

Unless otherwise noted all dimensions in millimetres. Use figured dimensions in preference to scaling. Contractor to confirm all dimensions and details on site prior to manufacture.

Attention
Due to this reproduction process the colours in this image are not exact representations of the final product.

Production Details
Digital print graphics reverse applied to back face of glass panels. Refer drawing 3031G.IF1

Yidinji

CULTURE AND HISTORY

Bilan gudan njundu Yidin Yabanday—Yidi Nalan nudjun
Welcome to Yidinji country—on behalf of the Yidinji Elders

The Yidinji people represented one of the largest Indigenous tribes of the Cairns area. The Yidinji Yabanday, or tribal lands, covered a large area—from the Barron River in the north, to the Russell River in the south; from the Murray Prior Range in the east, to Tolga in the west.

Today, some Yidinji people—like many other Indigenous Australians—continue to live as their ancestors did.

YIDINJI CLANS

The Yidinji tribe was made up of eight clans, which served as custodians of various tracts of Yidinji country. Two dialects of the local Yidinji language were spoken—a tableland dialect and a coastal dialect.

Gimuy-Walubarra Yidi
(Pronounced gimuy-wal-bar-rah)
The Gimuy-Walubarra are the traditional custodians of Cairns and the surrounding region. Gimuy is the Yidinji name for the region now known as Cairns. It takes its name from the ebbony blue fig tree. This species grows in large numbers in the area, and was known as gimuy by the Yidinji. Wal is the Yidinji word for 'side of the hill'.

Bundabarra Yidi
(Pronounced bun-dab-bar-rah)
The Bundabarra are the traditional custodians of the tableland mountains. Bund is the Yidinji word for 'hill' or 'mountain'.

Gulgubarra Yidi
(Pronounced gulg-bar-rah)
The Gulgubarra are the traditional custodians of the northern lands and the tableland mountains. Gulg is the Yidinji word for 'table' or 'tableland'.

Wadjanbarra Yidi
(Pronounced wad-jan-bar-rah)
The Wadjanbarra are the traditional custodians of the low lying forest between the tableland mountains. Wadjan is the Yidinji word for 'forest'.

Radjabarra Yidi
(Pronounced rad-jab-bar-rah)
The Radjabarra are the traditional custodians of the area around the Barron River. Radja is the Yidinji word for 'river'.

Mandigalpi Yidi
(Pronounced man-dig-al-pi)
The Mandigalpi are the traditional custodians of the land from the Yidinji river to the mouth of the Barron River. Mandigalpi is the Yidinji word for 'mountain'.

Mallanbarra Yidi
(Pronounced mal-lan-bar-rah)
The Mallanbarra are the traditional custodians of the area around the Barron River. Mallan is the Yidinji word for 'river'.

Djumbun Yidi
(Pronounced jim-bun)
The Djumbun are the traditional custodians of the area around the Barron River. Djumbun is the Yidinji word for 'river'.

Yidinji shields

The Yidinji people made shields for a variety of purposes. There were ceremonial shields, fighting shields and shields that symbolised each of the eight clans. (Ceremonial shields are only used in traditional Yidinji rituals, and cannot be reproduced here.)

The shields are made from the buttress roots of the Gimuy or slippery blue fig tree. The scars of many generations of shield making can be seen on the old Gimuy trees in the region. The Yidinji shield makers were careful not to mortally damage the trees.

The colours used to decorate the shields are traditional tribal ochres readily available in the region.

FIGHTING SHIELDS

Fighting shields were used in battles with other tribes. The four shield designs pictured here symbolise blood, Djumbun the witchetty grub, the local mountains and landscape, and the Yidinji battle sword.

The Yidinji sword was two metres in length and made of bloodwood. (The sword and shield can be seen in the adjacent photograph of Ye-I-Nie.)

DJUMBUN A Yidinji Totem
The Djumbun is a popular totem in Yidinji culture. The name Djumbun is used to refer to two very different creatures—the witchetty grub and the scorpion.

As witchetty grubs and scorpions are often found in the same places, the Yidinji believed they were two different stages of the one lifecycle. Both forms of Djumbun can be seen on the Yidinji shields featured here.

The metamorphosis of the witchetty grub into a moth (or, as the Yidinji believed, a scorpion) is symbolic of the preparation, development and initiation of the young warrior.

The scorpion itself symbolises courage, strength, wisdom, honour and independence. Djumbun the scorpion keeps to itself, and is very capable of taking care of itself.

The King of Cairns

In the early 1800s, colonists began the practice of presenting gorgets or "King Plates" to Aboriginal tribal leaders. These plates were presented in recognition of status and as a sign of treaty—in an attempt to foster Aboriginal cooperation in the development of the colony. However, Aboriginal people did not recognise the plates themselves as such.

The plates were made from brass or bronze, and inscribed with various titles. They varied in size, but were generally crescent-shaped. Some of the later designs were quite large and unusual in shape.

Yidinji tribal leader Ye-I-Nie (pronounced yi-nee), the Peace Maker, was granted the plate of "King of Cairns" in 1905.

The colonists never left, but the free food and blankets didn't last.

TREATY

The Yidinji people, like many other Aboriginal tribes, fought to protect their lands and bring about justice and respect for their people.

In 1898, a treaty was formed between the Yidinji people and King's Counsel, declaring that attacks by both parties would cease. The Governor of the day agreed to issue free food and blankets to the Yidinji for as long as people of the Commonwealth were to stay in their country.

The King of Cairns

Gindaja

THE CASSOWARY

The large, flightless bird Gindaja (pronounced gin-duh-ja)—the Cassowary—is another totem of the Yidinji people. There are many story trails involving this most unique and unusual animal.

One Yidinji story tells how Gindaja travelled from Wajan Yabanday (the Atherton Tableland) to the coast. In Yidinji Storytime, Gindaja had large wings and could fly. He flew from Bunda Gindaja (Lamb's Range) to the area now known as the Trinity Inlet. The landscape here was dominated by a large lake 10 000 to 15 000 years ago.

And so, today, the Cassowary cannot fly. His remaining feathers are black from the mud in which his ancestor was stuck. He walks around lost, trying to find his way home—the land is very different on foot.

You can learn more about the Yidinji people on the touch screen presentation on the other side of this node.

3/04.1

Side 4 Elevation
Scale 1:10

3/04.2

3/04.3