Ngarra law: Aboriginal customary law from Arnhem Land

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This article is for both Yolngu (Aboriginal people) and for Balanda (white people). The law painting referred to in this article shows that Yolngu have law, and this law (rom) is alive and strong and still being practised in many communities. The painting is hung in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly for all Australians to recognise that Yolngu law does exist and is knowable by the mainstream Balanda legal system if it wants to know about the law. This law, this painting, is not about dividing Yolngu and Balanda law, but about bringing them together to recognise each other. It is hoped that these two legal systems will work together wherever they can.

HISTORY OF NGBARRA LAW

This article will help readers to learn a little about Ngarra law, that is, the Aboriginal customary law of Arnhem Land. It is important to recognise that to fully understand Ngarra law it is necessary to sit down with Aboriginal elders and learn directly from them.

The man pictured highest in Photo 1 is Ngaritjngaritj Garawarrpa, a Gupapuyngu leader, Ngarra law scholar and peaceful leader, who lived among the Yolngu people of Arnhem Land that he served. He managed leadership and change from a tribal culture to engagement with modern society and his descendants survived.

The man pictured on the left in Photo 1 is Ngaritjngaritj’s son, George Dhawadanygulili Garawarrpa Morgunu Gaykamangu, the supreme legal authority of the Gupapuyngu tribe. He was taught leadership management and was vested with authority and power from his father to oversee events in the tribe. George’s father was the only clan leader for Gupapuyngu nation in Eastern Arnhem Land and he is the only one that managed and controlled Gupapuyngu customary law. George is one of the eldest sons. The man pictured on the right in Photo 1 is that of Djawa Garawarrpa Gaykamangu, George’s brother. Djawa was also central in the Gaykamangu leadership.

Under Ngarra law, the leadership is passed on to the next generation so the Gupapuyngu legacy will live on, as long as the next Gupapuyngu generation remembers to carry on this legacy. Also, George was given the honour of having been entrusted to maintain Birrkili/Garrawirrtja and Layumbi/Malibiri ceremonial law and is recognised for ceremonial purposes in many other lands across Northeast Arnhem Land.

* This article has been written on behalf of the Yolngu people and was originally edited by Danial Kelly, Lecturer in Law, Charles Darwin University.
As Gupapuyngu leader, George delegated and passed on the responsibility, authority and management to his sons to keep and practise the customary law. George delegated some responsibility to his younger brothers, Libundja and Djawa, and others whom he trusted to exercise their knowledge of law to protect people and their rights.

- To Lipuntja (brother of George from the same mother), the responsibility was given to oversee that everything is carried out according to the law. According to the Ngarra law, Lipuntja was a spokesperson and a protector of Djawa and George.
- To Djawa, George gave dalkarra (highest form of Ngarra law) ceremonial songs and dances and also the task of learning the types of law the missionaries brought and practised among the Aborigines.
- To Roy Rraywala, George gave the responsibility to teach the younger generation the raypirri (discipline) and respect in ceremonies.
- To Jimmy Wululu, George gave the responsibility of looking after the public and sacred ceremonial activities.
- To Djuma, George entrusted the responsibility of maintaining and teaching younger generations the Ngarra law, songs and dances.
- To Bunguwuy, George gave the responsibility to ensure that the dalkarra ceremonial songs and dances are performed according to customary law.
George sent Djawa to find out what the missionaries were bringing to teach the people because George was suspicious that the Balanda (white people) were coming to destroy the Aboriginal culture, the Ngarra law, the Yolngu people and take over the Yolngu land. Djawa reported back to the Ngarra (the Yolngu court where laws are discussed and made; similar to a Parliament) that the missionaries were bringing a good Christian story and had come to help the people. George thought ahead that there would be big changes in the future brought by the Balanda. They would bring many things that would influence the Yolngu peoples’ lives like education and industries such as timber, fishing and art. When George saw that the missionaries were bringing good things he decided it would be good to sit side by side. Both sides were to learn and respect each others law and culture. The aim was to put the two laws together. George was a lawyer and a peacemaker. Unfortunately, the Balanda also brought some bad things like alcohol and drugs.

As a young man, George and the other members of his family grew up with his father Ngarritjngarnitj Garrawaba and learned from him the Ngarra law. The law taught people to live together, work together, hunt and gather food freely and peacefully from the land. He taught the Ngarra law to younger generations and passed on the customs that are connected by ceremonial ties. He exercised his knowledge of the law to protect people and their rights. As a wise man, he could foretell bad things that would happen to his descendants.

When George died around 4,000 people attended his funeral. In Ngarra law the names of dead persons cannot be used. However, George’s children and grandchildren are permitted to use their father’s name.

George was a person of authority and power in his tribe, according to the Ngarra law, and was recognised right across Northeast Arnhem Land as a leader and a law man in both Yirritja and Dhuwa moities. He was a dalkarramiri, that is, a Ngarra law “judge”. In the past traditional leaders kept tribes together in peace, although at times there were tribal wars. Ceremonial businesses are organised by clan leaders in the tribe. Only one leader is vested with authority and power to oversee events in the tribe and to make sure that ceremonial rituals are organised according to customary law.

As the Gupapuyngu leader, George delegated and passed on the responsibility, authority and management to his sons to keep and practise the customary law. Other caretakers of the Ngarra law are known as the djunggayas. They are like Ngarra lawyers and they organise the activities that have been directed to them by the owner of cultural ceremony and law. Balanda elect their leaders but Yolngu leadership is passed down from the older generation to the younger generation. Balanda find their own marriage partners. Yolngu may find their own partners or be married according to the promise system, but either way the husband and wife must be “right skin”, that is in correct relationship according to the moiety system.

George made sure that Ngarra law was carried out according to the traditional code of ethics. The law had to be obeyed, listened to and practised through peaceful means. Marriage and kinship laws were carefully practised. If there was trouble, clan leaders were given the power to solve the dispute by mediation. George exercised raypirri (discipline) in and through the Ngarra law.
Under his leadership everything was governed according to the law, and the law was respected. It was his responsibility to keep peace and keep the Gupapuyngu tribe and clans together. He taught this to other tribal leaders too.

George and the other clan leaders ensured that young men, women, boys and girls were taught properly about Ngarra law and raypirri. Some of the rules of behaviour that they were taught include:

- not to commit domestic violence, including abusive language;
- not to laugh, bully, make fun of, harass, spit upon, tease or do any wrongful thing against any member of the society;
- not to steal property, things and women or damage other people’s belongings that is not rightfully theirs. If they commit any of these crimes, they would be judged under the Ngarra law and be held accountable for that crime;
- to seek permission from leaders for any activity in the society whether it is of a personal or communal nature;
- to observe right skin relationships in marriage by marrying in opposite moieties, Dhuwa and Yirritja, and to be old enough to marry;
- not to stand over the elders and clan leaders, and to show respect to elders and clan leaders at all times; and
- to obey and respect the law of the land at all times and at all cost.

George is the late father of the Gaykamangu brothers and sisters Gilbert, Matthew, James, Thomas, Jonathan, Purnell, Roger, Stanley, Ellen, Shirley and Jessie. His deceased children are Billy Milwuyun, Peter Dhakuwar, Micheal Baluka and Dorothy Muwalkmuwuy.

Photo 2 is of Gilbert Gubiyn Gaykanmangu, the eldest son of George, who has the current primary leadership status. George passed on the Gupapuyngu leadership to Gilbert and his younger brothers and sisters before he died.

PHOTO 2 – Gilbert Gubiyn Gaykanmangu
Photo 3 is of Joe Djimbangu Gaykamangu who is sanctioned to organise cultural ceremonies on the father’s and the mother’s side. He organises Ngarra and Garma ceremonies and Gunapipi ceremonies and teaches young people.

Joe is the eldest son of Lipuntja. Lipuntja passed on the leadership to Joe and his younger brothers and sisters before he died, namely Clancy Bandhamarra, Lesley Wothungu, Trevor Djarrakaykay, Johnny Ngulumba, George Badikan, Dorothy Mawukuwuy, Malulawul, Jane Miyatatawuy, Mayarrurra, Waypunpul, Burrkun and Barritj.

PHOTO 3 – Joe Djimbangu Gaykamangu

PASSING ON LEGAL AND RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE AT THE INITIATION CEREMONY

From early childhood, Yolngu children are taught the basics of Ngarra law. The initiation ceremony for boys is still practised and the traditional ritual is performed when the boys are between 12 and 15 years old. The parents and extended family are involved in the ceremony but most of the responsibility is shouldered by the women in the family. They organise things such as the correct arm bands to be given to the boys before and during the initiation ceremony and paints for the body painting. The father of the boy is responsible for making sure the initiation ceremony goes well.

In Photo 4, Steven and Bradley Gaykamangu have just been initiated through a custom that is authorised by the Ngarra law. These two boys are grandchildren of George Clifton Dhawadanygulili. They are very much involved in their grandfather’s visionary leadership and have learned a lot to keep the tradition going. The initiation ceremony is supervised by a djungay (Ngarra lawyer) and no females are allowed to enter the ceremony. The initiates are taught respect and discipline.
The initiation ceremony is a religious ritual. The initiation ceremony ground (garma) is marked and prepared in the afternoon of the ceremony and ceremonial songs will start to be sung in the mid-afternoon. The painters will then paint the boys while the tribal elders decide what totem of ceremonial painting will be painted on their bodies – usually it is the father’s or grandfather’s totem. Yolngu people do not worship their totem. Totems are part of the Ngarra law, and oversee and protect the people wherever they go.

The actual initiation ceremony is finalised early in the morning of the next day just before sunrise. After initiation, the boys wear a ngaka or calico skirt which is open on one side to make it easier for the boys to walk around. The men gather around to give the boys water again while singing ceremonial songs. Before and after the giving of water is when discipline (raypirri) and related rules are taught, such as: do not swear at old people, or young girls or women; do not steal things that do not belong to you; respect all people; do not tease young girls and make fun of them; do not do selfish things in community life; learn to help; listen to what you have been told; do not get involved in bad things; practise dance, songs and rituals; and pay respect to others then they will respect you.

The boys are prepared for the future handing-over of the moral laws, tribal discipline and religious secrets which will take place years later.

Girls have a similar ceremony where they also learn respect and discipline and matters of marriage. This ceremony marks the change in the girl’s status from being a child to becoming a woman. In the ceremony she learns the correct ways of conducting herself in Yolngu society as a young woman. If the girl has been promised to a “promise man”, then that promise man has the right to do her body painting in a disciplined manner. In the ceremony she will learn moral doctrine, tribal discipline and religious secrets which will take place probably three years later. The elder women discipline her by telling her not to do bad things; to help her mother, grandmother and family; to respect what she has been told and asked to do; to not tease young boys; to not be selfish; to practise dance and songs; and to do good things in your life. The initiated girl is now considered capable and mature.
PHOTO 5 – Dorothy and Donna Muwalkmawuy

Photo 5 is of Dorothy Muwalkmawuy (right) and her granddaughter Donna prepared for the girls initiation ceremony.

WHAT IS THE LAW IN THE LAW PAINTING?
The law painting in Photo 6 is not just a painting. It is a legal document in Ngarra law. This painting is based on the honey bee (Niwuda gugu) ceremony. The black part at the top is the hole where the honey bee goes in and makes the honeycomb. The story for this painting is about that honey bee. The honey bee flew over the saltwater and made a diamond design on the back of a whale. Then the honey bee flew to ganalbingu country which is around the Arafura swamp area. Instead of landing on a tree, the honey bee landed on a rock and out of the rock came running fresh water. After this happened the honey bee flew to butgari country and then flew back to the Djluirri Yrralka home country. This Niwuda gugu landed in the Warrayngu and Bunggu clan groups. Niwuda gugu flew to different places to invite them to become peaceful tribal people and to recognise each other as being part of the Niwuda gugu law.

This painting is birkuda, a type of sacred coat of arms. It is dhuwul (holy, sacred). It is madyain, rrangga (secret law, the highest category of authority in Ngarra law). It is dharpal rom (the biggest legal authority to respect and obey). When Yolngu people speak in the presence of the painting they must tell the truth, like taking an oath in a Balanda court.

From this painting we have much law. The law is wide ranging. It teaches Yolngu how to live properly. From this law we know that children must go to school and wagging is not allowed. Child abuse is not allowed. Initiation law comes through the law in this painting.

Domestic violence is not permitted. Domestic violence is no longer appropriate. Ngarra law has no room for domestic violence. In the past, husbands did hit their wives sometimes – this happened in both Balanda and Yolngu society. The law – both Balanda law and Yolngu law – allowed it to happen. Not anymore! We do not have to be ashamed of what happened in the past, but we all need to work together now as a nation.

1 A copy of the Ngarra law painting in Photo 6 is hanging in the Northern Territory Parliament and another copy is hanging in the Northern Territory Supreme Court. The law paintings were presented to these two Balanda law institutions on 12 August 2011 at a combined ceremony at Parliament House.
“Pay back” is another thing that has changed over time. When “pay back” happened in the past, it involved physical punishment, just like in the old law of the Old Testament: “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”. These days “pay back” is more like mutual obligation: when you look after my children when they visit you, I have to “pay back” by looking after your children when they visit me. When people break the Ngarra law these days they can be punished by other means, including compensation or discipline training camps in the bush (Gunapipi). When there has been a really serious breach of law, say murder or rape, the Balanda system can take care of it. The Ngarra law can work together with the Balanda law.

This law is all-encompassing and when it is followed there is peace among people and in the country. This law makes the path for people to walk safely. This law painting is like a Constitution in Balanda law because it is the backbone of Ngarra law. This law does not permit drugs or alcohol. Murder is a serious offence. Possession of alcohol is not a serious offence. The Ngarra law does not impose tax upon people. Nowadays, Yolngu people are told to get jobs and pay tax to the government. We need to control alcohol and especially alcohol-related violence. For example, alcohol can be sold one day a week only. At the same time, the government needs to create more jobs so that people have something worthwhile to do. Liquor licences do not fix the problems.

When the world was nothing the law was there. We believe that this law created this country.
The law in this painting tells its adherents that we need to listen to other peoples’ laws, that is, we need to be respectful. But Balanda law does not do that, Balanda law breaks down the power of the Ngarra law by ignoring it. The Ngarra law says that I am not allowed to invade other people’s private space, such as going into their house (unless they invite us). This law says men are not allowed to steal other men’s wives or commit acts of violence. Violence is a breach of Ngarra law.

This law tells us to teach discipline to young people. When we conduct the initiation ceremony for young boys we put a piece of string across their tongues to teach them not to swear, lie or say other bad things. We put the boys’ hands into hot sand to teach them not to steal.

We do not understand Balanda law. Why does Balanda law allow pornography and tobacco when we know these are bad things? This law painting says you cannot make money from sexual exploitation of women. Sexual activity is a private thing between a husband and a wife, not a public thing. We do not understand why in Aboriginal communities the Balanda are allowed to drink alcohol but the Yolngu are not.

This law painting belongs to certain people who have rights over it. Other people do not have rights to do what they want with this painting but the owners may give permission to people to do something with the painting. Only the owners are allowed to paint this law painting.

There are thousands of more stories in this law painting.

ALL ABOUT NGARRA LAW

The law painting represents the Ngarra law that has been the backbone of Yolnu society for many thousands of years before the white colonial system arrived. Aboriginal customary law is the first law in time in Australia. It is difficult to conceptualise Aboriginal customary law in Western law terms, but you can consider the law painting to be similar to a coat of arms that contains all of the constitutional law needed to identify and maintain the society that the coat of arms represents.

Ngarra law is concerned with people maintaining their responsibilities, and maintaining safety and protection of the land and sea environments and the people. It maintains safety for women, children and men both young and old from random violence and deprivation of property. It provides for peace, order and good government of Aboriginal people. One clan group will never criticise the customary law and ceremony of another clan group. The white legal system refuses to listen to the law from other countries – it only listens to itself. But sometimes the white law does reference law from other countries, when it is convenient. The white law should listen to the Ngarra law.

Ngarra law includes disciplining people doing the wrong thing. This legal process is known as raypirri. It is like the Balanda term “corrections”. The Ngarra court also has jurisdiction over sexual assault matters. Offences of adults having sexual relations with juveniles attract severe judicial punishment in the Ngarra court.

Ngarra law is comprehensive for the whole of Yolnu society. It is practised in the areas of education and training, marriage, hunting, looking after children,
looking after young women and men, fishing, camping, domestic violence, community safety, trade, employment and crime.

Ngarra law teaches the young people about discipline, respect and how to live in society respectfully. And as elders are respected lawmakers (dalkarramiri) it is not permitted to speak offensively about them.

Much of the Ngarra law is very practical, such as how to use clap sticks and a didgeridoo, how to make letter sticks, spears, woomeras and boomerangs, when to burn a bush fire for hunting, how to build humpies, how to trap fish, and the special seasons for gathering bush foods. The Ngarra law also has authority to regulate economic activity, housing and employment. Ngarra law can work together with Balanda law if the Balanda law will let it.

Traditional marriage is a right under Ngarra law for both men and women. A girl may be promised to her future husband straight after her birth and parents on both sides are obligated to each other until the girl is old enough to marry. Marriage partners must conform with the consanguinity laws of “right skin” under Ngarra law.

Yolngu are the Aboriginal people of Arnhem Land. Even though Yolngu people have different clan groups, or even if they speak different languages, the main law, the Ngarra law, is similar right across the language groups. In fact, the principles of Aboriginal customary law are similar across the numerous Indigenous jurisdictions in Australia. Some of the fundamental principles of Ngarra law include the need to acquire permission to enter other people’s lands, natural justice, mutual respect, non-violation of other peoples’ rights and equality before the law.

For Yolngu society, the court that has authority to decide these matters is known as the Ngarra court. The Ngarra court is sanctioned by the whole of Yolngu society including the grieved family and tribe. For this reason, decisions of the Ngarra court are completely authoritative and binding on all parties and all lower institutions of dispute resolution in Yolngu society.

Ngarra is like a Parliament where the law of the land is discussed. We talk about policies for education, land management, the justice system, employment, marital laws, child protection and the environment.

We pride ourselves in teaching our children moral education. For example, respect for elders and neighbours, no stealing of goods or wives, no swearing, and we promote “do the right thing”. Ngarra law has much wisdom. We see some Balanda law that does not have wisdom. We need our laws to be full of wisdom.

**NGARRA LAW AND AUSTRALIAN LAW**

The Ngarra law has never been written down by anyone in black and white for people to read and understand. But Yolngu people are ready and willing to have the law written, to aid in this understanding. The mainstream system of law urgently needs to understand Ngarra law and Aboriginal customary law broadly to recognise and address the longstanding injustices to the Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people seek to have their law accepted and recognised alongside the mainstream system of law.

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Aboriginal customary law has ceremony, paintings and dances – Australia should be proud of it! Many non-Aboriginal people think that Aboriginal clans have different laws and culture. In a way that is right, we do have different languages and different dances, but we all have the same system of law.

Aboriginal customary law is the law that has existed in this country before the colonial system came and settled in Australia. Legislation comes from the federal and Northern Territory Parliaments and case law comes from the courts. But Yolngu law comes from the beginning, from our ancestors, and has been passed down through the generations.

Ngarra law is not written down like Balanda law is written on paper. Ngarra law is “written down” in the ceremonial processes and cultural artefacts such as Ngarra bunggul (dance), manikay (songs), paintings, in our kinship and marriage system, the way we look after our children, and the way we look after the country and the sea. These songs and dances are not performed for entertainment. They form part of an educational system in which the elders teach the young boys and girls how to learn the song line, dance, law, order, discipline, marriage, respect for people, respect for land, hunting and fishing locations, and many other issues relating to Aboriginal customary law.

The problem we have is one of mutual understanding and mutual respect. The legislation and case law does not work together with Ngarra law. They clash because they do not understand each other. The mainstream legal system comes from England, but Ngarra law has always been in Australia. We need to work together to understand each other, and when there is an issue we need to sit down and work it out together. It will not be resolved by continuing to ignore one another.

For many, many generations, Aboriginal people were free from alcohol, drugs and most major crimes because there was nothing to break into or steal. The only significant stealing involved men stealing other men’s women. Other major issues that did occur before the white people came here were tribal fighting between clans, tribal trespassing or breaches of the law pertaining to ceremonial grounds. All of these issues have legal remedies in Aboriginal customary law. Under the Ngarra law, the Yolngu have lived safely and survived for thousands of years; without the Ngarra law the Yolngu would be gone.

For police to work together with Yolngu people, they need to respect ideas of privacy in Yolngu society and privacy laws under the Ngarra system. Police need to have a warrant before entering a Yolngu person’s house. It is very disrespectful for anyone, including police, to enter a Yolngu person’s house without authority. Even with a warrant, the police need to speak with the owner of the house before entering. That is the respectful way of working together. Police should also work with the recognised Yolngu leaders (dalkarramiri and djungaya) to make this happen.

Whenever a Balanda court is set up for Yolngu people, the court should be a community court, not the same regular court that happens in Darwin. Yolngu elders should be involved in the court process whenever Yolngu people are the offenders or the victims.

Balanda lawyers, prosecutors and law students can learn more about Ngarra law at the Charles Darwin University’s Law School. The Law School is working...
together with dalkarramiri, djungaya and other Aboriginal leaders to make the Ngarra law accessible to people who want to learn about it.

**SOME FUNCTIONARIES OF THE NGAARRA LAW**

Ngarra law is our backbone, our foundation. We have a number of officials who have various functions to perform in relation to the Ngarra law. Just as Balanda lawyers go through university and qualify to become lawyers, Yolngu people have their own qualification system through the Ngarra law that qualifies them to hold these positions.

The highest level of office in Ngarra law is the dalkarramiri (that is the Yirritja moiety name; the Dhuwa moiety name is “djirrikay”). In the Ngarra legal system, the judicial and legislative functions are conflated into one office, that of the dalkarramiri. Dalkarra and djirrikay people are responsible for training the young people in the law.

Djunggaya (Ngarra lawyers) ensure the law is described and applied properly and are the caretakers of the law. The clan or tribe leader’s sister’s children are the djunggaya. They organise the activities that have been directed to them by the dalkarramiri, the owner of the law. The djunggaya make sure that in the system of ceremony everybody follows the rules. Also the djunggaya advises the clan leaders and traditional owners about how to keep the system on the right track, and gives them feedback about what is happening in the ceremonies.

**LAND**

The interconnectedness of land and the Ngarra law is very important. Yolngu people see the Ngarra law as embedded in and emanating from sacred areas. The land as the “mother” has provided protection and enjoyment, and has catered for the economic, social and religious needs of the people. The land determines the relationships between the clans in their social, cultural, economic and religious life. Land is also seen as having legal significance and its legal requirements are binding upon the people. For most Aboriginal people, traditional law has not changed much. If the Aboriginal people want change, then change may be possible in some areas of Ngarra law. New Ngarra laws may be pronounced in relation to modern life, such as employment, education and housing.

**SOLUTIONS TO OFFENCES UNDER ABORIGINAL CUSTOMARY LAW**

When Balanda think of the term “payback” the first thing that comes to mind is something like spearing someone in a leg and traditionally this has been a punishment for serious crimes. Another option that is available under Ngarra law is the makarrata which is a type of settled agreement, similar to a treaty, and typically involves compensation and undertakings to do or not to do certain things.

In discipline (raypirri), Yolngu children and adults are all taught good manners and behaviours. Raypirri can happen after an offence as a form of correction or before any trouble happens as a form of prevention against offences occurring.

In matters of domestic violence, women can go to their parents or aunty or grandmother’s place, or they can go to a jilimi, that is an Aboriginal women’s
safe house where women are allowed to stay and men are not allowed to go there without the women’s permission. The jilmi will often be the women’s camp or the woman’s mother’s place as that is a place that the husband of the woman should never enter under Ngarra law. The woman will now be safe in the jilmi until the domestic violence issue is settled. Again, the police should work with the Yolngu leaders to make this happen. Domestic violence orders are causing lots of trouble in Yolngu communities; instead domestic violence could be handled under Ngarra law which would work better because it is authoritative for Yolngu people.

For correcting offenders, the Balanda courts and government could work together with Yolngu elders to arrange for offenders to serve sentences under Ngarra law methods. Offenders could work off their sentences as community work orders in remote locations away from their families. As well as community work, the offenders would learn from and be disciplined by responsible elders. Offenders could also produce artwork, which is to be sold and the proceeds be sent to the victim of the crime.

This type of correctional program is known as Gunapipi. Offenders can attend Gunapipi for short durations for minor offences and long durations – up to three years or more – for more serious offences.

There are many ways the white legal system can work together with the Ngarra legal system. The white system just needs to learn to sit down and listen to the dalkarramiri and djunggaya instead of ignoring them. Two laws working side by side will work well – it will be strong law, not weak like now.

PHOTO 7 – James Gurrwanngu Gaykamangu

Photo 7 is of the author: “I am a dalkarramiri from Milingimbi. I have worked in the Balanda legal system as a NAATI-accredited Senior Interpreter and mentor to younger interpreters. I have worked as an Indigenous Court Liaison Officer in Katherine. I have worked very hard with Daniel Kelly on this Yolngu Ngarra law from Arnhem Land; we worked together in partnership. This is the future – Yolngu and Balanda working together in partnership.”