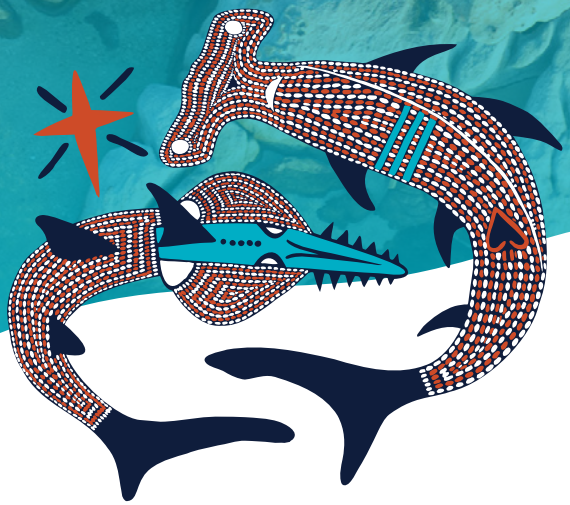
Anindilyakwa
Land Council

Stories from Groote

Edition 14
19 August 2025



Message from the Chair

You may have seen in the news recently that the Northern Territory's four Aboriginal land Councils united at the front of Parliament House in Darwin. I was proud to be there on behalf of the Anindilyakwa Land Council with my board advocating for our people.

A joint Land Council meeting held the same week was important in reaffirming policy and advocacy priorities across the territory. Together, we called on the Government to work with the four land councils - supporting more than a third of the Northern Territory's population.

One of the major priorities of the joint meeting was justice – an issue the ALC has worked tirelessly to improve in the Archipelago through Aboriginal-led initiatives and has seen great success with. Since we took control of delivering justice, our crime rates have halved on Groote Eylandt in the past 12 months.
In this edition of 'Stories from Groote' we tell the story behind a special art commission for South 32's GEMCO headquarters. We take a deep dive on a coral project changing what we know about the vulnerable ecosystems in the Archipelago, and we show you our travels to Garma where Anindilyakwa culture was shared.

We are always open to feedback you may have or stories you may like covered – you can reach us directly on corporate.media@alcnt.com.au

Cherelle Wurrawilya, Chair

Subscribe now



Angurugu Community Meeting | Photo by: Britten Syd Andrew

Talented artists commissioned to create special piece

Invest in the present to build a self-sufficient future

Binding the Land Together (Ngarna Ngarruwa Karuma Ngarrawadanguma enena-manja Akuwaduwada) is a major ghost net art project created in collaboration between Anindilyakwa Arts and the Ghost Net Collective, commissioned by South32.

The three artworks — Land (Erriberriba), Stream and Jungle (Adalyuma akwa Murungwena), and Ocean and Coast (Makarda akwa Mijiyelya) — were created by twenty Warnindilyakwa artists working alongside Lynnette Griffiths and Marion Gaemers from the Ghost Net Collective.

The project took many hands and many months to complete. Ghost nets were deconstructed into strands and colours before being woven into large-scale landscapes, each filled with intricate detail. Up close, you can see brain coral radiating, yams leaves dancing, and streams babbling through the woven scenes. These pieces tell deep stories of Country, sea, and the changes being felt across the Groote Archipelago.

"We are working with ghost net creating the land that we see. It's about environment. Changes in the environment. We see the place changing every year. Coastline is changed every year. Seeing ghost net washed up and trapping marine life – it damages the reef and corals, it damages the turtles and dugongs. It won't be the same for the next generations." – Bernadette Watt, Alice Durilla & Stephanie Durilla

Ghost nets are abandoned fishing nets drifting into Australian waters arriving in the Groote Archipelago at an alarming rate. The Anindilyakwa Land & Sea Rangers dedicate significant time and resources to removing these nets, which threaten marine life, disrupt coastal ecosystems, and damage the once pristine beaches of the region.

As part of the project, a group of Anindilyakwa artists travelled to Perth to see the works installed at South32's headquarters and lead weaving workshops during NAIDOC Week. These hands-on sessions gave employees and their families a chance to learn traditional weaving techniques and hear stories of Groote Eylandt directly from the artists.



The artists were proud to see their works in their new home — transforming corporate spaces into places of cultural storytelling and environmental awareness. The skills, ideas, and inspiration gained from the project will continue to shape future artworks.

A short film about Binding the Land Together, produced by ALC Media, will be released soon on Anindilyakwa Arts and Anindilyakwa Land Council channels.



Binding the Land Together is a major contemporary Ghost-Net artistic project which re-uses discarded ghost nets | Photo by: Britten Syd Andrew

Game-changing Coral research

Protect, maintain and promote Anindilyakwa culture

ALC Land and Sea Rangers are helping scientists make an incredible discovery under the water that could change what we know about coral and threatened marine ecosystems of the Groote Archipelago.

According to University of Technology Sydney (UTS) coral reefs are one of the most biodiverse and beautiful ecosystems on the planet, supporting a quarter of all marine life including more than 4,000 species of fish.

The coral research project between the ALC and UTS scientists has been running for two years and shows what can be achieved when communities work collectively to benefit the reef. The project aims to map and identify corals around the Groote Archipelago as this has never been done before.

ALC Indigenous Protected Area Operations Coordinator Annabelle Doheny said the Rangers have been assisting with collecting samples of a variety of corals for further processing in the lab at UTS.

“From there we are hoping to establish the thermal tolerance of the corals, and the mechanisms behind any resilience that they may have,” Ms Doheny said.



“We have seen significant coral bleaching over, at least, the last two summers, but have also seen significant recovery, suggesting that the coral around Groote may be resilient to temperature stress,” she said.

“There is also a lot of evidence to suggest that some of the samples that are being recovered are species that haven’t been described by science before which is extremely exciting. We are waiting for confirmation on this.”



Coral reefs are one of the most biodiverse and beautiful ecosystems on the planet | Photo by: Britten Syd Andrew

Garma Festival sparks important discussions on its 25th anniversary

Protect, maintain and promote Anindilyakwa culture

Anindilyakwa people made their annual trip to the remote Northeast Arnhem land during August for a four-day celebration of art, song, dance – marking GARMA's 25th anniversary.



This year ALC's music and arts program attended the festivities. Anindilyakwa traditional dancers and the band were invited to showcase their culture and talent, performing for the crowd across several days.

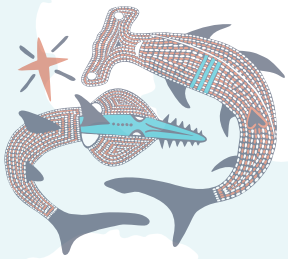
Anindilyakwa Arts was invited to GARMA's Gapan Gallery under the stars. The gallery is a major drawcard for visitors and showcases local art to thousands of people.
The Garma Festival is Australia's largest Indigenous gathering. This year's theme is 'Law of the Land, Standing Firm' following the 2025 High Court win by the Northern Territory's Gumatj clan.

At the centre of Garma are important discussion forums which shape and support the future of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia.



GARMA's 25th anniversary | Photo by: Anindilyakwa Arts

Our values



One People One Family
Ngarrurrakawuruma ngarnumamalya

Pride
Ngarriwerrikiyangmakwajinama

Honesty/Truth
Akuwerrikilyangmandukunadinama

Listen
Akeningmidini-yada

Respect
Akumaringkirradinama

Our Future
Ambakumurra-yada

The Strategic Plan 2023-33

Protect, maintain and promote Anindilyakwa culture

Invest in the present to build a self-sufficient future

Create pathways for youth to stand in both worlds

Anindilyakwa Land Council

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