



Garma
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Adventure of a lifetime for Garma youth

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Nearly 300 students from across Australia are gearing up for the time of their lives as the Garma Youth Forum draws closer .

Sponsored by the University of Sydney's Widening Participation and Outreach, the Youth Forum has become one of the highlights of the Garma program and a place where life-long friendships are formed.

Yothu Yindi Foundation CEO Denise Bowden said about 280 young people were expected to participate this year, with students from large private schools interstate and smaller remote Indigenous schools in Arnhem Land and surrounding homeland areas.

"The Youth Forum program teaches young people to get the best out of themselves – to grow, to learn, to respect one another, and to open their eyes to different experiences and perspectives," she said.

"It's designed to inspire our youth, while encouraging them to have a little fun along the way. It's a program that draws from an Indigenous cultural curriculum and focuses on the meaning and significance of this year's main Garma theme of Makarrata."

"At the end of Garma, when the students share the insights they have gained over the course of the four-day program, they have a greater understanding of Australia's Indigenous heritage and a better appreciation of the complexity and depth of Indigenous cultural traditions."



On the program are a range of creative arts and design activities, including a paint workshop where students will use the dribble and splatter technique - popular with the likes of Jackson Pollock and Indigenous artist Richard Bell - to paint the night sky.

The University's Sydney Conservatorium of Music will work with students to produce cutting-edge beats, while its scientists will explain how technology such as radioactive carbon dating helps us piece together our knowledge of the past and the present.

As in previous years, activities which help young people develop leadership skills and self-belief will be a major feature, such as a debating workshop run by University of Sydney law students that will teach participants how to mount a strong argument.

Once equipped with these skills, groups will debate different topics relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today. There will also be a Youth Parliament where students tackle the big issues in their lives.

Story-telling, lessons in the *Yolngu matha* language, Learning on Country and a range of other cultural activities are also on the program.

At night, students can go on an astronomy tour where they will see the night sky through Yolngu eyes, or participate in one of the many fireside chats taking place around the site.

Mary Teague, Head of Widening Participation and Outreach at the University of Sydney, said: "The Garma Youth Forum is a significant occasion for us. We will have the privilege of listening to young people, hearing their views and interpretations of Makarrata, *a coming together* for the future through facilitating the sharing of knowledge, culture and lived experience."

Garma 2017 begins on Friday 4 August at the beautiful Gulkula ceremonial grounds in north-east Arnhem Land.

As always, the Yothu Yindi Foundation is pleased to present a drug and alcohol-free event.

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About the University of Sydney's Widening Participation and Outreach

Widening Participation and Outreach is the University of Sydney's schools outreach program. It works with school students who are generally under-represented in higher education: low socio-economic status, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and regional and remote students. Its primary goal is widening access and participation to higher education.

