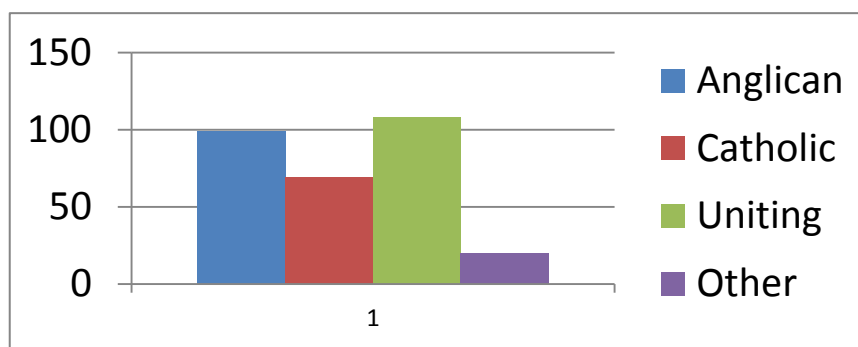


**Introduction**

The past year has been immensely encouraging. We finished 2015 with 5 graduation ceremonies where 80 students graduated. We had record numbers of students and a strong staff team. We finished the year financially strong. However, each year is a new year with its different challenges and joys and 2016 is no exception.

**Students**

Student numbers are continuing to increase. Once again we have had over 500 students apply to study at the College this year. In 2015, 296 students actually attended the College. The denominational breakdown of the students is shown in the graph below. As you can see, the Uniting Church students make up approximately 1/3 of the students.



Another encouraging trend is the increase in full time equivalent students (FTE) over the past 4 years as shown in the table below.

<b>2012</b>	172
<b>2013</b>	182
<b>2014</b>	206
<b>2015</b>	235

This has a significant impact on the amount of funding the College receives. However, we estimate we need 250 FTE students to maintain the college in a favourable financial position for the future. Of course the increase in student numbers also means we are very busy and sometimes struggle to fit them all on campus at once.

## Courses

The College is continuing to offer 5 courses. However, we have changed our Certificate III and IV in Theology courses to the Certificate III and IV in Christian Ministry and Theology. These new courses are generic courses offered in a number of colleges, but we are able to customise them for the Indigenous context. The course content was designed in consultation with Board members, students and church leaders.

Current courses are:

- **Foundation Studies** is a literacy and numeracy course based on the Bible. Most students do this course prior to further study in theology so they will be set up to succeed in their later studies.
- **Certificate II in Media and Discipleship**  
Now in its fourth year, this is a great course to teach the practical skills involved in making short films, while also reflecting on personal faith development.
- **Certificate II in Music**  
This is also a great practical course teaching skills in performing and recording music. The focus of the course is on Christian music and we are seeking to help students write and record in their first languages.
- **New in 2016 Certificate III in Christian Ministry and Theology.** This course provides a biblical foundation and starts the process of thinking about how to apply this in the community context. It finishes with a subject on Pastoral Care.
- **New in 2016, the Certificate IV in Christian Ministry and Theology.** This course builds on the foundation laid in the Certificate III and focuses on Christian Leadership. There is opportunity for candidates for ministry to do a ministry internship as one of the subjects.

## Staff News

Currently we have three full time Uniting Church Staff Members – Rev Felicity Amery, Rev Dr Lee Levett-Olson, and Rev Dr Helen Richmond. Unfortunately, Felicity has been on personal leave for first semester this year. Helen therefore, took over the role of Dean and has done a fantastic job stepping into that role.

In addition to our full-time staff we also have three part-time Uniting Church Assistant Teachers released to work with us. Yurranydjil Dhurrkay and Maratja Dhamarrandji are assisting in the Certificate III in Christian Ministry and Theology as well as studying at the

Certificate IV level. Sandra Wangarr is continuing in her role as Assistant Teacher in the Certificate II in Media and Discipleship as well as studying the Certificate III in Christian Theology and Ministry.

We were very encouraged at the start of the year to have a teachers' workshop that brought all the Assistant Teachers in to Darwin for a time of sharing and training with the other teachers. It was a great time of two-way learning with sessions on understanding the Vocational Education System, as well as exploring culture and some tips for the non-Indigenous teachers on teaching in more culturally appropriate ways.

However, one of the disappointing things for the College in the area of staff has been the difficulty of filling vacant positions. In particular we are still seeking a suitable person for the role of Development Officer. A number of staff have also been absent for extended periods for various reasons.

### **Finance**

The financial position of the College was more stable in 2015. For the first time in a number of years the College did not have a deficit at the end of the year. This was partly the result of good student numbers completing their full four weeks of study and the college therefore receiving the full funding for their travel and accommodation costs. There were also significant efforts to reduce costs, including reducing staff in the admin department by one position. This is not without pain however, and with the increased student numbers it has been a challenge for staff.

For 2016 things are progressing well with good student numbers once again. However, we will not know until the end of the year when students have returned for their second intensives how things will end up. This is of course the case every year and we trust that God will continue to provide for the needs of the College.

### **Governance**

The College has now become an Indigenous Corporation registered under ORIC (the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations). This has changed our Board structure by reducing the number of Directors appointed from each of the three partner churches from 4 down to 3. There is also an additional appointment of an Indigenous Chairperson who is selected by the three churches. Mr Maratja Dhamarrandji has been appointed to that position for a 2 year renewable term.

## Conclusion

The College is continuing to build on the work done over several years. We are very grateful for the significant support of the Uniting Church Northern Synod and the NRCC. As we look to the future, there are great opportunities to continue to develop the work of the College. We are seeking to listen to our Indigenous church partners, and respond to their vision for the future of the church and the training needs that are identified. Thank you for your partnership in this vital ministry.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jude Long". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "L".

Dr Jude Long

Principal