

# Maliki nintirringutja-ku

Strangers coming  
in learning  
Ngaanyatjarra way

A guide for new residents and visitors in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands

**Edited by** Kate Fielding, Delvina Lawson,  
Jasmine Lawson and Janet Vost

# Walykumunu It's good

This publication was developed and published by the Ngaanyatjarra Council and the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku. Please see the contact details and full credits on pages 44-46.

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# Pitjangu: you came

**Walykumunu Pitjangu: It's good you came!** Welcome to all the workers for the store and the roadhouse. All the builders and tradies, the pool guy, mechanic and the teachers, the Shire workers and the arts workers, the church mob, bible project and SWIM team, the NPYWC people, disability staff, nutrition workers, youth workers and all. Welcome all the DCP workers and the sisters at the clinic, all the Council staff – the college, land management, CDAs, project officers, anthropologists, and training staff. Welcome all the new police and lawyers and all the justice mob, the Government mob coming for meetings and all the Centrelink workers, job network agencies, JSAs, the ICC, the dentist, HAC workers, pilots, truck drivers, the *punu* man. And welcome to families of the staff: husbands, wives and kids. Welcome to the tourists just travelling through on the road.

 **Yuwa, walykumunu  
pitjangu ngurra nyaku.  
It's good you came  
to have a look at  
our country.**



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**We made this book to** welcome new people to our community and to teach you a bit about our place. Lots of it relates to the all the communities on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands (we call it the 'Lands' for short), but some parts are mainly about Warburton, because that is where we are based.

This book won't teach you everything; it's just to get you started. It is really important that you remember that. After this you could talk to people and read other things. There's a list of suggestions at the back of this book.

In the Ngaanyatjarra Lands we have staff coming from lots of places: Melbourne, New South Wales, Perth, New Zealand, India, Brisbane, Indonesia, Timor, Africa, Adelaide, Tasmania, Alice Springs, South Australia and Kalgoorlie.

Because staff come from lots of other places they might not know what to expect. We tried to think of things that might be different to where you come from, and things you might not know.

We put this book together over a year: *yarnangu* [Ngaanyatjarra people] and *walypalas* [whitefellas] working together. We did it in lots of different ways: out bush, inside buildings, sleeping out under stars, *wangka pirni* [talking a lot] in meetings, *inma* [ceremony, dancing and singing], drawing a lot, brainstorming, making things and then showing each other. Asking the oldies about their stories and ideas. Trying out some things on new staff. Asking the advice of long-term staff. All of us in our 20s, 30s and 40s – not young, not old – working together.

Our place is different to lots of places in Australia. For you coming here might be a bit like going to another country. We hope you will learn some things to help you work right way on the Lands.

– Kate Fielding, Delvina Lawson, Jasmine Lawson and Janet Vost.



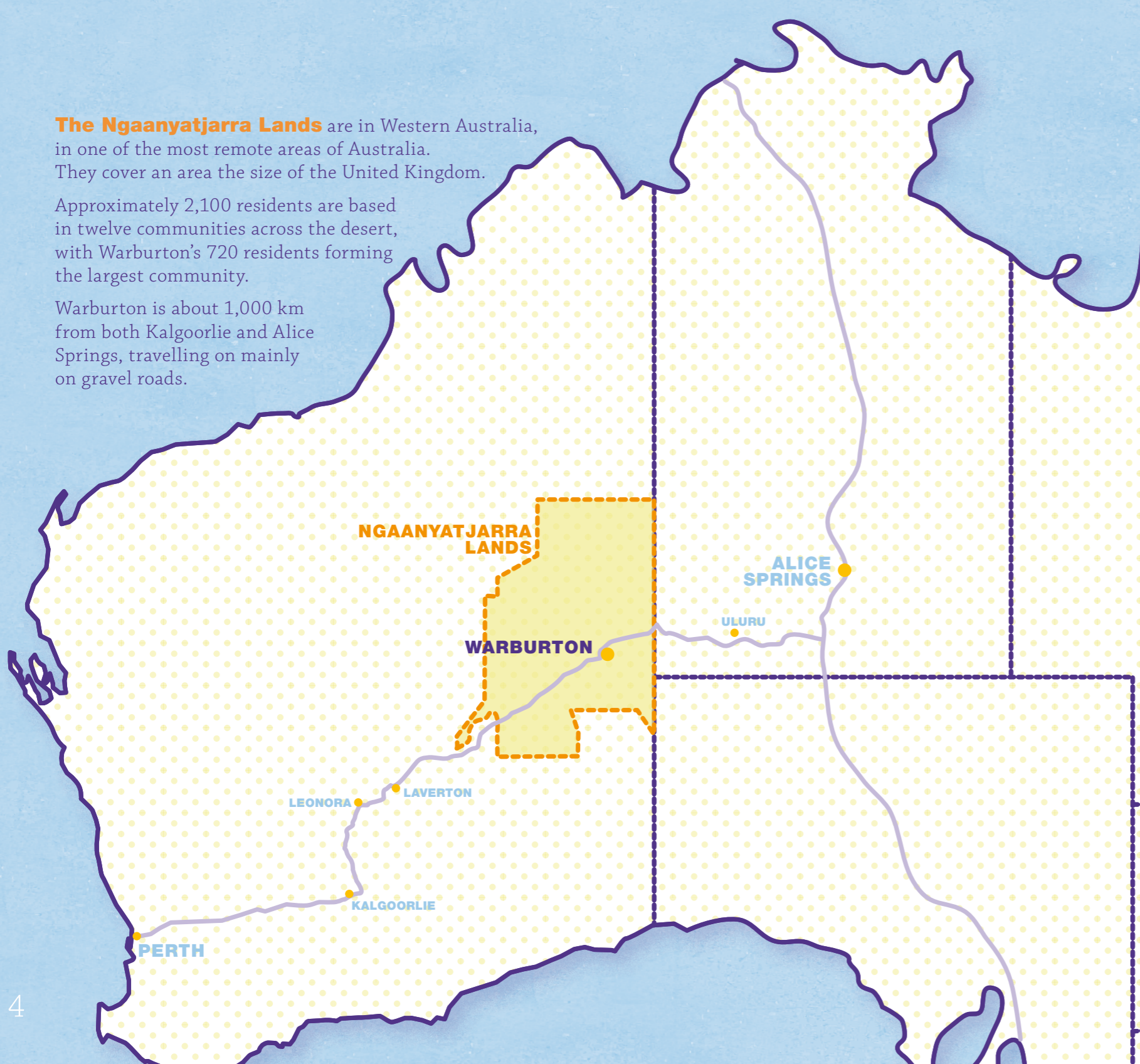
Artwork by Clarabell Ward



**The Ngaanyatjarra Lands** are in Western Australia, in one of the most remote areas of Australia. They cover an area the size of the United Kingdom.

Approximately 2,100 residents are based in twelve communities across the desert, with Warburton's 720 residents forming the largest community.

Warburton is about 1,000 km from both Kalgoorlie and Alice Springs, travelling on mainly on gravel roads.



DISTANCES BETWEEN COMMUNITIES (KM)								
	Blackstone	Patjarr	Tjirrkarli	Tjukurla	Warburton	Wanarn	Warakurna	Wingellina
Blackstone		405	330	380	205	175	235	75
Patjarr	405		355	575	230	330	395	480
Tjirrkarli	330	355		540	125	295	360	405
Tjukurla	380	575	510		415	275	180	330
Warburton	205	230	125	415		170	235	280
Wanarn	175	330	295	275	170		105	250
Warakurna	235	395	360	180	235	105		185
Wingellina	75	480	405	330	280	250	185	

**Note:** 1. These distances have been provided as a guide only, please confirm distances before travelling.  
 2. The above distances are approximate only, the Great Central Road (Outback Highway) and other community roads are subject to road realignments which may vary the distances.



we made you this  
little book so you can  
see our culture

## We made you this little book so you can see our culture

*“When staff first get here, got to go out with the old people, to learn about cutting all the warta [tree, bush, wood], to make a wirra [digging bowl], lankurru [woomera], tjara [shield], kupulu [club, waddy], piti [large wooden carrying dish or bowl], kirti [spinifex gum] as well. Go together, a couple, kurrirrlu, Mr and Mrs, so the kungka [younger woman] can work with the minyma [woman] and the man can work with the wati [man]. That’s how the new staff will learn. If it’s a young person, like a youth worker, they should go out with their yarnangu [Ngaanyatjarra] worker to become a friend, and their families.”*

Tjingapa Davies and Norma Giles, Ngaanyatjarra Elders

**Everybody here is family and** knows each other. Many people live in houses with two, three or sometimes four generations of their family as well as their brothers, sisters and cousins.

The way relatives are grouped in Ngaanyatjarra culture is different to the way some other cultures do it. Ngaanyatjarra way you would call both your grandfather and his brother ‘tjamu’ and they would also call you ‘tjamu’. If you are a female, all your sister’s kids would call you ‘ngunytju’ [mum]. Have a look on the family tree in the middle of the book and see if you can work out the differences.

As well as all the family relationships, Ngaanyatjarra people also have a skin group. The skin group of both their parents decides this. When people choose a husband or wife – a *kurri* – they have to choose someone that’s the right skin for them

Artwork by  
Kresna Cameron



I'M A Purungu Girl  
WHAT ARE YOU?



I'M A Karimarra  
YOU MUST BE MY  
GIRL FRIEND



Purungu  Karimarra



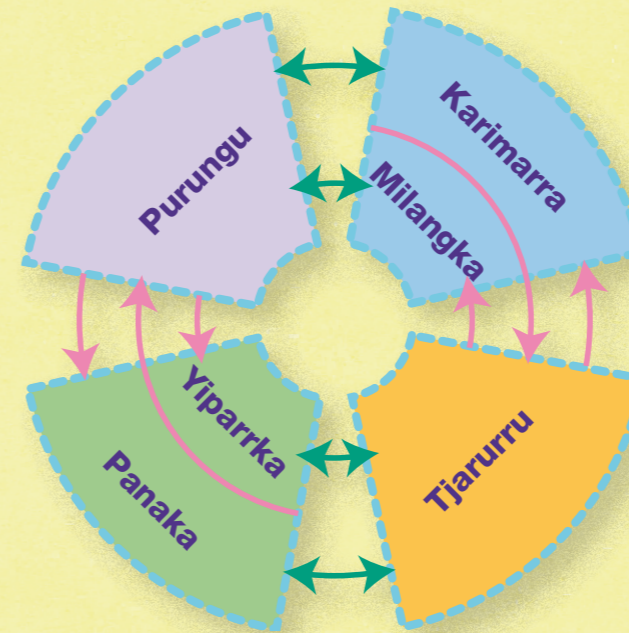
I'M A Panaka  
Tjarurru Ngayuku  
Kurri

I'M A Tjarurru  
Panaka Kurri  
Ngayuku

Panaka  Tjarurru

Tjingapa Davies explains:

"Kurri must be, minyma Tjarurru-ku kurri must be Panaka, tjitji [children] Karimarra. Purungu-ku kurri, Karimarra. Wati Karimarra-ku kurri Purungu. Wati Karimarra-ku tjitji Panaka. Wati Purungu-ku kurri Milangka, tjitji Tjarurru. Wati Milangka-ku kurri Purungu, tjitji Yiparrka. But sometimes they mix and mix now, that's wrong. Tjuni palyumunu."



This diagram is based on one developed by United Aborigines Mission linguist Wilfrid Douglas published in 1964. The green arrows indicate right skin marriages. The pink arrows indicate which skin the kids will be.

Through skin groups people also know the right way to behave for funerals and ceremonies. Jasmine Lawson says "Right skin's gotta do the work funeral day. When the Tjarurru finish, Panakas gotta work. The Karimarras finish; Purungu gotta work. So the kurris, brother and sisters work."

"Some staff, if they are workers, will get a skin name from their malpa [co-worker]." – Jasmine Lawson

Opposite: Artwork by Lisa Nelson  
This image is based on an example given in Ameer Glass Into another world

'Malpa' is a Ngaanyatjarra word meaning 'friend' or 'companion'. 'Working malparara way' describes a long-term, co-worker relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people being paid to work alongside each other using their different areas of expertise. These skills include cultural and social knowledge, professional training, language fluency and technical proficiency. Malparara way fundamentally recognises that the exchange of skills, knowledge and experience goes both ways: everybody has things to learn, everybody has things to teach.





we want to teach you  
going out bush



Artwork by  
Kresna Cameron

## We want to teach you going out bush

### **Ngaanyatjarra people's connection to particular**

country is complex. There are anthropologists who have worked in and written about the Ngaanyatjarra Lands so if you want to know more, have a look at the further reading list.

Anthropologist David Brooks explains:

*“The term ngurra when used in reference to birth place connotes the place which is a person’s place of origin, or home – in the unique, personal sense. Thus birth, at the least, gives a person an inalienable, unambiguous connection to a particular place, involving a feeling of personal origin. This personal connection will generally, though perhaps not always, also involve a more powerful and far-reaching element. This stems from the tjukurpa, or Dreaming. In most cases a person’s tjukurpa is determined by their birth place.”*  
– David Brooks, 2002

Going out bush is really important to people for lots of reasons including looking after country, hunting, ceremony and keeping well. If you are lucky you might get to go out bush with people to their country.

If you want to head out bush, ask a family who you think is connected to that area. It’s important to always ask, especially when you are new to the community. Some places are out of bounds all the time; others are okay to go to at some times, but not at others. It is better not to go out on country by yourself, so it’s useful to have an idea which families belongs to which country.

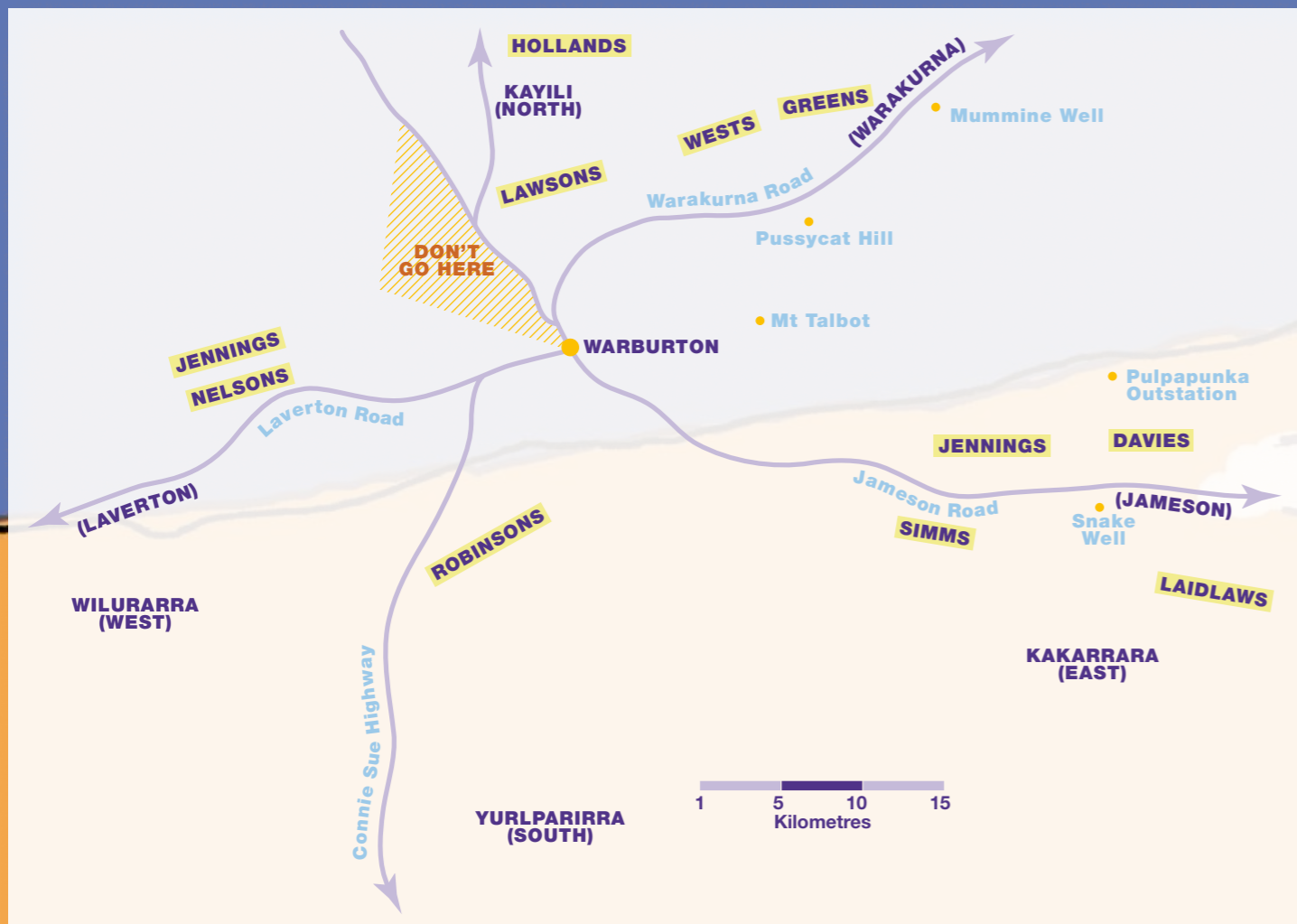


Portrait of David Brooks  
by Deanne Westlake





Have a look at this map for Warburton, it's just a rough guide but it will help you to know the right families to ask. If you are in another community you could check with your *malpa* [co-worker] or the Community Chairperson.



Artwork by Jasmine Lawson



“Do not run over any dogs whatsoever in and around the community.” – BJ, Ngaanyatjarra leader and Wilurarra Creative Communications Officer





Portrait of Jasmine Lawson  
by Deanne Westlake

### Janet Vost speaks with Jasmine Lawson

Janet Vost and Jasmine Lawson have worked together malparara way for about seven years.

**Janet:** Do people still live in the communities closest to their families' country?

**Jasmine:** Yuwa [yes], they like to stay in their own family's place. They might visit another community for a while, but then they say 'I'm not from here I gotta go back to my ngurra where I come from'. If I go to Warakurna I'll get homesick. And they might tell me "you're not from here: this not your ngurra."

**Janet:** What happens now that most people are born in town, how do they work out their country?

**Jasmine:** They don't claim Kalgoorlie, Alice Springs or Perth; they only get their home through their mother and father.

**Janet:** What about their tjukurpa story?

**Jasmine:** I don't know, they must get a gold mining Dreaming (laughs) No they get nothing, Kalgoorlie mob. Or sometimes they get a story from where their mother went when she was waiting, even if they were born in another place. Sometimes they get the birthmark from their Dreaming.

**Janet:** Do women still take on their husband's country?

**Jasmine:** They take it from both sides: they can't go there and take over their husband's country. When they have their kids they will still tell them both sides, mother and father. Some do stop one place on their husband's country, and can't go back. They might say "I'm used to this ngurra, I'll stop with my children and my grandkids. Some ladies when they lose their husbands they go back to their country or some will say, "you're right, I'm staying. I came here when I was young and I'm old now".

**Janet:** What about the last generation where they mostly born out bush?

**Jasmine:** A lot of people are connected to Ranges (Warburton) because of the mission. When people say "I don't want to stay here, this (Warburton) is a dopey place," those old people will say: "where's your ngurra? You were born here, you just lately went to that other place."



# Early days

*Those old people, they like talking about the mission days. When we're talking about something else they'll twist it round and talk about the early days.*

– Jasmine Lawson

## The Ngaanyatjarra Lands have been

through a lot of changes over the past eighty years. Some of these changes happened right across Australia, others are specific to this area. Understanding a bit of this local story can help you understand the community you are going to be living or working in.

Inge Kral, a linguist and anthropologist explains:



*“To the new arrival, the Ngaanyatjarra Lands consists of eleven [now twelve] small, widely-spaced Desert Aboriginal communities under the umbrella of the Ngaanyatjarra Council, with Warburton as the major centre. It is these communities that are the dominant, ‘given’ reality as far as most non-yarnangu people visiting and working in the Lands are concerned. However, they are only very recent developments in historical terms. Only a few decades ago, a way of life existed here in which it would have been unthinkable for large groups of people to ‘sit down’ in one place on any kind of long term basis. Instead, the length and breadth of this seemingly harsh land was combed by people regularly on the move in small groupings which constantly formed and reformed their membership. This was a way of life largely born of necessity, but it was also more than this – it was a life celebrated in dance and myth, and reflected in such things as how social and family relationships were thought of and experienced, and how spiritual connections to country were generated and understood.”*

– Inge Kral, 2003

Portrait of Inge Kral by Deanne Westlake

The United Aborigines Mission (UAM) established a mission settlement at Warburton in 1934, following several missionary visits in the early 1930s. Many older yarnangu can remember this first contact with the walypala.

Everyone’s experience of the mission was different. Many people maintained their independent, mobile lifestyle and just used the mission site for trading.

*“Yuwa they used to bring the papa [dingo] skin in to the mission, swap it for the mirrka [food] and they would give them a 100 wide flour, mirkka purlkanya [a lot of food] and sugar.”* – Tjingapa Davies

Other people ‘sat down’ at the mission for longer. Some kids lived and went to school there. *“We stopped at the mission, and in the holidays we went with our parents to the homelands”.* – Benjamin West

For some people first contact with white people didn’t occur for several decades until big droughts in the 1950s forced people towards the mission to get food and water.

You can still see the first mission site, not far from Warburton. *“Brother Williams put the cross there, when the mission finished, so when you go to that place you can tell that story, think about that place.”* – Tjingapa Davies

During the 1950s and 1960s the Government presence began increasing in the central desert region with weapons and atomic testing in South Australia. This had several effects on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.

New roads were built to support these tests, including the Gunbarrel Highway which was surveyed by Len Beadell and completed in 1958. Other infrastructure created to support the tests included the Giles weather monitoring station, established at present-day Warakurna in 1956.

Up until then Warburton had been the only settlement on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, and lots of people were still living out bush. In the late 1950s and early 1960s people from the east part of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands were moved to the Warburton mission during the Blue Streak long range rocket testing.

There are lots of different stories about this time. A measles epidemic at the Warburton mission happened around the same time as lots of people were brought in.

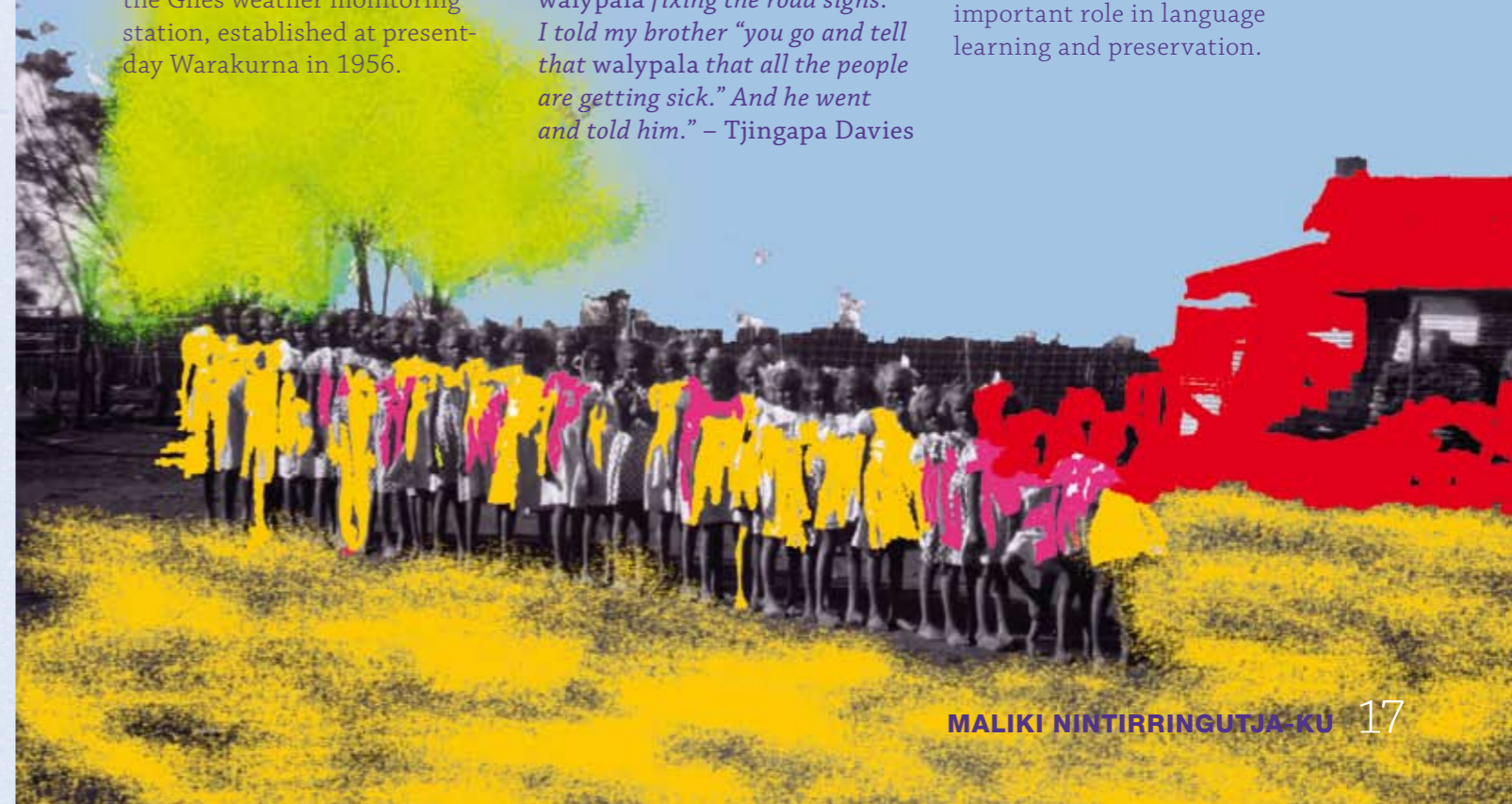
*“A big truck brought all the people to this ngurra, from out in the bush they brought them in to the mission. Some people got left out in the bush. There was a walypala fixing the road signs. I told my brother “you go and tell that walypala that all the people are getting sick.” And he went and told him.”* – Tjingapa Davies

*“We saw one big smoke. We thought it was fire but it wasn’t.”* – Myrtle Holland

*“I heard a story here that people were putting all their kids in the flour bags because of the smell from the rockets.”* – Jasmine Lawson

*“That school was like a hospital – all along they lined them up gave them needles and sent them to Kalgoorlie.”* – Tjingapa Davies

In the early 1970s management of the Warburton mission settlement moved from the UAM to the Commonwealth. The church remains an important part of life in the Lands. Missionary projects such as the Ngaanyatjarra Bible Project have played an important role in language learning and preservation.





we wanna teach you  
in our language  
ngayulurna nunturna  
nintipukularipi ngayuku  
wangka

# We want to teach you in our language Ngayulurna nunturna nintipukularipi ngayuku wangka

## **Ngaanyatjarra is the first language of**

most *yarnangu* living in the Lands. Whilst Ngaanyatjarra is the main language, Ngaatjatjarra (a closely related dialect), Pitjantjatjara and Pintupi are also spoken. Pitjantjatjara is spoken mainly in communities closer to the South Australian border, and Pintupi is spoken around Patjarr. Sometimes English is the second or third language people learn. Kids might not learn English until they go to school and some old people don't have much English. Don't expect that everyone you work with will be fluent in English; it will help if you can learn some Ngaanyatjarra.

Luckily for staff coming to the Lands, there are lots of great resources to help you learn. Linguists like Dorothy Hackett and Ameer Glass have worked for decades with Ngaanyatjarra speakers putting together a dictionary and learner's guides. For a full list and details of where you can buy these books see the further reading list.

A good place to start is learning how to say Ngaanyatjarra (a tricky one!). Here's some hints from Dorothy and Ameer:

- Ng* as in the English 'ng' sound in 'sing'
- aa* as in the 'ar' in 'cart'
- ny* pronounced with the tongue between or against the teeth
- a* as in 'about'
- tj* pronounced with the tongue between or against the teeth, a cross between the English *j* in 'judge' and the 'th' in father
- a* as in 'about'
- rr* pronounced trilled as in the Scottish form
- a* as in 'about'

In the middle of this book there are some cards with the different words for family relationships. You can cut them out and make a game matching them up to help you learn these words.

Artwork by  
Kresna Cameron



# \* Building the Communities

**Ngaanyatjarra people have worked** really hard to ensure the Lands were established with the infrastructure they needed to thrive. Many Ngaanyatjarra people were directly involved in both the buildings of roads and other facilities to support the growth of the communities. This development also supported the limited copper mining activities that occurred during the 1960s and early 1970s.

In the late 1970s *yarnangu* worked to make a direct road from Warburton to Warakurna to replace the indirect route surveyed by Len Beadell in the 1950s. The new road follows the traditional walking route between the two places which linked important rockholes, soaks and cultural sites.

*"We went first, getting that road started, Min Min to Giles. We were walking and camping the night. Walking burning the spinifex and cutting the warta with an axe. Cut cut cut!"*  
- Myrtle Holland

*"They was doing the road. The Hollands and Jennings, they were going in front for the cut line, and then we came through. I remember, I packed up my things and got on that grader. My husband, he was driving, I rode with him all the way to Giles, camping at night, making the road smooth with that grader. Bumpy ride!"*  
- Olive Lawson

*"They cut it all with an axe, all the warta, then pulling it up with there with mara [hands] taking them out and throwing them in a heap all along. Wiya [no], they had nothing, no machines. That walypala took all the stores [food and supplies] out for out them, for the workers and left it there."*  
- Tjingapa Davies

Whilst Warburton was established in the 1930s, most of the communities are a fairly recent development. It wasn't until the mid 1970s, under the Whitlam government, that there was more funding available for establishing communities away from Warburton. This allowed people to live closer to their own country in settlements in Warakurna, Jameson, Blackstone and Wingellina.

In 1973 the Warburton Community Council formed and representatives were elected to run the Community's affairs with support from non-Indigenous advisors. Other communities soon followed this model. This was an exciting time: a shift towards self-determination. Community advisers were placed in what was then thought to be a temporary position, to skill up *yarnangu* to take over the running of communities.



Artwork by Valda Fraser





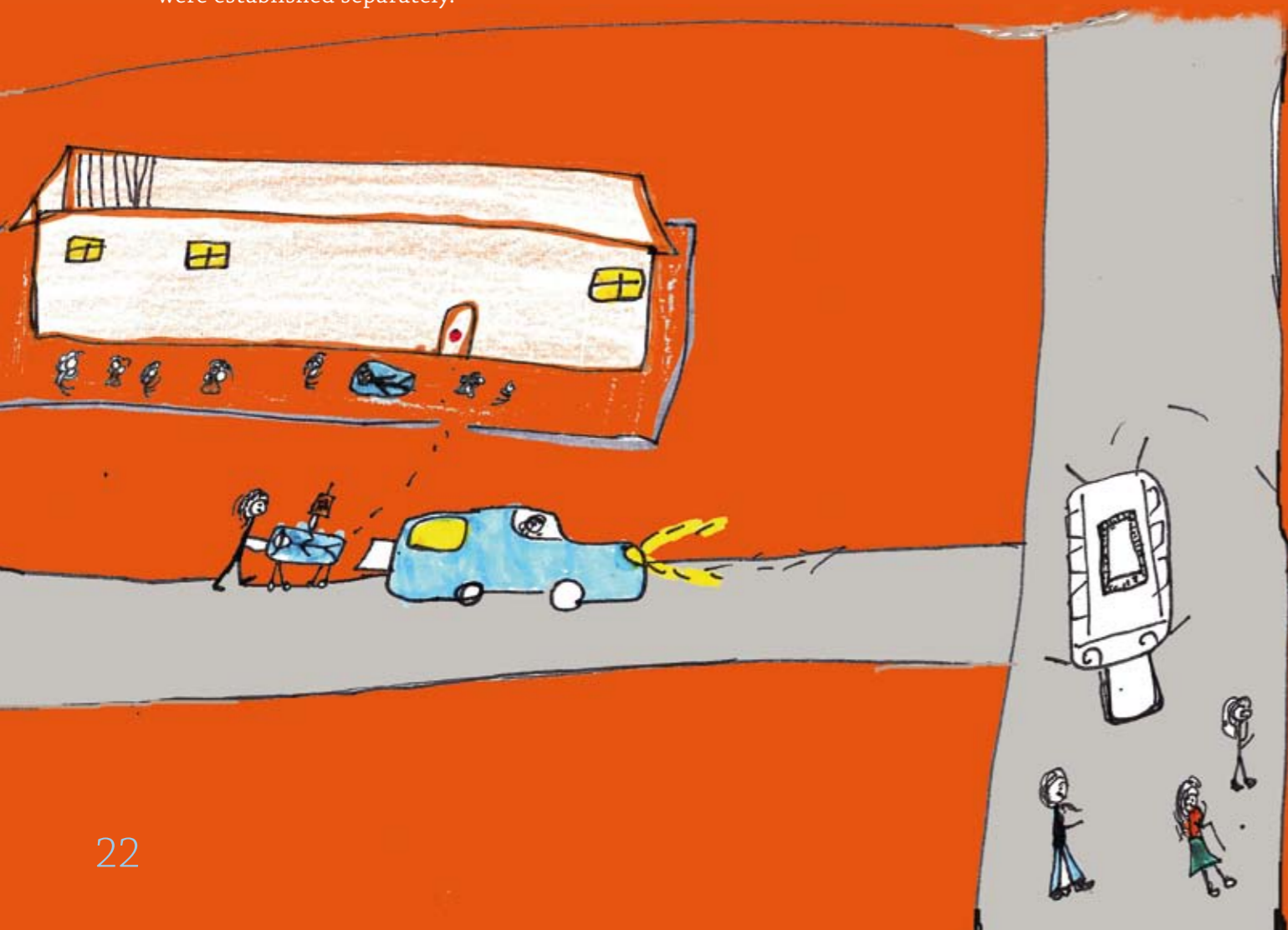
From 1976 Ngaanyatjarra representatives were involved in regional representation through the Pitjantjatjara Council. By 1981 Ngaanyatjarra people had formed an Aboriginal Corporation called the Ngaanyatjarra Council, consisting of communities on the Western Australian side of the border. Under this new Council a further five communities were established: Tjukurla, Tjirrkarli, Wanarn, Patjarr and Kanpa. Cosmo Newberry and Kiwirrkurra also attached themselves to the Ngaanyatjarra Council, but were established separately.

In an attempt to be financially secure, Ngaanyatjarra Council set up several businesses – Ngaanyatjarra Air, Ngaanyatjarra Agency and Transport Services (NATS) – and purchased a Caltex petrol station. Ngaanyatjarra Air is no longer running but NATS still transports goods to the region.

In 1993 the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku was established to provide mainstream local government services to the Ngaanyatjarra region. The Shire has an Indigenous-majority group of Councillors.

The two organisations – Ngaanyatjarra Council and the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku – continue to work together to deliver services and develop the communities.

In 2005 the entire Ngaanyatjarra region (excluding the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve) was given Native Title. This was the largest ever-Native Title claim in Australia. It took nearly 20 years to get the claim through. The Ngaanyatjarra Council Native Title Unit and many Ngaanyatjarra people worked hard secure this title for the region.



Artwork by Clarabell Ward



With Australia's resource industry growing – mining and exploration royalties and mining work might be a major part of the future economic viability of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, but it remains to be seen whether the remoteness of the region will allow a this industry to develop.

*Yarnangu* are still working hard towards the future of their communities. Both Ngaanyatjarra Council and the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku hold meetings every month where people can talk about important decisions on the Lands, such as mining exploration issues; government plans for the area and other significant matters.

The committees and Councils of each organisations are made up of elected representatives from the communities.

*Yarnangu* are also working jobs in clinics, art centres, land management, youth services, community development, schools and stores. It's really important every person coming to the Lands works alongside *yarnangu*.



**The old man needs help from the families to explain to him. If you're working with old people you need to employ Ngaanyatjarra interpreters**

Artwork by Sharna Turner

# Kinship cards

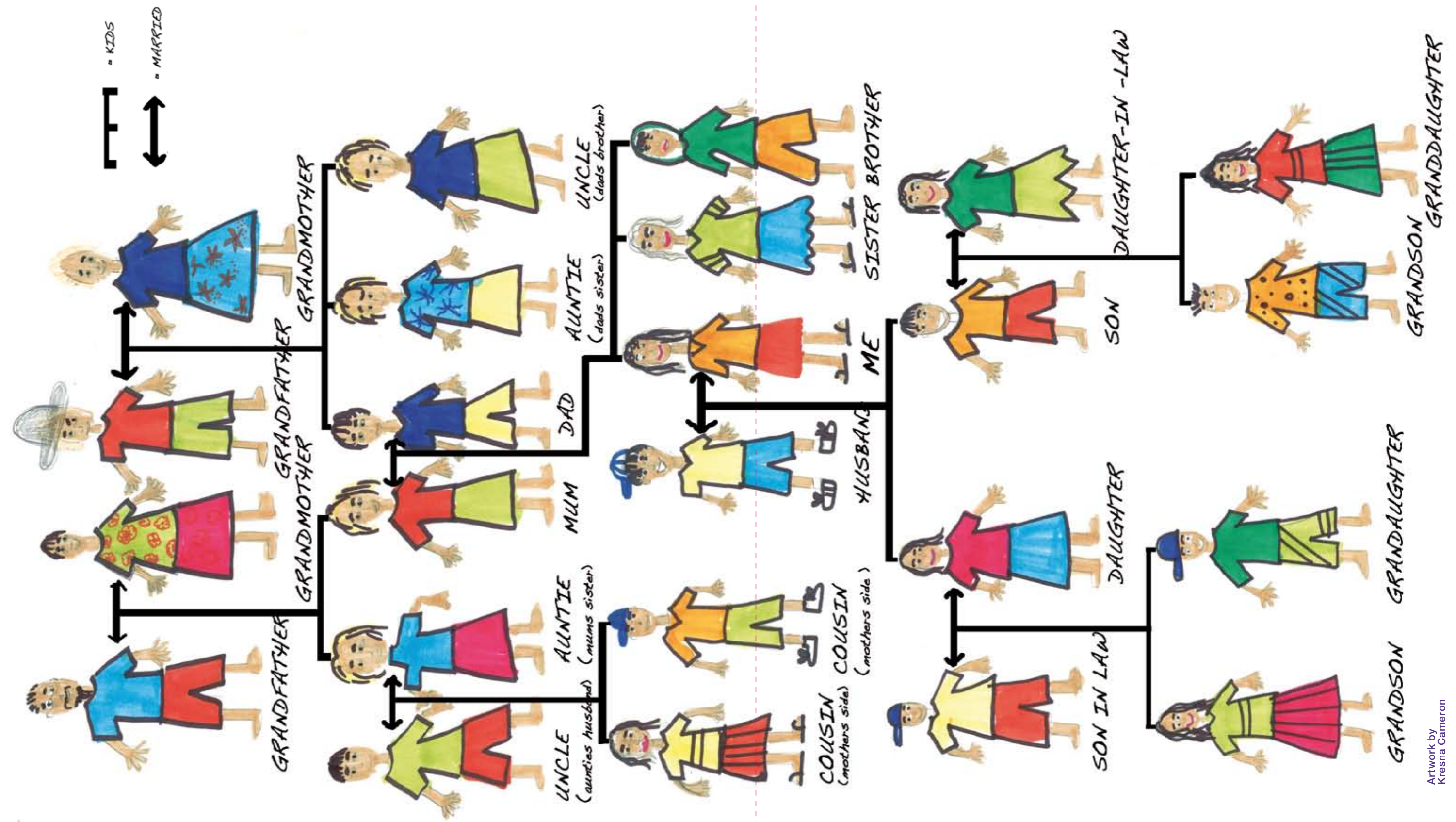
**Cut out the cards and match them to the family tree on the next page to help you learn Ngaanyatjarra!**



GRANDFATHER	GRANDMOTHER
GRANDFATHER	GRANDMOTHER
MUM	DAD
AUNTIE (MUM'S SISTER)	UNCLE (AUNTIE'S HUSBAND)
AUNTIE (DAD'S SISTER)	UNCLE (DAD'S BROTHER)
ME	HUSBAND
SISTER (OLDER)	BROTHER (YOUNGER)
COUSIN (MOTHER'S SIDE)	COUSIN (OPPOSITE GENDER)
DAUGHTER	SON-IN-LAW
SON	DAUGHTER-IN-LAW
GRANDSON	GRANDDAUGHTER
GRANDSON	GRANDDAUGHTER

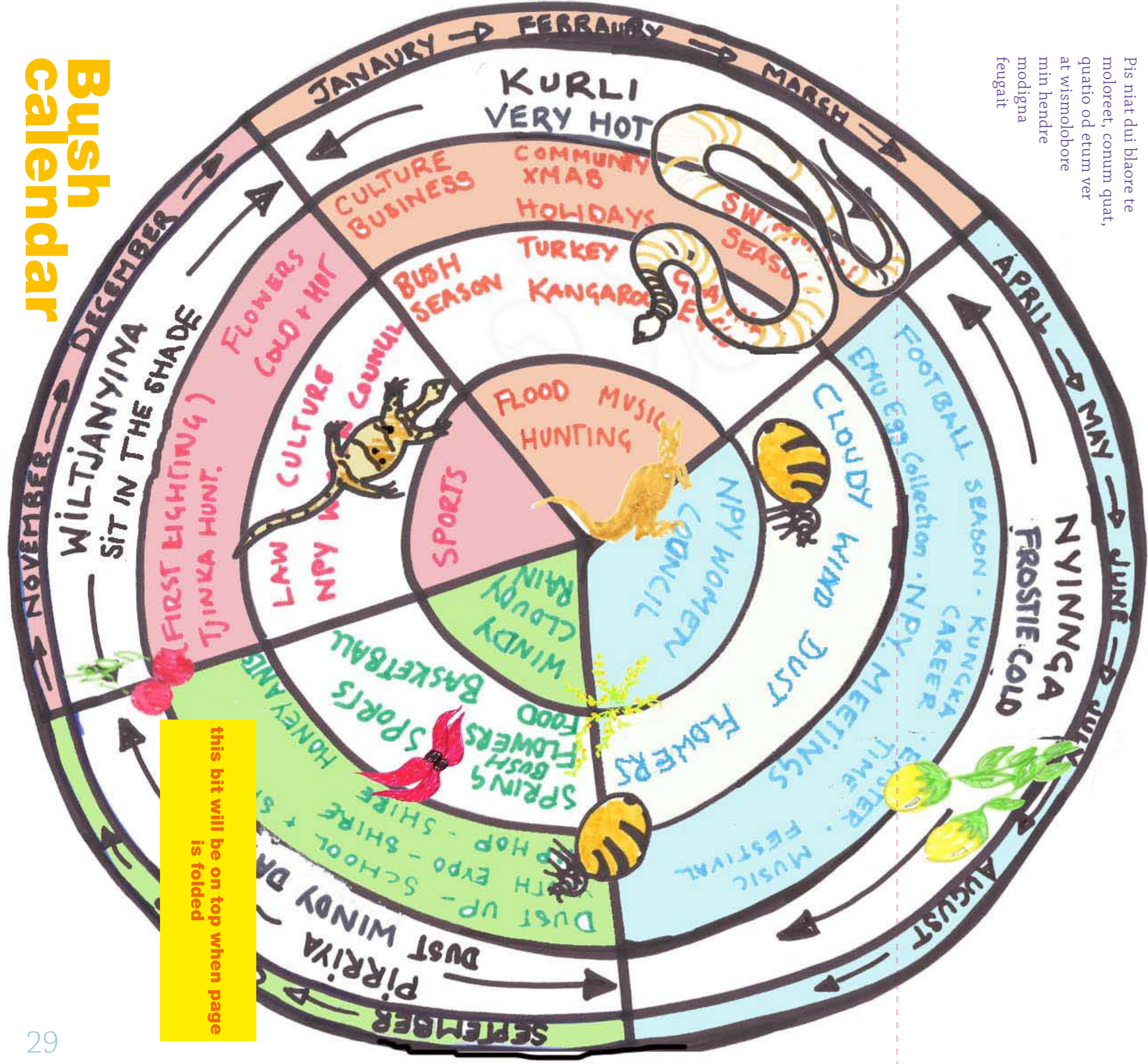


KAPARLI	TJAMU
KAPARLI	TJAMU
MAMA	NGUNYTJU
KAMURU	NGUNYTJU
MAMA	KURNTILI
KURRI	NGAYYUNYA
MARLANYP	TJURTU
NYARRUMPA	WATJIRRA
TJINTANGU	YURNTAL(PA)
MINGKAYI	KATJA
KAPARLI	TJAMU
KAPARLI	TJAMU





# Bush calendar



this bit will be on top when page is folded

# Bush calendar

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Artwork by Delvina Lawson

**NO** **Got** **JOBS** **ON**



**CAN I LOOK AROUND FOR JOBS OR SHOULD I STAY HOME, JUST WALK AROUND?**

**I COULD GO BREAK INTO HOUSES SEARCH AROUND AND STEAL SPRAYS TO SNIFF**

**FAMILIES WORRYING .... POLICE ARE LOOKING FOR ME I DID THE WRONG THING IN THE COMMUNITY**

**I'VE GOT A GOOD JOB NOW, IM WORKING STRONG FOR MY PEOPLE AND MY COMMUNITY**

STAFF NEED TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION ABOUT WORKING, BE PATIENT AND GIVE PEOPLE MORE THAN ONE CHANCE





# Getting ready to come here safely

## Permits

All visitors and new residents to the region must obtain a permit prior to travelling here.

Tourists will be given a transit permit that allows them to travel on specified roads. These do not give permission to enter communities.

As well as granting you permission to travel in the area, your permit supplies you with important information about safe transit and relevant Ngaanyatjarra Council by-laws. Talk to your employer about arranging this.

To obtain a permit contact Ngaanyatjarra Council, Alice Springs (08) 8950 1711 or Aboriginal Lands Trust, Perth (08) 9235 8000.

Any visitors that you have will also need to get a permit prior to coming here.

The Shire is not involved with issuing permits.

## Health checks and immunisations

There is very limited access to medical services on the Lands. Before you come here you should get your health checked out and think about having vaccinations.

Ngaanyatjarra Health Services recommend you get vaccinations for hepatitis A, hepatitis B, influenza and the 'Boostrix' vaccination (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis aka whooping cough).

Pharmaceuticals are limited, and newer combination medications (including the contraceptive pill) are not available so you will need to bring in their own supply. An arrangement with your usual pharmacy and GP is worth setting up

## Communications

Community residents, including staff, are very busy and deal with a large number of visitors. Professional conduct is essential if you want to build relationships and achieve your work goals. If you are visiting a community and want to meet with a somebody, call ahead, make appointments and be respectful in your requests for their support and resources.

When travelling on the road let somebody from your organisation know when you are leaving and when you expect to get to your destination. If you don't arrive they can then arrange a search.

Much of the Lands area does not have mobile phone reception. There is limited mobile reception in Warburton. Satellite phones work in most areas.

Artwork by Kresna Cameron





## Driving

- No driving when the road is flooded, you might slide off the road.
- No travelling to another community when the road is blocked for business.
- Slow down when you see another car coming.
- Look ahead for water and corrugations on the road.
- Look ahead for dust, that means there's another car on the road.
- Look out for camels, they might sit on the road or run across at the last minute.
- Take extra water, fuel and spare tyres with you.
- Don't drive too fast, corrugations and sand.
- Can make the road slippery, try not to go faster than 80km/hour.
- A lot of people have accidents on this road, *yarnangu* want you to get here safely.
- Stop for other people broken down on the road.
- If there is water pooled on the road it is usually better to drive through the middle of the pool, not around the edges. The ground will generally be firmer in the middle.
- Some organisations have polices regarding solo drivers and safety. Discuss with your manager and colleagues.

## General facilities and services

Most likely the facilities on communities will be quite different to what you are used to. It is important to ask your employer about facilities and services so you can prepare in advance for this.

Some examples include:

- Most communities have a weekly mail plane service. Mail is distributed through the community office, which has very limited postal services.
- Food available in community stores (which is usually the only shop) can be very limited in range.
- There are no banks on the Lands. ATMs are available in most communities.

Most of these things can be easily adjusted to with a bit of planning.

Artwork by Valda Frazer





# Living in and visiting communities

## When we started making

this book a big group of us – Indigenous and non-Indigenous together – tried to think of some of the things that might be different for new people coming to the Lands.

Here are some of them:

- Yuwa, it's really hot!
- Lots of culture here.
- They might not have been bush before.
- They might not been hunting.
- There's different feed here.
- No war here.
- People play cards here.
- Different language.
- People coming here might be missing their families and friends.
- Everybody here is family and knows each other.
- They might not know the right place to camp.
- They might not know where they are allowed to go, or even that they aren't allowed to go places.
- No pub, KFC or MacDonald's.
- Lots of people here don't have enough money.
- Different clothing style here.
- There is sniffing here.
- No mine here.
- Some people get married young.
- No job – make people worried.
- Skin names and groups here.
- People might be worrying for their family or friends who have been involved in a car accident, in drugs, in fighting.
- Roads can be dangerous.
- Listening to *yarnangu* is important.
- *Malpa* system (both ways cross-cultural mentoring) is important.
- Proper introductions are important – getting introduced by someone who knows both people.
- People don't talk rough way or directly here.

Working in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands is a rare opportunity to live in a unique part of Australia that very few people ever experience. It can be rewarding and inspiring as well as challenging and confronting. This section of the book will help get you settled into the communities, working right way.

## Communicating right way

As a new resident on the Lands you might notice a few differences in communication styles. Lynley Green and Alex Walton have worked alongside each other malparara way for three years in the NPYWC child nutrition program. They think new people need to remember to be respectful: *"You are in another culture that has different cultural customs to your own. What you believe to be the 'right way' to act in your culture may differ to what is accepted as the right way to act in Yarnangu culture."* (Lynley Green and Alex Walton)

Generally in Ngaanyatjarra culture direct questions are considered rude, especially with someone you don't know very well. It is polite to limit eye contact whilst in a conversation. Silence and indirect communication play an important role in discussion.

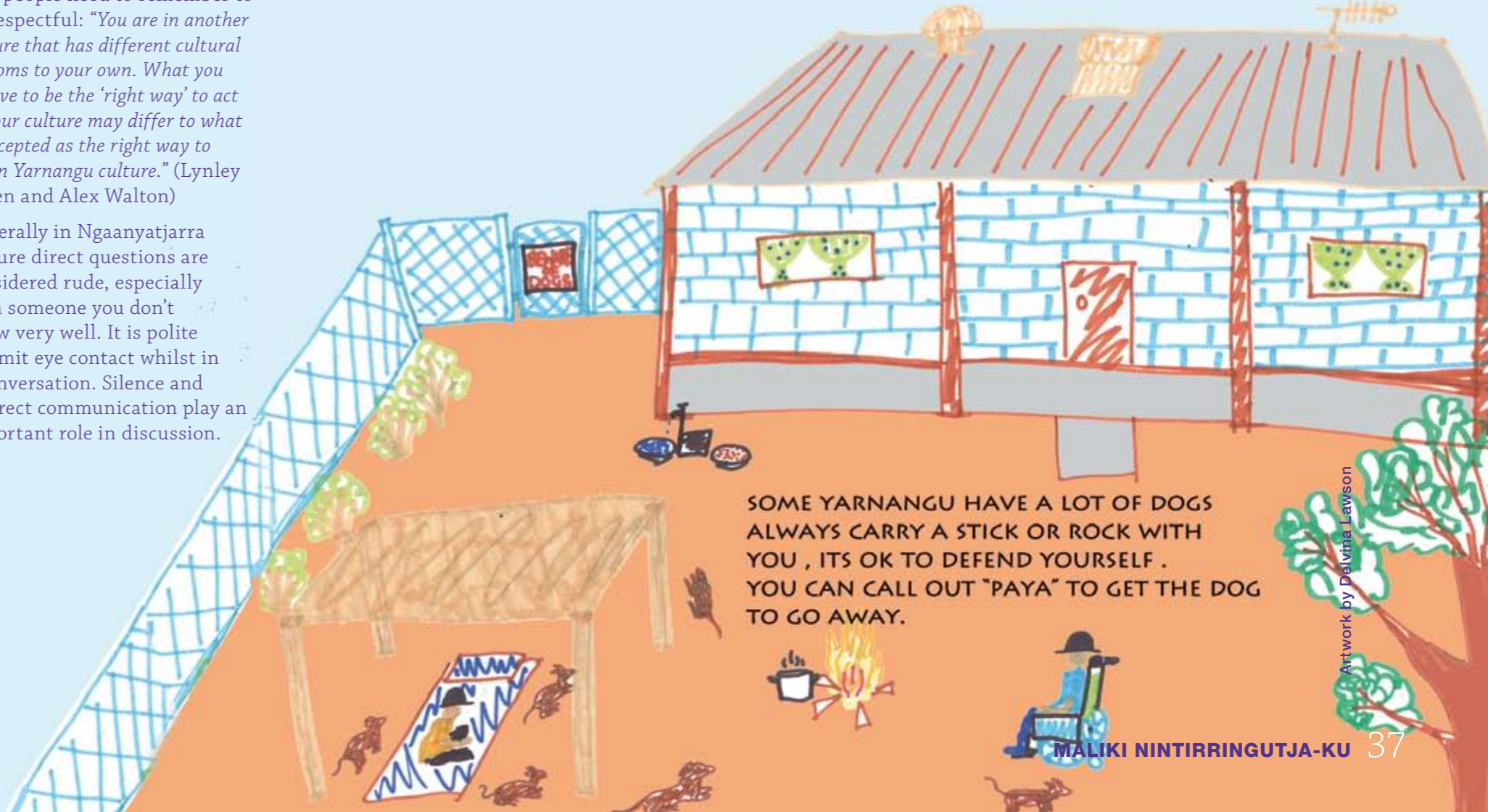
*"When talking to yarnangu ask in a clear and polite and respectful way. Some young fellas really get offended and can take all the things you said differently. Same as joking remarks with yarnangu."* – BJ, Ngaanyatjarra leader and Wilurarra Creative Communications Officer

Try to learn by quietly listening, watching and thinking. If you do have to ask a question it is generally best to quietly ask a community member of the same gender and approximate age as yourself.

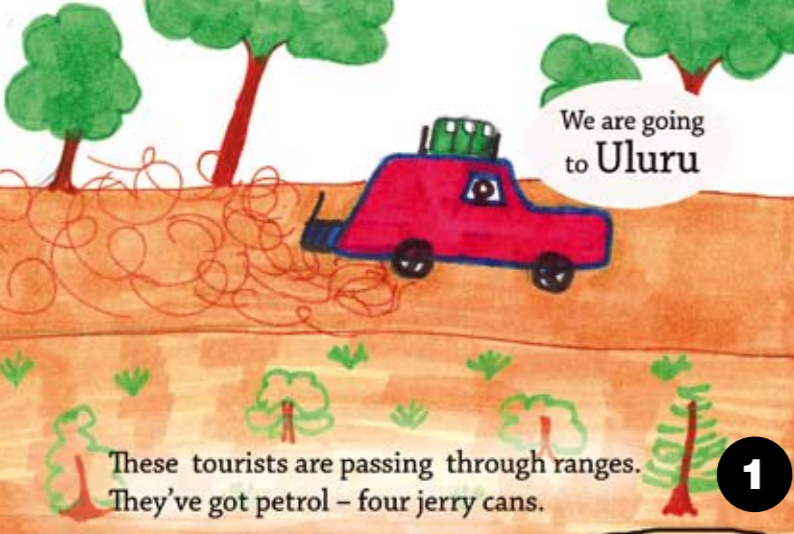
Generally there is very little physical contact in public between males and females, even if they are in a relationship. Shaking hands is generally reserved for sorry business (someone passing).

*"When looking for someone do not enter their house, only when given permission to do so."* – BJ, Ngaanyatjarra leader and Wilurarra Creative Communications Officer

SOME YARNANGU HAVE A LOT OF DOGS ALWAYS CARRY A STICK OR ROCK WITH YOU , ITS OK TO DEFEND YOURSELF . YOU CAN CALL OUT "PAYA" TO GET THE DOG TO GO AWAY.

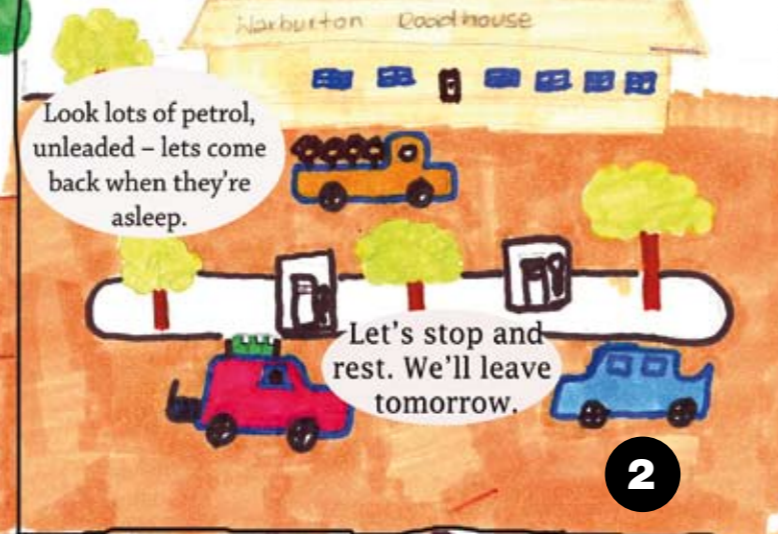






These tourists are passing through ranges. They've got petrol - four jerry cans.

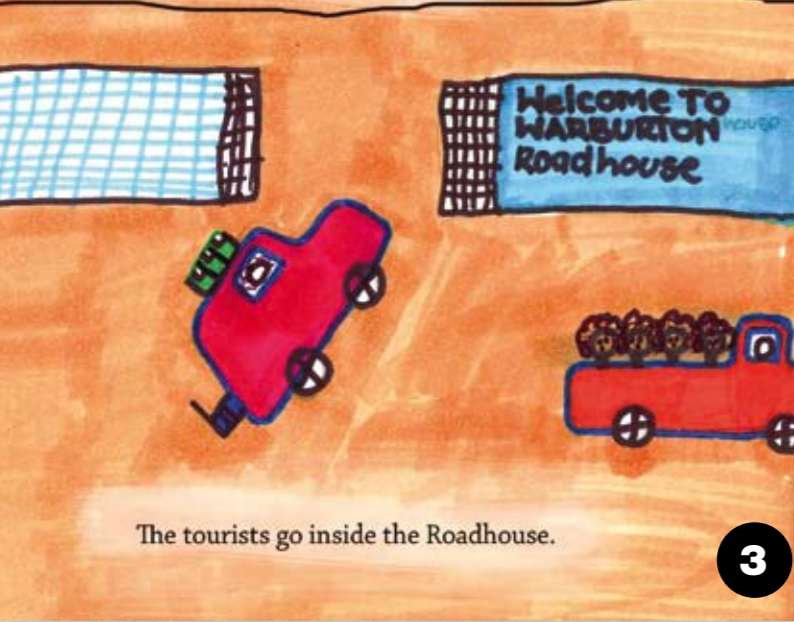
1



Look lots of petrol, unleaded - lets come back when they're asleep.

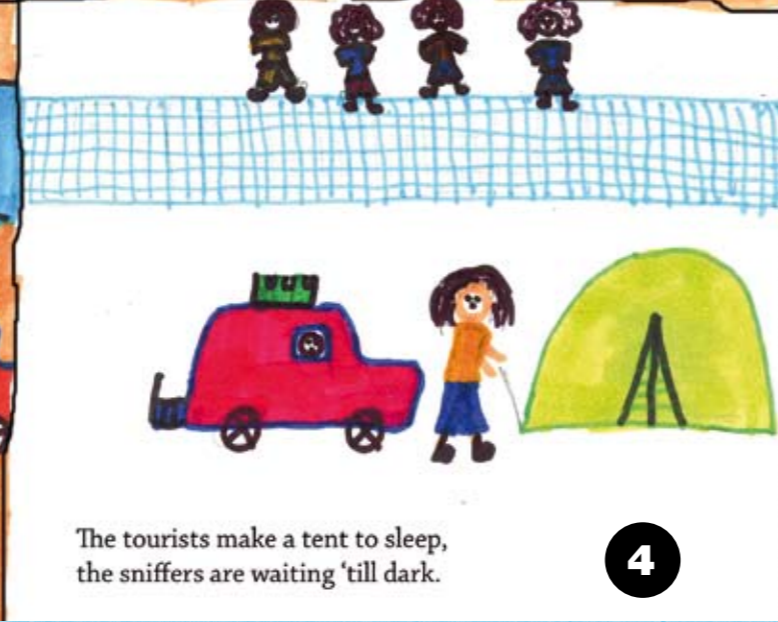
Let's stop and rest. We'll leave tomorrow.

2



The tourists go inside the Roadhouse.

3



The tourists make a tent to sleep, the sniffers are waiting 'till dark.

4



Keep looking people might see us.

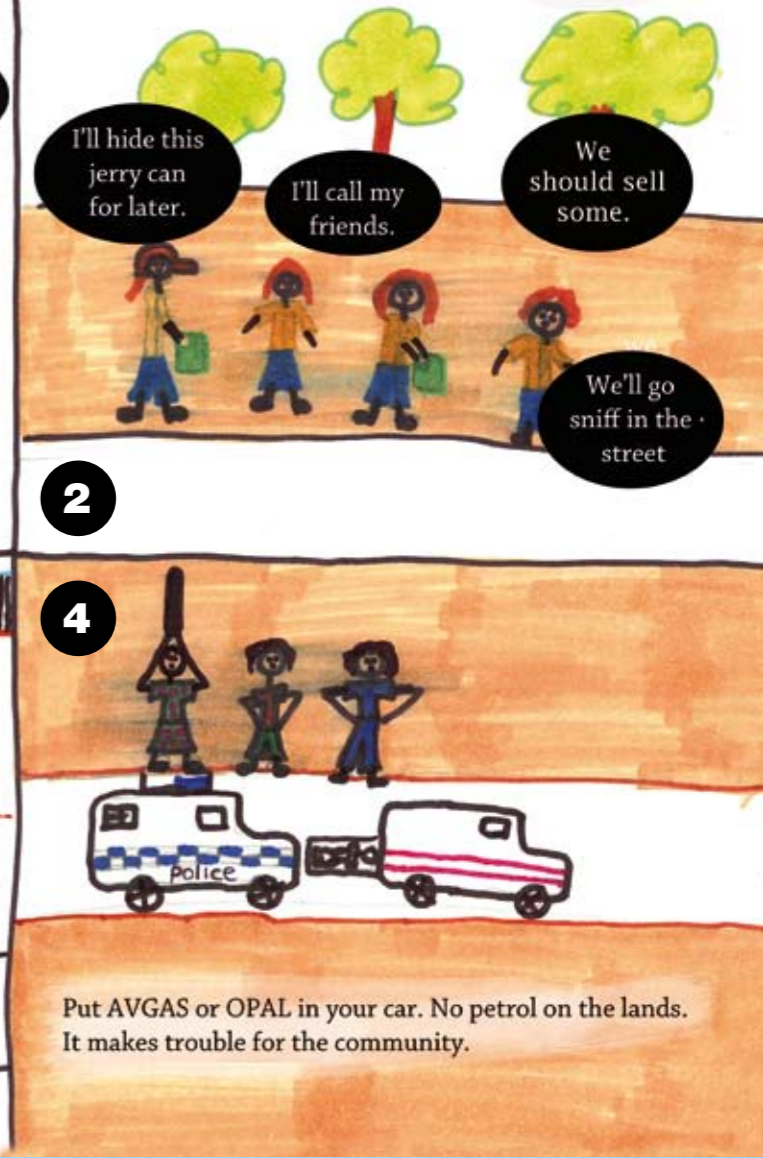
Just get two jerry cans.

zzzzzzzzzz zzzz

1

3

They're fighting getting mad from petrol.



Put AVGAS or OPAL in your car. No petrol on the lands. It makes trouble for the community.

2

4

I'll hide this jerry can for later.

I'll call my friends.

We should sell some.

We'll go sniff in the street

**Wama wiya, Petrol-pa wiya**

*"Do not bring any wama or drugs. Don't do deals with Aborigines; young and old, boys and girls."* - BJ, Ngaanyatjarra leader and Wiluarra Creative Communications Officer

It is illegal to bring alcohol and deleterious substances onto the Lands. Deleterious substance means glue or any volatile liquid containing hydrocarbon, which includes red fuel such as petrol. Opal fuel is available as an alternative to petrol. These items have been prohibited under the Aboriginal Communities Act 1979: Ngaanyatjarra Council (Aboriginal Corporation) By-laws.

Artwork this page and facing: RoseQueen Ward





THE NEW GIRL CAME FROM TOWN ON THE PLANE TO WARBURTON

### Short skirt story

It is important to dress appropriately for the climate and for the local community. Here's some tips from malpas Lynley Green and Alex Walton:

*“Right way for women means wearing skirts or pants that are loose fitting and knee length. Sleeveless tops are okay. Tight clothing, short skirts and short shorts are not appropriate. For male staff long pants/shorts and shirts or t-shirts are okay. It is generally recommended for both male and female staff to avoid wearing bright [‘fire engine’] red.”*

Delvina Lawson explains *‘there are a few reasons why people think it is better to not wear red including: it’s for men’s business, it can make lightning hit you, it makes people get wild, it can hurt your eyes and it can make camels chase you.’*

### Snakes, spiders and centipedes

*“Them snakes, they just bite anyway cause they gotta poison. Stay away from these snakes, go call the others. For poison spiders, just hit them. Wack the spider with the storywire or the stick. The centipedes, if they go on you, flick it to the fire or the ash. They can bite you.”* – Valda Frazer

### Climate

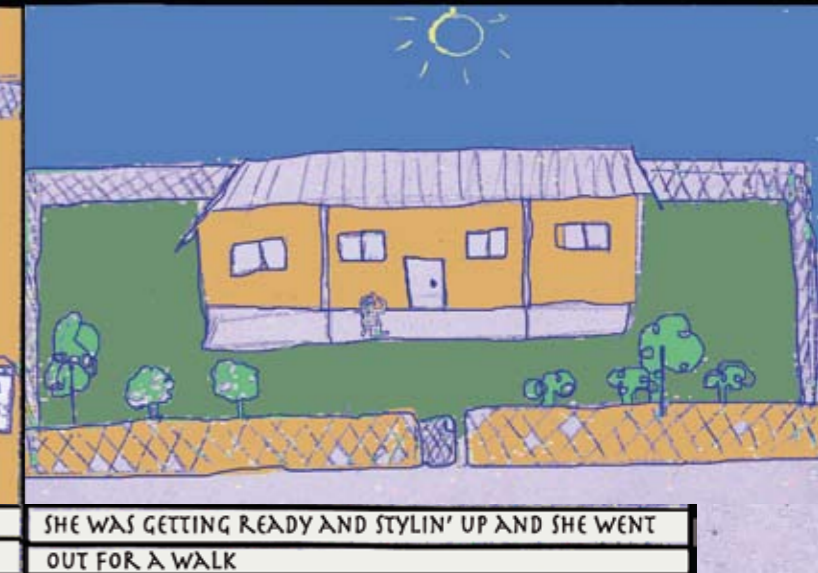
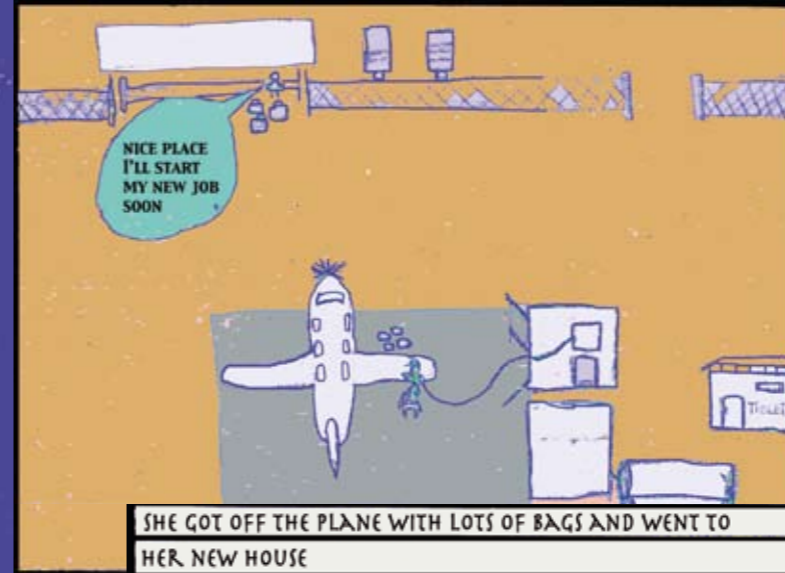
Yuwa, it’s really hot here! During the warmer months the temperature is higher than 40 degrees celsius most days. It is important to drink lots of water, have light clothes that cover you and to not run around in the heat. In the cooler months it can get below zero at night, so you need to have some warm clothes too.

Have a look at the Bureau of Meteorology website

information about Warburton and Warakurna (Giles) for more information about temperature and rainfall: [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)

### Stress

Heat, work overload, isolation, culture shock, long drives and dealing with community sorry business can all be stressful. They impact on you and other people around you. You might be homesick, and not cope as well as you thought you would. Remember to do some relaxing activities! People will often also experience ‘reverse culture shock’ when they go off the Lands for leave. Keep this in mind when planning your breaks and try not to overload yourself. The Bush Support Line specialises in providing free, confidential support services to people in remote Australia 1800 805 391.



Artwork by Delvina Lawson



## Business or ceremonies

Ceremonial activity ('business') is an important aspect of life in the Lands. There are a range of ceremonial activities or *inma*. Non-Indigenous people are requested to show respect for traditional law and culture. This may mean respecting restricted entry to certain places and tolerating that certain people are unavailable for work or meeting during these times.

Should you have to travel it is advisable to find out whether the roads are open and not travel on roads when they are 'blocked' because the 'business' is passing through. You can ask your *malpa*, a person the same gender as you (preferably same age or older), the Community chairperson or the Community Development Advisor (CDA). If you do happen upon any ceremonial business it is best to leave the area.

*"When Business has finished it is important to know that the young mans who have come out of the bush will have a camp outside of the community and no white staff or contractors are to be there in that camp or going near or taking photos."*  
– BJ, Ngaanyatjarra leader and Wilurarra Creative Communications Officer

## Photography and filming

*"We've had lots of them here , they just come, grab a photo and then take it away."* – Myrtle Holland

*"Do not take community photos of people or landscapes unless given permission by a Ngaanyatjarra Elder. It's the same with bike riding around: do not ride to sacred sites around the community and take photos. You must consult with a Ngaanyatjarra Elder which way is best to ride. Photos are not be sold on the internet without people knowing."* – BJ, Ngaanyatjarra leader and Wilurarra Creative Communications Officer

Always ask before taking photos, especially of older people. Landscape photography may also not be allowed for cultural reasons (eg sacred sites). Consult with *yarnangu* before taking landscape photos.

Don't let that put you off taking photos altogether: people may be disappointed if you haven't brought your camera along to some important social outing or event.

Professional photographers must have a legal Agreement with the Council if they wish to take and publish photos. Permission must also be obtained if amateur photographers wish to have photos published.

## Sorry business

It can be difficult to know how to behave when someone passes away.

The relatives will move out of their home into a 'sorry camp' a small distance away from the community. Relatives from distant communities may travel to the sorry camp and remain there until after the funeral. For a time you will not be able to go near or drive past that person's house.

If you know the person that passed away –

*"Pitjaku [go to] church then sit down. Wait for those right people to go there then come back. Come to the church and pampulku [touch the coffin], put the flowers then nyaku [look], yulaku [cry], that's the last one and go and sit down and wait for people to come back from the graveside."* – Tjingapa Davies

*"When the new staff come with a dead person's name, yarnangu will give them a nickname, a wangka name or call them Kunmarnanya. They will give them a new name so families don't get sadness when they hear the name of someone who has passed."* – Myrtle Holland

*"While they are waiting for a funeral, some days before they'll get the families from the camp. They break some branches off the trees and some oldies will put flour all over themselves to make it like a ghost. Then they'll go round office way, public areas, then they'll go to the families' houses, put out some flowers, clean around the houses. Then it's free for people to walk and work around in the public areas. That'll mean there's no spirit walking around calling out the names. It makes it safe for the people. Families might get sad, thinking that person is still talking in the street. The house and the street where that person passed away is closed til the second funeral. After the second funeral they'll move in again."* – Delvina Lawson

Artwork by Cushia Holland

Artwork by Valda Frazer



# Reference materials and further reading

Many of these resources can be bought from the Warta Shop at the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku, Warburton. You can also order them from the publisher.

## General Information

*Into another world: a glimpse of the culture of the Ngaanyatjarra people of Central Australia*,

Amee Glass (Summer Institute of Linguistics, originally published 1978, revised 1997, reprinted 2002)

*Fighting for survival: The Ngaanyatjarra of the Gibson Desert*, Liz Thompson (Heinemann Library, 1998)

*Bush Tucker and medicine of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands*, multiple authors (Pearson Library, 2009)

*Ngangkari Work – Anangu Way: traditional healers of Central Australia*, (NPY Women's Council 2003)

*Lurrtjulu-la Palyanma – Let's keep doing it together*, Ben Fox, Delvina Lawson, Kate Fielding, Sherma Bates (Wilurarra Creative and Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku, 2010)

*Mission time in Warburton: an exhibition exploring aspects of the Warburton Mission History, 1933-1973*, catalogue, ed. Vicki Plant and Albie Viegas (WAP Press: 2002)

*Never Give Up News Magazine* published annually by NPY Women's Council

*Minymaku News Magazine* published annually by NPY Women's Council

*KURRA Wilurarra Style*, multiple authors, (Warburton Youth Arts [Wilurarra Creative] and Gozer Media, 2009)

## Language Learning Resources

### Ngaanyatjarra

*Ngaanyatjarra and Ngaatjatjarra to English Dictionary*, Amee Glass and Dorothy Hackett (IAD Press, 2003)

*Ngaanyatjarra Learner's Guide*, Amee Glass (IAD Press 2006)

*Talk, Text and Technology: Changing Social Practice in Remote Indigenous Australia*, Inge Kral, Clevedon (UK: Multilingual Matters: 2011)

'History of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands'; 'Ngaanyatjarra Kinship System'; and 'Tjukurrpa, Country, Sites and Land Tenure' in *Overview of Ngaanyatjarra People and Culture: Cultural Awareness Materials*, David Brooks 2002, published by Ngaanyatjarra Community College, Warburton.

### Pitjantjatjara

One of the best Pitjantjatjara language learning resources can be found at:

[www.ninti.ngapartji.org](http://www.ninti.ngapartji.org)

*Wangka wiru: a handbook for the Pitjantjatjara language learner*, Paul Eckert and Joyce Hudson (Underdale, S. Aust. : South Australian College of Advanced Education, 1988)

*A learner's guide to Pitjantjatjara/ Yankunytjatjara*, Cliff Goddard (Alice Springs, N.T. : Institute for Aboriginal Development, 1993)

### Pintupi

A learner's guide to Pintupi-Luritja John Heffernan in collaboration with Kuyata Heffernan (Alice Springs, N.T. : IAD Press, c1999, 2000.)

## Publication Contacts

IAD Press: (08) 8951 1334  
[sales@iad.edu.au](mailto:sales@iad.edu.au)

Ngaanyatjarra Council:  
(08) 8950 1711

Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku:  
(08) 8956 7966

## Web Resources

Ngaanyatjarra Council  
[www.ngaanyatjarra.org.au](http://www.ngaanyatjarra.org.au)  
Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku  
[www.ngaanyatjarraku.wa.gov.au](http://www.ngaanyatjarraku.wa.gov.au)

Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council  
[www.npywc.org.au](http://www.npywc.org.au)

Ngaanyatjarra Media  
[www.ngurra.org](http://www.ngurra.org)

Wilurarra Creative  
[www.wilurarra.com](http://www.wilurarra.com)

## Art Centre Websites

[www.warakurnaartists.com.au](http://www.warakurnaartists.com.au)

[www.papulankutja.com.au](http://www.papulankutja.com.au)

[www.tjarlirliart.com](http://www.tjarlirliart.com)

[www.kayili.com.au](http://www.kayili.com.au)

# Contacts and credits

## Credits

This book has been produced in partnership by the Ngaanyatjarra Council and the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku. Key support for image development was provided by Wilurarra Creative.

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The following texts are referred to in this publication and have been key references in its development:

- Inge Kral, Cultural Awareness Course notes, 2003, Ngaanyatjarra Council
- David Brooks 2002

- Amee Glass *Into another world: a glimpse of the culture of the Ngaanyatjarra people of Central Australia* (Summer Institute of Linguistics, originally published 1978, revised 1997, reprinted 2002)

## Design

Sandie Stewart, Chocolate Design

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## Image Credits

To be inserted once layout is confirmed



## Ngaanyatjarra Council

Ngaanyatjarra Council is an Aboriginal controlled organisation representing the interests of all Ngaanyatjarra, Pintupi and Pitjantjatjara people living in the 12 Ngaanyatjarra Lands Communities located in the Central Desert region of Western Australia.

Ngaanyatjarra Council was incorporated in 1981 with the aim of supporting the development of all Ngaanyatjarra people. At the core of this work was assisting the Ngaanyatjarra Communities to be strong and sustainable with reliable essential services, air transport, bookkeeping, agency and road transport, fuel distribution, health services, community services and improved housing.

Today, Ngaanyatjarra Council is the largest Indigenous Corporation in Australia and has grown to be the major representative body for Ngaanyatjarra people. Ngaanyatjarra Council is also the parent and ultimate holding company of the Ngaanyatjarra Corporate Group which includes the following entities: Ngaanyatjarra Services (Aboriginal Corporation), Ngaanyatjarra Health Service (Aboriginal Corporation), Indervon Pty Ltd (Caltex Alice Springs), and NATS (Ngaanyatjarra Agency and Transport Service).

**NGAANYATJARRA**  
COUNCIL (Aboriginal Corporation)

## Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku

The Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku is an Indigenous-majority Local Government that serves a predominantly Ngaanyatjarra group of electors based in the remote desert area of Western Australia. It provides local government services and infrastructure development for the ten communities on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands within its boundaries. The Shire encompasses 159,948 square kilometres – an area larger than England – and is located approximately 1,550km from Perth.

The Shire was involved in this project through its Community Development Team. This team, with an Indigenous-majority staff, grows successful community development projects and practice on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands. Our focus is on effective collaborations and long-term community building. We prioritise culturally-appropriate pathways to sustainable futures for Ngaanyatjarra people living on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands. We hope this book will help new residents to settle into their new community.



**Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku**  
ON A JOURNEY

## Some Basic Phone Contacts

### Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku

Warburton (08) 8956 7966

### Ngaanyatjarra Council

Alice Springs (08) 8950 1711

Perth office (08) 9425 2000

**NATS** (08) 9350 5969

### Chartair

(weekly mail and passenger plane)

Alice Springs Office (08) 8952 6666

### NPY Women's Council

(08) 8958 2345

### Ngaanyatjarra Health Service

(08) 8950 1730

### Police

Warburton (08) 8955 8300

Warakurna (08) 8956 7099

Blackstone (08) 8954 8088

### Community Offices

Blackstone (08) 8956 7975

Cosmo Newberry (08) 9037 5969

Jameson (08) 8956 7678

Kanpa (08) 9037 1121

Kiwirrikurra (08) 8956 8611

Patjarr (08) 8956 7900

Tjirrkarli (08) 8956 7686

Tjukurla (08) 8956 7388

Wanarn (08) 8956 7353

Warakurna (08) 8956 7368

Warburton (08) 8956 7642

Wingellina (08) 8956 7704

## ROAD SAFETY WATCH OUT FOR:

	<b>BIKES AND MOTORBIKE.</b> When you driving look around or drive slow when bikes are on streets, because theirs no pathroads for bikes for safety rides.
	<b>OLDIES AND DOGS.</b> Old people always walk with the Dogs on streets. Walking to public areas like shop, clinic, office, drive slow.
	<b>OTHER CARS.</b> When theres Cars on streets some they just cruise and drive fast. Some used road Rules.
	<b>KIDS CROSSING.</b> On school hours Kids like Crossing for swimming lesson and shop. Cars always stop and give way.
	<b>DRIVING SICK.</b> When you are sick you dont need to drive if you dont have you medications on you. or go to the clinic.





## We made you this little book so you can see our culture

**Our place is different** to lots of places in Australia. For you coming here might be a bit like going to another country. We live in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, in the desert in Western Australia. The Ngaanyatjarra Lands are one of the most remote areas of Australia, and the centre of the world for Ngaanyatjarra people.

We made this book to welcome new people to our communities and to give you some information about our place. We made it, *yarnangu* and *walypalas* working together. We hope you will learn some things to help you work right way on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.



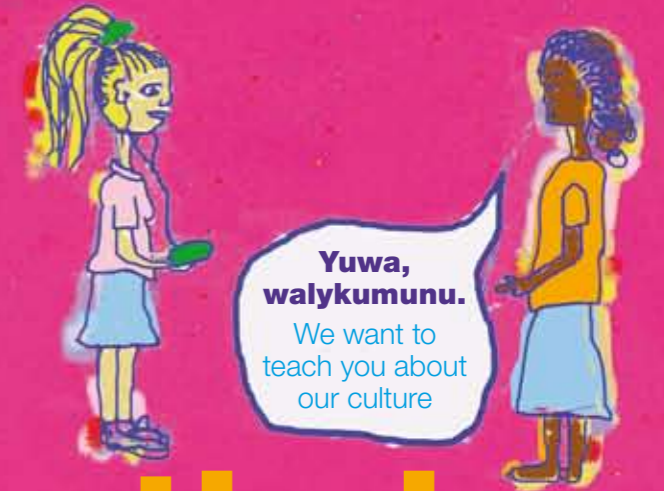
Shire of **Ngaanyatjarraku**  
ON A JOURNEY



**Wilurarra**  
Creative

Recommended Retail Price **\$25**

ISBN XXX-X-XXX-XXXXX-X



# Maliki nintirringutja-ku

## Strangers coming in learning Ngaanyatjarra way

A guide for new residents and visitors in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands

**Edited by** Kate Fielding, Delvina Lawson,  
Jasmine Lawson and Janet Vost





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Shire of **Ngaanyatjarraku**  
ON A JOURNEY



**Wilurarra**  
Creative

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ISBN XXX-X-XXX-XXXXX-X



**Yuwa,  
walykumunu.**  
We want to  
teach you about  
our culture

# Maliki nintirringutja-ku

## Strangers coming in learning Ngaanyatjarra way



A guide for new residents and visitors in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands

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