

Back from Pipalyatjara

Thursday, 01 May 2008

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I am back this week from a two-week stint in Pipalyatjara Community, South Australia, which is approximately 700 km south west of Alice Springs, a few kilometres from the tri-state borders of the NT, SA and WA. Documentary film maker and mentor David Wardell and myself were invited to Pipalyatjara by NPY Women's Council to run film-making workshops for young people over the school holidays.

The program was very popular with a shed full of people on the first night when we showed films made by young people in other communities over the past year. This is how we introduce what we do, and many people recognize the films from ICTV, which is great inspiration for young people to start thinking about what they would like to make. It's always a juggle working through school holidays with so many different age groups and aspirations so we juggled our days between young women, young men and kids to produce films whose content ranged from stories, such as one about the day the local camel chased the kids and kungkas (young women) going for nguru (sap), to documenting activities like climbing the hill to the former mine, football training with SAFL and going for maku as well as the production of video clips for young musicians.

Local youth worker Cameron Cooper took us up the mountain with over 20 kids in tow to make a video called 'Puli Katu'.

Samantha Cooper and Ria McKenzie were keen apprentices on camera.

We were impressed by the diligence of a number of young people in following through the process of conceptualizing, story-boarding and even scripting (in Pitjantjatjara) their films before shooting in a desire to create material they were proud of. On the last night we had another movie night which the initial lack of power only served to attract more crowds to. What a beautiful way to end our trip with a full moon and a full shed of happy kids and families.

The Sunshine Band set up outdoors to make a film clip for 'Wati Kutjungku Ngurini' which attracted a crowd who soon became part of the clip which featured dancing on the road into Pipalyatjara.

And the big news is we have obtained funding from Playing Australia to tour the stage show to Darwin, Alice and Ernabella later this year. We still need to raise the rest of the money - creating a stage with the same production values as an inner city theatre in the remote desert is not a cheap (or easy) undertaking! But nevertheless Mariaa is back on board starting to lock in dates and the team and to think about the logistics for cast and crew! The dates for the Ernabella season coincide with the 60th Anniversary of the Ernabella Arts Centre so we can support the Ernabella community to stage this exciting event.
<http://www.ernabellaarts.com.au/mainpages/60anni.html>

In other news Ngapartji Ngapartji has been selected as a finalist in the McArthur River Mine Indigenous Innovation Award Category of the 2008 NT Research and Innovation Awards. We also presented at the Australian Innovation Festival NT Launch at the Desert Knowledge precinct here in Alice this week and last week Alex attended the NT Council of Social Service's Territory Fair & 'How do we get there?' Conference in Darwin.

Trevor, Jangala and Gail profiled on Living Black on SBS which showed footage of the Ngapartji Ngapartji show and Makinti Minutjukur, who performed with us at the Sydney Festival this year was also interviewed on Living Black at the Prime Minister's 2020 Summit.

Back in Alice Belinda's been making a digital story with Jane about her involvement in Ngapartji Ngapartji. After hours of work choosing and arranging stills, adding titles, transitions, headings and music, she's produced a lovely piece which she will show as part of our Ngapartji Ngapartji presentation at NPYs Kungka Careers Conference next week. Thanks to Dave for helping with the final production touches as well as finalizing the DVD from Pipalyatjara before returning to Melbourne.

Dani