

Yindyamarra Trust



Charles Sturt
University

The cover image on our prospectus is the constellation Orion, which, according to Wiradjuri lore, is the resting place of Baiyaame - God. From the stars, Baiyaame gives us our law and our faith. From God comes Yindyamarra, our gift of grace, love, kindness, and respect from the Wiradjuri people to all people.



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Invitation to join the Yindyamarra Trust

Commit to the spirit of Yindyamarra

In 2023, I decided to walk away from my very public and high-profile role in the Australian media. After 40 years as one of Australia's most awarded and esteemed journalists and a career that took me around the world reporting from more than 70 countries and covering the biggest stories of our times, I believed journalism was failing us. Simply I did not trust journalism anymore.

I found myself at the centre of a vicious public debate over history and racism. As a significant Aboriginal leader, thinker and writer, I became a lightning rod for deep divisions in our society. I had to confront my own complicity in this miserable turn of events. I could not simply blame the failings of others, I needed to look at how I had failed.

I returned to the deep cultural principles of my Wiradjuri heritage founded in a commitment to love and

peace that emerges from a love of our land and God. Since then, I have dedicated myself to breathing new life into public discourse by extending grace to all. I believe we cannot grow fruit out of poisoned earth, we must water the ground with love.

This is the fundamental offering of the Yindyamarra Trust.

The Voice referendum revealed deep fissures in the Australian community. There has been much focus and analysis on the vote and the successful 'No' Campaign but too little awareness of the paucity of public dialogue and debate that inhibited a truly informed electorate.

The issues of race, history, identity and political ideology undercut the civic unity necessary for a healthy democracy and in this way Australia mirrors the democratic recession experienced in other liberal democracies globally.



We at the Yindyamarra Trust believe it is imperative to find innovative and grace-filled initiatives to reinvigorate our democracy. These would grow out of a commitment to the principles of Yindyamarra, a Wiradjuri gift of being – founded on reciprocal and mutual respect, kindness, truth, faith, love, wisdom, and deep listening.

We believe there is no age in greater need of Yindyamarra than ours.

We live in a world in a state of flux. The old ideas are no longer sufficient for addressing the questions of the 21st

century. Our society, organisations, and identities are ever more fractured and divided.

In face of this division, Yindyamarra – a unifying philosophy – is both eternal and essential. Yindyamarra offers us a way home to Country. It shifts our focus away from a dangerous obsession with who we are (and how we are unlike each other) towards an embrace of where we are, and how we share this land with each other.

We are responsible for each other.

With your support, the Yindyamarra Trust will be able to cultivate a space for thought leadership and spiritual reflection in our national life.

Together, we can reach beyond the fray and fracture of politics to surrender to the gentle spirits of our land. We can root ourselves in ancient Wiradjuri traditions.

In the next months, Charles Sturt University is aiming for a funding target of \$30 million to support the work of the Yindyamarra Trust for the next decade.

Work has already begun. We have assembled a strong team of researchers and thinkers in areas of history, democracy, philosophy

and theology. We have established a Yindyamarra podcast initiating stimulating and challenging conversation with big thinkers about the most pressing contemporary issues, but always with a heart of grace and compassion. We hold regular events bringing together writers and scholars to debate the questions of Australia's democracy and place in the world. We have published books and articles. We will be establishing scholarships and study retreats for young scholars to explore the dimensions of Yindyamarra in their chosen fields of endeavour.

Australians are yearning for a better way of relating to each other.

I am dreaming of that better way, too. I would encourage you to please view this video of my address to Changefest 2024, which embodies all of the principles of Yindyamarra.





“What are we bringing? Are we filling space or are we opening space?”

STAN

GRANT

CHANGE
FEST
Mildura,
VIC 24

Join me
in this journey.
In my language,
Mandaang guwu.

Professor Stan Grant



Why a Yindyamarra Trust? Why now?

Since my words marking my break from Q+A, I have thought long and hard about how to positively respond to this moment.

I have asked, how – and if – public discourse can be done better. I have looked for the best way to give effect to my words that “I am not just responsible for what I do, but for what you do.”

My whole life, I have lived according to the principle that on the land of my ancestors we are all responsible for each other. Yindyamarra winhanganha means to live with respect in a world worth living in.

With my decision to step aside from the media, I have said: no.

No. I will not live in a world in which hatred fuelled by politics and media is permissible, let alone encouraged.

No. I will not contribute to, nor be complicit in violence posing as debate.

I have chosen instead to take pause and sit with my ancestors in the world of story. To fully commit myself to living with Yindyamarra as a Wiradjuri way of being.



Photos: Prof Stan Grant at the two-day Warangesda Festival, at Darlington Point, February 2023.

I am seeking your support in establishing a Yindyamarra Trust.

A Yindyamarra Trust would be a national meeting place for thought leadership on issues of justice, faith, equity, and belonging. It would address the challenges of our time from a quiet, sacred space in which all Australian leaders are invited to join me in imagining our nation anew.

A Yindyamarra Trust is my attempt to give practical expression to the difficult and demanding love I have tried to show my country. It calls each of us to surrender to a new vision of Australia, freed from the constraints of identity and the burdens of history.

Will you join me in this journey?



Stan Grant farewell speech on Q+A

Before I go, I wanted to say a few words.

Many of you would know by now that I'm stepping away for a little while.

Sometimes, we need to just take time out. Sometimes, our souls are hurting, and so it is for me.

I've had to learn that endurance is not always strength. Sometimes, strength is knowing when to stop. And to those who have sent messages of support – thank you so much.

But I'll be ok. Please, send that support and care to those of my people, and all people, who feel abandoned and alone, who are wondering whether they have a place in this country and who don't have my privileges.

To those who have abused me and my family, I would just say – if your aim was to hurt me, well, you've succeeded, and I'm sorry.

I'm sorry that I must have given you so much cause to hate me so much, to target me and my family, to make threats against me. I'm sorry.

And that's what Yindyamarra means. It means that I am not just responsible for what I do, but for what you do.

It's not just a word – it is sacred. It is what it means to be Wiradjuri. It is the core of my being. It is respect. It is respect that comes from the earth we are born into, from God – Baiyaame. If I break that, I lose who I am.

I am down right now. I am. But I will get back up. And you can come at me again, and I will meet you with the love of my people.

My people can teach the world to love. As Martin Luther King Jr said of his struggle, "We will wear you down with our capacity to love."



Don't mistake our love for weakness – it is our strength. We have never stopped loving and fighting for justice and truth – the hard truths – to speak in our land.

Yindyamarra winhanganha means to live with respect in a world worth living in. And we in the media must ask – if we are truly honouring a world worth living in.

Too often, we are the poison in the bloodstream of our society. I fear the media does not have the love or the language to speak to the gentle spirits of our land.

I'm not walking away for a while because of racism – we get that far too often. I'm not walking away because of social media hatred.

I need a break from the media. I feel like I'm part of the problem. And I need to ask myself how, or if, we can do it better.

To my people – I have always wanted to represent you with pride. I know I might disappoint you sometimes but, in my own little way, I've just wanted to make us seen, and I'm sorry that I can't do that for a while.

To my family – I love you. And to my mum and dad – Balladhu Wiradjuri Gibir Dyririmadalinya Badhu Wiradjuri. Mandaang guwu. Goodnight.

Vision and principles of Yindyamarra

Yindyamarra is a way of being not captured by events but rooted in ancient, living Wiradjuri traditions.

The establishment of a Yindyamarra Trust gives us the opportunity to align ourselves with this land through five key principles:

- **Storytelling.** Our nation, our people, are not a debate. We are neither a source, nor site of conflict. We are a story. The Yindyamarra Trust will create a space for Australians to reflect on the story we tell about ourselves. To consider how we might re-write it to include all of us on this land to which we all belong.
- **Country.** My father has said to me, “language is not about who you are, but where you are.” Who are you? is the most dangerous question we ask today. The answers we give to this question almost always divide us. Where are we? rather, is a question that calls us to surrender to the land that holds us.
- **Respect.** By inviting Australians to live with Yindyamarra on country, I am calling us to have respect for each other and ourselves.
- **Faith.** Yindyamarra is work of the spirit; work of faith. Yindyamarra is about finding alignment with the spirit of this land – with something bigger than ourselves – through love.
- **Love.** Yindyamarra means that we live in relationship with each other. In the face of hatred, and in place of resentment, we must always choose love for each other. We are not only responsible for what we do, but for what others do too. Each of us has a responsibility to make the world a home in which we all can live. We do that through love.



Our core programs

We are seeking investment to support the establishment of a Yindyamarra Trust located within Charles Sturt University.

The Yindyamarra Trust would build on the existing work being done at Yindyamarra Nguluway – a current meeting-place for critical discussions around issues of justice, equity, faith, and belonging led by Stan Grant.

We are currently initiating and exploring the establishment of the following programs to be situated within a Yindyamarra Trust.

Yindyamarra leadership program

We will offer a series of immersive leadership retreats located in the heart of Wiradjuri country. These retreats will offer Australian leaders the opportunity to reflect with Stan Grant on what it means to live in alignment with the principles of Yindyamarra. Such retreats will be open to all Australians and exist in various forms:

from a focus on youth and emerging leaders, to social and business leaders and more.

Public engagement

Our public discourse is in dire need of contributions to public debates that are at once evidence-based and imaginative. Drawing on a team with leading applied academic expertise and standards in research, thinkers at the Yindyamarra Foundation will embody the principles of Yindyamarra in their public contributions. Through podcasts, social media work, events, videos, and public talks we will bring Yindyamarra to bear on the challenges of our time.

Wiradjuri nation-building program

Yindyamarra is an ancient tradition, rooted in Wiradjuri principles and practices that have existed for thousands of years. Building on the work already being done at Yindyamarra Nguluway, the

Yindyamarra Foundation will continue to support the Wiradjuri Nation with nation-building activities, including by: ensuring that equitable practices exist for knowledge-sharing; by protecting, and developing the Wiradjuri language and culture course; and assisting with community facilitations and discussions around advocacy on the Voice, Treaty and other issues of Wiradjuri and broader First Nations justice.

Yindyamarra democratic futures program

Through the power of Yindyamarra we will drive a national conversation on how we can strengthen democratic practice, celebrate our democratic achievements and be the best democracy that we can be. We will host the Democratic Audit of Australia which will audit the qualities of our democratic practice, investigate and experiment with what works in terms of renewing our representative system of government and facilitate non-partisan conversations on future democracy.

Yindyamarra international comparisons program

Democracy needs to find ways to renew itself. We are therefore working with world-class international partners including the London School of Economics and Political Science

(Democratic Audit of Australia/UK), Harvard University and the University of Southampton (Trustgov.net) and 360info wire agency to develop a world's first virtual agora to share stories of democratic innovation and imaginings of future democracy targeted at those areas of democratic governance which are most vulnerable.

The Yindyamarra Trust will be a home to an inter-disciplinary team of leading applied thinkers and practitioners in democratisation, theology, ethics, public policy, and other areas. They will contribute to Yindyamarra Monthly – which will include contributions and news from our founding director, Stan Grant – alongside high-end research on culture and leadership for the common good. In addition, they will contribute to our Yindyamarra Talks podcast series, blogging platform and public events.

Yindyamarra will be a physical, virtual and intellectual space where people meet, engage and exchange ideas. It will be non-partisan, committed to debate, research and thought leadership, where discussion is encouraged and civil disagreement is welcomed.

With investment we will be able to assemble a world leading team of innovative, practical thinkers living

Yindyamarra values and committed to imagining our nation anew.

We are therefore seeking your support to create Yindyamarra through:

- The creation of two physical centres – the Spiritual Adelong Yindyamarra Leadership Centre and the Wagga Wagga based centre for the Yindyamarra Trust.
- The establishment of a Yindyamarra Chair (1), Yindyamarra Professorships (5), Fellowships (10), PhD studentships (25) and an operational support team to deliver the program activities above.
- Yindyamarra Program funding to support delivery of high impact projects.



Photo: The Pilgrim Poles at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Charles Sturt University, Canberra campus. The Pilgrim Poles show symbols drawn from Aboriginal and Christian spirituality. They portray a journey fuelled by faith, hope, and love.



The Yindyamarra Trust – built for success

As a body led by Professor Stan Grant at this historic moment, the Yindyamarra Trust is set up to succeed. Stan is a globally recognised public intellectual of enormous importance to Australia's national life and public culture. He has a proven track-record in thought leadership, ethics, writing, and journalism. He is our national conscience in public life.

The Yindyamarra Trust will build on the organisational architecture already established and the work being done at Yindyamarra Nguluway within Charles Sturt University. We have a team of experienced academics and subject-matter experts with outcomes in both academic life and practical reform. Our existing advisory group – made up of high-profile and experienced academics, media workers, and organisational leaders – will further assist with the establishment of the Yindyamarra Trust.

The Yindyamarra Trust will further draw on the close ties that Yindyamarra Nguluway and Charles Sturt have established, under Stan's leadership with the Wiradjuri community and other important business, community and governmental stakeholders. We also have unique international partners with world leading universities in our areas of focus.

Join us

Contact Professor Stan Grant

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Find out more about making a gift to the Yindyamarra Trust

Charles Sturt University is seeking the generous philanthropic support of committed organisations and individuals. To discuss supporting the Yindyamarra Trust contact:

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