The Northern Institute is located within the Faculty of Law, Business, Education and Arts at Charles Darwin University and is led by a Director who develops the research profile of the Institute and works in partnership with internal and external stakeholders to foster a supportive and motivating environment for researchers.

The Institute undertakes interdisciplinary research in areas of social and public policy that are critically important to Northern Australia and beyond. Building on the strength of its connections to remote, regional and urban contexts, the Institute focuses on issues of importance around the intersections of people, policy and place.

The Institute has developed from investment by the Northern Territory Government and Charles Darwin University through the Institute of Advanced Studies and now secures independent income from external research and consultancy grants, student supervision and teaching.

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Contents

Foreword 3
Director’s Welcome 4
   Vision 5
   Goals 6
Overview 7
   Northern Institute Organisational Chart 9
Research Themes 9
   Central Australian Research Group (CARG) 11
   Comparative Indigenous Traditional Knowledge for Environmental Management 14
   Contemporary Indigenous Knowledge and Governance 16
   Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages 21
   Demography and Growth Planning 22
   National Award for Building Statistical Literacy around Demographic and Social Change in Remote NT Communities 25
   Evaluation for Northern Contexts 26
   2013 Evaluation Symposia 29
   Northern Futures 30
   Chasing the Winds 34
   Workforce Development, Migration and Pathways to Learning 35
   Employment and mobility trajectories of overseas-born early childhood education and care workers in Darwin, NT 39
Events Calendar 2013 41
Northern Institute Staff 49
Adjuncts, Honoraries & Consultants 50
HDR student list 51
Community and International Engagement 53
Publications Listing 2012-13 54
Statistics 59
Article: Endangered Indigenous literature finds a safe home 60
Article: Written on the wind 62
Article: Keeping alive an ancient language 64
In the spirit of respect, the Northern Institute acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and seas of Australia. We pay our respects to the elders both past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal Australia.
Foreword

Research is central to the purpose of Charles Darwin University and being located in the remote far north of Australia, it closely ties to the needs of the Northern Territory and the Territory’s immediate region: Timor Leste, Eastern Indonesia and the Arafura Sea.

To achieve focus and align research with the changing economic profile of Northern Australia, the University has identified a number of research fields to add to the University’s existing strengths in Environment and Livelihoods, and Human Health and Wellbeing that have the potential to develop into world class fields of research that are strategically important to the Northern Territory. These emergent strengths are in Social and Public Policy; Education at the interface with Health; and Energy. In addition, Indigenous Knowledges is a cross-cutting research focus that is integral to the areas identified above.

It is in this context that the work of the Northern Institute over the past year has been critical to the University’s contribution to our region. The Institute has focused attention and worked closely with government and communities to address pressing issues around northern economic development, security, community diversity and sustainability.

The Northern Institute has also been central to the promotion of cross-disciplinary research to build world-class research capability. Research capacity and capability have been strengthened through key partnerships such as those with ANU, JCU and AIMS under the Collaborative Research Network for Northern Research Futures. Increasingly, the Northern Institute’s research partnerships extend internationally, particularly throughout the Asia-Pacific region and into global partnerships with colleagues working in the remote territories of Canada and Scandinavia.

Building CDU’s capacity to contribute to the development of the evidence base to inform social and public policy is a key priority for the coming year, especially with renewed national interest in northern Australia. It is envisaged that the Northern Institute will play a key role in the emerging agenda.

Professor Sharon Bell
Interim Vice Chancellor
The team at the Northern Institute are committed to making a difference through their long standing connections and commitment to understanding the ways people and systems operate in the region. This includes our near neighbours in Timor Leste, Eastern Indonesia and beyond. We know that together we can find ways to support effective decision making for the future of the region.

The success of the Northern Institute as a social and policy research institute is founded on our ability to contextualise research thinking and approaches for the local setting. Our researchers demonstrate the highest standards in research that is useful and applicable to policy, industry and communities in the region. We work in partnership with Indigenous communities, the Northern Territory Government, and international and national agencies to understand the complexity of our world and the ways different knowledge and governance systems operate to improve our lives and opportunities.

In 2013, we established a number of initiatives to share the outcomes of research, engage international expertise and attract outstanding post doctorate researchers to create a program of national collaborative social, industry and government research and innovation in the northern Australian region. As a team, we recognize the value of the support from the management and staff at Charles Darwin University and our partner agencies.

2014 has many challenges: the potential growth of Northern Australia, opportunities to support effective partnership and leadership models for co-benefit in the region, building the social infrastructure of a cohesive and productive society and meeting the challenges that need a growing, culturally competent and skilled workforce. The investments made in 2013 prove we are able to provide significant leadership in social policy research that informs public policy and our region’s development.

Professor Ruth Wallace
Director
Vision

The Northern Institute (NI) delivers excellence in research and research leadership that seeks to understand development and the interactions of people, policy and place. The research and research training is consistently of high quality, relevance and a focus on outcomes that are sustainable.

NI’s research and research training programs provide evidence for policy development, build capacity and respond to the needs of governments and communities in the region. This research recognizes the lives, geography and history of these places and the importance of contextualising research for the region.

The Institute’s researchers are partnership focused, working with multiple stakeholders to ensure outcomes meet stakeholder needs and impact positively on people’s lives and opportunities in the region. The Institute demonstrates this conscience by taking a stand and leading debates on issues of significance to the region.
The Northern Institute aims to:

1. Develop and undertake social and policy research of significance for the region.
2. Attract external research funding and undertake a coordinated program of social and public policy research of a high standard and be recognised at a national and international level.
3. Provide support for stakeholders to connect with social and public policy researchers across Charles Darwin University.
4. Build local capacity to undertake leading research in regional contexts.
5. Ensure staff with specialist research skills are available to undertake social and policy research and foster cross-disciplinary and team research.
6. Provide a productive research development environment for staff.
7. Provide quality research training.
8. Train research (HDR) students in a supportive and stimulating academic environment.
9. Lead an active public engagement and events program that engage stakeholders in key social and public policy debates.
10. Establish a viable mixed business model to ensure the sustainability of the Northern Institute.
Overview

The Northern Institute acts as a catalyst to build capacity in social research and policy research that impacts on people’s lives and aspires to an inclusive, sustainable future for people in northern Australia and the neighbouring regions.

The Northern Institute (NI) undertakes interdisciplinary research in the areas of social and public policy that is critically important to central and northern Australia and its near neighbours. The Institute builds on the strength related to living in remote, regional and urban contexts and focuses on issues of importance around the intersections of people, policy and place.

NI’s research program and activities aim to provide evidence for policy development, generate informed debate, build the capacity of social researchers and respond to the needs of government and non-government agencies and communities in the region. The Institute brings together knowledgeable and skilled people to undertake social and public policy research in desert, tropical, regional and remote contexts. Researchers lead analysis of complex issues in regional and remote settings that impact on people, policy, practice and public awareness. This research is recognised nationally and internationally for innovative design and relevant outcomes. The Northern Institute’s success is measured by its contribution and ability to undertake research related to people, policy and place and its ability to;

- Speak independently from a sound evidence base on social and public policy research
- Attract high quality researchers and research funding
- Conduct world class innovative research
- Broker research partnerships with government, community and industry
- Develop the capacity of people in the region to engage in, lead and use research undertaken through the institute
- Disseminate research outputs through contributions to high impact, peer reviewed journals, books, reports and other public media.
As a place that promotes social public policy research excellence, the Northern Institute provides an independent voice based on sound evidence through rigorous research. Its researchers are responsive to stakeholders, leading innovative thinking and crucial debate in topics of importance to its constituents. Research teams led by internationally and nationally recognised scientists, operate to develop research in the areas of demography and growth planning, transdisciplinary methodologies and knowledge systems, social inclusion and community engagement, remote workforce development and pathways with training and social sustainability across Northern and Central Australia and the nations to our north.

Our research is concerned with not only understanding what is, but also what could be. The Northern Institute’s researchers have specialised research skills and knowledge to bring to this task. They work in partnership with internal and external stakeholders to provide a sound basis for research projects and dissemination of the outcomes. Visiting Fellows contribute to, and lead research and public engagement to focus attention on complex issues in the region. The Institute’s teams collaborate with local, national and international universities, industry, not for profit agencies, communities and leading thinkers to seed and undertake research activities. Engaging in public debate and providing informed commentary are key activities for the Northern Institute.
Northern Institute
Organisational Chart

DIRECTOR
Professor Ruth Wallace

Northern Institute Advisory Committee (NIAC)

Demography & Growth Planning
Principal Scientist
Dr Andrew Taylor
Senior Researcher/s
Professor Dean Carson
Dr Kerstin Zander
ECR/S & Assistants
Greg Sharley
Huw Brokensha
Jan Salmon
Alice Henderson

Contemporary Indigenous Knowledge & Governance
Principal Scientist
Professor Michael Christie
Dr Linda Ford
Senior Researcher/s
Professor Helen Verran
ECR/S & Assistants
Anthea Nicholls
Matt Campbell
Trevor Van Weeren
Juli Cathcart
John Prior
Ann Fleming
Cathy Bow
Tanyah Nasir
Julia Fortune

Central Australian Research Group
Principal Scientist
Professor Rolf Gerritsen
Senior Researcher/s
Dr Samantha Disbray
ECR/S & Assistants
Dr Benxiang Zeng
Dr Don Zoellner

Evaluation for Northern Contexts
Principal Scientist
Associate Professor
Emma Williams
Senior Researcher/s
Dr Allan Arnott

Northern Futures
Principal Scientists
Professor Paul Carter (RMIT)
Assoc Prof Allan Dale (JCU)
Dr Tom Rayner (RIEL)
Senior Researcher/s
Dr Anne Stephens (JCU)
Research Fellows
Dr Gemma Blackwood
Dr Tom Brewer
Dr Chris O’Brien (RIEL)
Dr Elspeth Oppermann

Workforce Development, Migration & Pathways To Learning
Principal Scientist
Professor Ruth Wallace
Senior Researcher/s
Dr Kate Golebiowska
Kathy Guthadjaka
Mike Harrison
ECR/S & Assistants
Dr Marilyn Kell
Dr Catherine Koerner
Alicia Boyle
Johanna Funk

Research Support Service
Research Coordinator
Belinda Snell
Partnership Coordinator
Katrina Britnell
Research Fellow
Pawinee Yuhun
Finance Officer
Macrina Abril
Administration Officer
Alisha Dakis
Research Administration Assistant
Mary Ann Maddox

* Current as at December 2013.
Charles Darwin University undertakes research relevant to people’s lives and policy. This research provides innovation and change in complex environments. This research takes a positive view of living in remote and regional contexts, recognises the leadership that people in the region diverse lies and knowledge systems and appreciates the value of understanding diversity is a strength. Indigenous people are a significant population in the Northern Australia, manage a large proportion of land and sea country in the region and reflect a high social and economic investment of high priority. Issues that are a priority for Indigenous people such as sustainable livelihoods, knowledge systems and their relationships to policy development, implementation and investment are key areas of research for CDU researchers and Indigenous partners.

**CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH GROUP (CARG)**
recognising and addressing social and systemic barriers to diverse group participation, economic activity, active citizenship and the links to the development and implementation of social policy.

**CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND GOVERNANCE**
to undertake research that engages people in policy formation and knowledge management across diverse knowledge systems that produces research outcomes for participants’ benefit.

**DEMOGRAPHY AND GROWTH PLANNING**
understanding population systems and trends found in the Northern Territory’s regional and remote areas, and being able to make decisions about the impact on economic and social wellbeing.

**EVALUATION FOR NORTHERN CONTEXTS**
evaluation approaches that work to engage people in remote communities, policy makers and funders, to support understanding evidence building in the evaluation process and its outcomes.

**NORTHERN FUTURES**
researching the social impacts and processes of the changes in Northern Australia related to infrastructure development, public policy and climate change.

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, MIGRATION AND PATHWAYS TO LEARNING**
identifying ways to plan for, support, develop and sustain workforces in a competitive market, in regional and remote areas both in large-scale and micro-businesses, and to embed the Northern Territory within global debates on international migration, integration and equality.

* All Australian and Northern Territory Government departments are referred to with their current titles, as of 18 September 2013.
Central Australian Research Group (CARG)

Recognising and addressing social and systemic barriers to diverse group participation, economic activity, active citizenship and their links to the development and implementation of social policy.

The Central Australian Research Group (CARG) undertakes interdisciplinary research in areas of social and public policy in regional and remote contexts that are critically important to northern Australia and its near neighbours. Central Australian research has been developed by investing in researchers recognised for their local partnerships, knowledge and expertise adapted for the region’s profile.

The team has undertaken research in Central Australia for over a decade and have identified the following priorities for research leadership and development in Central Australia:

- **Tourism management**, including social inclusion, local economies and community engagement
- **Sustainability and natural resource management**, identifying environmental, economic and social consequences of planned developments and interventions including impacts of climate change, infant industries in marginal economies, and feral pest management
- **Local and Indigenous governance**, examining the administrative organisation and government effects on remote and Indigenous local governments
- **Education**, including Vocational Education and Training (VET), remote education, and encompasses the Central Australian Education and Training Network (CAETN)
- **Chinese matters**, including Chinese State-Owned Enterprises, Chinese women’s political participation and the Chinese outbound tourism sector.

- **Future Development**, focusing on local adaptation and building local capacity to the changing environmental, economic, social and policy conditions in Central Australia.

CARG has a multi-faceted role: as an integral part of the Northern Institutes Central Australian research and as a research mentoring unit and hub for postgraduate research students working across all sections of the University on the Alice Springs campus.

**Research Partnerships**

- Alice Solar Cities
- Australia Centre of Excellence in Local Government
- Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation (CRC-REP)
- Flinders University
- Multicultural Youth Northern Territory (MyNT)
- National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)
- National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCARF)
- Northern Territory Department of Business *
- Northern Territory Department of Local Government and Region
- Northern Territory Department of Land Resource Management *
- Northern Territory Government
- Northern Territory Melaleuca Refugee Centre
- Plant Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre
- Perpetual Philanthropic Services
- The Nature Conservancy
- The University of Adelaide
- Tourism NT
Selected Projects

Remote Education Systems

Identifying how education can improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in and from remote communities, while increasing opportunities for engagement in the economies that exist in remote contexts. A key focus is working closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in getting their voice heard in the supply of education in remote Australia.

Engaging Aborigines to monitor feral camel’s impact on carbon emissions

This research directly addresses the NT Climate Change Policy 2009 Target 20 by seeking solid evidence of the impacts of feral camel management on carbon sequestration. The project will innovatively combine invasive species, climate change and Aboriginal participation. The project will create substantial employment opportunities by engaging Aboriginal communities in monitoring activities. The success of this project will set up an example in dealing with similar issues in Australia.

The anticipated outcomes include:

1. a better understanding of the implications of invasive species management for climate change adaption

2. identified opportunities for local community participation on climate change adaptation and in environmental management in NT

3. an enhanced partnership in environmental management between researchers, governmental agencies, organisations and local communities in NT
The Context
This project explores the differences and similarities between Indigenous traditional knowledge for environmental management in various Asia-Pacific countries. The hidden value of indigenous knowledge is yet to be explored and utilized as a component of sustainable development by academics and development practitioners. Natural and social scientists should work alongside policy makers and development practitioners, to help evolve a sustainable model for ecological resource management. The project will review existing research to define such Indigenous traditional knowledge, scope a future comparative study aiming to open dialogues and build bridges between Indigenous cultures, and seek to integrate Indigenous environmental philosophy and modern environmental management approaches to inform policy making and practices in Indigenous regions.
The Research

It is believed that the indigenous knowledge from different indigenous communities in different countries will have both differences and similarities, therefore contributing to the integration of traditional knowledge into modern sciences to find the solutions for global environmental crises.

The project seeks to integrate indigenous environmental philosophy with modern environmental management approaches to inform environmental policy making and practices in indigenous regions.

This project aims to answer some key questions:

1. What do we know about the indigenous traditional knowledge for environmental management?
2. How is indigenous traditional knowledge currently integrated into different indigenous cultures in different regions?
3. How does indigenous traditional knowledge contribute to environmental management in different regions/countries?
4. What are policy implications of integration of indigenous traditional knowledge into contemporary environmental management in a global context?

The Research Partners

- Faculty of Law, Education, Arts and Business, CDU
- South Central University for Nationalities, China
- Providence University, Taiwan.

The Outcomes

The project will impact on improved understanding of indigenous traditional knowledge for environmental management in different cultures, and therefore a positive contribution to the development of more functional environmental policies for indigenous country conservation. The project will create a research report, a journal paper and a further proposal on “Comparative Study into Indigenous Traditional Knowledge for Environmental Management in Australia, China and Taiwan”.

NORTHERN INSTITUTE • ANNUAL REPORT 2012-2013
The Contemporary Indigenous Knowledge and Governance team have been working closely with Indigenous and nonindigenous knowledge and governance authorities from Northern Territory communities for over thirty years.

We focus on:
- ground-up and generative research
- engaging traditional Aboriginal knowledge and governance practices
- collaborative research, planning and evaluation with Aboriginal cultural authorities
- building local solutions collaboratively with local authorities, government, the corporate sector, and civil society organisations

Members of the team work with Indigenous academics and cultural authorities to engage distinctive Indigenous methodologies, and are committed to the professionalising of Indigenous researchers and consultants. Our interests include questions of evidence and accountability, ethics and agreement making in the changing policy settings and governmentalities of Northern Australia.

The collaborations that are forged and enhanced through their research, allow the team to focus on front-line policy work and organizational cultures.
They work with people on the ground in urban and remote communities and across all levels of government to identify and support those local practices which are successful and productive, but often invisible in mainstream policy development. They work at the local level to support vibrant practices - producing knowledge and policy at the same time.

Research Partnerships

- Australian National University
- Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education
- Catholic Education Office of the Northern Territory
- Charles Darwin University Library
- Department of Health
- Department of Social Services *
- Fisheries Research and Development Corporation
- Institute for Breathing & Sleep, Austin Hospital
- Northern Territory Department of Education *
- Northern Territory Department of Health *
- Northern Territory Department of Local Government and Regions *
- Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries, Darwin Aquaculture Centre
- Northern Territory General Practice Education
- Northern Territory Library
- Northern Territory Power and Water Corporation
- Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
- Plant Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre
- Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
- Tangentyere Council
- Tiwi Islands Employment and Training Board

Working closely with indigenous and non-indigenous consultants from Northern Territory communities for over 30 years.
Selected Projects

**Indigenous Governance and Leadership Development**
This project engages with individuals and groups in the Northern Territory towns of Millingimbi, Ramingining, Ntaria, Wurrumiyanga, Warruwi, Gapuwiyak, to support and enhance local governance and leadership. The research will develop better understandings of Western and Aboriginal governance systems in these towns, and support local people, governments and decision making groups to build leadership and governance capacity.

**Tyikim Language Revitalisation**
Elders of the Tyikim language community are working to find creative ways to keep their languages alive. Many of the younger generation no longer speak Marrithiyel, Mak Mak Marranunggu or other languages of the Daly/Wagait region south-west of Darwin. Working with the Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity (RNLD), Dr Payi Linda Ford and her family members are engaging in a Master Apprentice program for sharing language with others, and further documentation and revitalisation initiatives are planned to ensure that the language stays strong.

**A Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages (LAAL)**
This project is digitising thousands of books produced in bilingual education programs in remote NT schools in over 25 Australian Indigenous languages. These materials contain traditional and modern stories, ethnobotany, history, instruction, memoir, songs, cautionary tales, and teaching materials for first language literacy and were at risk of being lost, damaged or destroyed. The materials are being made available on an open access website with a highly visual search interface. The project focusses on strengthening the intergenerational transmission of traditional languages and culture through developing systems for enlivening and tailoring collections at the local level, and engaging students and researchers from around the world in collaborations with the language owners.

**Talking Strong, Staying Safe (TSSS)**
The aim of the TSSS project is to research and develop local solutions to the issues of bullying and inappropriate use of mobile phones, internet and social media (cyber safety) in the remote communities of Ramingining, Milingimbi and Gapuwiyak. The project involves research and visits to communities for conversations, meetings, interviews, presentations and focus group sessions (workshops) with senior authorities, individuals, family and work groups. This is leading to an increased understanding of the issues at a community level and the collaborative production of resources in English and Djambarrpuyŋu for use by individuals, families and organisations, and community-based workshops.
Key social and economic factors for successful engagement in aquaculture ventures by Indigenous communities

Three projects are underway on Warruwi, Goulburn Inland to identify culturally suitable methods to assist Aboriginal people establish aquaculture enterprises. One aims to assist the community's governance body, Yagbani Aboriginal Corporation, to develop a fisheries and aquaculture plan. This plan will integrate western corporate governance with customary approaches based on traditional authority structures and sea ownership.

Work is also underway to assist the Warruwi women set up a ‘healthy tucker program’ and in doing so, document the negotiation process between external facilitators and community participants.

A third project seeks to integrate traditional and western knowledge about oysters and water quality into a seasonal calendar that highlights the ‘healthy eating’ and ‘safe eating’ times throughout the year.

Indigenous Governance Approaches to Community Activities and Workforces

This project engages Tiwi approaches to developing and implementing community activities and workforce development under the Regional Jobs and Community Program which aims to set out a practical path to generating more jobs, participation and economic development.

Project websites

- www.cdu.edu.au/laal
  The Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages is a digital archive of endangered literature in Australian Indigenous languages from bilingual schools in the Northern Territory.

- www.cdu.edu.au/centres/groundup
  We design and negotiate collaborations that are locally situated in remote Aboriginal communities and tailored to meet the specific needs of individuals, groups, organisations, communities and government.

- www.cdu.edu.au/yaci
  The Yolngu Consultants Initiative have been approached by academic and medical researchers, government and private industry for consultancy services where Yolngu ways of knowing and being in the world are considered crucial to successful collaborations to improve the health, education and wellbeing of Indigenous people, and the cultural and intellectual resources of the Australian community.
Indigenous Knowledge and Resource Management in Northern Australia (IKRMNA) was an ARC Linkage Project to support and develop Indigenous databases that maintain and enhance the strength of local languages, cultures and environments in Northern Australia.

The Australian Learning and Teaching Council has provided funding for the development of an ICT-based program in which Yolngu (northeast Arnhemland Aboriginal) and academic knowledge authorities can come together to develop, foster and engage an emergent remote Indigenous pedagogy: *Teaching from Country*.

Their work with CDU started with a program for teaching Yolngu languages and culture, and led on to collaborative research and consultancy work. More recently their work has been loosely organised through the Yolngu Aboriginal Consultancy Initiative.

The National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia is an ARC Discovery Project ‘Intercultural inquiry in a transnational context: Exploring the legacy of the 1948 American–Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land’ hosted by the University of Sydney. The 13th Symposium on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Music and Wellbeing was held in Melbourne University.

The National Indigenous Research and Knowledges Network is a multidisciplinary hub and spokes model network of Indigenous researchers at various stages of their career from over 20 collaborating universities, including AIATSIS. The network will provide a platform for new Indigenous multi-disciplinary research and the establishment of a critical mass of multi-disciplinary, qualified Indigenous researchers to meet the compelling research needs of our communities.
Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages

The Context
There are thousands of books and materials in over 25 Aboriginal languages created during the era of bilingual education in the Northern Territory that are at risk of being lost, damaged and destroyed. This project is collecting these items of great cultural and linguistic value and growing a digital archive which is accessible to the public.

The Research
The goals of the Living Archive are:

- to preserve these irreplaceable items for future generations
- to re-engage local communities with their language materials
- to connect researchers with the people and communities from which these materials originated

The Research Partners
- Australian Research Council (ARC)
- Australian National University
- Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education
- Catholic Education Office of the Northern Territory
- Charles Darwin University Library
- Northern Territory Department of Education
- Northern Territory Library

The Outcomes
- A prototype website has been developed and is now available to the general public, www.cdu.edu.au/laal. The website is still in test and feedback on the site is encouraged.
- Over 500 items in 21 Indigenous languages have been digitally recorded and are now available to those who would never have had access before.
- A further 2000 items are in the process awaiting permission to be made public.

More Good News
Additional ARC Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (LIEF) funding was won in late 2013 to continue this project for another 12 months.
Demography and Growth Planning

Building knowledge on population systems and trends for the Northern Territory to facilitate coherent policy and decision making, leading to improved economic and social wellbeing.

The Demography and Growth Planning theme builds knowledge and expertise on the relationships between the population structures found in the Northern Territory and remote areas elsewhere, and the economic and social wellbeing of these areas. The team are experts in the sourcing, application and analysis of social and demographic data for the Northern Territory and beyond, and understands how population change in sparsely populated areas like the NT affects peoples lives.

With an emphasis on population dynamics and tourism, the team partners with other universities, government agencies and organisations to look at the big issues affecting their communities, regions and constituents.

Their projects focus on:

- Formal demographic analysis and modelling for small and relatively isolated populations (including cohort component and agent-based modelling)
- Developing innovative techniques for understanding and representing demographic impacts from policies impacting on ‘the north’
- Understanding and mapping impacts from population flows, mobilities and migrations in the Northern Territory and beyond
- Assessing the demographic and social impacts from non-resident workers and visitors across the north and in remote areas in general
• The changing demographics of Indigenous Australians in the Northern Territory and other remote areas
• Enhancing the relationships between economic development, major investment and population change in the Northern Territory

Research Partnerships

Our major partners are the Northern Territory Department of Treasury and Finance* and the Northern Territory Department of Local Government and Regions* who support programs of demographic research at CDU.

Other key partners include:

• Australian Bureau of Statistics
• Australian College of Indigenous Knowledge and Education, Charles Darwin University
• Australian Research Council
• Flinders University, South Australia
• Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation, Darwin
• Management Centre, Innsbruck, Austria
• Northern Territory Department of Business
• Northern Territory Department of Health *
• Northern Territory Department of Treasury and Finance *
• Poche Centre for Indigenous Health, Alice Springs
• The Australian National University
• The Centre for Sami Research (CeSam), Umeå University, Sweden
• The Machado Joseph Disease Foundation, Alyangula, Groote Eylandt, NT
• The Nordic Centre for Spatial Research, Stockholm
• The Nordic Ministers’ Council, Stockholm
• The University of Applied Sciences, Krems, Austria
• The Vienna Institute of Demography, Austria
• Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada
Selected Projects

- **Population projections for the Northern Territory and its regions**
  We work with the Northern Territory Department of Treasury and Finance to continually develop and improve population projections for the NT and its regions. Our current model, NTPOP, has been fully refreshed to account for the most recent data on population trends and change. Projections provide a basis for government, industry and businesses to plan for services and infrastructure into the future. In line with this, we are partnered with the Australian National University’s Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research and Queensland University’s Centre for Population Research to improve Indigenous population projection throughout Australia (funded by the Australian Research Council in collaboration with the Department of Social Services*).

- **Indigenous demographic futures**
  The settlement and demographic profiles of first Australian’s is shifting dramatically from the combination of changing propensities to identify as Indigenous and increasing rates of mixed partnering in the urban centres of Australia. The Northern Territory, along with other states who have significant remote Indigenous populations, is affected in a number of ways; not least from the redistribution of Goods and Services Tax revenues to states and territories with growing urban Indigenous populations. Our research will build knowledge on the causes and consequences of this socio-cultural phenomenon with a focus on the Northern Territory.

- **Demographic and Social change in Remote NT Settlements**
  This research program will help remote communities to articulate their social and economic futures to governments through a process of ‘demographic discussions’ around information which is used by governments to make decisions on their behalf. The aim is to assist communities in understanding the what, how and why of ‘outside information’ as it is applied to policy, program and investment contexts. Communities can then identify what information from the ‘inside’ they see as important to establishing, monitoring and bringing to fruition their hopes and aspirations for the future. A microsimulation scenario modelling tool is being developed and implemented to assist with demographic discussions.

* All Australian and Northern Territory Government departments are referred to with their current titles, as of 18 September 2013.
National Award for Building Statistical Literacy around Demographic and Social Change in Remote NT Communities

The Context
The NatStats 2013 Excellence in developing statistical capability awards recognise excellence in using administrative data, developing statistical capability and using statistics in the media.

The Research
The NatStats 2013 Award for excellence in the developing statistical capability are awarded to an individual, group or organisation within the Australian education and training sector that have demonstrated a positive contribution to the development of statistical capability in the last two years. In this context, education and training encompasses primary, secondary and tertiary education, both public and private; as well as all levels of government, and private business. Criteria include a demonstrated contribution to the development and/or promotion of statistical capability, a demonstrated an innovative approach to improving statistical capability and demonstrated evidence of raising the profile of statistics, particularly by enhancing the ability to interpret statistical information among target audiences.

The Research Partners
• Northern Territory Department of Community Services
• Northern Territory Department of Treasury and Finance

The Outcomes
• Innovative methods for applying statistics to understand the rapidly changing populations of northern Australia
• Helping others to discover, understand and apply the vast stock of information available for planning, evaluation analysis and research is a step towards empowering communities, businesses and individuals to make informed decisions for their futures
Evaluation for Northern Contexts

Approaches to evaluation that build capacity and connect people in remote and urban communities, NGOs and government, project funders and policy makers, leading to better outcomes for all involved.

The **Evaluation for Northern Contexts** theme focuses on methodologies and approaches responsive to the special dynamics of remote Indigenous communities in Central Australia, the Top End, urban NT communities and our regional neighbours to the north. There is a particular emphasis on social policy issues, and a network of visiting fellows and adjuncts with national and international expertise support NI in capacity building.

Special features of NI evaluation include:

- researchers and evaluators able to provide an Indigenous perspective and experience working in remote community contexts
- an emphasis on working with stakeholders to clarify their processes and desired outcomes, often achieved through development of a Program Logic/Theory model
- support in development of databases and data collection support, involving significant innovation and targeting the needs of program participants where literacy and English language fluency present challenges
- support and facilitate the implementation of continuous improvement mechanisms
- emphasis on policy-building evidence through theory-building findings and methodologies
Focal areas include:

**Theory building**
Most evaluation theories and methodologies were developed in and for mainstream Euro-American contexts. This is looking to use local projects to inform a richer and more nuanced interaction between practice and theory.

**Independent, external evaluations**
Evaluations can be contracted for programs, policies or strategies. These can be commissioned when initiatives are being planned or are ongoing, and can be designed to focus on monitoring systems, service and process improvement, or impact assessments.

**Collaborative evaluations**
Evaluations can also be commissioned on a ‘skills transfer’ basis, where the NI evaluators work collaboratively with government and program personnel to build their internal capacity to identify, document, and address monitoring and evaluation issues.

**Capacity building**
Considerable resources are being devoted to building the capacity of NT evaluation stakeholders in multiple areas, including commissioning evaluations, disseminating and using findings to meet accountability requirements, improving governance and service responses, and conducting policy, program and strategic evaluations. There is special emphasis on selected approaches such as realist evaluation.

**Research Partnerships**
- Australasian Evaluation Society
- Australian Institute of Criminology
- Australian National University
- Northern Territory Department of the Attorney-General and Justice
- Miwatj Health
- Northern Territory Department of Children and Families *
- Northern Territory Department of Education *
- Northern Territory Department of Health *
- Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services
- Northern Territory Police Association
- WISE Employment

Evaluation outputs result in learning that leads to change for the better and benefit all involved.
Selected Projects

**Safe Streets Audit**
The Safe Streets Audit is intended to be the first of several joint projects that will build the Northern Institute's capacity to research and evaluate NT crime and safety issues. The research focused on crime trends and perceptions of public safety in the urban areas of Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs. It involved a literature review, analysis of three years of police data from 2010 to 2012, media analysis for selected weeks during that time period, and consultations with crime reduction stakeholders in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs.

**Targeted Family Support Scheme (TFSS) Evaluation**
Targeted Family Support Services provides a range of targeted services through NGO agencies to support low risk, high need families and prevent entry or re-entry to the child protection system. It works in close partnership with Department of Community and Families (DCF) programs responsible for child protection in the Northern Territory. The evaluation worked with program teams to review progress and support in data gathering. The recommendations and approach received a very positive response.

**Remote Area Rotation Initiative (RARI) Evaluation**
The Remote Area Rotation Initiative (RARI) was a pilot initiative to attract skilled child protection practitioners to the Northern Territory to address a critical workforce shortage in this area. By interviewing participants and stakeholders, the evaluators identified the activities and outcomes of RARI, and provided recommendations for possible future developments.

**DiversityWISE summary evaluation**
This project followed an initial formative evaluation of the Darwin based enhanced employment program for refugees, set up and managed by WISE Employment. It focused on the employment context and impact of DiversityWISE. A partnership with ANU supported a cost-benefit view of the program.

**Aboriginal Police Officer Recruitment and Retention**
Local interviews and focus groups were supplemented by investigation of a range of national and overseas models to provide recommendations for multiple paths to recruit, retain and promote Aboriginal police officers in remote and urban areas.
2013 Evaluation Symposia

The Context

The Northern Territory provides a challenging environment for evaluation. There are often complex interventions running concurrently, making it difficult to attribute outcomes to a particular intervention. Practitioners with strong theoretical and methodological skills may not have the skills to operate in NT’s cultural contexts; and those with rich cultural knowledge may not be skilled in ‘speaking the language of government’ and presenting the quantitative evidence that investment decisions need. Evaluation commissioners and evaluation practitioners, many new to their roles and/or the Territory, often struggle with these issues.

The Research

Funding was provided by CDU to strengthen evaluation across LEBA. The symposia were designed to identify areas of critical need and where the university should target its activities.

The first symposium in October 2013 was targeted to beginners and took participants through the stages of a typical evaluation, noting how each stage could be affected by its northern context.

The next symposium targeted more experienced evaluators and took them through issues often encountered in NT, including the challenge of evaluative attribution in complex intervention environments.

An Alice Springs symposium highlighted the need for better local support of NGO and government evaluation and a discussion on the challenges Indigenous evaluators faced. Over 40 stakeholders participated in the symposia overall.

The Research Partners

The symposia were facilitated by Northern Institute staff, visiting fellows and adjuncts. They included NI associates with many years of senior government policy and evaluation experience in fields such as disaster management, education, health, crime and justice, Indigenous and remote services. They were able to share their experience in scoping and conducting evaluations, and judging tender responses.

The Outcomes

Participants received a great deal of information on evaluation, but in addition the university identified areas for future research and potential business. A number of early career researchers decided through this process to develop as evaluators, building the university’s capacity in this area, and additional training has now commenced.

The Northern Institute formed a relationship with the local branch of the Australasian Evaluation Society to continue to build evaluation across the capacity, using models that emerged from the symposia. External associates with expertise in evaluation gained valuable knowledge of the special dynamics of NT evaluation, and this is leading to new materials and publications.
Northern Futures

Understanding and addressing the social impacts and processes of change in Northern Australia related to infrastructure development, public policy, climate change and migration.

Northern Australia faces a decade of rapid transformation as it redefines its role in the Asian region. A series of large-scale projects are set to drive population growth, urbanisation and infrastructure development. However, understanding of potential economic, social and environmental impact is limited. The Northern Futures research theme aims to address this broad knowledge gap through collaborative, multi-disciplinary research that can: (a) inform public dialogue around the future of Northern Australia; and, (b) underpin robust and flexible planning and policy frameworks. The theme will enhance existing capacity at the interface of commodities, communities and conservation research by integrating infrastructure and expertise across partner institutions. Outputs will target critical National Research Priorities, leading to improved understanding and decision making in a challenging time.

Areas of focus are:
- Research Leadership
- Research Training
- Collaboration
- Knowledge Transfer

Northern Australia faces a decade of rapid transformation as it redefines its role in the Asian region. Understanding of potential economic, social and environmental impact is limited.

Principal Scientists
Professor Paul Carter (RMIT)
Assoc Prof Allan Dale (JCU)
Dr Tom Rayner (RIEL)

Senior Researchers
Dr Anna Stephens (JCU)

Research Fellows
Dr Gemma Blackwood
Dr Tom Brewer
Dr Chris O’Brien (RIEL)
Dr Elspeth Oppermann
Research Partnerships

The **Northern Futures** theme began in mid-2012 and is funded primarily through the **Northern Research Futures Collaborative Research Network**\(^1\). Additional funding is provided by the **North Australia Marine Research Alliance**\(^2\).

Current research partners include:

- Australian Institute of Marine Science
- Australian National University
- James Cook University
- RMIT University

Outputs will target critical National Research Priorities, leading to improved understanding and decision making.


\(^2\) [http://www.namra.net.au/](http://www.namra.net.au/)
Selected Projects

**Future of Northern Australia: Governance system and policy**

The aim is to start a public discussion/debate about the issues of governance of northern Australia and the future of the north. The first document emerging from this project is a monograph focused on future governance challenges facing northern Australia. It explores how to significantly inject some health into the governance system.

It deals with three big tensions in the relationship between Southern Australia and Northern Australia. The three big tensions are (1) the resource exploitation agenda, (2) the resource preservation agenda, and (3) the Indigenous empowerment agenda.

**Ocean Connections**

This project aims to build an effective dialogue between three areas of research interest and expertise that rarely talk to one another. These are (1) Indigenous understandings of saltwater systems or simply for coastal peoples ‘country’; (2) non-Indigenous or cross-cultural science relating to coastal and offshore ecosystems – an immense oversimplification of a spectrum of intermediate amphibious land/water bodies and their non-human communities; and (3) fragile environment design with a particular focus on climatically appropriate public space design that responds to the imperative to develop new tropical coast infrastructure. It pursues a transdisciplinary understanding of the cultures of fragile environments in the context of major infrastructural investments currently affecting Darwin Harbour.

**Coastal Marine Science, North Australia Marine Research Alliance (NAMRA)**

Projects are emerging that draw on existing traditional knowledge about the interactions between seasons, plants, and animals, and yet explore some of the biophysical mechanisms driving environmental signals some of us have known about for centuries! In collaboration with The Australian Institute of Marine Science, this project is based on the hypothesis that bacteria in the environment and in the guts of animals have distinctive signatures that allow us to track where animals have been and who has eaten who – in other words reconstruct food webs.
Heat Stress: from adaptation to transformation?

This title encompasses a set of three related projects, each addressing individual and societal adaptation to heat stress in the Darwin and wider Top End region. It considers current and short-term adaptations and how these might enable or undermine more substantial or transformative responses to climate change.

This project engages with daily and seasonal practices of adaptation to heat stress that are already in place, and what level of vulnerability and adaptive capacity result. It will also examine the failures to adapt that are already causing exposure to heat stress and knock-on-effects in labour availability, efficiency, and hospitalization rates, all of which tie into changing costs of production and infrastructure and food reliability/security, as well as emerging contestations of resilience and liberal governmentality.

In collaboration with the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre, we are developing physiological research in conjunction with practice based research to create a grounded understanding of processes of adaptation. We are also exploring the effect of heat stress on decisions to remain in the territory.

Chasing the Winds: A Modern Climate History of the Arafura/Timor Region

This project is a modern climate history of the Arafura/Timor region from 1600AD onwards. Climate histories have relied on instrumental records which only date to around 1850AD. This project draws on ships’ logs and official colonial and mercantile reports going back four centuries.

Its purpose is to determine how weather and climate patterns have changed and, particularly, to provide a baseline against which current and future climate change can be assessed. A second crucial dimension examines how European newcomers to the region understood the weather and climates they encountered.

With this knowledge, people across North Australia and the Arafura/Timor region will be better able to adapt to climate change and the extremes of weather it will bring. This research will also help inform plans to develop northern Australia and places in its broader ecological context.
The Context
Climate history research has largely focused on two time periods. The first is so recent that it is almost history of the present – the last three or so decades, using rich data gathered by instrumental records. The second works on ecological archives and tells us about climate on the scales of deep time. This work examines climate history using human archives - ships’ logs, and Dutch, English and Portuguese colonial records for the Arafura/Timor region. Its timeframe is the period from about 1600 onwards, working in the neglected space between the recent times and the distant past.

The Research
Climate is not merely a physical phenomenon. A plethora of cultural factors shape how it has been understood at different times, in different places. As well as aiming to reconstruct past climate, this research also identifies how climate has been understood in the past. To this end, research entails close reading and analysis of early modern scientific works, navigation manuals and travel narratives, as well as weather recordings in ships’ logs and official colonial and mercantile records. Some of this material had been studied for other purposes.

Many records from the past have either perished or are in too poor a state to be useful. Step one was to seek and identify suitable material. Produced for other purposes, these documents are not catalogued in a manner that would indicate whether they are useful to these inquiries. Whether they were and whether they had survived was another question. There is no secondary material to rely on or even hint at a direction. Until the British Library and the British National Maritime Museum records have been investigated, knowledge, intuition, faith and hope had to be relied upon.

Research Partners
• Australian National University
• Charles Darwin University
• The British Library
• The British National Maritime Museum

Outcomes
An ocean of material! After an exhaustive analysis of English East India Company shipping timetables, definite records were identified. Thousands of records in fact. This represents a breakthrough, when the project went from an assumption to a practical, material viability. It is no longer a matter of if the documents exist, but how to organise them into bite-sized, digestible chunks. A three year project has now morphed into a potential 12-15 year project. Before returning to the UK institutions and before visiting Dutch and Portuguese archives, the task is to reframe the project, focus on particular periods and formulate very specific questions in order to navigate these seas of paper. This is a very exciting development.
This theme explores the questions, issues, challenges and opportunities for planning, developing, implementing, operating and sustaining an integrated workforce in diverse contexts. Workforce planning and development research supports enterprises and agencies to improve productivity in complex working environments. This theme looks at working environments in not only different geographic spaces but also changing policy environments.

Through innovative research this theme articulates the perspectives and actions of staff, institutions and employers under context-specific economic and social pressures and identifies, applies and evaluates approaches that build local capacity now and into the future. The research supports decision making that utilises innovation to better understand and support the growth of a sustainable workforce, and manage attrition and turnover as part of the business cycle. This work is also embedded within a global context and within international debates on labour force dynamics, integration and equality.

The research explores and develops ways to achieve socially, culturally and economically sustainable livelihoods by:

- understanding and addressing the keys to active transition between the worlds of work and learning in remote, rural and urban settings
- assessing the return on investment in various workforce development strategies

Workforce Development, Migration and Pathways to Learning

Identifying ways to plan for, support, develop and sustain workforces in a competitive market, in regional and remote areas both in large-scale and micro-businesses, and to embed the Northern Territory within global debates on international migration, integration and equality.

Principal Scientist
Professor Ruth Wallace

Senior Researchers
Dr Kate Golebiowska
Mike Harrison
Kathy Guthadjaka

Research Associates
Alicia Boyle
Johanna Funk
Dr Marilyn Kell
Dr Catherine Koerner
investigating and recommending new approaches to recognise and address social and systemic barriers for diverse group participation and active citizenship in order to inform theory, policy and programs.

applying systemic use of multimedia technologies to support workforce engagement and addresses social and systemic barriers to diverse participation and active citizenship.

This research seeks to understand the ways different systems operate when they intersect, such as the pathways between learning and workforce development. The focus transitions between work and learning and explores the issues associated with engaging disenfranchised people in employment. The research undertaken contributes to the focus on migrant, diversity and post-colonial frameworks.

Our research supports enterprises and agencies to improve productivity in complex working environments.
Research Partnerships

- Australian Government Department of Education
- Australian Government Department of Social Services *
- Australian Research Council
- BINUS University, Indonesia
- Centre for Sami Research, Umeå University, Sweden
- Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation
- Duke University, United States of America
- East Arnhem Fisheries Network
- East Arnhem Shire
- Fisheries Research and Development Corporation
- Flinders University
- Human Services Training Advisory Council
- Indigenous Business Australia
- MCI Management Centre Innsbruck, Austria
- Nordic Centre for Spatial Research, Stockholm
- Northern Territory Department of Business *
- Northern Territory Department of Education *
- Northern Territory Department of Land Resource Management *
- Northern Territory Department of the Chief Minister
- Northern Territory Office for Multicultural Affairs
- Oxford University, United Kingdom
- Plant Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre
- Service Industries Training Advisory Council
- The Nordic Ministers’ Council, Stockholm
- Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia
- Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Indonesia
- Universitas Nusa Cendana, Indonesia
- University National of Timor Leste
- University of Applied Sciences, Krems, Austria
- UNRAM University, Indonesia
- Vienna Institute of Demography, Austria
Selected Projects

* Building resilience in Indigenous communities through engagement - a focus on Biosecurity threats

To enhance the ability of Indigenous communities, and relevant regulatory authorities and industries to better manage social, environmental and economic impacts of biosecurity threats, and to participate in biosecurity strategies by describing and evaluating bicultural engagement models that build empowerment and ownership in indigenous communities and their responses to those threats.

* Collaborative knowledge systems for plant biosecurity surveillance

This project tests the hypothesis that remote communities can contribute to effective delivery of plant biosecurity surveillance. An assessment framework will be developed and tested that can be used by government and community stakeholders to pinpoint the risks and benefits of engaging different sectors in plant biosecurity surveillance.

* Resource Development for the Defence of Darwin Experience (DDE)

The DDE facility is being developed to form part of the World War II Precinct at East Point with the Darwin Military Museum and will provide links to a distributed digital experience, using the DDE website and smartphone applications, which will encourage people to visit the WWII heritage sites in Darwin and beyond.

* Development of the East Arnhem Fisheries Network Training Framework

The project will partner with the NT Department of Resources and the East Arnhem Fisheries Network consultation and development process to understand the key elements of and develop a coordinated training framework that aligns with the aspirations of Aboriginal people seeking to establish sustainable seafood enterprises in the East Arnhem region.

* Workforce planning and development and cultural competence

This research focuses on new ways of bringing together these two approaches to develop frameworks for sustainable Indigenous workforces. Further work to be investigated includes case studies of Indigenous Organisations, and scoping and engagement with organisations interested in implementing these frameworks.

* Pre-VET Project

In collaboration with the Northern Territory Government, this project utilises e-learning technologies to support the development of workplace literacy and numeracy skills.
Employment and mobility trajectories of overseas-born early childhood education and care workers in Darwin, NT

The Context

In the Northern Territory (NT), overseas-born early childhood education and care workers (ECEC) make up 28% of the workforce. Given the enforcement of new minimum qualification standards on 1 January 2014 as part of the National Quality Framework, the ability to attract and retain these workers is critical to meeting the community needs for childcare.

This pilot study investigated the skills levels and level of employment of ECEC workers in the NT, their job satisfaction, professional development expectations and mobility trajectories.

The Research

The research aimed to fill a knowledge gap about overseas-born ECEC workers in order to provide evidence to assist the Northern Territory to develop strategies to successfully implement its own Workforce Plan as well as meet the new national standards. This information will also be of interest to other stakeholders such as the Human Services Training Advisory Council NT and training providers. The research:

- documented the demographic, economic and qualifications characteristics of the overseas-born ECEC workforce in the NT
- documented their level of employment, job satisfaction and professional development expectations, and
- provided information to better understand their mobility motivations and patterns
The Research Partners

• The Reference Group, which included Child Care Centre Directors and representatives from the NT Department of Education
• NT Human Services Training Advisory Council
• Department of Employment (formerly the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations)

The Outcomes

Key findings included:

• The overseas-born ECEC personnel in the NT are passionate about working with babies and children. They work in a supportive work environment created by colleagues and Centre Directors.
• The majority of the interviewed overseas-born ECEC workers are already suitably qualified to work under the new minimum qualification standards commencing on 1 January 2014.
• Higher wages, more time to upgrade formal qualifications, better financial recognition of higher level qualifications, and more flexible modes of formal training could improve their employment experience.
• The majority of the interviewees intended to live and work in the ECEC sector in the NT long-term. Family ties and the NT lifestyle and climate were the two principal reasons for migration to and staying in the NT.
• The attraction of new workers to the ECEC sector remains an issue. The appeal of a career in this industry can be improved by promoting permanent contracts, being offered scholarships to study for an ECEC qualification at CDU, work experience through the VET in Schools programs at NT senior schools, career counsellors introducing graduates to careers in the ECEC sector, and the better chance for the overseas-born reaching a management level in the NT rather than elsewhere in Australia.
Events Calendar 2013

13 February
Darwin Housing Update
special 2-part presentation
Seminar
Presenter: Greg Sharley
Institutions: Northern Territory Government and Northern Institute

13 March
Consultation for better housing outcomes
Seminar
Presenters: Professor Michael Christie and Matthew Campbell
Institutions: Northern Territory Government and Northern Institute

8 March
Special Event
International Women’s Day
Venue: Northern Institute
Facilitated by: NI for Melaleuca Refugee Centre

21 March
Fixing through mixing. Understanding ethnic clustering in English Schools: Consequences for Social Cohesion
Seminar
Presented by: Dr Serena Hussain

22 March
Let’s Talk Data Linkage!
Seminar
Presented by: Andrew Stanley and Nicky O’Brien
9 May
The work of the Australian Institute of Criminology: an overview
Seminar
Presented by: Dr Adam Tomison
Institution: Australian Institute of Criminology

16 April
GROUNDUP at Northern Institute - Who, What, Where and Why?
Seminar
Presented by: Professor Michael Christie, Dr Anthea Nicholls, Trevor van Weeren and Juli Cathcart
Institution: Northern Institute

12 April
Ocean Connections Seminar
Presented by: Professor Paul Carter
Institutions: Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) and Northern Institute

5 April
Special Event
Film screening ‘My Mother’s Village’ by Director Aaron Burton
Venue: Northern Institute
Hosted by Professor Sharon Bell

16 April
Groundup at Northern Institute - Who, What, Where and Why?
Seminar
Presented by: Professor Michael Christie, Dr Anthea Nicholls, Trevor van Weeren and Juli Cathcart
Institution: Northern Institute

9 May
The work of the Australian Institute of Criminology: an overview
Seminar
Presented by: Dr Adam Tomison
Institution: Australian Institute of Criminology

30 May
Collaborative Learning Pathways Seminar
Presented by: Johanna Funk and Shelley Worthington
Institutions: Northern Territory Government and Northern Institute
June 12 and 13
CRN Writing non-fiction with Professor Tom Griffiths (ANU) Workshop
Participants from across the Humanities and Sciences, from Darwin, Cairns, Alice Springs and Canberra joined award-winning writing and historian Professor Tom Griffiths at CDU and NARU to probe issues relating to the philosophy, psychology and technicalities of good non-fiction writing. Participants included people from CRN partner institutions such as ANU and JCU’s Cairns Institute as well as postgrads and postdocs from across CDU.
Venue: Northern Institute

June 18
Do Loose Lips Bring Ships? The Role of Policy, Politics and Human Rights in Managing Unauthorised Boat Arrivals Seminar
Presented by: Professor Mary Crock
Institution: Sydney University

June
‘Reframing Refugees’ Asylum Seeker Symposium 2013
Presented by: Associate Professor James Jupp and Professor Mary Crock
‘Reframing Refugees’ was the second in the ‘Asylum Seeker Symposium’ Series hosted by The Northern Institute following ‘All in the same boat’ in 2012 which was aimed to challenge current stereotypes about asylum seekers and refugees. ‘Reframing Refugees’ showcased research and expertise to inform public debate and reframe national narratives about asylum seekers who come to Australia. Ultimately, the ‘Asylum Seeker Symposium’ series seeks to contribute rigorous, empirical social research findings to regional solutions on refugees.
This year, Northern Institute partnered with the Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory.
Venue: Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT)

26-28 June
Thirteenth International Conference on Diversity in Organizations, Communities, and Nations
Presented by: Dean Groom, Bronwyn Stuckyey, Lauren Ferro and Mark O’Rourke
The Diversity in Organizations, Communities and Nations knowledge community creates a space of discussion for anyone with an interest in, and concern for, mediating cultural difference and diversity. Common Ground’s collection of Diversity journals examines the realities of difference and diversity today, empirically and critically as well as optimistically and strategically, touching upon the topics of globalization, identity and social group formation.
At a time of virulent reactions to difference and globalization (ethnonationalism, racist backlash, parochialism and protectionism), there is a pressing need to reflect critically on the shape and the possibilities of the normative agendas of diversity and globalization. They aim to be a place for thinking about and discussing these pressing matters, and in ways that range from the ‘big picture’ and the theoretical, to the practical and everyday business of negotiating difference and diversity in organizations, communities and civic life.
Venue: CDU
2 August
Special Event
A Grammar Sketch in Yolŋu Sign Language Book Launch
Authors: Dr Dany Adone and Elaine Lanurpa Maypilama
Venue: The Northern Territory Library, Parliament House

16 July
Diversity and Performance in Higher Education: Comparative Research Project Seminar
Presented by: Dr Melanie Jaeck, Dr Magalie Marais and Dr Cedrine Joly
Institution: Montpellier Business School (France)
Venue: Northern Institute

1 August
‘Hand Talk - Indigenous sign languages’ Workshop
Facilitator: Dr Dany Adone
Institution: University of Cologne (Germany)
Venue: Northern Institute

13 August
The Rebalance and the Future of U.S. Leadership in Asia Seminar
Presented by: Brad Glosserman
Institution: Centre for International and Strategic Studies (CSIS), Honolulu (Hawaii)
Venue: Northern Institute

23 August
‘Defending Australia: The US Military Presence in Northern Australia’ Symposium
Keynote Speakers: The Hon Malcolm Fraser, Professor Richard Tanter, The Hon David Tollner and Dr Tom Lewis
The US Military has been extending their presence in Darwin from a 200 strong company of Marines in 2012 to a full Marine Air Ground Task Force of 2500 soldiers by 2016, as part of the enhanced Australia-US defence cooperation announced by the Prime Minister and President of the United States in November 2012. The aim of this symposium was to bring together a range of views on the deployment and to open up a conversation about the US presence in Northern Australia. The symposium also provided an opportunity for members of the public to take part in a Q&A with a panel of keynotes and speakers.
Facilitated by: Northern Institute
Venue: Litchfield Room, Parliament House
26 August

Shared problems, shared interests: re-framing Australia-Indonesia security relations Seminar

Presented by: Professor Richard Tanter
Institution: Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainability, University of Melbourne
Venue: Northern Institute

28 August

‘Knowledge, Governance and Organisation Management through Objects’ Symposium Part 1 of 3

Presented by: Professor Helen Verran

Objects of Governance as our Familiars.
Familiars, or familiar spirits, are said to come down to us from European folklore of the Medieval and Early Modern periods. Familiars were, we are told, supernatural entities believed to assist witches and cunning folk in their practice of magic. Unlike ghosts, familiaris are vivid and animated, often, but not always, benevolent—especially when companions of cunning folk, for whom they serve as protectors. Helen tells stories of several contemporary objects of governance. She suggests that in Australia’s relatively recently re-formed governmentality (technology of government) objects of governance work as companions and protectors for interventions. Also Helen suggests that much needs to be re-imagined in the era of new governmentality.

Venue: Northern Institute

29 August

‘Knowledge, Governance and Organisation Management through Objects’ Symposium Part 2 of 3

Presented by: Professor Tess Lea
Institution: University of Sydney

Hugh Wason Byers and Me: Describing policy wordings through doing theory lite’
This paper drew on the processes of writing a book about Darwin, my home town, the most different of Australia’s capital cities. It was written for locals and strangers and non-academics. It was my attempt to capture where and what this vulnerable, resilient little town is about, with its delusions of grandeur and its humiliations; its catastrophes and resurrections; its misconceived projects and its visionaries. In writing it, I did not erase my presence or family history. A more objectifying language would strike a false tone. Personalising the stories and introducing some of the town’s colourful people, critters and eventful times, I also hoped to give a sense of Darwin’s consistent social inequalities from an eco-critical as well as anthropocentric viewpoint. I call this doing theory-lite. In this paper, I played with the figure of Hugh Wason Byers to share my struggle with telling stories in order to do theory-lite.

Venue: Northern Institute

30 August

‘Knowledge, Governance and Organisation Management through Objects’ Symposium Part 3 of 3

Presented by: Professor Beth Povinelli
Institution: Columbia University (USA)

Geontologies: Being, belonging, and obligating as forms of truth-making
In this talk Povinelli explored the governance of the otherwise from the point of view of the “carbon imaginary”, namely, the self-evident separation of life and nonlife (biochemistry and geochemistry) based on the drama of birth, growth, and death. The talk also explored the three central figures in the carbon imaginary—the desert, the animist/totemist, and the terrorist. And compared the carbon imaginary to other ways of linking bios (life) and geos (earth).

Venue: Northern Institute
2-4 September

‘Game On: Exploring Innovative Pedagogies’ Using Game Design to Enhance Online Learning

Presented by: Gabe Zichermann, Nicole Lazzaro, Karl M. Kapp, Sebastian Deterding and Anne Derryberry

This project is a part of a larger Structural Adjustment Fund (SAF) project that includes within its mandate, the establishment of an Innovative Media Production Studio (IMPS) for the specialist design and development of interactive online resources. The studio will utilise a range of contemporary technologies and approaches to create rich, innovative and engaging online learning materials. One of the approaches will be the application of game theory to underpin innovative pedagogies and resource development for online learning at Charles Darwin University (CDU).

The aims of the Symposium was to: a) inform the development of online resources at CDU generally, and more specifically, in relation to the potential for the incorporation of game design, game-based learning and/or gamification elements. b) assist in identifying staff, teams and disciplines that are most interested in investigating these opportunities and explore real and potential barriers that need to be addressed by CDU in order to realise any incorporation of game design, game-based learning and or/gamification elements pedagogies and resource development for online learning at Charles Darwin University (CDU).

Venue: Northern Institute

14-17 September

Writing Workshop

Facilitated by: John Henry and Dr Linda Ford

Venue: Northern Institute

3-4 September

Northern Australia Coastal Science Symposium

Charles Darwin University (CDU) and the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) conduct high-quality social and biophysical research on coastal systems, including freshwater, estuarine and marine environments, across Northern Australia. Both institutions have strong track records in delivering evidence-based input to Government policy planning and commercial coastal operations. However, the roles of research and teaching institutions are evolving as Australia redefines its role in a rapidly changing Asia.

This symposium acquainted new and established researchers with current capabilities and coastal science activities of CDU and AIMS relevant to Northern Australia. It provided a valuable forum for discussion of the past and future of integrated coastal science in Northern Australia, further strengthening links between CDU and AIMS. Speakers were challenged to reflect on the evolution of their fields and shared their vision for inspired, strategic research in the North.

Venue: Northern Institute

19 September

Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Hungary) Seminar

Long-term socio-demographic effect of Chernobyl disaster on the rural areas of Ukrainian and Belarusian Policy

Presented by: David Karacsonyi

Institution: Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Hungary)

Venue: Northern Institute
8 October
Evaluation In Northern Contexts (Casuarina Campus)
Workshop
Facilitated by: Associate Professor Emma Williams
Venue: Northern Institute

10 October
Urban North Writing Workshop
Workshop
Facilitated by: Professor Dean Carson and Dr Andrew Taylor
Venue: Northern Institute

9 October
‘Urban North: Dreams and Realities’ Symposia
Presented by: Bruce Prideaux, James Cook University, Australia, Lee Huskey, University of Alaska Anchorage, Deanne Bird, Risk Frontiers, Australia, Prescott Ensign, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada, Peter Berggren, Glesbygdmedicinskt Centrum, Sweden, Dean Carson, Flinders University, Australia, Keith Storey, Memorial University, Canada, Elena Nuikina, University of Vienna and Austria, Doris Carson, University of South Australia

Settlement in remote regions has posed challenges for policy makers, the companies that operate in these areas and the people who make their homes there. Remoteness from services taken for granted in larger urban areas, high living costs, harsh environments, limited employment and education opportunities and difficulties in attracting private sector investment create barriers for urban development in remote regions. These barriers create a difficult environment for the long term sustainability of viable urban settlements. One response has been the rapid growth in FIFO employment in mining and other sectors.

In the longer term factors such as climate change, the end of the mining boom and other potential disruptions such as the slowing of growth in Asia will pose a new group of challenges.

The response of the public sector to these issues will have an enormous influence on the attractiveness or otherwise of life in remote areas and how urban settlement patterns evolve to meet these challenges. This symposium considered these issues and explored how remote settlements in other countries have met these challenges. Case studies from Russia, Canada and Australia examined issues such as making remote settlement economies work, entrepreneurship, FIFO vs residential populations, developing sustainable services in small towns and the challenge of climate change. Issues related to indigenous settlements and long run sustainability were also examined.

This event was facilitated by The Northern Institute for Collaborative Research Network Program: Northern Research Futures.
Venue: CDU
11 November
Tyikim Language Revitalisation Forum

The Tyikim Language Revitalisation Forum was funded by CDU Innovation grant 2013 and the recipients then reported on the Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu and Marrithiel language activities that have been conducted since June (27th) – November (17th) 2013 in Darwin, Batchelor, Litchfield National Park, Shilo and the Wagait Aboriginal land Trust at Twin Hill Station, Wulmun, Pandayal and Ditjini Outstations.
Venue: Northern Institute

4–5 December
School of Education Writing Workshop
Facilitated by: Dr Greg Shaw and Marilyn Kell
Venue: Northern Institute

18–29 November
‘Paper Blitz’ Workshop
Facilitated by: Dr Tom Raymer
Venue: Northern Institute

20-22 November
Evaluation in Central Australia Workshop
Facilitated by: Associate Professor Emma Williams
Venue: CDU Alice Springs

2-3 December
Staff Planning Workshop
Facilitated by: Professor Ruth Wallace
Venue: Northern Institute

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Venue: Northern Institute
Northern Institute Staff
2012 and 2013

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Greg Cartan
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Dr Aggie Wegner
Dr Emma Williams
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Dr Kerstin Zander
Dr Benxiang Zeng
Dr Don Zoellner
Adjuncts, Honoraries & Consultants
2012 and 2013

Professor Dany Adone
Dr Allan Arnott
Professor Hurriyet Babacan
Professor Tony Barnes 5
Matthew Campbell
Professor Paul Carter 2
Dr Tom Carter
Juli Cathcart
Professor Lesley Chenoweth
Eileen Cummings
Associate Professor Allan Dale
Dr David Eagling

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Dr John Guenther
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Professor Tess Lea 4
Professor Stewart Lockie
Margaret MacDonald
Tanyah Nasir
Professor Elizabeth Povinelli
Professor Bruce Prideaux 3
Dr Cathy Robinson
Dr William Sanders

Dr Anna Stephens
John Stoney
Dr Richard Tanter
Professor Ian Thynne
Dr Allan Van Zyl
Professor Helen Verran 1
Gillian Sue Westhorp
Chris White
Matthew Willis
Shelley Worthington

1
2
3
4
5
HDR student list

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
Deasyanti Adil
Paul Barrett
Claire Bartlett
Delyna Baxter
Karen Borgelt
Bethune Carmichael
Derek Cruz
Hanandyo Dardjito
Kevin Dolman
Terry Dunbar
Josephine Douglas
Sarah Edmond
Edward Egan
Marisa Fogarty
Janice Gerar
Lisa Hall
Adam Heaton
Rachmat Hidayat
Jayson Ibanez
Steven Kovola
Heleen Kruger
Deborah Lauscome
Theofransus Litaay
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Wayan Mudita
Emanouil Nia
Joanne O’Cock
Kyriakos Papaspyrou
Alison Reedy
Bronwyn Rossingh
Susana Saffu
Ratna Dyah Suryaratri
Jennifer Taylor
Helen Thompson
Gemma Wickens
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Helen Wozniak
Peter Yates

Masters by Research
Debbie Boon
Karen Cieri
Rhonda Gilchrist
Adam MacFie
Collin Marshall
Rachel O’Leary
Jose Dias Quintas
Jan Salmon
Katharina Voit

Doctor of Teaching
Sharon Gierus

Completed

2012
Roman Curtis - To What extent do Perceptions of Racism Deter and Prevent Aboriginal men from using public health
Jamie Seaton - Place discourses in the context of high levels of population migration
Andrew Taylor - Investigations of Changing Indigenous Migration Practices for the Northern Territory of Australia: Theoretical and Policy Implications

2013
Gregory Cartan - Organising Tourism Providers on Remote Touring Tracks as Geographically Distributed Teams.
Katharina Voit - Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Challenges for the Northern Territory - A qualitative study investigating opportunities for the introduction of clinician-led workforce research
Donald Zoellner - If Vocational Education and Training is the Answer, What Was the Question? Theorising Public Policy and the Behaviour of Citizens
Community and International Engagement

Seeking to understand the ways power plays out in our communities; enabling or hindering the social inclusion of all groups.

At the Northern Institute, Community and International Engagement is reflected through all research themes, with a focus on applied policy research in our region and beyond. Our projects investigate and recommend new approaches to recognising and addressing social and systemic barriers to diverse group participation and active citizenship. Projects develop a deep understanding of intergroup relations in the region and inform theory, policy and programs.

A core aim of this theme is to embed the Northern Territory within a global context and within debates on international migration, integration and equality. This involves engagement with international scholarship to increase relevant knowledge and skill bases of academics and other knowledge sector professionals. In addition, the researchers partner with international experts in areas that build our knowledge of living and working in regional and remote areas that face a number of challenges and opportunities.
2012


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2013


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Statistics

Research Population

![Graph showing research population comparison between 2012 and 2013, with categories: Adjuncts, Visitors, Students, and Staff.]

Research Outputs

![Graph showing research outputs comparison between 2012 and 2013, with categories: Refereed Conference Papers, Journal Articles, Book Chapters, and Books. Notations: *Publications as at November 2013.]

Research Income

![Graph showing research income comparison between 2012 and 2013, with categories: NTG, CRC, Commonwealth, CDU, and Australian Competitive Grants.]

* Publications as at November 2013.
Written on the wind

Children know from a young age when different foods are in season. They are also taught to avoid danger.

Gold bush tucker.
Researchers KATHY GUTHADJAKA and TREVOR VAN WEEREN have developed a new tool for the next generation of Indigenous story-tellers in East Arnhem Land.

When the dry easterly wind blows across the Top End, it is Midaarrarr (end of the wet season). It is time to look for mud mussels and shellfish: it is the time when turtles lay their eggs. It is time to pick root foods like water lily bulbs and yams.

These are the environmental cues the Gälwa community has used for countless generations. Now a seasonal calendar “Gurrumulyn Yolnu seasons – Gälwa – the changing seasons in east Arnhemland” has been launched as part of a collaborative project by Charles Darwin University.

Kathy Guthadjaka, also known as Gôle, is a senior elder from Gälwa, a small homeland community on Elcho Island in North-East Arnhem Land. Working as an educator since the mid-1960s, her research spans Warramiri language, knowledge, culture and country, and more widely. Aboriginal education, bothways education, spirituality, identity and ceremony, Warramiri, the language spoken in Gälwa, is endangered.

A Senior Research Fellow at The Northern Institute, Ms Guthadjaka said the calendar was a holistic concept whereby the educators who used it could remember whatever they needed at any time of the year.

“It is important to record traditional knowledge about what is good bush tucker at different times of the year, when certain plants fruit and what to look for when hunting. It is also a record of ‘songlines’ and medicinal plants.”

She said traditional knowledge could best be described as a “big tree” with interlinking stories. On the surface the trunk, branches and leaves were the current generation growing in their learning of knowledge, while the roots underneath held the memories and dreamtime stories of the elders that supported the transfer of knowledge.

“We built the calendar as a community, working together to identify plants, write stories and take photographs. We can preserve the language and teach the kids at the same time.”

A cross-disciplinary researcher at The Northern Institute who also runs design company Merri Creek Productions, Trevor van Weeren, has been involved with Indigenous communities in North and East Arnhem Land since the late 1980s. He has worked with Ms Guthadjaka on several language projects and helped to develop the calendar concept with the Gälwa school children and community members.

“Gôle wanted to develop a curriculum for the school around the seasons,” Mr van Weeren said. “The calendar would represent one small part of the knowledge to be passed on to the next generation at the community school.”

The calendar is the first piece in a series of digital tools Ms Guthadjaka plans to develop as educational resources.

“Gôle wants to bring Warramiri, her endangered language, back into use by the next generation, using new and rich technology. We are now making videos with the school children.”

The calendar is being used as a basis of curriculum background in the Gälwa school. “This has the effect of keeping the school and broader Yolnu community in tune with each other,” Ms Guthadjaka said. “Seasons play an important role in the education of our children. The names of the seasons represent a set of things that happen together,” she said.

The calendar (see over page) is based on wind direction throughout the year. It was a collaborative effort by CDU and Merri Creek Productions. Visit cdu.edu.au/the-northern-institute.

Traditional knowledge could best be explained like a ‘big tree’ with many interlinking stories.
Keeping alive an ancient language

Stories transmit Indigenous knowledge across the millennia. Now ANTHEA NICHOLLS is working with a Yolnu elder to ensure stories from Arnhem Land are preserved for future generations.

Yambol Dumurras, a Yolnu man from Arnhem Land.
Traditional languages have been at the heart of preserving Australian Aboriginal culture for the past 60,000 years. Stories are passed through the generations, carrying with them knowledge of Earth’s creation, history, survival and the protection of sacred sites, performances and rituals. Language and cultural knowledge are entwined.

Indigenous Yolŋu elder Yambral Durrurrma is a 77-year-old man who has spent his life in the Northern Territory’s Anbinjord Land region. He has joined forces with a CDU researcher and together they make a formidable pair in recording the stories of the area.

Research Fellow with CDU’s The Northern Institute Dr Anthea Nicholls first met Mr Durrurrma when she moved to the Indigenous community of Fanningning in 2001 to take a job as a school teacher. At the time Dr Nicholls was studying a Yolŋu Matha online language course at CDU, and she and Mr Durrurrma quickly formed a friendship around their shared love of linguistics, reading and writing.

“Some of our favourite conversations took place at a table strewn with notebooks, pencils, dictionaries and coffee mugs, next to the caravan I lived in,” Dr Nicholls said. “Yambral would tell me how young people were not speaking the language the way it was spoken back in his day. He was concerned by how the language was changing. Indigenous Australians have always been multilingual, however, linguistic diversity is being lost, and that is quite regrettable.”

Mr Durrurrma has witnessed the deterioration of his traditional language, Liyagalawunjurr during his lifetime, and has taken charge of keeping it alive. With Dr Nicholls’s support, Mr Durrurrma set about recording his stories, some from his own life and others that had been given to him, to keep the old language alive and ensure his people’s stories will endure the tests of time and social change.

The exercise grew into a linguistic preservation study, and for more than six years, Dr Nicholls and Mr Durrurrma collected, transcribed and translated the stories for a book entitled Narrakan Djiwa. Dr Nicholls said in those early days she and Mr Durrurrma developed a work process that they would follow for many years. “Yambral would write his stories in an exercise book and give them to me to type on the computer, I would give him a print-out of the story, and he would return it to me, sometimes days, other times weeks or even months later, with meticulous corrections,” Dr Nicholls said.

“I would make the revisions and give him another print-out, and this process would go on and on until each story was ready,” Dr Nicholls said. “Yambral’s voice and narrative was very different from the Western notion of ‘stories’, in which the author tries to fill in all the details needed to create a picture in the reader’s mind. At first I gravitated to accounts that included more descriptive passages that helped me picture the stories.”

In the book, Mr Durrurrma also takes the role of ghost writer for elders who have passed stories on to him. The recounts of well-known elder Djirwa fill many of the book’s pages, one of which tells how World War II arrived at Milngimbi. Through Mr Durrurrma, Djirwa recalls how he was in the community’s church when it was hit by Japanese bombs, and people were forced to retreat into the jungle until the conflict ended.

Elder Djirwak’s story also comes to life as Mr Durrurrma writes of the horror and bloodshed of a guerilla war that took place near Anbinjord Land’s Aralum Swamp at the turn of the 20th Century. Mr Durrurrma said it was here that the East Africa Cold Storage Company established a station on traditional hunting grounds, leading to the theft of cattle and fencing wire by the Yolŋu people.

Retribution was swift and harsh, with stockmen chasing down and killing many Yolŋu. Djirwak made his escape, transforming into a frinticole (small bird of the plain) and dodging the white man’s bullets.

Even though these men have long since passed, Mr Durrurrma keeps them alive by telling their stories, just as enduring stories and the languages used to tell them continue to give life to Indigenous culture.
Language specialists MICHAEL CHRISTIE and BRIAN DEVLIN are leading a web-based project to breathe life into more than 25 Australian Indigenous languages through a unique living archive of endangered literature.

With many Australian Indigenous languages and literature under threat, a team of dedicated researchers has travelled thousands of kilometres throughout the Northern Territory, working to preserve more than 4000 Indigenous stories.

For thousands of years, traditional stories have been the vehicles through which Indigenous Australians have passed knowledge and language from one generation to the next. Now the internet is providing an interface not only to help Indigenous people preserve some of these stories, but also to provide an educational and research resource for academics and the broader community.

Professor of Education and project leader, Michael Christie said that during the era of bilingual education in the NT (1973 to 2000), more than 4000 books, recordings and audiovisual materials in excess of 25 languages were produced in 20 Literature Production Centres.

"Almost 40 years on, much of this literature is endangered and the texts are vulnerable," Professor Christie said. As valuable tools chronicling Indigenous cultural heritage, the topics of these stories range from environmental knowledge to traditional practices, oral literature, ethno-botany and history.

"It was part of an international movement to allow children to begin reading and writing in their own languages at school," Professor Christie said. "Thousands of books and other school materials were produced in Australian Indigenous languages by Aboriginal people, in collaboration with staff in school bilingual education programs across the NT. Many were traditional elders who were interested in bilingual education because it would allow their children to learn both traditional Indigenous knowledge and mainstream Australian knowledge. Although often illiterate themselves, they were committed to the possibility of preserving their knowledge using whatever tools were available."

Realising the texts were vulnerable, Professor Christie and CDU Associate Professor in Indigenous Education Brian Devlin set up the "Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages" project, aiming to build a digital archive of endangered literature in collaboration with the language-owning communities. With more than 4000 titles on their list the team...

**A FAMILY AFFAIR**

Waymamba Gagakumai, originally from Millngarni, 540 km east of Darwin, remembers her father telling the story about the Makassan fishermen he met as a boy. As he told it, Waymamba’s father was standing with his uncle fishing off Howard Island, east of Millngarni. They were approached by a Makassan captain named Giril, who gave Waymamba’s father the Makassan name Garra Maqalay. "It was the name of a city from far away, maybe from where the Makassan was from," she said. "He kept that name because it was given to him. He kept it until the day he passed on."

This story and others told by her father are included in the archive, Waymamba, alongside Professor Michael Christie, formed the first Yolngu studios group and taught language and culture for more than 20 years at CDU. She is now working with the team to record audio files of her father’s stories in the Gupapuygu language.

"The books were compiled in the community schools to help teach the children how to read and write in their own language," she said. "The community got together and some people told the stories in language, while others recorded them or illustrated them with pictures." This archive is very important, not only to Yolngu Indigenous people, but also the whole Indigenous community, to keep their language and culture strong.

Eight of her father’s stories, published between the mid-1970s and the late 1980s, will feature in the archive.
A speaker of the Yolngu language Gamanj, Associate Professor Brian Devlin has worked in applied linguistics in the NT for more than 30 years. Having been employed in the Indigenous communities of Yirrkala and Galiluwu during the bilingual era as a teacher-linguist and school principal, Dr Devlin is a chief investigator of the “Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages” project alongside Professor Michael Christie. He has seized the opportunity to bring these important historical records to life using 21st Century technology.

“In the early ’80s, we recorded the stories using typewriters and basic printing equipment,” he said. “This [Living Archive] project provides us with a great opportunity to make the archive as interactive as possible by combining the text and images with sound, so that these using the archive will be able to hear how the words are pronounced in language. Indigenous children will be able to listen to the recording and read along with some of the stories.”

“We have also started working on the development of e-books, which use historical audio recordings of elders telling traditional stories or recordings that have been collected by the Living Archive team as they travelled throughout the NT in search of books.” One such recording was of an Indigenous elder talking about the concept of language shift, which Dr Devlin recognised as an integral part of language research. In his doctoral thesis at Columbia University, entitled “Language Maintenance in a Northeast Arnhem Land Settlement”, Dr Devlin found that many traditional clan languages were giving way to a common peer-group vernacular spoken by Indigenous youth.

“Language shift is occurring in many communities,” he said. “Although the elders expect the children to grow up speaking traditional clan languages, the large communities and their schools have brought Indigenous children together from different clans. In these situations, often the traditional languages have been forsaken and replaced with a modern alternative spoken and understood by all.

“As part of this project, we also hope to record the variety of Indigenous languages, and the stories that surround this evolution and language shift. The archive will include traditional Indigenous and modern Indigenous languages.”

including project manager linguist Cathy Bow, staff from the Australian National University and the Northern Territory Government, began a year-long search, travelling thousands of kilometres throughout Northern and Central Australia to give these books new life.

“There are some amazing stories,” Ms Bow said. “Many of the books have been produced by teachers, elders or linguists to teach the students language, but many have also been written and illustrated by the students themselves in language. The stories range from traditional Dreamtime stories to the first contact of Indigenous people and the Matsus and experiences of Indigenous communities during World War II.”

With the support of the communities visited, Ms Bow has located thousands of titles, which have been transported to Darwin to be digitised, or left with the language-owning communities to scan and send through to the research team.

“Many of the schools and literacy centres had well-catalogued collections, but we also found books in dusty sheds covered in spider webs and piled up in wheelie bins,” she said.

“In some cases there was only a single copy of a book left and a few books had disappeared or been destroyed altogether. Without this digital archive, these stories could have been lost forever.”

Ms Bow said that respecting ownership by seeking permission for digitisation, and building the archive in collaboration with the language-owning communities has enabled the communities to make decisions about sharing their intellectual property. It has also reconnected lost stories and illustrations with the places and people of origin. “We have found family members who had no idea that their father or mother had been involved in the creation of these books, or of the family stories the books told,” she said.

Professor Christie said the website was more than simply a repository of materials to preserve language. It also aimed to engage academics and the wider community. “The web-based archive will enable researchers to engage nationally and internationally to engage with the texts and related resources, and with the original language-owning communities to pursue collaborative and grounded research,” Professor Christie said.

“Australia’s languages have evolved over many thousands of years to enable and enact unique human relationships with the social, cultural, technical and natural worlds. This resource will make publicly available a large archive of previously unavailable resources to support this work.”

“As a living archive that will continue to grow, this resource will facilitate connections with knowledge and language owners, most often descendants or relatives of the original storytellers.”

The project was funded through the Australian Research Council and conducted in partnership with the Australian National University and the Northern Territory Government Department of Education and Training.
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