

The Yan-nhaṅu speaking people of northern Arnhem Land.

Yan-nhaṅu is a Yolṅu Matha (people's tongue) language belonging to the traditional owners of the seas and Islands of the Crocodile Group. [4] The majority of Yan-nhaṅu speakers reside in and around Maningrida and Milingimbi communities, and surrounding outstations such as Murrunga Island.

The Yan-nhaṅu speaking Yolṅu people are the traditional owners of the land and sea of the Castlereagh Bay area of the Arafura sea and thirty one islands of just under 10,000 square kilometres (3,900 sq mi). Sometime after 1600 the annual arrival of Maccassan sailors harvesting trepang (bech de mer) changed the timings and patterns of Yan-nhaṅu people's seasonal movements around the Crocodile Islands. The arrival of the Methodist mission to the island of Milingimbi in 1922 attracted large numbers of eastern of kin to settle permanently on the Yan-nhaṅu estate. [1][2]

The Yan-nhaṅu are a Yolṅu people with a distinctly marine orientation arising from intimate coexistence with their salt water country. The sea is a crucial aspect of Yan-nhaṅu society, religion and language. The ocean's movements, sounds and changes are considered to be physical indexes of ancestral action. People share their names with the names of the ocean, its waves, colors, spirits, and winds.

Yan-nhaṅu people continue to perform the rich ritual, musical, dance and artistic practices shared by Yolṅu kin through out north-east Arnhem Land. More so they continue through ritual and practical actions to care for their marine environments.[2]

Bilingual education is still continued on some of the surrounding outstations by traditional owners concerned to support the linguistic, cultural and biological diversity of the Crocodile Islands

To this end the Yan-nhaṅu traditional owners have started the volunteer Crocodile Islands Rangers project to promote sustainable livelihood activities for local people in local languages.station.

Senior Australian of the Year 2012, Laurie Baymarrwangga, born on Murrungga largest of the outer Crocodile Islands in 1922 is the senior

djungaya (manager) of Milingimbi Island and continues to create projects to help its people.

Her Milingimbi projects, Yan-nhaṅu Dictionary 1994-2012, Crocodile Islands Rangers project CIR, YEK, and CII won the 2011 NT Innovation and Research Awards. Baymarrwanga was photographed by Donald Thomson at Milingimbi and at Murrungga in 1937

The Yan-nhaṅu Language Team, started in 1994 consists of linguists and native speakers working to compile resources for the description of Yan-nhaṅu culture and the revitalization of Yan-nhaṅu language.