

News from Nungalinya

with Emily Quinn • April 2026



Greetings from Darwin! As I sat down to write News from Nungalinya at the start of last year, we were trying to wait patiently for *Dalay* – the monsoon season – to begin. It was the latest recorded arrival on record, and we were longing for the rain. This wet season, by contrast, has been huge!

The weather kicked off with Tropical Cyclone Fina, which passed near Darwin as a Category 3 on Saturday 22 November. Having been through Cyclone Marcus in 2018, I was confident that my building was secure, and grateful for underground powerlines, but not looking forward to the wind and rain arriving at night. I didn't relish the thought of listening to wild weather in the dark, perhaps kept awake late into the night and not being sure of what was happening. As it turned out, I felt very safe inside my unit and went to bed at a normal hour! Nungalinya College did lose power, but overall thankfully, the damage was minimal.

Give thanks to God for safety and minimal damage throughout all the weather

Classes finished in mid-November of 2025. Along with our 'block-by-block' graduation of Foundation Studies students, we had a bigger graduation ceremony for the Making Disciples class. This cohort is made up of Cert IV graduates and church leaders, who return to College for ongoing training.

We also turned our minds to community visits. Although it is not possible to visit every community represented at Nungalinya, we do try to see as many as possible. My colleague Jeanette and I travelled

to Milingimbi, and then Ramingining, both in North East Arnhem Land. This was my fifth trip to Milingimbi, where we were well looked after by Florence, *ngarraku māri* (my kinship grandmother). It makes a huge difference having someone to guide you through negotiating a different place, culture and language. Florence sat with us all day in the park, opposite the shop, to help talk to people about College and give out application forms. It was very pleasant sitting in the shade of the tamarind trees, planted by the Macassan traders from Indonesia, long before white settlement, while also enjoying the sea breeze. From Milingimbi it was a short and scenic fifteen minute flight on a MAF plane across to 'Ramo', where we also spent time outside the shop, connecting with current and future students.



Banner Image: Magpie Geese in the Nungalinya College Grounds

Circle Image: Emily

Middle Image: Flying over NE Arnhem Land

Bottom Image: Jeanette and Florence in chair at Mili

Under the Tamarind tree in the park



Funeral prep in Pukatja

Continued from previous page...

A few weeks later I was able to go on a second community visit to a place I had never been before: the APY (Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara) Lands. Doreen, the Uniting Church dean of students, David, a Uniting Church pastoral care worker based in Alice, and I made the trip to Pukatja (Ernabella). Like all plans in the NT, it was held lightly. Our original intention was to go to two communities, but a big funeral at Pukatja meant it would be better to stay at one. We had also planned to fly out from Darwin early Tuesday morning and get to Pukatja that night, but when we arrived (bleary-eyed) at the airport, that flight had been cancelled and we were rescheduled to fly out in the afternoon.

It all worked out well: Doreen and I had plenty of time to meet David and stock up on groceries, before enjoying a luxurious night in Alice and then heading out on the road the next day. From Alice Springs, you travel south

We were able to gather some new applications, and reconnect with former students, so it was a good trip

on the Stuart Highway until you almost reach the South Australian border. From here, take a right onto a gravel road, through cattle station country, and continue for about 100km, running parallel to the border. Then take a left onto another dirt road and continue south to Pukatja. I loved the fact that in this 6-7-hour trip there were only two turns!

Pukatja, a small community nestled in the stunning APY landscape, was getting ready to celebrate the life of an esteemed Aboriginal artist,

Mrs Tapaya OAM. The funeral, when it happened, was surprisingly short – about 40 minutes. This may have been due to the heat. I am used to the humid tropics, but the heat in the Centre, at 40 degrees, was like being followed around by someone holding an electric heater. It was a completely new experience for me. We were able to gather some new applications, and reconnect with former students, so it was a good trip.

Give thanks for safety in travel, the successful community visits, the new applications and the chance to reconnect with former college students.

Back at Nungalinga for 2026, we have just completed our first block of study, with five classes running. There have been some changes in our small Foundation Studies team, with Annette Anderson taking on the role of Dean of Anglican Students (also supported by BCA), Jenny Wood (CMS) returning to Sydney with her husband Ian to complete home assignment, and Fr Mark, an Orthodox Serbian priest, coming onboard. I have also moved on from teaching at the 'lowest' level to a more intermediate class, which is looking at Paul and his missionary journeys. This was new material for both myself and my co-teacher Wanggarr, but I think it went well! A highlight was creating a three part mural that mapped out Paul's journeys (see left).

Weather has continued to be a focus. First of all, heavy rains saw the Todd River in Alice flowing,



Class painting Cert 1 March 2026

Continued from previous page...

along with flooding, so we began checking the news in class each morning, to see how people's families were faring. Then Katherine experienced severe flooding, with the evacuation of the hospital. The community of Nauiyu (Daly River) was evacuated, returned, and then evacuated again, along with the neighbouring community of Palumpa. Then we watched Cyclone Narelle form and track across Queensland and into the Gulf, triggering the evacuation of Numbulwar. Finally Narelle crossed the NT and went to WA, Numbulwar were returned home and Katherine prepared for a second major flooding event, with the hospital emptied a second time! It's been a lot for everyone. Only in the last few days are we seeing bluer skies, drier air and that precursor of the dry season: dragonflies.

Pray for those in communities still recovering, especially for Nauiyu and Palumpa, who won't be able to return home for some time.

On a personal note, I spent almost a month out of Darwin, mostly in Tasmania. I enjoyed seeing family and friends, as well as soaking up the Tasmania landscape, including some invigorating cold water plunges: something I really miss in Darwin! I came home via Adelaide, where I was able to attend the BCA Connect Summer

Edition evening, and share about Nungalinya, as well as sharing at the Clayton Wesley Uniting Church on the Sunday. I am about to make another short (week long) trip home over Easter to see my mum.

Give thanks for the chance to visit Tassie and catch up with BCA supporters at Connect Summer Edition in Adelaide.

Please give thanks for a strong start to the year, including a three day staff retreat, and moving into a beautiful new, renovated Foundation Studies office!

Please pray for the ongoing work of travel and logistics, as we look to bring in another 90+ students to Nungalinya for Block 2, knowing that plans can (and do) change at any minute.



Blessings in Christ,
Emily

Pray for

**my work at
Nungalinya College**

Find out more

**about
Bush Church Aid**

Give

**to partner with us in
going the distance to
share Jesus with the bush**



Reaching Australia for Christ since 1919