

My name is _____

Sharing Our Spirit

The Garma Festival – A celebration of culture that brings Aboriginal Australia alive.



The Garma Festival is a vibrant and colourful celebration of East Arnhem Land Yolngu culture. For five days each year the festival brings a gathering of people to Gulkula – a remote stringybark forest on an escarpment with views over the Gulf of Carpentaria. Everyone sleeps in tents in the forest and this year there were over 1000 tents pitched among the trees.

Gulkula is a site of special significance, where the ancestor Ganbulapula brought the yidaki (didjeridoo) into being among the Gumatj people.

The highlight of the festival is the Bunggul – a ceremonial performance of traditional dance and music performed each afternoon as the sun sets. Local people of all ages are involved in the performance.

There was also a traditional dance group, the Yidinji Malluwuy dancers, who travelled all the way from Cairns and Brisbane to perform.

Their performances included “Shake a Leg” and “Story of a Crocodile”.

There were different events at Garma for everyone. High school students travelled from all the corners of Arnhem Land so their bands could perform at the festival each day over the lunch hour. There were bands from Maningrida, Yirrkala, Numbulwar, Angurugu, Gapuwiyak, Groote Eylandt and Elcho Island. The bands practiced out in the bush studio before heading on stage to jam in front of a large audience. The band Djumbung from Millingimbi was chosen to play on the main stage on the last night of the festival in front of hundreds of people.

Year 11 and 12 students from Jabiru High School, in Kakadu, also came to Garma to talk about experiences at their school. Local park ranger Arian Pearson from Dhimurru Land Management Aboriginal Corporation told the students about the challenges he faced after coming back from

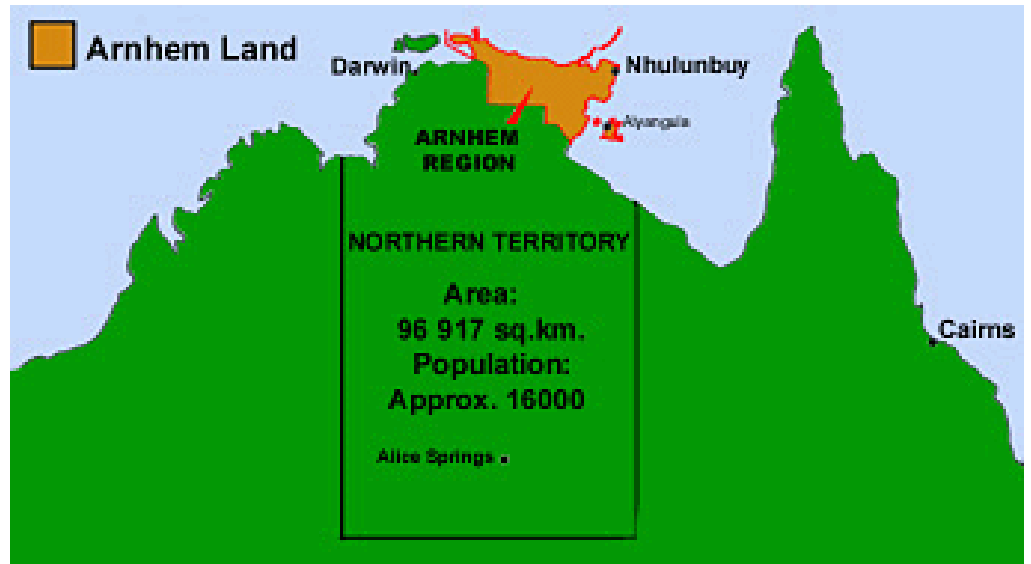
boarding school in Queensland to his home to Yirrkala and re-learning traditional knowledge. Arian’s job now involves saving turtles from ghost nets, patrolling beaches, and helping to move crocodiles out of swimming holes. He encouraged all the students from Jabiru to set goals and follow their dreams.

There were lots of musical performances, especially on the last night of the festival. Yothu Yindi, Casey Donovan, NoKtuRnal and Coloured Stone all performed on the main stage in a huge night of entertainment.

Garma also hosted a Youth Forum, with over 130 students and children registered to participate. The boys learnt spear-making, searching for the materials themselves, while the girls tried their hand at honey collecting and making shell bracelets. All the participants had spare time to get involved in the lino prints workshops. The prints were



The Garma festival is held each year in East Arnhem Land in the Gulf of Carpentaria. It is a celebration of culture that brings Aboriginal Australia alive. East Arnhem Land is at the very top of Australia.

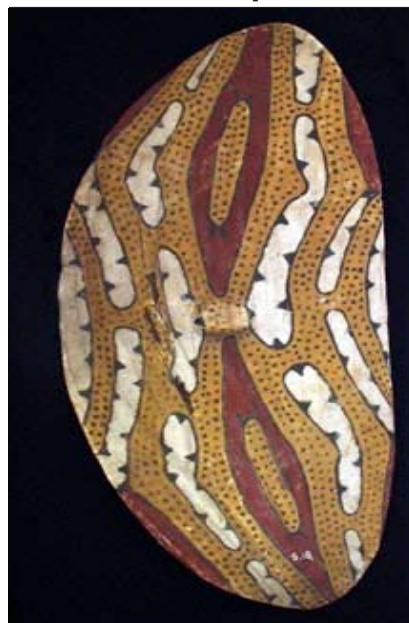


Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia

ACTIVITY 1

Look at the photos of traditional dancers and their shields on page 8. of *Deadly Vibe* magazine.

Below is an example of a traditional shield. Copy the design next to it.

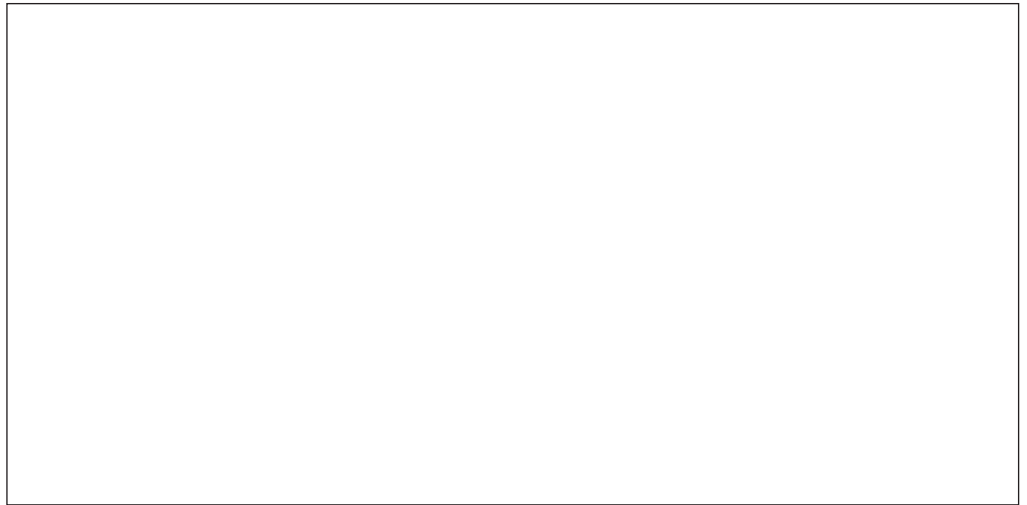


Traditional shield

My copy of the shield



ACTIVITY 2: CREATE YOUR OWN SHIELD DESIGN BELOW.

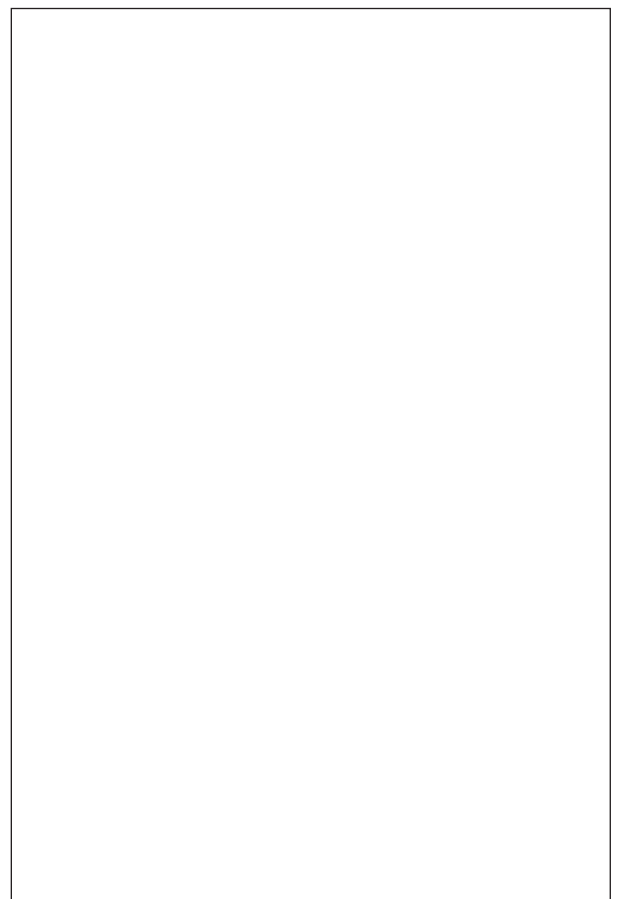
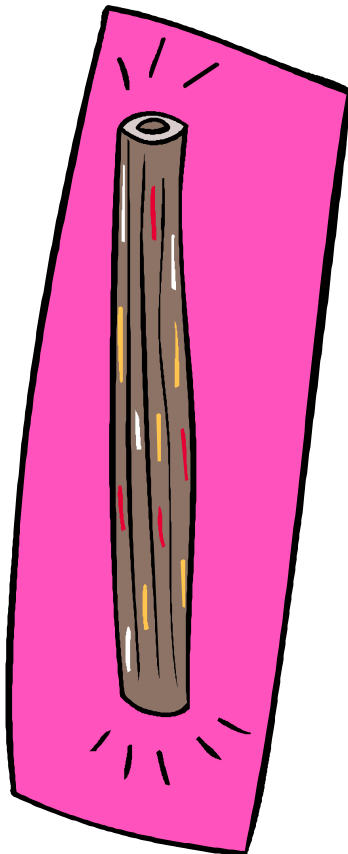


My design

ACTIVITY 3

According to the Gumatj people of Arnhem Land, the yidaki (didgeridoo) was brought into being by the ancestor Ganbulapula.

Draw your own design for a didgeridoo next to the picture below.



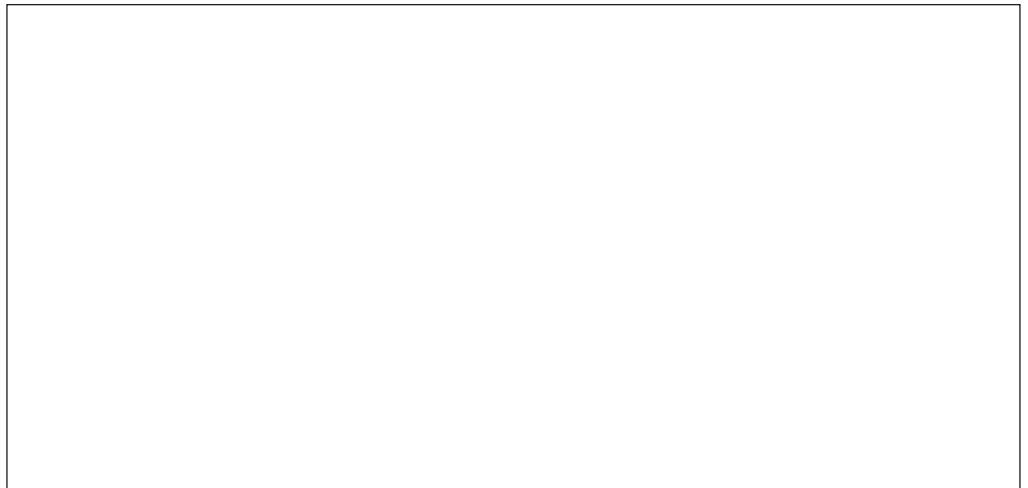
My design



ACTIVITY 4: READING FOR MEANING

1. How long does the Garma Festival run for each year? _____ days
2. Where do people gather?
G _____ forest.
3. Everyone sleeps in t_____ in the f_____.

In the box below, draw a picture of lots of tents pitched among the trees of Gulkula.



ACTIVITY 5

Here is a list of things you would find at the Garma Festival.

Write each word out on the line next to it:

- dancers _____
- tents _____
- shields _____
- didjeridoos _____

What would you like to do at the Garma Festival?

For more photos from this year's Garma Festival, head to:

www.garma.telstra.com

