The beautiful Gandu Jarjum committee polo shirt was launched at Biennial Conference. Here, the Chair of Gandu Jarjum, Amanda Power, reflects on its conception and design.

“The polo shirts have been a vision of Gandu Jarjum for a while so there could be a visible identity and profile in the Union for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members.

It is something that can be recognised by all Union members and gives everyone in the Union the opportunity to wear it and stand in solidarity with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and on Aboriginal issues and Torres Strait Islander issues. The artist, Dr Mayrah Yarraga Dreise, a Gamilaraay and Yeeralaraaya woman, was, at the time of formulating the design, a principal, an active unionist and member of Gandu Jarjum. Gandu Jarjum members chose the animals on the shirts from Mayrah’s designs to reflect Aboriginal peoples, Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Union.

The eagle on the front was chosen as it is significant and is a symbol of leadership. It is a bird that flies high by itself, it doesn’t hang out and follow other mobs. So that’s like our Union, it’s not afraid to stand and speak up, also as it soars high it sees the whole picture, but then it can also narrow its view to focus on one point. The turtle on the back was also chosen as it is significant and a symbol of protection. The turtle is a gentle creature which has a hard shell on its back. This is why it was placed on the back of the shirt. It’s our protection just like we have the support of our Union’s strong back. These two animals can also be seen either in the sea, on the land or in the sky, therefore making that connection stronger to all.”