

It is important that I begin this report by acknowledging the passing of one of our dear Directors, Miss Gurruwiwi. Her passion, vision and contribution will be greatly missed by the ARDS Board and all the team. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family at this time.

I would also like to thank Chris Marshall, the previous CEO, for the time he took to hand over his responsibility and the generosity that he showed throughout the process.

At the time of my commencement in August 2015, ARDS was in the process of responding to change on a number of fronts, including:

- Government policy and approach to Indigenous funding
- Significant number of new staff
- New office accommodation unfinished with construction taking place
- Another change in senior management
- Yolngu Radio operating increasingly autonomously of ARDS
- New arrangements in financial services
- Stakeholders unclear about who ARDS is and what we really do.

There was a real sense of change fatigue within the team. We have worked together to draw on the strength of ARDS' past to help build strong foundations for our future development.

With the assistance and guidance from our Board of Directors, we have been able to firstly consolidate and now build in a number of areas – resulting in ARDS Aboriginal Corporation being in a very different position today.

### **Presenting a new face to the world**

In recognition of the need to reposition ourselves in the changing environment of Indigenous funding, we have undertaken a number of organisational change projects including:

- Designing a new logo
- Constructing a new website

- New, contemporary look for the office
- Redefining who we are and what we do
- Commencing a process of strategic planning

Our new brand is **ARDS Aboriginal Corporation, *Creative Media and Communication Specialists***.

I have received very positive feedback from key stakeholders in response to our changes and they have all expressed that it is good to have a clearer way to describe what ARDS does.

It is important that we continue to grow our strategic relationships with government and other key stakeholders and be willing to take up opportunities as they arise.

Equally, it is important that we maintain ongoing links with the Aboriginal people of Arnhem Land and beyond, wherever possible. I have commenced a schedule to visit communities where ARDS is currently providing service and also to communities where ARDS would like to respond to expressed need.

While our funding levels are still far from certain or sustainable, I feel confident that we are making the most of our potential and building a good reputation for delivering our work on time and at a high standard.

The year ahead will focus on:

- Exploring a wide range of opportunities for funding
- Expanding to work outside of north east Arnhem Land
- Developing social enterprises to increase the long-term viability of the organisation
- Responding to the needs as identified by the Board

## **Overview of Activities**

### *Language*

Hannah Harper has commenced as our new Linguist, as Howard Amery has moved into new endeavours. Howard has made an immeasurable contribution to ARDS and we are grateful that he has agreed to work on a reduced basis to ensure a smooth transition and continuity of the ARDS language team.

ARDS currently receives no funding for our linguist and Hannah has been required to allocate much of her time to the preparation of funding submissions.

Work currently involves:

- Small translation contracts: Gove Hospital, PowerWater, films
- Funding applications for more language work: Gurraṅṅay, Economics, Health/Legal Resources
- Staff development: language, Plain English, translation processes
- Networking with stakeholders to promote ARDS resources and language work

*Cross-Cultural Services - engaging with the community*

#### **Galiwin'ku Community Statement on Family Violence.**

- ARDS cross-cultural facilitators have conducted four separate trips to Galiwin'ku to conduct women's and men's meetings, as well as separate meetings with key senior and emerging leaders from 15 clan groups.
- These meetings covered the complexity of family violence, discussed causes and proposed solutions from a Yolṅu perspective.
- The final statement will be delivered in June.

#### **Family Violence and Prevention Community Education.**

- ARDS cross-cultural facilitators are using the Yolṅu cycle of seasons/cycle of violence radio play and poster resources to stimulate discussion about healthy relationships, anger management, Yolṅu Rom and Balanda law.
- Week-long trips are being conducted to Miliṅinbi, Ramangiṅiṅ (and this week to Galiwin'ku). Later in the year, we will also travel to Gapuwiyak and Yirrkala .
- Community and other stakeholder feedback has been very positive from both trips so far, and we will look to expanding this project to allow for additional visits to communities .

#### **Low Income Energy Efficiency Project.**

- ARDS has continued to be contracted by Power&Water to provide culturally appropriate support for the project, including reviewing the final report and proposing a culturally competent process for disseminating the information to their clients.
- ARDS has previously been very heavily involved in in-depth training, in Yolṅu Matha, for the Yolṅu workers.
- The final part of this project is to prepare and deliver an end-of-project community event in Gapuwiyak in late June.

### **Bothways Mental Health Education Resource**

- ARDS is currently collaborating with the Nalkanbuy mental health team from Galiwin'ku in the development of a video resource that explores both-ways approaches to mental health care within Indigenous communities.
- This ground-breaking project is being supported by the Commonwealth Partners In Recovery initiative and will receive a national release in late 2016.

### **Smoke-Free Spaces**

- ARDS cross-cultural facilitators are working closely with researchers from James Cook University to develop a pilot Smoke-Free Spaces community health initiative to reduce Environmental Tobacco Smoke within Aboriginal communities.

### **Men's and Women's Health**

- ARDS has been working on this project for a number of years and is now developing a DVD educational resource, one for young men and one for young women that will explore
  - Germ theory
  - Infectious diseases to avoid
  - How to maintain a healthy life
- The knowledge of how to develop this DVD has been gained through a large number of face-to-face sessions conducted with Yolŋu men and women over a number of years.

### *Creative Media*

#### **Bulunu Milkarri**

- Premiering on NITV on June 26, 8:30pm
- Being used in a theology class at Nungalingya College as course content to discuss the intersection of Yolŋu traditional and Christian beliefs, particularly looking at funeral processes.
- Has been receiving many screen licence bookings for NAIDOC week this year, as the theme is 'Songlines'.

#### **NITV short film projects**

- "Mission Days" – 15-minute short film telling the funny stories of the early mission days

- “*Maccassan Traders*” – 15-minute short film telling the funny stories from the Macassan’s trade with Yolŋu .
- “*Yirriytja Rain*” – 5-minute short film of Andrew Galitju telling a story and singing manikay about Yirritja rain (Baltha cloud formation)
- “*Djurrpun*” – 5-minute short film telling some of the story of the ‘evening star’.

### **Special Project**

- Book of Mark Dedication in Dhaliynbuy (Wanguri book) launch

### **Multi Media Archive Project**

- Archive Project to protect against loss of valuable material and to facilitate sharing material back to the communities

### *Yolŋu Radio*

### **Highlights**

- Yolŋu Radio team has been growing, with a number of new presenters on air
- Keisha Gurruwiwi and Roberta Dhurrkay have really excelled in their editing skills, they are now recording, editing, mastering and scheduling their own stories.
- Key events include:
  - coverage of Yirrkala Year 12 graduation
  - Gungka ga Mitiji (Pandanas collecting, colouring and weaving story) from Dhalinbuy
  - interview with Economist James Kirby about the economic forces shaping Arnhem Land in the next 10 years
  - Recorded over 70 tracks of Rirratjingu/Djapu/Galpu Manikay at the Bapurru at Gunyangara recently
  - Rririkay Mala won the contract again to provide sound for Garma and other community festivals
- Yolŋu Radio Darwin station is moving to FM:
  - Moving to broadcast to FM will increase the quality of sound for listeners

- Installation of the new FM transmitter has been completed at Darwin's main broadcast location – Deloraine Road. The test transmission will be underway in coming weeks.

### **Audience Survey**

To ensure that we have a process of continual improvement, Yolŋu Radio is actively seeking feedback from its audience.

- An audience survey is underway, with almost 100 Yolŋu people Darwin, Nhulunbuy, Yirrkala, Galiwinku, Ramingining and some homelands already interviewed.
- The good news is that out of the surveys completed so far, only 1 person doesn't listen to Yolŋu Radio.
- Interesting listener trends and preferences are emerging, which will help guide the team in ensuring we strive to meet the needs of our audience through the ongoing provision of a language-based community development radio service.

### *Recording studios*

- Galpu Yothu Yindi Gospel Album by Barra West Wind in final stages of production.
- Have begun making preparations for another Gospel Album sung by a ladies' choir from Yirrkala and Birritjimi, led by Mayalil Marika.
- Darwin Studio will soon be fitted out with professional music production equipment to provide professional music services in Darwin, which is more accessible than Nhulunbuy for many people.
- The Nhulunbuy studios will soon undergo major upgrades to broadcasting equipment with a professional broadcasting console going in the main on-air studio as well as one in the second studio, which will be used for training, production and live broadcasting with larger groups.
- Darwin Studio will move to have the capacity for live broadcasting.

### **Social Enterprise**

#### **Outback Spirit Tours**

- ARDS Nhulunbuy team is facilitating Welcome to Country Bunguls for senior Australian tourists who are embarking on the 12 day overland Arnhem Land trip with Outback Spirit Tours. There are tours every 2-5 days for a 5-month season. This first month has been very successful.

ARDS Aboriginal Corporation continues to provide a wide range of services and activities that enhance the quality of life for Aboriginal people through the provision of culturally competent information services, cultural maintenance programs, employment opportunities and entertainment.

While we continue to struggle for funding, we are confident that we are moving in the right direction and ask for the ongoing prayerful support of the Synod - that the Board continues to be upheld by His Grace and to enable the organisation to respond to His will as we seek a sustainable level of funding and the delivery of our services.

Johanna Ward  
Chief Executive Officer