

Yolngu law recognised: DVD

Educating Yolngu people and legal practitioners in the existence of both mainstream Australian and Indigenous Yolngu law systems is the aim of a new DVD launched on Elcho Island recently.



Romgu Dhukarr Dhiyal (A Meeting of Two Laws): A Cross-Cultural Legal Education video in Yolngu Matha is the first in a series of DVDs, narrated in local Aboriginal languages.

Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission Director Ms Suzan Cox said that in 2006 the Commission coordinated visits by legal services from the Top End of the NT to communities in north-eastern Arnhem Land to provide information about key legal issues and evaluate the unmet legal need in the region.

“It was identified that Indigenous community members in the region did not have access to legal education about their rights and responsibilities under the Australian legal system in a language and context they understand,” Ms Suzan Cox said.

The DVD, which was launched recently at the Galiwin’ku community, was developed in response to that need; the result of a collaboration between Commission staff Delphine Dupont-Morris and Fiona Hussin and Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre, Duduyngu Pty Ltd, local film makers and clan leaders. It was filmed at Galiwin’ku.

It draws on the existing knowledge of structures of Yolngu law and governance in the region to explain foundational concepts about the Australian legal system.

Ms Suzan Cox said while an intended audience for this DVD is Yolngu people



in the Arnhem region, it is also important that those administering the Australian legal system understand the law and governance perspective of Aboriginal people in the region.

“This DVD can assist in enhancing cross-cultural understandings and respect between the

co-existing Yolngu and Balanda (white) systems of law,” Ms Cox said.

The next two DVDs in the series are set at the Nguiu community on the Tiwi Islands, and Tennant Creek in the Barkly, both will be produced in the languages of the region .

For more information contact Fiona Hussin at Legal Aid in Darwin on (08) 8999 3000.