

GUNDJEIHMI

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



Media Statement – 3 June 2013

Mirarr mark loss of a great Australian leader and educator

The Mirarr traditional Aboriginal owners of the Kakadu region have extended their deepest sympathies and respects to the family of great Australian leader and educator Mr Yunupingu, who has passed away at his home in the Northern Territory.

Mr Yunupingu was a strong supporter of the Mirarr in their resistance to mining development on their country from the late 1990s. He marched alongside Senior Traditional Owner of the Mirarr clan, Ms Yvonne Margarula, and other Mirarr in defence of the Mirarr Peoples' right to protect their country.

Yvonne Margarula, who led an ultimately successful international campaign to prevent the development of the proposed Jabiluka uranium mine in the late 1990s, expressed sadness at Mr Yunupingu's passing.

"He was a strong voice for his people and supported our fight for country. He was also an important leader for Indigenous education. We send our deepest sympathies to his family and community," Ms Margarula said.

Acting Chief Executive Officer of the GAC, Mr David Vadiveloo, described Mr Yunupingu as a great Australian whose contribution to national and international awareness of Indigenous issues in Australia could not be underestimated. "He was a true educator of people, sharing his knowledge and wisdom as a teacher, school principal and international music icon", Mr Vadiveloo said. "His passing represents a great loss to our nation and should give all Australians cause to reflect on the power of his voice and the messages he promoted through his music."

Further information: Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation on 08 8979 2200