



Brendan Yantarrnga at Ebirrimirrimanja



Yantarrnga country art



Jazel marking up the no-go area at Nangbalumenja

# YINUMA

The archaeological story of a Groote Eylandt songline.

The project is a collaboration between Yantarrnga and Maminyamanja clans, the Land Council and ANU archaeologists. Yinuma refers to the story of the Sawfish and Stingray, a well known songline in the western Gulf of Carpentaria, connecting communities from the mainland to eastern Groote. Yinuma is just one of many names for the river created by the Sawfish and the Stingray as they travelled across Groote Eylandt to Salt Lake.

## Some of the questions we want to answer

- How does the songline connect people today? What role does it play in people's lives?
- Did the old people think about the songline *arakburakbakiyawiya*? Did they walk across Groote Eylandt following the songline paths?
- What happened to the Freshwater Yantarrnga? When did they live in the stone country, and did they also know this songline?
- How do we pass this important knowledge on to the next generation?



1. Mapping and recording the known places, names and stories associated with the songline.



2. Finding and visiting the old places in the stone country that aren't known about and seeing if and how they might connect to the songline.



3. Using archaeological methods to find, record and determine the age of places, see what people did there, compare the art, and map the landscape.



4. Resourcing on-country visits and making time for intergenerational knowledge sharing.



## ... and what's next?

- **Excavation of occupation shelters** along the track of the songline - to find out the 'what and when' of occupation.
- **Environmental reconstruction** and elevation modelling of the central stone country valley to look at landscape change.
- **More surveys** for places within the central valley, recording and seeing if there was a clear way people walked.
- **Community analysis** of all these findings, so we can collectively tell the stories about *arakburakbakiyawiya*.

## What we've found so far...

We established the project in 2024 by sharing stories and developing the research questions. In 2025 we have spent 2.5 months recording knowledge and finding unknown archaeological places in the centre of Groote Eylandt's stone country.

- **Located 130+ new places** where people lived and painted art, with community visits to several.
- **Identified connections** to the songline in the rock art and stone arrangements.
- **Testing program** to identify rock shelters with possible archaeological deposits.



Anindilyakwa Land Council



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