



AN EXHIBITION

PHOTOS AND
WORDS BY
MARK CHEW



1. Playing and learning

We found a group of three young boys, playing outside their house in Galiwin'ku. As they pedalled the tricycle, which was towing a small trailer, they learned about co-operation, teamwork, hierarchy and a little physics.



2. Hands from two worlds

I photographed this resident in the aged-care centre on Bathurst Island. We talked for a while and then I made a few portraits. Just as I was saying goodbye, I noticed her hands. They tell a story of a long life, but the glitter on her fingernails convey that there's a lot of sparkle left.





3. Wurrurniyanga Future

Some people hate having their portrait made. Others love it. Both these groups are hard to photograph, as one is reluctant to give anything away, and the other gives you too much of what they think you want. Occasionally, I find a subject who is somewhere in middle; they are comfortable with who they are, and are happy to share this with the camera. This eleven-year-old Tiwi girl who lives on Bathurst Island was calm, engaged and clever and a joy to photograph.





4. Life experience

Every public surface in the township of Wurrumiyanga is covered in either graffiti or art, or often a combination of both. This resident was happy to tell me her story of life on Bathurst Island. Her wisdom and calmness mask a mischievous twinkle in her eyes.



*"Working together.
Walking together."*

JENNIFER CLANCY,
MANTIYUPWI
TRADITIONAL OWNER



5. Elcho dinner time

As the sun goes down directly off the westerly facing beach at Galiwin'ku, a few pieces of driftwood are set alight to boil some beautifully patterned sea snails in a pan. The flesh is later picked out of the shells with a small stick and eaten as a snack before the evening meal.





6. The Past is Always Present

The past and the future become entwined on Elcho Island with this image. The art of fishing has been honed over tens of thousands of years but has been modernised with the use of new tools.



7. Holding on

The intangible bond between a mother and baby is hard to capture in a photograph. Sometimes it's the small gestures that tell the biggest stories. In this case, we see a mother's unconditional devotion to her baby.



*"It's not a hand out.
It's a hand up for our
community."*

GEOFF MAJOR, MURRUP



8. Galiwin'ku Fishing

The main beach at Galiwin'ku on Elcho Island comes alive in the evening with families fishing, cooking on open fires, dancing and playing football. In this image, two young people fish with handlines, while a woman, baby and dog look on, perhaps keeping an eye out for crocodiles!



"Listen. Listen to what we've got to say. Let us design programs that ... we've got a part of. If we can design it and we show our people we've got ownership over it, then they'll take it up."

ANTHONY HENRY,
WOORABINDA ELDER



9. Reflection

While a crowd of boys yelled and bombed and splashed at the end of the Palm Island jetty, one boy sat quietly looking into the velvet sea.



10. Flying

Each boy takes a turn to leap off the Palm Island jetty, trying to outdo the previous jumper. As a stills photographer, the task is to capture a frozen moment that is both visually satisfying within the frame, and yet still encapsulates a little of the excitement of the moment.





"What we're doing, through our programming, is supporting First Nations children and young adults into their journey of freedom."

SHELLEE STRICKLAND,
MURRUP CEO

11. Friendship

The bonds between groups of adolescent friends are strong on Palm Island. Steering these relationships to make positive change is essential for a bright future.



12. Evening at the Jetty

The young male form has been the subject of artistic endeavours for thousands of years. Think of Michelangelo's 'David' or Brancusi's 'Torso of a Young Man'. Occasionally a photograph hints at the same objective.



These photos offer a glimpse into Murrup's four partner communities - Galiwin'ku and Wurrumiyanga in the Northern Territory and Palm Island and Woorabinda in Queensland. We pay homage to the Traditional Owners of these magnificent places, and acknowledge the privilege and honour it is to work there.

Mark Chew is one of Australia's preeminent documentary and editorial photographers.

These images are reproduced as museum-grade art prints on cotton rag media and signed and numbered by the photographer. They are presented in a 2cm black timber box frame in their original state. The finished size is 72cm x 102cm x 4cm.



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