

*Our vision is for Indigenous people to be able to engage in equal terms with the wider Australian society and its organisations and systems. We “span the gap” that often exists between mainstream services and the information they typically provide and the information Indigenous communities want and need.*

ARDS’ work champions the importance of language and culture in developing self-empowerment for Aboriginal people. We provide a range of communication platforms for Aboriginal voices to be heard and we support Aboriginal communities to become informed about and engage on their own terms with mainstream services and systems.

The ARDS team has been busy preparing funding submissions and responding to requests to deliver a wide range of services.

I am pleased to say that ARDS is now working outside of northeast Arnhem Land. We have delivered services to Ngukurr and Numbulwar and we continue to explore opportunities to extend our footprint across the Top End.

We are experiencing a significant increase of interest and recognition of the work that ARDS does, however the organisation remains in an uncertain financial position. We require financial support to assist us to grow our capacity and to take on a bigger volume of work across several regions.

Unfortunately, we have not been successful in securing this support.

## **Overview of Activities**

### ***Community Information***

We have commenced a two year project on **Tackling Indigenous Smoking** – funded by the Department of Health. The project will work with three communities to explore ways that individuals and families can reduce exposure to passive smoking. Work to date has been concentrated at Ramingining and Gapuwiyak will start soon. A further community outside northeast Arnhem Land will commence later this year.

We were successful in our tender as a preferred provider to **Power and Water** for the delivery of community information regarding new power meters and water usage. The work involved engaging with all residents to provide information about the roll out of the new power meters. The new system is quite different in the way people make payments and had the potential to be very confusing. We delivered services to Galiwin’ku, Ramingining, Gapuwiyak, Ngukurr and Numbulwar.

Work has continued in the area of **Women's health** with a number of community information sessions being conducted. To ensure these important messages are continued after the completion of the project, a short film with teaching notes has been produced for distribution to health professionals and schools.

A new project has just commenced in response to the increase in **Volatile Substance Abuse**, in particular relating to AvGas. The NTG has engaged us to develop community information messages for radio and also for the delivery of information at the relevant communities.

Twelve radio information programs have been developed to inform our audience about **Poker machines**. The programs explore the history of gambling in Arnhem Land, how poker machines work and the relationship with addiction.

We have continued to deliver community education about **Family violence** and also **Legal Education** in conjunction with NAAJA to people encountering the legal system on court days.

### ***Language***

Our language team is currently working on an exciting project – **Gurraṅay Ancient Sounds New Language**. Workshops are being held to record and identify language used by elders. The traditional recordings will be played on Yolngu Radio and lead to the development of contemporary songs. Through this process the importance and value of sometimes lost language can be shared with younger generations.

Another project is Bridges in **Health and Criminal Law** that involves developing audio recordings of the dictionaries that have been previously developed. These recordings will have a number of end uses, including apps for mobile phones.

### ***Multi Media***

Production is nearly complete for a film **Burmalala** about resilience and cyclones, a response to Cyclones Lam and Nathan. The film will be ready for release prior to next wet season.

Another film **Nambi** has been completed. This film records the Wagilak song line related to the ancient site of Njilipitji. For cultural reasons this film will not be released for another year.

Two other short films about **Mission Days** and **Macassan Traders** are also restricted for cultural reasons and will be made available for public use at a later time.

### ***Training***

A two day Leadership workshop was conducted for **NLC Women Rangers**. The training was aimed to build self-confidence and to gain an understanding of leadership in the workplace.

Workshops have been held for **ARDS workers** to assist them to gain a deeper understanding of the workplace, including:

- Roles and responsibilities
- Contracts
- Wages v salaries, casual v part time or permanent
- Working as a consultant

### ***Radio***

Yolŋu Radio is currently undergoing a major review. We are drawing on listener surveys, funders and our Yolŋu producers' feedback to improve both content and sound.

We are moving toward the development of a weekly broadcast schedule to allow for a better match of messaging to target audiences. Programs feature an array of regular weekly live and pre-produced shows, which cover topics of news, information, traditional and contemporary music and the new Football show.

Yolngu Radio has commenced our test broadcast on 88.9FM in Darwin. After a long and arduous process over 5 years Yolŋu Radio will now enjoy improved and clear sound in the Darwin region.

We are looking forward to celebrating this achievement after completing a trouble free test period.

Yolŋu Radio is partnering with the Northern Territory Government, stakeholder groups and communities in a multi-faceted approach to overcoming the prevalent issue of volatile substance abuse, particularly in relation to AvGas. The NTG recognises ARDS' unique ability to deliver information and communication services effectively to communities and as such has engaged the services of ARDS Yolŋu Radio to undertake this urgent work across the region.

### ***Social Enterprise***

ARDS has continued to work with the tourist operator Outback Spirit to perform **Welcome to Country *bunguls*** (song and dance) throughout the dry season. We are now in our second year and we are pleased with the positive outcomes of the project.

I would like to thank our Board of Directors for their tireless support, encouragement and wisdom.

We ask for the ongoing prayerful support of the Synod – that the Board continues to be upheld by His Grace and that we continue to seek His will as we struggle for a sustainable level of funding for the organisation.