

**14 JULY– 14 AUGUST 2017 Dharratharramirri/ Rrarrandharr**

**WALKING THE YOLNGU ROAD II**

**2017**

# **Learning the Secrets of Mata Mata and surrounds: Food, Art, Culture, Dance, Dogs, Is- lands**

**WITH BATUMBIL BURARRWANGA AND FAMILY MEMBERS**

**APPLICATIONS/EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST CLOSE 2 JULY 2017**

Dear friends,

The time has come for us to gather at the sacred waŋa (homelands) again. Last year was such a great pleasure to “walk the yolngu road” with my sons, grandson, sisters and friends from all over Australia. My “team” of visitors allowed us to retrace the footsteps of my father and our journey so many years ago across the lands we sing and dance and guard. It meant a great deal to the entire community.

This year we will stay closer to the Mata Mata and Gikal area and focus on the day to day djäma (work) of life: weaving, gathering materials, dyes, bush food and on dhäwu (stories) of times past, gurtha (fire) and many other things. I particularly hope that women who are interested in weaving and art will come to work with me, learn and share. There is also an opportunity for the more adventurous to go with my son Terence to walk Inglis Island but this year I need to stay closer to home.

This year has been trying for our family because of health issues and the passing of our great elders and leaders. So apologies for the relatively short notice, our time has to be quite short on the calendar due to oncoming commitments for ceremony and funerals.

As ever my heart is open and I want to welcome you. Please come and support us once again and let us also support you. Thank you for your interest and your concern for our precious homelands.

Batumbil

20 June 2017



## Dharratharramirri / Rrarrandharr

**May-June-July** is known as Dharratharramirri,. During this season the predominant winds are from the South East and come in strong gusts which flatten the tall grasses which grew tall with the previous rains. This season is referred to as the ‘knock-em-down’. With the lack of rain, the vegetation dries out and small fires are lit by the Yolngu to flush out the animals to be hunted and speared for food, plus to help regenerate the plants for regrowth. NT People also call this period as “Granny Season” when relatives from ‘down south’ escape the southern winter cold to drop in for an extended visit

**August-September-October** is known as Rrarrandharr. This is the true ‘dry’ season.

Days are warm and sunny, nights are cool and clear. No rain. Winds are from the ESE, SE & SSE. Larger bushfires are started by the Yolngu, again for hunting purposes but also to clear and clean the buildup of undergrowth associated with the previous wet season. Most fish species are fat and hungry and the barramundi move from the freshwater areas into the saltwater – the best time to throw in a line. The Mango trees are fruiting. When the mangoes are nearly finished, the weather changes and the thunder begins – the next season of Dhuludur’ is about to begin and the cycle starts over again.



Our host Mata Mata and Gumatj elder Batumbil Burarrwanga

## Activities

- \* Batumbil Burarrwanga and her family welcome visitors every year. She teaches about Aboriginal culture, heritage, arts and spirituality on her waja.
- \* This year there will be a combination of activities: A strong focus on weaving, as well as Bush Food, Plants, Dyes, learning about culture and walking the land.
- \* Dogs are a central part of Mata Mata life. Visitors will hear stories of the primordial dogs of the area and their role in ceremonial life. There is currently great interest in the archaeology of Australian native dogs. Perhaps this year we will journey one step closer to linking science, archaeology, palentology and Yolngu knowledge.
- \* The annual Garma Festival with a focus on national healing will be held from 4-7 August. Visitors are welcome to come to Mata Mata before or after Garma.
- \* In the second week of August there will be a walk around the uninhabited Inglis Island led by the renowned hunter and song man Terence Gurruwiwi.





**Schedule: 14 July - 14 August**

**From Friday 14th July Early Arrivals at Gove & Mata Mata**

**Pickups from Gove Airport 16th July - 3rd August**

**Friday 4-7 August Garma**

**Pickups Gove Airport 8th August**

**9 - 14th August Inglis Island walk**





# Essential Knowledge

## Food

Visitors will be offered food throughout their visit. This will generally be beautiful fresh product from the land. **However it is the responsibility of each visitor to bring enough supplies of their own food and compact camp fire cooking utensils for the duration of their visit. Dried foods, dehydrated camping foods that can be prepared quickly and easily on an open fire are suggested. Clean fresh water is abundant around Mata Mata except when bush walking.**

## Clothing & Footwear

Recommended light weight hiking clothing full body cover, reef shoes, old sand shoes, easy carry water container.

## Camping Equipment

There is limited sheltered accomodation. Please bring a two man tent, torch/head lamp, protective sheet, sleeping mat

## VIP

Tropical Strength Insect Repellent ([www.mosiguard.com.au](http://www.mosiguard.com.au)) recommended) , also mix a bottle of Dettol and baby oil for midge and insect bites.

## Facilities

There are showers, lights, rudimentary pit toilets, washing machine and fresh water, power at Mata Mata. Firepits. Firewood is abundant.

## Dangers

Buffalo, crocodiles, snakes, spiders, marine stingers including cone shells and stone fish. Please do not walk into the bush on your own or leave the camp site or community without talking to Batumbil or Peter. There has been a record wet season so there will be a number of snakes most probably this year. Keep ten to twenty yards away from any snakes. Dogs in the community play an important early warning protective system against snakes. Be attentive.







## What the annual visit is all about!

The purpose of the annual activities at Mata Mata is to empower the local traditional owners to support themselves and their homelands. We aim to raise a minimum of \$30,000 clear profit for the community each year. There are so many projects and issues to address from schools, kids education, transport, maintenance of infrastructure, health, roads and runway maintenance, solar power, water that this money seems hopelessly inadequate. But each year we also build greater awareness at a grass roots level. Each year we hopefully grow stronger and more capable and work more cooperatively with other agencies charged with looking after Aboriginal homelands. There is an extensive literature and articles on Mata Mata for all who want to learn more.

Money finances are always needed. Each visitor is expected to donate to our monetary goal and we expect a donation from each visitor to the community of between \$1-5000. Those wishing to take part in the walk around Inglis Island need to make a contribution of at least \$3500-5000. Donations will be required to be deposited into the Australian Prospect bank account by July 14 2017. A small amount will cover the costs of organisers and the ISX's ([www.isx.org.au](http://www.isx.org.au)) role in organising the activities. Our goal is to ensure that upwards of 80 per cent of any funds stay within and are controlled and managed by Batumbil and the community. All accounts will be transparent and shown to all participants at the end of the visit and on request.

Gikal/Mata Mata and the areas we are visiting are spiritual places of Yolgnu education, culture and knowledge. Rarely is this experience shared with outsiders. Because of long standing friendships and a willingness to contribute to world thinking about the sustainability of land and sea Batumbil is opening up her land and culture to visitors by invitation only.

Visitors are privileged and much valued guests. Cultural tourism can provide income and support for the Mata Mata and Gikal communities. Travel permits are necessary to travel in North East Arnhem land and these may be obtained after an invitation is issued by the family to join us. We will facilitate this process.

This year we will also be trying to do some maintenance activities. We need painters, carpenters and mechanics. If you have skills in any of these areas we will off set monetary contributions in return for work activities in the community.

Peter Botsman

20 June 2017





## Travel & Logistics

As a condition of acceptance visitors are required to take out their own insurance and health cover for the entirety of the visit and are expected to take personal responsibility for all safety and personal requirements of their trip and visit. Visitors take part at their own risk. The organisers and community will at all times work to ensure the personal safety of all who all take part, but they do not accept any liability for accidents or ill health or any misadventure or misfortune of visitors for the duration of the visit.

Visitors need to be able to get to Gove Airport between 14th July and the 3rd August and no later than the 8th August for the walk around Inglis Island. It is possible to get return flights from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth for between \$800 and \$1500. HOWEVER IT IS IMPORTANT TO BOOK FARES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AS IT IS A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF THE COSTS OF THE TRIP. FARES PARTICULARLY AROUND GARMA ARE VERY PROHIBITIVE.

The roads in the region have been particularly bad after the last record wet season and the Mata Mata road is particularly troublesome this year. So we take a good deal of time traversing it. We recommend the Peninsula Motel in Nhulunbuy as a good quiet place to stay either the night before or after coming to Mata Mata. If you are accepted we will pick you up from the airport or Nhulunbuy town.

The car trip is recommended as a way of feeling your way into the country. However for those who are short on time there are excellent safe small plane services into Mata Mata from MAF, Marthakal and a series of other services from Gove Airport. Each way trip is usually around \$400. We generally don't recommend this for inward flights as it is just too big a culture shock to come into a remote area from a city or town. It's best to slowly drive in! **an** get your bearings.



# Expressions of Interest

## Participation by invitation only.

For more information or send your application

Peter Botsman 02-4465-1665/0414-218-469 [peter@peterbotsman.com](mailto:peter@peterbotsman.com)

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## Suggested Written Application Format

Name:

Address & Contact Details:

Emergency Contact:

Why I want to visit Mata Mata:

Contribution I can make to Mata Mata Homelands:

Financial:

Non - Financial:

Bush walking/Wilderness Experience:

I accept full responsibility for all health, accidents and any issues concerning my personal well being concerning my trip to Mata Mata in 2017 and will apply for a permit to visit Aboriginal land through the NLC in Nhulunbuy if accepted. Signature:

Please email your application to [peter@peterbotsman.com](mailto:peter@peterbotsman.com) You can include any other information you think is relevant.





























