

WELCOME

July 2024
Newsletter #10

Learning on Country Program Named as a Finalist in Indigenous Governance Awards 2024



The Learning on Country Program (LoCP) has been named a finalist in this year's Indigenous Governance Awards (IGA). Established by Reconciliation Australia, the IGA recognises and celebrates outstanding examples of governance in Indigenous-led organisations and projects. The awards highlight effective governance practices that contribute to the wellbeing and self-determination of Indigenous communities across Australia.

This recognition highlights the significant impact the LoC Program is having in supporting Indigenous students and their communities across the Northern Territory through its Two-Way learning model, integrating traditional knowledge with contemporary education. The IGA judges were highly impressed with the application submitted by LoC and will visit the Territory in September to witness firsthand the exemplary work being done.

NLC Chair, Matthew Ryan, said, "This recognition speaks to the dedication of everyone who has been involved in the Learning on Country Program. I look forward to seeing this team keep up all their good work empowering Aboriginal students!" LoC Steering Committee Co-Chair, Dangadanga (Danny) Garrawurra, echoed this sentiment.

IGA judges will visit the NT in September ahead of the National Awards in November, where the winner will be announced at the Gala Dinner in Brisbane.

Strengthening Voices Together

Clan Language Workshops

In Week 7, Year 8-12 students from Yirrkala Bilingual School travelled to Gāṅgaṅ Homeland to attend a Galtha Rom Workshop about clan languages with Laynhapuy Homelands LoC and Bāniyala School. Students were welcomed to Gāṅgaṅ with a Barṅ Ceremony and were then broken into their clan groups.

In their groups students learned from ṅalapalmi (knowledge holders, Elders) about their yindipulu, gurrutu connections and how to use their dhāruk (clan language) to speak about themselves. Students also had opportunities to visit important places around Gāṅgaṅ such as the massacre site and old Gāṅgaṅ and listened to ṅalapalmi tell stories about these places.

“The highlight of the Galtha was seeing the students stand up and in front of everyone and confidently present a speech about themselves in their dhāruk” said Dan McLaren, LoC Site Coordinator at Yirrkala Bilingual School.



“A big thankyou to Gāṅgaṅ community, ṅalapalmi, Dhimurru and Yirrkala Rangers for teaching and supporting our young people.”



Rubbish Warriors

Numbulwar Students Tackle Marine Debris

About 25 kids from grades 7 to 11 at Numbulwar School spent an insightful day learning about ghost nets and marine debris with the Numbulwar Rangers.

The day started with a presentation and videos that showed the impact ghost nets and marine debris have on our oceans and ecosystems. They learned about how things like old fishing gear can hurt animals and the dangers of microplastics spreading throughout marine ecosystems. Students learnt about the ways they can help, like reporting when they find ghost nets and cleaning up trash so it doesn't end up in the ocean. They used barcode scanners to identify where trash comes from and which things they buy are most likely to affect the environment.

Afterwards, they headed to the beach with the Rangers for a clean-up activity from Numbulwar town beach to the first creek. Together, they cleaned up about 120 kilograms of trash and saw how clean-up actions can make a big difference.

In the afternoon, female students were joined by women artists from the Numbulwar Art Centre. They were given a demonstration of weaving and were able to try weaving themselves. Meanwhile, male students went collecting bush foods and berries out in the country.

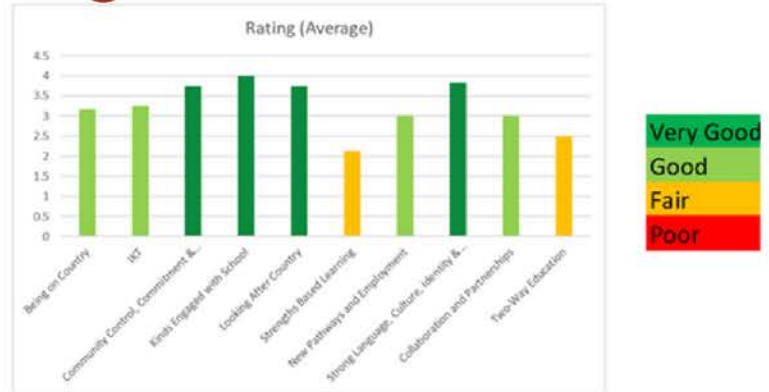
The students will continue to spend time with the Numbulwar Numburindi rangers in the future to get out on country and support the beach clean-up efforts.



M&E Workshop at Milingimbi

Community-Led Monitoring for LoC Programs

Over the last two years, the Learning on Country (LoC) Team, in collaboration with the Australian National University (ANU), Conservation Management Pty Ltd, and Local LoC Committees, has created a unique Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework.



This M&E Framework is a tool to assess the health of 10 LoC Program Values identified by local communities. Key performance indicators for each Value were established through consultations and M&E planning workshops at three pilot sites: Maningrida, Laynhapuy Homelands, and Galiwin'ku.

Last week, the Milingimbi Local LoC Committee members, including Traditional Owners, Cultural Advisors, Rangers, and the Loc Coordinator, reviewed the developed M&E 'tools'. Their feedback, mostly provided in local languages, indicated that the LoC M&E is well understood and effectively tells each site's story and the functioning of their LoC program.

This framework will enable the sharing of stories and results regarding student education and employment outcomes with various stakeholders, including the local community, LoC Program Steering Committee, NLC, NT Department of Education, and the NIAA funding body.

The success of this ground-up, Aboriginal community-led approach suggests a genuine, two-way, evidence-based method for monitoring and reporting on the LoC program's effectiveness.

More information on the LoC program and the M&E efforts can be found at: [Learning on Country M&E](#)



"Reflecting on what it was last week, we are all so grateful to have been able to host you out here in Milingimbi! We work tirelessly to provide this program for the kids and community and we feel strong in knowing that we are supported by you."

Thank you all again for coming out and experiencing Mili life with us last week! We all look forward to the next time and will always welcome you with open hearts :)"

Mili LoC Crew ❤️

BUSY at Barunga!

LoC Program Team Hit the Road!



The LoC team hit the road and headed to Jawoyn Country in June for the 2024 Barunga Festival. The team spent two days talking with community members and stakeholders and catching up with LoC students and families.

A special highlight was a visit from the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, the Honourable Eva Lawler MLA, who stopped by to greet the LoC team and celebrate the program's achievements, saying she has "loved seeing the program grow over the years."

Thousands of people attend the much-loved community festival, which celebrates Indigenous culture through live music, traditional arts, cultural activities, and sports competitions and provides a platform for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to come together and celebrate the rich cultural heritage of the region.

"These events present a great opportunity for us to talk directly with people about what the LoC Program is and how it benefits Indigenous students and communities. It provides a platform to showcase the success of LoC, the commitment of our stakeholders and support other communities and schools looking to implement their own Cultural programs" said Learning on Country Program Manager Shane Bailey.

Thanks to everyone that stopped by to say hello.



Wildlife at Wadanga'yu!



Exploring Biodiversity Towards NTCET

Fifteen senior secondary students embarked on an unforgettable three-day, two-night biodiversity survey LoC camp at Wadanga'yu, guided by the Gumurr Marthakal Rangers.

The students were actively involved in setting up 10 camera traps, 45 small Elliott traps, and 15 large Elliott traps across various habitats. Their efforts paid off as they observed an array of wildlife, including the marranju (savannah glider), burrowing frogs, geckos, Burton's legless lizards, Jabiru, crocodiles, spiders, and curlews.

The activities contributed work towards students' Two Way Science SACE subject and an Outdoor Education SACE subject, which will count towards their NTCET pattern, and included mapping, recording Yolŋu and scientific names of species, and comparing different species between three habitats: billabong, open forest, and riparian forest.

This experience highlights the importance of combining traditional indigenous knowledge with Western scientific methods, providing students with a comprehensive understanding of the natural world and an appreciation for biodiversity and conservation, all the while gaining credits towards NTCET completion!



Joining Forces for a Clean Coast

Students and Rangers join Sea Shepherd Australia's Marine Debris Campaign on Elcho Island



In May, students from Shepherdson College's Learning on Country (LoC) Program joined forces with the Gumurr Marthakal Rangers and Sea Shepherd Australia as part of their Marine Beach Debris campaign to clean up the beaches of Elcho Island, Arnhem Land.

The Rangers generously shared their stories and knowledge of Country with senior secondary students enrolled in the Maritime Operations and Conservation & Ecosystem Management VET courses and the Sea Shepherd crew, highlighting the benefits of Yolŋu and Balanda working together to protect these special coastlines, demonstrating the power of two-way learning.

Strong winds postponed their planned departure to Martjanba, so the team focused their efforts on Dayawili, where an Indonesian fishing vessel had run aground earlier this year, resulting in huge amounts of debris scattered along the beach, stretching all the way to Binitji.

Together, the LoC Program students, Gumurr Marthakal Rangers, and Sea Shepherd volunteers removed over one tonne of debris from this single stretch of beach spanning 500 metres. This project showcased the strength of collaboration, reinforcing that together, we are stronger!



Staff Profile

Joanne Hill, LoC Coordinator at Wugularr School

Beswick and Barunga welcomed two new LoC Coordinators in April, Jo Hill & Mallory Thompson. We caught up with Jo to find out a little bit more about her!

What's been your most memorable experience working with the LoC Program so far?

Working on the Mayalli seasonal calendar and seeing the excitement from community, staff and students. This has extended to every trip out bush to find something we can add to the calendar. I am also blown away with the excitement and participation of all the students.

What's your favorite traditional skill or knowledge you've learned in your role?

Traditional fire lighting was really exciting. Most of the classes at school came to have a go at trying to get the fire to light. Although the fire was not lit, there was smoke and it has given us loads of ideas and increased team work.

If you could choose one animal to symbolise you or your work, what would it be & why?

It would have to be a turtle, slow steady and stable.

If you could instantly learn any new skill or talent, what would it be?

To be in many places at once.

What's the weirdest food you've ever tried, and did you like it?

White bait, it tasted alright but it was off putting seeing all those eyes looking at you.

What's your go-to karaoke song?

I don't do Karaoke but it would be a Tracy Chatman song for sure.

If you could visit any place in the world, where would you go?

Animal sanctuaries in Africa.



Out and About...

Yirrkala School turns 50!



Are you signed up to the LoC Mailing List?

[Visit the website learningoncountry.com](http://learningoncountry.com)

"The 50th Anniversary was a celebration of the commitment and strength of past and present Yolngu educators to ensure that children and young people in Yirrkala continue to learn in their first language so that Yolngu languages stay strong in the community". The Dhimurru Rangers went hunting for bush foods with students the day before the 50th Anniversary and the rangers cooked bush food for everyone on the day.

Katrina HUDSON, Co-Principal
Yirrkala School

