

Additional Information About Living and Working in Mäpuru

Location and access

Mäpuru is a tiny town of around 100 Yolŋu people in east Arnhem Land or Yolŋu Land. Close to 50 of these are children. It is located on the mainland, 30 km south of Galiwin'ku (on Elcho Island).

It is a very isolated location, taking around 13 - 15 hours to drive from Darwin to Mäpuru in the dry season (June to November). These roads are impassable in the wet season.

The cheapest way to fly to Mäpuru from Darwin is via Elcho Island on Air North and then a Missionary Aviation Charter (MAF) flight to Mäpuru, about 10 minutes costing around \$1,000 each way. Other more expensive routes are via Milingimbi and Gove.



Conditions of employment include:

- Relocation costs to Mäpuru.
- Travel allowance equal to 4 return flights to Darwin annually.
- Independent accommodation, with ability to host relief staff.
- Fresh food freight assistance
- Remote Incentive Allowance
- Please discuss 'matching' current workplace remote incentives and study leave entitlement possibilities with Principal.

Community

Yirralka Education has invited three qualified teachers to live and work in the town at Mäpuru, the teachers are the only non-Indigenous people living at Mäpuru, therefore we are seeking teachers who are independent, can live a simple, sustainable lifestyle and enjoy Yolŋu as well as their own company.

Community members at Mäpuru may adopt you into their family, ensuring you are surrounded by loving family who will encourage you to take part in broader community life.

Teacher Accommodation

Mäpuru has 3 staff houses. A 3 bedroom house and two, 2 bedroom houses. All houses have a verandah and expansive areas to create gardens. Houses are designed to attract the prevailing breezes as only the bedrooms have airconditioning.

The college also contains a one bedroom flat or staff room within, where most visitors stay.

Power

The college and staff accommodation, along with the rest of the town are solar powered, ensuring adequate power for lights, fans, fridge, freezer and washing machine. Every household (including teachers in each classroom) are mindful of the need to conserve energy use so there is adequate power for everyone.

During 2019 air-conditioning was installed for the first time as our solar power is limited. It was installed in the Secondary classroom, as this building is not orientated to catch the breeze. Air-con was also installed in each bedroom of the 3 teacher houses. This air-con will need to be very carefully managed, especially during the wet season when the sun is not shining, so that fridge and freezers can continue to operate. Conservative, wise use is cautioned.

Internet, phone and television

Each house has 2 small satellite dishes on the roof. The NBN satellite dish enables telephone and internet services. The other enables free to air television and radio services.

Health Service

Mäpuru is visited by Marthakal Health Service usually for one morning per week. This team usually consists of a Registered Nurse and an Indigenous Health Worker, with a Doctor visiting once a month. When staff are not well in-between these visits, Marthakal Health Service will organise medications to be delivered by plane or the patient to be evacuated for health care.

In an emergency the Principal would follow the procedures of the NT Health Emergency Medical Kit, which the school is a registered holder of. This provides immediate access to the Rural or District Medical Officer (DMO) at Royal Darwin Hospital who will guide the dispensing of medications held in this kit or organize emergency evacuation to hospital.

Health Direct also operates a great phone service to provide general medical advice.

The physical isolation of Mäpuru indicates that people applying should have very good or robust general health alongside taking a high level of personal responsibility for their ongoing health care.

Shopping

Mäpuru has a tiny store run co-operatively by the community, *Mäpuru Ngatha*. It contains basic, non-perishable food supplies like tins of flour, baked beans, corned beef, tomato sauce and golden syrup. The Secondary students also run a shop, *Mäpuru Market*, selling other basics to the community, fishing lines, axes, machetes, brake fluid, tin mugs and cooking pots.

Obtaining further goods and food supplies can be tricky, time consuming and expensive. It takes 3 hours to drive each way to the nearest shop at Gapuwiyak during the dry season and it costs \$400 each way to fly to Elcho Island to the nearest shop. There are no shopping services, like Coles on-line, that deliver to Mäpuru.

Once a fortnight, the school purchases fruit from the ALPA store at Galiwin'ku for the students. Staff are encouraged to place orders through ALPA for their fresh supplies to arrive on the same charter flight. A range of service providers fly in to Mäpuru from Darwin and will transport staff food and supplies.

Currently both households have vegetable gardens and enjoy making their own bread, yoghurt, being creative with hunting and making something delicious out of what we have left. In mid-October we also stock up with our non-perishable food supplies (milk powders etc) and essentials (toilet paper etc) to take us through to the following June, which is when we'll drive back to Darwin to have the school 'troopy' serviced.

Recreation

The Arts

- Mäpuru is home to some of the best weavers and dyers in Australia, the Arnhem Weavers. These skilled women can teach you a range of fibre arts and dyeing.
- Bark painting is an enjoyable past time for Mäpuru families

Gardening

- Teachers in the past have created and maintained a vegetable and fruit garden which is a much appreciated resource

Hunting

- Just over one hour's drive away is excellent fishing
- Families hunt for all their protein rich foods in surrounding estuaries, beaches, flood plains and forests. They may ask you to join them on these hunting days.

Note: Access to a vehicle would be advantageous for trips such as fishing, driving to a boat landing (an hour away), hunting or shopping trips to Gapuwiyak. Whilst there are two school vehicles, they are used exclusively for school business and not for staff members' recreational or shopping activities.

A final note from us

We are excited that you are considering joining our team. We have tried to provide enough details to 'paint a picture' of the challenges and opportunities for 'westerners' (Balanda) living in a geographically isolated place as well as the joy and privilege to be invited to live and work with Yolŋu at Mäpuru. Of course, this is something that really needs to be experienced first-hand in order to understand and appreciate. One way of experiencing Mäpuru is to join an Arnhem Weavers or Men's Business workshop at Mäpuru where you will also be introduced to the life of the college.

As part of the discernment process for both yourself and Yirralka Education, short listed applicants will be invited to come to Mäpuru for a week or more and experience the college and life at Mäpuru.

If you are not certain about a long term commitment to living and working at Mäpuru, we would welcome you to work with us for shorter periods as a relief teacher. Relief teaching provides strong opportunities for you to develop relationships with the students and families of Mäpuru, get a real taste of the joys and challenges of working in a remote Yolŋu school and to develop your skills in this ever rewarding field.

In the meantime, if I can provide you with any further information as you consider your application, please don't hesitate to be in contact with me.

John Greateorex

Co-Chair

Yirralka Education

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