





### **COVER ARTWORK:**

Crowned Aboriginal, Travis Lane 2019

### **GLOSSARY**

As Ngaanyatjarra is the primary language for over 97% of Wilurra Creative participants, we regularly use Ngaanyatjarra words and ideas to help describe our practice, people, and service. For those unfamiliar with Ngaanyatjarra language and central desert cultures, here is a glossary of some of the terms used in this document.

- **Mirlirtjarra** – the Ngaanyatjarra name for Warburton Community, and the Lands around it
- **Walypala** – non-Ngaanyatjarra person; roughly translates to “whitefella”
- **Yarnangu** – people (of the Lands); usually Ngaanyatjarra person but can also be other First Nations people
- **Mangka** - hair
- **Wati** – man/male (who has been through the manhood ceremonies)
- **Kungka** – young woman/female
- **Wilurra** – west

### **‘MALPA’ AND ‘WORKING MALPARARA WAY’**

“‘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.”

Excerpt from ‘Maliki Nintirringutja-ku: Strangers coming in learning Ngaanyatjarra way’ – **Edited by Kate Fielding, Delvina Lawson, Jasmine Lawson and Janet Vost**



## Vision

Our vision is to remove the obstacles keeping Ngaanyatjarra young adults from pursuing their creative potential. To replace limitations with aspirations. To resouce the community capacity, cultural strength and language for their stories to be heard.

Wilurarra Creative holds the potential of younger Ngaanyatjarra people in its hands. When government strategies and schemes come and go and outside interests decide they can direct the future of young Ngaanyatjarra people, those young people will be at Wilurarra. We are on the ground where a connected, motivated, talented younger generation are using artistic vision and creativity to build the lives they want. Wilurarra is a grass-roots movement of energetic young adults walking the line between an ancient culture, colonialist mission history and a future of their own choosing. A vibrant culture of music, art and meaningful community development that they are demanding every day. If you listen, they speak with a clear voice. Wilurarra's vision is to embolden that voice, and provide the resources for it to be heard.

*"Here, we are building. We are climbing more and more onto better progress for young people. As you know, if you ever lived in Warburton, there is no suicidal problems with our young folks, because they found their place in Wilurarra"*

- Brett Jennings, (Director, Wilurarra Creative and Ngaanyatjarra cultural mentor)  
Speaking at the launch of our Wilurarra Mangka Salon, 17 April 2018



# About Wilurarra Creative

Wilurarra Creative is young adults building strong communities and culturally relevant opportunities through arts-based training, skills-exchange, and creative practice; building a personal and collective identity that authentically expresses contemporary Ngaanyatjarra culture.

**Wilurarra Creative is a project of Warburton Community Inc.** Warburton is the largest of the 10 member-communities of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, which is governed by the Ngaanyatjarra Council.

Wilurarra Creative began in 2004 as 'Warburton Youth Arts', arising from a Ngaanyatjarra-determined need for young people to access technology, facilities and training in contemporary arts practice that were not otherwise available in the community. **Wilurarra was built by the community, for the younger members of the community**, and is considered a vital component of the cultural life of Mirlirtjarra/Warburton and the Ngaanyatjarra Lands region.

Wilurarra Creative is an arts-based community development project that has become a model for best practice Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) through:

- prioritising Ngaanyatjarra culture, knowledge and ways of working
- co-creation of all projects and programs with Ngaanyatjarra people (particularly young adults)
- creative engagement to effect meaningful change in the lives and futures of participants
- partnerships with exceptional professional arts workers who receive thorough training and ongoing development in Ngaanyatjarra-specific cultural exchange
- flexibility in program delivery to adapt to the skills and interests of participants, with respect for the local community context and cultural commitments of participants
- developing, modelling and evolving cross-cultural working protocols

Our 2 arts studios are unique on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, providing ongoing space, essential services, resources and programs, including:

- music composing, rehearsal and recording studio and access to a variety of musical instruments
- equipment for digital photography, video, graphic design and editing
- tools for metalwork, sculpture, set building and cultural maintenance
- Wilurarra Mangka Salon – a multi-purpose creative project space that we use for hairdressing training, fashion, photography, workshops, exhibitions, visual and performing arts projects
- essential community resources: IT hub with internet access, computers, printing and our community access digital archive
- Community development framework and protocols that make it comfortable for Ngaanyatjarra people to participate and self-direct creative practice and programming

Wilurarra Creative offers the only local access to post-school education and the only program targeted at Ngaanyatjarra young adults (16 – 30 years old). For this, the largest demographic of Ngaanyatjarra people, Wilurarra is the primary resource through which they can explore and express Ngaanyatjarra culture in the context of contemporary Australia. Our key point-of-difference at Wilurarra is that our young artists focus on digital arts, new media, and music technologies in a landscape predominantly populated with traditional and analogue art practice.

Wilurarra exists because Ngaanyatjarra people do not want to move from their Lands, but they do want to move with the times. It is this age group of young adults who will most experience and lead that movement in community.

*"The Young People are like the eyes for the old people seeing into the future."*

- Livingstone McKain West (deceased), speaking about Wilurarra Creative.



*"I come here for Studio. I come [stay in] Warburton all the time because we don't have this Studio where I live. I live [in] Warakurna community. I want to do music, [but] there's no Wilurarra in Warakurna! That's why I come here."*

**- Jeffrey Yunkett**

For 20 years Wilurarra has grown with its community, the new generation of Wilurarra participants have grown up knowing that there is a place for them. They style up, strut their stuff on community-made catwalks in a new and different way than their parents did in the early days of Wilurarra fashion projects. They make drum sets out of cardboard boxes practicing for the day that they are old enough to 'play band' with the Wilurarra musicians. When boys go through Men's business and no longer go to school, they know that there is a place for them, a place where creativity, self-expression and learning co-exist with cultural practice, maintenance, and lore.

And when that day comes that a child is old enough to be part of Wilurarra you see the pride on their faces, that sense of belonging. This place that is owned by Ngaanyatjarra people, that provides meaningful creative engagement and self-directed learning without leaving your homelands, that values Ngaanyatjarraku language and culture as much as it values new skills on the 360o camera, a new desert reggae riff played on an electric synthesiser, a digital collage that is as universal as it is from, of and by the young people of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.

# The Context We Work In

## We are of this place

Wilurra Creative's very remote home is Warburton Community, WA. Warburton is the largest community and central service point for approximately 2,100 Ngaanyatjarra residents, based in ten communities, spanning an area larger than Victoria. The region is notable for rich Ngaanyatjarra culture, a diverse, energetic art practice and stunning landscapes. 97% of residents mainly speak Ngaanyatjarra, with English as a second language at best.

Warburton is a 1,000km drive from the nearest regional towns, an alcohol-free community with no doctor, only one store, a roadhouse, police station, swimming pool, and a prison. This unique place faces complex challenges including extreme poverty and high living costs, isolation, disproportionate adverse contact with the justice system and a life expectancy of 45 years old. Few people have ever graduated high school here. The average age of the population is 24 and 41% of people in Warburton are between 16 – 30 years old.

Nearly 100% of Wilurra Creative participants are Ngaanyatjarra, Pintupi or other related First Nations people. Wilurra Creative operates two studio spaces in Mirlirrjarra (Warburton Community). Our primary studio is open year-round and houses our digital design hub, its associated computer equipment and design software, a small music rehearsal space and our recording studio. Our second creative space is the Wilurra Mangka Salon, which houses our social change hairdressing salon project, and is activated as required to facilitate larger arts projects, community gatherings, fashion, photography, design and community use as needed.

Underpinning the day-to-day operations of Wilurra Creative is a community internet and IT hub offering Warburton's only public access to the internet, as well as software for word-processing, personal music library management, photo editing and printing, and all associated equipment. For most participants, Wilurra provides their only access to a computer or wifi internet. These services address a vital infrastructure need within the community and also act as a catchment for connecting with the community and engaging people with Wilurra's work. The internet hub often prompts a participant's first engagement with our programs.

## We are of our people

Wilurra is: young men fresh off the prison plane who walk straight into the recording studio to lay down a desert reggae track in Ngaanyatjarra language about their experiences; young women learning to use power tools to cut Wirras (traditional women's digging bowls) out of car bodies; social change salons that paint and sculpt hair and self-styled fashion shoots on a backdrop of ancient homelands; young people becoming community leaders furnished with appropriate skills to create local festivals, events and concerts, turning their recording studio rehearsals into music videos, and community concerts into self-made regional tours, photography and design workshops into digital artworks, prints, merchandise and publications.

Wilurra Creative has empowered this artistic expression and community development with and for Ngaanyatjarra young adults for nearly 20 years. Our work fosters culturally-responsive contemporary creative practice in communities across the Central and Western Deserts and shares the outcomes with an increasingly diverse audience across Australia.

Our success is made possible because participation is self-directed and young people have ownership of programs that reflect their culture's history, respond to their contemporary reality, and forge new visions for their future.

## **We are responding to increased opportunities**

Seven years of investment by Australia Council for the Arts has delivered a confidence in our program and connection to a national arts and culture sector. This recognition affirms the integrity of our approach and values the way we work, in a way that is not always understood by other local organisations.

**We do things differently** and this has been recognised and regarded nationally. Investment in our deeply embedded Community Arts and Cultural Development practices has led to the following:

- Increased core funding, diverse investments and new partnership income.
- Implementation of a staffing structure that reflects our values; employing more Ngaanyatjarra relationships (Malparara-way.)
- Increased administrative capacity, that led to new Ngaanyatjarra work being made, and more employment of Ngaanyatjarra artists, musicians and cultural brokers
- Development of our creative leadership strategy, that is transitioning our 16 -30 year old lead artists into paid positions within our organisation.
- Proving our worth within the region, co-creating innovative Ngaanyatjarra-driven models of remote music touring, devising new exhibitions, generating innovative publications and other ways to promote the stories of Ngaanyatjarra artists to audiences near and far.
- Recognition of our growth, development and renewed confidence with our peers, locally and nationally.

## **We are responding to these new challenges:**

- Reduction in community-controlled funding and changes to Warburton Community administration – moving to a regional service delivery model, with decisions being made from Ngaanyatjarra Council head offices in Perth and Alice Springs, rather than by and with people living on the Lands.
- Regionalisation of service delivery to the Lands, resulting in the loss of other community services and programs, including loss of community-connected Domestic Violence response services, mental health and wellbeing programs, public health, community development and quality of life services, as well as a reduction in youth services. This regionalisation has also affected availability of tradespeople to fix essential issues, such as updating Wilurarra Creative's internet service from ADSL and repairing properties following break-ins
- Community housing crisis – Wilurarra creative had our two staff houses demolished in 2020 (due to asbestos risk), this has greatly impacted our program, staff and core organisational capacity
- Housing crisis was compounded by Covid 19 pandemic impacts, including:
  - o no visiting mentors or artists,
  - o increased pressure on core staff
  - o no remote leave for staff possible with lock-downs and WA hard border closures
  - o staff burnout, due to greater demand from community and low core capacity to meet this demand

## **We are looking to the future**

Our next 20 years will not look like our first 20 years. We are in a time of change – the outside world has tilted. A new mine is being built at Mantamaru. With it, our one dirt highway will be sealed to facilitate the passage of trucks and supply to the 1000 staff that will be working 24 hours a day mining these sacred lands for the next 25 years. The encroachment of a non-Ngaanyatjarra world into our remote desert home is happening. What is the future of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands? How will the latest generations of Ngaanyatjarra people lead their communities through change and engage with a world that routinely denies Ngaanyatjarra people the basic right to self-determination?

Wilurarra Creative has always been a tool for Ngaanyatjarra young people to self-direct change in the community; we do not stand in the way of change, but rather we work with Ngaanyatjarra young people – as members of their community, kinship and culture – to have agency over change; to process and speak back to it.

On the Lands, in Western Australia and in the nation's capitals Ngaanyatjarra people are mostly still left out of decision-making conversations. Wilurarra is a resource for people to be brought into 'the conversation'; more importantly, a place for Ngaanyatjarra people to continue and start their own conversations; through creative expression that tell their own stories.

Wilurarra is located in the most remote place in Australia. But for Ngaanyatjarra people the Ngaanyatjarra Lands is the centre of the world – their Australia.

For Wilurarra Creative, the Ngaanyatjarra Lands will always be the centre of our universe too, the place that matters, where opinions and directions come straight from young people – who can work with Wilurarra to make their ideas a reality. At Wilurarra, Ngaanyatjarra people don't have to squeeze themselves into the narrow box that non-Ngaanyatjarra world pushes them into.

This is the resource we offer, so that the future leaders of this Ngaanyatjarra community can navigate the rapid change heading our way.

This strategic plan focuses on the next 5 years, as a foundation for our next 20 years, addressing the need for Wilurarra Creative to:

- Continue as the **essential service for young adults** on the Lands.
- **Resource Ngaanyatjarra voices to be heard**, and for their authority to be respected, on the Lands and all the way to the Council offices in Perth and to politicians in Parliament House
- Build a **bespoke creative precinct for Mirlirrtjarra** (Warburton) community, that can house the breadth of our programs, solutions to gaps in community service, and help Warburton Community to rebuild an arts centre for older Ngaanyatjarra artists
- **Build our own dedicated infrastructure**, including staff housing, so that the future of our organisation is assured.
- Be positioned as leaders in remote First Nations Community Arts and Cultural Development
- **Develop, demonstrate and advocate for an evolving 'best practice'** for program delivery and working in the Lands.
- Facilitate empowering essential skills in Ngaanyatjarra people, including creative digital literacy, through community-led, culturally appropriate programs that respond to place and nurture community.
- **Implement community-directed outcomes from our 2023 Wilurarra Creative Evaluation – including re-activating our Wilurarra Mangka Salon** program, **new infrastructure to expand** our programs to meet the level of demand, and **revamping our existing resources and core capacity** in order to deliver a consistent creative cultural program.
- **Address changing needs** of our staff, **including developing equity** measures to respond to increasing poverty in Ngaanyatjarra communities.
- **Develop the next generations of Ngaanyatjarra creative cultural leadership.**

*"I am a fan of the Wilurarra Creative programs and have recommended their work to many of my colleagues, not only to dissuade them from antiquated beliefs about Aboriginal cultures, but also to show them the astonishing achievements of the most deprived youth in the country. Youth are bringing their own cultural expressions to the fore and these expressions are examples of the resilience of Aboriginal culture. With just a digital video camera or a mobile phone, they are able to insert themselves into national Australian and international cultural life and give us all hope that Aboriginal culture is alive and well."*

– Professor, Marcia Langton





# STRATEGIES

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# 1. CULTURAL LEADERSHIP

## STORY

With the sealing of the Great Central Road and the new mining activity at Mantamaru (Jameson), the encroachment of non-Ngaanyatjarra people into our remote desert homelands will bring permanent change.

Isolation has always defined our region, and while living remotely comes with challenges, this remoteness has provided some protection for Ngaanyatjarra language, cultural practice and connection to land. A sealed highway significantly increases access to our communities, bringing opportunity but also risks to local culture, community life and language sovereignty.

We are living through different times on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, the older community leaders, that lived through first 'settlement' in the 1930's are dying now. Wilurarra's emerging leaders are their grandchildren, who will hold responsibility for Ngaanyatjarra lands and culture going forward.

20 years of Wilurarra has been instrumental in building leadership for the Ngaanyatjarra Lands. The new generation of community leaders that are now middle-aged, grew up through the early days of Wilurarra - such as Warburton Community's Chairperson, who is a musician and worked with us when he was younger.

Our role is to empower the younger members of the community, those young adults taking on the responsibility for cultural maintenance and development. They will also lead their communities through unprecedented times ahead. Developing this cultural leadership through Wilurarra will bring greater resources to all community contexts, for many years to come.

Wilurarra has developed protocols, cultural induction, staff training and culturally informed ways of working across the Lands. We will use this knowledge, the cultural strength of our artists, and their ideas for communicating culture, to help demonstrate, protect, exchange and respect Ngaanyatjarra culture on Ngaanyatjarra Lands and beyond.

## THE WORK WE WILL DO:

### Demonstrate leaderships through best practice CACD with Ngaanyatjarra-specific ways of working.

Our model of working is the right way for our region and has led to long-term outcomes for our community. We will share our model and advocate for Ngaanyatjarra-specific working protocols for our partners in the Lands, demonstrating how others can develop their own community-led models for their regions.

## ACTIONS:

**1.1** Maintain up-to-date induction materials and processes for our visiting creative mentors, continual improvement of our intercultural protocols, and interagency advocacy for culturally safe working protocols.

**1.2** Seek opportunities to demonstrate our excellence through sector forums and communications.

**Co-create cultural awareness training.** There is currently no Ngaanyatjarra-led cultural induction or formal language training on the Lands. Wilurarra Creative Leaders, advisors and key participants will co-create bespoke models and creative material for Ngaanyatjarra Lands cultural induction in partnership with other local organisations such as Land & Culture Ranger program.

## ACTIONS:

**1.3** Secure investment to develop Ngaanyatjarra-specific cultural awareness training packages, including creative content, resources, materials and pathways for Ngaanyatjarra employment in the delivery of the training.

**1.4** Secure \$250,000 Regional Economic Development (RED) grant to undertake this work starting in 2024.

### Prioritise creative and cultural exchange between Ngaanyatjarra and other remote First Nations artists and communities.

Creative and cultural exchange between First Nations communities empowers our young artists to step into leadership, and represent their community and culture. This type of exchange nurtures Ngaanyatjarra talent within a broader network of First Nations excellence.

## ACTIONS:

**1.5** Secure opportunities for artists and musicians to tour locally and share creative platforms with their peers in other communities.

**1.6** Build relationships with other First Nations arts and cultural organisations with a view to collaborating on workshops, residencies and exchange programs. Commencing in 2024 with Babbara Women's Centre in Mangrida, and Barkley Arts in Tennant Creek.

**Further develop our Leadership program.** We will continue to develop culturally relevant pathways to leadership for younger Ngaanyatjarra adults from paid roles as artists, musicians, arts workers, cultural advisors and hosts, to employment in delivering programs within Wilurarra. Working with Ngaanyatjarra leaders, we will identify and build capacity in younger artists to take on creative industry roles within the Wilurarra team.

## ACTIONS:

**1.7** Embed Creative Cultural leadership program into core service delivery by securing an additional \$40,000 per year to employ Wilurarra Creative Leaders. To be covered through RASI funding and/or earned income from CDP participant hosting.

### Co-create opportunities that drive change in the region:

There is strong demand for Wilurarra's services across our region. Through empowering our young artists to lead programs and deliver events, they share their skills with peers in other communities. This process is building a movement of arts programs led by younger members of communities. We will prioritise and resource these engagements across the Lands.

## ACTIONS:

**1.8** Using our touring equipment, leveraged from OzMinerals in 2021, deliver a bi-annual music tour in our region.

**1.9** Maintain the concert touring equipment by leveraging West Musgrave Mine's social investment fund.

**1.10** Co-create bespoke protocols for the use of our touring equipment to deliver community concerts and upskill key musicians to deliver live music event programming across the Nganyatjarra Land.

**1.11** Continue to engage with other arts centres through Western Desert Mob network.

## 2. STRONG PEOPLE & PLACES

### STORY

Wilurarra has always achieved a lot with very little. Our studio facilities were not purpose built and our equipment has been sourced through a series of ad hoc grants and sponsorships. In 2020 we lost our two x 3 bedroom houses (that were provided by Warburton Community for our staff and visiting artist accommodation) - which were demolished due to asbestos risk. While Warburton Community supports us with cash contribution for core program delivery costs, the high cost of building infrastructure in Warburton makes replacing capital infrastructure unachievable without grant funding.

Meanwhile, community demand has outstripped our existing aging facilities, with competing projects sometimes jostling for space. For example, without a dedicated music practise room, we often need to close down other activities for a band to rehearse, or they end up rehearsing outdoors on the sand. We have undertaken community consultation to develop a design concept for a new creative precinct with an architect who has volunteered his services. Warburton currently has no community hall or public meeting places and no visual arts centre. We need fit for purposes cultural infrastructure as a foundation for our programs to flourish.

Likewise, we need to continue to be an agile and responsive program with the right staffing model for Ngaanyatjarra culture and for our remote location. This means increasing the number of Ngaanyatjarra staff working with us, and looking at models for greater sustainability in on-the-ground and administrative staffing.

### THE WORK WE WILL DO:

#### **Build a bespoke creative precinct for Mirlirtjarra** (Warburton), **including dedicated staff housing,**

The Creative precinct includes new Wilurarra facilities, (music practice rooms, project space, storage, creative digital literacy facilities, admin office) alongside community meeting space, and a visual arts program for older artists in the community. The Creative Precinct will include co-located housing for staff and creative mentors. The precinct will host the breadth of our programs and provide a new multi-purpose community facility. We will use these facilities to increase creative programming and re-activate a visual arts program for older Ngaanyatjarra artists. The creative precinct will deliver permanent creative infrastructure that will serve our community for generations.

### ACTIONS:

- 2.1** develop the precinct within Wilurarra's successful CACD frameworks and protocols.
- 2.2** Develop a new shared staffing structure for our creative precinct, that embeds Malparara-way of working and provides pathways for Wilurarra alumni to be employed as artswokers across creative programs.

**2.3** Co-locate of creative precinct staff housing to deliver increased sustainability for staff and programs.

**2.4** Work with Goldfield-Esperance Development Commission, Lotterywest and Growing Regions Program to secure funding (approx \$8million) and investment to deliver the Creative Precinct for Mirlirtjarra.

**Trial new models for delivering every-day studio operations,** such as engaging 4 studio managers that all work on 3-month rotations across the year, as an example.

### ACTIONS:

- 2.5** Develop an operational manual that allows for administrative efficiency and shared work standards.
- 2.6** Secure investment/partnerships to research remote staffing solutions and innovate a bespoke model for Wilurarra in 2024, then trial new models to deliver increased core programming capacity by 2027.
- 2.7** Continue to resource employment of Ngaanyatjarra staff through core funding and Warburton community cash investment.

### Increase core program capacity

- 2.8** Grow the pool of creative mentors across a broad range of arts and cultural practice areas.
- 2.9** Increase our local Ngaanyatjarra staff and continue to budget for Malpa workers in every new source of investment.
- 2.10** By 2026, Develop a 'talent register' of visiting and local creative mentors, including their skill areas and previous projects delivered with Wilurarra.

**Prioritise staff development,** in order to maintain high quality of program and induct new people into our frameworks

### ACTIONS:

- 2.11** By 2025, implement staff equity measures that respond to already high costs of remote living and increased poverty of Ngaanyatjarra Lands communities; this could include addressing non-Ngaanyatjarra and Ngaanyatjarra staff inequity through an allowance for power cards and basic provisions to support Ngaanyatjarra staff to attend work.
- 2.12** Advocate for Ngaanyatjarra Council to develop a Ngaanyatjarra employment strategy, including translating local knowledge and expertise into non-Ngaanyatjarra systems of valuing work.
- 2.13** Co-create professional development opportunities, with respect for non-standard ideas of what professional development might look like in a remote location, and for Ngaanyatjarra staff development.
- 2.14** By 2024, strengthen Ngaanyatjarra leadership and authority by investing in monthly team bush trips.
- 2.15** Invest in remote professional-supervision (employee assistance program all year round) for non-Ngaanyatjarra staff. Due to the complex nature of working in remote contexts professional supervision is used to mitigate risk of staff burnout and strengthen CACD practice.



### 3. CONTEMPORARY CREATIVE PRACTICE

#### STORY

Our unique strength is facilitating Ngaanyatjarra artists to explore contemporary expressions of culture through digital mediums, fashion, performance and music. We will continue to create opportunities for young adults to engage in daily creative participation and experimentation, as well as broader artform development, which gives rise to quality arts and creative products to share with a range of audiences locally and further afield. This work is a continuation of our core function, working to meet the artistic needs of Ngaanyatjarra community members. We focus on diverse participation opportunities and building a program of everyday activities in our studios.

#### THE WORK WE WILL DO:

- 3.1** Deliver our open studio programs 48 weeks of the year, with appropriate resources and staffing.
- 3.2** Offer a broad and inclusive range of programs that respond to community interests and a diversity of arts practices – so that everybody can find their place, and use creativity to build the lives they want.
- 3.3** Improve engagement with the 16-20 year old age group through targeted creative skills building workshops and new pathways into Wilurarra for those that are currently disengaged.
- 3.4** By June 2024, develop and deliver a pilot program of Ngaanyatjarra creative/cultural workshop delivery, intergenerational exchange, and employment of older artists / Elders. This pilot program will be resourced through existing Regional Arts Sector investment funding.
- 3.5** Secure investment from Tourism WA to develop new authentic Ngaanyatjarra contemporary arts products for sale through roadhouses and Tjulyuru Gallery.
- 3.6** Work with Ngaanyatjarra council to develop policy around stocking of ethical Ngaanyatjarra arts/craft products in all their community-owned outlets.
- 3.7** By 2025, secure Deductible Gift Registration (DGR) status for Warburton Community, so that Wilurarra can fundraise and attract new philanthropic sources of income.
- 3.8** Develop a fundraising campaign, and secure \$20,000 through donations/philanthropic investment to go towards a Ngaanyatjarra self-determined creative project by 2026.
- 3.9** Leverage funding from Oz Minerals social investment fund for Wilurarra-led music development across the Ngaanyatjarra Lands by 2025.

**3.10** Deliver the next Alanya publication, profiling storytelling, graphic design and the creative developments of Wilurarra artists. This is an important project ensuring mass participation, the second edition had over 170 community members contribute to the book. It has become a significant cultural work across the Lands and it is time for the third edition.

**3.11** Work with other local organisations to do a creative revamp of our aging facilities and grounds – including new metal work sculptures, murals and outdoors creative workshop space.

**3.12** Explore temporary options to address the lack of creative spaces by fitting-out disused community spaces, until permanent infrastructure is secured.

**3.13** Create more opportunities for exhibiting our artists' contemporary visual arts work, including local exhibitions at Wilurarra Mangka Salon, and Tjulyuru gallery. Develop new exhibitions with other Ngaanyatjarra arts centres, ArtGold, WA Museum Goldfields, Cannery Arts Esperance and beyond.

**3.14** Advocate for adequate project funding and performance fees to facilitate industry standard payments to our artists.

**3.15** Maintain membership of Indigenous Art Code, AACHWA and Desart.







*" Wilurarra Creative it's been a good space for long time, this here has been a big part of our community and other communities as well, like not just musically we also put things out there for funerals, music and all sorts of other activities that we bring together, NAIDOC and other things."*

**Brett Jennings**

*"Basically Wilurarra Creative kicked off the whole entire youth fashion movement in many ways through all the Central Desert and parts of the north. Everybody is copying them, everybody is doing fashion shows in those regions now."*

**Starlady, Wilurarra Creative Mentor  
2009 – 2016**



*"Best thing is sharing, not like all these others, but here they got something to say. Like with the guitar, telling a story. Singing about ngurra and all that. Tjamu kaparluku ngurra."*

**Clint West**





# Our Purpose and Priorities



Wilurarra Creative exists to deliver meaningful, creative, community-connected, and participant-driven programs and places for young adults on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands that achieve:

- quality of life outcomes for participants, increased social inclusion, active citizenship and improved self-esteem
- self-determination, self-directed learning, and leadership qualities
- cultural pride and positive expressions of contemporary Ngaanyatjarra culture
- opportunities for young people to explore and build personal and collective identity
- pathways towards remote orientated employment skills and the opportunity to build networks
- an experience of other contemporary cultures outside of the remote Ngaanyatjarra region, through cross-cultural exchange with artists and creative practices
- reduced instances of high-risk behaviour and adverse contact with the justice system, including incarceration

We do this through engagement with the arts and creative practices, in programs that often give rise to significant new work and unique artistic outcomes. Our priorities for arts and cultural programs are:

- providing access to high quality resources and equipment for arts practice and production
- generating opportunities for practice-specific training and skills development in language and on country
- continuing and evolving long-term relationships with professional arts practitioners, mentors, cultural advisors, and peers
- increasing opportunities to create new work and build the profile of Ngaanyatjarra young artists
- sharing and celebrating the work of Ngaanyatjarra young adults with local community and reaching new audiences outside of Ngaanyatjarra communities
- forging pathways towards cultural leadership, professional arts careers and creative enterprise
- supporting cultural wellbeing and identity building through creativity
- employing local people in meaningful creative cultural work and relevant employment pathways for our remote context

*“This program is all about community control. It is not conditional in a way that welfare reform is conditional. It has strong messages about acceptance and equity, which is hugely important. The accessibility of programs has evaporated, and these communities are becoming increasingly impoverished. Programs like this have been one of the avenues the community has had to claim back its identity, its control and set the agenda for how they see themselves going forward. This program is one where young people are very free to test the ideas of who they are in a contemporary world.”*

**- John Damian McLean (Community Services Manager Warburton Community Inc, President Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku) talking about Wilurarra Creative in 2019**

# Protocols - They way we work

In Mirlirrtjarra (Warburton), Wilurarra is the conduit through which engagement with wider contemporary Australian culture takes place. Warburton is a private Aboriginal community, and through Wilurarra, walypala professional arts workers exchange experience and knowledge with Ngaanyatjarra young people and cultural workers.

We are dedicated to a community arts and cultural development process that is appropriate and respectful to the culture of Ngaanyatjarra people living in their remote Lands. We operate with a guiding set of evolving protocols, co-created with Ngaanyatjarra cultural workers and young people. These protocols underpin the ways in which we engage with the community and host visiting artists within Warburton. The protocols include:

- **Working Malparara\* Way** – a Ngaanyatjarra system for long-term cross-cultural working relationships between Ngaanyatjarra workers and non-indigenous colleagues, underpinned by the understanding that knowledge exchange goes both ways. Everybody has things to learn and everybody has things to teach.
- **Slow Way** – longer-term investment in projects and programs that allow for genuine relationship building and organic idea evolution.
- **Right Way** – process driven projects which value quality of engagement over quantity of participants or outcomes.
- **Ownership** – participant driven activities in which young artists are responsible for creative directions, decisions and for delivering the activities.
- **Appropriate literacy**, responsive communications and peer learning environments.
- **Flexibility** in workshop and service delivery that allows for participants to prioritise cultural business, sorry business and family concerns.
- Thorough **cultural induction and hosting** for visiting artists - through Wilurarra creative's Ngaanyatjarra-specific induction manuals and ongoing, on-the-ground mentorship.
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- **Strengths-based approaches**, valuing unique and different styles of working. Particularly valuing the unique and specific skills, experiences, and expertise of Ngaanyatjarra staff and participants
- Investing in **key relationships** that ensure broad-reaching and inter-generational support of the program, projects and artists. For example, building relationships of reciprocity with the families of key participants and other community leaders, assisting with internet use, downloading songs, managing family photographs, printing funeral booklets or creating memorial videos. All these things help people to fulfil their cultural obligations to family and community and demonstrate the value of Wilurarra Creative to the participants' families.
- We back ourselves; we are on-the-ground and value our own locally-specific ways of doing things, above directives that comes from outside our own context. We know from 20 years' experience, that these always-evolving co-designed protocols are right-way for our

*"Hard. Because no recording studio [at Wanarn Community]...That's why we go to Wilurarra. Go there muck around, play guitar. It's good in Warburton, Wilurarra, that's why we go there ... Important to have that because all the band member they can go there. Wilurarra. To that recording studio ... We always contact Wilurarra, try and get help from them, sometimes talk to BJ, talk to him, language Ngaanyatjarra ... they support us, and we help Wilurarra mob do this and that."*

**Moonlight Reggae Band: Isaac Bates Jnr, Alistair Reid, and Milton Reid 25 April 2023)**

# Our Programs

## PARTICIPATION

Participation by Ngaanyatjarra young adults, aged 16-30, is at the core of Wilurarra Creative. Participation happens in three ways:

**1. Self-directed.** Ongoing, everyday access to arts, technology and equipment provides for practice, learning and experimentation in music, digital design, handcrafts, metalwork, fashion, beauty and styling.

**2. Project-driven.** Participants identify projects or skills-building workshops of interest and work with core staff to make them happen. These are usually at least 3 weeks and involve cross-cultural exchange with a (non-Ngaanyatjarra) creative mentor staying in Warburton, such as music recording and mixing, video making, photography and design projects.

**3. Community-supported.** As is right for the community, Wilurarra is inclusive and intergenerational. Young adults share their skills and knowledge in the studios with other members of the community. This often involves two-way learning.

## PRESENTATION

We present and distribute the creative work of Ngaanyatjarra young adults to local, regional and national audiences. We do this through:

- **Local** concerts, exhibitions, Wilurarra Fashion performances and distribution of Ngaanyatjarra language music (made in our recording studio) through the internet cafe.
- **Tours** to remote, regional and metropolitan centres for concerts, exhibitions, workshops and conferences, including large scale events such as Bush Bands Bash and Revealed: WA New & Emerging Aboriginal Arts Festival.
- Inclusion in **national exhibitions** such as Tarnanthi Festival, Regional Arts Australia Summits, Desert Mob and Arts Health Alliance Conference.
- **Online distribution** of music (Spotify, iTunes), video works, publications, artwork and merchandise.

## LANGUAGE, CULTURE, CREATIVE PRACTICE

We resource Ngaanyatjarra young adults to explore and express personal and collective identity, capturing the songs, stories, styles, language, artwork and aesthetics of contemporary Ngaanyatjarra culture. Wilurarra Creative's core principle of empowering Ngaanyatjarra language and cultural strength is expressed through everything we do.

Working in both Ngaanyatjarra and English, as directed by participants, we cover a broad range of arts practices, responsive to participants' interests and talents. Arts practice and creative skills underpin cultural maintenance and expression. In turn, this living culture is the bedrock of artistic excellence.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE

In line with Ngaanyatjarra community values, we take an inclusive, intergenerational approach to community development projects and services for the community. All ages of yarnangu can access Wilurarra, but it remains focused on and led by 16-30 year olds.

Salon programs include public health partnerships for social and emotional wellbeing, sexual health education, and provision of wingka (headlice) treatments.

The internet café and IT hub offers the only public internet access and digital archive in Warburton, as well as assistance with word-processing, managing photo libraries and making funeral and memorial booklets.

Our community-access digital archive contains family photos, Wilurarra project work and music archives collected since 2004.

## CAPACITY BUILDING AND LEADERSHIP

We work with community leaders to create long-term and culturally relevant opportunities to further creative goals. There is no tertiary education or training on Ngaanyatjarra lands. Wilurarra builds capacity in young adults by putting them in charge of:



- Equipment and peer training to facilitate and deliver community events.
- Local concerts and events, such as NAIDOC week, sports festivals and events responsive to lots of people being in town for Men's business ceremonies.
- Murals, public art and maintaining and developing community facilities and creative spaces
- Wilurarra Mangka Salon operations and creative projects
- Designing and making merchandise, branded clothing, sports uniforms, and local band merchandise.
- Designing community health and cultural awareness campaigns, including videos, songs and graphics.

### ENTERPRISE AND PATHWAYS

- We take a long-term approach to developing professional practice and locally-relevant skills in participants. We build enterprise opportunities and develop the pathways participants seek to fulfill leadership roles in the community.
- This is an area that is in constant development and is more of an outcome of the way we work, rather than a goal.
- In our remote community context with very few jobs, employment pathways take on a different meaning, and engaging in enterprise is more about personal achievement, contributing to community and sharing culture, than it is about commercial interests and generating income for the program.

## Program Cycle

This program cycle shows the ways Wilurarra participation and engagement generates our programs ongoing evolution and growth, with Ngaanyatjarra investment and direction as the driving force.

### WILURARRA CREATIVE STUDIOS

- Year-based studio access with between 10 - 20 projects
- Community Hub: self-directed learning, creative process, arts equipment and facilities
- Service Provider: internet access, IT equipment and software, library development, digital archives

INCUBATOR: springboard for creative projects, ideas development, creative networks and distribution of work

### EVOLUTION

- Feedback, evaluations, opportunities, inspiration, new projects and growth
- Program development, arts development, audience development
- Community Support, Community Input, Community Archive
- Culture building, cross-cultural exchange, community vitality, self-determination
- Evolving expressions of Ngaanyatjarra culture mentored by young adults

### WORKSHOPS AND PROJECTS

- Skills development:
  - music/composing, recording and sound engineering
  - metal work, sculpture, crafts, public works
  - digital arts, photography, design, video making and editing
  - performance, styling, hair salon and fashion projects
  - event management, stage management, technical training
- New Work development
  - Written, visual and technological literacy
  - Community Cultural Development, Cultural Maintenance

### COMMUNITY BUILDING

- Performance, presentations, publications and events
- Young adults sharing artworks, ideas and culture with community
- A positive, engaged role for young adults in the community
- Local community art work, involvement and engagement with the art events and events
- Public Art for the betterment of the community
- Touring, distribution, online access to reach broader audiences and other communities

# Operational Structure; Our People

Wilurarra Creative is a program of Warburton Community Inc, an incorporated, private Aboriginal Community. Like any department within an incorporated association, Wilurarra has its own budgets and internal management structure, but is ultimately included in wider Warburton Community Inc operations, finances and governance.

## **Warburton Community Board**

Wilurarra Creative is governed by the all-Ngaanyatjarra Warburton Community Board of Directors and our finances are included and audited as part of the wider Community's.

## **Warburton Community Management**

Wilurarra Creative reports directly to the Community Development Advisor (CDA) of Warburton Community inc, Steve Austin. As a program of Warburton Community, we receive financial administration support, HR and Payroll from Ngaanyatjarra Council Aboriginal Corporation.

## **Wilurarra Advisory Committee**

Wilurarra has co-created our own method of sourcing and integrating culturally relevant consultations and strategic directions from key Ngaanyatjarra advisors, lead artists and community development workers, who act as an 'arts board' to Wilurarra Creative. These people are supported, 'put forward' by, and recognised within the community as intrinsic to our program. This means, that people within the community recognise them as leaders at Wilurarra, and will approach them with ideas, concerns, projects and feedback.

This includes the following three groups of current peer leaders and other long-term advisors/ contributors to the direction and community cultural development of Wilurarra and the arts and culture it supports:

**1. Wilurarra Leaders, Advisors and key participants:** Grenville Westlake, Jossiah Porter, Junior Isaac Bates, Devon Westlake, Trenton Giles, Morris Giles, Kyndan Porter, Nathaniel Nelson, Travis West, Anthony Watson, Delwyn Lane, Charlene Frazer, Desiree Scott, Anthony Porter, Sheldon Porter, Janika Hunt, Angelica McLean, Elijah Jackson, Truhan Jennings, Bevan Hunt, Tristen Jennings, Kieren Lawson, Shentalia Munroe, Dixon Bell, Milton Reid, Travis Lane, Seema West, Adrian (Urra) Smith, Latrell Smith, Joshua (Momo) Frazer, Raymond Carnegie.

**2. Wilurarra 'Alumni':** Jasmine (Tjawina) Lawson, Carl Smith, Nathan Smith, Sherodie Robinson, Gino Ward, Kingsley Porter, Casey Jones, Lee Ward, Clarabell Ward, Joanne West, Neil Frazer, Shirly Frazer, Timmo Ward, Jade Giles, Stephen Giles, Madelaine Jackson, Debra West, Celestine West, Roseanne Porter, Darcy Woods, Loraine West, Rosanne Porter and Leroy Yates.

**3. Key Elders:** Julie Porter, Andrew Jones, Ronald Hunt, Ivan Frazer, Betty West, Christine West, Rowan Scott, Elizabeth Holland, Derek (Junior Harris), Nancy (Tjungulpi) Carnegie, Paul Carnegie, Isaac Bates Senior, Alywn Bates, Michael Rixon. Keith Richards.

## **Wilurarra Creative Directors (Co-Directors)**

Wilurarra Creative has two Directors, whose wages are covered through Warburton Community earned income. The Co-Directors work Malparara-way, one Ngaanyatjarra and one non-Ngaanyatjarra, one full time and one part time. These are:

**Brett (BJ) Jennings** (2011 - present) is a Ngaanyatjarra / Pintupi man, lead artist, mentor, arts worker, inter-cultural advisor and translator. He advises on program development, cultural safety, and is a musician, welder, metalwork sculptor and purnu (wooden 'artefact') maker. He provides high level induction to all Wilurarra walypala staff, cultural induction to male visiting artists and leads engagement of young adults in projects and programs.

**Silvano Giordano** (2011-present) produces creative workshops and programs, with responsibility for management and administration. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts and Certificate III in Graphic Arts (Print Machinist). As well as extensive experience in cross-cultural project delivery with Ngaanyatjarra communities, Silvano has nine years' experience in sound engineering and fifteen years involvement in the graphic design, publishing and printing industry.

### **Project Mentors**

Delvina Lawson and Anne-Marie Vashti Lane, are part-time Ngaanyatjarra Project Mentors/ CACD workers who act as program and project advisors, community liaison and key operational staff in the delivery of Wilurarra projects. They are instrumental in developing community relationships, participant referrals and inductions to arts projects with female participants and visiting artists.

### **Studio Manager 2020 – present**

Deborah Grant has lived and worked in Warburton Community since 2012. She is a long-term supporter and previous volunteer for Wilurarra Creative. Deborah's strong community relationships, knowledge and community development framework has been instrumental in the development of our Wilurarra Creative Leaders program and in the core operations of Wilurarra's two studio spaces.

### **Current Wilurarra Creative Leaders**

Funded through Regional Arts Sector Investment funding from Regional Arts WA 2021-present, employment of 16-30 year old Ngaanyatjarra young adults is the cornerstone of our cultural and creative leadership program.

### **Phillipa Butler 2021-present**

Phillipa is a young Ngaanyatjarra women who has grown up with Wilurarra Creative. Phillipa's engagement with our artistic projects since she was a Kungkawarra (teenager), led to her employment as the first Wilurarra Creative Leader. Phillipa leads our young women's program as an artist, facilitator, teacher, cultural broker and peer mentor.

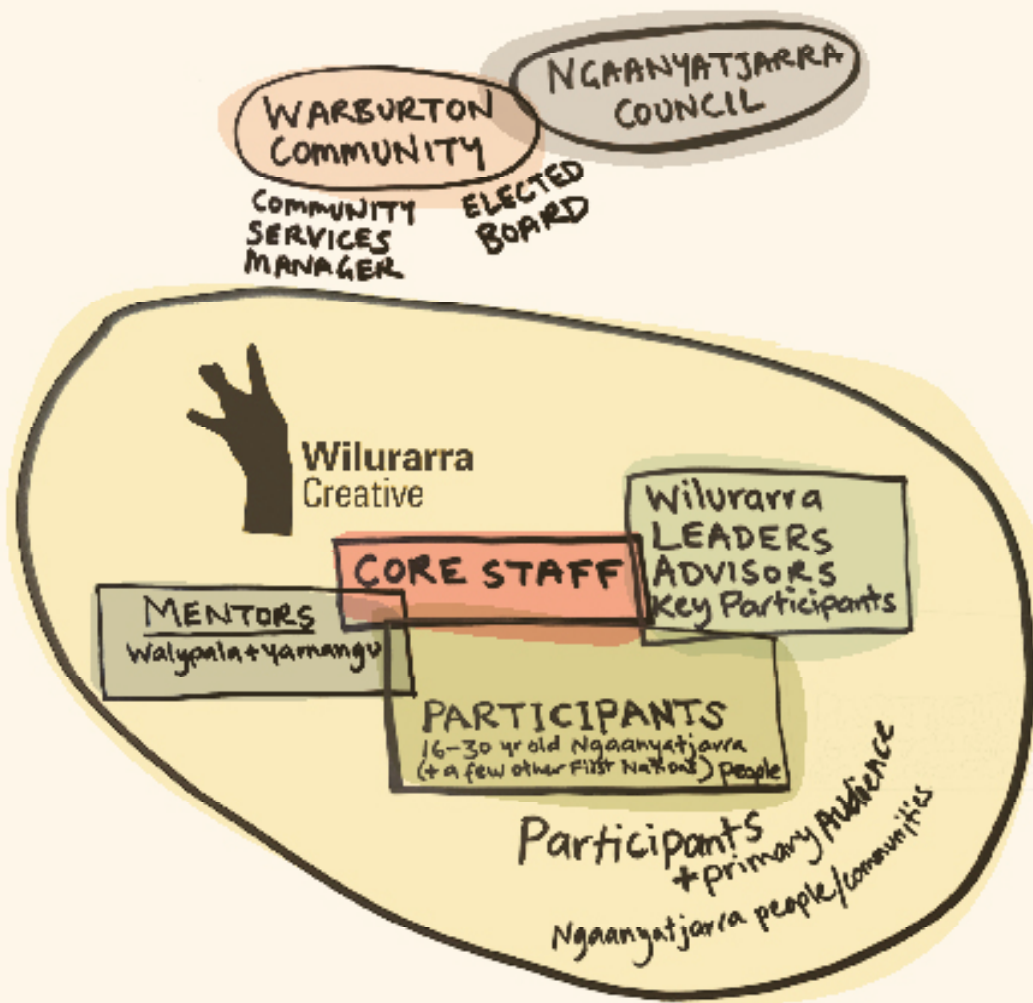
### **Grenville Westlake 2022 – present**

Grenville is the leader of Red Sand Beat Band, a talented multi-instrumentalist and key driver of our music program. He is a generous teacher, who mentors other yangupala (young men) in music recording, practice, sound tech and delivery of community concerts. As part of the current revamp of the Wilurarra program and facilities, he is working on securing a temporary practice space (so musicians are not practicing in the dirt outside our Studio building) and advocating to rebuild our community concert stage.

### **Visiting Creative Mentor/Artists**

Wilurarra Creative has developed a number of important, long-term relationships with key professional arts workers who come to the Ngaanyatjarra Lands to co-facilitate our arts projects, mentor and train participants. These Mentors are engaged on a project-to-project basis and their fees are met by individual project budgets and grants funding. In order to achieve optimum results, workshops run for a minimum of 3 weeks. We prioritise building a core group of high calibre artists that are culturally inducted, can commit to returning, will build local relationships, and can deliver tailored professional development programs specific to Wilurarra's remote context.

This diagram illustrates the way our people and participants work together at Wilurarra Creative.



## Key Stakeholders and Partners

### Ngaanyatjarra young adults

The program is designed by and for this demographic.

### Ngaanyatjarra Community including community Leaders and Elders

Wilurarra Creative could not exist without community support. Wilurarra has internal protocols and appropriate consultation processes to ensure that it continues to enjoy broad-based community support – including inclusive, intergenerational participation in our programs and service, and cultural approval processes for all our work.

### Federal Government

- Australia Council for the Arts: Four Year Organisational Funding; \$500,000, 2017-2020 and \$740,000 2021 – 2024. The security of multi-year funding has enabled us to grow partnerships and leverage diverse sources of income and investment.
- Contemporary Music Touring Fund 2022 - \$49,835.



### Western Australian Government

**2021 - 23** - Lotterywest: \$140,392 to purchase new remote-capable vehicle for Wilurarra; and funding of Wilurarra Creative Evaluation led by Dr Inge Kral

**2017-19** - Goldfields Esperance Development Commission and Royalties for Regions: \$266,000 for 'Wilurarra Social Enterprise Salon Project'

**2019** - State Library of WA + Minderoo Foundation: \$10,000 Creative Fellowship for 'From Another View'.

### Regional Arts WA (formerly Country Arts WA)

- Provides regular project and multi-year funding, and partnership in the presentation of the annual Sand Tracks (remote Indigenous music tour) 2009 - 2019. Regional Arts WA regularly seeks advise, information and support from Wilurarra Creative to help connect with and stay relevant to the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.
- 2021- present - Wilurarra Creative received \$143,500 (over 3 years) for Regional Arts Sector Investment (RASI) funding; and
- 2016-2019 received \$130,500 (over 3 years) for 'Alanya Projects' - Scheme four, Regional Arts Legacy Grant (RALG) funding.

### Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku


- Wilurarra supports the Youth Team by provision of services and facilities – such as rent-free hire of the Wilurarra Mangka Salon to support weekly Kungka (Girls) Nights.
- For over a decade, the Shire provided casual wages for two Ngaanyatjarra CACD workers - Delvina Lawson and Vashti Lane - to work at Wilurarra Creative. Due to budget shortfalls, this arrangement ended in 2019.
- With the demolishing of Wilurarra Creative's staff accommodation in 2020, the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku have committed to provide Wilurarra Creative one rent-free staff house 2023- 2028.

### OzMinerals/West Musgrave Mining project

- 2021 Leveraged set of touring instruments to support Wilurarra to deliver community concerts in other Ngaanyatjarra Lands communities \$35,000 and deliver concert for their community consultation meeting.
- Wilurarra engaged to deliver Cultural Awareness Training video project about contemporary Ngaanyatjarra life for mine staff.







*"If Wilurarra had a community hall be good. Studio too small, too noisy. They've grown out of that little tin box there. I just hope that the funders come to help these young people out... We need a bigger place here and to be financially stable for Wilurarra and the people following, coming after these young people. We need to be looking after them too."*

Derek Harris Junior – previous Chairperson of Ngaanyatjarra Council 2013-2022

*"All quality of life programs have disappeared from Aboriginal Affairs. Process for helping people make better decisions dismissed. Youth Arts one survivor. Last standing quality of life program. Particularly for target group where people are worried about youth suicide, self-harm etc."*

(Damian McLean- 5 August 2022, interview with Dr. Inge Kral)

*"Good now it has turned into a studio. All the changes, so the kids coming around, they learn more. Learning anything, like motivation. Like how they get strong and all that. Important for all of Warburton. It's proud of it. Like they see everything changes but it's still here. Important for the next generation, because keep it going."*

Clint West

Credit + Quote



[wilurarra.com](http://wilurarra.com)  
[alanya.com.au](http://alanya.com.au)

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