



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

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### **A school that really matters in a time when it couldn't matter more**

Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School is a growing thing. A partnership based on mutual respect, trust and two-way learning. It changes people's lives, influences the decisions young people make about their future and is a vibrant, practical pursuance towards reconciliation.

Students, teachers and their families are moved by the experience. They are enlightened by this opportunity to learn about Australia's Indigenous history and culture alongside, from, and with, members of our Indigenous communities from remote Northern and Central Australia. In this sense it is truly a model worthy of emulation.

Within the Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School the conditions, the environment, and the time is there for real relationships to form. There is time for genuine cross-cultural learning and the kind of understanding that is created by the amalgamation of knowledge, empathy and humanity. Mick Dodson, in his address to the National Press Club in Canberra, after being named Australian of the Year in 2009, asserted... "Reconciling is an active pursuit - it's about getting on with what's needed and what we know to get the results we all want, and that's a mixture of measures that target the body, the mind and the spirit." This is what we do. He goes on, referring to reconciliation... "It's not grand policy half so much as attention to detail. And persistence – making sure it works."

This country is waking up to this stuff again – rhetoric versus reality, policy versus practicality, talk versus action – as it has before when we've lost our way as a result of arrogant, ignorant and short-sighted leadership. People are demanding that history be told accurately, so that healing can take place, so that attitudes are addressed and we focus again on what we know to be the right thing.

The people are telling our leaders that they no longer want a divisive and exclusive dialogue, and are insisting on equality, care and love as guiding principles. These ageless values that should nurture a society, guide its leaders and nourish its people, are what's at the heart of this school and this partnership. Yiramalay/ Wesley Studio School - *Many Cultures, One Community*. A school with a vision, and a school that really matters in a time when it couldn't matter more.

**Matt Watson, Deputy Director Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School, Deputy Head Learning in Residence - Melbourne**



Term 2 images from the Kimberley

### **Many Cultures, One Community**

This partnership between Bunuba people and Wesley College is about sharing our knowledge and skills. Aboriginal people give spiritual guidance – we say 'slow down, don't walk there.' Aboriginal people share their healing plants, their healing water and help students and staff to understand what 'sacred' means. We teach what it means to be connected through skin and kinship and we teach that country is where we learn and where we belong – it gives us our identity.

Our ancestors had their own curriculum to teach us on-country, and that is what we teach today. The great thing is we are learning two sides now. We try new things, we learn from each other to develop different talents. It's about communication and growth and opening hearts and minds through our three circles of learning – Personal Development, and Industry and Academic learning. Then our students will be able to give back to the community.

**Kaylene Marr, Cultural and Community Advisor**

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.

## Our Three Circles of Learning

With an equal focus on Academic Learning, Personal Development and Industry Learning, the Senior Years Learning Framework (SYLF), guides everything we do in the program as we seek to expand the horizons, expectations and life choices of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young Australians. During their time with the Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School, students must complete 150 hours of Personal Development hours in teamwork, community service and leadership, along with 50 days of structured workplace learning with industry professionals.



LEARNING AT YIRAMALAY

### Academic - Standard and Advanced

The three circles of learning allow us to deliver a diverse program of experiential, on-country learning, practical hands-on activity and classroom based subjects for our Senior Years Preparation Program (Year10). In Years 11 and 12, our students have the academic option of SYLF Advanced, which sees them studying the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). They also have the academic option of SYLF Standard Level, which is a Certificate II in Skills For Work and Vocational Pathways (14 units of competency including First Aid).

### Personal Development - teamwork, leadership and community service

Throughout the remote learning phase of Term 2, the focus of the Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School has been on the pastoral care needs of our students. This was fostered as staff travelled far-and-wide from Fitzroy Crossing to Broome and the Pilbara to set our students up for remote learning. This strategy proved effective in assisting our students when transitioning to face-to-face learning upon their return to Yiramalay in the Kimberley. This phase saw staff and students engage in integrated remote and face-to-face teaching and learning activities across our diverse curriculum pathways – VCE, Senior Years Learning Framework - standard and advanced, and Senior Years Preparation Programs, providing equal learning opportunities for all within our community.



Learning across our two locations - Kimberley and Melbourne

Students enjoyed opportunities such as engaging in remote ballet lessons with the Australian Ballet, wood carving with elders and mentors, performing kitchen duties and participating in team building through trivia nights and sports matches. Furthermore, students enjoyed on-country learning experiences such as our Personal Development camps to Bell Gorge, Willare and Biridu with a focus on expanding the horizons, expectations and life choices of those within our community.

### Monique Fewkes, Head of Teaching and Learning



Personal development in the Kimberley - Term 2



The Personal Development Program is an integral part of our learning and way of being at Yiramalay. Cultural identity is the cornerstone of the program, so that students remain connected to their cultural values, families and community. Two-way learning is acknowledged and prioritised as our program evolves.

Teamwork, leadership and community service provide a scaffold enabling students to build skills for their future. Goal setting and reflection are also vital skills our students develop as part of their growth.

The COVID-19 pandemic meant that we needed to learn new ways of being. Remaining connected and engaged in a remote and digital environment was our goal until we were able to return to country. Setting goals around what learning will look, sound and feel like as well as goals to be 'ready to learn' were the foundation skills we set out to achieve during this time. While both students and teachers found this time very challenging, now upon reflection, we can see the positive outcomes of the hard work, as we remain a healthy and connected community. Industry, enterprise and afternoon activities have provided opportunities for students to develop their ability to work within a team. Preparation for camp and our community jobs program, have been valuable in students gaining a sense of contribution to the wider Yiramalay community. Woven amongst these activities, we have begun to notice our emerging leaders. We aim to continue to foster these skills and qualities further in Semester 2, as we continue to develop our student leadership program.

There is a sense of gratitude amongst us to be back together on Bunuba country. We have been able to take some time and reflect on what connection to land means, not only to our wellbeing, but to our learning as well.

### Brent Simons and Fiona Mackenzie, Student Wellbeing Co-ordinators

A key feature of the Personal Development program is on-country learning, which provides opportunities for staff and students to learn from each other and work together fostering positive relationships. These are key ingredients for a flourishing community. In Term 2, staff and students at our Kimberley site enjoyed a weekend camp to Bell Gorge on the Gibb River Road. They participated in swimming, fishing, cooking, and various team building activities including setting up camp and tents for everyone to sleep in. When immersed in country and culture, these camps present powerful learning opportunities that build trust in, and respect for, each other.

Setting up a sleeping area on top of the camper trailer with the boys, telling stories all night, and seeing some of the students return to places they hadn't been since they were little kids made me realise how these learning experiences are memorable shared moments for all.

**Ryan Ali-Akil, Program Activities Co-ordinator**



Images from the Bell Gorge on-country experience

**Industry Learning - hands-on and practical**

Within the Industry Learning circle of our program, students are exposed to a wide range of industry experiences in which they actively participate. These include day-long visits to a variety of workplaces, and structured work-placements in industry. A vital part of the program when both in the Kimberley and Melbourne, is to assist students to build the skills, capabilities, and mindset to find future employment and participate effectively in the workplace. The framework for Industry Learning encompasses the skills of communication, teamwork, problem solving, enterprise and initiative, planning and organising, self-management, learning and technology.

Across this past term in the Kimberley, students had the opportunity to learn onsite alongside our highly skilled staff as they engaged in experiences, and developed their skills in the areas of Horticulture, Hospitality and Grounds and Maintenance. Participation in these hands-on learning experiences prepared students to work safely in the construction industry as they gained their White Cards. Within the hospitality industry, students were given the opportunity to gain their Food Handling certificates as they developed their understanding of the basic content of all fundamental food safety. They also learnt about identifying hazards in and around the kitchen, temperatures, cross-contamination including colour codes for various food, and chopping skills. Furthermore, students learnt how to weld, and operate a ride-on lawnmower and tractor. They learnt how to construct garden beds and about the fundamentals of soil and its nutrients, and how to prepare it for planting and seeding.

In Term 3, students can look forward to embracing the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills as they deep-dive into the Tourism Industry, learning and working alongside tour guides, rangers, marketers and business managers.

**Monique Fewkes, Head of Teaching and Learning**



Industry learning opportunities in the Kimberley - Term 2

## Student reflections Term 2

It was really nice going back to Yiramalay after two-and-a-half years and spending some time there. I have spent most of my time with the Yiramalay program at Wesley in Melbourne so it was cool to see how the place has changed since I was on induction.

One of my highlights was going on camp to Willare and watching one of the other students catch a stingray. While it has been difficult to do Year 12 VCE online, it has been nice to be able to spend some time at home with the family. I am looking forward to going back to Melbourne when I can!

### **Coen Wright, Year 12**

This term I elected to join Oz the Kimberley cook, as part of the Industry class. Last term we studied food preparation and safety in Melbourne and this term I wanted to get into the kitchen. This term we have done a certificate in Safe Food Handling and I learnt a lot of stuff. I learnt how to tuck my fingers when you cut vegetables; when you are cutting an onion always use a sharp knife to stop the juice from spraying into your eyes; to store meat you have to put it low in the fridge and put the vegetables above that so the blood does not drip down and make the food yucky.

This afternoon I will cook a meat and vegetable stew, my own recipe, learnt from my Mum. And that's how life goes.

### **Tenisha Badal, Year 12**

This term has been really challenging with COVID-19. At home in Broome, there was a lot of drama happening keeping me from focussing and I found it difficult to finish my school work. Now that I am back at Yiramalay I've been able to focus more and finish my work. I know that I work better in a school environment. I have got some work done here at Yiramalay, but I find it difficult not being face to face in class with my teachers in Melbourne.

The upside about being in Yiramalay is I don't have to worry as much as I do in Broome, I can concentrate on school tasks and I get support from all the staff - also we get snacks.

### **Hiki-Lee Kinley, Year 11**

Coming back to school was great to catch up on school work, get into a good routine and catch up with people. One thing I like is being out in the bush, so a highlight of this term was going out camping to Pandanus. I missed catching two barras and didn't come back with anything. Even so, I had a good weekend!

Right now I am really focussing on finishing off my Year 12 certificates and looking forward to graduating. I am getting older and have more experiences of being at school, so now I'm going to my classes, and just getting it done. I am getting myself ready for when I finish and go away from school. Being here helps me to be strong in a routine.

### **Corry Brooking, Year 12**



Coen and Elizah with Tim (Mentor)



Tenisha during industry learning



Hiki-Lee with Tenisha getting ready for on country learning



Corry focussing on graduating Year 12

## Important Dates

13 Jul	Learning in Residence opens	18-19 Jul	Kimberley students pick up
14 Jul	Melbourne Term 3 start date	20 Jul	Kimberley Term 3 start date

The Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School is committed to keeping children safe.  
Trained teachers deliver the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum to all students.