

# Wunan Foundation

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Building a stronger future in the East Kimberley



## Annual Report 2004/05



## Tom Birch – Chairperson

*Tom lives in Wyndham and has traditional ties with the Bunaba people and the Balangarra people. Currently, Tom is also Chairman of the Kimberley Land Council.*

# Chairman's Report

## Summary of Key Activities

I am pleased to present our Annual Report for 2004/05, which has been another exciting year of progress and development for Wunan Foundation.

### Building Capacity

Like many not-for-profits, Wunan Foundation operates some commercial activities to help achieve greater independence to drive innovation and change and to underwrite ongoing social investments.

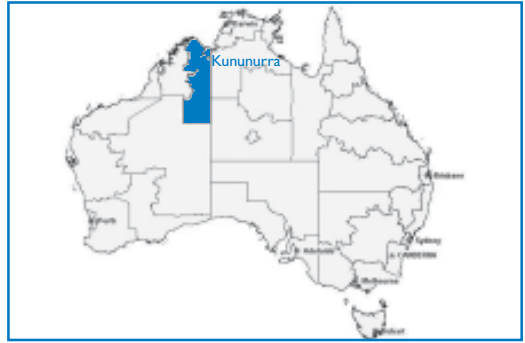
- In 2004/05, Kimberley Wilderness Adventures (KWA) completed its first full year under the new joint venture between Wunan Foundation and national industry leader, Australian Pacific Touring. The business acknowledges the continuing support of the Traditional Owner communities whom we partner with in the operation of our remote Wilderness Camps and particularly thank the Purnululu Aboriginal Corporation for their support in helping us establish the spectacular new Bungle Bungle eco-tourism camp.
- The Foundation is looking forward to the imminent completion of a new partnership investment – an initiative of Indigenous Business Australia – which will become a significant addition to our long-term 'foundation' asset portfolio.

### Social Investments and Benefits

- The Foundation's strategic partnership with Kimberley Group Training (KGT) has continued to grow real employment outcomes for local Aboriginal people. We are grateful for the outstanding support that KGT receives from within the community and particularly from its many host employers. The achievements that KGT has made in the last twelve months reflect the strength of its various partnerships and are a tribute to its enthusiastic and hard-working staff and its energetic voluntary board.
- With the support of the Foundation and Aboriginal Hostels Limited, Wunan House continues to provide quality, safe, affordable and culturally supportive accommodation in Kununurra. Through the support of the WA Department of Education and Training and Argyle Diamonds, Wunan House was pleased to introduce scholarships to provide additional financial assistance to young Indigenous trainees and apprentices and, with the support of the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal's Rural Education Fund, we have been able to continue these. I congratulate the hostel team, Amy, Derek and Trudi, for maintaining such an excellent standard of accommodation and meals, and also to the residents in creating a wonderful 'home' environment.
- Following on from research and local consultation, the Foundation, together with KGT, initiated the new 'Job Pathways' project with the aim of delivering more cohesive strategies to



Tom and Ian accepting National CDEP Award from The Hon Kevin Andrews MP.



The Wunan Region.

improve Indigenous employment outcomes. This initiative will target identified 'opportunity gaps' to increase employability skills amongst local young people to help them achieve better job outcomes. We look forward to this initiative rolling out some very exciting new activities over the months and years to come.

- In response to the crippling instability that many remote community organisations routinely suffer from, the Board is delighted to see the Foundation establish Wunan Business Services (WBS) to help other Indigenous organisations in the region improve their governance and management effectiveness. Only recently, has Wunan Foundation itself achieved the necessary capacity to be in a position to expand to support others and is pleased to have now introduced tailored business services with Kalumburu, Warmun, Oombulgarri, Waringarri Arts and KGT. By achieving greater operational stability and continuity, these organisations become better placed to move forward in a sustainable manner as well as engage with Government and the private philanthropic sector to pursue value-adding projects.

In conclusion I wish to thank all of our Partners who have made a contribution to the work of the Foundation over the last 12 months. Wunan is going through a dynamic period of development and we were therefore delighted to welcome Patrick Dodson and Vicki Butters to the Board during 04/05. To the Board and Staff of the Foundation, I thank you for the achievements you have made during 2004/05 and for your continuing enthusiasm to build stronger futures for Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tom Birch'.

**Tom Birch**, Honorary Chairperson

## Executive Director's Report

Indigenous disadvantage is a complex issue in the East Kimberley. Despite many challenges, there has been some real progress in certain areas here. For example, I note the improved position that the community of Balgo is in compared to just a year ago. Clearly, Balgo has benefited from some major investment in local resources during this time. The combined efforts of the Police, the WA Department of Community Development and the community organisation, in particular – focused around the key strategic themes of safety, security and stability – is starting to create a positive environment for change in a community that has had an uphill battle for many years.

With Indigenous birth rates in the East Kimberley almost double the national average, and with teenage birth rates more than three times the national average, it's like a veritable 'freight train' approaching if we don't start to make such investments in building Indigenous capacity. As the ANU's Dr John Taylor points out in his 2003 report into Development Planning in the Northern East Kimberley, it's not a case of whether we fiscally respond to Indigenous issues in this region – it's whether we choose to enhance the economic status of Aboriginal people, through increased investment in education and real job creation, or whether we simply accept a growing number of people who are disengaged and welfare dependent, which increases the burden on our social security, health and justice systems.

The bottom line for our people, organisations and the Government is that we cannot continue with the strategies we have used over the last twenty years. These strategies have not produced the outcomes our people deserve and so we must



Some of the Wunan Board (L-R): Ian, David, Tom, Vicki, Pat and Trevor.



Robbie Day.

## Wunan Foundation – making a real and lasting difference

*“Completing my apprenticeship has been my best achievement so far! I feel I’ve got a very good future ahead of me and I thank all of those who have helped me get a job and do this training. I hope this apprenticeship might show the way a bit for other Aboriginal young people in the area.”*

**Shannon Ward**, qualified automotive engineer

*“In coming to work in Kununurra a couple of years ago, I was keen to make some good changes in my life and start knuckling down. Getting a decent place to stay was another thing. It was such a relief to find Wunan House. This place has really helped me focus on my work. It’s got a good atmosphere too. I am planning to complete my apprenticeship in 2006, which in many ways will be thanks to Wunan House.”*

**Robbie Day**, apprentice boilermaker

*“As the CEO of a remote Aboriginal corporation, I would find it difficult to survive the demands of the position without the support of Wunan. The role of CEO is challenging as we strive to make a real difference to the lives of Indigenous Australians. Wunan staff know the issues, know the challenges and, most importantly, know what will build the social and economic capacity of a community to bring about lasting change.”*

**Leonie Cameron**, Chief Executive Officer –  
Kalumburu Aboriginal Corporation

*“The Wunan Foundation provides crucial leadership at the local level. In my previous role as Director General for the WA Department of Indigenous Affairs, I observed Wunan demonstrating regional leadership across many fronts. They are prepared to tackle hard issues and I find them really driven to succeed. They have some excellent runs on the board and the work they’re doing in employment and economic development is absolutely what needs to happen. They are really showing the way forward.”*

**Chris Cottier**, Manager – Aboriginal Affairs,  
BHP Billiton Iron Ore

be prepared to innovate and support each other.

I believe too that growing the economic capacity of Aboriginal people will help to restore our culture and traditional values that have been diluted as a result of poverty, substance abuse, family breakdown and violence associated with systemic welfare.

Like at Balgo, some positive changes are starting to occur at Kalumburu where Wunan Foundation has been working with the local community organisation and alongside Government to add value to existing programs.

Continued investment over a long period is needed in these places to achieve a level of stability that allows for sustainable progress and for these communities to reach a position where they can develop their own resources to deal with issues such as internal capacity building, nurturing strong leadership and effecting proactive relationships with external stakeholders.

Within the East Kimberley and from partner organisations outside the region, I sense a growing willingness to innovate and deliver real change. Together with our existing partners and with new ones too, we are keen to build on what we have achieved so far and harness this collective spirit to build stronger futures for Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley.

**Ian Trust** Executive Director

# 2004/05 Overview

Major achievements and outcomes by Wunan Foundation during 2004/05 included:

- Commenced Wunan Business Services (WBS) – providing tailored business support services to other Indigenous organisations in the East Kimberley. Through WBS we have since helped Kalumburu successfully re-finance their community store to restore regular supply of fresh fruit and vegetables for the 550 people living there.
- Contracted with the WA Government to assist with community capacity building at Warmun and Kalumburu as part of the State's Place Management initiative.
- Contracted with DEWR to establish an Indigenous Employment Centre for the East Kimberley.
- With support from DEWR's Indigenous Small Business Fund, commenced a study into Indigenous enterprise opportunities in the housing industry, which has since led to the development of the 'Something Concrete' project in partnership with Beacon Foundation and the WA Department of Housing and Works.
- Together with KGT and with seed funding from Telstra Foundation, initiated the 'Skilling for Employment in the East Kimberley' workshop, which has since led to the development of our Job Pathways Initiative.
- Received National CDEP Business Award and was finalist in the Employment and Training and Community and Cultural Benefit categories of the National CDEP/IEC Awards.
- Appointed to the national consultant panels for the Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations and the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination.
- Commenced partnership involvement with Parsons Brinckerhoff in the Remote Area Essential Services Program.
- Hosted 2005 Australian of the Year, Dr. Fiona Wood AM, for her official visit of the Kimberley.
- Introduced quarterly thought leadership paper and newsletter, *Pathways*.
- Continued management cadetship and Wunan House scholarships.

Wunan Foundation also provides strategic and financial support to Kimberley Group Training, Kimberley Wilderness Adventures and Wunan House, which in turn contributed to the achievement of the following outcomes:

## Kimberley Group Training

- As at 30 June 2005, KGT employed 226 apprentices and trainees, including 180 Indigenous people.
- Industry partner, Argyle Diamonds, won the 2005 Minister's Award for Excellence for Employers of New Apprentices – Northern WA Region and Group Training Australia's 2005 Host Employer of the Year.
- Continued to provide pre-employment occupational health and safety training and subsidised driver training.
- Introduced new industry-focused numeracy and literacy training.

## Kimberley Wilderness Adventures

- New \$1.2 million Bungle Bungle Wilderness Camp in Purnululu National Park officially opened by then WA Minister for the Environment, the Hon Dr Judy Edwards MLA and featured on Channel Seven's *Sunrise* and *The Great Outdoors*.
- Finalised new sub-lease arrangements with Traditional Owner communities for Wilderness Camps at Inimtji and Marunbabidi.

## Wunan House

- Supported on average 10-12 Indigenous people at the hostel in helping them achieve their personal and career goals.
- Nominated as a Finalist in the 5th Australian Sustainability Awards presented by Ethical Investor magazine for Accommodation Scholarships for Indigenous Students as Best Practice Not-for-Profit.
- Provided emergency accommodation to elderly residents from Kalumburu who were forced to evacuate during Cyclone Ingrid.

**Independently audited financial statements and Director's details for Wunan Foundation Inc are available on request to potential funding bodies.**



2005 Australian of the Year, Dr Fiona Wood AM (right) together with Wunan Board member, Vicki Butters, at the Kimberley Language Resource Centre in Halls Creek.



A group from Kalumburu staying at Wunan House in Kununurra to attend training at the Kimberley TAFE.



Newly qualified auto engineer, Shannon Ward.



Purnululu Aboriginal Corporation Chairperson, Shirley Drill, performs the official welcome for the opening of KWA's new Bungle Bungle Wilderness Camp.



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Wunan Foundation is a not-for-profit and non-Government Indigenous organisation with focus across the East Kimberley in Western Australia.

The Foundation enjoys a number of important strategic partnerships and particularly wishes to acknowledge the following organisations:

