

Becoming Curators

By Louise Hamby, Research School of Humanities, ANU



The upcoming exhibition Gapuwiyak Miyalkurrwurr Gong Djambitjmala: Women With Clever Hands was the impetus for Lucy Wanapuyungu, her daughter Anna Malibirr and grandson Ryan Munungurr to fly south in April to be part of two events, one at the Australian National University and the other at Wagga Wagga Art Gallery.

Women With Clever Hands is the first exhibition of fibre work to be shown from women from Gapuwiyak and is being curated by Louise Hamby from the Australian National University, assisted by Lucy Wanapuyungu. Supported by VISIONS development funding this show will open in September 2010 at the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery. It is unusual in that the national tour will include a small portion of the exhibition that will travel by Troop Carrier to selected Arnhem Land Art Centres. One of these will be the new Gapuwiyak Culture and Arts Centre.

With assistance from ANKAAA Lucy and Anna were first able to participate in a two-day workshop at the Research School of Humanities for graduate students in the course Indigenous

Collections and Exhibitions. They were part of a group of Indigenous curators that included Lorraine Coutts from Museum Victoria, Joe Gumbula from Galiwin'ku and Julie Gough from Tasmania, who are currently curating exhibitions that are in various stages of development. The workshop provided opportunities not only for the students to learn about issues the curators thought were important but also for the curators to gain insights from each other.

As part of the intensive Lucy and Anna worked with a group of students with pieces from Gapuwiyak to explain their selection criteria compared to the group without their input. Lucy explained to the students her concept of old styles and ways and new styles.

The second portion of the stay involved a trip to Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, partners in the development of the exhibition. Part of the

experience was to meet gallery staff and gain an understanding of their roles in the development of the exhibition.

The staff included Director Cath Bowdler, Linda Elliot, the Public Programs Curator, Curator Stephen Payne and Melanie Evans, the Indigenous Trainee for the exhibition Yarra.

The highlight of the stay was a community meeting with local Wiradjuri artists and elders organised by the Indigenous Liaison Officer, Kelly Murray, from the Wagga Wagga Council and the Gallery. This was held on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River. Lucy and Anna demonstrated techniques and showed work and materials from Gapuwiyak.

The result of this meeting is that Wiradjuri women would like to come to Gapuwiyak and learn from Lucy and others. It is hoped that *Women with Clever Hands* will help bring together this two groups with a common interest in fibre and maintaining cultural values.

Above: Wagga Wagga Art Gallery Director Cath Bowdler, Lucy Wanapuyungu and Anna Malibirr.

Below: Community meeting with Wiradjuri artists and elders, Murrumbidgee River, Wagga Wagga

