



Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School
Many Cultures, One Community
www.yiramalay.net

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COVID-19 Update

On Monday 20 April, the Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School moved to remote learning as a result of COVID-19 (coronavirus). Remote learning packages were sent to the homes of Senior Years Preparation Program (Year 10) students and Senior Years Learning Framework (SYLF) – Standard Level students (Years 11 and 12). There will be weekly pastoral check-ins with families to ensure that wellbeing levels are being monitored, and daily contact with students who have not attended their live remote learning sessions with their teachers. Please let us know if you do not receive your remote learning package; if your student is having trouble with the live classes on Microsoft Teams; or you are worried that your student is not engaged in their learning; or you need further help of any kind.

Given the latest advice from the WA state government, we are working with our Bunuba partners on a plan for re-opening the school for students who are not able to access remote learning for any reason, as well as our Year 12s. We will make further announcements about this soon. A period of 14 days self-isolation will be required before students and staff travel to school from outside of the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley.

When school reopens, please be advised that rules will be in place to ensure the safety of our students and staff, and to protect our local communities. Limiting outside visitors, increased cleaning of 'high-touch' areas throughout the day, additional hygiene measures including handwashing, and physical distancing will be expected.

In the meantime, enjoy more reflections of Term 1 below, stay safe and we will look forward to when we next see you in person.

Felicity Pearson, Director (acting)



Induction 43 images

Induction 43 Reflection

Despite a delayed start due to cyclone related weather sweeping through the Fitzroy Valley, and an early finish due to COVID-19, Induction 43 didn't fail to leave an impression.

On Saturday 7 March, 16 students and three staff arrived at Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School from Wesley College, Melbourne to start their Induction journey here in the Fitzroy Valley, alongside seven local students. From start to finish this jam-packed, immersive, educational program afforded students and staff a real-life experience and opportunity to learn from elders and mentors of the local community as they enjoyed culturally appropriate hands-on, on-country activities shaped by the physical context of season and time. Activities included interacting with and forming relationships with a variety of different people; hunting; fishing; collecting bush honey and medicine; engaging in local cooking methods; swimming in springs, creeks and rivers; and meeting and learning from local elders as they shared their stories.

These two-way learning activities successfully facilitated student and staff self-development in the areas of self respect, gaining an understanding of who they are, and pride in their culture and community, honouring the philosophy upon which Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School was founded – to bring about positive change through education.

Monique Fewkes, Head of Teaching and Learning

Induction 43 impressions

Yiramalay is an experience like no other.

Google Maps can't show you the incredible locations and waterholes throughout Bunuba country like the local elders and guides have in the past three weeks. A Google search can't show you the immense history behind the country like we've heard from elders like Olive Knight and Mervyn Street. Social media can't connect people from entirely different worlds in Australia like this Induction program has connected people from Northern Australia and Victoria. The stories we've been told, the people we've met and the places we've been are life changing.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's first people and pay our respects to their elders both past and present as owners of this land where we stand.

Many people are never given this kind of opportunity to connect with our nation's core roots in such a hands-on experience – and we were lucky to be given such an opportunity (even if the bathrooms had a bunch of bugs in them).

Leo Day, Induction 43

The last two weeks in Yiramalay were a great experience. We went through some easy and some challenging times. The weather in this community is very hot, which was a struggle for most of us, though we got to visit some great springs and swimming holes – a highlight for most of us. We all created some funny memories and enjoyed each other's company; it was easy getting to know the Melbourne kids which turned out to be a highlight for me. It was a great time getting to do all these activities such as hunting, swimming, telling stories together, breaking down in the car etc. But it was sad finding out that it all had to end.

Tanika McHenry, Induction 43

Design Within Country

The Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School program places equal emphasis on three areas of learning: Industry, Personal Development and Academic. The experiences of a day-long photoshoot together along with a Melbourne Fashion Festival event offered students the opportunity to learn more about that exciting industry first-hand, as well as an opportunity to challenge themselves and gain self-confidence. The young women worked together to support each other to sign up for the events, and then found individual pride to overcome their nerves on the day.

Mary Zbierski-West, Teacher

Hiki-Lee, Ree-alla, Tenisha, Renisha and I went to Jira Models for a photoshoot one Saturday early in February. Later, in March, Asharanie and Niniesha joined us for the runway show of Marnin Studio from Fitzroy Crossing. It was fun and enjoyable. All the girls had a lot of fun and we got to meet new people. The people at the show were so happy to see us modelling and they were saying we were all stunning. They kept coming up to us and asking to have their photo with us. Modelling is fun and I think in the future I will be modelling again with Jira Models.

Monique Dean, Year 11

Modelling was a good experience. I wish I could do it again some time, when I am back in Melbourne. It really brought my confidence out. I was really shy at first but I saw the other girls doing it, and I let myself out there. I don't need Kimberley Girl to do modelling, I could just do that. I really thank them for giving us a try, I really enjoyed it.

Tenisha Badal, Year 12



Yiramalay alumni and students at the Design Within Country event at the Melbourne Fashion Festival

Day at the Quarry

As part of the students' on country learning, some chose to go hunting and the greater proportion chose photography at the quarry. We set off in the early morning light and arrived at the quarry in the peak of the heat. The students had two DSLR cameras and their cameras on their phones. The task was simple, to venture off around the quarry's amazing rock formations, and find interesting and unusual colours and designs to capture. Insects, plants, flowers, and the height, length and depth of the quarry were also explored behind the lens. Every student got right into it without doubt, diving into coves and crawling into the depths of the quarry's walls in an attempt to capture some stunning photos, whilst cooperatively sharing the cameras.

With the students' eager approval, an array of these photos from the quarry are proudly displayed in the Yiramalay Dining Hall for all to enjoy.

Alya Pearson, Mentor in the Kimberley



Images from the photoshoot at the Quarry

International Women's Day Breakfast

On Monday 9 March, the school hosted an International Women's Day breakfast at the Kimberley site. We were so fortunate to have Kankawa Nagarra - Olive Knight, as our inspirational guest speaker, and were pleased that so many community members and parents could join us for this celebration. With a theme of following your dreams, Kankawa's speech encouraged us all to never stop believing that anything is possible.

Kankawa shared stories about her identity as a Walmajarri women born in the desert and now living in the small remote community of Wangkatjungka as a backdrop to the journey that led her on a path of 40 years of activism and human rights work, including playing a significant role in supporting the movement against the closure of remote communities in recent times.



Felicity, Olive and Ayla at the Yiramalay International Women's Day Breakfast

As an Aboriginal woman, Kankawa had not dared to dream of being taken seriously as a musician, due to the prevailing attitudes towards race and gender during her youth. Such were the times. However, that is exactly what happened and she is now also a renowned blues musician, most recently spending time on the road touring with Hugh Jackman both nationally, and overseas. Kankawa now channels her passion for using music into supporting the healing process for vulnerable people in her community and beyond.

Thank you to the Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School community for supporting this wonderful event and thank you to Kankawa for taking the time to share her important message of hope with us.

Felicity Pearson, Director (acting)

Term 1 Reflection

Coming back to Yiramalay and finding my place again was the best thing this term for me and my family. It took a little time for all of us at Yiramalay to adjust, especially new staff and students, but with teamwork things settled nicely as the term went on. Taking students on country and sharing culture in Term 1 has been healing because I have been away in Melbourne for many years and for me country is about connection. It's more than the land – it's my identity, it heals, and it gives me spiritual guidance. Country is where we teach and learn. It's where we belong. Students always look brighter and fresher after swimming in the springs. They relax as they take time to talk and laugh, making damper and tea on open fires and eating it and listening to stories shared by elders.

During Induction 43, I was asked to share my knowledge of skin groups and put together a lesson using colours for each skin group and giving each student a colour and explaining the relationships they would have with every other colour. Students could see it and understood it, they really enjoyed the lesson, I was very proud.

With Term 1 over, we are all waiting to see what the new opportunities are ahead for our school community.

Kaylene Marr, Cultural and Community Advisor



Yiramalay Term 1 images

Wyvern Medal

On Wednesday 4 March, I attended the Queens College Commencement Dinner, representing Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School. The evening was one of celebration and joy as the Queens College community joined together to see in the new academic year and congratulate scholarship and award winners. I was delighted to catch up with Yiramalay alumni, Brigalow (Briggs) McIntosh (OW2018).

Briggs spoke to me about what an amazing opportunity Yiramalay and Wesley had afforded him and that he was only now starting to realise now how truly significant the impact on his life had been. A proud moment for all was seeing Briggs awarded a Wyvern Medal. Every semester the College awards academic medals to students who have achieved an 80% average or over in four subjects. (It's called a Wyvern medal as it has the College mythical beast on it.)

Matt Watson, Deputy Director Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School, Deputy Head of Learning



Matt Watson and a very proud Briggs McIntosh (OW2018) at Queens College Commencement Dinner

Friends of Yiramalay

On Monday 2 March, Friends of Yiramalay (FoY) proudly hosted a sold-out screening of the brilliant documentary *In My Blood It Runs*, at the Classic Cinema in Elsternwick. More than 250 people, including the Year 12 Yiramalay students, attended the successful event, which raised over \$5,000.

Wesmob prefect, Saskia Lloyd, opened the event with an Acknowledgment of Country before Yiramalay Prefect Alena Landers thanked attendees for supporting the FoY effort to raise funds for the students attending the Glen Waverley Year 12 formal. In particular, she thanked Mojdeh Pleasants who, each year, spends countless hours shopping with the students ensuring they look sharp, feel confident and enjoy a fantastic night. This year, Vanessa Levin has volunteered to assist Mojdeh in this rewarding task. FoY member Lavinia Riachi drew the raffle for the two donated prizes: an Esteban the Natureman bird image printed on stone, and a superb photographic artwork by Yiramalay student, Coen Wright, depicting his family's country in Western Australia. The winners were thrilled.

The audience was deeply moved by the documentary, which follows 10-year-old Arrernte boy, Djuwan, as he grows up in Alice Springs and navigates his challenges getting an education in the mainstream system. The film reinforced the critical importance of the Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School and the outstanding educational model it provides for Indigenous education in this country.

For more information about Friends of Yiramalay, please follow us on [Facebook](#).

Romy Moshinsky and Georgie Raik-Allen, Founders, Friends of Yiramalay



Images from the screening of *In My Blood It Runs* at the Classic Cinema in Elsternwick

Skin Group Lesson from a Master

I was privileged to be present when Kaylene Marr, Cultural and Community Advisor, took her Aboriginal Skin Groups lesson during the recent Induction 43. As a teacher and experienced Induction leader, I have seen the session delivered by several elders over the years and students are always left with different levels of understanding, so I knew the difficulty of getting key concepts across while conveying the system's complexity. Even though I have been told my Bunuba (and Gooniyandi) skin group is Jawandi, and I am reminded on every Induction that this makes our young local Induction staff member and guide, Marilyn, my Grandmother, I still forget the names and order of the four generational skin groups, which are different for both males and females. Now you might begin to understand why I can in no way claim to understand all the complexity and subtlety of the skin group beliefs and customs that structure social obligation.

When I asked Kaylene to run this session for Induction 43 the next morning, we both knew what a big ask it was. (In the absence of any elders, I'd tried to explain the system to the students on the previous day and I knew they were struggling with the concept.) I could see in her eyes that she wasn't keen, but never the one to avoid a challenge, Kaylene graciously agreed. The next day, Kaylene asked me to prepare coloured paper wristbands for the session.

Before the lesson, Kaylene put up some posters she'd made the night before showing colour coded skin group names. The next hour was an inspiring masterclass on how to teach complex material in a beautifully ingenious way. Kaylene's uncomplicated language to explain the system with the aid of differently coloured wristbands made it real and alive. When the morning tea bell rang, students laughed and teased each other good naturedly as they were dismissed by skin group along with their complimentary skin group from which their husband or wife could be chosen.

It was my highlight of the trip and Kaylene has won the skin group lesson teaching guernsey in every future Induction that I have anything to do with.

Kym Adams, Induction Coordinator and Teacher



Images from Kaylene's skin group lesson