

# AMRRIC STRATEGIC PLAN 2020 to 2025



**AMRRIC acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders both past and present.**

**Information about original cover artwork**

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- Community – Nyirripi
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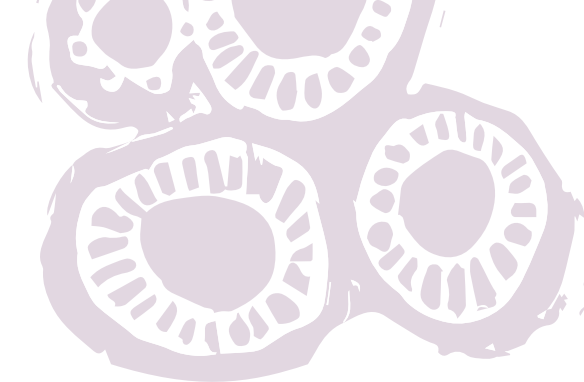
**With the guidance of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group, the efforts of the AMRRIC team and the governance of the Board, we look forward to rolling out this new strategy with collaborators and communities towards self-determination, and greater national reach for people and their animals.”**

**KATE BLASZAK, AMRRIC Board Chair**





A healthy resident of Palmerston Indigenous Village



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**FOOTNOTE:**

*The term Indigenous is respectfully used throughout this strategic plan to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.*

*Where the word 'communities' is used, we are referring to rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.*



**AMRRIC  
Vision**

**Aboriginal  
and Torres  
Strait Islander  
communities  
that are  
healthy and  
safe for people  
and their  
companion  
animals.**



A demonstration  
of love during a  
Yuendumu vet  
program

## AMRRIC Core Values

### RESPECT

- For the communities with whom we work, our supporters and our colleagues
- For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and traditional knowledge
- For the diversity and individuality of all people
- For the environment in which we work

### ACCOUNTABILITY

- We work to clearly articulated objectives and goals in a transparent manner
- We seek to achieve the best use of resources

### INTEGRITY

- We are honest, open and transparent
- We avoid real, or apparent, conflicts of interest

### OUTCOMES FOCUS

- All our decisions are framed around the question  
*“How will this help the communities with whom we work?”*

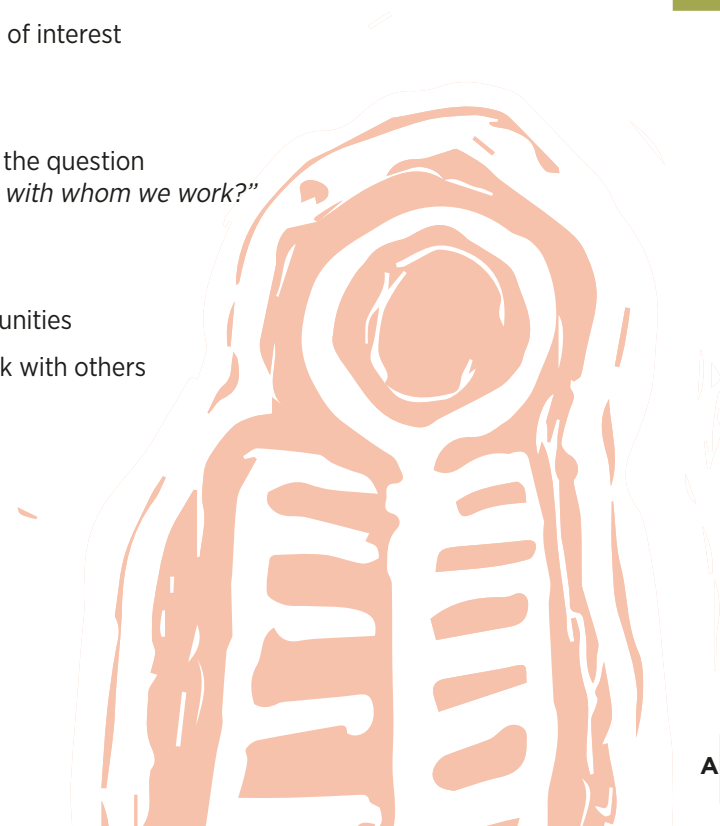
### INTERCONNECTEDNESS

- We work collaboratively *with* communities
- We integrate our programs and work with others



I love the passion and energy that comes with the delivery of AMRRIC programs. It is the vision of the Advisory Group that the long term legacy would be to partner and empower our Indigenous communities through education delivery and regular visits by vets and AMRRIC staff to ensure communities are involved in management of the health and well-being of their animals.”

**CHRISTINE ROSS,**  
AMRRIC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group  
Member and AMRRIC Director (2016-2019)







A Yirralka Ranger assisting the vet program team in Gapuwiyak



## About AMRRIC

AMRRIC (Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities Ltd) is a not-for-profit organisation that coordinates culturally safe veterinary and education programs in rural and remote Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. AMRRIC exists to assist and empower communities to meet their needs for companion animal health, care and safety. AMRRIC's Board and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group work together to guide and govern AMRRIC.

Principles of cultural safety and One Health One Wellbeing<sup>1</sup> underpin AMRRIC's approach. Cultural safety is where users of services have the power to feedback their observations and experiences to contribute to service outcomes. Cultural safety is defined by receivers or users of services, and extends beyond cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. One Health One Wellbeing recognises the links between human, animal and environmental health and wellbeing. Positive relationships between owners and their animals are fundamental to daily animal care and welfare and contribute to community health and well-being.

<sup>1</sup> 'One Health One Wellbeing' is a term refined by AMRRIC to accommodate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples preferences. It references the international concepts 'One Health' (see [www.onehealthcommission.org/en/why\\_one\\_health/what\\_is\\_one\\_health/](http://www.onehealthcommission.org/en/why_one_health/what_is_one_health/)) and 'One Welfare' (see [www.onewelfareworld.org](http://www.onewelfareworld.org)). For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the word 'welfare' has negative connotations, so AMRRIC has instead elected to use the term 'wellbeing'. One Health One Wellbeing services to highlight the interconnections between animal, human and environmental health and wellbeing. It fosters interdisciplinary collaboration to improve physical, mental and socioemotional health of people, pets and country.

All smiles and hard at work in Lajamanu



A vet or animal management officer of the future





## AMRRIC History

### 1990s An Idea is Born

In the early 90s, a handful of veterinarians were providing various types of dog health programs in remote Indigenous communities. Like-minded visionaries who were accustomed to yarns around the campfire wanted to catalyse a coordinated approach to companion animal management in remote Indigenous communities. The founding members of AMRRIC were Tony English, Philip Donohoe, Stephen Cutter, Rick Speare, Jack Shields, Rod Salter and Robert Dixon.

### 1998 Ideas Become Reality

The founding members created the first working group under the name of the "Big Lick"

### 2000 Bringing People Together

The first "AMRRIC" hosted conference titled A Better Dog's Life - Itches to be Scratched was hosted in Darwin; a watershed event of presentations and workshops that energised participants and focused activities surrounding companion animal management in remote Indigenous communities.

### 2002 Formalising Things

In order to create structure and opportunity they created the incorporated association (first registered on 01/04/2003), renamed Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities "AMRRIC". The new name was chosen to reflect an emerging depth to the expansion of its animal management focus beyond dog health programs.

### 2000-2010s The Work Continues

Over the years, AMRRIC has developed critical resources including manuals for veterinary practitioners and Indigenous Animal Health Workers and has become increasingly active in the education arena. As well as assisting veterinary practitioners, AMRRIC worked strategically at local, state and federal government levels to facilitate and support companion animal health programs, always prioritising a collaborative approach to programs, research and advocacy.

### 2004 AMRRIC is Launched

AMRRIC received its first substantial government grant and the organisation was officially launched, with an increasing band of passionate supporters.



**2006**

### Attracting International Audiences

AMRRIC's first Executive Officer, Phil Donohoe, was the driving force behind the major AMRRIC international conference Dog People.

**2015-2018**

### Guiding AMRRIC's Direction

The Strategic Plan guiding this period formalised the One Health focus of AMRRIC – the linkages between human, animal and environmental health and well being, and embeds this approach.

**2019**

### Continuing to Grow and Innovate

In response to AMRRIC's increased level of government funding and through the Board's commitment to governance, the organisation's legal status is updated to a company limited by guarantee. There was also an increased emphasis on the work for community cat management and recognition for AMRRIC's One Health Program by JetPet Innovation Award.

**2017**

### Advice towards Self-Determination

The Inaugural meeting of AMRRIC's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group is hosted in Darwin.

**2020**

### AMRRIC sets clear goals

With the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan in place, AMRRIC continues its commitment of the founding members with updates to a One Health One Wellbeing approach and clear goals including continuing AMRRIC's commitment of working towards Self-Determination of communities and greater impact nationally.



## Our Approach

From the very beginning, AMRRIC's unique approach to its work has been founded on a deep respect for the cultures and traditional ways of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We promote a model of service delivery, developed over years of dialogue and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, that recognises companion animals as being intrinsic to the fabric of the community and acknowledges the inseparable link between the health and wellbeing of companion animals and that of their owners and their communities.

Stakeholder collaboration is fundamental to AMRRIC's work. Internally, AMRRIC's stakeholders include individual and organisational followers, members, donors and volunteers. Externally, AMRRIC works with remote Indigenous communities nationally alongside all levels of Australian government, corporate businesses, environmental and human health service providers, animal management workers, vets and vet nurses, educators and researchers.

## Our Actions

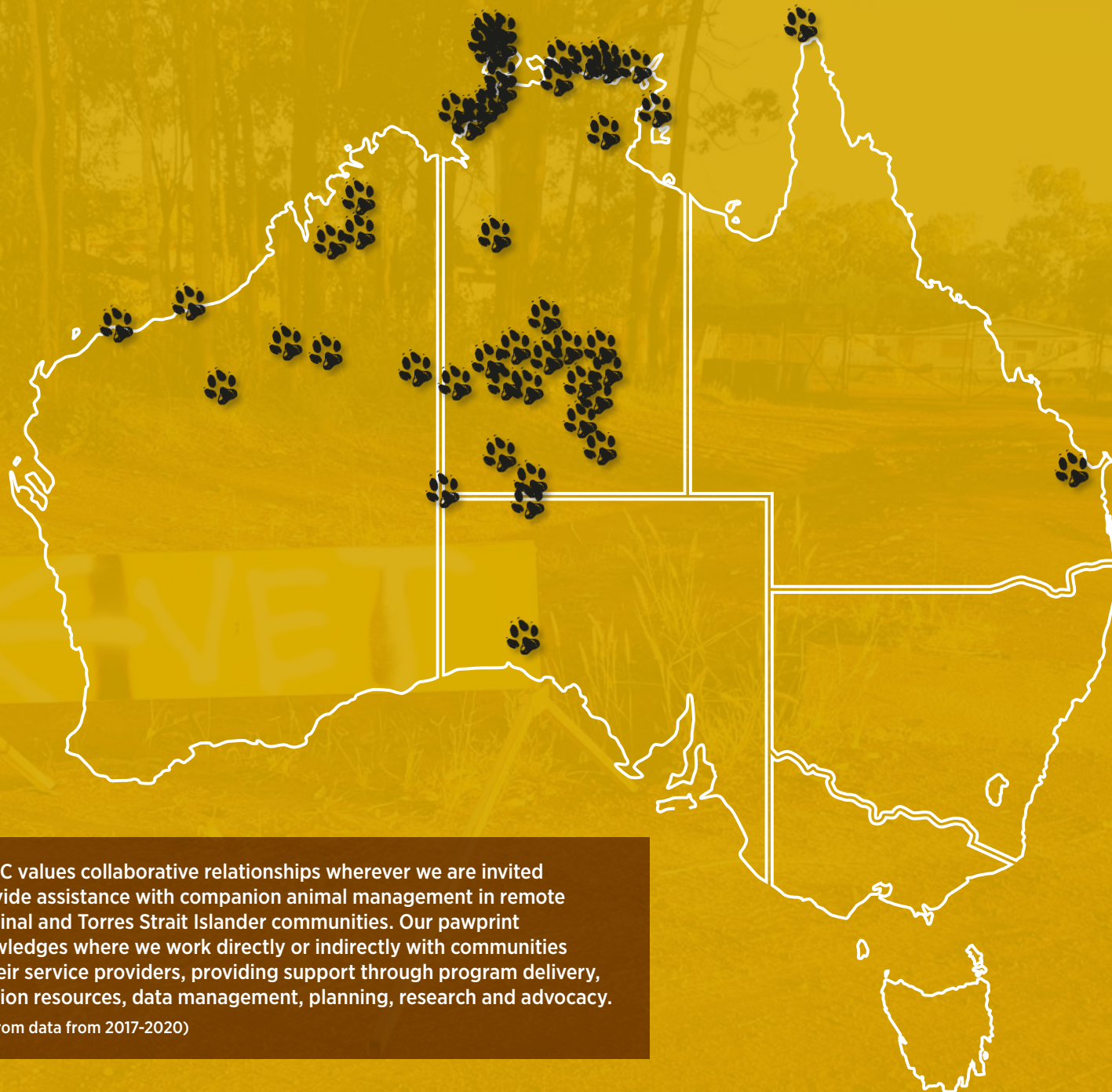
Existing and emerging challenges are complex and interrelated, requiring coordinated and committed action by national, state, territory and local government, policy makers, funders and communities. AMRRIC remains adaptive to ensure our community engagement and wholistic program approach, including tailored education, meets the needs of the communities we work with. We continue to address the public health, wellbeing and environmental implications of companion animal population management which not only recognise dogs, but with increasing popularity, cats and other larger domestic animals as pets. We also remain committed to our involvement in disaster and emergency animal disease preparedness and response, helping to build solutions in critical remote situations.



Engaging children in Nyrripi in education alongside the surgical desexing program



## AMRRIC 'Pawprint'



AMRRIC values collaborative relationships wherever we are invited to provide assistance with companion animal management in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Our pawprint acknowledges where we work directly or indirectly with communities and their service providers, providing support through program delivery, education resources, data management, planning, research and advocacy.  
(taken from data from 2017-2020)



## Working together to plan & deliver

### Collaborative Governance

AMRRIC's elected Board of Directors is made up of a wide range of people, from both veterinary and environmental health, tertiary institution staff and private and corporate sector members.

The AMRRIC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group brings the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities into the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of AMRRIC's discrete animal management services and programs.

Its members are sourced from across Australia bringing with them a wealth of knowledge and experience which will assist in ensuring that AMRRIC's programs and communication are both culturally sensitive and achievable.

To find out more about the AMRRIC Directors and Advisory Group visit our [Governance section](#) on our website.





## Strategic Aims

### Collaboratively, we will work with others to:

1. **Facilitate** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to lead companion animal health and wellbeing programs and priorities, including setting community agendas and targets.
2. **Promote** training and job pathways to encourage a skilled remote community environmental and animal management workforce.
3. **Advocate** for affordable and appropriate animal health and care products to be available for sale in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
4. **Encourage** delivery of culturally appropriate educational and engagement programs, media and resources focusing on animal care to all communities.
5. **Broker long-term commitments** with stakeholders to guarantee quality and sustainability of animal health and management services.
6. **Advocate** for ongoing financial commitment to veterinary and local animal management service delivery in rural and remote communities.
7. **Promote** regular scheduled veterinary visits providing services for animal health and welfare, zoonotic disease prevention and control, and population management.
8. **Facilitate opportunity to measure and report** on inputs, outputs and outcomes from animal management programs that are measured and reported, and approach community determined targets.
9. **Advocate and lobby** for State and Territory animal welfare legislation that is better understood and resourced and is more applicable to remote communities.
10. **Support and encourage** local governments to resource and implement appropriate animal management regulations, by-laws or other frameworks to improve animal management, health and welfare.



Young students in Minyerri practising safe bandaging



## Self-determining Communities

local priorities, tailored programs, capacity built

# SAFE, HAPPY, HEALTHY ANIMALS & COMMUNITIES, NATIONALLY

## Quality needs based services

veterinary visits, education, environmental health workers, access to prevention, advocacy

## Sustainable resourcing

people, funding, ongoing delivery and monitoring

Safe, happy and healthy animals in communities – companion animals are healthy, animal populations are in control, communities and owners are safe and well educated in animal care and empowered for self-determining good animal management.



**We will:**

- i.** increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the AMRRIC Board of Directors and throughout our staff.
- ii.** build strong partnerships with local Community Councils to guide AMRRIC programs based on shared objectives and principles of community empowerment and self-determination, cultural safety and One Health One Wellbeing.
- iii.** support companion animal programs that meet AMRRIC principles, and are responsive to, and empower communities, schools and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.
- iv.** develop and deliver training courses, as advocated for by community, in order to increase local responsibility and capability for sustained animal management culture and practice.



My experience with AMRRIC has been one of positive action, where community empowerment is a major focus. I support the programs that educate and advocate for good health for all animals in Aboriginal communities.”

DR JULIE OWEN,  
AMRRIC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
Advisory Group Member

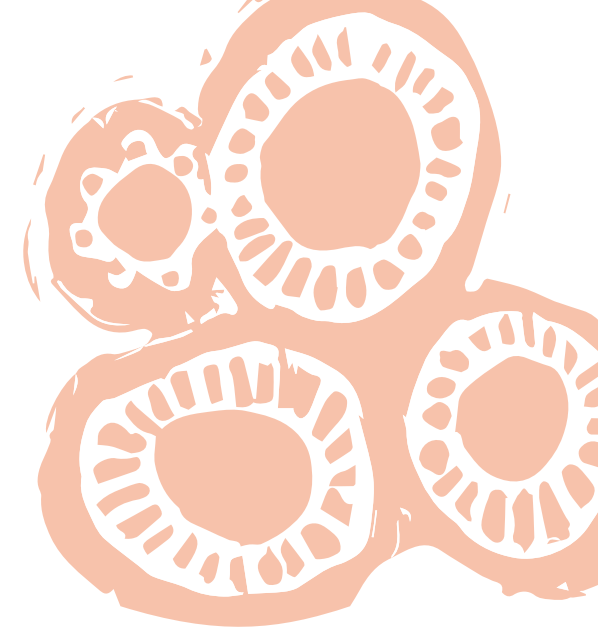




## 2.1 Regional Planning

### We will:

- i. work to increase Animal Management Plans in regional council areas of most acute need, nationally.
  
- ii. negotiate strategic partnerships with communities organisations, schools, and local councils to strengthen ownership at a local level.



A Bawinanga Ranger being trained in use of the AMRRIC app for companion animal census



They're the eyes and ears in regards to the animals out there... AMRRIC has the capacity to engage with industry and get those veterinary services out there."

PETER MCLINDEN,  
Local Government Association of the  
Northern Territory.





## 2.2 Veterinary services and preventative care outputs

### We will:

- i. report on key measures and targets for animal health, welfare and population management and map these through AMRRIC facilitated or delivered programs in partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- ii. continue to improve health and welfare of dogs and cats in communities through AMRRIC facilitated or partnered programs.
- iii. advocate for access to preventative care products and companion animal food in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- iv. support veterinarians, vet nurses and trained/authorised environmental health workers to deliver quality services.



AMRRIC is essential and it's a really important organisation... it gives a lot of value to the communities; that bond between dogs and people is getting stronger, and people are enjoying their dogs more which I think is great.”

DR STEPHEN CUTTER,  
The Ark Animal Hospital, AMRRIC Founder,  
Life Member and partner vet





## 2.3 School and community education

### We will:

- i. provide school and community education programs and language resources for NT and communities of greatest need nationally.
- ii. broker partnerships to sustainably provide education in schools.
- iii. provide culturally responsive community education, events and media with every community based program.



I really believe in the messages that they are working on, and the education programs that they're working on, so I am very happy to offer my support to AMRRIC and particularly the staff who go out and work with our community members about those really great ways to look after our animals.”

THE HON SELENA UIBO,  
Minister for Education, Aboriginal Affairs  
& Workforce Training, Northern Territory  
Government



below: Learning to recognise dog behaviours in Kalumburu







## 2.4 Advocacy

### We will:

- i. promote stories of success and increase awareness across a range of public and community platforms, media and Indigenous languages.
- ii. broker strategic partnership to advocate and support the development of relevant laws.
- iii. work with government and non-government agencies so that One Health One Wellbeing and cultural safety principles and responsibilities are widely understood and supported.
- iv. strive for the highest standards in organisational policy, practice and research and regulatory standards.

below: Lending a hand during surgery program in the Barkley





Yirralka Rangers taking part in community census and being trained in use of the AMRRIC app.







**We will:**

- i. increase and diversify funding and collaborative partnerships to extend the AMRRIC support and service delivery model to key communities nationally.
- ii. work towards more and stronger partnerships under the principles of One Health One Wellbeing, cultural safety and environmental responsibility.

right: Pets in the Barkly region receiving anti-parasitic treatment



far right: A surgical program underway in the APY Lands







Houndstooth Studio – Alex Cearns



Animal Management in Rural and  
Remote Indigenous Communities

For more information or to support our work:

[www.amrric.org](http://www.amrric.org)

[info@amrric.org](mailto:info@amrric.org)

08 8948 1768

[www.facebook.com/AMRRIC](https://www.facebook.com/AMRRIC)



**This painting depicts ‘malikijarra Jukurrpa’ (two dogs Dreaming). The ‘kirda’ (owners) of this Dreaming are Nampijinpa/Nangala women and Jampijinpa/Jangala men.**

This Dreaming comes from country adjacent to the windmill at Warlarla (Rabbit Flat). This site is part of a long Dreaming track that stretches from Yarralpa in the extreme west of Warlpiri country to Warlaku (Ali Curung) in the east. In this Dreaming story, two dog ancestors, a Jampijinpa and a Napangardi, travelled from the west to the east. They began at Yarralpa (a waterhole) and travelled through Wirninginpa, Jinarli, Karljawarnu (a rockhole), Jilwirrpa, and Waanjurna (a rockhole). They dug holes in the ground and created ‘warnirri’ (rockholes) and ‘ngapa’ (waterholes) as they went.

At Tapu (a rockhole), the two dogs separated. The female dog, Napangardi, went to the south towards Ngamarnawarnu. The male dog, Jampijinpa, went to the north through Mukirri and Paruwu. Eventually he became lonely and howled for Napangardi in the south. She came running to him, and they married each other at Ngarnka. They wore men’s and women’s marriage headdresses, and Jampijinpa painted himself with white clay for the ceremony. After the wedding, they continued on slowly to the east through Kurduwijawija, Warlarla (Rabbit Flat), and Yurlpuwarnu (rockholes). At Yurlpuwarnu they started a fire using a ‘jimanypa’ (stick), a spear-thrower, and ‘yindirnti’ (bat-wing coral tree [Erythrina vespertilio]) wood for firewood. The dogs then continued east through Kulpurlunu (a waterhole) and Ngumurlungu, where they encountered some other dogs. However, these dogs sent them away while they performed a sacred ceremony.

The two dogs continued running east, past Jarramarda and Yankirrikirlangu, before arriving in Warlaku (Ali Curung). Many other dogs were living in Warlaku when they arrived. There were many families of dogs, mothers and fathers and children and uncles all living together. Jampijinpa and Napangardi made a burrow to rest in and started a big family of dogs there. They chose to stay in Warlaku and live with all the other dogs. In this way,

the ‘malikijarra Jukurrpa’ (two dogs Dreaming) tells the story of proper conduct in families and marriages.

In Warlpiri paintings, traditional iconography is used to represent the Jukurrpa and other elements. The ribcages of the Jampijinpa, Napangardi, and their family of dogs are depicted in this work. Their ribs can also be seen as features in the landscape in the Yankirrikirlangu area. Concentric circles are used to represent the ‘ngapa’ (waterholes) around Yankirrikirlangu.

For information about artist

Murdie (Maudie) Nampijinpa Morris was born in the 1930s at Rabbit Flat, a tiny settlement in the middle of the harsh Tanami Desert in the Northern Territory of Australia about 160 km from the Western Australia border and 315 km north-west of Yuendumu. Her parents would have taken her out bush in around Nyirripi area, showing her sites and teaching her the traditional ways of her country. In the early 1980s she settled in Yuendumu and worked at the Old People’s Home - a Program that cares for the elderly by helping them when they are sick, and being with them when they are alone or when they are frighten during storms. She was married but is now a widowed woman. She never had children.

Murdie has been painting with Warlukurlangu Artists Aboriginal Corporation, an Aboriginal owned and governed art centre located in Yuendumu, since 2012. She was prompted to paint when she attended a workshop in 2012. She enjoys painting, and paints her father’s jukurrpa, Maliki Jukurrpa (Domestic Dog Dreaming) and Malikiarra Jukurrpa (Two Dog Dreaming). Dreamings that have been passed down through the generations for millennia and relate directly to the land, its features and the animals and plants that inhabit it. She uses an unrestricted palette to develop a modern interpretation of her traditional culture.



Murdie Nampijinpa Morris