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GETTING STARTED

SYNOPSIS
Through song, dance, art and ritual, the Yolngu people of northeast Arnhem Land pass on their sacred knowledge. The Djungguwan is one of their most important ceremonies. Now, at the request of Yolngu leaders, this two-DVD set brings together three rare films of the Djungguwan from 1966, 1976 and 2002 – including, for the first time, secret and sacred scenes – plus an introductory film and five mini-documentaries. It explores the role of ceremony in Indigenous Australia and provides an extraordinary cultural record for future generations.

A NOTE FROM THE MAKERS OF CEREMONY DVD
In December 2003, Rirratjingu clan leaders called a meeting with Trevor Graham and Denise Haslem who were in Yirrkala at that time filming for Film Australia. The Rirratjingu were concerned about negative media coverage of Yolngu culture. They asked Trevor and Denise to produce a series of documentaries that explained the depth of Yolngu culture and law. They asked specifically that all three filmed versions of the Djungguwan be used to show the history and complexity of Yolngu ceremony and how ceremony relates to land, law, people and politics.

They also wanted the history of the land rights struggle to be included. They felt that this production would be, as Wanyubi Marika said, ‘a powerful thing to help build self-esteem and establish a basis for a positive future’.

That meeting began the production of this DVD set which brings together the three remarkable films of the Djungguwan ceremony and a series of documentaries which include interviews with Yolngu leaders, anthropologists and filmmakers filmed specifically for this DVD.

The documentaries are designed to help students access the complexity and richness of Yolngu history, law and social structure through an understanding of ceremony.
Ceremony DVD Summary of Contents

Disc 1
A valuable teaching resource offering insights into Indigenous Australia and the role of ceremony in society. It also introduces students to aspects of colonisation and contact history and a range of important debates arising from Indigenous Australian ideas about land tenure, in addition to archaeology and anthropology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEGMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong> 6 mins</td>
<td>Section 2, page 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>An overview of the Djungguwan ceremony and its unique cinematic history.</td>
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<td><strong>Understanding the Ceremony</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>This Is My Land</em> 11 mins</td>
<td>Section 2, page 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outlines a brief history of the Yolngu and the role that their land plays in their spiritual and material lives.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Meaning of the Ceremony</em> 10 mins</td>
<td>Section 2, page 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides a context for the Djungguwan ceremony in Yolngu culture.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Wawilak Narratives</em> 7 mins</td>
<td>Section 2, page 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explains the role, journey and origins of the Wawilak Sisters – the key ancestral creators of the Djungguwan.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Instruments of Ceremony</em> 11 mins</td>
<td>Section 2, page 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Djungguwan is like a theatrical performance. This documentary looks at some of the tools or props and sets used.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>A Cinematic Record</em> 18 mins</td>
<td>Section 2, page 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explores the three different Djungguwan ceremonies filmed in 1966, 1976 and 2002.</td>
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<td><strong>Films of the Ceremony</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Djungguwan--Speaking to the Future</em> (2002) 87 mins</td>
<td>Section 3, page 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feature-length film about the Djungguwan held in Yirrkala in 2002.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Djunguan of Yirrkala</em> (1966) 17 mins (unrestricted scenes only)</td>
<td>Section 3, page 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shown for the first time on this DVD, public scenes of the Djungguwan filmed in Yirrkala in 1966 by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Extras</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Photo Gallery</em> – A slide show of images from the Djungguwan filmed at Gurka’wuy in 1976 and Yirrkala in 2002.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Maps</em> – Locates northeast Arnhem Land and key geographic points mentioned in the films and mini-documentaries.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Credits</em> – Key personnel involved in the making of the DVDs and acknowledgements.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Background Material</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Insert Disc 1 into your computer to access additional information about the Yolngu, their ceremonies and political history as well as interviews, biographies and further references, including websites.</td>
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Disc 2
More a primary source for those interested in ongoing anthropological research and study.

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<th>SEGMENT</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Films of the Ceremony</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Djungguwan at Gurka’wuy</em> (1976) 199 mins (edited version)</td>
<td>Section 3, page 20</td>
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<td>Part 1 – 37 mins</td>
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<td>Part 2 – 43 mins</td>
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<td>Part 3 – 44 mins</td>
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<td>Part 4 – 41 mins</td>
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<td>Part 5 – 34 mins</td>
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**CURRICULUM LINKS**
At the secondary and tertiary level the DVDs are directly relevant to:
- Indigenous Studies
- Legal Studies
- Society and Culture
- Studies of Society and Environment/Human Society and Its Environment
- History
- English
- Media
- Performing and Visual Arts

Teachers should be aware that the films and documentaries on the DVDs contain references to alcohol and drug use.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**Knowledge and Attitudes**
Students will learn about a range of significant Indigenous issues that relate directly to history, anthropology, law, society and culture. In addition they will have the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of, and empathy with, the Yolngu. Students are exposed to concepts associated with both symbolic and practical reconciliation.

**Skills**
Students will be able to watch and listen, to make notes based on the DVDs and to summarise and synthesise information. The DVDs also include written documents that offer the opportunity for reading and comprehension. Research and the skills associated with debate and discussion can also be developed and assessed by combining the DVD set with the exercises included in the teachers notes.

**FORMAT OF THE TEACHERS NOTES**
These teachers notes are composed on the twin premises, that the DVDs are:
1. a stand-alone resource for the study of the Yolngu and their ceremonies;
2. a valuable stimulus that represents an opportunity for extension and enrichment in the broader areas of Indigenous Studies and History.

These teachers notes are, therefore, generic and explore issues that arise from Yolngu culture and the ceremonies depicted, rather than the narrow syllabus requirements of any individual course or discipline. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these notes to their particular course and educational circumstance.

The notes are divided into four sections:
1. a general introduction that sets the scene, addressing the history and nature of Yolngu society, their land and the importance of ceremony to the Yolngu;
2. study guide to the Introduction and Understanding the Ceremony;
3. study guide to excerpts from the three films of the ceremony;
4. a brief review of the background material, highlighting some of its important historical/anthropological aspects.
B E F O R E  W A T C H I N G

T H E  I M P O R T A N C E  O F  C E R E M O N Y

All cultures have developed ceremonies or rituals to teach, to celebrate, to remember or to mark points of transition.

The Yolngu of northeast Arnhem Land share with all other cultures the practice of ceremonial activities. A close look at any society’s ceremonies offers learning opportunities and insights into that society.

Activity
Consider this brief list of events and the ceremonies practised around them in Australia:

- birthdays
- funerals
- Anzac Day

Add to that list five more and identify the purpose of the ceremonies listed.

A B O R I G I N A L  C E R E M O N I E S

There are many ceremonies and reasons for ceremonies in Aboriginal society. All are concerned with acting out the stories and laws of the ancestral past. Great ancestral spirits arranged the earth by creating people, animals, plants and birds and made rules and the law to ensure their survival.

Men and women have different roles in ceremonies and these roles vary from language group to language group. In many areas men are given the role of guardians of a special spiritual site where a ceremony was performed. Women are the guardians of a special knowledge and therefore hold great religious and spiritual power within the language group.

Roles in ceremonies will vary considerably depending on the reasons why the ceremony is being held. Some ceremonies are for men only, others only for women, and both men and women have their own spiritual and sacred objects. Sometimes this is talked about as men’s business and women’s business. Neither men nor women possess greater spiritual needs than the other – they coexist in different ways to ensure that sacred elements of the ancestral past will be practised and passed on.

Ceremonies and rituals take on many different forms. Some are very private and involve people only in that language group. Sometimes they involve the creation of special and sacred objects, drawings in the sand or earth (sand painting), moulding and carving of spirit figures in clay or wood, bark paintings, specific body designs and special songs and dances.

Question
- What do you think Aboriginal ceremonies are primarily about?

Activity
Find other indigenous ceremonies from Australia and overseas eg those of the indigenous peoples of Canada. Consider the purpose of the ceremony and how that might affect the form of the ceremony, who participates in it and what role men and women play.
SECTION 1 – SETTING THE SCENE

THE YOLNGU

The Yolngu are the Indigenous Australians who live in the northeast of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory.

Yolngu are linked by common social customs, by culture, by ceremony and by aspects of language. Their culture is rich and complex.

Broadly the Yolngu social structure is based on clans and moieties

Clans are extended family groups and they are the foundation of Yolngu social organisation. There are more than 50 Yolngu clans in northeast Arnhem Land. Each clan has its own traditional land or country, their wanga, their own dialect or version of the Yolngu language, the Yolngu Matha, and their own ceremonies or bunngul.

Clan membership is patrilineal, in other words it is based on the father.

The Yolngu and their clans are divided into two moieties.

Moieties are larger subgroups of the Yolngu. The two Yolngu moieties are the Dhuwa and the Yirritja. All the clans belong to one or the other. Members of each of the moieties are linked to different parts of the country and believe that they are descended from different ancestors responsible for the creation of all things.

Questions

• Who are the Yolngu and where do they live?
• What are clans and moieties?

Yolngu tradition and law are passed from one generation to the next through songs, dances, art and rituals.

Activities

Remember that ceremony can be even more important in a culture that uses methods other than writing to record and pass on information. Consider why that might be the case. As you reflect, think about how young children learn before they can read.

How do you remember the letters of the alphabet or the number of days in each month? Can you think of any other information that is learned through song and rhyme? Provide examples.

The pressures of non-Indigenous culture have made it harder for the Yolngu to preserve and nurture their distinctive culture. In order to aid preservation and communication, Yolngu elders invited non-Indigenous filmmakers to record some special ceremonies such as the Djungguwan.

The process that led to the creation of these DVDs does in itself, therefore, offer an important lesson about Indigenous culture. It is not static and it should not be studied simply as an anthropological artefact. Yolngu culture continues to adapt and in the process it survives.
THE DJUNGGUWAN
The Djungguwan is a ceremony of the Rirratjingu and the Marrakulu clans. It is a ceremony of transition, teaching and remembering. It is an initiation ceremony that aims to teach young boys about discipline, law and respect for the traditions of their people. Through song, dance and art, a narrative is told about two ancestral beings, the Wawilak Sisters, as they journey through country creating each tribe and clan and giving them their law.

The Djungguwan is also sometimes used as a circumcision ceremony, linked to ideas and images of fertility and growth.

No two performances of the Djungguwan are the same – each is a unique creation – but they all share a common core and each reflects the same principles and ideas.

Each ceremony is filled with a depth of meaning that invites careful and detailed study. The nature of that study will depend on the specific course being undertaken and is left to the discretion of the individual classroom teacher and instructor.

THE WAWILAK NARRATIVES
In eastern and central Arnhem Land two creator women, the Djang'kawu Sisters, gave birth to the first children of the Dhuwa moiety. Another pair of ancestral sisters, the Wawilak, also laid down much of the law and ceremony for those children to follow.

As they travelled through Arnhem Land the Wawilak Sisters hunted, gathered food and made camp like the Yolngu of today. But like all ancestral beings their actions took on a creative and land-transforming nature; and as they travelled they sang, naming and thereby giving meaning to the country and everything upon it. They created great ceremonies like the Djungguwan through which they taught the first ancestral people of this country, the Djuwany, the sacred and moral law which has been handed down to this day.

Originally the Wawilaks’ story and their companion Djungguwan belonged only to the Wagilag, Liyagalawumirr and Mandhalpuy clans of central Arnhem. But sometime around 1918, the story and ceremony were exchanged and given by the men of the Mandhalpuy clan to a senior Rirratjingu man, Djuwakan Marika, from east Arnhem Land.

The sharing of this ancestral narrative confirms the close relationship between these clans and the sacred power the Wawilak story embodies for Yolngu. This creation story portrays the beginnings of Yolngu law, painting, ceremony and custom.
**Northeast Arnhem Land**

*Note:* It is recommended that teachers show students the map in the Extras section of the DVD at an early stage of the unit to ensure a clear grasp of the geography of Arnhem Land.

East and northeast Arnhem Land is a huge area stretching from east of the Blyth River to the Gulf of Carpentaria and south as far as Rose River – an area in excess of 40,000 square kilometres.

The Gove Peninsula is situated 650 kilometres east of Darwin, on the northeastern corner of Arnhem Land where the Gulf of Carpentaria meets the Arafura Sea. The landscape is typical of the Top End – red earth, corkscrew palms and speargrass. Its beaches, bays and islands are idyllic, with stretches of beautiful white sand and clear blue ocean waters.

The Gove Peninsula has three main settlements: Yirrkala, Marngarr and the mining township of Nhulunbuy.

Nhulunbuy (the Yolngu word for the hill named Mt Saunders by Matthew Flinders), with a population of over 4000, is the fourth-largest regional town in the Northern Territory and a tourist haven for tropical sport and reef fishing, diving and snorkelling.

Here the grass is constantly watered and mowed. Many of the houses are prefabricated concrete bunkers. For the locals there is a pool, sporting facilities, two shopping centres and a large regional hospital.

**Yirrkala**

Yirrkala has a population of 800, including a handful of non-Indigenous administrators, community workers and teachers. The town serves as a resource centre for a further 800 people who live in small family-orientated outstations or bush camps in the region known as Laynhapuy Homelands.
Colonisation and Contact History

The Yolngu have occupied their lands since the earliest of known time. The first recorded contacts between the Yolngu and the world beyond Australia came with the arrival of Macassan traders from Indonesia. The Macassans came in search of trepang, also known as the sea cucumber or sea slug. It was much prized in China. There is clear evidence that these contacts began in the 1720s, but they may have been earlier. These visits lasted until 1907, and there appears to have been a significant degree of cooperation between the Macassans and the Yolngu. The Yolngu adapted and incorporated many aspects of the Macassan influence into their own traditions.

Although a number of European explorers made landfall on the northern Australian coast, the first recorded contact between the Yolngu and Europeans was in 1803 when Matthew Flinders visited the area.

Their relatively isolated position meant that the Yolngu had only limited contact with Europeans up until the last years of the 19th century. In the 1880s Arnhem Land was divided into a number of pastoral leases and violence ensued as the Yolngu resisted the occupation of their lands by the newcomers. Aside from the deaths in what have been called the Pastoral Wars, European diseases took the heaviest toll on the Yolngu. The early years of the 20th century brought the church and missions. The missions offered medical aid but they also created dependence.

Gradually however the resilience of the Yolngu and their ability to adapt became apparent. They took to trade and industry and worked within the economic system imposed by the dominant non-Indigenous culture.

A traumatic change occurred however after vast quantities of bauxite (for making aluminium) were discovered on the Yolngu land of the Gove Peninsula in the 1950s. Without consulting the original owners, the Commonwealth Government authorised mining by Nabalco, a Swiss-based multinational company. In 1963 the Yolngu sent their famous bark petition to Canberra in protest. In 1971 the Gove Land Rights Case was heard, where the Yolngu unsuccessfully challenged the mining company and sought legal recognition of their ownership of the land.

The Yolngu experience provides a valuable insight into the history of land rights in Australia. From 1788 until the historic Mabo decision in 1992 Australia was described as terra nullius – it was seen as vacant or empty land, not owned or claimed by anyone prior to the arrival of Governor Phillip and the British.

Henry Reynolds in his book Aboriginal Sovereignty points out that although Justice Blackburn in the Gove Land Rights Case ruled against the Yolngu people living around Yirrkala, his decision indicated that an Australian court had taken the claims of an Indigenous community seriously. Even though he ruled against them the judge did accept that the Yolngu had a recognisable system of laws and described that system, in his judgement, as ‘subtle and elaborate…which provided a stable order of society’.

The Yolngu challenge therefore paved the way for Mabo because if a court recognised that Indigenous society did have a system of laws, then they must have exercised ownership or sovereignty over territory.

The opening of the Nabalco mine brought mixed results for the Yolngu. There was money from mining royalties, but there was also alcohol and drug abuse plus a range of social problems linked to the decline of traditional culture.

The Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 and the creation of the Homeland Movement was seen by many of the Yolngu elders as the salvation of their people.
THE HOMELAND MOVEMENT

In the early 1970s in northeast Arnhem Land Aboriginal family groups began leaving Yirrkala Mission to go ‘home’ to the lands of their forefathers. Other communities soon joined the exodus from mission settlements across the Top End to return to their ancestral lands. It was an historic turning point in the struggle for land rights and self-determination.

For the Yolngu of Yirrkala it was about survival. They defied mission rule and turned their backs on the intrusions of the modern world – brought on by the imposition of a huge multinational mine – in a bid to revive culture, care for country and begin their lives anew.

Today, more than 30 years later the Homeland Movement, as it is now known, is still effective. In northeast Arnhem Land alone there are 16 clan settlements operating in an area the size of Tasmania. Most homelands have three to 15 houses, some form of power, a bore, a public phone, a school and a dirt airstrip. Residents of the homelands are generally related by birth, marriage or the complex, extended kinship system that governs Yolngu life.

Homeland life is a unique blend of ancient lore and modern ways. And Yirrkala, no longer a mission, is its administrative heart. Laynhapuy Homelands Association runs a vast network of schools, health services and even its own airline, to service the needs of Yolngu living in this vast tract of nearly 100,000 square kilometres of Aboriginal-owned land.

One of these homelands is Gurka’way, the home of the Marrakulu clan at Trial Bay on the Gulf of Carpentaria. In the 1970s clan leader Mithili Wanambi with Dundiwuy Wanambi re-established Gurka’wuy as an outstation for the Marrakulu. An airstrip was created along with several buildings close to the bay. Dundiwuy attempted to keep the outstation going but eventually had to return to Yirrkala in 1980.

In 2000, a new dwelling was built closer to the airstrip. Marrakulu clans people visit regularly but no one lives there permanently. More recently, in 2003, a Djungguwan was again held at Gurka’wuy, this time to commemorate the deceased Marrakulu man, Dundiwuy Wanambi, and to establish a memorial for him near the beach. (In this instance, the ceremony was filmed by the community and is not included in the Ceremony DVD.)

Note: This section is explored further in the mini-documentary This Is My Land.

Questions

• When was the first contact between the Yolngu and the outside world?
• What were the results of the European settlement of Arnhem Land in the late 19th century?
• What was the bark petition?
• Why was the Gove Land Rights Case important?
• What is the Homeland Movement?

Activities

Imagine that you were a member of the Yolngu. Write a page explaining your feelings about the arrival of the Europeans, and the fact that the newcomers did not understand your laws or close ties to the land.

Use the internet to find out more about the Homeland Movement. Do you think that it is a good idea? Give reasons to support your opinion.
Yolngu are a non-literate society; they pass on their culture and law through song, dance, ritual and art. Their collision with and subsequent integration into western culture has meant that new generations are not being as intensively instructed in cultural ways as they once were.

Since the 1960s, film and video have become increasingly important for preserving Yolngu ceremony and law. While the richness of the culture has sparked curiosity from filmmakers and anthropologists, the Yolngu themselves have been instrumental in organising the making of various film and video programs. Roy Dadaynga Marika made his intentions very clear to Ian Dunlop in Yirrkala in 1970 when he said:

This is our chance to record our history for our children, for our children and our grandchildren. We should do this while we are still alive. Before we die we should make a true picture...our own Yolngu picture, that will teach our children our dances and law and everything, our singing, our own Yolngu culture.

– Pain For This Land, Film Australia, 1970

The Yirrkala Film Project
In 1970 Ian Dunlop started a long-term project with the Yolngu of Yirrkala for Film Australia. Eight major filming trips were made between 1970 and 1982. Initially 11 films were produced. Then from 1994, in a joint venture between Film Australia and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Ian Dunlop and Philippa Deveson edited an additional 11 films from previously unused and historically important material. In July 1996 the last of these were taken to Yirrkala for Yolngu approval.

The 22 films document many aspects of Yolngu life. Each stands on its own but each is also part of a rich interconnecting mosaic of people and themes. The impact of the mine and mining town on the Yolngu is a major theme. The resilience of the Yolngu and their culture is another. The birth and development of the Homeland Movement is documented, as are several major ceremonies. The complex relationship between people and their clans, ritual, art and land is an intertwining theme through many films.

These films are for everybody; as Dundiwuy Wanambi says at the end of Djungguwan at Gurka’wuy – ‘This is a history for new generation and new generation...’

The Law and Order Project
In 2002 Trevor Graham, Rose Hesp and Denise Haslem spent ten months in Yirrkala filming for a documentary program about law and order issues in the Yolngu community. The program was sparked by the controversial 1997 Northern Territory mandatory sentencing laws which saw so many young Indigenous boys ending up in prison, and sometimes taking their own lives. The law was subsequently repealed in late 2001 when the Labor Government ousted the Country Liberal Party from office. But the question still remained about why so many young Indigenous boys and men were getting into trouble.

The filming focused on issues to do with alcohol and drug abuse from which the documentary Lonely Boy Richard was produced.

Trevor Graham also filmed many aspects of community life and at the request of Yolngu leaders filmed two ceremonies. The first was a traditional funeral ceremony for a beloved non-Indigenous man who had tragically died in a helicopter crash. This became the half-hour documentary The Pilot’s Funeral.

The second ceremony was the Djungguwan. Wanyubi Marika requested that Trevor come and film all aspects of the ceremony. Wanyubi was concerned about the many young men who were drinking in the community, and the number of alcohol-related deaths. Wanyubi wanted to use the Djungguwan as a ceremony to instil discipline and respect for the law of the Wawilak Sisters in those who participated.
Wanyubi also knew how popular Ian Dunlop’s *Yirrkala Film Project* films were in the community and how important they are as a record of Yolngu ceremony and culture. He too wanted to record the ceremony to ensure its future but also to show that Yolngu culture was alive and active in 2002.

The cinematic history of the Yolngu and the Djungguwan contained in this DVD set is important both for what it preserves and in its own right. Much of the cinematic content is anthropological. Nevertheless the project and the people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who inspired it represent reconciliation – both symbolic and practical. These issues are captured in the mini-documentary *A Cinematic Record* that is reviewed in the next section.

**Questions**

- Why is it so important for the Yolngu to record their ceremonies?
- What is *The Yirrkala Film Project*?
- What was the purpose of the Law and Order Project?

**Activities**

Use the internet to research the history and meaning of reconciliation.

Consider the meaning of reconciliation and just how the films, the filmmakers and the aims of these projects represent reconciliation.
SECTION 2 - STUDY GUIDE FOR THE INTRODUCTION AND UNDERSTANDING THE CEREMONY MINI-DOCUMENTARIES

The mini-documentaries are:

- Introduction
- This Is My Land
- The Meaning of the Ceremony
- The Wawilak Narratives
- The Instruments of Ceremony
- A Cinematic Record

They collectively run for just over one hour. The longest of them is 18 minutes. They provide a clear exposition of the cultural, anthropological and historical issues arising from a study of the Yolngu and the Djungguwan ceremony.

The mini-documentaries draw on the three longer films made in 1966, 1976 and 2002 about the Djungguwan ceremony. As such they reflect continuity and change in the Yolngu world. The mini-documentaries can be used collectively as the basis of a unit of work or they can be used individually as part of a single lesson.

Depending on the teaching discipline and subject involved, there is real value in using all of the mini-documentaries as the basis for a complete unit of work. Each of the documentaries is linked and the words and images contained within them overlap to reinforce important themes and concepts.

INTRODUCTION – 6 MINUTES

This mini-documentary serves as an introduction to the two-DVD set and should be viewed prior to all other material. It gives an overview of the Djungguwan ceremony and the other mini-documentaries, explaining the reasons for and background to the ceremony as well as its unique cinematic history.

Yolngu clan leaders, anthropologists and filmmakers all give their own perspective on the Djungguwan.

The documentary illustrates the relationship between the men involved in the 1976 and 2002 Djungguwan – Milirrpum Marika was the father of Wanyubi Marika and Mithili Wanambi the father of Wukun Dennis Wanambi. It also introduces the main theme throughout the DVD set of recording culture for future generations.

Questions
- How do the Yolngu pass on their culture?
- What is the Djungguwan ceremony meant to teach?
- What is the story being told in the ceremony?
- What are the three main functions of the ceremony?
- What makes the three films so special?
- Why did the Yolngu leaders commission the films?

Activities

Note the very deliberate way that the Yolngu leaders want to ensure that the non-Indigenous filmmakers capture a clear record of the ceremony. At one stage we hear one of the Yolngu leaders issue the instruction ‘Turn that tape recorder on’.

Consider the extent to which this is an example of the Yolngu elders using non-Indigenous people and their technology to serve the needs of the Yolngu.

In addition, note that each of the ceremonies filmed in 1966, 1976 and 2002 was prompted by a death in the community and a funeral. This can make the Djungguwan ceremony a ceremony of renewal.
Remember that these three documentaries are a portrait of history and Yolngu life.

What aspects of the three ceremonies reflect continuity and what aspects reflect change?

UNDERSTANDING THE CEREMONY

This Is My Land – 11 minutes
The film offers a brief history of the Yolngu and the important role that the land plays in their spiritual and material lives. The documentary reviews many of the historical issues addressed earlier in the notes under the heading Colonisation and Contact History (page 10). The central features of the documentary are the Yolngu’s concepts of land tenure and the clash of cultures and priorities that followed the European settlement.

The Yolngu have a complex system of land tenure that includes both land and sea boundaries based on the natural features of the landscape. In order to understand them, non-Indigenous Australians must abandon their ways of thinking and empathise with the Yolngu and their world. The DVDs are an important resource to encourage that empathy.

The documentary depicts the concerns of Yolngu elders about the influence of European culture and the effects of alcohol and a loss of identity. Mungurrawuy Yunupingu is heard in a voiceover describing the arrival of the Nabalco mine and the money and change associated with it as ‘the new law’.

A key focus of the documentary is the Homeland Movement and the film made by Ian Dunlop in 1976. It features an elder, Mithili Wanambi, explaining the importance of the move back to traditional clan lands. He says that it is ‘to show that our foundation is in this country’ and how he hopes the film he has encouraged Ian Dunlop to make will help the outsiders to understand ‘about our land and our sacred law’.

The filmmaker Ian Dunlop summarises many of these ideas when he says that the images associated with Yolngu ceremonies amount to title deeds. This concept is further developed in scenes from the 2002 documentary where Wukun Dennis Wanambi is seen decorating one of the ceremonial poles used in the Djungguwan ceremony. He says that the video and images that he is creating will stand as proof of ownership so that ‘white people can’t steal our land’.

Questions
• Where do the Yolngu live?
• What does the word ‘Yolngu’ mean in the language of the people of the region?
• When the Yolngu moved on to the Yirrkala Mission from 1935, how did they maintain links with their traditional clan lands?
• How did the Yolngu respond to the granting of mining rights on their land?
• What motivated the Yolngu to move back to their clan lands?
• What are the links between the Djungguwan ceremony, its images and the Yolngu idea of land rights?

The Meaning of the Ceremony – 10 minutes
This documentary provides a context for the Djungguwan ceremony in Yolngu culture. The ceremony plays a key part in defining Yolngu law and social organisation. It also provides links between generations within the community.

Djuwalpi and Bakamumu Marika provide personal insight into ceremonial process as they recall what it was like as young boys to go through the Djungguwan, how they were scared and frightened at being taken away from their mothers. They also outline the law that is handed down and explain it in Christian terms.

Take particular note that some individuals appear in both the 1976 and the 2002 films of the ceremony. The young boy from 1976, Wanyubi Marika, is seen as the leader in 2002. This symbolises for any audience the ideas of continuity and change.
Questions
• What are the functions of the Djungguwan ceremony?
• Why did the Yolngu hold the Djungguwan ceremony in 1966, 1976 and 2002?
• What was it like for the boys participating in the Djungguwan?
• Why do the Yolngu compare their laws with the Ten Commandments?
• How does the ceremony reflect links between the past, the present and the future?

Activities
The documentary deals with circumcision and the initiation or transition from childhood to adulthood for the boys in the clan.

Find and describe other rite-of-passage ceremonies in cultures or religions throughout the world.

The Wawilak Narratives – 7 minutes
The documentary explains the role, journey and origins of the Wawilak Sisters story. The Yolngu believe that their world was made by creator ancestors. There are a number of variations on this theme but in the Wawilak narratives, the story is based on a journey across Arnhem Land by two sisters.

Note that the ceremony is more than just the rituals of song, dance and art. The Yolngu elders use the occasion of the ceremony to teach and discuss the stories that are linked to the ceremony.

Questions
• Summarise the Wawilak narrative and the experiences of the ancestral sisters on their journey.
• What happened at Gurka’wuy?
• What does the snake swallowing and regurgitating the sisters represent?
• How do the Yolngu express the Wawilak Sisters narratives?

Activities
List some creation stories from other cultures around the world and across time. Why do you think people need to have and to hold these stories?
Compare and contrast the Wawilak Sisters story with some of the other creation narratives from other cultures.

The Instruments of Ceremony – 11 minutes
The Djungguwan is like a theatrical performance. This documentary details some of the tools or props and sets used: madayin – sacred objects, manikay – songs, miny’tji – ancestral designs, rannga – emblems, bunngul – ceremonial dance, gundimolk – ceremonial ground.

Questions
• What do the songs of the ceremony record?
• In the songs what is the importance of naming places, objects and animals?
• What is the significance of the ceremonial poles that feature in the Djungguwan?
• Describe the ceremonial ground, the gundimolk. What are some of the different stories it represents?
• How do the Yolngu describe their dances performed during the Djungguwan?
• How is the Djungguwan like an opera?

Activities
Find a ceremony from another indigenous culture in the world and list the instruments used within the performance. Compare with the Yolngu Djungguwan ceremony. Are there similarities?
A Cinematic Record – 18 minutes
This documentary explores the three different Djungguwan ceremonies filmed in 1966, 1976 and 2002. The filmmakers explain how and why the filming came about and who was involved. The Djungguwan is regarded as a particularly rich and diverse ceremony that has invited study and interest from anthropologists. The films also show that the Yolngu are more than simply the object of study.

Yolngu leaders encouraged the filmmakers in their endeavours. The Yolngu therefore used the film projects to satisfy their own goals. These goals, evident throughout the DVD set, are preservation of traditions and the education of future generations within the Yolngu world and beyond.

Take particular note of the changing attitudes of the different generations of Yolngu leaders and how material that was once restricted eventually came to be seen. Also think carefully about the motivations of the Yolngu leaders as they talk directly to the camera.

Questions
• Summarise the details of the production of each film.
• Describe the three different approaches by the filmmakers.
• What are the elements of continuity and change evident in each of the three filmed ceremonies?
• Why did the communities want the Djungguwan filmed?
• What does Ian Dunlop mean by each Djungguwan is ‘a unique event’?

Activities
Ian Dunlop says, ‘I didn’t really think about who my audience was.’ Discuss what difference a consideration of an audience would make.

The 1966 and 1976 films both have restricted scenes. Discuss the concept of filming and restricting scenes. Do you think it is still valid? What do you think about this present generation showing previously restricted scenes?
Each of the three films of the Djungguwan ceremonies of 1966, 1976, and 2002 present a different picture of a unique ceremony. There are common elements across the films, such as the telling of the Wawilak Sisters creation story, the singing and the dancing.

The different approaches to portraying key themes make watching some or all of each film a rewarding experience. For example, the 2002 film depicts tension between traditional and western influences; the 1966 film presents a wide range of dance; and the 1976 film offers in-depth insights into Yolngu culture.

Djungguwan – Speaking to the Future
2002, 87 minutes, on Disc 1: Films of the Ceremony

The 2002 film reveals tension between traditional Yolngu culture and western influences. Teachers could choose to watch one or more of the excerpts mentioned below. Together the four excerpts total just less than 30 minutes of viewing. If a teacher sought ten minutes of viewing or less, the first two and a half minutes of Excerpt 1 and all four minutes of Excerpt 2 together provide a good glimpse of several of the key themes of Djungguwan–Speaking to the Future: traditional law and lore, western influences, culture and history.

Some Background
In Djungguwan–Speaking to the Future the clan members who lead the ceremony are Wanyubi Marika of the Rirratjingu clan, and Wukun Dennis Wanambi of the Marrakulu. They are very concerned about the threat western culture poses to their culture (see Excerpt 4) and their children, especially the negative influences of drugs and alcohol (see Excerpt 3). They wanted this ceremony recorded so that their children would be able to see it, understand it and perform it in the future.

Previously unseen images of the preparation of the ceremonial poles and artefacts in the secret men's camp form a significant part of this film (see Excerpt 1). Dennis and Wanyubi sing and paint the story of the Wawilak Sisters (see Excerpt 2). When the poles are completed, there are five days of ritual held at the ceremonial ground in the community before the poles are finally carried out and put into their resting place, the gundimolk. Here they act as a reminder of the law and of two men, Jacky and Roy Marika. Boys, men and women paint their bodies with traditional designs. At the men’s camp, the boys are initiated into the law. The final part of the ceremony is led by the women as they weep in memory of the two men.

Excerpt 1:
Scene Selection 4 – Day 3 Explaining the Poles
Approximately 9 minutes

Some Background
Dennis Wanambi contributes to the preparation of three poles for the Djungguwan ceremony, and explains their significance to future generations. The preparation is undertaken in the secret men’s camp. Two large poles represent the Wawilak Sisters, Raymattja and Lak Lak, and a third smaller one represents their child, Dhaluk. Because the ceremony is held in Yirrkala, which is Rirratjingu land, the two large poles also represent two Rirratjingu leaders who have passed away: Wanyubi’s father, Jacky Marika, and his uncle, Roy Marika. Both men were instrumental in the famous Gove Land Rights Case (1970), which was a precursor to Mabo in 1992.

Dennis is painting a Marrakulu clan design on one of the poles. He suggests that this painting acts as an important connection to their land, law, culture and history.
Note: The material following Dennis’s discussion is optional for classroom viewing (approximately two-and-a-half minutes into the chapter).

Questions
- What do the three ceremonial poles represent?
- Why does Dennis suggest it is important for Yolngu people to paint their ceremonial designs?
- When was the last Djungguwan ceremony before the one shown in the video clip?
- How did Dennis change after attending the previous Djungguwan?

Excerpt 2:
Scene Selection 5 – Day 5 Painting After Work
Approximately 4 minutes

Some Background
Whilst painting and singing in the secret men’s camp, Dennis and Wanyubi further explain the narrative of the two Wawilak Sisters.

Questions
- What ancestral animal do the Marrakulu believe they are?
- How many moiety dimensions do the Marrakulu and Rirratjingu believe there are? What items are categorised in this way?
- What instruments are played while Wanyubi sings the story of the Wawilak Sisters?
- What is the colour of the clay that the Wawilak Sisters have on their bodies?

Excerpt 3:
Scene Selection 6 – Day 5 A Little History
Approximately 8 minutes

Some Background
Everything changed in northeast Arnhem Land when vast quantities of bauxite were discovered in the 1950s. By the early 1970s the construction of the $320-million mine, port, refinery and new, fully equipped town to house the miners and their families was almost completed. The mine, plant and the township of Nhulunbuy was officially opened in 1972. The mine brought royalty money for the Yolngu, but also alcohol, with devastating consequences. The serious social problems of violence in the family and community that are now being experienced are anchored in alcohol and drug abuse.

Questions
- How many liquor outlets are near Yirrkala at the time of the film?
- What does Dennis say is evil? What else does he say is bad?
- What does Wanyubi say that young Yolngu should do to be ‘really Yolngu’?

Excerpt 4:
Scene Selection 11 – Day 10 Tension
Approximately 8 minutes

Some Background
As the narrative unfolds it is clear that in 2002 things are not going quite to plan. The ceremony starts with enthusiasm with many men turning up to help paint. But over three weeks of painting and preparation, the involvement falls away. The poles have to be moved to a new area away from the ‘drinkers’. By the time the ceremonial ground or gundimolk is prepared, there is so little attendance that a megaphone is used to remind people that their presence is required. All comes good on the final day with a large turnout.

Note: The questions relate to the final one-and-a-half minutes of this excerpt, when Wanyubi uses the megaphone to call for support. The earlier part of the chapter shows the build-up of tension and how it influences the ceremony that follows.
Teachers could show three extra minutes into the next chapter to see the better turnout on the next day, which is the final day.

**Questions**

- What does Wanyubi suggest over the megaphone that his community has been ignoring?
- What does he call the community?
- What emotion does Wanyubi suggest that the Yolngu community should feel?

**Activities**

Research some of the legal innovations associated with circle sentencing for members of Indigenous communities. How are the attitudes of Yolngu elders compatible with the philosophy behind the sentencing circles?

**THE DJUNGGUWANYATYGURKA’WUY**

1976, 199 minutes (edited version), on Disc 2: Films of the Ceremony

The visuals in this film are mostly of singing, dancing and movement, with more of a range of ceremonial dances compared to the videos of 1976 and 2002.

**Some Background**

In the early 1960s the filmmaker Cecil Holmes approached the Institute of Aboriginal Studies (now the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies – AIATSIS) to record ceremonies in the Northern Territory before they disappeared. Government policy of that time was for Aboriginal assimilation into mainstream society and it was felt that this would lead to such rapid change that many ceremonies would not be performed for much longer.

The institute decided to form their own film production unit and in 1965 they appointed director Roger Sandall and anthropologist Nicolas Peterson. The principal of the institute, Fred McCarthy, wanted the ceremonies to be as authentic and traditional as they were before Europeans came. Peterson was sent out to find ceremonies that were actually happening and discovered that a Djungguwan was to be held at Yirrkala.

Two film versions of the Djungguwan were eventually completed in 1966, a 50-minute story of the ceremony and a five-hour archival record. Both accounts, however, were restricted in 1967 as they contained scenes of sacred dances performed at the secret men’s camp – dances that are to be viewed by initiated Yolngu men only. This is the first time other parts of the ceremony have been available for the public to see.

*Note:* The leading men performing in this 1966 ceremony are the fathers and uncles of the men who perform the 2002 Djungguwan held at Yirrkala.

**Questions**

- What sacred animal do the men represent on their journey in the afternoons?
- Do the women succeed in protecting the three poles?
- What have forked sticks traditionally been used for?
- Why has the path the initiate boys walk on been widened in five places?
- What are the initiates hidden under by the women?
- What are the initiates placed on after being seized?

**DJUNGGUWAN AT GURKA’WUY**

1976, 199 minutes (edited version), on Disc 2: Films of the Ceremony

Twenty-five minutes of excerpts from *Djungguwan at Gurka’wuy* are recommended. These excerpts offer in-depth insights into Yolngu culture and history. These DVD chapters explore some topics in greater depth than covered elsewhere in the DVDs. Topics covered include: social relationships, recent history and creation stories.

The order of the excerpts below is provided as an option only. Teachers are encouraged to use their own discretion to meet the particular needs of their students and lesson plans.
Some Background
This 1976 film was made by Ian Dunlop at the invitation of Dundiwuy Wanambi. Both of these men speak extensively through the film.

The Djungguwan at Gurka’wuy is the focal event. The ceremony was held on Marrakulu land and was primarily initiated and organised by Dundiwuy and Mithili Wanambi, who are Marrakulu clansmen. People of other clans (see Excerpt 1) also played an extremely important part. For example, Bokarra of the Manggali clan was the senior son of the senior Marrakulu woman of her generation. As such he acted as manager, ensuring the proper performance of his mother’s ritual. Most importantly, leaders from the Rirratjingu clan, Roy Dadaynga Marika, Jacky Milirrpum Marika and Wandjuk Marika, played pivotal roles in the ceremony. This is because the Rirratjingu and the Marrakulu share custodianship of the Djungguwan in northeast Arnhem Land.

Note: The 2002 Djungguwan held at Yirrkala was performed in honour of two of the leading men performing in this 1976 ceremony, Jacky and Roy Marika.

Excerpt 1:
Scene Selection 3 – Kinship Ties Between Moieties and Clans
Approximately 2 minutes

Some Background
The Wawilak divided the Djuwany people and the whole of nature into the Dhuwa and the Yirritja. Men always marry women from the opposite moiety and therefore a different clan from their own. Children belong to their father’s clan.

The principal element or heart of Yolngu social organisation is the clan.

Questions
• What clan do a parent’s children belong to?
• What relationship do the children of a Madarrpa man and a Marrakulu woman have to Gurka’wuy?

Excerpt 2:
Scene Selection 2 – Gurka’wuy and the History of Clan Settlements
Approximately 8 minutes

Some Background
Gurka’wuy is in Trial Bay on the Gulf of Carpentaria, some 150 kilometres by bush track south of Yirrkala. This is Marrakulu clan country. Today it is the site of a Marrakulu clan homeland settlement. Gurka’wuy is an important sacred site associated with the Wawilak and other ancestral beings.

Questions
• Where did members of the Marrakulu clan stay at Gurka’wuy before the new centre was built?
• What previous event did Dundiwuy parallel when he organised the Djungguwan at Gurka’wuy?
• Why did the Marrakulu clan return to their homelands?
• What created the shared rituals between different clans?
Excerpt 3:
Scene Selection 1 – Introduction
Approximately 6 minutes

Some Background
Dundiwuy’s painting of the Djungguwan at Gurka’wuy shows how the two Wawilak Sisters taught the first people their law, including the rules of kinship, marriage, social behaviour and land ownership. Today this law is taught, celebrated and handed on from generation to generation through the performance of the Djungguwan and other rituals such as painting.

Questions
• What does Ian Dunlop, the narrator, say the painting design is part of, in reference to a clan’s country?
• What characteristics do religious art and ritual of the Yolngu have?

Excerpt 4:
Scene Selection 6 – The Story of the Wanambi Tree and Djarrka
Approximately 9 minutes

Some Background
Ian Dunlop, the narrator, suggests that the Wanambi tree is a physical sign of part of the history of the Marrakulu clan. Like other ancient histories, Yolngu history has been codified or abstracted over time into a series of symbolic or poetic images. The Yolngu remember, express and relive ancient histories through ritual song, drama and art.

Marrakulu people think of themselves as Djarrka, the ancestral water goanna. These are closely linked to the Wawilak Sisters themselves. Ancestral honey and its accompanying power is also an important theme in Djungguwan at Gurka’wuy. Ian suggests that images such as these are known to all, and that they underpin the philosophical concepts and connections that give meaning to the Yolngu world.

Note: The Wanambi tree is a good example of the theme of multiple realities. Dundiwuy says that even though the Wanambi tree looks different, with different leaves (like those of a mangrove tree), it really is the stringybark tree of the creation story.

Questions
• What is the Wanambi tree?
• What does Dundiwuy suggest is another word for the Gurka’wuy River? How else is this word used?
• What does Dundiwuy say the rocks at Birranyala are?
SECTION 4 -
A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE BACKGROUND MATERIAL

The background material can be accessed on Disc 1 via a computer. It brings together a range of texts that are useful in helping to establish the historical and political context, both within Australia and within Arnhem Land, in which the different documentaries were produced.

PREPARATION FOR VIEWING THE FILMS

Section 1.1 Origins of the Djungguwan provides an historical overview of the origins of the Djungguwan ceremony. It reveals that the rights to the Djungguwan ceremony were only passed on to the Rirratjingu in 1918, by a clan from central Arnhem Land. The story of the Wawilak Sisters was always important to the Yolngu, however the rights to the particular Djungguwan ceremony previously only belonged to the Wagglag, Liyagalawumirr and Mandhalpuy clans.

Section 2 Extracts from Journey to the Crocodile's Nest is particularly useful in providing the historical/political context (see Section 2.2 A Brief History of Yirrkala) and also expanding students' understanding of the complex social structure of the Yolngu people (see Section 2.3 Yolngu Clan Organisation and Structure). Section 2.10 Women and the Law may help to answer some questions students may have after viewing the films as to the role of women in the Djungguwan ceremony.

Section 3.2 The Yirrkala Bark Petition includes a complete translation of the petition and should be noted as this was an extremely significant and symbolic item in the history of land rights in Australia.

Section 4 Manikay (Song Cycle) of the Djungguwan 2002 provides an English translation of the verses sung in Yolngu Matha for the film Djungguwan – Speaking to the Future and may be a valuable reference for students to have in front of them while viewing the DVD.

Activity 1

A particularly interesting exercise for students would be to analyse the biographies of the documentary makers and anthropologists (Trevor Graham, Denise Haslem, Philippa Deveson, Ian Dunlop and Professor Howard Morphy) and the two Indigenous consultants (Wanyubi Marika and Wukun Dennis Wanambi). See Section 6 Biographies in the background material.

How do the opening paragraph/s of each of the biographies define each of the people?

What is the main difference between the biographies of the two Indigenous consultants when contrasted to those of the non-Indigenous documentary makers/anthropologists?

The biographies reveal that for non-Indigenous people, the most common way of defining one's self is by referring to one’s career and personal achievements. By contrast, the Indigenous consultants define themselves by who their fathers were and the positions that their family held in society and the respect they received within Yolngu culture. The biographies therefore serve to highlight some important cultural differences.

Activity 2

The text of the interviews with Bakamumu Marika, Wanyubi Marika and Djuwalpi Marika could be compared by students to help give a clear understanding of the role of the Djungguwan ceremony for the Yolngu (see Section 5 Interviews in the background material). All three interviews tend to stress that the ceremony is important because it teaches the Yolngu discipline. The 2002 ceremony reveals how the context of that discipline is changing, with problems communities face such as the influence of drugs and alcohol.

What do the three interviews with the Marikas say about the Djungguwan ceremony helping to provide discipline for the Yolngu?
SECTION FIVE – APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – YOLNGU MATHA WORDS USED IN THE DVDS

Yolngu Matha literally means tongue of the Yolngu. It refers in general to the dialects spoken in northeast Arnhem Land.

Throughout these notes you will often see words containing the letters ‘ng’. These letters replace one of the Yolngu Matha consonants that is not part of the English alphabet.

Note: Like other Aboriginal languages, Yolngu Matha is traditionally a spoken language. Approaches to spelling change with changes in linguistic practices and therefore often vary (for example, from Djunguan in 1966 to Djungguwan today).

YOLNGU the Indigenous inhabitants of northeast Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory of Australia

ROM refers to the law or ceremonial law or the customs of everyday life

DJALKARI literally means foot, footprint or the roots of a tree. Yolngu use this word to describe the very basis of their culture, the foundation of what they see and know about the world.

WANGARR Ancestral past – the time when totemic ancestral beings travelled over, acted upon and gave meaning to the land and all things upon it in the distant (but also ever-present) past transforming into animals, birds, monsters etc

WANGA describes Yolngu land, place, camp, home

MANIKAY songs that recall in detail the events that occurred as the creating ancestors travelled along their tracks

MADAYIN the collection of songs, designs and sacred objects that belong to a clan and defines their law

GUNDIMOLK sacred ceremonial ground

BUNGGUL ceremony, rite, ritual, dance

RANNGA sacred totems, ceremonial objects, emblems

DHAWU stories

BILMA clapsticks

RIRRATJINGU a Yolngu clan, Dhuwa moiety

MARRAKULU a Yolngu clan, Dhuwa moiety

RAYPIRRI discipline, reprimand

NGANITJI alcohol

BALANDA a term used to refer to non-Aboriginal people. Derived from the word Hollander, its use is currently restricted as it sounds the same as a recently deceased man and has been replaced by the word ngapaki.

DJAMARRKULI children
APPENDIX 2 – TIMELINE OF EVENTS AFFECTING THE YOLNGU OF YIRRKALA

1918  Northern Territory Aboriginals Ordinance forbids mining on Aboriginal Reserved Lands.
1931  Arnhem Land Aboriginal Reserve is declared.
1934  Methodist mission established at Yirrkala.
1942  Aboriginal people make up special reconnaissance unit to defend against the Japanese who bombed Darwin in 1942.
1953  Legislative Council passes a bill giving citizenship rights to Northern Territory Aboriginal people except for those in State care.
1957–1958  Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) established.
1958  The Commonwealth Electoral Act is amended to give franchise to all Aboriginal people, extending the right to vote to Northern Territory Aboriginal people.
1962  In June a bark petition is developed by elders of Arnhem Land community to petition against mining on Gove Peninsula. On 28 August it is presented to the Federal Government but is not accepted. In August a Select Committee on Yirrkala Grievances is set up.
1967  Referendum held in May to change the Federal Constitution from discriminating against Aboriginal people eg S.125 excluded ‘full-blood’ Aboriginal people from census.
1971  Gove Land Rights Case (Milirrpum v Nabalco Pty Ltd) attempts to gain recognition of pre-existing Aboriginal land rights in an Australian court for the first time.
1972  Nabalco mine and refinery commence production and township of Nhulunbuy established.
1972  The Whitlam Labor Government brings in policy of self-determination and in December freezes all applications for mining and exploration on Commonwealth Aboriginal Reserves.
1973  Mr Justice Woodward of the Aboriginal Land Commission delivers his first report.
1974  Mr Justice Woodward delivers his second report.
1978  The Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Ordinance is passed. The Northern Territory is given self-government. On 3 November the Ranger Agreement is signed by Northern Land Council and the Commonwealth of Australia regarding uranium mining.
1979  The Aboriginal Development Commission is established.
1980  In September the National Federation of Land Councils is formed giving Aboriginal people a national voice on land rights.
1983  The Seaman Inquiry (Aboriginal Land Inquiry) was established under Paul Seaman QC.
1985  The Land Councils from the Northern Territory and other states go to Canberra to protest against proposed amendments to the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act.
1987  Northern Territory elections are held and voting becomes compulsory for Aboriginal people.
1992  The Mabo Case recognises the system of Aboriginal land ownership, rejecting the notion of terra nullius.
1993  Federal Government passes the Native Title Act.
Appendix 3 – Ethnographic Filmmaking

Australia has a long and distinguished history of filmmaking in general and ethnographic filmmaking in particular. As early as 1898 a team from Cambridge University filmed in the Torres Strait. That tradition continued and probably reached a peak in a 30-year period from 1961 when the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies produced a major body of ethnographic films. Like the Yolngu, many Indigenous communities during this period embraced film technology to tell their stories and preserve important traditions.

What Is an Ethnographic Film?

By definition, ethnographic films are those produced to meet specific anthropological or sociological agendas. Ian Bryson, in his history of ethnographic filmmaking in Australia entitled Bringing to Light, suggests that ethnographic films differ from documentary films because they have an explicit interest in people and in creating visual representations of their cultures.

Professor Howard Morphy, Director of the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research at the Australian National University, suggests that ethnographic film is a mode of documentary that attempts to view cultures from within—the film equivalent of the anthropological method of participant observation in which the filmmaker is directed as much as possible by the flow of events seen from the viewpoint of those taking part.

One of the characteristics of ethnographic filmmaking is the direct or verité style, dominated by lengthy observational scenes and the use of wide-angle shots. The changes that have taken place in the genre have commonly been prompted by developments in cameras and other technology. Smaller and more portable cameras combined with better film, sound and lighting have created new opportunities for directors. These ideas are reflected in the comments of specific filmmakers interviewed for the mini-documentaries in the Ceremony DVD.
SECTION 6 – REFERENCES
For further reading, see Ceremony–The Djungguwan of Northeast Arnhem Land Background Material.

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Available through Film Australia
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Trevor Graham (director), Aeroplane Dance, Film Australia, Sydney, 1994.
Classification: M (adult themes, low-level coarse language)
Rose Hesp (director), The Pilot’s Funeral [Bundurr Mangalili Yolngu Dhupundji], Film Australia, Sydney, 2004.
Tom Murray & Allan Collins (directors), Dhakiyarr vs the King, Film Australia, Sydney, 2004.

DRAMA FEATURE
Available through the Australian Children’s Television Foundation
CEREMONY –
THE DJUNGGUWAN OF NORTHEAST ARNHEM LAND

Director: Trevor Graham
Writers: Trevor Graham, Philippa Deveson, Professor Howard Morphy and Ian Dunlop
Yolngu Consultants: Wanyubi Marika and Wukun Dennis Wanambi
Producer: Denise Haslem
Executive Producer: Chris Warner
Duration: 360 minutes
Year: 2006

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For information about Film Australia’s programs, contact:
Film Australia
PO Box 46 Lindfield NSW 2070
tel 02 9413 8634
fax 02 9416 9401
e-mail sales@filmaust.com.au
www.filmaust.com.au

Teachers notes prepared by Bruce Dennett with consultants Paul Batten, Bronwyn Batten and Denise Haslem.

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