

Basic Detail Report



Donald Nuwandjali Marawili

00054886

Title

Blue Mud Bay Sea Rights Flag

Date

2016

Primary Maker

Medium

Synthetic fabric, dyes.

Dimensions

Overall: 1800 × 900 mm

Name

Flag

History

Donald Nuwandjali Marrawilli originally requested Northern Land Council to assist with the production of a Blue Mud Bay flag that he had designed for the Blue Mud Bay Decision and celebration and Yilpara, and for the future celebrations and recognition of sea rights in the Northern Territory. Nuwandjali Marawili is amongst the artists of the Saltwater Barks collection currently at the Australian National Maritime Museum. He is a younger son of the great Madarrpa artist and clan leader Wakuth (b. c. 1921). The Blue Mud Bay case was not an isolated case brought before the High Court. Its roots reach back into the 1960's. The Saltwater Barks in the Australian National Maritime Musuem collection, were painted by the Yolŋu people of East Arnhem Land, and was an effort by forty seven artists from fifteen different clans to educate outsiders about local Indigenous stories, land ownership and sacred sites. The Yolŋu have been active in the struggle for land rights since the 1960's and these barks represent their attempts to gain legal recognition of their traditional homeland, the Marrakulu Saltwater. The paintings are also a visual and traditional representation of the Yolŋu living and interacting with the sea, depicting camps and sea hunting. The barks have a political and legal significance beyond their spiritual meaning as they underpin the Yolŋu community's native sea title claim which was granted in 2008 and known as The Blue Mud Bay decision. The production of the paintings provided an Indigenous tool for community action that could be created into evidence and used in the Australian legal system. The High Court granted the Saltwater People's rights, use of the Arnhem Land coast and therefore precedence over commercial interests and fishing. *Aboriginal freehold title is now recognised down to the low water mark.