

WELCOME

The year is flying by and it's been a busy and successful first half of the year for 2022, for all 15 Learning on Country communities across the Top End.

The Learning on Country program saw 1,980 Indigenous students participate in the program in Semester One, delivering on its key objectives of improving student learning

and increasing school attendance, increasing inter-generational transmission of Indigenous knowledge and customary practice, and developing strong partnerships between Ranger groups, schools and local community to deliver a culturally responsive secondary school curriculum.

DEADLY FACTS SEMESTER 1, 2022



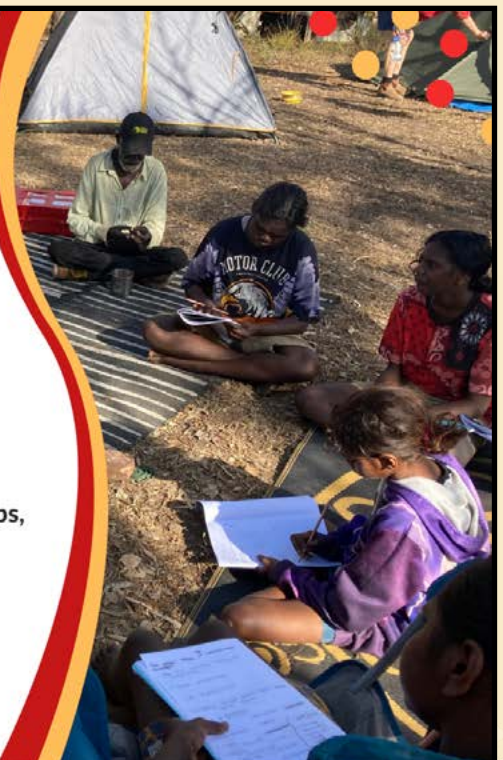
167 staff were employed through LoC Program funding to deliver LoC activities.

1980 Indigenous students participated in one or more LoC Program activities



LoC students participated in 421 'on-country' camps, excursions and field activities delivered by local Cultural Advisors, Traditional Owners, Rangers, Teachers and VET trainers

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Bible Camp (Wadanga'yu) Revitalisation Project



Wāṅa waṅaṅu (Traditional Owner), James Bayuṅ Garawirrtja decided he wanted to restore the site as a hub for families, students and community services to use again. With limited funds and a strong sense of nostalgia, The Bible Camp Revitalisation Project began. Learning on Country's strong partnership between the Marthakal Rangers and Shepherdson College sees weekly visits of senior secondary students enrolled in a Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management, as well as the local Trade Training Centre with students enrolled in a Certificate II in Construction pathways. The Bible Camp Revitalisation Project provides an opportunity for students to apply their newly acquired skills and knowledge in a contextually relevant manner, and in a way that benefits the broader community.

This year Conservation and Ecosystem Management students have applied

knowledge and skills associated with Chemical Treatment of Weeds, Chainsaw Operations, Recording Information on Country and Identifying Hazards to clear an area for a new shelter, install drop toilets, basketball courts and remove noxious weeds from the site. The RTO provider INLOC sees the benefits of this project in supporting relevant and meaningful student assessments through operating within existing work plans to maximise time on Country with the Rangers.

This project has grown in popularity and now attracts weekly visits from the CDP, local families and other service providers, who all share fond memories of Bible Camp when they were children. In this way, this project is creating a strong platform for inter-generational knowledge transfer for future generations, and will be a valuable recreational site for families away from the centralised community of Galiwin'ku.

Lots to learn as seasons change in Yirrkala

Angurugu / Alyangula



It was a busy end to Semester 1 for Learning on Country Students at Yirrkala School working towards their Cert II in Conservation and Eco System Management. Supported by Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation Rangers, Senior Secondary students have been learning how to plant trees and shrubs, perform ecological restoration works and how to use and look after small motors. Students have been able to spend time learning and applying their skills and knowledge and being able to ask lots of questions from the Rangers and their trainer Gareth.

Senior Students also had the opportunity to join the Dhimurru and Yirrkala Rangers and *Daḷapaḷmi* on a camping trip at Barrkira and Bukudal to learn about seasonal bush foods, indicator plants and the changes in the seasons and, how this impacts and influences

the behaviour of flora and fauna.

They also learnt how to cook wallaby and how to find, collect and cook ganguri and djitama (bush yams). Students also learned about gurruṯu and sharing rules and how to prepare and process djitama to make sure it is safe for eating.

Middle years students have been learning how to make Yolṅu Shelters. Students learned how to harvest and prepare gaḍayka for making the roof and how to make bush string to fasten pieces together.

Secondary students also competed to create designs for the new Learning on Country shirts. There were some impressive designs



Senior Secondary girls camp at Bellaglan (Minyerri Community)



Last week, Ngukurr LoC Coordinator Linda Williams, along with cultural advisors Robyn Rodgers and Hazel Farrel visited Minyerri community, to talk about how the Learning on Country Program is delivered in Ngukurr, and how both ways learning is helping keep culture strong and achieving great educational outcomes for their students.

Senior secondary girls travelled over with Linda, Robyn and Hazel and set up camp at Bellaglan. During the trip the students were taught how to identify and collect different types of bush tucker

and learnt about the country where Alawa language is spoken. Students were able to see first-hand how introduced species such as buffalo and pig play havoc on the environment in their home community of Ngukurr, compared with the native landscape in Minyerri.

The students enjoyed collecting the lillies. “The stems you can chew, and they taste similar to celery, and seeds from the pods can be ground to make flour for damper” the old ladies at Minyerri explained.

Senior Secondary girls camp at Bellaglan (Minyerri Community)

Since the Learning on Country Program’s inception, there has been a strong focus on the need to monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the program, providing an independent evidence base to assess the success of the program.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation is also important to help identify improvements for the program and understand the successes and the challenges at each site, and to understand what each site values most when we tell the LoC story.

The M&E team recently worked with the LoC teams at Maningrida, Galiwinku and Yirrkala to undertake an M&E Values Workshop.

[Check out the video summary from the Maningrida workshop](#)

Yirrkala Students Making Strides Outside



It was a busy end to Semester 1 for Learning on Country Students at Yirrkala Bilingual School working towards their Cert II in Conservation and Ecosystem Management.

Supported by Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation Rangers, Senior Secondary students have been learning how to plant trees and shrubs, perform ecological restoration works and how to use and look after small motors. Students have been able to spend time learning and applying their skills and knowledge, and being able to ask lots of questions from the Rangers and their trainer Gareth.

The Cert II in Conservation

and Ecosystem Management qualification enables individuals to select and develop basic factual, technical and procedural knowledge in conservation and ecosystem management for Indigenous land management, lands, parks and wildlife services and the restoration and rehabilitation of ecosystems.

The Yolŋu children of north-east Arnhem Land are the future owners and managers of their land and sea. In time they will become the custodians of a rich tradition of songs, art and knowledge about their estates. Dhimurru has recognized that since its inception by providing regular opportunities for school

children, especially Yolŋu children, to visit and learn about their culture and environment with traditional owners including Dhimurru Rangers.

Learning on Country in Yirrkala is an exciting extension of regular ranger presentations to Yolŋu students at School. Students literally “learn on country” at events planned and delivered by senior Yolŋu, rangers, vocational education trainers and schoolteachers. Each event is followed up in regular classroom teaching that uses aspects of the ‘country’ as resources for student development, learning and academic achievement.



Milingimbi Turtle Camp



Milingimbi Learning on Country middle and secondary years students travelled to nearby island Murrunga for a NTCET Miyapanu (Turtle) focus camp. The students had been involved in the planning of the camp and took care of operations on the camp with assistance from elders and teaching staff. The students also participated in a series of workshops over the 4 day camp, covering topic issues such as social media, domestic violence and cyber bullying.

Learning on Country in Milingimbi is delivered in a close working partnership with the Crocodile Island Rangers. Crocodile Islands Rangers combine traditional knowledge with conservation training to protect and manage their land, sea and culture. Ranger work provides meaningful employment, training and career pathways. In partnership with Milingimbi School the program aims to transfer and preserve Yolngu culture and knowledge.

