

# Research agreement

***Yandaarra: go together as a group, shift camp.***

We call our group Yandaarra, a group going together, shifting camp together. This is also the name for our research and our work together. It is what we are doing - moving - and how we are doing it - together. It is our research journey and our research process. We're walking together, remembering, coming into a consciousness that is the Dreaming.

We see Yandaarra, our research, as a re-creation story. It's about remembering what was (what is) as part of this re-creating. This work is about honouring Elders and custodians past, present and future. Our guidance from them is so important; it's timeless, relevant for ever. Stories don't belong to one time but for all time. This story that we're doing now, the research, is relevant for then and now and for the future.

Yandaarra, our research, is directed and led by Aunty Shaa Smith under the guidance of the old Fellas and Gumbaynggirr Country and with Neeyan Smith, her daughter, in the place of continuing to pass down knowledge from generation to generation. Yandaarra includes Sarah Wright and Paul Hodge from the University of Newcastle, and the Jaliigirr Biodiversity Alliance as partners. Our first project is an ARC Linkage called, *Caring for Country: Geographies of Co-existence in Urban and Rural Areas*. This research is being used to support Aunty Shaa's vision of bringing ceremony back to Country and caring for Gumbaynggirr people and Country in this way.

The core of Yandaarra, the research, is to understand together how to live on and in relationship with the mother earth and each other. In order to form this relationship one has to know one's place. From here one moves into ceremony as a way of learning. Gumbaynggirr wisdom is that of oneness and walking together. We are at a stage where radical change is necessary, and Gumbaynggirr wisdom is to be used as a key to enter the gateway of creating this new pathway of how to live on and with the earth and each other.

Together we would like to document Yandaarra and to detail this evolving re-creation story, this learning journey, as it happens. We aim to do this as equal co-authors and in the form of journal articles, conference presentations and community events. Yandaarra will also produce practical outputs for practitioners and others that support Aunty Shaa's vision.

We have had many conversations and some pilot workshops that have helped us to build relationship and to begin Yandaarra, to give us a sense of what the journey is and how to step into Yandaarra. We acknowledge the contributions to these conversations from Uncle Bud Marshall, Bernard Kelly-Edwards, Martin Quinlan, Lily Nicholson, Jonathan Cassell, Larry Hancock, Les Boule, Matthew Webb, Fee Mozeley, Kaz, and future Elders, Stephen, Aila and Heather. These were supported by a pilot project grant from the University of Newcastle.

***What is important to Yandaarra (our research values)***

**Safe space:** Yandaarra should always be a safe space to share. We should treat each other with respect and be supportive of each other. We recognise we need to support people in the journey and realise that everyone will be in their own personal place on that journey. We also believe that for Yandaarra to happen there needs to be trust and sharing and that part of this is allowing ourselves to 'let go' and be part of the journey.

As we learn how to trust together in this safe space we need to be aware that everyone has their own way of learning and listening. It's about sharing in this context; holding the sacredness of each other; sitting in the circle that is Yandaarra.

Yandaarra also happens on Country so a big part of nurturing a safe space as we're connecting with Country is to listen for the lessons from Country. We will make mistakes but that's a way of learning; Country knows we're doing something and it's Country that will be there for us to learn from that.

**Intellectual property:** Yandaarra is underpinned by a recognition of Indigenous peoples' rights to maintain, control, protect and develop their tangible and intangible heritage. The intellectual property of Gumbaynggirr people will always remain the property of Gumbaynggirr people and Gumbaynggirr Country. The intellectual property that any participant or organisation brings to the project e.g. songs, stories, poems, dances and information, will remain their property.

**Acknowledgement:** We will acknowledge sources of information and sharing. If an Elder shares a story or some information, for example, that they are happy for us to include, we would make sure we acknowledge who shared the story. If they, or anyone, would prefer, they can be anonymous.

We acknowledge that the learning that comes from the Old Fellas and Country is associated with protocols about what can be shared, and how it should be shared. We will work to respect and honour these protocols and to let all co-researchers and participants know what these are.

**Consent:** No one has to take part in Yandaarra, or in the documentation of the process, if they don't want to. No one needs to share anything they don't want to. At any stage people can let us know if something they say isn't to be included or they can stop being involved.

We will seek verbal consent from participants and co-researchers as we ask them whether they would like to be involved. This will be done after we have explained the research process and will be accompanied by a more detailed Yandaarra Information sheet. We will then record their consent. We feel that verbal consent is better than written as it is more respectful of oral cultures and will not make people anxious that they are signing away their rights over their knowledge.

Some aspects of ceremony will not (and cannot) be documented and shared (either during or in the form of reflection). When appropriate, we can also archive things with protocols attached, for example, only making some things available for women, or for Gumbaynggirr people. We also acknowledge that some aspects of the ceremony of Country, including of animals and other beings, cannot be verbalised. We will try to do justice to the wide forms of expression of Law/lore in respectful ways.

The modes of documenting Yandaarra may include participants and co-researchers reflecting on, for example, particular moments, events, workshops and ceremony. This may be done through self-journaling, note taking or video and audio recording where appropriate and with consent.

**Guidance:** Ultimately we are accountable to the Old Fellas and Gumbaynggirr Country. Guided by Aunty Shaa, a network of Elders and an advisory group will also help guide the

project. As we go through Yandaarra, we will keep growing this group that will evolve as we continue our journey. Our responsibility to the Old Fellas and Gumbaynggirr Country will be something to always attend to.

**Mediation:** Because Yandaarra will involve many people over a long period of time we understand that in the learning difficult things will come up. We need to help and support people (and ourselves) through this by setting up a way for people to 'journal' and process what is happening, giving support to this deeper intelligence and knowing that's happening, and that people will need to be supported. We will also nominate an independent person or organisation for people to talk to if they have problems with the process or with the research. This person will be there to try and help us keep moving together and to mediate if things are difficult, uncomfortable or if someone's needs are not met.

Aunty Shaa Smith, Gumbaynggirr Elder and Cultural Facilitator

Neeyan Smith, Gumbaynggirr co-Facilitator in support of Aunty Shaa Smith continuing the passing down of knowledge from generation to generation

Sarah Wright, Paul Hodge from the Discipline of Geography and Environmental Science, the University of Newcastle

Julie Woodroffe, Jaliigirr Biodiversity Alliance

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