

WAYMAMBA GAYKAMAŋU



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

DISCIPLINE

Education
Language

RESEARCH AREAS

Yolŋu Languages and Culture
Yolŋu 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

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 Gaykamaŋu was a full-time lecturer-researcher/linguist at CDU for 14 years until her retirement. John Greateorex 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 Yolŋu elders and families. Betty Marrŋanyin passed away in 2008.

WHAT THE AWARD HAS MEANT

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

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

- 2012 Waymamba Gaykamaŋu 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 Greateorex and Linda Miller in collaboration with the Yolŋu community established an independent school at Mäpuru in east Arnhem land;
- 2008 ALTC Grant for 'Teaching from Country' for the Yolŋu Studies team;
- 2007 Waymamba Gaykamaŋu was awarded the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Exceptional Performance in Research;
- 2006 The development of the Yolŋu Aboriginal Consultants Initiative: cdu.edu.au/yaci.

NETWORKS

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

TEAM MEMBERS

Professor Michael Christie, Waymamba Gaykamaŋu (pictured), Betty Marrŋanyin (deceased) and John Greateorex.

BACKGROUND

Michael Christie worked within the Yolŋu community as a teacher/linguist during the 1970s and 1980s before joining CDU. Waymamba Gaykamaŋu, a Yolŋu woman and Gupapuyŋu elder, highly regarded as a Yolŋu teacher/linguist, is the daughter of the widely respected Yolŋu statesman Djäwa. Michael and Waymamba set up the original Yolŋu 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 Yolŋu Studies. Betty Marrŋanyin was a highly respected Yolŋu linguist, educator and researcher from Elcho Island who joined the Yolŋu Studies teaching team at CDU for a short period leading up to the Award. John Greateorex 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 Yolŋu Studies coordinator, which he did until 2014. John and Michael both lived in Arnhem Land in the 1970s where they learnt to speak Yolŋu 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), which greatly expanded student numbers and Yolŋu contributors – as guest lecturers from remote communities. The Award raised awareness of the program and its impact on the Yolŋu 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 Greateorex and Linda Miller had the support of Yolŋu 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.