



[Good] [Tiwi News] **Pupuni Ngirramini**

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TIWI BOMBERS FLYING HIGH >> PAGE 15 & 16



**TIWI CULTURE
SHOWCASED IN
MELBOURNE**

>> PAGE 9



**OSPREY CRASH
CEREMONY**

>> PAGE 6 & 7

What's in this issue

Rangers to report illegal foreign fishing 3

Fire and Carbon project 4

Junior Rangers 5

Osprey Crash – Commemoration ceremony 6,7

Senate Estimates 8

Tarntipi Exhibition / Rina Moreen Exhibition 9

Artifacts returned / Wellbeing Festival 10

Tiwi College / Xavier Catholic College 11

Ocean Shoals Marine Park 12

Biosecurity / TIRC Update 13

New Staff / Tiwi Animal names Puzzle 14

Coastal Management Drones / Tiwi Bombers ... 15

Tiwi Bombers 16

EDITORIAL

Pupuni Ngirramini is published by the Tiwi Land Council for the Tiwi People

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Message from the Tiwi Land Council Chair

As we step into 2025, I am pleased to share some important updates on the work being carried out by the Tiwi Land Council and our dedicated teams. We have started the year on a strong note, with our first full Land Council meeting for 2025 successfully held in Wurrumiyanga. This meeting was an opportunity for our council members to come together, discuss key priorities, and reinforce our commitment to strengthening Tiwi governance, culture, and community development. I want to thank all the councillors and staff who contributed to making this a productive and positive meeting.

A highlight of our work has been the ongoing efforts of the Engagement and Strategy team, led by Helen Daiyi. This team has been instrumental in ensuring that our engagement with Tiwi communities remains strong and that our strategies reflect the needs and aspirations of our people. Their work continues to build meaningful relationships, ensuring that Tiwi voices guide the direction of our projects and policies.

One of the initiatives they support is the Tuwurrampila Cultural Heritage Committee. This committee is leading the way in promoting, and strengthening Tiwi cultural heritage. Through their efforts, we are seeing greater community involvement in cultural projects, as well as the continued push to establish an

annual cultural festival that will showcase Tiwi traditions, stories, and practices. This is a vital step in ensuring that our younger generations stay connected to their heritage and identity and over time will become an important economic driver.

Another key initiative is the Tiwi Leaders Forum, which will provide an important space for emerging Tiwi leaders to develop their skills and take on greater responsibilities in governance and decision-making. Leadership is essential to our future, and it is inspiring to see young Tiwi men and women stepping up to contribute to the well-being of our communities. I commend those involved for their dedication and look forward to seeing the positive impacts of their leadership in the years ahead.

As always, the work of the Land Council is guided by our collective responsibility to protect Tiwi land, culture, and people. Our commitment to strong governance and sustainable development remains at the heart of everything we do. Whether it be through economic initiatives, cultural programs, or environmental stewardship, we continue to advocate for the best interests of all Tiwi people.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of our elders, past and present, who have laid the foundations for the work we do today.

Their wisdom and leadership continue to guide us, and we remain committed to upholding the values and principles they have instilled in us.

I encourage everyone to stay engaged with the work of the Tiwi Land Council and to take pride in the progress we are making together. Thank you to all those who continue to support and contribute to our shared vision for a strong, united Tiwi future.

Mana



Warm regards,
LESLIE TUNGATALUM
Chair, Tiwi Land Council

Message from the CEO

As we reflect on 2024, we can all be proud of the significant progress made by the Tiwi Land Council. Over the past year, we undertook an extensive restructuring process, bringing in new staff and strengthening our internal capacity. This transformation has positioned the Land Council to better fulfill its statutory responsibilities and deliver strong outcomes for Tiwi people. I want to acknowledge the dedication of our team, both new and long-serving, who have worked tirelessly to implement these changes.

With the start of 2025, we continue to build on this momentum. The first full Tiwi Land Council meeting of 2025 took place in early February, and we have now completed our first round of clan meetings, ensuring that Tiwi families remain engaged and have their voices heard in decision-making processes.

A significant focus of our work in early 2025 has been on understanding and sharing information about the proposed second rotation of eucalyptus pellita across the existing Melville Island plantations. It's a complex project, and I've been impressed with the level of engagement across all Tiwi land-owning groups, as we explore the potential

benefits and risks of the proposal for Tiwi people and country.

The effective management of land use applications and the protection of Tiwi country are critical priorities for the TLC and we now have a more robust team in place to manage these responsibilities. Murray Knyvett has stepped into the role of Manager, Land Use and Operations, overseeing our Environment and Resource Officers, as well as our Anthropologists. His leadership will be instrumental in ensuring that these functions operate effectively and support the long-term aspirations of Tiwi people.

We are also pleased to welcome Brenton Toy as our new Senior Policy Officer. Brenton brings a wealth of experience working in government and will be pivotal in shaping policy initiatives that support Tiwi self-determination. Additionally, James Scrymgour has joined us as the Coordinator for the Tiwi Leaders Forum. His role will be crucial in fostering leadership and engagement among emerging Tiwi leaders, ensuring improved coordination of the service system to better address Tiwi priorities in community.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to working closely with our communities

to ensure that Tiwi aspirations and values guide our direction. I encourage all Tiwi people to stay informed, stay engaged, and continue to participate in the important work of the Tiwi Land Council.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment. Together, we will continue to build a strong and resilient Tiwi future.



BRENDAN FERGUSON
CEO, Tiwi Land Council

Rangers pivotal to reporting of illegal foreign fishing boats, prompting multi-agency crackdown



Aboriginal rangers and groups have played a key role in reporting an alarming rise in the number of illegal foreign fishing boats in northern Australian waters.

The reports prompted the setting up of a multi-agency operation in the Northern Territory on December nine to target the increase in illegal foreign fishing vessels being detected in the area.

Operation LUNAR is led by the Australian Border Force as an additional contribution to combatting illegal foreign fishing in northern Australia.

Rangers regularly patrol and monitor Aboriginal-owned coastlines across the Territory, supporting the work of agencies such as Australian Border Force (ABF) and Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) as well as the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

A recent influx of foreign fishing boats along the West Arnhem Land coastline concerned rangers due to the threats to the Territory's sustainable fisheries management, land and marine ecosystems, border security, biosecurity, and community safety.

In November, Mathew Ryan, Chair

of the Northern Land Council called for a much tougher approach from federal agencies after the spike in boat sightings, which were reported by Aboriginal groups.

"These illegal fishermen have been stealing from our Sea Country and encroaching on our land for a long time now and they have recently stepped up the pace," he said.

"Now we know for sure that they're people smuggling as well, which takes it to a whole new level.

"Rangers play an important role in supporting AFMA and ABF to keep our Country and Australia safe, and the Federal Government must make sure ranger groups are properly resourced and equipped."

Operation LUNAR complements a similar operation working successfully since December 2023 in the Kimberley Marine Park in Western Australia known as Operation LEEDSTRUM, and the long-running Border Monitoring Officer Program operating in the Torres Strait.

Operation LUNAR will involve a multi-agency task force providing an enhanced posture on-land and on-water, coordinating assets from the Australian Defence Force, the

ABF's air and patrol vessels, along with additional support provided by the AFMA.

Rear Admiral Brett Sonter, Commander Maritime Border Command, said the ABF proactively adjusts and monitors its posture across northern Australia through an intelligence-led, risk-based approach, and this was achieving results.

"We are absolutely committed to protecting our vulnerable marine resources and delicate ecosystems through the targeting of illegal foreign fishing in Australian waters," Rear Admiral Sonter said.

"Illegal foreign fishers will not be tolerated in Australian waters and my message to them is clear: you will be found and we will intercept you. You will lose your catch, your equipment, potentially your vessel, and you may be arrested and prosecuted under Australian law.

"Operation Sovereign Borders remains a priority and we are appropriately postured to respond to maritime people smuggling ventures targeting Australia, including those attempting to use common illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing corridors to reach Australia."

Rear Admiral Sonter said an

important component of Operation LUNAR included the expansion of land patrols and surveillance, working closely with federal and territory agencies and local communities in the NT, particularly local First Nations communities.

"I cannot emphasise enough how important local knowledge and observations of First Nations communities is in the NT, in terms of informing of work to detect foreign fishing vessels across more than 10,000km of vast coastline."

As of 3 December 2024, the ABF and AFMA have successfully conducted 156 foreign fishing vessel interceptions and successfully prosecuted 83 foreign fishers in Australian courts this financial year.

Anyone with information about suspicious activity which may impact the security of Australia's borders is urged to contact Border Watch.

By reporting suspicious activities, you help protect Australia's border and the community. Information can be provided anonymously.

To report illegal boat sightings go to: <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/helpand-support/departamental-forms/onlineforms/border-watch> or call 1800 061800



IMAGES: David Hancock

It's ours! Tiwi Fire and Carbon Project now fully independent

Traditional Owners, rangers and guests at Wurrumiyanga have celebrated a groundbreaking milestone in the Tiwi Fire and Carbon Project.

Until October 2024, the Tiwi Fire and Carbon Project was supported by the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation's Savanna Fire Management Program with funding from the INPEX Corporation.

But the project is now a fully independent Tiwi-owned carbon enterprise.

This transition away from external funding is due to the successful management of the project by Tiwi Resources and the Tiwi Rangers over the past eight years.

It marks a crucial step in the Tiwi journey towards self-determination and local enterprise growth.

In 2016 the project, which covers approximately 8,000 square kilometres of Tiwi country, was registered with the Australian Government and since 2018 has generated 230,020 Australian Carbon Credit Units.

It aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by strategic burning in Kimirrakinari (early dry season) to prevent the destructive impacts of late dry season wildfires.

As well as addressing global climate change, the Tiwi Fire and Carbon Project provides a wide range of benefits to Tiwi landowners and their communities including:

- Increased economic independence and self-determination
- Appropriate training and employment opportunities for Tiwi people on Tiwi country
- Improved ecosystem health and conservation of native wildlife

- Increased control of feral animals and weeds that thrive in frequently burnt country
- Protection of Tiwi infrastructure including communities, outstations, bush camps, forestry plantations, and tourism facilities
- Acknowledgment and preservation of Indigenous fire knowledge and skills
- Increased opportunities for Tiwi people to connect with country.

Tiwi Resources Board Chair Alice Munkara said Tiwi Resources was proud to lead the project and acknowledged the important role the rangers have played in its success.

"This Tiwi Fire and Carbon project looks after country and culture. It not only helps us maintain our traditional practices but also supports our community economically."

ILSC Group Chief Executive Joe Morrison said the Tiwi Fire and Carbon Project exemplified ILSC's mission to support First Nations peoples in achieving self-determination.

"Tiwi Resources is the first organisation that's participated in the SFM program to transition to be independently managed. This is what self-determination looks like at the fire management level," he said.

"This project demonstrates how traditional practices can effectively tackle modern environmental challenges and stands as a testament to the resilience and vision of the Tiwi people."

The Tiwi Islands Fire and Carbon Project not only demonstrates the potential for Indigenous-led initiatives to thrive but also serves as a model for other communities aiming to establish sustainable carbon enterprises.



Learning about kukuni

Tiwi people have managed their freshwater and freshwater places for many thousands of years. Last year, Tiwi Junior Rangers were able to get a better understanding of these important kukuni (aquatic) ecosystems while cooling off in Picka creek - plus it was a great way to beat the Tiyari heat! They learnt about the water cycle, different types of freshwater habitats and aquatic food webs. With the support of CDU RIEL scientists and Rangers, the Junior Rangers used nets to sample the many different types of tiny critters – called macroinvertebrates - living in the creek including dragonfly, mayfly and mosquito larvae, water fleas, beetles, snails, worms, crustaceans and leeches. Back in the classroom they identified their catch under microscopes and recorded what they had found.

"I didn't know there were so many things that live in the water. I liked catching the bugs in the nets and looking under the microscopes. Now I know what's there!" said one of the Tiwi Junior Rangers.

Aquatic macroinvertebrates play a critical role in Tiwi aquatic ecosystems by recycling nutrients and providing



food for animals, such as fish, frogs and turtles, higher up the food chain. They make excellent biological indicators for determining the health of freshwater places – if the macroinvertebrates are healthy, the creek is healthy! The Junior Rangers also measured the creek's water quality, including temperature, turbidity and pH. The overall report card for Picka Creek is

good – it is home to a healthy diversity of aquatic macroinvertebrates, it's clean and clear (has low turbidity) and is also great for a refreshing dip on a hot day!

"This is the first time we've done anything like this. It was fun using the nets, being in the creek, looking for animals. Seeing them with the microscope was good." – Tiwi Junior Ranger



Tiwi Junior Rangers celebrate first year

The first year of the Tiwi Junior Ranger program was celebrated at the Tiwi College Awards Ceremony last December. IPA committee members, Tiwi Rangers and families were there to help congratulate the 40 students that have participated throughout the year.

The Program combines curriculum and culture to build the skills, confidence, and capacity of students – the islands' future leaders! Rangers, Charles Darwin University and NT DLPE researchers and elders delivered training focussing on Tiwi plants and animals, fire management, ghost nets, and aquatic ecology. Junior Rangers completed units in Certificate I in Conservation and Ecosystem Management, providing foundation level skills and knowledge required for working as a ranger, in wildlife management, or in horticulture. They also got to experience life as a ranger first-hand by working on country with the Tiwi Ranger team every fortnight during school terms. Cultural education is an important part of the program with 30 Junior Rangers participating in Tarntipi Bush Camps during the dry season. The Tiwi Rangers also took the program to other Tiwi schools, and this will be expanded in the future. The Tiwi Junior Ranger Program is funded by NIAA.

'Our young ones are our future. Can't leave it too late, got to open the door for our young ones.'

Tiwi Traditional Owner

'Kids need to learn how to be a ranger, it's a good pathway for our young people.'

Tiwi Traditional Owner

Tiwi Junior Rangers at the Ecological Society of Australia conference

The Tiwi Junior Rangers' vertebrate biodiversity program was highlighted at the Ecological Society of Australia conference in Melbourne in December.

The Tiwi Islands are a biodiversity haven, supporting a very high diversity of plant and animal species, including many not recorded anywhere else in the world. Junior Rangers discovered last year that the bush around Tiwi College is home to more animals than they realised. Working with Flora and Fauna Division (NT DLPE) researchers and Rangers, they recorded 14 mammal, 19 bird, 7 reptile and 2 frog species, including threatened species such as Mapulinka (Partridge Pigeon) and Yintumunga (Black-footed Tree-rat), from live trapping and visual and auditory surveys. Students matched scientific and common names of animals to their Tiwi names and were able to recognise how these approaches to naming and categorising are different, but complementary. This work was presented as a poster by NT Flora and Fauna scientists at the conference, which was attended by more than 1200 delegates from across Australia.

A vertebrate biodiversity training program for Junior Rangers on the Tiwi Islands

Kathryn Knights¹, Anna Miller¹, Alex Kutt¹, Darcy Martini¹, Catherine Whitehead¹, Greg Hollis¹, Barbara McKaige²

Tiwi Traditional Owners want their young people to achieve educational success, engage with the wildlife and natural resources on Country, retain their culture, language, and Tiwi identity, and live long, happy and healthy lives. Traditional Owners representing the eight Tiwi Landowning groups identified the development of a Junior Ranger Program as a key path to achieving these aims, and a key action in their Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) Plan. The Program, currently funded for the 2024-25 academic years, is administered by Tiwi Resources (the managers of the Tiwi Ranger Program and Tiwi IPA), and delivered through Tiwi College, which is Tiwi owned and operated through the Tiwi Education Board. Training partners from Charles Darwin University (CDU) and the Northern Territory Government (NTG) provide the Program content in collaboration with the Tiwi Rangers.



THE GOAL

"...to support and spark passion in young Tiwi—for learning, for Language, for culture, for Country and for the strength to walk in two worlds in the future."

Ngawurrayamangi murrakupuni—Looking after Country

THE PROGRAM

The Tiwi Junior Ranger Program provides opportunities for students to gain experience in land and species management activities undertaken by the Tiwi Rangers, including fire management, plants, vertebrate and invertebrate biodiversity and survey methods. It also provides an important pathway to future employment with the Tiwi Rangers and skills acquired by students will be transferable across a range of vocations.

The aim of the vertebrate biodiversity training workshops—run by Flora and Fauna Division (NTG), with support from the Tiwi Rangers and Tiwi College staff—was to familiarise the Junior Rangers with common survey methods that are used by the Tiwi Rangers, NTG and other organisations across the Northern Territory. Through practical and classroom activities, students learned how effective management of wildlife populations is supported by data obtained using these methods.

THE RESPONSE

The Program is having the intended effect of sparking passion among the young people. Many students are considering careers as land managers and scientists, with some even saying, "If I don't play in the AFL, I want to be a Ranger!" Their teachers and other staff at Tiwi College are supporting them to secure internships and gain the necessary certifications. There is a clear commitment among the Tiwi College community to foster the enthusiasm among the students for working on and caring for Country.

The importance of this Program cannot be understated; investing in the next generation of community leaders and land managers is both vital to ensuring their social and economic welfare, and critical to ensuring the persistence of biodiversity, and effective land and natural resource management for many years to come.



(1) Flora and Fauna Division, Northern Territory Government; (2) Tiwi Resources; (3) Tiwi College; (4) Copyright Communication



Ceremonies honour Marines



United States Marines, families of three Marines who died in an MV-22B Osprey crash in 2023 and Australian troops watched Tiwi Islanders, supported by Larrakia people, perform a healing ritual marking the end of a one-year-and-one-month mourning period.

During the event in September, Tiwi Islanders formally adopted the U.S. Marine Corps, the three fallen Marines and their families into the Tiwi community.

"The Tiwi people have a long-standing connection with both the Australian and U.S. militaries," Tiwi Land Council chair Leslie Tungatalum said in

a press release.

"This adoption shows our deep respect for the Marines and their families and strengthens the ties between us."

Marines, family members of the deceased and Australian troops traveled in September to the crash site at Pickertaramoor, Melville Island, for the Pukumani ceremony.

There, locals erected Pukumani poles, representing the eight Tiwi clans, alongside three additional poles for the fallen Marines.

Cpl. Spencer Collart, 21, Capt. Eleanor LeBeau, 29, and Maj. Tobin

Lewis, 37, died when their tiltrotor went down on Melville Island on August 4 2023.

"We're a very close-knit family, and clearly, the Tiwi people are about family too, so that's what really draws us to them, and we feel one with them," Spencer Collart's father, Bart Collart, said in the release.

"Our Marine Corps family has been wonderful as well, and it's just an honor to be here."

Families, Marines and Australian troops, also joined Larrakia and Tiwi people people for a ceremony in Darwin.

A Marine Corps accident report released August 9 last year identified complacency" as the crash's primary cause.

The Osprey went down after a close call with another aircraft during their approach to a landing zone, according to the report.

It also found that squadron leadership had permitted "a culture that disregarded safety of flight."

Ten Ospreys were deployed to Darwin last year as part of the annual rotation of about 2000 Marines through the Top End.



Tiwi-Mantiyupwi leader Jennifer Ullungura Clancy said the crash had left the Tiwi people grieving for the loss of life on their country.

"The day it happened, it was very hard for my people to move on, to be happy the next day," she said.

"We can do [ceremony] and grieve our own way, to let go."

Two groups of people facing each other across a stage, outside on a sunny day.

Ms Ullungura said it was important for the American families to be adopted by Tiwi people.

"When they come, they can do their grieving on their own, and then we do it together as one," she said.

"Now we are family. Like we told them, we are family."

killed in Osprey crash





Senate Estimates in Canberra

From 6 – 8 November 2024 Land Council members and staff, travelled to Canberra for Senate Estimates. Many productive meetings with Ministers and NIAA staff were held taking the needs and aspirations of the Tiwi people to the corridors of power. Meetings were held with Senator Malarndirri McCarthy (Minister for Indigenous Australians), Marion Scrymgour, (Member for Lingiari), Tanya Plibersek (Minister for the Environment and Water), Office of Tony Burke MP, (Minister for the Arts) & the Office of Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles, (Minister for Defence).

The following is a transcript of what TLC Chair Leslie Tungatulum and Manager of Engagement and Strategy, Helen Daiyi, said in their opening statements to the Senate estimates hearing on Indigenous matters.

My name is Leslie Tungatulum and I am the Chair of the Tiwi Land Council. I am proud to be here on the 50th anniversary of my father Hyacinth Tungatulum's election to the Northern Territory Parliament, the first Indigenous Australian elected to a state or territory parliament.

My father was elected to the NT Parliament in October 1974 to represent the Tiwi Electoral Division, which is now known as the electorate of Arafura.

In 1974, my father faced not only political hurdles but societal attitudes that often marginalised Indigenous voices. His election was a landmark moment that paved the way for future generations.

I am proud to be here continuing his legacy, taking a leadership role with the land council with the aim of making a difference for future generations of Tiwi people.

I now hand over to Helen Daiyi to deliver the opening statement.

Good morning Committee Members.

Over the past two years, the Tiwi Land Council has been attending Senate Estimates with a consistent message that we are rebuilding and strengthening our organisation. And we're proud of the progress that we have made.

We have implemented a new method of choice and terms and conditions of membership. We now have a Council that is reflective of Tiwi people, with equal numbers of men and women and representation of our 8 land-owning groups.

Our Council has endorsed new meeting rules and a stronger Conflict of Interest policy.

- We have developed a framework to define the responsibilities and operation of our Accountable Authority.
- We have recently re-established our Executive Committee to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our decision-making.
- We have worked with an external provider to develop a comprehensive risk management framework.
- We have reviewed staff position descriptions and restructured our operating model.
- We have documented, and are in the process of embedding, key operational policies, including procurement, recruitment and work health and safety.



Through these and many other changes, we have fully or substantially implemented all recommendations delivered by the Australian National Audit Office, Commonwealth Ombudsman and Ernst and Young in their respective reviews.

The journey that we're on from here is one of continuous improvement, embedding this reform and consolidating the renewed trust of Tiwi people.

With the important foundations of our organisation stabilised, we are now focussed on delivering outcomes for Tiwi people. The key priorities identified by our council members, who represent the eight Tiwi clan groups, are **culture, country and community**.

To ensure that we have oversight and input across all three domains:

- The Tuwurrampila Cultural Committee is now embedded within our Governance Structure.
- We are transitioning the Tiwi Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) Committee into a formal sub-committee of Land Council; and
- We are taking on responsibility for coordination of the Tiwirrampila Leaders Forum.

The Tuwurrampila Cultural Committee has been established to guide and foster the maintenance and celebration of Tiwi culture. The outcomes of this initiative will support programs aimed at maintaining our cultural traditions, reducing suicide rates and chronic health conditions, and support a range of programs that will improve wellbeing, employment and sustainable and culturally appropriate economic opportunity.

In 2024, the standout project to emerge from the Cultural Committee was the recommendation to re-establish a Tiwi Cultural Festival. The inaugural Tiwi Cultural Festival was held on the 24th of August 2024. This "pilot" event was significant because it marks the beginning of an annual celebration aimed at promoting, preserving, and sustaining the rich and vibrant culture of the Tiwi Islands.

Aligning the Tiwi Cultural Festival with the Tiwi Islands Football League grand final promises to become one of

the most important first nations community events in the nation.

The Tiwirrampila Leaders Forum aims to empower young emerging Tiwi leaders and their elders to coordinate responses to issues identified by the Tiwi Leadership including:

- High suicide rates;
- Chronic health conditions;
- Gambling;
- Youth crime and family or community violence; and
- Elevated levels of unemployment and lack of economic opportunity.

Consultation in relation to a Tiwi Indigenous Protected Area has been on-going for the past three years and we are now working – together with our partners – towards dedication of the IPA in 2025. The IPA will empower Tiwi to look after their country, consistent with an agreed plan of management.

This includes working with Tiwi Rangers and research institutions to manage feral cats, pigs and buffalo, and prevent the introduction of further biosecurity threats posed by ghost nets, cane toads, fire ants and gamba grass.

A further priority will then be to establish rights and interests over Tiwi sea country, including through a Native Title claim, enabling the Land Council to represent Tiwi people when activities are proposed that affect Tiwi people and their seas.

Finally, we are committed to increasing the employment of Tiwi people within the Land Council. Plans for a permanent office on the Tiwi Islands are underway, alongside our commitment to ensure that Tiwi people take the lead in these initiatives.

Together, we are paving the way for a sustainable future for the Islands and our communities.

Thank you

HELEN DAIYI
(Manager of Engagement and Strategy)



Tiwi culture showcased in Melbourne

A photography exhibition called “Tarntipi” showcased at Magnet Galleries Melbourne on 10 November 2024, attended by many people eager to see the photographs made by Nicholas Walton-Healey and to meet Tiwi Elder Teddy Portaminni, who travelled from Bathurst Island with his wife Teresia.

The Tiwi visitors were welcomed to Wurundjeri Country by Elder Uncle Ian Hunter.

A carved spear (by artist Bede Tungatulum) was presented by Teddy to Ian to seal the connection between the two Indigenous groups.

When in Melbourne Teddy and Teresia worked with Nicholas to provide a cultural awareness workshop in the gallery.

Feedback from participants said “this experience provided an opportunity to reflect on our perspectives, foster connections, and engage in meaningful discussions, ultimately enhancing our understanding, and alerting us to the challenge of our biases.”

Tarntipi Homelands Aboriginal Corporation (THAC) facilitated the arrangements for this important cultural exchange.

THAC is managing the programs at Tarntipi Bush Camp and aims to foster Tiwi culture and

genuine inter-cultural relationships.

It builds Aboriginal self-determination and promotes cultural awareness through camping experiences – the Tiwi way.

Tiwi families have hosted many visiting groups over the years at Tarntipi Bush Camp and the connection and collaboration between Nicholas and Teddy grew from around the beginning of this process.

Tarntipi Homelands Aboriginal Corporation acknowledges and thanks the Tiwi Land Council and Nguu Ullintjinni Association for contributing to the costs of Teddy and Teresia's travel and accommodation costs associated with this event.



Rina's works exhibited at Aboriginal Bush Traders

One of the young stars of Jilamara Arts, Arthurina (Rina) Moreen, exhibited Ngiya Jilamara Karri Jamutakari (My Designs in the Wet) at the Aboriginal Bush Traders (ABT) in Darwin on December 14, which was attended by Tiwi Land Council staff.

Rina is an accomplished arts worker and gallery assistant and a graduate of ANKA (Arnhem, Northern, Kimberly Artists) 2023 and 2024 Artworker Extension Program.

She is also a talented footballer and stars in the recent film Like My Brother.

Featured at Melbourne and Darwin International Film Festivals, the story follows four Tiwi women travelling south to Victoria for football.

When Tiwi Land Council staff met Rina and Colin Puruntatameri (also a Jilamara artist and graduate from the ANKA program), they were on their way back from Melbourne.

There, they spent two weeks working with conservators of the Grimwade conservation centre (Melbourne University), as part of the ANKA program.

Celebrated artist Timothy Cook was also present at the ABT exhibition opening, supporting Rina, his granddaughter.



IMAGES: Ilana Rose – Magnet Galleries Melbourne Inc.

Artefacts returned to Tiwi islanders

Tiwi artefacts collected by Donald William Mitchell, who passed away last year, have been delivered to the Tiwi Land Council.

Sharon McVilly and her brother Brendan Mitchell brought the collection into the TLC offices in November, saying they wished to give their father's collection back to the Tiwi islanders, where it belonged.

Donald Mitchell and his wife Irene and their daughter Sharon came to the NT from Victoria in 1976.

Initially a cabinet maker and then builder, Donald assisted with rebuilding Darwin after Cyclone Tracy before in 1981 beginning a contract with the Aboriginal Development Corporation to build housing in Milikapiti on Melville Island.

Irene assisted with payroll at the local council office.

The Mitchells became part

of Tiwi community over the two years they lived on the island.

Brendan (Donald's son) was "adopted" by locals and given the Jarakalini, turtle totem and skin of snake.

Sharon's totem is Mantuwujini (dugong).

Unhappy with the houses he was building, Donald met with some elders to find out what they actually wanted in housing and then worked to try to improve designs.

For instance, he thought there was not enough communal space to light a fire.

He took these ideas back to Aboriginal Development Corporation wanting to change things but they weren't receptive so he left.

He later started a construction company, M&P Builders in Bombing Rd Winnellie which is still in operation.

It's not certain exactly how the family came into possession of all the items but it's believed they were all made in 1981-1982.

The makers and artists are largely unknown.

Sharon thinks one of the artists could be Holder Adams.

Sharon remembers attending a lot of ceremonies in Milikapiti when they lived there.

She remembers watching hundreds of turtle eggs hatching and the little baby turtles making their way down to the water.

The Mitchells made several close family friends and Sharon remembers Happy Cook and Aggie Daniels.

Sharon said Happy Cook taught them how to use bush foods and medicines.

The collection was presented to the TLC Executive Council in the presence of Sharon.



We are stronger together

The Wellbeing Festival held at Wurrumiyanga late September 2024, saw stakeholders and service providers from the Tiwi islands and the R U OK campaign come together to host a whole of community collaborative event to support the social and emotional wellbeing of individuals, families and the community.

The Wellbeing Festival was designed to bring the community together as one, empower people to check in on each other and reduce the stigma for people to reach out to others who are having hard times. The event spread the message "We are stronger together" showing the whole community that we all care about each other and there is always hope and help available. The event supported the important protective factor of community and cultural connectiveness with cultural practices including Yoyi, kumurupuni, bush tucker, song and art facilitated by community leaders.





New Principal promotes “Tiwi Way” at Tiwi College

Tiwi College has welcomed the arrival of a new Principal, Mr James Faraone.

Originally from Melbourne, James began his teaching career in 1998 and arrived in the Northern Territory in 1999 when he began teaching at St Johns College.

After a three year stint at St Johns he decided to go remote and found himself at Xavier CEC at Wurrumiyanga where he spent three years teaching and immersing himself in Tiwi life and culture, in which time he was adopted into the Puantlura family.

In 2002 he married his wife Rosetta (Queenie Babui) and they have raised three strong Tiwi boys who are all now adults.

In 2005 they all moved to Darwin where James worked for 12 years at Kormilda College (now Haileybury) and once again worked closely with Tiwi boarding students.

He performed various roles including classroom teacher, House Coordinator, Year level Coordinator 10/11/12, and Head of Middle School.

During this time he also completed his Master of Education (Indigenous).

In 2017 James moved to Good Shepherd Lutheran College where he was the Head of Middle School for seven years.

After some well deserved time off in early 2024 he and Rosetta decided to return to the Tiwi Islands and work at Tiwi College in July 2024 and he has now taken up the role of Principal in 2025.

James is very excited at this opportunity as he is again able to work closely with Tiwi people on country and utilize his long held relationships to maximise the impact of his work in nurturing and enhancing the education experience of Tiwi College students.

At Tiwi College he is working with some of his old students and has even taught some of their children! James' focus at Tiwi College is to re-build trust and positive relationships with communities and families to increase student numbers, and through quality literacy, numeracy and practical work and life related programs aims to increase the number of skilled and work ready young Tiwi people who when they leave the college will be able to access a range of employment opportunities across the islands and beyond.

A large part of this is having “Tiwi Way” at the centre of all things at the college, through educational programs and activities as well as through a large and strong cultural program led by Tiwi staff.

Xavier footy teams develop skills and pride during trip to Darwin



Late last year our Xavier Catholic College AFL teams embarked on a three-day trip to Darwin where they competed with Haileybury Rendall School (HRS).

The adventure began with the selected 24 students setting off on a Sea Darwin Charter, sailing to Darwin dodging wet season storms.

The action kicked off with a girls' AFL game against HRS, showcasing their skill and determination on the field.

Afterward, both teams came together for a shared dinner and played basketball with the HRS boarding students, fostering friendships and sportsmanship.

The next morning allowed for a relaxed start with breakfast and some free time, a visit to the Darwin Cenotaph and a cooling off at Leanyer Water Park before returning to their accommodation for lunch and preparation for the

boys' AFL game against HRS in the afternoon.

The boys brought their A-game, playing a spirited match full of energy and teamwork.

Following the game both teams were treated to a Clontarf BBQ, a perfect way to refuel and connect with peers.

In the evening seven of our female students participated in the U18 Wanderers versus Waratahs girls' game, rounding out a day of sports and entertainment.

The last day saw the teams checking out after breakfast and heading to Stokes Hill Wharf for their return journey.

The trip was a fantastic opportunity for our students to develop their skills, build friendships and represent XCC with pride.

We extend our gratitude to the staff, HRS community, and everyone who made this trip a memorable experience for our students.







TIWI COLLEGE 2025 PROGRAMS

New Literacy and Numeracy program

Junior Rangers Program

School based apprenticeships

VET for seniors

Senior students working onsite at Tiwi College

Certificate courses through CDU and TITEB

Work experience placements across the college

Elective programs including Major Art Projects, Physical Education, Technology and Design.

Tiwi Culture and Language program

Red Dust collaborations

Wellbeing programs across day school and Family Group Home

Tiwi Academy

Farm revamp







Chance connection made during joint-venture boat trip to marine park

Tiwi Land Council staff and Munupi Traditional Owners Carol Puruntatameri, Karina Coombes and Delarosa Puruntatameri set out on a boat trip to the Ocean Shoals Marine Park north-east of the Tiwi Islands in September last year.

The trip was a joint venture between Charles Darwin University, the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water and Elysium, a project management company.

The purpose of the trip, broadly speaking, was three-fold.

The first was for ocean data logging.

Loggers were dropped down to the ocean floor at rough intervals of one every hour with the primary objective to receive data to onboard tablets via satellite and record the depth and temperature of the water to assess climate changes over a three-year period.

The second objective was to facilitate knowledge exchange through intergenerational, cross-cultural and multidisciplinary learning, the collection of scientific data, documenting cultural and biodiversity values. These include connections of the Tiwi people to the Ocean Shoals Marine Park and adjacent waters and importantly to record the meaning of these to Tiwi and their storytelling.

The third objective was to facilitate the collection of fishing data, recording the varying species at each stopping point.

During our three days we anchored at several locations, including Mesquite Shoal, Moss Shoal and Parry Shoal in the Marine Park where there was ample opportunity for fishing and identification of different species.

Amongst them, was trevally, blue line emperor, spanish and spotted mackerel cod and a never-ending number of reef sharks.

The project was an opportunity to learn from others working in complementing capacities.

Traditional Owners were eager to participate in the data logging exercise and to understand how the equipment worked, see the results, how rapidly the data was transmitted from satellite to tablet and how it was assessed.

As the boat was leaving Pirlangimpi, heading northwest through Apsley Strait, past

views of the northern tip of Bathurst Island, we sat at the high tables on deck and elders began story telling about ancestors who traversed country by foot but, also, notably by sea in bark or dugout canoes, to make the transit from one island to the other.

There were also shared stories of spiritual ancestry – the creation story, and of the historic Macassan trade – the route taken to Tiwi in pursuit of trepang and culture, contributing to Tiwi's rich and diverse heritage.

Several crew members and participants of the boat trip had not travelled to Tiwi before, so many sessions spent around the common dining table was often chance for cross-cultural education and exchange.

Late night on the third day of the trip an uncanny connection was unearthed between Carol and an English graduate oceanographer, India Wildman.

Carol mentioned her artwork and that she had a few pieces in the Saatchi Gallery in south-west London.

It so happened that India lived very close to the gallery and was excited to visit it when she got back to the UK to see Carol's works.

Immediately India called her father Nick Wildman to tell him the news about her meeting with Carol.

Hearing Carol resided in Pirlangimpi, Nick told his daughter the story of him living in Australia back in 1986 working on Operation Raleigh, part of an archaeological dig on the Fort Dundas Ruins.

One night Nick Wildman had met up with some locals, one of whom was a Tiwi elder and a leader in the community.

Coincidentally this elder was also called "The Wildman" by others, and he and Nick bonded over their namesake.

After India's call to her father she recounted his story to us.

Excitedly, Carol exclaimed that the "The Wildman" in Nick's story was in fact her father because he was the only one in Pirlangimpi with that name and had garnered that name through some of his antics.



Biosecurity Matters

Since Tamara South, the new TLC Quarantine and Biosecurity officer, came on board in late November, there have been over forty inspections. Despite a small break over the Christmas period and some wet season related delays the amount of vehicles and machinery travelling to the islands has not been greatly impacted.

These inspections have been carried out in both barge yards and onsite for contractors and customers. Having the ability to inspect machinery and vehicles in the contractors' yards is a great help to them as they have facilities within their yards to be able to do further cleaning if required. Working with the customers and contractors to

ensure they understand the importance of the inspections and ensuring that vehicles, machinery and equipment are free from all organic matters is key to keeping the islands safe from weeds and unwanted pests that do not currently inhabit the island and stopping anything that is currently on the islands from spreading.

Please remember, if you wish to take machinery, vehicles, or luggage to the Tiwi Islands, they must be clean, free from all seed, plant materials, dirt, cane toads and other pests. If they do not meet these standards, your goods will not be allowed to travel to the islands until they are thoroughly cleaned and inspected.



Tiwi Islands Regional Council Update

Inter Island Ferry

In December 2024, the Tiwi Inter-Island Ferry was in need of significant maintenance and repairs. Darwin Tug & Line towed the ferry to Darwin where it was lifted out at Spot On Marine shipyard. The teams at Precision Marine NT, Onsite Welding NT, Custom Works Northern Territory, and Keil Maritime were able to repair and upgrade the Murrantgala1 and she was relaunched just before Christmas Day 2024.

The Council aims to stay on top of future maintenance requirements to ensure the ferry remains in excellent condition, allowing this important service to continue for years to come.

The new Wurrumiyanga Garbage Truck has been ordered and is currently being

shipped to the Northern Territory. We will commence training for our employees on how to operate the new truck, which comes with exciting new features. Once the training is complete and our trainers are confident in our employees' abilities to operate the truck, it will be sent to Wurrumiyanga by barge and go straight into operation.

The Tiwi Islands Regional Council (TIRC) is collaborating with Bathurst Island Housing Association (BIHA) to organize garbage collection for the community while we await the delivery of the new truck. We do not want to rush either the delivery or the training, as this is an essential asset for the community, and we want to avoid any future issues.

We appreciate everyone's patience as we work to bring these vital services to the island.





Brenton Toy
Senior Policy Officer

Brenton is a stolen generation descendant of Tiwi heritage through his mother and grandmother. He was born and raised in Darwin but has maintained strong connections to family and communities on the Tiwi Islands. He has a long history working in a variety of fields in government including Youth Justice, Sport and Recreation but, predominantly and most recently has worked in senior roles in Education.

Brenton is extremely passionate about getting the best outcomes for Tiwi people and continuing a strong tradition of Tiwi leadership and advocacy. He is married to his beautiful wife Elissa, and three children Kale (16), Abbey (14) and Jayda (12). In his free time, he coaches St Marys U16s and an assistant coach with Tiwi Bombers, AFL teams and when time permits, you can find him and the family fishing at Snake Bay.

Brenton is excited to be a part of the TLC Team and looking forward to contributing to positive work outcomes in the policy space.



Tamara South
Quarantine & Biosecurity Officer

Over my working career I have worked in a number of different industries such as childcare, hospitality and for the last four years before joining the Tiwi Land Council I worked in the marine logistics field. I am always up for a challenge and learning new skills to help me understand different perspectives and cultures and have a keen interest in learning all that I can about the Tiwi Islands community and the people and their culture. I have lived and worked in the Territory for over 26 years and love the vastly different country and people who make it an amazing place to call home.

When I'm not at work I enjoy everything about the outdoors including fishing, camping and quad bike riding with my daughter and spending time seeing different parts of the Top End and exploring as much as we can. We live in the rural area in Darwin and have a lot of smaller creeks and areas where we can go fishing and exploring and teaching my daughter about the amazing place that she gets to call home.



James Scrymgour
Tiwi Leaders Forum Coordinator

I am a proud Tiwi man from my mother's lineage, belonging to the Tarnikini (Flying Fox) sub-skin group under the Myatuwi(Pandanus) skin group. I am also part of the Marrikawuyanga clan group, a connection that deeply grounds me in my identity, culture, and heritage.

Taking on the role of Leaders Forum Coordinator with the Tiwi Land Council is a tremendous honour and responsibility. It reflects my commitment to preserving and strengthening Tiwi culture, fostering unity, and ensuring that our traditional practices remain relevant and vibrant in today's world. This role allows me to serve as a bridge between our elders, community leaders, and younger generations, facilitating important discussions and decisions that impact our land, people, and future.

Through this role, I aim to gain a deeper understanding of governance processes, cultural stewardship, and the collaborative approaches required to address the needs and aspirations of our communities. I hope to further develop my leadership skills while building strong relationships with stakeholders to create sustainable outcomes for the Tiwi people.

My contribution will centre on honouring the teachings of our ancestors while embracing opportunities for innovation and growth. By fostering respect, trust, and collaboration, I aim to empower the voices of our people, ensure the protection of our lands, and promote the values and identity that make us uniquely Tiwi. This is not just a role; it is a commitment to the ongoing journey of cultural preservation and community development for generations to come.

I officially commenced my role as the Tiwi Leaders Forum (TLF) Coordinator on the 2nd of January. This first month has been incredibly busy and productive for our team. Together, we have worked to draft the 3-year budget and the Terms of Reference (TOF), which have been shared with our full council and the National Indigenous Australians Agency for feedback.

As part of my role, I have been actively engaging on the ground with individual Tiwi Land Council (TLC) members, executives, Chairman, and Deputy Chair. Additionally, I have connected with a wide range of stakeholders, including:

- Tiwi Island Regional Council
- Tiwi Island Training Employment Board
- Catholic Care – Tiwi NDIS support workers
- Some members of the Cultural committee
- Community leaders

During these meetings, I provided an overview of the Tiwirrampila place-based plan and explained how we are constructing action group members for each pillar of the TLF organizational chart. I also detailed how these action groups will integrate into the TLF framework.

The three pillars of focus are:
Education and Youth
Community and Wellbeing
Workforce and Economy

As we form the action groups, I will continue reaching out to Tiwi stakeholders—both on and off the islands—to foster collaboration and emphasize our shared responsibility to close the gap and deliver meaningful outcomes for our people.

Tiwi Animal Names

T A I R M M I Y R U U I K R J M K I R M
A A R A N T A A W A I A G K A R A I R L
P R R A I G K A R R A A R R M I M Y K J
I U K L N I A K R M A I L N R A W A A K
N R M A I N K N I A I A K K W I R P T A
N T I W G J N L A I M U R A A J R I W Y
A M N I A R I A N U K A G K K I N K I A
K I A R G R Y R N M Y K M I I R W I R N
I A I K I A N G R I A R I R I I Y R A I
I I N K I A A I R A A N W I R R L R N A
I I N I T A I N N G K R R T A R I I I K
N A G A K A K Y K G A A A I Y I R Y A L
L N G A R W N A A K A I M K A M A I W R
P G K M R A W R L U A L I L G I J A M I
A N M M I A R I N I Y N U W U T N R A M
R N M U R N I N G A K R A R R T I I K L
N A A R M R G I A R I I A K Y A A I I K
Y R I N A T R R A I R A G N I R R A Y N
A M I N N R R I Y R G A N A A G K A I Y
N A A R R N I G N M W N U I R R L K N L

Kawarri
Yinkaka
Nyarringari

Mirririji
Murninga
Yirrikipayi

Kirilima
Arlamunga
Pumwarninga

Arljirraka
Marntuwunyini
Kitirika

Taking a bird's eye view of Sea Country – using drones for coastal management

From tracking invasive species to detecting fires and ghost nets, drones are formidable tools for nearly every aspect of land management. By flying safely and at relatively high speeds, drones can cover large areas quickly and capture high-resolution images of the land from the air.

Last November Tiwi Rangers, Stanley Tipungwuti and Dominic Tipiloura, participated in a drone and Artificial Intelligence (AI) training workshop for ranger groups from northern Australia. The training, which was run by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in Weipa and Mapoon in Queensland, focussed on ghost nets

and will help rangers to more effectively monitor remote Tiwi coastlines. Ghost nets are fishing nets that have been abandoned, lost or discarded at sea. They are responsible for trapping and killing marine animals, such as fish, dugongs, sea turtles, dolphins, whales, crocodiles and sea birds.

Following on from the workshop, the Tiwi Rangers hosted the Yugul Mangi Rangers from Ngukurr and Numbulwar Numburindi Rangers from Numbulwar in January. Both groups were unable to travel to QLD last year and so were trained by DAFF staff and the Tiwi Rangers in remote locations on the northern Melville Island coast.



Flying high Tiwi Bombers ... continued

"It's awesome to be up here, you just take a step back to see how special it all is and that just increases the buy in from us guys."

"The community on the islands love footy, it means so much to them to see this team succeed."

*The Tiwi Bombers senior women's team also have had an outstanding season, reaching the finals and playing Palmerston Magpies in a wet elimination final on Saturday 22 February.

The women's side lost 10.7 to 3.6 but the players can be proud of their performances across the 2024-25 season after missing out on playing finals in 2023-24.

Best players in the women's elimination final were Jessica Nannup, Shaylee Dayman, Jamie Lee Puautjimi, Maria Rioli and Jelena Tipungwuti.





The Tiwi Bombers were defeated by 10 points against St Mary's in the NTFL knock-out semi-final on March 1 in a gallant display after reaching the finals for the first time since 2020 after three seasons as wooden spooners.

The remarkable comeback from the wilderness this season has stoked excitement about senior coach Patrick Bowden's team remaining a power side in the NTFL Men's Premier League.

The Bombers pulled within four points of St Mary's in the final quarter of the game at TIO Stadium in Darwin but St Mary's hung on grimly to win 11.11 (77) to 10.7 (67).

It was a brave "never say die" performance that has typified the team's performances throughout their fairytale season.

St Mary's appeared to have the game won mid-way through the third quarter but the Bombers dug deep and got their flow-on game going.

Anthony Munkara got the crowd on their feet when he was able to snap a goal and pull out his motorcycle celebration while William Munkara kicked true too as Tiwi clawed back into contention.

Richmond premiership player Marlion Pickett, on his return from suspension, played the tagging role on Saints' big man and season's leading goal scorer Jackson Calder.

The Bombers Michael Thompson and Nathaniel Cooper made the best impressions blazing through the midfield while Sam Darley was an important link option.

The previous three matches between the sides had been

decided by less than 10 points, though the Bombers had momentum with the most recent win and their return to finals footy after five years.

The Bomber's secured a finals berth after booting five unanswered goals in the final five minutes of the game against Pints in round 17 on February 8.

The last time the Bombers were so electrifying was during their premiership victory in 2013.

The performance of the side this season has captivated the nation, especially across the football-mad Tiwi Islands, home to some of the AFL's top stars over decades.

Marlion Pickett emerged as a leader of the Bombers after joining the side at the start of the 2024-25 season and capped off a fantastic season by claiming the side's best and fairest award, finishing ahead of local star Michael Thompson.

Marlion averaged 18 disposals from his 12 appearances so far this season, excelling in multiple roles, including pinch-hitting in the ruck.

The Bombers' turn-around has coincided with the recruitment of some former AFL players including Marlion, Matthew Parker and Tom Phillips.

Football commentators have also been raving about marks and goals by Bombers' star Anthony Munkara, a Tiwi islander who was delisted by Essendon after playing 15 Victorian Football League (VFL) games in 2023.

Anthony booted three goals in the knock out semi final.

Nathaniel Chambers, writing in the NT News, described Anthony's performances this season for the

Bombers as "inspirational."

Melbourne's Herald Sun and the Adelaide Advertiser have also reported on Anthony's thrilling goals and breathtaking marks.

His latest miracle goal was a magical bouncer that seemingly defied physics and caught the eyes of the nation as his side raced to a round 12 win against the Darwin Buffaloes.

The NT News said the full forward was hurtling towards the boundary line when he dropped the ball onto the side of his right foot to grubber it through from the seemingly impossible angle.

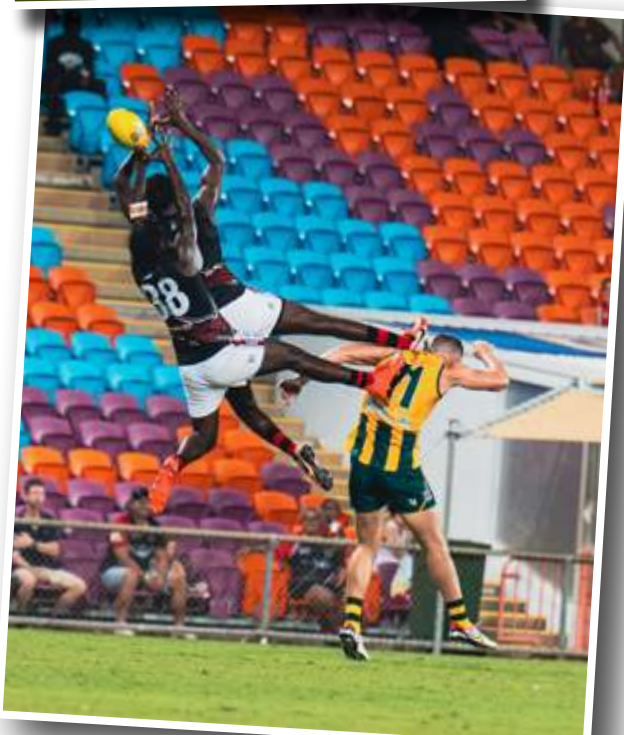
The commentators were only able to yell "no" and "wow" in disbelief as the ball bounced around the corner and through the sticks, while the opposition were wrong-sided and unable to prevent the goal.

The Bombers' rise up the ladder this season has been the result of support and drive from former AFL player Sam Darley and coach Patrick Bowden.

While the influx of experienced talent has been pivotal to the club's success so far it has been local talent that have been crucial to winning games, including Kim Kantilla, Michael Thompson, Karlson Kantilla and Thaddeus Puautjimi.

"We're learning a lot from them and they're learning a lot from us on and off the field," Pickett, 33, told the NT News.

"We're just playing for them and the community, that's what it's all about when we get out there playing like a team and a family," he said.



Continued Page 15

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