

Supporting projects in Aboriginal Communities

Aboriginal Benefits Foundation Ltd.

NewsLetter ISSUE #1 AUGUST 2010



Welcome to all the friends and supporters of the Aboriginal Benefits Foundation over our first few years.

This short retrospective news letter will inform you of the activities of the Foundation, see the results of our small grants program as well as give news of our major initiative, support for the Yirkala Healing Centre, in Eastern Arnhem Land. Our dedicated Board works pro bono to assist the welfare of Indigenous Australians by responding to approaches made through grant applications and direct contact with members of the Board, many of whom have advanced knowledge of the situations in the communities throughout Australia. I am sure all of you want to see a better life for Aboriginal artists and their communities- particularly an improvement in physical and mental health.

Join us at one of our dinners or auctions – watch for up-dates to our website and read our next newsletter.

Your assistance is greatly valued and appreciated.
Jennifer Isaacs AM
Chair

Banner Images: ABF Feature Project Gunbalanya Clinic & Oenpelli Arts Centre, NT (2006) (details below)

The ABF was established in 2005 by a group of concerned individuals involved in Indigenous art and culture with the aim of improving the well being of Aboriginal Australians. The objectives of the Foundation are to promote, provide or carry out activities, facilities or projects for the benefit or welfare of Aboriginal communities in Australia, and members of those communities in particular, by reason of youth, age, infirmity or disability, poverty or social or economic circumstances. The Foundation is a not-for-profit public company limited by guarantee which is managed by a Board of Directors.

Grants Up-date

The ABF's Board considers applications for grants & requests for assistance consistent with the aims of the foundation. Since its establishment the ABF has supported many worthy projects and applications for financial assistance.

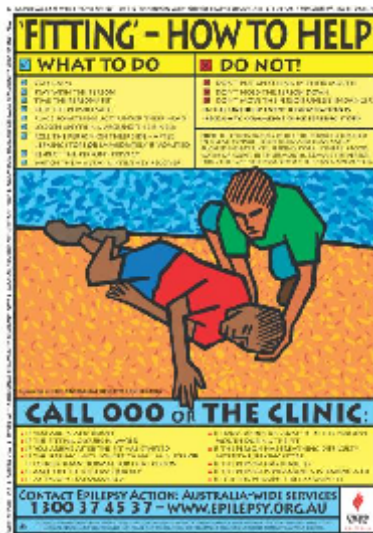
<http://www.aboriginal.org.au/grants.htm>

The following projects have been supported by the ABF:

Cyclone Devastation Relief, NT (2005) Following the destruction of the artist Terry Yumbulul's home and workshop, on remote Wigram Island NT, the ABF provided a small grant to enable the artist to replace equipment essential to resuming his sculpture practice & providing a living for his family.

Munupi Pottery, Tiwi Islands, NT (2008) ABF funding enabled Robert Punruntatameri to attend the National Art School to further his understanding of ceramic techniques to gain further skills in this genre. Robert has become one of the Islands most successful artists & a strong advocate for keeping Tiwi culture alive through art. A master potter also visited Munupi to assist Robert's practice & hold a workshop for clay workers. The education of the Tiwi People is crucial to their future. Supporting Robert to access new skills, as a key potter at Munupi Pottery, is crucial to building the future of Tiwi Island arts & will benefit the whole community.

Munupi Arts & Crafts Association
http://www.tiwiart.com/art_centres



Epilepsy Australia, NSW/National (2006) ABF support for this poster and national education campaign enabled Epilepsy Australia, through Red Back Graphix, NSW, to workshop & produce **Information on Seizure** posters to be used in Aboriginal communities. The resulting poster is an outstanding educational product and has been provided to hundreds of Indigenous Community Medical Centres nationally.

Epilepsy Australia:
<http://www.epilepsyaustralia.net/>

Aboriginal Literacy Foundation, VIC (2009) With ABF support, the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation trained volunteer tutors to run a literacy program, working with indigenous students from the Koori community in Shepperton, to improve literacy levels & students sense of worth and confidence. Funding also provided literacy materials & enabled regular assessments & evaluations of students. In March 2010 the ALF reported the program results were extremely encouraging with 75% of students improving their literacy levels to national minimum standards or greater.

Aboriginal Literacy Foundation
<http://www.aboriginalliteracyfoundation.org/>

Waringarri Arts Aboriginal Corporation, Kununurra, WA (2009) *In the Saddle On the Wall* was a cultural maintenance project recording & documenting individual & collective histories of key cultural leaders involved in both the cattle industry & the Indigenous arts movement of the east Kimberley. The project aimed to support communities to understand & value their cultural heritage, reinforce cultural values, share cultural histories and maintain cultural pride.

Waringarri Arts Aboriginal Corporation
<http://www.waringarriarts.com.au/index.html>

The Yirrkala HeaLing Centre

In its establishment phase, the ABF focused support for improving Indigenous health, facilitating and supporting schemes or projects of benefit to Aboriginal health and welfare with potential for wider application.

Support for the Yirrkala Healing Centre is a major ABF initiative.

The ABF has provided grants for a number of preliminary initiatives that have ensured community advice was obtained and that the model was tested through a feasibility study.

The Yirrkala Healing Centre has the capacity to become a model for other Indigenous communities.

Yirrkala has experienced a scourge of substance abuse & youth suicide that has risen to unprecedented levels, severely affecting the mental health of the Community. By 2007 the resulting stresses were so intolerable the Community took action.



BANYON TREE SITE

When the Community at Yirrkala petitioned the ABF & appealed for help dealing with the urgent need to expand the medical services & care available to the Yolngu people, to help address the declining emotional & spiritual well-being of the community, the ABF agreed to support the development of a permanent Healing Centre facility at Yirrkala. The ABF provided a seeding grant of \$20,000 for the Dhanbul Community Council at Yirrkala to commission a feasibility study by Ambrose Business Solutions (Ambrose). Results indicated the Centre has great potential for success as a combined social welfare/business initiative & could be self-supporting within a few years of establishment.



HEALING SHELTER

Situated on Aboriginal Land the Centre will be led by family members from Yirrkala, many of whom have suffered the loss of a young man in their family to suicide. The Centre will expand the health services & care available to Yolngu families in distress as well as offer a facility to which professional teams & individuals will visit to provide medical services & train & educate locals in techniques & areas not currently available or offered in the area. Specifically, the Centre will respond to the problems of family breakdown, youth addictions & alienation women s stress & general community well being.

The ABF is helping raise the funds necessary to develop the Healing Centre at Yirrkala.



MEN'S SHARED SPACES MONTAGE

In early 2008 NG Art Gallery hosted an exhibition featuring a number of established indigenous artists. Opened by Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, Governor of NSW, with guest speaker Jennifer Isaacs AM, this exhibition donated all proceeds raised from the sale of the artwork to the ABF. Galleries involved included Coe-ee Aboriginal Art Gallery, Lauraine Diggins Fine Art, Dacou Gallery and Gallerie Australis. NG Art Gallery also collaborated with Mission Restaurant Bar to host a number of fundraising dinners to raise greater awareness of the Yirrkala Healing Centre project.

The ABF s inaugural charity art auction and fundraising dinner was held at Sydney s Museum of Contemporary Art. This event raised around \$300,000 for the Yirrkala initiative. More than 100 individual items were received from artists, collectors, and galleries throughout Australia and we hope to repeat the event again.

Plans for the Centre have suffered a long course of delay after the Federal Government Intervention into Aboriginal communities in the NT & the necessity to ascertain the legal situation regarding development in the area.



YIRRKALA WAITING AREA MONTAGE

In 2009 Development Plans were stopped pending the release of a land tenure report by the Northern Land Council. Land tenure was re-established in late 2009 & the Banyon Tree site, chosen for the Healing Centre, was retained with site plans extended. The site, which was once an eyesore community dump, has since been cleared of cars and metal & all rubbish removed. The survey of the site has been completed & regeneration of the area begun. Whilst awaiting the development & under the guidance of Yirrkala s principal healer Mutilnga Burarrwanga, healers have built a traditional shade/shelter at the Banyan site in close proximity to many of the medicinal plants which the women are utilizing. Twelve young members of the community were involved in the construction of the healing shelter. Since the construction of the shelter, bush medicines have been collected and healing treatments of families, & training of potential healers, have now commenced. Mutilnga directed the collection of bush medicines & has asked for all her practices to be recorded in writing while training potential healers to perpetuate the wealth of Yolngu traditional medical practices & medicinal treatments into the future.

For news of the centre's activities go to:

<http://www.aboriginal.org.au/healing-centre-news.htm>

The Yirrkala Healing Centre will offer a Medical centre model for health care, combining western medical personnel and traditional healers in separate locations. While traditional methods are vital, with the influence of western culture, other methods are needed to cope with the negative impacts of drug and alcohol abuse. It is acknowledged that specific assistance is required in the area of counseling, particularly for youth. The Centre will have separate areas designed for counseling & programs will be run with an option identified of attending bush location camps for rehabilitation & spiritual renewal for young men in distress, cared for & mentored by older Yolngu men.

The Community is committed to drawing upon the healing practices of both cultures to move toward a better future for healthy Yolngu people.

In February 2010, after two Architects Visits, Shelly Indyk, Design Director, Indyk Architects, offered her pro bono services to present an Architectural Master Plan to the ABF Board and the community in Yirrkala. In this presentation the buildings needed were reconceived to make it possible to construct areas in stages as funds become available. Work on the Young Men s Counseling Complex commenced this 2010 Dry Season.

The Foundation is continuing to seek support to complete Stages 1-3 of the master plan over 3 years - 2010/2011/2012.

ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTABLE

ABF Feature Project:



Gunbalanya Clinic & Oenpelli Arts Centre, NT (2006)

This collaborative project, between artists at the Oenpelli Arts Centre & Indigenous staff of the Gunbalanya Clinic, enabled the creation of culturally relevant Aboriginal Art diagrams of Bodily Systems for medical education. Workshops run between the resident medical officer, indigenous health workers & local artists helped to form an understanding of the function & connection of various systems of the human body. Diagrammatic paintings, in the local indigenous style, are now displayed & used in the clinic for public education. This project was extremely valuable & may lead to follow up initiatives in other communities to aid health understanding in cross cultural situations.

Images from Left to Right: Blood Flow, Circulatory/Renal System, Gastrointestinal System, Pregnancy, Respiratory System, Skeleton.

Oenpelli Arts centre:

<http://www.injalak.com/>

2010 ABF Board of Directors:

Jennifer Isaacs AM (Chair) / Chris Chow (Secretary/Public Officer) / Simon Chan (Treasurer) / Adrian Newstead / Dawn Casey
Shane Simpson / Robert Simkin / Robert Edwards

Support:

The ABF was set up by a group of concerned individuals involved in Indigenous art and culture with the objective of benefiting the well being of Aboriginal Australians.

To assist in achieving its aims, the Foundation is able to accept donations in the form of money, as proceeds in full or in part from the sale of art works, as gifts in kind, and as bequests and in other ways.

The ABF is a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) organisation. All monetary gifts over \$2 are tax deductible.

<http://www.aboriginal.org.au/donations.htm>

Contact Us:

Chris Chow, Secretary/Public Officer
Aboriginal Benefits Foundation

C/- Simpsons Lawyers
Level 2, Lot 1, Pier 8/9
23 Hickson Road
Millers Point NSW 2000

Phone: 02 8014 5050

E-mail: info@aboriginal.org.au

www.aboriginal.org.au

Links:

<http://www.aboriginal.org.au/links.htm>

DVD appeal for the Yirrkala Healing Centre – Banduk Marika
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqxSngz3YXA>