# CULTURAL PROTOCOLS AND ETIQUETTE

## Respect the Women's Law Ground.

- The Kapululangu Women's Law and Culture Centre is located on the Balgo Women's Law (Ceremonial) Ground. The Women's Law Ground is a sacred women's space where Ceremony is performed on a regular basis. The entire area is a place of significance to the local peoples. It consists of three buildings.
- Kapululangu House is the Office, Meeting Room and Staff residence. This is an open space and both local women and men visit this house.
- The Women's Law House is a residential house for the women elders and a place of learning for younger women. It is located on the Women's Law Ground proper and is open only to women and girls and also boys aged under 5 years old.
- The Culture Shed is also on the Balgo Women's Law Ground. This is a sacred space where Ceremonies and Tjarrtjurra Women's Healing rites are conducted under the guidance of the Elders. The Culture Shed contains a room which is the Keeping Place repository of a collection of *tarruku* (secret, sacred ceremonial items) – one of Australia's few repositories of *tarruku* which is used on a regular basis.
- It is imperative that, during your visit, you do not enter the Culture Shed unless attended by a Kapululangu representative. While in the Culture Shed you must not open any doors or enter any of the rooms. Please treat the Culture Shed with the utmost respect.

## Other Restricted Areas.

- Please do not venture off on your own or wander by yourself around the town. Please respect the residents' privacy.
- Plus there are places around Balgo which are sacred which you are not aware of and which you would not be able to identify and which you may venture into unintentionally. The locals may not tell you that you are violating space or intruding, or may find you intruding too late to prevent it.
- There will be opportunities to visit the Store, the Art Centre and other agencies and to generally look around Balgo Community. All trips off the Women's Law Ground will be organised and accompanied by Kapululangu representatives.

## Asking Questions:

- Please do not ask questions of our Elders at any time as in local Aboriginal culture strangers asking questions is considered to be rude. There will be plenty of opportunity to ask questions of the Camp Coordinator throughout each day.

## Cross-Cultural Communication Protocols

- When approaching any local Aboriginal person please go forward in the normal way and gently shake their hand. You may make initial eye contact as you approach but then drop your eyes. Do not attempt to hold eye contact as this makes local people uncomfortable if they do not know you. It is considered to be a threatening stance.
- When having a prolonged conversation with a local Indigenous person please do not insist on prolonged eye contact. Make immediate contact with their eyes and then look away. If the discussion keeps going do not stare, gently make eye contact and look away alternatively.
- Do not think that people don't want to talk with because they are not looking at you. In Balgo, if people respect you then they show this by NOT looking into your eyes for a prolonged period. It is completely the reverse in White society.
- Protocol around eye contact is difficult for Non-Indigenous to grasp and can make you feel unsure and insecure but it is better that you feel this way and show respect to your hosts. When you don't look straight into an Aboriginal person's eyes you are showing them that you respect them.

## Photographs (Videos and Sound-recordings)

- We know that you want to take photos home so we will take photos which we will share with you.
- You may bring cameras with you to take photos on your way to and from Balgo but taking photos in Balgo is highly restricted.
- Due to the cultural sensitivity of people and sites it is imperative that the direct permission of the Camp Coordinator or Counsellor is granted before taking any photos.
- Please do not ask the Women Elders or any Aboriginal women whether you can take photos of them as they will say 'yes' because they want to please you. This will cause a situation where the Camp Coordinator will be obliged to intervene and will embarrass the Elders and yourself.

- No photos may be taken at any time of any Law or Culture activity. Anyone taking photos during those times will be asked to delete their photos. Some photos will be made available of the cultural experience after the Camp.
- There can be no Videoing or Sound-recording at any time so please do not bring such equipment with you.

## What is Expected of you while Visiting Kapululangu

As a Participant of the Camp you are expected to:

- Carry out the requests of the Camp Coordinator, Counsellor and Tilitja Team Leaders
- Provide service to the Kapululangu Women Elders as a first priority
- Attend all of the Camp activities and participate in a timely and efficient way.
- Read Kapululangu's story in the book *Holding Yawulyu: White Culture and Black Women's Law* by Zohl de Ishtar, Kapululangu's CEO, prior to coming to the Camp. ·
- Wear a skirt at all times while on the Women's Law Ground and travelling to Special Sites. Wear modest clothing at all times (day and night) (for example, no shoulder-strap shirts).

## Gifts for Your Cultural Knowledge Tutors (Women Elders)

- It is important that you bring gifts for the Women Elders who will be your teachers and guides while you are with us.
- Please bring 1 new double GRW Super-Soft Mink 100% polyester blanket (or equivalent) and 1 tin of Log Cabin tobacco (you can find Log Cabin in most tobacconists)
- Please be aware that the tobacco is not for smoking purposes but is an essential item for showing respect to the Elders in their Culture.