

A visit to Mapuru.

For 10 days in June 2009, I lived with the women and children of Mapuru Homeland community, 950 kms by road from Darwin. The stated intention of the trip was to learn to weave baskets. This in itself was a beautiful experience – sitting with the Aboriginal women as they shared their craft from early morning to dark, sitting with my fellow travellers – other white women wanting to experience this unusual ‘holiday’ opportunity.

In the first days of our visit, we were adopted as family by a member of the community. I was Auntie (gäthu) to Linda who spoke no English. I was amazed how much we were able to communicate without a shared language! At the end of our time Linda thanked us for honouring the community by listening to them and learning from them.

My time in Mapuru was a window into a way of life that human beings have lived for millennia. Western culture is putting huge pressure on the eco-systems of our planet home. We have much to learn from indigenous people who live in harmony with the natural world. The highest values of the Mapuru people are caring for the children and the environment. What is more important than this?

Dot Green, Melbourne