Timber Creek
Bush Medicine Festival.

Community Report.

A joint project between the Ngaliwurru-Wuli Association
and Flinders University.

By Rita Kucera, Stephanie Bertagnole
and Claire Keating.
We would like to thank all the members of the Ngaliwurru Wuli Association (Timber Creek) who supported this project.

Community language groups who participated on this project: Nungarlinya, Ngaliwurru, and Naringman.

Community member participants:
- Judy Marchand,
- Roy Harrington,
- Rosie Sadler,
- Margaret McDonald,
- Eileen Medel,
- Duncan Bero,
- Jack Little,
- Betty Laurie,
- Laurie Jones,
- Eileen Raymond,
- Dolly,
- Tommy,
- Pauline.

We would also like to thank Catholic Care Northern Territory, Lorraine and Mark Popple and Neil Smitheis. Special thanks also to the Foggarty family.
About this report:

This community report will explain the Bush Medicine Project carried out on the country of the Ngaliwurru-Wuli Association which represents 16 communities in the Timber Creek Region. This project took place between July 8 to July 11 of 2010.

(Photo: Pauline, Judy Marchand, Alison, Eileen, Margaret McDonald, Betty and Roy Harrington)

This work was carried out together with members of the Ngaliwurru-Wuli community, and students and staff from the Flinders University. The goal of this work was to help in the collection, recording, education and sharing of Indigenous knowledge of bush medicine.
How it all started:

Rosie Saddler had fond memories of a past bush medicine festival back in the 1970s. This festival built up community spirit and strengthened community ties. As this festival was so long ago Rosie wanted to see this happen again, and wanted the same benefits to return to the community.

(RoPhoto: Rosie Saddler and family)

Rosie achieved this with the help of Lorraine and Mike Popple. Lorraine and Mike asked Dr. Claire Smith of Flinders University to help.
What we wanted to achieve:

The community thinks that it is important to keep the knowledge of bush medicine for the whole community and to teach their children, and grandchildren. Students and community members worked closely together to collect and record information about bush medicine. To do this they visited different areas in the region and found plants that can be made into medicine.
How we found the information:

Students and community members met on Thursday 10 July 2010, at Ngaliwurru-Wuli Association and split up into four groups.

Each group visited different areas where they looked for plants that can be used to make medicine.

When a plant was found it was recorded by taking three photos. One of the leaves, one of the bark and one of the whole tree.

Community members talked about these plants. This information included what the plants are called in different local languages, what they are used for and how they are used to make medicine.

This information was recorded by video by the students.

The location of each plant was described and recorded.

(Photo: Margaret McDonald and Lorraine Popple)
The pictures that were taken of the bush medicine plants were printed out and made into posters. These posters were put on display at the Bush Medicine Festival for all to look at and learn from.

The video recording was made into a movie which was played at the Bush Medicine Festival.

Some plants were also collected so that they could be shown to people at the Festival. Judy Marchant talked to visitors at the Festival about the plants and explained what they were and how they are used.

(Photo: Eileen Medel, Judy Marchand and Viki Gordon)
The Bush Medicine Festival:

On the morning of Saturday 10th July the Ngaliwurru-Wuli Association and students and staff from Flinders University set up the Bush Medicine Festival at the Timber Creek Race Track.

People arrived by car, bus and caravan from all over the region. Visitors from around the country and the world also dropped by to see the Festival.

The men got the pits ready to cook the food. The women prepared food for the cooking pits. The types of food cooked included bush turkey, turtle, beef, kangaroo, and yams (bush potatoes).

There were many different activities and games, including a spear-throwing competition, a drawing competition, a bush-tucker competition, and a dancing competition.

A running race was also held for the children, and a jumping castle was also set up.

Clothes, jewellery and craft were also for sale.

Artwork by Marjorie White was hung up for sale. Marjorie also showed visitors how she made her paintings.

(Photo: Marjorie White)
Feed back:

The children thought the festival was good fun, with lots of things to do and lots of good food to eat; and they didn’t even mind learning a few things about bush medicine.

Generally, people really liked the festival because it brought different parts of the community together and taught the young ones about bush medicine and bush tucker.

(Photo: Judy Marchand)
The Bush Medicine Festival was a good chance to bring community groups together. It also helped the younger people learn about their culture and how important it is to keep the knowledge alive for their future children.

The knowledge gathered from this work is now kept by the community.

Everybody from the Ngaliwurru-Wuli communities will be able to look at and use this knowledge to teach and learn about medicine plants, and how they can heal the sick.
Special Thanks:

A big thank you to the Ngaliwurru-Wuli communities for all their interest and support for the Bush Medicine Festival.

Also to Lorraine and Mike Popple for their support, advice and help throughout the project.

We are particularly grateful to all the staff and students from Flinders University for all their hard work and long hours.