

## When one is better than three

**Northern Territory:** Mimi Ngurradalingi Aboriginal Corporation is one of our newest corporations. It came into existence when the members of three separate parent corporations decided they could do better if they joined together and became one. In other words, if the three corporations amalgamated—which is exactly what they did in December 2011.

### Congratulations Mimi

In April 2012 Mimi Ngurradalingi Aboriginal Corporation had its first general meeting since it was registered under its new name and acquired its larger membership base. Held over three days it also included a highly successful governance training workshop presented by ORIC.

Mimi Ngurradalingi is active on many fronts but its main business is promoting the region's artistic heritage and protecting Aboriginal language. The new corporation is looking to expand its art centre program and to re-establish its language programs in and around the Katherine region.



Above: ORIC regional office manager, Bob Turner, helps out during the corporate governance workshop for directors and members.

Right: Gathered outside the corporation. Below: Barbara Ambjerg Pedersen (left) and Marianne Roberts explain the corporation's corporate structure and how it works—members at the top, the directors next and then the CEO and other staff. Understanding the corporate structure is often the key to understanding how a corporation should be run.

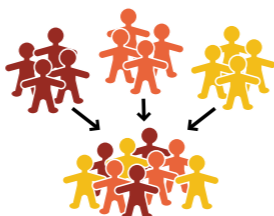
All photos: Mimi Ngurradalingi Aboriginal Corporation



## AMALGAMATION

Mimi Ngurradalingi Aboriginal Corporation is a new corporation that combines three former corporations:

- Mimi Arts and Crafts Aboriginal Corporation
- Ngurradalingi Aboriginal Corporation
- Diwurruwurru-Jaru Aboriginal Corporation



The benefits:

- bigger stronger corporation representing all the people in the region
- a fresh start attracting new funds
- restored financial viability.



Above: Using pictures the Deputy Registrar, Joe Mastrolembo, talks about corporate governance and the importance of clear reporting lines. The directors perform their duties with the support staff, in line with members' wishes and the corporation's rule book.



Australian Government  
Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations

# ORIC Oracle

## Follow your art

July 2012

## Reaching out to young people

**Western Australia, Kimberley region:** The senior artists at Warlayirti Artists Aboriginal Corporation are fine exponents of their artistic tradition. Artists such as Eubena Nampitjin, Elizabeth Nyumi, Nora Wompi, Bai Bai Napangarti, Kathleen Paddoon and Helicopter Tjungurrayi are founding members.

But the challenge today is what's next? These artists are getting old.

The answer is complex. There are many excellent mid-career artists presently nurtured by Warlayirti Artists but it takes time—many years—for artists to hone their skills, as Sally Clifford, the corporation's contact person and staff member points out. And only once in a while does an artist of the calibre of Eubena, Helicopter or Elizabeth Nyumi rise to the surface.

In the meantime along comes the global financial crisis and the market most severely hit is, of course, the high end. The flow-on effect to the community is a drop in revenue.

'We did a lot of education around the world money story. Many people in

our community didn't understand what had changed so we asked them, "If you once had a good full-time job but now you're getting Centrelink payments would you buy a \$10 000 painting?"', says Sally.

The good news is Warlayirti Artists is back on track for a financially much stronger year. This is encouraging for everyone, including the young people who are just starting out.

Over the past four years the corporation has put a lot of energy into a new media program.

'Young people need different challenges—and we have found they are very good at digital stuff,' says Sally. 'Everybody watches DVDs so we're working in these art forms. It's still about story-telling but it's based in a contemporary culture.'

It is this determination to motivate young people that is the inspiration behind the Motika project which explores the fascination many Aboriginal people have with cars.

'For a lot of people in the community getting a car is the main thing people want. We need to move around—because of law business, funerals, ceremonies,' says arts worker David Mudgebell.

Using photography, film and new media, the Motika project is educating young people about safe driving as well as the law. Sometimes people in the community are gaoled for driving-related offences.

An interest in photography, music and film has given young people a range of new skills and has helped to engage them in community life. But the reality is painting is still Warlayirti Artists' core business so Sally tries to make sure the relationship between painting and new media is clearly understood. 'As young people come in and do photography, we try to re-engage them with painting—and now there's a handful of young men who are coming back to it.'

At the vibrant art centre, the traditional and contemporary sit comfortably side by side. And the future is full of promise with painting exhibitions planned for Germany and Singapore and a photography exhibition in Australia. It will be a good year.

[www.balgoart.org.au](http://www.balgoart.org.au)



Top: On the Motika project—Steve Rhall, with Basil Sunfly, lines up a shot. Photo: Warlayirti Artists Aboriginal Corporation



Left: And action! Azman Nanguri behind the camera, Jake Baadjo on the rail slider, and Luke Nicholls about to perform. Photo: Warlayirti Artists Aboriginal Corporation

## AGM and annual reporting time

Now that the 2011–12 financial year has closed it's time to prepare your reports and hold your annual general meeting (AGM).

### Need help?

If you need help filling in your reports or some extra time contact us.

**Why not lodge online—it's easier than you think:** <https://online.oric.gov.au>

Corporations can lodge a range of forms and reports online.

*Do it now. Don't be late!*

Call and hold AGM  
*Due between 1 July and 30 November*

Lodge 2011–12 reports with the Registrar  
*Due between 1 July and 31 December\**

\*Corporations that don't lodge their 2011–12 reports by 31 December 2012 could face prosecution.

freecall: 1800 622 431 (not free from mobiles) email: [info@oric.gov.au](mailto:info@oric.gov.au) website: [www.oric.gov.au](http://www.oric.gov.au)



## AT THE HEART OF ART

A snapshot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations in the visual arts sector



The Registrar's recently published report is a snapshot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations operating in the visual arts sector over the past four years. It analyses 101 corporations registered under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*.

Now available at [www.oric.gov.au](http://www.oric.gov.au).

**101**  
64 in the visual arts sector only  
37 in visual arts and other sectors

101 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations registered under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* operate in the visual arts sector.

**\$16.2 million**  
collective average annual revenue from art sales



corporations generating the highest average revenue from art sales are located in South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory

• location of corporations generating the biggest arts sales revenue

**4.5 employees**  
average number per corporation (full time equivalent)

**693 directors**  
360 women 232 men 101 unknown

SOME COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF CORPORATIONS INVOLVED IN VISUAL ARTS ARE:

- membership of one or more peak industry body
- registered for tax concessions and/or exemptions
- adapted rule book to reflect the specialised nature of their activities
- most directors are women
- they operate an 'open door' policy—any community member is welcome to participate in art.
- they offer materials and services, such as providing workspaces, art supplies, secure storage and marketing opportunities

Full page image: Nora Wompi painting at the art centre in Balgo, Western Australia. Photo: Warlayirti Artists Aboriginal Corporation

strong corporations, strong people, strong communities

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