



Ancestral Knowledge holder Baby Israel laughing on the Pandanus Sun Mat- natural fibres & vegetable dye. Artist: Mavis Warrigina Ganambarr, Elcho Island Arts. Photo: Pat Josse

FACT SHEET

DJÄKAMIRR (DOULA) MATERNITY WORKERS

Starting in 2023, all Yolŋu pregnant women from Galiwin'ku, Elcho Island North East Arnhem Land will be offered djäkamirr (doula) care during their pregnancy journey.

Djäkamirr (doula) care is being offered as part of maternity service redesign in the project called: *To Be Born Upon a Pandanus Mat: Yothuw gayatha dhäwal' guyaŋa' nharaw.*



What is a djäkamirr?

A **djäkamirr** is a First Nations doula, also known as a childbirth companion. A First Nations word from the Yolŋu Matha language- djäkamirr means 'caretaker'.

What is the djäkamirr scope of practice?

Djäkamirr (doulas) provide skilled companionship, information/education, comfort measures, ceremonial care, & support to Yolŋu women during pregnancy, childbirth & other outcomes (ie. miscarriage & termination of pregnancy). They provide support in the woman's primary First Nations language (not English). **Djäkamirr** (doulas) do not provide medical care, clinical assessments or make clinical decisions. They do not replace the need for a qualified First Nations Language Interpreter or a medical professional ie: midwife or doctor.

Where do djäkamirr practice?

Djäkamirr (doulas) work in relationship with a woman & support her where & when they are needed. This includes home, community, bush & clinical settings. **Djäkamirr** (doulas) have practice insurance. Djäkamirr (doulas) will travel to Nhulunbuy, Darwin & beyond to support a woman including aeromedical evacuations, sit-down (waiting for baby) & childbirth.

What training do djäkamirr take?

Djäkamirr (doulas) are undertaking nationally recognised vocational education certificate training provided by the *Australian Doula College*. The training takes 12-18 months to complete & includes a First Nations Yolŋu curriculum co-delivered by Yolŋu Experts. The quality training provided by the *Australian Doula College* is the only Government recognised doula certification in the World. Otherwise, the doula industry is not regulated.

Are djäkamirr paid?

During vocational education certificate training, **djäkamirr** (doulas) are paid a scholarship. When they graduate from training, they move into a paid work model.

While away from community, the **djäkamirr** (doulas) travel, accommodation & food is provided by NT Health. Any travel & accommodation enquires should be directed to the *Djäkamirr Coordinator* who can be contacted during business hours on

0428 092 196

How do I work with djäkamirr?

Djäkamirr are experts in understanding and knowing the women they are supporting. Djäkamirr can contribute this expertise to the team for the benefit of the woman. Djäkamirr work in a foreign system with a foreign language, so please keep this in mind. They will appreciate if you introduce yourself, explain your role and share a little bit about where you come from and who you are.

Health care professionals work respectfully in multi-disciplinary teams with workers of variable skill levels, responsibilities, scope of practice and confidence. Individual djäkamirr will be at different stages of their professional learning. You can be a good team member by supporting their learning experiences and making them feel welcomed.

Who supports the djäkamirr?

The *Molly Wardaguga Research Centre* & the *Australian Doula College* provide **djäkamirr** (doula) ongoing professional mentoring & educational support during their training & support experiences.

A **djäkamirr** (doula) supervisor can be contacted all-hours 7 days a week: **0420 737 396**. Please reserve out of hours calls for ONLY urgent needs or emergencies. *The supervisor can not assist with travel or accommodation enquires.*

Galiwin'ku community based **djäkamirr** (doula) support can be accessed by email djakamirrsupport@cdu.edu.au or by phone on **0428 092 196**

Need to know more?

Associate Professor Sarah Ireland
sarah.ireland@cdu.edu.au or **0477 786 243**



Health Workers
Djäkamirr Care
Resource Video



Birthing on
Country
Website



Australian
Doula College
Website



To be Born
Upon a
Pandanus
Project Website

