



Yiyili Aboriginal Community School (YACS)

Annual Report 2019



Compiled March 2020

Audience:

- Parent s and carers
- Local community
- Visitors and involved agencies (government and non-government)
- Funding bodies (State and Federal)
- Department of Education Services

History:

Influenced by the Nookanbah and Strelley experience, the school's genesis was when a group of mainly Gooniyandi people shifted from the station camp at Louisa Downs HOesmted to set up a new camp approximately 7 kilometres to the east. Establishing their own school seemed a better alternative to sending their children to the hostel at Halls Creek where parents felt they would lost control of the children. Since that time the school has expended considerably to include six outstation communities who bus their students into Yiyili.



Physical Setting:

Yiyili Community is an excision on Louisa Downs Station situated 170kms southeast of Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

Louisa Downs is owned and operated by Yiyili Community members. The community is 5kms off the Great Northern Highway and the station is 11kms off the Great Northern Highway. It is easily accessible during the dry season. During wet season a 4WD is often required to negotiate the track into the community.

Halls Creek is 120km east of Yiyili and is the only town of the Central Kimberley. There is a small supermarket, a butcher, fuel outlet, post office, two hotels and public swimming pool in the town. It also has a well-resourced hospital and a pharmacy.

Kununurra has the closest airport and is approximately 500kms north-east of Yiyili. Broome, however, 570kms west of Yiyili, is the Kimberley's regional capital and major service point for the school and community.

The winter months (or dry season) are usually cool; the temperature can range from 4-10 degrees in the mornings and evenings and between 18-30 degrees during the day. The weather becomes very hot in late September until it begins to rain. The range during this time is from 36-46 degrees. The amount of rainfall in the wet season varies from year to year.

The Community

Yiyili community acts as the hub for six independent outstation communities: Ganinyi, Goolgaradag, Kuyinyjarn, Moongardie, Pullout Springs (Girriyoowa) and Rocky Springs (Tharmindi). Outstations range from small communities with their own power and water supplies to seasonal camps occupied at culturally appropriate times throughout the year. Each community is situated on culturally significant land with important sites (cultural and dreaming) nearby.

Approximately 250-300 people live in and around Yiyili Community.

The language spoken by all the children and a large majority of the adults is Kriol, a recognised language in its own right. Gooniyandi is the traditional language; however, there are only a few fluent speakers in the community and they are mostly elderly. Standard Australian English is spoken at school, and students learn their traditional language each day with a Gooniyandi teacher. With the support of AISWA, the Wyemando Bequest (and other philanthropic organisations) and WA Department of Education, Yiyili Aboriginal Community School is in the process of reviving Gooniyandi language. This continued to be an important focus of the school in 2019 as is discussed in more detail later in this report.

Yiyili Community was established in 1981. People had left the station earlier when equal pay issues faced non-Aboriginal station owners and Aboriginal people were told to leave cattle stations. When people returned, they lived in shelters on the edge of the Margaret River. They also did mustering and fencing on Louisa Downs in return for a space on their traditional land.

The school was established in 1982. Initially a mobile Kindy teacher, who had been visiting Louisa Downs Station camp as part of her job, was employed to start Yiyili Aboriginal Community School. Community was granted an excision allowing permanent housing and a school building to be erected. A teacher's house was built in 1986 and then another in 1988. During 1989 the lease for Louisa Downs Station was handed back to the Cox family. It was purchased by ATSIC and leased to the community for 99 years. The station employs people from Yiyili and its outstation communities and these employees are mainly members of the Cox and related families.



During 1990 a building that housed the clinic and the store was built. A community office building was erected in 1996. The store is owned by the people of Yiyili Community and is currently managed by Outback Stores. A doctor and nurse from Halls Creek Hospital visit the community every Wednesday. In case of emergency, an ambulance is sent from Halls Creek (120km away) and a community vehicle is used to transport the patient until they meet the ambulance. There is an unsealed airstrip on Louisa Downs Station if the Flying Doctor needs to be called.

Governance

The school is governed by a School Board. It is made up of elected community members from Yiyili and its outstation communities, and the School Principal (as an ex-officio, non-voting member). Decisions concerning governance of the school are decided by the School Board. The rule book of Yiyili Community Indigenous Corporation (YCIC) recognises the School Board and delegates the running of Yiyili Aboriginal Community School to the School Board (YCIC Consolidated Rule Book – Objective 2.6). Day to day management of the school is the responsibility of the Principal. The Principal and School Board periodically report to Yiyili Community Indigenous Corporation.

Employees

In 2019 the school employed 8 FTE Non-Indigenous Staff and more than 20 local Indigenous staff. Indigenous staff included Aboriginal Education Workers (classroom), cooks, cleaners, language and culture teachers and

maintenance/gardeners. Non-indigenous staff included the Principal, five classroom teachers, a performing arts/teacher support teacher, an 0.5 administrative support worker and an 0.5 language/literacy support teacher. All teaching staff at YACS have the required qualifications to teach and are registered with the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia. Teaching staff are held accountable to the National Professional Teacher Standards and using a process called PRICE actively move forward through the standards in a systematic way. All staff are required to have a current Working With Children Check.

Curriculum

Yiyili Aboriginal Community School encourages an educational relationship among students, staff and parents where communication is open, friendly and invites involvement. Both community members and teaching staff promote an atmosphere of reasonableness and understanding where young people know they are valued in an environment that supports both the wealth of their traditions and acknowledges equality for all through improved educational outcomes.

The school uses the Accelerated Literacy program to teach literacy from K-6. The program works at scaffolding literacy with a focus on a particular text, giving students access to the language and skills required to read, understand and write literary texts.

In Numeracy, the school has been using the Stepping Stones program alongside the encouragement of hands-on materials. An encouragement of the use of money helps in preparing students for everyday life. The AICS Numeracy portal provides relevant, informative assessments to better inform teaching practice.

The school works through a range of Integrated Curriculum focuses throughout the year. In 2019, the focus of "How can we make the school grounds the best they can be" saw the planting of trees and grass throughout the school yard to create a more child-friendly environment.

Physical Resources

Yiyili Aboriginal Community School is a very well established and resourced remote school. Even though the cost of doing business in remote Australia is high, the school board has planned for and allocated sufficient resources, taking into account student enrolments, to ensure that it exceeds like schools in the quality of the resources and the knowledge of how best to use them.

The school has five well-equipped classrooms, all with the latest interactive whiteboard technology, computers and iPads. Facilities also include a music studio/library, Gooniyandi language classroom, Gooniyandi cultural classroom and a well stocked playgroup room. Of particular note is the instructional kitchen where

students participate in hospitality skill set training, particularly barista training (utilising the tourist traffic into the school managed art centre). There is also a school kitchen where students' lunches are prepared. The school provides four cooked lunches per week based on a source of carbohydrates, protein and at least three vegetables and on Fridays, kitchen staff prepare sandwiches.

The instructional kitchen underwent a refurbishment and extension in 2016, bringing it up to the standard of a commercial kitchen, with addition of bakery equipment to further develop the hospitality training and the possibility of business opportunities for community members when catering for the tourist trade. The upgraded instructional kitchen is used extensively as an integral part of student learning, alongside the EON program which utilises the school gardens in these cooking lessons.

The vehicle workshop that was constructed in 2016 has been converted into an art workshop where local artists can paint. This will continue to be developed in 2020 alongside the tourism industry, further adding to the appeal of Laarri Gallery as well as providing a space where children can learn stories and artistic skills from elders.

2019 also saw the conversion of our smaller shed into a bike mechanic workshop, fully equipped with the tools to repair and maintain bicycles. This project formed the 'Skutta Bush Bikes' business, a High School enterprise aimed at selling refurbished bikes to community members.

Enrolment and Attendance

Average enrolments across 2019 were a total of 60 students from K-10. This was very similar to 2018 enrolments. Attendance rates for 2019 are as follows:

| YEAR | No. of students enrolled averaged across all terms | Average attendance across Terms (%) | | | | Average attendance 2019 (%) |
|--------------|---|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------------------------------|
| | | T1 | T2 | T3 | T4 | |
| Kindy | 7 | 75 | 55 | 56 | 52 | 59 |
| PP | 3 | 84 | 66 | 53 | 44 | 60 |
| 1 | 3 | 94 | 88 | 89 | 92 | 91 |
| 2 | 7 | 79 | 66 | 72 | 74 | 73 |
| 3 | 10 | 88 | 64 | 75 | 69 | 75 |
| 4 | 5 | 68 | 51 | 53 | 64 | 59 |
| 5 | 7 | 80 | 81 | 72 | 75 | 77 |
| 6 | 4 | 72 | 71 | 62 | 64 | 68 |
| 7 | 5 | 78 | 78 | 62 | 69 | 71 |
| 8 | 6 | 58 | 62 | 50 | 55 | 56 |
| 9 | 3* | 62 | 55 | 49 | 63 | 57 |
| 10 | 0* | - | - | - | - | - |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Total | 60 | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|

*Although Yiyili Aboriginal Community School has registration to Year 10, the strong community preference is for students of that age to go to Boarding School. Years 9 and 10 students will attend YACS whilst awaiting travel to these schools, and often upon return to the community for cultural reasons or at the end of the term. As the students are often only here for those times attendance statistics for these year levels tend not to have a great deal of meaning.

It is noticeable that there are fluctuations in attendance across the whole school throughout the year. There are many factors responsible for the fluctuations. Weather patterns, cultural imperatives, family responsibilities and medical issues all play a part in the attendance patterns for students. In-community attendance at Yiyili Aboriginal Community School is excellent. However, as with all Kimberley schools, student transience remains an issue. Also, a school is required to keep a student enrolled (and therefore part of its attendance statistics) until they have formally enrolled at another school. This means that often students have moved to another community but continue to be reported in YACS attendance data.

Non-attendance is managed in a number of ways. Teachers notify the principal or administrative staff if students need to be collected. Multiple trips are made through the community to collect students that are late. If students are not in the community every effort is made to ascertain their whereabouts, and sometimes to collect them with a school vehicle if they wish to return to school.

2019 SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

School lawn project

As part of our ongoing project to improve the school grounds, we laid turf to provide a lawn for students to play on. This was a large scale project supported by community workers from Marra Worra Worra.

The project was possible as a result of the fence installed in 2018, as previously the lawn would have been destroyed by cattle. As a result, the school yard is now a wonderful and safe playing area, without the danger of rocks and prickles under foot, and also remains cooler during the scorching heat of October through to April.



Girlwanggi (Old People) – second Gooniyandi Music Video

A project facilitated through Indigenous Hip Hop Projects, 2019 saw the production of our second music video entirely in Gooniyandi Language. Written by Gooniyandi teacher Frances Dawson and Gooniyandi Culture teacher Kenneth Dawson, the song

speaks about the importance of respecting old people and the knowledge they possess.



Skutta Bush Bikes/Dismantled

As part of our ongoing hands-on High School class, we teamed up with bicycle repair company Dismantled, who come to remote communities and teach students how to fix and maintain bikes. From this, the High School enterprise 'Skutta Bush Bikes' was born, providing the opportunity for parents to purchase bicycles that the High School students have repaired.



Bush trips/Gooniyandi family days

The school continues to foster Gooniyandi culture through ongoing class bush trips. The trips provide an opportunity for Gooniyandi language and culture to be spoken and celebrated, as well as an opportunity for students and adults alike to connect with country.

Each class goes on a number of daytime and overnight bush trips each term.



Yiyili Mawilyi book

Through work done with Jane Godwin and Alison Lester in 2018, we welcomed the production of 'Yiyili Mawilyi', an illustrated picture book with designs by students from the school.

The book is an illustrated version of the song which was produced in 2017 with Indigenous Hip Hop Projects and features full Gooniyandi Language as well as an English translation.



School Gardens

The school garden continues to thrive through the EON Foundation and work done alongside EON-employed community members. The school now holds three fantastic vegetable gardens, in the Kindergarten, outside the Year ½ area and a large separate school garden.

NAIDOC Night

Our NAIDOC celebration was very special this year, featuring catered food, cultural dance and a performance by local band The Main River Band.

High School students supported in catering the event, while students were painted in ochre and performed traditional dance. The event was held outside on our new lawn, which was quite spectacular.



School Income 2019:

Federal Per Capita: \$1,798,677
State Per Capita: \$320,228
Indigenous Wages: \$483,000
Special Education: \$42,460
Universal Access: \$13,341
Art Gallery: \$37,498
Interest: \$3,742
Donations: \$31,320
Accommodation (Staff & Visitors): \$25,654
Literacy Acquisition (LAPS): \$7,000
ROSLA grant: \$4,300
Wyemando Bequest (Language): \$16,340
LotteryWest (1st pmt playground) : \$50,000
Sporting goods grant : \$4,500
Basketball courts grant (1st pmt) : \$58,320

Other income: \$11,422

Total Income \$ 2,907,803