

## WAYMAMBA GAYKAMAŃU



## AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY TEACHER OF THE YEAR 2005 CHARLES DARWIN UNIVERSITY (TEAM AWARD)

### DISCIPLINE

Education  
Language

### RESEARCH AREAS

YolŃu Languages and Culture  
YolŃu Philosophy of Identity  
Communication across cultures  
Indigenous Epistemologies and Pedagogies  
Digital Technology and  
Indigenous Knowledge Systems  
Participatory Action Research

► [cdu.edu.au/northern-institute/our-teams/michael-christie](http://cdu.edu.au/northern-institute/our-teams/michael-christie)

### CURRENT ROLE

Professor Christie is Professor of Education at the Northern Institute at Charles Darwin University (CDU) where he is Head of the Contemporary Indigenous Knowledge & Governance group. Dr Waymamba GaykamaŃu was a full-time lecturer-researcher/linguist at CDU for 14 years until her retirement. John Greatorex lives in east Arnhem land with the Mäpuru community where he and his wife are collaborating with the community to establish an independent school under the authority of YolŃu elders and families. Betty MarrŃanyin passed away in 2008.

### WHAT THE AWARD HAS MEANT

YolŃu Studies Program security | Recognition of YolŃu indigenous knowledge, lecturers | YolŃu indigenous knowledge – legitimate place in the academy

### MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

- 2012** Waymamba GaykamaŃu was awarded a Doctorate of Education Honoris Causa;
- 2010** Waymamba Gaykamangu was awarded National Elder of the Year by the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council;  
John Greatorex and Linda Miller in collaboration with the YolŃu community established an independent school at Mäpuru in east Arnhem land;
- 2008** ALTC Grant for “Teaching from Country” for the YolŃu Studies team;
- 2007** Waymamba GaykamaŃu was awarded the Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Exceptional Performance in Research;
- 2006–** The development of the YolŃu Aboriginal Consultants Initiative: [cdu.edu.au/yaci](http://cdu.edu.au/yaci).

### NETWORKS

Ancestral networks of knowledge | Authority and accountability recognised and supported by the YolŃu advisers, and by many different clan groups of YolŃu

### TEAM MEMBERS

Professor Michael Christie, Waymamba GaykamaŃu (pictured), Betty MarrŃanyin (passed away) and John Greatorex.

### BACKGROUND

Michael Christie worked within the YolŃu community as a teacher/linguist during the 1970s and 1980s before joining CDU. Waymamba GaykamaŃu, a YolŃu woman and GupapuyŃu elder, highly regarded as a YolŃu teacher/linguist, is the daughter of the widely respected YolŃu statesman Djäwa. Michael and Waymamba set up the original YolŃu Studies program at the then Northern Territory University (now CDU) in 1995, which continues to this day. Waymamba taught undergraduate and postgraduate students and supervised research. Michael was the coordinator of YolŃu Studies. Betty MarrŃanyin was a highly respected YolŃu linguist, educator and researcher from Elcho Island who joined the YolŃu Studies teaching team at CDU for a short period leading up to the Award. John Greatorex was an educator at the school on Elcho Island and was invited by Professor Christie to join CDU in 2003 and to take over the role of YolŃu Studies coordinator, which he did until 2014. John and Michael both lived in Arnhem Land in the 1970s where they learnt to speak YolŃu languages.

### IMPACT ON LEARNING & TEACHING

As a result of the Award, there were local and international invitations to give several keynotes at Conferences. International invitations included the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and the European Society for Oceanists (Verona, Italy). The award led to the funding of a major program called Teaching from Country (see [cdu.edu.au/tfc](http://cdu.edu.au/tfc)), which greatly expanded student numbers and YolŃu contributors – as guest lecturers from remote communities. The Award raised awareness of the program and its impact on the YolŃu people. Writing up the application clarified what the team were doing, and this was beneficial for reflecting on how contextual learnings was an integral part of the program.

### IMPACT ON CAREER

As a result of the Award, the team was awarded a \$350,000 grant from the Australian Learning and Teaching Council, to further develop the program to a ‘Teaching from Country’ based pedagogy. Waymamba received an honorary doctorate in 2012 and retired to her home community on the island of Milingimbi. She continues to play an active part in CDU research and in teaching from country. John Greatorex and Linda Miller had the support of YolŃu elders and the NT Christian Schools Association to set up a school in the remote homeland centre of Mäpuru whose curriculum is based upon continuing principles of elder authority, the value of ancestral languages, and ‘both ways’ education.