



INFORMATION PACK

Volunteering at Warlukurlangu Artists

Yuendumu, Northern Territory, Australia



Introduction

The contribution made by our Volunteers is greatly valued and their work is essential to the running of Warlukurlangu Artists. We rely on the generous donation of time and effort and the many skills that our Volunteers bring. Living and working as a Volunteer in a remote Australian Aboriginal community, whether for a week or for several months, provides a unique opportunity not available to many. We expect our Volunteers to work hard as part of our team and in return we hope that they find the experience interesting and rewarding. If you are interested in visual arts and crafts, Aboriginal culture or simply travelling to a very remote community in the desert you will find much of interest here.

Before considering volunteering at Warlukurlangu Artists please familiarise yourself with our organisation through our website www.warlu.com which explains who we are, where we are, what we do, and why we do it. The text and images on the website will help you understand our business and assist you to make an informed decision about volunteering in what can sometimes be a challenging environment. We also post activities on facebook at *Warlukurlangu Artists Aboriginal Corporation*.

At Warlukurlangu Artists we support local Aboriginal artists to maintain traditional culture and to produce artworks which the organisation then markets and distributes on behalf of the artists. Warlukurlangu Artists is a successful Aboriginal-owned enterprise and run as an efficient business, with hard-working staff and Volunteers following established policies and procedures

The Volunteers Program at Warlukurlangu Artists has been operating since 2002. The Volunteers provide labour and skills essential to the day-to-day operations of the organisation. We usually have between one and ten Volunteers working here at any one time. We have hosted Volunteers from all over the world, as can be seen on our website, and our Volunteers now have their own facebook page at *Warlukurlangu Volunteers*

Please take time to look through this information pack and if you are keen to join us please contact either:

Cecilia Alfonso or Gloria Morales

Managers

Warlukurlangu Artists Aboriginal Corporation

Yuendumu, Northern Territory

info@warlu.com

What to expect

- Yuendumu is very remote and services here are limited so you need to be healthy, resilient and self sufficient to volunteer here.
- Remote Aboriginal communities have social conditions which can be considered third world. You need to be prepared to cope with this experience.
- Yuendumu is home to a large Aboriginal community which maintains its own culture. There are important cultural sensitivities that you need to understand and respect. These include not entering certain areas in and around the community, wearing appropriate clothes and requesting permission to take photographs.
- As a Volunteer you are expected to undertake work activities at Warlukurlangu Artists five days per week, during normal business hours.
- There is always something to do. If you are a willing worker Warlukurlangu Artists will keep you busy.
- Your fellow Volunteers are likely to be people of all ages from all over Australia and often from Europe, USA, South America, New Zealand and elsewhere.
- Accommodation and facilities for Volunteers are shared and basic.
- Yuendumu is in the Central Australia Desert so it is flat, sandy and very hot in summer.



What we do

Warlukurlangu Artists (often called 'the art centre') has been operating in Yuendumu since 1985. Many local Aboriginal people in Yuendumu are artists and crafts people. They come to the art centre to collect art materials, to paint together, to share stories and to socialize. The building is usually a hub of activity during the daytime. As well as the artists, members of their families and often their dogs, there are five staff members and up to ten Volunteers working here. Visitors and tourists come to the art centre to see the artists, the paintings and often to purchase artworks. When the artists complete a painting it is documented, catalogued and listed for sale. Sold or consigned artworks are invoiced and packed for transport.

It sounds simple enough, but when you consider the number of artists and the large number of artworks they produce, and the numbers of artworks distributed around Australia and internationally the activities required to support this daily operation are constant and quite complex. Strict, well-established procedures are necessary order to maintain quality of art production and accuracy in documentation is critical to ensure funds are distributed back to the artists correctly.



What work will you be doing?

Volunteers usually assist with the following tasks:

- Supporting the senior artists during the day by preparing breakfast, morning tea and lunch.
- Preparing art materials for distribution to artists which includes:
 - Mixing paints, filling paint tubs, organising paints and cleaning the paint area at the end of the day.
 - Mounting canvas on stretcher boards, priming canvas, storing prepared canvases or finished paintings.
- Photographing completed paintings, cataloguing, data entry on computers, including cross-referencing and updating information.
- Preparing Certificates of Authenticity, filing these, pricing artworks and keeping the gallery and visitors area clean and tidy.
- Assisting with hosting visitors and tourists to Warlukurlangu Artists.
- General cleaning of the buildings and grounds.
- Assisting with the Healthy Dog Program.
- Assisting with on-going maintenance of the buildings and grounds, making repairs and gardening.

If you have special skills, let us know, we may be able to find tasks that make best use of your talents.



Very important information

- Working in a remote Aboriginal community requires a high level of emotional resilience. People with recent trauma and/or mental health issues should consider their capacity to work effectively in this environment.
- Volunteers should ensure they have health insurance and sufficient money to sustain themselves for their full stay in at Yuendumu. If from overseas Volunteers must have health insurance and sufficient money to sustain themselves for their full stay in Australia. Volunteers are not paid for any work at Warlukurlangu Artists.
- Remote Aboriginal communities have social conditions which can be considered third world so you might be exposed to conditions and illnesses not commonly found in most developed countries.
- Yuendumu is a 'dry' community so alcohol and drugs cannot be brought into the community, purchased or consumed anywhere in the community. This policy is strictly enforced by the local police.
- The art centre and the Donga accommodation are within a secure, fenced and locked compound area. When you venture out into the community you need to act responsibly and be conscious of your own personal security.
- If volunteering at the art centre, you don't need a Permit to enter the community from the Central Land Council.
- Yuendumu has many dogs. The art centre runs a Dog Program to feed, care and monitor the dog population so the dogs are pretty healthy, well fed and friendly, but they can sometimes be intimidating.
- You will need to provide full personal details on arrival, including your residential address, driver's license or passport details, any medical conditions and emergency contacts etc. You must sign a form to indicate your agreement to comply with the Warlukurlangu Artists Safety Policy.
- You will need to pay a cash deposit of \$50 on arrival. The deposit will be returned when you are leaving Yuendumu, after inspection of the accommodation to ensure it is clean and tidy, all the linen and kitchen equipment is present, and the keys are returned.

When to come

Warlukurlangu Artists is usually closed from mid December to early February, during the hottest part of the year. However some staff stay on during this period and there is still volunteer work to be done if you can manage the hot weather, although you will not have daily contact with artists.

The weather is seasonal but as Yuendumu is in the desert winter nights can be cold and summer days and nights extremely hot. Check the conditions, temperatures and forecasts with the Australian Bureau of Meteorology (www.bom.gov.au) before you come.

Accommodation

Volunteers are offered free accommodation at the art centre in exchange for work at the art centre only. We are not a free hotel in the community for people to volunteer at other organisations.

There is a simple transportable, air-conditioned building (called a 'Donga') which is located at the rear of the centre. Volunteers share this 'backpacker' type accommodation, there are no single rooms. In the Donga there is:

- A combined living/kitchen area with lounge, TV and DVD, library of books and magazines, table and chairs, plenty of fridge and freezer space, microwave, electric upright stove with full oven and grill, cupboards and cookware, crockery and cutlery.
- A shared, unisex bathroom/laundry with shower, toilet and washing machine.
- Two bedrooms each with two sets of comfortable bunks, wardrobe and screened windows.
- An attached covered verandah looking out over a neat yard which is a great place for evening relaxation.

The art centre provides much of the maintenance products for cleaning as well as bed linen, towels and kitchen utensils.

Volunteers can be provided with a sandwich at lunch during the week if required. All other meals are your own responsibility.

The water supply is via artesian wells and is heavy with minerals. Some people don't like the taste. Fresh drinking water is available from a rainwater tank near the art centre.

Staying in touch

There is no landline telephone service at the accommodation Donga, however Volunteers may use the landline telephone in the art centre during business hours for infrequent calls if required.

Mobile phone access is available via Telstra's 3G network. You will need a mobile phone and an access plan suitable for 3G. If you are unsure, call Telstra or the local dealer in Alice Springs to check before you arrive. Other phone networks do not operate in Yuendumu.

Access to the art centre's WiFi is available at the accommodation Donga.

What is in Yuendumu

Yuendumu is a community of approximately 800 people, about 300kms northwest of Alice Springs. The local Indigenous people are the Warlpiri people and a number of non-Aboriginal people also live and work there.

Services in Yuendumu include:

- Airstrip for the Flying Doctor service, there are no other air services.
- Health Clinic – open Monday to Friday. Doctors and nurses are available for emergencies.
- Police Station.
- Post Office – open Monday to Friday. The mail service into and from Yuendumu is on Monday and Thursday.
- Shopping – there are three shops in the community.
 - The Big Shop offers an assortment of goods with basic household items, dry goods and fruit and vegetables. It also has a basic take away counter and is open the longest hours.
 - The Outback Store is a smaller shop with a wider range of dry goods and fruit and vegetables.
 - The Mining Shop is a very small shop front with basic range of dry goods and some fruit and vegetables.
- Swimming pool – There is a large community swimming pool. It is managed by the Mt Theo Youth Program and is a popular place for children and adults alike. The pool generally closes to children at 5pm and has lap swimming until 6pm.

Other community facilities include: Childcare centre, School, Centrelink office, Shire office, Mt Theo Youth Program, PAW media, and Churches.

What you should bring

You will need to come prepared to be self-sufficient.

Clothes:

You must dress appropriately for the local culture. In general, certain areas of the body (bottom and thighs) must be modestly covered. When swimming at the pool it is advisable to wear long, loose shorts.

- Clothes appropriate to the season - as Yuendumu is in the desert winter nights can be cold and summer days very hot.
- Plenty of old clothes that you don't mind getting paint on.
- Sturdy footwear.
- Sunscreen, sunglasses and a good shade hat.

Food:

You need to provide all your own food (apart from a single sandwich at lunch time). The local stores stock only basic items and can be expensive in comparison to Alice Springs. Many Volunteers bring food, especially fresh food supplies from Alice Springs.

Medical and personal supplies:

Bring all your medical and personal chemist supplies.

Getting here

Yuendumu is off the Tanami Road that runs between the Stuart Highway, north of Alice Springs, NT and Great Northern Highway, near Hall's Creek, WA. Access is usually via Alice Springs.

Bus

There is a local bus service, the Centre Bush Bus, which comes to Yuendumu on Sundays and Thursdays, and returns to Alice Springs on Monday and Thursdays. The bus usually collects passengers in Alice Springs at 7am and leaves Yuendumu for the return journey around 1pm. The trip takes about five hours each way. The trip costs \$110.00 one way and you will need to book a seat. Phone: 08 8953 0127, www.centrebushbus.com.au

Your own vehicle

The last 80km of the Tanami Road is unsealed and a 4WD vehicle in good mechanical condition is recommended. The Tanami Road is sometimes closed after rain. Check the road conditions on www.roadreport.nt.gov.au OPAL or diesel fuel, is available in Yuendumu, but is very expensive.

Next steps

If you want to offer your services as a Volunteer in whatever capacity you can, please contact us to discuss possible timing. The art centre can be busier at certain times of the year, the accommodation may be fully booked or activities in the community may preclude visitors from being here.

Always check with us first before making arrangements to come to Yuendumu.

Contact by email preferred:
Cecilia Alfonso or Gloria Morales, Managers

Mobile: 0411 220 331

Email: info@warlu.com

Web: www.warlu.com

facebook: Warlukurlngu Artist's Aboriginal Corporation

facebook: Warlukurlangu Artists Volunteers

