



# **GURRUMUL YUNUPINGU FOUNDATION**

## **2024 ANNUAL REPORT**



# BUSINESS OVERVIEW

Business name: Gurrumul Yunupingu Foundation (GYF)  
Business structure: Australian Public Company  
ABN: 25 163 166 283  
ACN: 163 166 283  
Business location: L1 66 Smith St Darwin 0800  
Date established: 16 May 2013

## Directors

Damian Trotter (Chair) appointed 2015 as Director, appointed Chair 6 June 2024  
Barbara Pitman (Deputy Chair), resigned 6 June 2024  
Donald Wininba Ganambarr (Deputy Chair), appointed 2023 as Director, appointed Deputy Chair 6 June 2024  
Rob Collins appointed 2018  
Michael Hohnen appointed 2013  
Professor Fiona Stanley AC appointed 2014  
Paul Ah Chee 'Ngala' appointed 2023  
Jennifer Nixon appointed 2023

## Committee of Management

Michael Hohnen appointed 2013  
Paul Ah Chee 'Ngala' appointed 2024

## Services

The Gurrumul Yunupingu Foundation offers a service that supports cultural and art-related programs and activities aimed at engaging and assisting young Indigenous Australians, particularly in remote communities. These initiatives focus on leveraging their strengths and providing future opportunities.

# VISION STATEMENT

The Gurrumul Yunupingu Foundation's vision is to alleviate poverty, ill-health and substance abuse, disadvantage, lack of education and employment opportunities, bullying and youth suicide in remote communities.

## MISSION

The Gurrumul Yunupingu Foundation's mission reflects its service, which to carry out and achieve its vision by engaging young people in remote communities in activities that build on their strengths, enabling them to contribute to culturally vibrant and sustainable communities and give them hope for the future, through approaches which include:

- Engaging young people by supporting community-initiated and managed programs;
- Supporting artistic, traditional, and contemporary community projects and developing artistic partnerships with mainstream industry bodies;
- Building on the strengths and existing skills of young people in the visual arts, music, dance, social media and IT, sport, cultural knowledge, and languages;
- Assisting young people with income generation and social support;
- Respecting community approaches to learning and the dissemination of information.

# KEY PRINCIPLES

The Gurrumul Yunupingu Foundation believes that positive change can be achieved through adherence to key principles as points of difference from much current service delivery. All the Foundation programs must:

- Be community devised and driven, with long-term planning and longevity always the goal.
- Value the importance of community languages, the inherent cultural knowledge they embrace, and celebrate their use.
- Employ Indigenous artists and trainers, especially from the local communities involved in the program, alongside guest/visiting artists, specialists, and trainers.
- Ensure that guest program leaders have appropriate cross-cultural awareness and knowledge, and the support of local language speakers on the ground.
- Build community capacity to continue activities, so skills remain in the community and ultimately lower the cost of delivery in remote locations.

## Goals and Objectives

- Find new approaches and solutions to the well documented, serious social effects of poverty, disadvantage, ill health, limited education, and employment opportunities in remote Indigenous communities.
- Enable community involvement in the development of Gurrumul Yunupingu Foundation funded programs, to determine what they want, and what they are interested in.
- Commit to long-term relationships and programs within communities, avoiding the one-off or 'fly-in fly-out' delivered outside local perspectives and needs.
- Ensure all Gurrumul Yunupingu Foundation activities and programs are informed by the needs and aspirations of young Indigenous people and community leaders.
- Provide opportunities in areas where young Indigenous people might excel and build on existing knowledge and capacities such as multi-media, IT, dance and music, arts and design, land care and conservation, cultural tourism as well as languages/interpreting (since most are multilingual).
- Compile evidence on social outcomes and benefits, collected from community networks, the wider community and service providers (e.g. local schools and health clinics).
- Provide evidence that young people are devising and initiating their own activities and engaging with community networks to secure their delivery by the Gurrumul Yunupingu Foundation.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Damian Trotter (Chair and Director)** Damian started his career at CBS Records in 1981 and became Managing Director of Sony Publishing Australia in 1992, later leading the merged Sony Music Publishing and EMI Music Publishing in 2012. He has been on Sony Publishing Australia's board since 2000 and is now Deputy Chair. Damian is proud to have supported the late singer Gurrumul to reach national and international audiences. He continues to actively support Indigenous musicians.

**Donald Wininba Ganambarr (Deputy Chair and Director)** Don, a senior Yolŋu man from Galiwin'ku and Gurrumul's brother-in-law, is a cultural leader (Djungaya) responsible for his family's cultural matters. He recently co-directed the performance piece called Bungul, inspired by Gurrumul's album Djarimirri (Child of the Rainbow). The performance, which blends Yolŋu and European music and dance, received positive reviews.

**Jennifer Nixon** Jenny is an Amnatyerr, Kaytetye, and Alyawarr woman from Alice Springs. She currently serves as the Director at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) for Central Australia. Over the years, Jenny has developed expertise in navigating education, social services, law, governance, and health between two cultures. Her professional experience aligns with her commitment to enhancing opportunities for children, families, students, and the broader community. Additionally, she is strongly motivated to promote the inclusion, recognition, and integration of Aboriginal cultures within education, health, support, and communication networks.

**Paul Ah Chee 'Ngala** Paul, a First Nations Arrernte Elder from Alice Springs with Aboriginal, Chinese, and European ancestry, has worked in sport, business, and music. He aims to create opportunities for economic self-sufficiency and help others make informed choices about their future. Recently, Paul re-entered the creative art industry, focusing on music and film. He recorded his first solo EP in 2022.

**Rob Collins** Rob, of Tiwi Island descent, was born and raised in Darwin. He graduated from the National Institute for Dramatic Arts in 2013. His theatre credits include playing Mufasa in The Lion King's national tour and Lysander in Sydney Theatre Company's A Midsummer Night's Dream. Rob won the 2017 TV Week Logie Award for Best New Talent for his role as Jack in The Wrong Girl (2016). More recently, he starred in ABC's Total Control (2019-2024), The Drover's Wife (2021), and Limbo (2023), for which he was awarded Best Supporting Actor by the Film Critics Circle of Australia.

**Michael Hohnen** Michael has over 22 years of experience in music and teaching in the Northern Territory, working with more than 20 remote Indigenous communities. As a classically trained double bass player, he coordinated the VET Contemporary Music Certificate at Charles Darwin University, delivering courses to these communities. He co-founded Skinnyfish Music Pty Ltd with Mark Grose, producing several ARIA award-winning albums, including Gurrumul, Saltwater Band, and Nabarlek, and received an ARIA nomination for Producer of the Year in 2008. Michael was awarded Australian of the Year (NT) in 2013 alongside Mark Grose.

**Professor Fiona Stanley AC** Fiona is the Founding Director and Patron of the Telethon Kids Institute, a Distinguished Research Professor at the University of Western Australia, and a Vice Chancellor's Fellow at the University of Melbourne. She has expertise in maternal and child health, epidemiology, and public health, focusing on childhood illnesses like birth defects. An advocate for Aboriginal social justice, she was named Australian of the Year in 2003 and became a UNICEF Australia Ambassador for Early Childhood Development in 2006. Fiona was elected a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in 1996 and received Australia's highest civil honour, Companion in the General Division of the Order of Australia.

# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

The completion of the Indigenous Children's Song project and the commencement of the Small Development Grants Program made for another productive year for the Gurrumul Yunupingu Foundation. This is especially gratifying as the Foundation runs on very limited resources.



The **Indigenous Children's Song project** was finalised and the set of thirteen Bininj Kunwok language Children's Songs was given to the Bininj Kunwok Regional Language and Culture Centre who will decide how to best use the songs with their community. We believe this is the largest collection of traditional children's songs professionally recorded in Australia in an Indigenous language.

Following, work began on the Gurrumul Yunupingu Foundation's new initiative – the **Small Arts Development Grants project**. Requested by the Indigenous community of Galiwin'ku, which is principally populated by the Yolngu people, and guided by the Indigenous Board Directors of the Gurrumul Foundation, this project aims to resource young people and organisations of the East Arnhem region through the provision of small art development grants.

In June 2024, we farewelled our Deputy Chair and Director, Barbara Pitman who undertook considerable work for the Gurrumul Foundation. We are fortunate to have Donald Wininba Ganambarr take on the role of Deputy Chair. I sincerely thank them both and pass on my gratitude to all the Foundation's Directors and our Executive Officer, Alessandra Superina.

Our work continues due to the generous donations from the public, especially those who give regularly, the philanthropic trusts and foundations who support us and the businesses who provide pro-bono work. Together we are working towards strengthening young Indigenous people's cultural identity through the arts.

Damian Trotter  
**Chair and Director**  
**Gurrumul Yunupingu Foundation**

# EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

While the Gurrumul Yunupingu Foundation is a very small not-for profit organisation, we have most of the responsibilities of a larger one.

This year, my key pieces of work included:

- writing the Gurrumul Foundation's **Media Policy and Procedure**. Its purpose is to guide the Foundation's social media activities and media liaison, and specify procedures and protocols for using social media, writing media releases, and dealing with media requests, with the intention of informing our donors and the wider public about our work and fundraising efforts.
- completing the administration of the **Indigenous Children's Song project**.
- beginning work on the **Small Arts Development Grants project** by writing the first drafts of the following documents:
  - o Guidelines
  - o Application form
  - o Reporting Form
  - o Letter of Agreement for Grantees

And also liaising with members of the Galiwin'ku community to organise a pilot for the project in 2025.

- completing the Gurrumul Yunupingu Foundation's **Case for Support** which is a document that explains our charity's mission, work, and impact, to hopefully encourage potential donors to support our mission. The case for support will be used for various fundraising materials, including:
  - Grant applications.
  - Website content.
  - Donor communications.
- Liaising with funding organisations and writing grant applications.

Additional work included reporting to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and composing reports to funding bodies, working with the auditor to prepare the annual Financial Statements for the Foundation and writing the annual report.

I would like to thank the Gurrumul Foundation's Board Members for their support and contributions.

A. Superina  
**Executive Officer**  
**Gurrumul Yunupingu Foundation**



# SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES IN 2024

## Finalising the Indigenous Children's Songs Project.

The **Indigenous Children's Songs Project** was completed this year. Delayed for several reasons, in particular the COVID 19 years, we were extremely proud to finally give the set of thirteen traditional Indigenous Australian songs, sung in Bininj Kunwok languages to the Bininj Kunwok Regional Language and Culture Centre. These songs will mean that Bininj children and their families are able to continue to learn their own musical traditions and help keep an endangered language alive.

## Beginning the Small Arts Development Grants Project

Seeking to support the cultural enrichment of Indigenous young people and their communities, work for the **Small Arts Development Grants project** began this year.

The administrative documents for this project were developed with the aim of organising a pilot for the project to ensure the documents are coherent and culturally relevant before advertising the grant round, for which we are still seeking funding.

This project will focus on artistic skills development and participation in arts-related endeavours chosen or created by the Indigenous young people participants and their communities. This will hopefully lead to future education and employment opportunities and the sharing of information and skills acquired within the community.

The key emphasis will not be on individual art grants, although several may be granted but rather on resourcing the greatest number of young Indigenous people through providing art grants to their community organisations, the development of new art programs, or supporting participation in existing relevant group programs and projects.

The East Arnhem region is the first location chosen for the project as it includes Galiwin'ku where the late singer Gurrumul was born and raised. The East Arnhem region is situated in the far north-eastern corner of the Territory and covers East Arnhem Land, Groote Eylandt and Elcho Island. The region is home to about 14,600 people, with major population centres in Nhulunbuy and Alyangula. There are 6,407 children and young people, aged 0-24, living in the region, almost half of the population. The majority of these (5,130) live outside of Nhulunbuy. In the latest recorded figures, East Arnhem reported the largest increase in the annual average unemployment rate, up by 0.7 ppt to 7.3%.

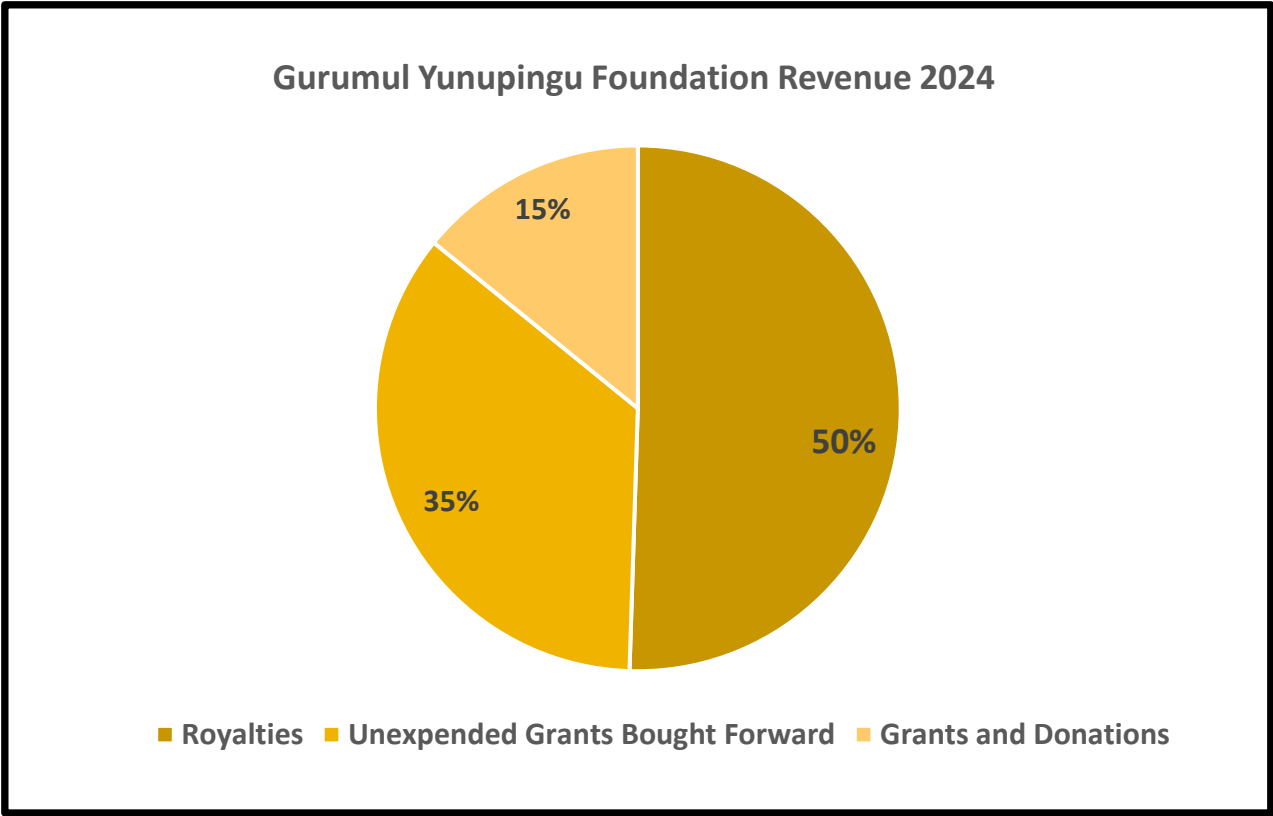
This project will be a direct way to support the artistic aspirations and talents of young Indigenous people living in communities within the East Arnhem region. Small community organisations of the East Arnhem region working for Indigenous young people can as apply for a small grant to use towards providing/bolstering an arts-related program/activity for their target group. It is hoped that in the future this project can be expanded to other regions where young Indigenous people live.

# FINANCIAL REPORT 2024

The Gurrumul Yunupingu Foundation (GYF) finished the 2024 financial year with a deficit of \$42,271 (2023: \$26,714 surplus), and the net equity position was \$240,482 (2023: \$282,753). GYF’s cash position as at 31 December 2024 decreased to \$245,548 (2023 \$299,685) and liability for unexpended grants decreased to 0 (2023: \$16,932).

## Revenue

Overall, the Foundation’s total revenue for the year was \$40,940 (2023: \$154,366), which was 73% lower than the previous year. It should be noted that 2023 was an extraordinary year for revenue as royalties for 2022 were not paid until 2023. Royalties received in 2024 made up 50% of the total revenue, unexpended grants bought forward: 35%, grants and donations:15%.



## Expenditure

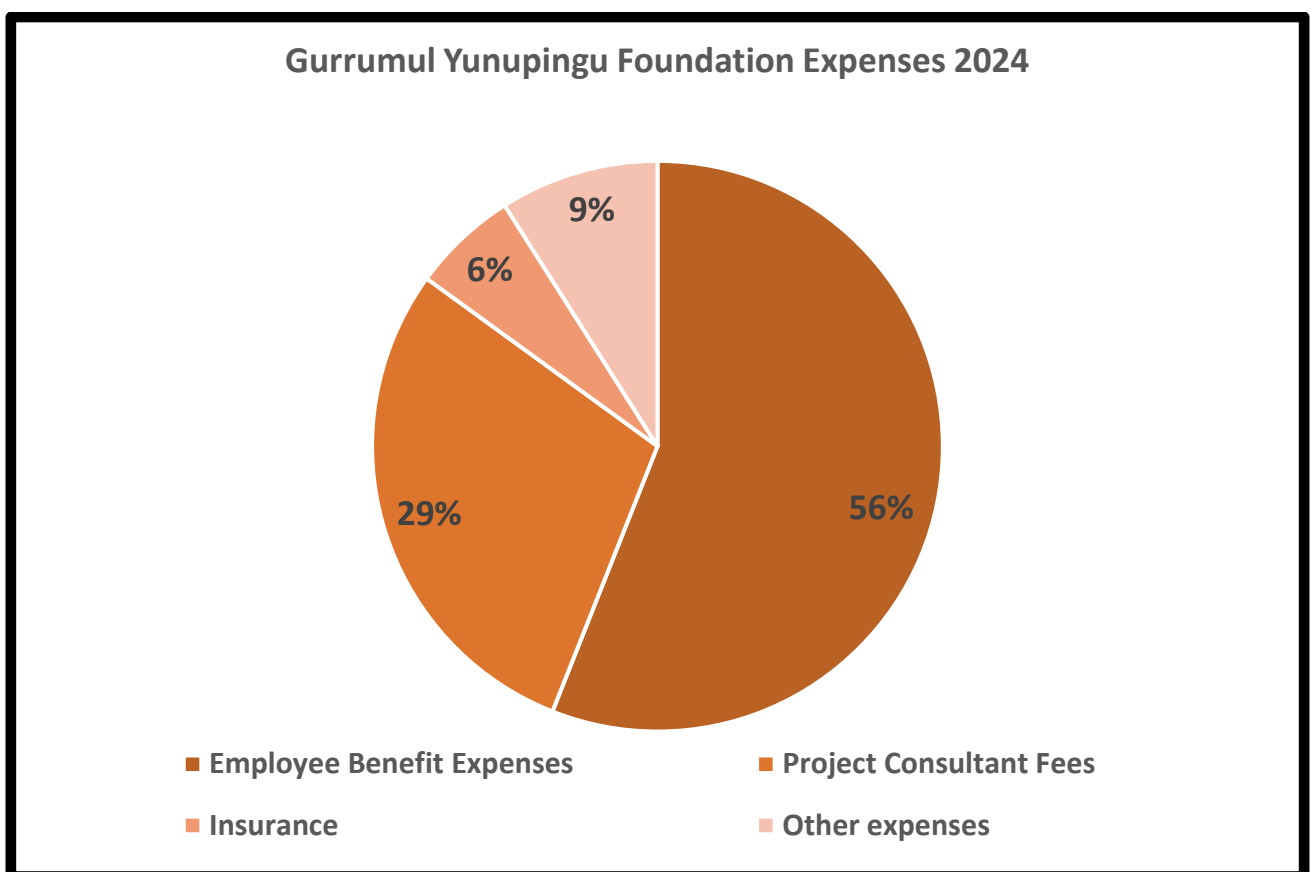
**Operational expenditure** for the Foundation totalled: \$58,997 This was a 15% increase from the previous year (2023: \$50,579). In 2024, funds were directed towards: the Executive Officer's wage, superannuation, essential software, GYF insurance, auditor's fees, website updates, WorkCover costs, payroll tax, travel and accommodation costs for a board member. It should be noted that the increase in the Executive Officer's costs was due to her working a full year (two days a week) in 2024.

### Indigenous Children's Songs Project

Project/Consultant cost:

The remaining 29% of the project costs (\$24,214) were spent this year including: Unexpended grants brought forward: \$14,261; the remaining amount for the project came from the Foundation's core funding. The project was successfully completed.

The highest expenditure (56%) was for the Executive Officer's costs: \$46,725, insurance costs (6%): \$4,847 and the remaining costs (9%) included auditor's fees, website updates, essential software fees, travel and accommodation for a board director: \$7,425.





The Gurrumul Yunupingu Foundation could not have undertaken its work without the generous assistance received from:

*Northern Territory Community Benefit Fund*

*Sony Foundation*

*Sony Music Publishing*

*Donnelly Garner Foundation*

and

*Public donations.*

**If you would like to support Indigenous youth, especially those living in remote communities, please consider donating through our secure donation website page:**

**<https://gurrumulfoundation.org.au/donations/donate-today/>**

Huge thanks also to:

Bininj Kunwok Regional Language and Culture Centre

Gap Road Design Co.

Nghi Huynh, Lee Green Strategic Accountants

Page Harrison & Co, Accountants

Duane Preston, Photographer of Indigenous Children's Songs Project

Anthony Liem, artist responsible for the cover page painting