

Yirrkala School

**Yirrkala School**PO Box 896
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Yirrkala School
14th February, 2018

To Whom it may concern

We are writing on behalf of the Yambirra Schools' Council to seek your support for establishing a Food Ladder project at Yirrkala School. The Yambirra Schools' Council is highly supportive of this exciting project which is a significant opportunity to enhance the learning and wellbeing of the children and teenagers who attend Yirrkala School. Food Ladder will support the children and families of Yirrkala on a number of levels and complement initiatives that are already happening in the school.

The main impact of the Food Ladder project will be on improving the diet of the students and their understanding about the importance of good nutrition. Many students come to school not ready to learn because of dietary issues that impact on their general health and on their dental health. The school has a School Nutrition Program that is funded by the Federal Government. This funding pays for the Canteen Manager and two Yolngu canteen workers. It does not cover the costs of the food. Food Ladder will provide fresh vegetables and some fruits to be used in the meals provided by the School Nutrition Program. Students will have a major role in growing the food and preparing the meals. This gives the long term benefit of ensuring children have a healthy diet and an understanding about the importance of making good food choices that will have a positive impact in their later lives.

In the last 12 months the school has placed great emphasis on improving the garden and grounds. The main stimulus for this improvement has come from the Yolngu groundsmen who have established beautiful spaces for the students to come to each day and feel happy in their surroundings. This has had a positive impact on attendance and the calmness of students at the school helping them to be more able to engage in learning. The Food Ladder project will enhance this initiative and provide more opportunities for the students to work supported by the Yolngu ground staff who will act as mentors and instructors to teach the students about looking after the greenhouse equipment and grow the plants.

Yirrkala School has a Families as First Teachers Program (FAFT) for mothers and children aged 0 to 4 years. A key goal of this program is to provide education to mothers about health and diet including making decisions about healthy food choices and making healthy meals. The Food Ladder project would greatly enhance this program by involving the mothers in growing the food and using the food to prepare meals. Food Ladder will also



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offer a program to mothers of school aged children after school hours and during holidays to provide this important education, advice and experience.

The Food Ladder project will support the school to develop curriculum and learning programs that increase the opportunities for the students to learn about the science and technology involved in running the equipment associated with the greenhouse.

This letter details some of the immediate benefits of the Food Ladder project to the children and families of Yirrkala, but as the project becomes more established there is potential for many more, including greater Yolngu employment, enterprise projects and the development of resources in Yolngu Dharuk to increase the understanding and awareness of growing and eating healthy food.

We hope that you will support this important project.

Yours sincerely

*currently away
from the community.*

Yanaymul Mununggurr
Chairperson
Yambirra Schools Council

Willie

Merrkiyawuy Ganambarr
Director
Yirrkala School

Katrina Hudson

Katrina Hudson
Principal
Yirrkala School