



# Marrma' Rom Two Worlds Foundation

## A look back at Semester 2 - 2013

Wow, what a semester! Unfortunately we were so busy we did not get time to get a newsletter out at the end of last year. In Term 4 there was hardly a spare weekend. Yirrmal and the Yolngu Boys really started to get a name for themselves and were in high demand. There were lots of performances in Geelong, Melbourne, Sydney and Queenscliff as well as our very successful fundraiser. We welcomed Mabo Mununggurritj to our little tribe down here, and Dion and Jerol successfully completed Year 11. Yirrmal had an audition to get in to VCA (Victorian College of the Arts) and NMIT (North Melbourne Institute Tafe), he launched his debut CD single and spent time with Shane Howard and Neil Murray, kick starting the songwriting project which has carried over into 2014.

## Foundation Fundraiser 2013

The Marrma' Rom Two Worlds Foundation held a fundraiser in October last year. It was our most successful fundraiser with approximately 280 people in attendance. We had some great entertainment with Mick Ryan kicking off the night, followed by Yirrmal and the Yolngu Boys and the launch of Yirrmal's debut single "Deep Blue Sea". There were loads of raffle prizes to be won, auction items to bid on and great wine and art work to be purchased. The Foundation was very privileged to have the legendary Bluesman Chris Wilson perform and, as expected, he put on a great show. Yirrmal and the Yolngu Boys finished off the night with another set of traditional ceremonial music and some of Yirrmal's original music. Overall, the night was a huge success with funds raised allowing the program to continue for another year. We cannot thank enough the people who helped make this night possible. There are too many people to thank individually but we would like to mention the staff at St. Joseph's College and Clonard College who lent a hand, the Black Tracks students of Clonard College, Megan Evans, Bridgette Henderson, Bluey, Tayla Robertson, Bek Drake, our good friends and of course our families. We are so grateful for your ongoing support.

## Introducing... Mabo Mununggurritj

Mabo Matati Mununggurritj joined the Marrma' Rom – Two Worlds Foundation for the last part of Term 4 last year to get a taste of what life is like down here in Geelong. Seviro Wunungmurra left the program at the end of Term 3 and we decided to get another student down immediately to take part in an orientation program. We had Mabo in mind as we taught him at Yirrkala CEC back in 2009-2010



and Cam caught up with him at Garma Festival last year where Mabo showed great enthusiasm and potential as the next candidate. After a lot of planning with his family Mabo arrived in October and entered Year 11 with Jerol and Dion. The four weeks he spent down here were extremely busy and very different to life up in Yirrkala and Garrthala, which is his homeland and where he spends much of his time. Mabo is certainly not shy when it comes to performing, joining Yirrmal and the Yolngu Boys on stage with Shane Howard only days after he had set foot in Geelong. Mabo is a very talented didgeridoo player, singer and dancer, and is learning guitar at school. The other lads have welcomed him with open arms and it was great to see him return with enthusiasm in 2014.



## Welcome back Raven Marika



Raven spent 6 months in the program in 2012 and has returned this year entering Year 11 with Mabo. Raven has matured in his time back in Elcho and realises that this is an opportunity to

improve his education and career outlook. Raven contacted Cam before Christmas to see if there was a place for him in the program, and that initiative is illustrative of the difference in Raven's approach in 2012 and 2014. Raven plays bass guitar and dances and his inclusion to the line up has been important in the bands recent success. He is working hard in class at St. Joseph's, and has made the school 1<sup>st</sup> XVIII Football team who will play off in the final of the Associated Catholic Colleges Football Championship at the end of Term 2. We hope that Raven continues to shine in Geelong and develops talents that will create opportunities for him in the future.



## Yirmal makes the move to Melbourne

In February Yirmal made the big move from our nest in Geelong to Yarra House at NMIT in Melbourne. A successful audition for the Certificate III in Music in January meant that he was taking the next step in the Leadership Program. Yirmal is still very much part of the Marrma' Rom Two Worlds Foundation, but he is developing his skills to become truly independent and embark on his music career. Term 1 was extremely busy with many festivals and performances, however a conscious decision has been made to slow down a little and allow him to focus on his studies and fully embrace the experience. It can be tough at times for him being in Melbourne on his own, but he does get back to Geelong often to hang out with the other lads. We are very proud of his efforts of pursuing his dream of becoming a leader, a musician and a role model to others.



## Woodford Music Festival 26<sup>th</sup> December 2013 – 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2014

Written by Yirmal Marika

At the end of last year we went to Woodford Music Festival where the population is around 50,000. It is three times bigger than Queenscliff Music Festival with many international musicians, artists and culture. The boys and I were really excited because we knew that Woodford was one of the biggest festivals in Australia. The first day I played on my own. I played all my original songs and some covers on the Songline stage



where all Indigenous people performed. I didn't expect many people to come, but as soon as I got out on stage there were more people than I have seen at any performance. It was packed out. The next day the band arrived, we got ready and put the tents up. We went for lunch with Cam, Melissa and little Archie. In the afternoon we had our gig at 5 o'clock. We gave the audience really good entertainment. A lot of people were talking about us saying that we were professional and able to keep people's attention with our songs that are from our heart and soul. The boys and I performed with Shellie Morris and we did a tribute to Doctor Yunupingu. We sang 'Dots on the shells' written by Yothu Yindi. There were so many people because Shellie is a star. She got us up there which was so inspiring to me and the boys. Again we did a tribute to Doctor Yunupingu with Blue King Brown. That was an amazing concert with them again. We smashed it. The audience, 10,000 of them were jumping and rocking. I could see them from the top of the hill and down to the bottom, it was a massive crowd. Then after us, Bob Marley's real son, Julian played on the main stage where we played with Blue King Brown. The boys and I met him for real. He is a legend like his father. It was an amazing time. The next day we had our gig at the other big tent. The day was hot and really bad and sometimes it rained, but not often. This gig was part of a group of musicians discussing song in language. Dion, Jerol and I got up and told a story about where we come from and what we are doing down at Geelong. And then we had to sing one song, one of our originals. After 6 nights and all our performances we got a bus to Brisbane and stayed there one night and then went back to Arnhem Land. We had such a great time at Woodford. It was the best festival we've been to.



## Multi Cultural Arts Victoria – Melbourne Performances

### Premier’s Gala Dinner...Viva Victoria...Black Harmony Gathering

As part of Cultural Diversity Week, Multi-Cultural Arts Victoria held a number of events in Melbourne where Yirmal and the Yolngu Boys were invited to perform. We headed to Melbourne just about every weekend in the month of March and were quite exhausted by the end of Term 1. To kick off Cultural Diversity Week the boys performed at the **Premier’s Gala Dinner** at the Crown Casino. The very next day we were back in the car driving down the highway to perform at the **Black Harmony Gathering**; an event that embraced the principles of Reconciliation and encouraged a strong commitment to respect Indigenous beliefs, values and customs. The following weekend the boys performed at **Viva Victoria**; a free event at Federation Square. With each performance the boys grew in confidence and attracted big crowds. They truly are starting to get quite a following.



### Queenscliff Music Festival - Emerging Artist Winners

Written by Yirmal Marika

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of November 2013 I played at the opening ceremony of the Queenscliff Music Festival with Dion on the didgeridoo. We played a couple of songs of our own, and there were a lot different artists. We all played for the little primary school kids. On the second day, 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 2013 Yirmal and the Yolngu Boys played at the Queenscliff Music Festival where about 15,000 people came to watch different musicians over the weekend. Yirmal and the Yolngu Boys played in smaller tents and we played our own original songs and a couple of cover songs, a tribute to Doctor Yunupingu, lead singer of Yothu Yindi. On 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 2013 Yirmal and the Yolngu Boys played this tribute with Blue King Brown. This was on the main stage where most people gather around for big shows in the big tent. Yirmal and the Yolngu Boys came on and sang ‘Djapana’ and ‘Treaty’. As soon as Natalie called our name, there were some people who knew us and screamed loud. I could see a lot of different faces and with smiles, this made me happy and enjoy it more. That night after the big concert with Blue King Brown I was still smiling and happy. It was like a dream for sure. I’ve never had that feeling before. It was amazing and the greatest excitement in my life and I’m sure the boys had that same feeling. On the next day Buster, one of my friend’s father, rang me first thing in the morning and asked me to perform on the main stage. I was happy. I said to Buster could you please wait, I have to ask Cam, he is my manager. Cam said that’s fine. And so up we go for another good show. We also entertained on smaller stages and they were good performances too. Lastly they asked me to do a radio interview. They asked me what I wrote about, why music is important to me and where I come from. I answered the question that I’ve come a long way to improve my skills on everything and there are lots of great things happening to me and that it is a journey to my home.



### Newtown & Chilwell Football Club

For the past 3 years, all the lads that have been part of the Foundation have worn the ‘blue and green’ Guernsey of St. Mary’s. In 2014 the boys decided that they would like to play for Newtown and Chilwell Football Club as they had some good mates there and a strong connection with the coach, Jono Holt. So the big move was made, clearances approved and they pulled on the ‘black and red’ jumpers; Jerol being the most excited about this as he is an avid Bombers supporter. Newtown and Chilwell Football Club have embraced them and the boys are happy and playing great football. All four lads; Raven, Mabo, Jerol and Dion are enjoying their footy and kicking goals every week. We thank the club for their warm welcome and hope that this relationship can continue to strengthen.

Interview with Deadly Vibe magazine....

## YIRRKALA MUSIC MAN



**It's not every day that you find an artist with such a raw talent; a young musician who can effortlessly draw on thousands of years of culture and interpret that into beautiful, soulful and touching music.**

Meet Yirmal Marika, a young Yolngu man born in Yirrkala and part of the Rirratjingu clan. He is a new generation of Australian artist who is breaking into the music scene with his fusion of traditional and contemporary harmonies.

Yirmal, 20, began learning music at 11 and has talent embedded into his genetics, coming from a family of exceptional artists, many of whom were the cornerstones of one of Australia's greatest bands, Yothu Yindi, like his father Witiyana Marika, a singer and dancer in the band.



"Music means a lot to me. It makes me feel good. I have been passionate about music since I started and still love it today. I sing about my land. I sing with my heart and soul. I tell the story about what has been created. As an Aboriginal person, we don't own the land, the land owns us. My singing connects me to the land," says Yirmal.

He has recently released his debut studio recording *Deep Blue Sea* and has performed at numerous events like AWME (Australasian Worldwide Music Expo) as a solo artist, and with Yirmal & The Yolngu Boys.

The Yolngu boys, Dion, Jerol and Seviro Wunungmurra have extensive knowledge of traditional Yolngu "Manikay" songs, and are accomplished singers, dancers and didgeridoo "yidaki" players.

"I won't be a big star but I want to be respected by my people. You never know what might happen. I don't just play music for myself, I play for others. I want to share my culture with others. I would love a career in music but I just want to share my stories," he says.

"Next year I am going to do some songwriting with some great musicians so I will be making an album or EP out of this great experience. They are going to help me with the songwriting. They will be a great inspiration."

Speaking of inspiration, Yirmal cites his grandfather and former lead singer of Yothu Yindi, the late, great and philanthropic Dr Yunupingu as his biggest influence. "He was my inspiration since I was a kid. He did great things for all Australians. There are a lot of other Indigenous people that I look up to also – people such as Archie Roach, Gurrumul, Saltwater Band, Dan Sultan, Jessica Mauboy and Rrawun Maymuru. I see what they have done for their people," he says.

Yirmal says that he looks to these iconic musicians because they help him to do what he is doing. Just like his idols, Yirmal wants to one day be a positive influence for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

"I see a lot of Indigenous youth doing bad things and to be honest I was heading down that bad road. I thought about myself and asked myself 'why am I doing this?' I want to be a positive role model. I want to be a leader," he says. "These young boys don't know where they are going. A lot of young Aboriginal Australians are not healthy and I want to change that."

Interview with Deadly vibe magazine  
continued.....



“My dad was a great cultural leader and a great positive role model to me and to other kids. I want to be like him. He is a strong cultural man teaching the next generation and I want to do that too.

“I want to lead by example. I want to teach music to both worlds, black and white. I want to teach about my culture and teach young people to be proud of who they are and where they come from.

“Role models are who you look up to and if you don’t have positive role models in your life then you have no direction. The people in your life determine how you turn out to be, so they have to be positive.”

Yirrkala, where Yirmal is from, is one of the most traditional lands in the country – closely adhering to ancient culture but simultaneously blending contemporary Australian culture, making what is a unique mix of life, but Yirmal now lives in Geelong, attending a leadership program that focuses on education and health.

“As part of the Marrma’ Rom Two Worlds Foundation we are learning about the big world outside of our community, mixing it with our world in Yirrkala and then becoming really strong and empowered,” he says.

“I’m not destroying or losing my culture or language, because it is so strong and it’s in my blood, I’m learning both ways so I can help my people. I want to teach non-Indigenous people about our culture so they can understand us better.

“I’m carrying the Yolngu message and sharing it with people in the Western World. In my mind, living in two worlds is like a keyboard; there are white keys and there are black keys. And to get a good sound you need to play both keys, you can’t just play one.

“This is what I am doing, learning about both worlds and recognising that we are all different but our blood is one and we need to work together to close the gap.”

In the future he is playing at the Queenscliff Music Festival, Woodford Music Festival, Port Fairy Folk Festival, St Kilda Festival and unleashing his new single at the Visible launch. Yirmal Marika is definitely one to keep an eye on.



“I want to continue to learn every day and to continue to empower my people. I am hopefully going to University next year to study music so I can develop skills so I can keep performing and inspiring people,” he says.





## Certificate II in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care

In 2013 Dion and Jerol completed a Certificate II in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care as part of their Year 11 studies. Health Education is such an important area for the boys to learn about and it is a career that has job opportunities back in their community of Gapuwiyak. Both lads are interested in becoming Aboriginal Health Workers and this course has opened the Health career pathway for them. St. Joseph's College, VACCHO (Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation) and Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-op worked together to provide the boys with the knowledge, skills and practical work placements to be successful in achieving the Certificate II. A great effort by both boys.



## Other highlights of 2013-2014

It has been such a busy year since our last newsletter. There were so many great performances and achievements. Other performances that were absolute highlights for Yirmmal and the Yolngu Boys were Port Fairy Folk Festival, Apollo Bay Festival, Mornington Water to Water Festival, AWME (Australasian World Music Expo), the National Apology Concert, Recognise Concert in Brunswick, the St. Kilda Indigenous Festival, and a few local performances in Geelong and Torquay.

Yirmmal also had some pretty special moments performing in Sydney as part of the Music Oz Awards, at the Sydney Opera House with Shane Howard, at the Caravan Music Club with Neil Murray and with the Black Arm Band in Brisbane.

It has been an amazing 12 months in regards to the development of Yirmmal and the Yolngu Boys and the Marrma' Rom Two Worlds Foundation. The lads continue to work hard at school and develop their independence at home. They have shown great commitment to the Leadership program and are on the way to becoming great role models in their communities.



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## Plans for 2014 and beyond...

- ✚ Dion and Jerol will graduate from Year 12 and we are currently making plans for them to continue studying next year in Geelong at tertiary level.
- ✚ Yirmmal will complete Cert III in Music and look to further developing his music career by possibly studying at VCA.
- ✚ Raven and Mabo will complete Year 11 and enter Year 12 next year.
- ✚ Two new students to study at St. Joseph's College in 2015.
- ✚ Yirmmal will begin to record an album.
- ✚ Yirmmal will travel to NZ and Singapore with the Black Arm Band early in 2015.

## Would you like to help? End of financial year donation

**With the end of the financial year upon us, it is a great time to make a tax-deductible donation to a not-for-profit charity like the Marrma' Rom Two Worlds Foundation. We are a grass roots charity that is striving to make a difference in the lives of these young men, and you can be a part of this.**

**If you are able to make a donation you are assured that this money goes directly towards empowering the future leaders of Arnhem Land.**

### Donations can be made via:

- 1) Our website [www.mrf2worlds.org.au](http://www.mrf2worlds.org.au)

Click on 'Support Us'.

Choose from one of the sponsorship packages.

- 2) Direct Debit Online

**Acc Name:** M Rom Foundation

**BSB:** 033 208

**Acc No:** 294 352

Please write your name as the reference and email us so we can send you a tax receipt:

EMAIL: [cam@mrf2worlds.org.au](mailto:cam@mrf2worlds.org.au)

- 3) Cheque payable to Marrma' Rom Foundation  
Send to PO BOX 3039, Waurin Ponds, 3216