

## Chapter 10

# Countrymen standing together

*Victor Rostron, Wesley Campion and Ivan*

*Namarnyilk<sup>1</sup> facilitated by Bill Fogarty*

'*Djelk*' is a Gurrgoni word for 'land' and 'caring for the land'. The Djelk logo embodies the land management approach of the Djelk Rangers and their supporting community. The fish trap represents the group's role in bringing land owners together to make decisions about the land.

The water lily links the earth, water, air and people – it is a plant of both beauty and a source of food.

The two stems represent the dual laws Djelk recognise – Bininj/Yol (Aboriginal) and Balanda (non-Indigenous). The lily bulbs and roots represent the many land-owning clans in the area. The dilly bag holds important messages for the people, alluding to the contemporary land management knowledge Djelk can offer land owners.<sup>2</sup>

This is a story about the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation's Djelk Rangers and some of the things we do. It is a story about how we began, where we are now and how we got here. But most of all, this story is about the future. This chapter is our effort to talk about a future for our country and our people. We want this to be heard by as many people as possible, so we are telling this story to you – to all the Bininj, Yol and Balanda.<sup>3</sup>

Our story as the Djelk Rangers begins in Maningrida. About 3000 people live in Maningrida (and the surrounding outstations), which is in western Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, right on the Liverpool River. The country we look after belongs to over 100 different clans and there are seven major languages spoken in

1 We would like to thank Djelk coordinator Brendan Bainbridge for assistance with this chapter.

2 K May, S Ansell and J Koenig (2010) *Djelk Rangers Annual Report 2009/2010*, Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, Maningrida, <<http://caepn.anu.edu.au/poc/partners/Djelk.php>> viewed 13 March 2012.

3 The terms Bininj (used in the west of the Maningrida region by the Bininj Kunwok cluster) and Yol (used in the east of the Maningrida region by the Burarra/Djinang language groups) are words for 'Aboriginal people'. The term Balanda is used colloquially throughout the region to describe non-Aboriginal people and is derived from the word 'Hollander'.

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