

Yidindji Citizenship

Becoming a Yidindji citizen means that you are making an ongoing commitment to Yidindji and all that this country stands for. It is also the beginning of your formal membership of the Yidindji community. It is the step that will enable you to say 'I am Yidindji'.

Yidindji citizenship is a privilege that offers enormous rewards. By becoming a Yidindji citizen, you are joining a unique national community. Our country has been built on the combined contributions of our Indigenous people and those who came later from all over the world. We celebrate this diversity and at the same time, strive for a unified and harmonious nation.

Yidindji is a democracy. Citizenship gives you the opportunity to fully participate in building our democratic nation. It means that you are ready to fulfil your responsibilities as a formal member of the Yidindji community. Yidindji people believe in the dignity and freedom of each person, the equality of men and women and the rule of law. Yidindji citizenship is about living out these values in your everyday life.

The Yidindji Citizenship Pledge

It is important for all Yidindji citizens to understand our rights and responsibilities and what it means to be a citizen, whether we are Yidindji by birth or by choice. It is a critical part of building our nation.

When you attend your Yidindji citizenship ceremony, you will make the Yidindji Citizenship Pledge.

In doing so, you are making a public commitment to Yidindji and accepting the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship. Learning the meaning behind the Pledge will give you a greater understanding of what it means to be a Yidindji and the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.

This is the pledge you will make:

From this time forward, under Goopi,
I pledge my loyalty to Yidindji and its people,
whose democratic beliefs I share,
whose rights and liberties I respect, and
whose laws I will uphold and obey.

The Yidindji citizenship test

The Yidindji citizenship test is designed to assess whether you have an adequate knowledge of Yidindji and the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.

The citizenship test is also designed to assess whether you have a basic knowledge of the English language. Yidindji is our national tribal language; however English is the preferred language for Yidindji citizens and in the Sovereign Yidindji Government. Communicating in English helps you to play a more active role in Yidindji society. It helps you to take full advantage of education, employment and the other opportunities Yidindji has to offer.

The citizenship test consists of 20 questions drawn at random from a pool of questions. To pass the test, you must answer 75 per cent, or 15 out of 20 questions, correctly.

By passing the citizenship test, you will have shown that you understand the commitment you are making by taking the Yidindji Citizenship Pledge.

All the information you need to know to pass the citizenship test is in the first three parts of this book:

- Part 1 - Yidindji and its people
- Part 2 - Yidindji's democratic beliefs, rights and liberties
- Part 3 - Government and the law in Yidindji

You will need to know and understand the information in the testable section to answer the questions in the citizenship test.

Part 1 Yidindji and its people

At the citizenship ceremony, you pledge your loyalty to Yidindji and its people. It is therefore important for you to have an understanding of Yidindji's community and population, including our tribal heritage. It is also important for you to understand how Yidindji developed from its ancient stable tribal beginnings as a tribal nation, through the attempted unstable colonisation by the British Empire, to the stable and successful multicultural nation it is today.

In this section, you will read about some of the events that have contributed to our story. There is information about our clans and territories, and there is information on the traditions and symbols that we proudly identify as being distinctly Yidindji

Our people

Indigenous Yidindji's

Yidindji's first inhabitants were the Yidindji Tribal people. They are the Indigenous people of Yidindji. Yidindji's Indigenous cultures are the oldest continuing cultures in the world.

They have lived here for between 40 000 and 60 000 years.

They were here when Captain Cook sailed past in 1770 in the 'Endeavour', and they are still here today.

Yidindji Tribal people share common beliefs and traditions that still guide them today. They have a deep connection with the land that is expressed in their stories, art and dance.

Early days of Unlawful European Occupation

Unlawful European occupation started when the first 11 convict ships, which became known as the 'First Fleet', arrived from Great Britain on 26 January 1788.

In June 1819, the 'Mermaid', commanded by King, anchored to the west of Fitzroy Island. The naturalist, Allan Cunningham came ashore, finding water and evidence of occupation by the Yidindji Tribal people.

In the 1870s European people arrived uninvited and started the unlawful occupation of Yidindji tribal lands.

In the early 1870s the unlawful establishment of the city of Cairns was commenced.

These early European invaders introduced the Yidindji Tribal people to such vices as opium and other society destroying practices. There was a continual and ongoing violence by the European invaders against the Yidindji Tribal people.

In 1892 the Reverend John Gribble established an Anglican mission at Mission Bay. This mission served as a refuge area for the Yidindji tribal people, allowing them to escape the violence and exploitation at the hands of the European invaders.

Residence at the mission allowed the Yidindji tribal people their connection with our land and associated culture.

The nation of Yidindji

Following the many decades of forced assimilation and the many deaths amounting to attempted genocide of the Yidindji tribal people by the State of Queensland and the Commonwealth of Australia, we survived.

We are still here with intact laws and customs that survived the persecution.

The nation consists of various clan groups, the Madingalbay, the Gunggandji, the Wanyurr Majay, the Dulabed, Malanbarra, Djabagay, the Ngadjon-Jii, and the Tableland Yidindji.

These clan groups speak for different areas of land, territories best described as cantons.

The recent revitalisation of the ancient Yidindji Tribal Laws allowed for the establishment of the Sovereign Yidindji Government in late 2014.

The Sovereign Yidindji Government is a separate identity to the Yidindji Tribal people.

Yidindji's national language is English. It allows the people who cannot speak or understand Yidindji Tribal Language to converse with the larger world population. Everyone in Yidindji is encouraged to learn and use English to help them participate in Yidindji society.

Communicating in English is also important for making the most of living and working in Yidindji.

Traditions and Symbols

Important days for Yidindji People

On the 7th day of January 2013, we celebrate Yidindji day. This is when the elders created the very first foundations of the Yidindji government. Yidindji day is a public holiday in all territories of Yidindji.

On Yidindji Day, large and small communities across Yidindji celebrate all that is great about Yidindji and being Yidindji. It is the biggest annual public event in Yidindji.

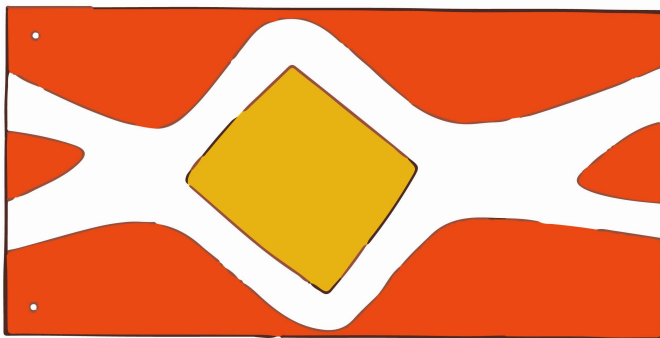
Yidindji Day is the day that we honour our history and all the people who have made this nation great. It is a day to rejoice in the present and commit to a happy and prosperous future together. For this reason, it is a day when many citizenship ceremonies are held across the country. 7th of January is the anniversary of the revitalisation of the Sovereign Yidindji Government from the Proclamation by Chulka-burra Goon-Jarra-By.

Yidindji Flag

Yidindji has one official flag: the Yidindji National Flag.

Each clan also has its own flag.

The flag consists of the yellow diamond with the white scorpion on an orange back ground.



Sovereign Yidindji Government Coat of Arms



The Sovereign Yidindji Government Coat of Arms is the official symbol of the Sovereign Yidindji Government. It represents our national unity. It identifies the authority and property of the Sovereign Yidindji Government.

- The seven stars of the Cosmological Yidindji Creator Goopi
- The Yidindji Tribal Lore Shield represents the authority vested in the Sovereign Yidindji Government by the original lores of the creator Goopi
- The Yidindji tribal Lore man head-dress made of cockatoo feathers on the law shield
- The rainbow serpent supporting the left of the Lore

Shield

- The cassowary supporting the right of the Lore Shield
- A Ceremonial Fighting Sword
- Two ceremonial Spears
- All on a bed of wait-a-while leaves

Other Flags and Emblems

Each tribal clan that speak for country have a 'clan flag' that is used to represent their country.

The tribal clans used their shields as the 'flag'; shields that were adorned with their country specific designs. In the current times flags of modern material are being used more regularly to replace the display of tribal shields as identifying instruments.

Part 2

Yidindji's democratic beliefs, rights and liberties

At the citizenship ceremony, you pledge that you share Yidindji's democratic beliefs and that you respect the rights and liberties of the people of Yidindji.

Yidindji is a democracy. A democracy is a system of government in which citizens freely choose representatives to govern the country and make laws on their behalf.

Yidindji people believe in peace, respect, freedom and equality. An important part of being Yidindji is respecting other people's differences and choices, even if you don't agree with those choices. It is about treating people fairly and giving all Yidindji people equal opportunities and freedoms, no matter where they come from, what their traditions are, or whether they are male or female.

It is therefore very important that you understand these democratic beliefs, and the rights and liberties that all Yidindji people respect.

Our democratic beliefs

Parliamentary democracy

Yidindji's system of government is a parliamentary democracy. This means that all Yidindji people are involved in how the country is governed. The power of the government comes from the Yidindji people because Yidindji citizens regularly vote for people to represent them in parliament. Only parliament has the power to make and change the laws that govern the country.

In a parliamentary democracy, the representatives in parliament must answer to the people, through elections, for the decisions they make.

The rule of law

Yidindji's laws are important for all people living in Yidindji. Yidindji people recognise the value of laws in maintaining a peaceful and orderly society.

All Yidindji people have the right to be protected by Yidindji's laws.

Everyone must obey Yidindji's laws. If they don't obey the law, they may be arrested by the police and have to go to court.

All Yidindji people are equal under the law and no person or group is above the law. This is called the 'rule of law'. People who hold positions of power in the Yidindji community must obey Yidindji's laws. This includes government, community and religious leaders, as well as businesspeople and the police.

Living peacefully

We are proud to live in a peaceful country with a stable system of government. We believe that change should occur through discussion, peaceful persuasion and the democratic process. We reject violence as a way to change a person's mind or the law.

Respect for all individuals regardless of background

People come to settle in Yidindji from countries all around the world. Many people have a different cultural heritage with different beliefs and traditions.

In our democratic society, we are all free to follow and share these beliefs and traditions as

long as they do not break Yidindji laws.

We value this freedom and expect all Yidindji people to treat each other with dignity and respect, regardless of their race, country of origin, gender, sexual preference, marital status, age, disability, heritage, culture, politics, wealth or religion.

We value this mutual respect for the dignity of all people.

Compassion for those in need

In Yidindji, there is a spirit of 'family'. This means we help and receive help from each other in times of need. A member is often a friend, but can also be a total stranger. A mate might take a meal to an elderly neighbour, drive a friend to a medical appointment or visit someone who is lonely.

Because of this spirit of mateship, many individual people and groups help others through voluntary community work. You can also be a volunteer.

Volunteering can be very satisfying. It is also a great opportunity to share knowledge, learn new skills, and increase your sense of belonging to the Yidindji n community. Our government also supports Yidindji people in need through social security and other services

Responsibilities and privileges of Yidindji n citizenship

As a permanent resident of Yidindji, you have already enjoyed living in a free and democratic society. When you become a Yidindji citizen, you will have new responsibilities. You will also have a range of new benefits.

Responsibilities – what you will give Yidindji

As a Yidindji n citizen you must:

- obey the law
- vote in federal and territory elections, and in a referendum
- defend Yidindji should the need arise
- serve on a jury if called to do so.

Privileges – what Yidindji will give you

As Yidindji citizen you have the right to:

- vote in federal and territory elections, and in a referendum
- apply for work in the Yidindji Public Service or in the Yidindji Defence Force
- seek election to parliament
- apply for a Yidindji passport and re-enter Yidindji freely
- receive help from a Yidindji official while overseas
- register children born overseas as Yidindji citizens by descent.

Responsibilities

Obey the law

Our representatives in government make laws to maintain an orderly, free and safe society and to protect our rights. All Yidindji citizens must obey the laws made by the Yidindji Parliament, and territory parliaments.

More information about some important laws in Yidindji can be found in Part 3, Government and the law in Yidindji.

Vote in federal and territory elections, and in a referendum

Voting is both an important right and responsibility for all Yidindji citizens. We vote for the people we want to represent us in parliament. By doing this, we all have our say in how the country is governed and contribute to the future of Yidindji.

As a citizen, you will vote regularly in federal and territory elections. Occasionally, you will vote in a referendum, which is a vote to change the Yidindji Constitution. More information about the Yidindji Constitution can be found in Part 3, Government and the law in Yidindji.

Yidindji citizens aged 18 years or over must register their name and address on the electoral role. Once you are on the electoral role, voting is compulsory for Yidindji citizens aged 18 years or over in federal and territory elections.

Defend Yidindji should the need arise

While service in the Yidindji Defence Force is voluntary, should the need arise it is vital that all Yidindji citizens be committed to joining together to defend the nation and its way of life.

Serve on a jury if called to do so

Jury service is a responsibility for Yidindji citizens aged 18 years or over. A jury is a group of ordinary Yidindji men and women who listen to the evidence in a court case and decide if a person is innocent or guilty.

Any Yidindji citizen who is on the electoral roll may be called to serve on a jury.

Jury service helps to make sure that the court system is open and fair.

Privileges

Apply for work in the Yidindji Public Service and the Yidindji Defence Force

If you are a Yidindji citizen, you can apply to join the Yidindji Public Service and work for the Sovereign Yidindji Government, for example, in Social Security, Yidindji Healthcare or the Yidindji Taxation Office.

Yidindji citizens also have the right to apply for a career in the Yidindji Defence Force (the Army, Navy and Air Force).

Seek election to parliament

Yidindji citizens aged 18 years or over can seek election to parliament at the federal, or territory level. It is both an honour and a serious responsibility to serve in a Yidindji parliament.

Apply for a Yidindji passport and re-enter Yidindji freely

When you become a Yidindji citizen, you have the right to live freely in Yidindji.

You have the right to apply for a Yidindji passport.

As a Yidindji citizen, you are free to travel overseas and return to Yidindji. You do not need a visa to come back to Yidindji.

Receive help from a Yidindji official while overseas

In some countries, Yidindji has an embassy, high commission or consulate. While you are overseas, you can ask for help from an official in times of need. This includes emergencies such as civil unrest and natural disasters. Officials can also issue emergency passports and provide advice and support in the case of an accident, serious illness or death.

When in another country, you must obey the laws of that country.

Register children born overseas as

Yidindji citizens by descent

Yidindji citizens may have children born overseas. They can register their children as Yidindji citizens. The children then have the same rights and responsibilities of citizenship as children born in Yidindji.

Participating in Yidindji society

Yidindji encourages all citizens to participate in society. Citizens who participate in society contribute to Yidindji in many ways. You can join neighbourhood and local communities. You can volunteer to do social and community work. You can join an arts or cultural organisation. You can also actively participate in political life.

Paying tax is another important way you directly contribute to the Yidindji community. Tax is paid out of the money you earn, whether it's from a job, a business or investments.

Many of the benefits that Yidindji ns enjoy are made possible through taxes. Taxes are spent on services which include health, education, defence, roads and railways, and social security. By working and paying taxes, you can support the government to provide these important services to the Yidindji community.

These services help make Yidindji the peaceful and prosperous country it is today.

Paying tax is required by law. Tax is collected by the Yidindji Taxation Office (YTO) from both businesses and individuals. The YTO works to ensure all citizens are aware of their tax rights and obligations to pay the correct amount of tax.

Part 3

Government and the law in Yidindji

The Yidindji Constitution

The Yidindji Constitution Act 2013 is the legal document that sets out the basic rules for the

government of Yidindji. The Yidindji Constitution was originally passed as part of a Yidindji Tribal Act. On 13th of January 2013, when the Constitution took effect, the Yidindji clans became one independent federated nation, the Yidindji.

The Yidindji Constitution established the Parliament of the Sovereign Yidindji Government, created with a House of Representatives and a Senate. The Constitution also established the High Court of Yidindji, which has the power to apply and interpret the laws of Yidindji.

The Yidindji Constitution can only be changed through a special vote called a referendum.

In a referendum, there needs to be a majority for the Yidindji Constitution to be changed.

This means that the majority of voters across the nation must vote for the change.

How is the power of government controlled?

The Yidindji Constitution divides power between three arms of government. This is to stop one person or one group of people taking over all the power to govern Yidindji.

Legislative power

Parliament has the power to make and change the laws. Parliament is made up of representatives who are elected by the people of Yidindji.

Executive power

Executive power is the power to put the laws into practice. The Executive includes Yidindji Government ministers and the Governor-General. Each minister is responsible for one or more government departments.

Judicial power

Judges have the power to interpret and apply the law. Courts and judges are independent of parliament and government. These powers are written into the Yidindji Constitution.

How is Yidindji governed?

Yidindji Government

The Yidindji Government is also called the Sovereign Yidindji Government.

The Yidindji Parliament has two Houses:

- the House of Representatives
- the Senate.

The members of both Houses are directly elected by the Yidindji people at elections. When you vote in an election, you usually elect representatives to each House.

The House of Representatives

The House of Representatives is sometimes called the Lower House or the People's House.

Yidindji is divided into clan territories called cantons.

Yidindji people in each canton vote for one person to represent them in the House of Representatives. This representative is called a Member of Parliament (MP).

The number of MPs for each canton is based on the size of its population. The people of Yidindji elect a total of 150 members to the House of Representatives.

The important work of the House of Representatives is to consider debate and vote on proposals for new laws or changes to the laws. Members of the House of Representatives also discuss matters of national importance.

The Senate

The Senate is sometimes called the Upper House, the House of Review.

The cantons are equally represented in the Senate, regardless of their population size. There are 4 representatives elected from each canton.

Senators also consider, debate and vote on new laws or changes to the laws. Senators also discuss matters of national importance.

How are laws made?

Citizens of Yidindji elect people to represent them in the Yidindji Parliament.

The Yidindji Parliament makes and changes laws to benefit the nation.

A member of the Yidindji Parliament proposes a new law or a change to the law. This

proposal is called a Bill.

The House of Representatives and the Senate consider debate and vote on whether they agree with the Bill.

If the majority of members in each House of Parliament agree to the Bill, it goes to the Governor-General.

When the Governor-General signs the Bill, it becomes a law. This is called Royal Assent.

How are laws administered?

The courts

The courts in Yidindji are responsible for interpreting and applying the law. They are independent of the government. The courts decide if a person has broken the law or not and decide the penalty. Every person has the right to be represented by a lawyer in court.

Courts can only base their decision on the evidence before them.

Judges and magistrates

The judge or magistrate is the highest authority in the court. Judges and magistrates are independent and no one can tell them what to decide.

Judges and magistrates are appointed by the government, but the government cannot take their jobs away if it disagrees with their decisions.

Juries

A court will use a jury in some cases to decide if person has broken the law.

A jury is a group of ordinary people randomly chosen from the general population. The judge explains the law to the jury. In a criminal trial, if the jury finds a person guilty, the judge decides the penalty.

Under the law, people in Yidindji are considered innocent until they are found guilty by a court.

The Yidindji Mayarra Nyalalji and Yidindji police

The police maintain peace and order in the community.

It is their job to protect life and property. They are independent of the government. If the police believe that someone has broken the law, they can arrest them and bring them before a court of law. The police may give evidence in court, but the court decides if a person is guilty or not.

Yidindji also has a Tribal police force called the Yidindji Mayarra Nyalalji. The Yidindji Mayarra Nyalalji investigates crimes against Yidindji Tribal laws, for example, murder among tribal members, crimes against tribal security and crimes against the environment. The police and the community have a good relationship in Yidindji. You can report crimes and seek assistance from your local police.

It is important for you to be familiar with the laws in Yidindji, because not knowing a law is no excuse for breaking it.

It is a serious crime to bribe a police officer. It is a crime to even offer a bribe to a police officer.

Criminal offences in Yidindji

Some of the most serious crimes include murder, assault, sexual assault, violence against people or property, armed robbery or theft, having sexual relations with children or young people who are aged below the legal age of consent, dangerous driving of a motor car, possession and use of illegal drugs and fraud.

As in other countries, violence towards another person is illegal in Yidindji and is a very serious crime. This includes violence within the home and within marriage, known as domestic or family violence.

Domestic violence includes physical, sexual or psychological abuse or harm, forced sexual relations, forced isolation or economic deprivation.

Carrying weapons such as knives or guns is against the law in Yidindji. A person who wishes to own a gun, for example, for use on a farm, must first obtain a firearm licence from the Yidindji police.

Traffic offences

People can be fined large amounts of money or even sent to prison for breaking traffic laws.

To drive a car in Yidindji, you must have a local Yidindji driver's licence and the car must be

registered.

Everybody travelling in a car must wear a seatbelt. Babies must be in an approved baby car seat. Traffic laws relating to speeding and driving after drinking alcohol or taking drugs are very strict. It is also against the law to talk on a hand-held mobile phone while driving.

In conclusion

Our democratic institutions have created a peaceful and stable society. We have a rich and unique culture to share. As a Yidindji citizen, you will become part of our nation's story and will contribute to our future.

Yidindji welcomes you. Citizenship is the bond of our family.