Wongkatha woman at the start of the program. With an excellent eye for framing and observation, we have been able to foster her passion for photography over the program providing further opportunity for C to build technical skills and refine her creative practice.

On Country trips through *Banthunguru-Bura*, coupled with one on one mentorship in the Digital Lab allowed C supported moments to photograph country, friends, family as well as archive, edit and effectively develop a strong body of work.

In order to amplify her achievements, mentors workers co-ordinated with FORM and her teachers at Roebourne District High School for further professional development workshops, eventually leading to her work being selected at the prestigious Revealed Exhibition hosted by Fremantle Arts Centre in Perth. Mentors were able to support C throughout this process, from the initial conversations with FORM and Fremantle Arts Centre, to the development of an artist statement, workshops on licensing, contracts and payments as well as feeding back outcomes and updates to her family and teachers at Roebourne District High School. A Big hART mentor member travelled with C to Perth for the workshops and opening of the exhibition and organised travel arrangements for C's mother and two younger siblings to travel to Perth as part of this event. At that point, C had not seen her mother in almost two years and was delighted that she was able to be with her for the opening event.

Over the course of the Revealed Exhibition, all of C's prints sold, including one being purchased by the WA State Government for display at Dumas House. Since this initial exhibition, C has been able to exhibit some of her work (images above) alongside her friends from Roebourne School at Cossack as part of the *Our Ngurra* exhibition, with a further Perth exhibition in July at the Good Shed with Yindjibarndi senior women artists from Roebourne.

In the last two months, C was experiencing considerable pressure at school due to a difficult scenario that was placing her at risk and sidelining regular participation. This situation had resulted in C considering leaving school in her final year. After some negotiation with C's family, the staff at Roebourne District High School and Ngarluma Yindjibarndi Foundation Ltd (NYFL), Big hART arranged for C to spend 2 full days a week with Big hART as part of a school based traineeship that will mean she can go on to continue her final year at school in a safe and supported environment, whilst exploring further professional and creative development opportunities and having this work recognised as part of her curriculum with the school through Big Picture Learning.

As C's confidence in photography continues to grow, she has also become a very important role model and mentor for some of the younger women involved in the program.

"My work focusses on portraiture, using my family and friends as subjects, and situating them within the country. I hope that sharing photos of country will encourage people to respect these places. I see my photography as a process of documenting important moments that can be reflected on in years to come."

C, Program Participant



Case Study - S

Having graduated year 12 high school in 2019, S is young Yindjibarndi woman who had yet to engage in any ongoing employment since leaving school. S was offered a casual trainee role at the commencement of the program. She is passionate about working in her community and was excited about the opportunity to build up new skills and experiences as a trainee with Big hART. The trainee role offered S eight hours a week mentoring participants, assisting with the delivery of workshops and On Country trips associated with the Banthunguru-bura program as well as Big hART's general Digital Lab skills workshop program, predominately catering to Roebourne Primary School aged students.

Throughout the course of the program, S received further training in digital technologies e.g., DSLR Cameras, Digital Drawing Software and Audio Recording. Program Mentors facilitated S to obtain her Driver's Licence, an essential qualification for employment in the region. S also undertook Media Training under the mentorship of Big hART's Media and Comms Manager, Bettina Richter. S implemented this training in conducting a number of interviews with program Mentors and Participants, and being interviewed with Pilbara News and Ngaarda Media.

S, herself displaying photography in the *Our Ngurra* exhibition volunteered to speak on behalf of her fellow artists at the Opening Event (pictured below). Her articulate speech resonated as a highlight of the event.

S's capacity and autonomy in her role as trainee has significantly improved over the course of the program. At the conclusion of the program, Big hART have offered to transition S from casual to permanent part-time work. S speaks positively of the program and continues to advocate for development opportunities for younger members of the community.

"Being a trainee with Big hART is a great experience for me as I gain a lot from supporting younger children during workshops and being a mentor and leader for them... this work helps me learn my identity and aspirations..."

"It's not just going out on Country but it learning - culture, fishing, traditional cooking... It's important for the young kids to learn it because it could help them in the future. You know, they might come up like "Yeah I know what plant this is." They might teach their own young ones, when they get older. So, it's about learning and absorbing everything. Learning from our Elders. Culture, it's very important to us. We need to know who we are."

S, Program Participant





Case Study - S

One of the main participants in the *Banthunguru-bura* program, S had struggled in school to engage in class, with her teachers noting that it was particularly difficult convincing her to try new things or to submit any work out of fear of failure and 'shame'. Over the course of this program, S's confidence notably grew, and whilst initially reluctant to try taking photographs or record audio, she soon became confident to try. Her initial exploration with this technology happened at a trip to Murujuga, and Sheneil, with permission from Clinton, was able to document turtle rock art. This was the first time that Sheneil had seen rock art, despite growing up in Roebourne and Wickham.

Her interest in turtles and her willingness to try new things continued to develop, and she was one of four young women to opt into a trip to Delambre Island as part of a turtle monitoring opportunity with Parks and Wildlife. S actively took part in the monitoring, working with the researchers to hold the turtles, take and record measurements and other observational data, which was a significant feat considering her low levels of literacy and numeracy.

In the lead up to the *Our Ngurra* exhibition, Big hART worked with S to encourage her selection of at least one of her images. In the end, she decided to include an image that she had taken of the turtle rock art at Murujuga (image below). Her description of the image was this:

'When I see rock art it makes me feel happy. When I took this picture, it was the first time I saw rock art.'

After the exhibition, we asked S to reflect on how it made her feel and she said:

'Seeing the photos up in the gallery made me feel a bit shame at first. But then it made me feel good. I felt proud.'

Artwork: 'Rock Art' by S





Artwork: 'Cloudy Hill' by participant



Artwork: 'Boss Man' by participant

Case Study - D

D is currently in year 11, attending Roebourne High School. D is well-liked and respected by his peers. Throughout the program D was eager to engage with the On Country Trips, valuing the cultural education on offer. He took a genuine interest and proactive engagement in any guest speakers from Murujuga Aboriginal Rangers, expressing an interest in a career in Cultural Land Management.

D, although initially tentative to try new things in front of his peers increased in confidence throughout the program, trying his hand at photography and drone piloting. D's photography was exhibited as part of the *Our Ngurra* exhibition, though he does not consider himself an Artist.

D's growing confidence over the course of the program was best demonstrated in the leadership role he played on the culminating trip to Millstream. He was central to the planning and preparation of this trip, and as a young and proud Yindjibarndi person, once out on country took initiative in sharing important places to him and his family. On the back of both D's growth and his interest in sharing culture, opportunities to build a traineeship role and work experience with Clinton are currently being explored.

"It's good to see the country. When we went to Cossack I learnt how to take photos on cameras, I'd never learnt to do that. I'd like to go on country more, take more photos of the country, of the land and plants. Learning on country is different to numbers and stuff because you actually get to see the land. In the classroom you use paper, (but) on the land you use (aboriginal language) words."

D, Program Participant





Activities:

Engagement workshops, wrap-around mentoring, intergenerational on-country trips, digital inclusion and content creation, entrepreneurial skills building, local community events.

Outcomes:

Social and workforce participation, leadership, agency and resilience, increased wellbeing, improved digital literacy, enhanced regional image.





6. Participant Skill Areas

Leadership & Governance

Young people have demonstrated leadership through their behaviour, respecting country and sharing knowledge. Governance has been explored through the lens of cultural systems and stories that speak to collective responsibility. Recognising that speaking for country allows you to speak publicly, focus on knowledge transmission and documentation is a pathway to build these participants towards public presentations.

Job Readiness

Young people have increased their digital literacy and self-entrepreneurial skills. The program has rebuilt habits of work, created new stepping stones to employment and increased relationships between employers and young people. Working with mentors and role models, young people were able to test drive their aspirations, strengthen their identity and set goals. Increased entrepreneurial exploration in e-commerce, intellectual property rights and content creation.

Cultural Knowledge

Young people connected to role models and Elders on country, increasing preservation, promotion & transmission of cultural knowledge and Ngarluma/Yindjibarndi language.

Media and Communications

Participants increased communication skills, problem solving and conflict resolution. *Our Ngurra* exhibition provided participants with a platform to speak in front of an audience. A number of participants were interviewed by Pilbara News and ABC Pilbara journalists.

Planning

Participants engaged in the planning, logistics and budgeting for on-country trips. Participants displayed a strong knowledge of applied mathematics.





7. Workshop Skill Areas Summary

Cultural Education

- Land Management practices and Cultural Knowledge - led by Murujuga Rangers and Ngurrangga Tours
- Traditional Food Preparation - how to skin, prepare, and cook a variety of traditional foods on country, including kangaroo tails, damper, razor clams, fresh water perch and bush turkey stew

Skills Development

- Logistics - planning an on-country trip, mechanics skills including checking oil, changing tyres
- First Aid and Bronze Medallion - facilitated by training provider Pilbara First Aid, in partnership with Roebourne School
- Drone Piloting - pilot small photography drones via a smart phone interface to capture video and still images, data interpretation through tracking, mapping and drone work
- Photography - technical skills of landscape photography, portraiture and compositional techniques such as framing, exposure, depth of field and shutter speed
- Audio Recording - concepting, script writing, studio recording, field recording, audio editing, sound design, mixing, mastering and original music composition
- Event Planning - budgeting, catering, site infrastructure, marketing and presenting speeches
- Exhibition Install - curatorial decisions, placement, hanging and levelling 20 artworks
- Media Training - interview techniques, writing questions, interviewing program mentors on camera, speaking to Pilbara News and local Ngaarda Radio
- Photo Editing - cropping, framing, colour balance, exposure and digital archiving, using photo editing software 'Adobe Lightroom'.
- Digital Drawing - use tablet software 'Procreate' to draw digital landscapes. Taught on country, digital drawing workshops focused on building colour palettes, creating layers
- Film Editing - using film editing software 'Premiere Pro', editing a short 30 second sequence of footage, considering concepts such as narrative, pacing, music and voice over
- Reflective Statements - journaling, writing artists statements





Artwork: 'Untitled' by Johnita Sandy

8. On-Country Trip Summary

Buriyamangga (Red Rock) on Cherratta Station

An intergenerational on-country trip with Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi Elders to a freshwater pool and cultural place on Ngarluma country. Led by cultural and musical mentors, Clinton Walker, Patrick Churnside, Michelle Adams and Naomi Pigram, young people sat with their Elders in respective men's and women's groups and took part cultural activities including artifact making, ceremonial object making, catching freshwater fish using endemic reeds, filtering fresh water by digging sand wells and cooking damper, fish and meat on the fire. Young people participated in a contemporary song writing workshop with a number of their Elders.

Mingullatharndu/Five Mile Dam

Taking place at a site linked to the 1947 Pilbara Strike, an important event in regional history, participants prepared and shared food with senior people from the Roebourne community by the fire. Led by artist mentor Claire Leach, young people worked on their photography skills throughout the afternoon, making use of the changing light. Culminating in a chance to do night-time photography, participants were able to gain experience using different ISO settings, fast and slow shutter speed and varying aperture settings.

Hearson's Cove and Mairee Pool

Timing the trip with the early morning low tide, the focus of this workshop was on coastal foraging and hunting. Participants took part in identifying and harvesting traditional coastal foods in and around Hearson's Cove on Ngarluma country. Led by mentor Clinton Walker, young people accessed tidal mudflats, mangroved islands and rockpools, harvesting tidal worms, oysters, mud crabs and razor clams. Participants encountered an adult hawkesbill turtle, who had become stranded in a rock pool at low tide. Clinton Walker demonstrated to the young people how to safely relocate the turtle. As well as foraging and spearing, participants used to opportunity to capture photos of their peers and country. The second part of the day saw participants travel inland to Mairee Pool where the catch was cooked up and enjoyed. Here they were able to have a swim and go out to collect 'Gardangu', a native bush lolly.

Murujuga Rock Art - Ngajarli and Withnell Bay

Guided by Mentor Clinton Walker, participants were taken to see and learn important cultural sites on the Murujuga (Burrup) Peninsula, one of the biggest rock art sites in the world. On Yaburrara country, these sites are very significant culturally the participants that belong to neighbouring Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi nations. Young people visited two sites, Withnell Bay, an important turtle site and Ngajarli which holds significant petroglyphs. For one young Yindjibarndi woman, this was the first time she had seen rock art. On this trip, Clinton instructed young people on how they can navigate cultural sites safely, how to identify animal tracks and track animal behaviour and how to use medicinal plants such as native lemongrass. The day involved significant discussions and teaching of Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi language associated with places and objects and Clinton was able to share important cultural stories of that area such as the story of the flying foxes – 'warramanagkas'. Throughout the day young people used cameras to capture images of the rock art and animal tracks and were able to observe the country from above using Clinton's drone.



On-Country Trip Summary

Bell's Beach, Wickham

Participants were led by Mentor Sarah McDonald, Coordinator for the Department of Parks and Wildlife's Pilbara Turtle Program. Taking place during turtle nesting season, Sarah explained, with the aid of artifacts, bones and illustrations, the life cycle of the turtle and her role in local conservation. Following a safety and information induction, participants waited quietly on the beach until dusk and were able to witness a mother turtle emerge from the water, crawl up the beach, dig her nest, lay her eggs and bury them. Sarah's workshop discussed the importance of a safe environment for the turtles.

Goanna Leg Gorge, Horseshoe Gorge, and Harding Dam

Participants were led by Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi mentors Clinton Walker and Michelle Adams to three different sites starting in lowland Ngarluma country, travelling up to the Yindjibarndi tablelands. At Harding Dam participants learned the traditional name – Punkaliyarra and the site's significance in the Seven Sisters' dreaming story, as well as important places that were inundated during the construction of the dam. Young people visited a historical campsite where many of their ancestors stayed as they were forced off their land and slowly shifted to Roebourne. At Goanna Leg Gorge, Clinton provided an introduction to drone piloting and participants captured 'action shots' of their peers, diving into the water using GoPros and SLR cameras. At Horseshoe Gorge in Millstream National Park, participants traversed the gorge, guided by Clinton, to witness a flowing waterfall and the lay of the country, followed by a barbeque and cake to celebrate one participant's birthday.

Murujuga Rangers at the 'Yatha'

This trip was a collaboration between Program Mentors, Roebourne District High School, Murujuga Rangers and Big hART. Incorporating all students at Roebourne District High School, the day started with a cultural induction at the Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation office, led by Ngarluma Mentor Patrick Churnside. The induction covered concepts of Culture and Land Management, highlighting the significance for Traditional Owners to engage in these practices through their work. The day continued at Murujuga's Yatha, an outdoor shelter or bough-shed constructed for meetings and cultural gatherings. Mentors Patrick Churnside and Clinton Walker introduced a number of the Murujuga Rangers, who alongside the participants engaged in workshops and activities including a guided tour of significant rock art at Ngajarli, a digital drawing workshop creating a specific colour palette for country, preparing cultural foods (damper, bush turkey stew and kangaroo tail) and career presentations from the Murujuga Rangers in their place of work. Roebourne School staff commented on the level of positive engagement shown from the whole cohort.

Millstream

Participants discussed important places of learning to visit which they could share with their peers. Yindjibarndi young people identified sites near Millstream connected to their family histories, including the old homestead, crossing pool and the gorge lookout. Accompanied by Mentors Clinton Walker and Vince Derschow, participants visited these places, photographed and discussed significant sites, fished and made fish traps in ancestral fishing places, cooked their catch and reflected on the relationship between being custodians and leaders in their communities. Participants did further training before flying drones unaccompanied to survey, photograph and take footage of the area. Participants came up with the title of their culminating photography exhibition - 'Our Ngurra' (our country/land/place).





On-Country Trip Summary

Malus Island and Flying Foam Passage

Participants were led by Mentors Clinton Walker and Vince Derschow on a boat trip to Malus Island and back via the Flying Foam Passage in the Dampier Archipelago. For some young people it was their first time on a boat. The trip was supported by Ngurranga Tours, Roebourne School, Murujuga Rangers, Big hART and a City of Karratha Youth Officer. Clinton demonstrated and explained the significance of 'calling out to country' to keep everyone safe. Young people took part in photography (on land and underwater), drone piloting, learning language names of flora and fauna and fishing techniques. The trip highlighted careers available to young people as Murujuga Land and Sea Ranger Leanne Lockyer discussed aquaculture projects and the Living Knowledge Centre.

Mulla Mulla Women's Camp, Millstream

Eight young women accompanied eight senior women Elders on a three day camp at Millstream. Young woman worked alongside Elders to ensure tasks ran smoothly including preparing food, collecting firewood and proactively documenting through photography, film and audio. Young women and Elders collectively designed activities and planned which sites would be visited. Over the course of the three days, the young women were taken to different sites by the Elders who shared important stories. Yindjibarndi Elder Nanna Berry, one of the few remaining female Tjaabi singers (important cultural songs that relate to country and are passed down through generations), shared some of these songs on country. Under the guidance of their Elders, young women collected ochres and rock pigmentations that are used in lore ceremony and learnt how to make different animal tracks and sand drawings. Over the course of the three days, both the Elders and Big hART mentors noted how the young women were focussed, engaged and attentive. One Elder commented that even the way that they walked changed – they were standing strong on country. Following this trip, Elders has been going through the Tjaabis recorded from Nanna Berry and with her permission, exploring with the young women and artist mentors how these critical songs might be layered into both animation and digital art to be shared with the community.

"It's important to know our stories to pass down to our young ones. It's important for me to be out here to learn about our old people and the Ngurra (country). I want to learn about the Ngurra and how our old people survived throughout their lives and the stories that got passed down. Knowledge is power."

Jamie, project participant

"We need to have more meaningful conversations. Overturning stereotypes, sharing diverse and rich history and story. Let's talk about the nurturing of Aboriginal women. Let's talk about the nurturing role of grandparents. Let's talk about strength."

Michelle Adams, Yindjibarndi cultural leader and emerging Elder





9. Our Ngurra - Photography Exhibition

Over the course of the program, participants had the opportunity to document their experience through film and photography. Towards the end of the program, there was a strong catalogue of photographs, depicting a variety of subjects and locations. A key cohort of participants suggested the idea of a photography exhibition.

Presenting the participant's photos offered up a unique opportunity for reflection. Mentors encouraged participants to select one or two of their favourite photographs to include in the exhibition and were asked to produce a statement on the image and its significance. Statements explored ideas around; connection to Country, cultural succession and learning, identity and relationships with their peers.

In addition to selecting images, young people were involved in all aspects of the exhibition and opening event including planning stages, catering, installation, hanging their framed artworks, inviting friends and family, speeches on the night and speaking to Pilbara News and local media.

The exhibition opening event attracted 80 community members, and was opened by senior Ngarluma Elder Mr Tim Douglas. The young artists and their peers who helped with other aspects of the exhibition were invited to take the floor, where family members and their community gave them a huge applause.

"How perfect to see the benefits of being On Country through the eyes of the young people. May their lives continue to benefit from that knowledge."

Exhibition attendee

The positive feedback from the community, school, visitors, tourists and stakeholders such as Roebourne Police and Youth services re-enforced a sense of pride and achievement by the young people, with the framed artworks remaining an important keepsake of their journey through the program.

Young people applied their new skills and confidences in front of their community, receiving positive feedback, a sense of belonging and reward. The exhibition acknowledged the new found skills and abilities of the young people and helped value their local contribution, resulting in re-engagement in the community and education.

The Exhibition featured 20 artworks from 13 different photographers pictured over the next five pages.





Yurnungga by Ella Togo

"Yurnungga means beautiful in Yinjibarndi. Beautiful wildflowers like these purple fluffy mulla mulla appear during Winter in the Pilbara. I am very proud of this photo. I like to take pictures because of the happy feelings it gives me when I look back on them. Taking pictures of nature is important. I want to keep taking pictures of country including plants and animals to share how beautiful and special these things are. I hope that sharing pictures of country will encourage people to respect these places."



Teaching from the land by Kimberly Wilson

"My photo is of Grandmother teaching granddaughter how to fish. The best school with the best teacher, learning out in the bush."



Undu Coming by Tiara Woodley

"This photo was taken standing at the Cossack lookout. Me and my friends were watching the clouds build up and the rain just about to pour. You could see and feel the undu (rain) coming. These big clouds caught my eye. I am very happy with this photo. Undu breathes life into the Pilbara."



Pilbara in the Frame by Simara Munda

"This photo I took at Cliff lookout, near Millstream. The landscapes looked outstanding and amazing. The guys are facing their heads towards the left because they are looking out onto the cliffs. I love this photo."



Harding Dam by Bella Warrie

"This photo makes me think of home. Going on country makes me feel happy, especially this place at Harding Dam because I hadn't been there for a long time. I love this photo because it was a very happy day when I took the photo."



Low Tide by Trey Wally

"I like it how there are pools of water, the sand and the channels as they come out to the ocean. It's all connected."



Buriyamangga by Karella Walker

"I love this photo because it is of my brothers and sisters: Kimberly, Selleck and Nickalayia. The photo was taken at Buriyamangga (Red Rock). We had just eaten damper and kangaroo stew and were fishing and feeling very happy. I remember sitting on the red rocks, having fun and learning on country. Makes me feel good."



Can You See It? by Chenisie Cameron

"This photo was taken when we were walking along a trail at Millstream and someone spotted a kangaroo that was just sitting there. I like that there are so many things that you can see in this picture, but then there is one little head that stands out amongst everything."



Mairee Pool by Johnita Sandy

"This is a good swimming spot. I like fresh water because we can look under water and we can swim far into the deep end. I like it when we can go out and have fun together. Kids are always good when they are out on country. It's important for us to go out on country because it makes us feel happy."



Ngajali Murujuga by Matilda Samson

"I like this picture because you can see the artwork in the rocks as well the sky and clouds. I took this picture at Murujuga, there is so much rock art there."



10. Future employment opportunities - Guest Speakers

The program explored several employment pathways accessible to the participants as school leavers. These jobs, requiring work on country were presented to participants as rewarding and meaningful vocations that encouraged cultural connection to country. Some featured guest speakers included-

Vince Dershow

Vince is a Tour Guide and Cultural Educator for Ngurrangga Tours. Vince uses his knowledge of Culture and Country to educate visitors to the region. A keen and savvy outdoorsman, Vince shared his practical skills to assist participants to plan and navigate multiple On Country trips. Vince was an advocate for

Leanne Lockyer

Leanne is a Ngarluma, Yinjibarndi & Karriyarra Woman and works as a Murujuga Land & Sea Unit Ranger. With a strong connection to nature, Leanne enjoys many outdoor activities in her spare time, such as camping, fishing, diving, horse riding and also has a passion for medicinal medicines. Leanne accompanied participants on a trip out to Malus Island and took the opportunity to explain some of her duties as a Ranger.

Sarah McDonald

Sarah is the Coordinator of the West Pilbara Turtle Program with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. Sarah shared her knowledge of turtle nesting and habitats to educate participants on how to advocate for turtle conservation in their community. Participants witnessed a mother turtle lay her eggs and bury the nest before return to the ocean.

Michelle Adams

Michelle Adams is a Yindjibarndi and Cultural Advisor to Big hART, working with the organisation for many years to ensure the program is safe culturally. A passionate advocate for change and an innovator in her community. Michelle has been a senior government adviser in Indigenous Affairs at the Department of Communities and is a trained language specialist with over 20 years' experience in community development and education. Michelle consulted on the delivery of the program and participated in multiple On Country trips.

Patrick Churnside

Patrick is a Cultural Advisor for the Murujuga Rangers. Through his work, Patrick shares the knowledge needed for everyday life such as how and when to find certain foods, dreamtime storytelling, explaining spirituality, heritage and the lore and customs of his people which are very important as they inform the younger generation about creation, ancestral beings and places, boundaries of tribal lands which then ensures these stories are passed down for future generations and still continue to this day. Patrick, along with his team participated in multiple On Country trips.





Future employment opportunities - Guest Speakers

Josie Samson

Josie is a Ngarluma Woman and cultural educator, currently working in Roebourne District School. Josie is a close mentor for many of the program participants and played a key role in engaging participants through in class education.

Tyson Mowarin

Tyson is a musician, film maker and proud Ngarluma man, Tyson produces both Children's television and factual content for community archives. Through his work, he aims to share community stories, history and cultural knowledge, improve awareness of Aboriginal traditions and custodial ownership via digital technologies. During the program, Tyson offered practical experience to participants on the set of his new ABC series 'Red Dirt Riders'

Sarah Hicks

Sarah is a Murujuga Ranger and has participated in multiple in class and on country workshops throughout the program, sharing her knowledge and experience. Sarah has been a keen advocate for the Murujuga Junior Rangers Program and encouraged participants to explore careers in Cultural Land Management.

Tristan Simpson

Tristan is the Senior Environmental Officer (Knowledge Exchange) for the Northwest Shelf Flatback Turtle Program with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attractions. Tristan led participants on an overnight turtle monitoring trip on Delambre Island. Tristan shared his experiences working with the Department, advocating for careers in Science and Conversation.

Wendy Hubert

Wendy Hubert is a respected Yindjibarndi Elder, Cultural Custodian and Linguist who has lived passionately and supported her Roebourne and Yindjibarndi community for more than 40 years. Wendy helped lead cultural activities on the Women's Camp.

Jean Churnside

Jean is a respected Ngarluma Elder, Cultural Custodian and Songwriter who is dedicated to her work with Yaandina Community Services. Jean is passionate about the education of young people and helped lead cultural activities on a Women's On Country Trip.

Allery Sandy

Allery is a Yindjibarndi Elder and has worked with Big hART as a cultural consultant and board member. Allery keeps the project safe by advising on community needs and mentoring young participants. Allery has advocated for the program within community, communicating the achievements of participants back to their families.



11. Challenges and Shifts

Personal development has seen positive growth throughout the program but further support and mentoring is required to engage youth voices in community forums.

In consulting with community stakeholders, it was agreed that engaging youth voices in forums such as Balagarni 6718 would be beneficial, if young people were carefully supported to participate in a meaningful and safe way.

It was identified that young people need to develop confidence and skills to engage in public speaking and obtain a deep understanding of cultural protocols. This, coupled with inherent “shame” of speaking out of turn or to a group of community leaders adds to the anxiety of public speaking. No participants formally engaged with community forums through the program. Cultural protocols must be learned and integrated into public speaking training.

To develop participants confidence, voice and community mindedness, a number of practical skills and workshops were delivered. Participants benefited from these workshops and exhibited positive development in self-confidence and public speaking.

Program mentors, along with other community stakeholders identified the need for a formal support structure and dedicated mentors to effectively engage youth members in future community forums.





12. Conclusion

"Nurture these emerging young leaders, we need to empower them to be the best that they can be."

Michelle Adams, Program Mentor

"It was remarkable to see the young people at the exhibition stand up and be proud. The majority of the kids that were standing in that room are not regularly going to school but they have so much to give. They're incredible young people whose skills aren't necessarily recognised by the system."

Aimee Kepa, Program Mentor

"It's important for kids to go on country with their old people, so we can learn. We learn about our language. I feel strong when I'm with my family. I feel strong when I'm on Country."

Karella, Project Participant

Complex social problems can't be solved with simplistic solutions. The Banthunguru-bura program has been a layered, responsive, mentoring based approach to overcome community disengagement experienced by young people.

The program has increased confidence, digital ability, school retention, leadership, safety and wellbeing for young people in Roebourne.

Over the past year, the Banthunguru-bura program has enabled young people to develop as community members and decision makers, and have encouraged pathways to local, culturally fulfilling career opportunities.

The Banthunguru-bura program represents the first steps in guiding young people into rewarding vocations, building confidence and engagement as future community leaders. Meaningful and long-term results will require sustained mentoring and support, provided in consultation and delivered in partnership with Roebourne District School.

Project Video

[Banthunguru-bura - https://vimeo.com/572941930/742c54e1ae](https://vimeo.com/572941930/742c54e1ae)

Clinton Walker, Ngurrunga Tours, Big hART and the Roebourne community thank NIAA for your trust and support.

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