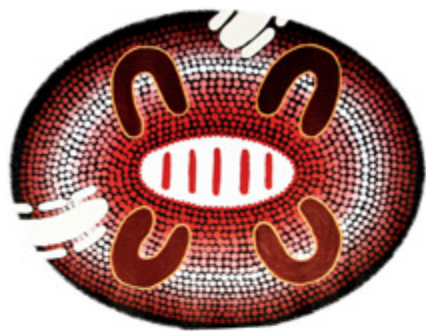


KURDIJI BUILDING OPENING DAY

20th May, 2013





Kurdiyi

Yuwarli wangkanjaku



Kurdiyi-kirlangu nyampuju yuwarli ngulaju Kurdiyi wardingki-patu-ku yungulu wangkami jaru manu wirntaru pirrjirdi-nyayirni nyampurla-ju kirri-ngka ngulaju Kurdiyi wardingki-patu-rlu yungulu kuruwarri manu kirri-ngka nyampurla-ju nyinanjala jungarni-mani kuruwarri manu jukurrpa jintangka-juku.

This building belongs to the Kurdiyi group, where we discuss community issues and stand together with strong resolve to support our community. Kurdiyi members work to support the community and meet here to discuss issues, sort out problems and keep the law and culture together in one.



Funded by GMAAAC

Francis Jupurrurla Kelly (Yuendumu) – CLC Deputy Chair

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

Events like this show kids about leadership. Everyone was excited.

What does the community feel about the Kurdiji?

Kurdiji means being under the protection of the law, it means looking after skin groups and protecting each other.

Yuendumu doesn't know much about what this Lajamanu group is doing now, but all Warlpiri have the same system.

What is Kurdiji for?

Kurdiji (shield) is for protection.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Communicate with judges and lawyers. Kurdiji is the main group to reach out to the other communities and government departments. It's about self-determination, running our own affairs.



Jerry Jangala Patrick

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

Really good. Good for everyone. That is the first time for everyone in Lajamanu to open their own office. The name 'Kurdiji' came first from Alekarenge.

What does the community feel about the Kurdiji?

It's good – Kurdiji members were really happy to open the office with the community and with the boys and girls.

What is Kurdiji for?

We want to live our law in the right way and have it recognised. Not just our law, but our ideas, we want to use our own ideas to make our community strong.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Keep working with our people to make our way (culture and law) strong and bring our ideas in – to do things our way. Kurdiji wants to grow up really strong. We want to work with the skin groups in the right way again.

Steven Jangala Nariari (Kalkarindji)

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

It was good. We were happy to go down and share that day with them.

What do you feel about the Kurdiji?

Kurdiji is doing a good job. We like what they're doing.



Yamaurangali Bidy Nangala Wavehill and Ngawanja Jimmy Japalyi Wavehill (Kalkarindji)

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

It was a good day – we hope all the Warlpiri will come up when we open up our own office – Myrta.

What do you feel about the Kurdiji?

We like Kurdiji – we would like Kurdiji and Myrta to work together.

What is Kurdiji for?

We are still learning about the things they are doing – we want to know more.



Paddy Jangari Doolak (Kalkarindji)

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

We are happy about it.

What do you feel about the Kurdiji?

We like that group. They are keeping culture strong – we want to do the same thing in Kalkarindji.

What is Kurdiji for?

We don't know a lot about what they are doing in Lajamanu, but what we've seen we like.



Joe Jangala Bird (Alekenge)

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

Really good event. I came from Alekenge for this.

What does your community feel about the Kurdiji?

People in Alekenge don't know what Lajamanu Kurdiji people are doing. Other Alekenge people are coming today for the mining meeting. The Kurdiji idea originally started in Alekenge.

What is Kurdiji for?

It's for everybody.

What should Kurdiji do next?

We all need to discuss this more and decide on the next steps.



Bardi-bardi Henry Jakamarra Cook

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

It's good that we have our own office from our own money. It was a really, really good day!

What does the community feel about the Kurdiji?

Number one! We really like it, it's important for us.



Joe Japanangka James

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

The opening was really good. We were really happy that people came from Kalkarindji – everybody [senior people from Kalkarindji, Lajamanu and other Warlpiri communities] cut the ribbon [to officially open the area]. It was really good that the school came and that we had support from the staff and Principal. The kids got painted up and danced together with the old people – we really like this sort of thing happening.

What do people feel about the Kurdiji?

People think it's a good one coming up. All yapa said it's good that Kurdiji is starting, it's a good one coming up. But it must grow slowly, not fast – slowly!

What is Kurdiji for?

Kurdiji is for yapa law and to promote doing things in a yapa way. We'd like to go a bit further – to have more yapa control of Lajamanu.

What should Kurdiji do next?

We want to help Kalkarindji start their own group. They want to call it Myrta (shield). We should start a community office slowly. No-one is in charge of Lajamanu anymore – we want to have the role that the Superintendent used to have – the authority in charge of the community.

Leslie Jampijinpa Robertson

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

It was good to see the purlapa and yawulyu – it's really important to keep that going. It was really good that those people from Kalkarindji came too.

What does the community feel about the Kurdiji?

People are proud of the Kurdiji group and we want to keep that group strong.

What is Kurdiji for?

We help solve problems in the community –it's about yapa and kardiya working together in harmony.

What should Kurdiji do next?

We should visit family members in detention. We should support people in Kalkarindji to start their own group. The Kurdiji can help other organisations in Lajamanu when they have problems.





Geoffery Jakamarra Matthews

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

It was good. The old people are strong.

What does the community / your organisation feel about the Kurdiji?

We want to help our people. Kurdiji is really helping people in the community.

What is Kurdiji for?

Kurdiji is for the protection of yapa; to help out with kardiya law.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Start talking with government agencies, visiting other communities and seeing their experiences and telling other communities how they got started, sharing knowledge.







Nirrpiya Judy Napaljarri Walker

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

The dancing and singing was really good – it made us happy. Three old ladies and that Japanangka showed the kids how to dance.

What do you feel about the Kurdiji?

The Kurdiji group is really good, we strongly support it.

What is Kurdiji for?

It's for helping yapa.

What should Kurdiji do next?

We're not sure, we're still thinking and talking about it.

Nanginarra Elizabeth Nungarrayi Ross

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

It was a really good opening day – yapa felt happy. It was good that the traditional owners (Gurindji) opened it with us.

What does the community feel about the Kurdiji?

Kurdiji is starting to get a strong voice for yapa to help our people.

What is Kurdiji for?

Look after family members and find alternatives to prison. And help stop grog coming into community – grog should only be allowed in if the person has a permit.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Make the office bigger.





Will Jupurrurla Crawford – Lawyer with NAAJA Community Legal Education

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

It was a wonderful example of the community taking control of the process and celebrating what they're doing.

What does your organisation feel about the Kurdiji?

NAAJA is full of admiration for Kurdiji looking after the community, engaging actively with community safety, promoting cultural regeneration and a commitment to local governance structures and participation in the criminal justice system.

What is Kurdiji for?

It is a bridge between the kardiya and yapa criminal justice systems and gives the kardiya system greater meaning and provides genuine general deterrence by participation by local senior leaders. It promotes two way learning for visitors and residents in a range of spheres.

It provides opportunities for young people to learn culture and the courts with meaningful info about community and culture.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Kurdiji should continue to take the opportunity to influence the process of the kardiya court system and process and make it more meaningful for yapa. They could also play a key role in helping to integrate non-yapa residents into community life. The group also has significant and untapped potential to influence NT and Commonwealth policy and the capacity to discuss and feed into wider-scale debates.



Norbert Jampijinpa Patrick – Central Desert Shire Deputy President

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

It was a very important event for us. It's the first time for Warlpiri people to have their own building from their own money. It made us all proud. It's really important for Warlpiri people.

What does the community feel about the Kurdiji?

It's an important organisation in this community so we can sort out problems, find out solutions and strategies to prevent those problems happening again.

What is Kurdiji for?

Mainly to keep the peace in the community and sort out problems between people, police, lawyers.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Play an important part to keep the peace between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and all stakeholders.

Tracie Napaljarri Patrick

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

I was really happy – it was really good to see lots of kids and adults getting painted to dance and getting ready to open the building.

What do you feel about the Kurdiji?

Kurdiji is good to have in this community to solve problems, to help our young people, to show them a lot of good things, to set a good example.

What is Kurdiji for?

To help the people in the community, to support them.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Keep going, doing what they're doing. They should look at teaching young people, get young people involved so they can learn alongside us, we should train them.





Max Jupurrurla Agnew, Lajamanu school Principal

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

I felt proud about the community and it showed us how the community keeps strong links with culture. I was really proud about how the kids worked really well with the elders.

What does the school feel about the Kurdiji?

The school feels very positive about the Kurdiji and the school would like to work with the Kurdiji more closely, especially to develop culturally appropriate ways to deal with positive and negative behaviour.

What is Kurdiji for?

To provide a local perspective and deal with issues affecting the community.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Talk to the community more about their role, coming to the school to talk to staff and the students about their role. The building can be a focus for the community to discuss issues and events.

Roger Japaljarri Jurrah – teacher, Lajamanu school

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

At first it seemed like there weren't enough people involved, but later lots of people arrived. The opening was really good for yapa people – it was really good to have our next-door neighbours, Kalkarindji people, there taking part in the ceremony with us.

What does the community feel about the Kurdiji?

Kurdiji is something we can turn to if we have problems. We can talk to Kurdiji members and have our say. In the past we didn't have this kind of organisation – it was really hard for us because we didn't have anyone to go to.

What is Kurdiji for?

To help yapa if they have family groups fighting one another and if they get into trouble with police. And talking with government on behalf of the community, representing the community.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Get more community members involved, especially younger people.



Kumunjayi (AJ) Japanangka Johnson

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

It was very good, because it's the first time that yapa have got their own office like that, where we can sort out our problems amongst ourselves in our own way. That makes us stronger.

What does the community feel about the Kurdiji?

I'm not sure. I'd like to hear from them what they think.

What is Kurdiji for?

It's about getting ourselves strong, to show our people that we're strong, to work with kardiya people to sort things out properly.

What should Kurdiji do next?

We should be recognised in the community by other organisations as an important organisation in the community.



Pirakari Joe Japangardi Marshall

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

It was really good. The painting up, the dancing, the singing is really important. It is good that the two tribes, Gurindji and Warlpiri, are talking together. The dancing was fantastic and everyone enjoyed the barbeque.

What does the community feel about the Kurdiji?

Kurdiji is right – that's how we want it in Lajamanu.

What is Kurdiji for?

It's also good to show other people in other places how we're strong – for the future. Show government that we're strong, we've still got our culture. Show that our culture and law is strong.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Watch over the community, address problems, look after both sides, kardiya and yapa.



Jonas Johnson, Community Engagement Police Officer

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

It is good to see the Kurdiji developing their own identity and good to see them have their own building.

What do you feel about the Kurdiji?

I feel that they have taken a leadership role and are helping to keep Lajamanu strong. Some of the things they have done, both in talking to government (like the submission to the Licensing Commission) and taking control of safety in their own community (like the letter to communities not to bring outside trouble to Lajamanu), are really good. As police, we saw that that letter to the other communities had a really strong effect and it is one of the most effective acts of community control and responsibility that I've seen as a police officer.

What is Kurdiji for?

It's for giving voice to things in the community and standing up for the community and protecting it, keeping it strong.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Stand up against alcohol coming into the community and changing the way royalty money is spent and harms the community.

Jim Butler, Store manager

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

I wasn't able to attend due to a meeting.

What do you feel about the Kurdiji?

I think that anything that promotes self-worth amongst yapa after the devastating effects of disbanding the community council and the removal of the limited power yapa had, has got to be good.

What is Kurdiji for?

Kurdiji can help the re-establishment of responsibility for the actions of the community.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Have more meetings and talk about issues in the community.



Lamun Japanangka Tasman

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

It was a proud day for the community, for elders in Lajamanu and Kalkaringi, and to have a building where Warlpiri can work from , with yapa and kardiya working together and working with other communities.

What do you feel about the Kurdiji?

I feel very proud to have the Kurdiji in the community and supporting the community.

What is Kurdiji for?

The Kurdiji is there to protect the community, to keep culture strong and to work in two ways for law and justice, to support other communities and be an example of what yapa can do for themselves.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Keep doing what they're doing – things like the letters and submissions they've been writing on behalf of the community.

Bill and Pauline Morrison –Baptist missionaries

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

There was a big sense of purpose and people knew the event was for them. It was nice to see old and young together. Everyone knew their job and worked together. Everyone took responsibility for their jobs and made sure they happened.

What do you feel about the Kurdiji?

It's a good concept – yapa developing a sense of their own future and behaviour and being empowered.

What is Kurdiji for?

It's for working for community improvement and law and order.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Write a newsletter about what Kurdiji is doing each month so kardiya get more information.



Rohan Japangardi Thwaites – NAAJA Community Legal Education; previously at Community Justice Centre

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

It was exciting to see the kids painted up and to see the Kurdiji open their own space.

What does your organisation feel about the Kurdiji?

NAAJA thinks Kurdiji is an excellent way of having senior law men and women having a say in justice issues.

What is Kurdiji for?

Writing court references, being involved in the court process to help the Magistrate make good decisions.

More broadly, it's about building local governance structures and having a strong yapa voice heard, for example, their work with the licensing commission, the letter to communities about fighting, and other things like that.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Not sure, that's up to them to decide.



Nat Napanangka Sargent – Mt. Theo youth worker

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

It was great seeing the involvement of the young ones painting up and dancing. It felt like a whole of community event – there was lots of community engagement.

What do you feel about the Kurdiji?

Kurdiji is like the law reference group for Lajamanu – they are the group that looks after big community issues.

What is Kurdiji for?

It's a group of elders that deal with community issues.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Keep going in small steps – grow slowly and build good foundations.



Francis Jampijinpa Patrick & Tamara Napangardi Johnson

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

Francis – it was good to see the kids dancing. It's good that yapa own their own office

Tamara – It really touched me to see the old ladies with the young ones for the first time. We used to do a lot of yawulyu with the elders. Purlapa was really good. We would like to do more and bring it back.

What does the community feel about the Kurdiji?

They can help sort out problems in the community.

What is Kurdiji for?

They help people at court, help sort out family problems, lots of things.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Keep using the office and doing what they're doing.



Patrick Jungarrayi Trost - Senior teacher, Lajamanu school

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

It was awesome - really well organised. There was a good progression of events, from the painting, dancing and singing to the speeches, the ribbon cutting and the barbeque.

The kids loved getting painted up, they were really proud and happy. The teachers could see that they felt really special and were really happy. All the teachers got the kids up at assembly who danced and told them they were really proud of them.

What does the community / your organisation feel about the Kurdiji?

I don't know much, but what I learnt on the day is that the Kurdiji building will be a special place for yapa to exercise their law and help solve problems in the community.

What is Kurdiji for?

Not much knowledge except from what I learnt at the opening day.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Work with young people and help them sort out problems with how kids treat each other.



Nigel Povey, Lajamanu GEC

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

I was unable to attend most of it due to a meeting.

What do you feel about the Kurdiji?

It's a great opportunity for local people to have a building they can have for their own use.

What is Kurdiji for?

Not sure – I haven't been in the community long enough to know.

Cheryl Nampijinpa Cartwright – Learning centre mentor

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

It was a really positive inter-generational event. It was nice to see people together getting ready for dancing, excited and proud. And it was great to see the Kalkaringi people – everyone in Lajamanu was really happy they came, particularly the old people. It felt very owned by the community, the community was in charge, doing things their way.

What do you feel about the Kurdiji?

I don't know enough to comment – I'm new to the community.

What is Kurdiji for?

I don't have specific knowledge, but I think it means there can be local input into decisions that affect the community and local people.

What should Kurdiji do next?

I don't know enough to comment. It is important for us to know their role, what their role is. More awareness about Kurdiji would be good.



Meaghan Nakamarra Hosking, teacher, Lajamanu school

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

It was really nice to see the culture and traditions and nice that we attended as a group, the teachers and students together. Was really good to see the painting and dancing and to see how enthusiastic the kids were. It was my first time seeing this kind of thing and I really enjoyed it.

What do you feel about the Kurdiji?

I don't know much about what they're doing because I haven't been in Lajamanu long.

What is Kurdiji for?

Maybe it could help the school where there's problems with kids.

Alan Jampijinpa Marshall, Deakin University lecturer and Coordinator NT Remote Teacher Placements Programme

What feelings and thoughts did you have about the event?

It was wonderful to see how proud people were and to see the sense of direction they had. It was good to see everyone together with a united voice.

What do you feel about the Kurdiji?

It's wonderful that there's a co-ordinated group of people that are setting their own agenda. From the perspective of Deakin University, it's great that there is a group representing the community we can go to and work together with. I look forward to working with Kurdiji in the future and supporting them in their work.

What is Kurdiji for?

It's a chance for people in Lajamanu to set the agenda for themselves and also to grow stronger as a community and as individuals.

What should Kurdiji do next?

Build their capacity to be a strong group and create strong processes for making good decisions.



Kyla Holmberg, Acting Deputy Co-ordinator General, The Office of the Coordinator General for Remote Indigenous Services

In May I visited Lajamanu and had the privilege of meeting a number of you and seeing your newly opened building, which you must be very proud of. Thank-you to Bardi-bardi who showed me around.

And thank you to everyone for welcoming me to your community and for taking the time to share some of your stories with me. Lajamanu is a vibrant community with a lot of strengths, and one of those strengths is clearly Kurdiji. I have reported on all of your good work to Brian Gleeson, the Coordinator General for Remote Indigenous Services, and we look forward to keeping in touch and hopefully meeting with you again in future.

