



AIATSIS

Strengthening Australian languages: between policy and practice

**Report on the
Language Policy Symposium,
26–27 September 2022**

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Language journey to health and wellbeing represents the Indigenous language journey keeping language strong and finding our way back to using languages that have been 'sleeping', also how language, community and health are forever interconnected.

Bev Coe is a Wiradjuri woman from Condobolin NSW. She is a master fibre artist and painter. Her weaving and artwork is on display at Wiradjuri Condobolin Corporation as well as in international collections.

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Warning

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are respectfully advised that this publication may contain names, images and quotations of deceased persons.

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Executive summary

On 26–27 September 2022, AIATSIS co-hosted a Language Policy Symposium with the Australian Research Council (ARC) Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language (CoEDL) at Maraga in Canberra. The theme of the symposium was: ‘Strengthening Australian languages: between policy and practice’. The symposium brought together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language workers to share their experiences strengthening and supporting their languages with one another, with policy makers and with other stakeholders.

Several key themes emerged from the presentations, including:

- the strengthening power of language
- the value of undertaking language work on Country
- the crucial role of language work in education at all levels
- the importance of Indigenous leadership in language programs and policy
- the reality that language workers wear many hats while caring for language
- the need for different funding structures, and
- the need for continuous training pathways.

The symposium highlighted the diverse contexts in which language work is happening across Australia. If governments hope to support all language work, they must deliver policies that consider all languages — traditional and new languages, spoken and signed languages, Aboriginal Englishes, and Indigenous ways of using Auslan — and all language situations, including revival, revitalisation, recognition and maintenance. Policy makers must also assess and consider the diverse experiences of language groups regarding funding and resources: some have a little, some have a lot and some have none.

Anonymous feedback from attendees was very positive: 80% of all respondents rated the symposium as ‘High’ or ‘Very High’ impact. No respondents rated the symposium as ‘Low’ or ‘Very Low’ impact. Delegates mentioned that they appreciated the opportunity to share ideas on language program delivery with each other and speak directly to government representatives.

Background

Prior to colonisation, hundreds of Indigenous languages were spoken in Australia. Just over two centuries later, only around 12 of these languages are still being acquired by children as their mother tongue from birth and spoken as their main language.¹ As a result, Australia has the dubious distinction of having one of the highest rates of language loss worldwide.² The third National Indigenous Languages Survey, carried out in 2018–2019, showed that over 109 languages are still spoken by adults but are not being acquired by children. Without urgent action to increase speakership, within a few decades these languages may no longer be spoken at all.³

Government policies since colonisation have been a major factor in forcing this dramatic shift. Policies of forcibly removing people from their Country and forcing speakers of different language backgrounds together in working and living situations disrupted intergenerational transmission of languages. This also ensured shifts to new Indigenous contact languages, varieties of Aboriginal English and English. The policies of ‘protection’ enacted in various jurisdictions led to children being removed from their parents, breaking the natural transmission of languages. These policies began in the late 19th century and continued until as late as the 1970s. They affected anywhere between 1 in 10 and 1 in 3 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.⁴

More recently, in 2008, the Northern Territory effectively abolished its remaining bilingual education programs for speakers of some traditional Aboriginal languages by mandating that the first four hours of instruction daily must be in English only.⁵ Although this stance has since been modified, many of those programs are still struggling to recover. Children who are first language speakers of traditional or new Indigenous languages are still not assured of learning in their languages in their first years of schooling.

Language shift to English is also caused by the fact that Indigenous language speakers have fewer and fewer places in which to use their languages. Just over 200 years ago, Indigenous languages were used in every aspect of daily life. Now, government services, education and the media are all delivered overwhelmingly in English. This makes it harder for people to keep using their languages.

1 Commonwealth of Australia 2020, *National Indigenous Languages Report*, Canberra, Australia.

2 Bromham L, X Hua, C Algy & F Meakins 2020, ‘Language endangerment: a multidimensional analysis of risk factors’, *Journal of Language Evolution* 5(1):75–91, doi:10.1093/jole/lzaa002; Simons GF 2019, ‘Two centuries of spreading language loss’, *Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America* 4(1):27, doi:10.3765/plsa.v4i1.4532

3 Commonwealth of Australia 2020

4 Commonwealth of Australia 1997, *Bringing them home: report of the national inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families*. Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/bringing-them-home-report-1997>

5 Simpson, J, J Caffery & P McConvell 2009, *Gaps in Australia's Indigenous Language Policy: dismantling bilingual education in the Northern Territory*, discussion paper 24, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

Positive and nuanced policy supporting the diversity of Indigenous language speakers and learners has been lacking in recent decades. In 2009, Australia released a national Indigenous languages policy statement. This was not supported by green papers or white papers⁶, but rather consisted of a media release from the responsible ministers announcing a meagre \$9.3 million in funding to 'protect' Indigenous languages, along with some high-level objectives and actions. The policy statement has not been updated since then and it is no longer publicly available.⁷

Given the fact that government policies have been instrumental in disrupting the learning and use of traditional Indigenous languages and causing language shift, we need to consider how policies can now be used to ensure the full range of speakers and learners of all Indigenous languages are recognised and supported so their languages flourish into the future.

6 Green papers are documents released by the government on a particular issue to stimulate discussion and feedback. White papers are also published by governments to seek feedback on a policy proposal or proposed legislation.

7 Macklin, The Hon J & The Hon P Garrett 2009, *New national approach to preserve Indigenous Languages*, [Joint Media Release], 9 August, Australian Government, accessed 1 August 2023, <https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2F95DU6%22;src1=sm1>; Wayback Machine 2009 (25 August), 'Indigenous Languages - A National Approach: the importance of Australia's Indigenous languages', Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage, and the Arts, accessed 1 August 2023, https://web.archive.org/web/20091013112416/https://www.arts.gov.au/indigenous/languages_policy

The Language Policy Symposium

In response to the need for new thinking around language policy outlined above, the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and the ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language (CoEDL) decided to jointly organise and host a two-day symposium, 'Strengthening Australian languages: between policy and practice'. The symposium brought together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language workers and linguists to meet at AIATSIS to talk about their experiences in strengthening language in their communities. The symposium provided language workers with the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience with each other, academics and government policy makers. The symposium was successful in strengthening the relationships between communities across Australia and the Torres Strait and provided these language workers with the opportunity to communicate directly with those developing the policies that will impact their communities.

This report explores the key themes of the symposium, which were arrived upon after a process of qualitatively coding the scribed notes from the presentations. Select presentations can be viewed on the AIATSIS website.



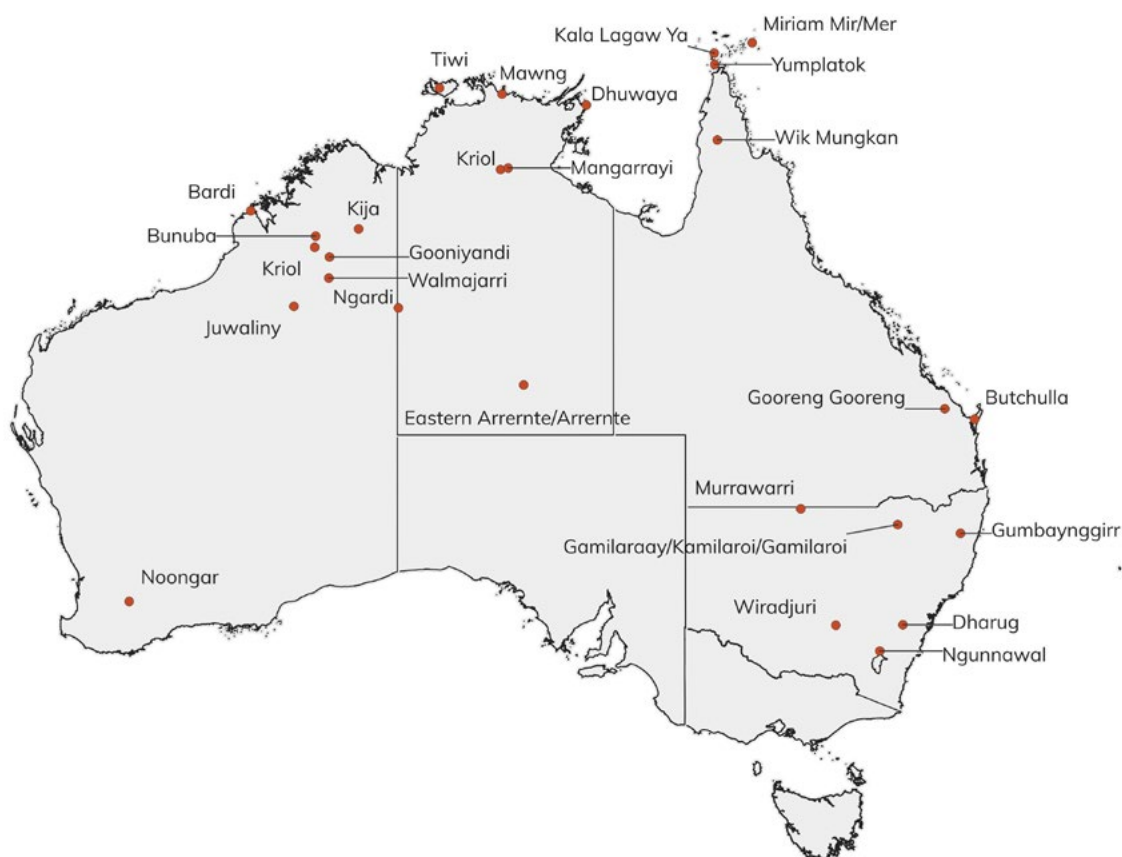
Joyce Bonner, Butchulla Aboriginal Corporation, talking with delegates at the AIATSIS Language Policy Symposium.

Event details

The Language Policy Symposium was held over two days, 26–27 September 2022 at the AIATSIS building, Maraga, 51 Lawson Crescent, Acton in Canberra. The symposium was facilitated by Rarrtjiwuy Melanie Herdman.

Approximately 50 people were brought together in dialogue over both days, including:

- 30 Indigenous delegates engaged in language work, including language teachers, language centre managers and workers, and academics
- representatives from language centres and language stakeholder organisations
- academics engaged in research on Australian Indigenous languages
- federal and state government representatives, and
- First Languages Australia.



Languages represented by presenting delegates at the 2022 AIATSIS Language Policy Symposium.
Attendees from other language groups attended and contributed to the forum in small group discussions. Points are approximate only.⁸

⁸ AIATSIS 2022, 'AustLang', Data.gov.au, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, accessed 8 August 2023, <https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/70132e6f-259c-4e0f-9f95-4aed1101c053>

Table 1: Delegates – Tertiary institutions and government

Tertiary Institutions	Government
The Australian National University (ACT)	Aboriginal Languages Trust (NSW)
Charles Darwin University (NT)	Department of Education (Commonwealth)
The University of Melbourne (Vic)	Department of Education (WA)
The University of Sydney (NSW)	National Indigenous Australians Agency (C'wth)
The University of Queensland (Qld)	Office for the Arts (C'wth)

Table 2: Delegates – Language centres and language stakeholder organisations

Bundiyarra Irra Wangga Language Centre
Butchulla Aboriginal Corporation
Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation
Dharug Ngurra Aboriginal Corporation
Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation
Fitzroy Valley District High School
First Languages Australia
Gumbaynggirr Language and Culture Nest
Kimberley Language Resource Centre
Koolkan Aurukun Community School
Ltyentye Apurte Catholic School
Mawng Ngaralk Language Organisation
Tangentyere Council
Tiwi Islands Council
Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre
Yanama Budyari Gumada Aboriginal Corporation
Yanunijarra Aboriginal Corporation
Yirrkala Community School
Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation



Pirrawayingi Marius Puruntatameri (centre), Top End Language Forum, speaking to fellow attendees, including Robert McLellan (right), University of Queensland.



Jenny Gregory-Kniveton, Irra Wangga Language Centre, Bundiyarra Aboriginal Corporation.

Speakers and presentations

- Day One consisted of a Welcome to Country by Ngunnawal Elder Dr Caroline Hughes AM, a keynote by Craig Ritchie, then CEO of AIATSIS (since retired), and four presentations:
 - Craig Ritchie, Chief Executive Officer, AIATSIS, '**National Indigenous Languages Strategy and Policy**'
 - Rarrtjiwuy Melanie Herdman, Pirrawayingi Marius Puruntatameri and Jenny Manmurulu, Top End Language Forum, '**Top End Languages**'
 - Carmel Ryan, Bernice Cavanagh and Susan Poetsch, Ltyentye Apurte School and University of Sydney, '**Arrernte Rlterrke Atyene-tyeke. History, achievements and needs for keeping Arrernte strong into the future at Ltyentye Apurte**'
 - Tracey Cameron, Lynette Riley, Denise Angelo, Susan Poetsch and NSW Aboriginal Languages Trust, '**Findings from: *Language Journeys – A literature review and guide for communities researching, learning and teaching Aboriginal languages in NSW***⁹
 - Jasmine Seymour and Corina Norman, '**Reigniting Dharug**'



Ngunnawal Elder and Executive Director, AIATSIS Collections Services Group, Dr Caroline Hughes AM, giving the Welcome to Country.

⁹ Angelo, D, T Cameron, S Poetsch & L Riley 2022, *Language Journeys: A Literature Review and Guide for Communities Researching, Learning and Teaching Aboriginal Languages in NSW*, NSW Aboriginal Languages Trust, Sydney.

- Day Two consisted of a panel session and ten presentations:
 - Lorraine Injie, Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre, '**Language centres: challenges and opportunities**'
 - Jennifer Gregory-Kniveton and Edie Maher, Irra Wangga Language Centre, '**Policy decisions and the impacts for language centres – Language Hubs: a new way of working for us**'
 - Marmingee Hand, '**Working with multiple languages in Fitzroy Crossing: Bunuba, Gooniyandi, Walmajarri & Kriol**'
 - Josie Lardy, '**Jilkminggan Community Languages – Mangarrayi, Kriol**'
 - Juanita Sellwood, '**Yumplatok and traditional Torres Strait Islander languages**'
 - Michael Jarrett, Gumbaynggirr Language Nest, '**What's happening with Gumbaynggirr Language**'
 - Yalmay Yunupiju, Natasha Yunupiju and Bamuruju Munungurr with Jill Wigglesworth, Yirrkala Community School, '**Yäku ga Rirrakay App**'
 - Denise Angelo and Jane Simpson, '**Launch and discussion of OECD report: *Common Ground Diverse Pathways: Learning (in) Indigenous Languages*. Findings from OECD working paper for Promising Practices – Supporting Success for Indigenous Students in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada**'¹⁰
 - Beau Williams, First Languages Australia, '**Languages Policy Partnership**'
 - Pauline Halchuk, Indigenous Languages Policy Taskforce, Office for the Arts, '**Language policy and partnerships**'

¹⁰ Angelo, D, S Disbray, R Singer, C O'Shannessy, J Simpson, H Smith, B Meek & G Wigglesworth 2022, *Learning (in) Indigenous languages: Common ground, diverse pathways*. OECD Working papers No. 278, OECDiLibrary, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, doi:10.1787/e80ad1d4-en



Michael Jarrett, Gumbaynggirr Language Nest, speaking with other delegates.



Des Crump, Industry Fellow in Indigenous Languages, University of Queensland, speaking to delegates including Carmel O'Shannessy, Australian National University (left).

Symposium themes

Several key themes emerged throughout the presentations, panel sessions and small group discussions. These are outlined below.

Language strengthens

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Indigenous languages are more than just words. Rather, languages are a fundamental part of an Indigenous person's identity and sense of self; languages are intrinsic to identity. This is true regardless of the extent to which people speak the language every day, and regardless of whether the language is a traditional or new language.

Traditional languages belong to particular areas of Country and particular peoples. Knowing them strengthens Indigenous people from the inside out. Using traditional languages creates pride and builds confidence. Speaking language has a positive impact on wellbeing and health, particularly mental health.¹¹

Carmel Ryan, a speaker of eastern Arrernte from an Arrernte-speaking community, addressed the room passionately, saying that:



Carmel Ryan (left) & Bernice Cavanagh, Ltyentye Apurte School.

**'Language doesn't
just come out of
my mouth.**

**It comes out of
my heart and
my mouth.'**
– Carmel Ryan

¹¹ Commonwealth of Australia 2020

Many presenters also spoke of the sense of power that using language gives the speaker. Speaking in Yolngu Matha, Yalmay Yunupiṅu said that:



**'Language is a power
... it is our strength
It gives us power.'
– Yalmay Yunupiṅu**

Yalmay Yunupiṅu, who co-presented with Natasha Yunupiṅu, Bamuruṅu Munungurr and Jill Wigglesworth on the Yäku ga Rirrakay app.

Carmel and Yalmay both speak traditional languages which are still being acquired fully and automatically by children in their communities. This is not the case for most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, but their languages are still equally precious to their people. Presenters reported on their extensive community work to reawaken their languages, often from the ground up with very little or no support. All advocated for the profound benefits of regaining their languages, both for individual and community wellbeing.



Jenny Manmurulu, Top End Language Forum.

Jasmine Seymour and Corina Norman presented on the transformative power of reviving their language, Dharug. Dharug is the language of the Sydney area, which experienced the earliest invasion and colonisation in Australia. Jasmine and Corina spoke about how awakening their language from historical records has been hugely transformative for Dharug people. For some Dharug people, Dharug language lessons are their first positive engagement with the educational system, and learning their language has created new opportunities in the workforce.

Delegates from language communities where new Indigenous languages (also called contact languages) like Yumplatok and Kriol are spoken also emphasised the importance of these languages for their speakers. These languages are part of the multilingual landscape of these communities and also need active processes to bolster their recognition.

Juanita Sellwood highlighted the importance of Yumplatok (Torres Strait Creole) in forging a distinct Torres Strait Islander identity. She noted the role that Yumplatok had played as a common language throughout the Torres Strait for Torres Strait Islanders organising the 1936 maritime strike. This strike focused on just wages and civil rights for Indigenous peoples.

Marmingee Hand, Juanita Sellwood and Josie Lardy all spoke about the need for recognising and responding to new Indigenous languages as the first/main languages of community members and the need to grow multilingualism among students, adding traditional languages and English to students' repertoires.

'There is strength and power in recognising the value of multilingualism.

Seeing contact languages as an asset and not a hindrance is a way to normalise a strong cultural value of knowing and wanting to learn many languages, including traditional languages.' – Juanita Sellwood

Language and Country

Country is tightly bound to traditional languages: 'Language belongs to Country' and 'language is country and country is language'.¹²

Several delegates shared positive experiences running immersive language experiences on Country, where they 'walked and talked' language. Here, language is situated within a deeply valued cultural context.

Marmingee Hand emphasised the value of students and their teachers having time on Country with Elders to gain a deeper appreciation for the rich interconnection of Country and language:



'When you go on Country, you have to talk to the River, to the old people ... Teaching our kids in language of why the river is so important to us.'

– Marmingee Hand

Marmingee Hand, Fitzroy Valley District High School, (centre) in a group discussion with Baressa Frazer (right) and other delegates.

¹² Donovan T 2022, 'Writing Country: Aboriginality Through Poetry in the Works of Australian Aboriginal Authors', *AIC Special Issue*, 3, p 83

Language in classrooms, community workshops, TAFEs & universities

Many delegates were educators with a great passion for the positive impact of Indigenous languages in education. Across Australia, great language learning and speaking (and reading and writing) goes on in school classrooms, community settings and formal adult education contexts.

Tracey Cameron, Denise Angelo and Susan Poetsch presented the results of a literature review conducted for the Aboriginal Languages Trust. A major finding of this review was that despite passionate and heartfelt advocacy from Aboriginal people and groups across New South Wales about the importance of reviving their languages, there was very little material available to support their work, such as practical strategies for learning one's language in a revival context and how to create language learning and teaching resources.



Tracey Cameron, University of Sydney, and Denise Angelo, University of Sydney and Australian National University, presenting on their findings from: *Language Journeys – A literature review and guide for communities researching, learning and teaching Aboriginal languages in NSW.*

Yalmay Yunupinju is a long-term experienced classroom teacher supporting first languages as the medium of instruction, including first language literacy education. She believes profoundly in its importance for children's educational success and for the maintenance of their language. She, along with other team members, presented their work on developing a suite of activities into an app to teach and monitor early first language and literacy development.

Carmel Ryan and Bernice Cavanagh are also from a community with a history of bilingual education. They spoke about the importance of Arrernte for children and their schooling, but also drew attention to the decreased opportunities for Arrernte language and literacy learning and teaching. There are initiatives underway that seek to change this, such as the language certificates for high school students.

Josie Lardy, a speaker of Kriol, spoke about the significance for school students of learning Mangarrayi, the traditional language of the Jilkminggan community. In addition, Josie emphasised the importance of using the students' first language, Kriol, to promote comprehension and engagement (as they are in the process of learning English).

'I had primary school boys about 11, 12 years old. They were not very connected with school or their learning when it came to the English side of it, reading and writing part of it ... For that term we did learning about Kriol. We learned the sounds and everything ...

By the end of that term those boys were confident, they were reading sentences in Kriol, getting up and being active participants in the lessons and their interest in literacy — it was awesome.' – Josie Lardy

Michael Jarrett is a renowned teacher of Gumbaynggirr language from the early years through to adults. He is the chairperson of the Murrumbidgee Aboriginal Language and Culture Centre and works for the Gumbaynggirr Language Nest. He has taught Gumbaynggirr in schools and in TAFE for many years. Michael spoke about his early language learning and teaching when he was becoming an early childhood teacher and attending lessons at Murrumbidgee.



Michael Jarrett, Gumbaynggirr Language Nest, provided an update on the Gumbaynggirr language.

'I say to people: If you want to learn your language, you teach language, then you learn more and it starts to stick in your head.'
– Michael Jarrett

Indigenous leadership

All delegates strongly emphasised that any policy, project or program needs to be led by Indigenous people who are actively involved in language work. Language communities should determine their own journey with their language, developing and applying their own cultural protocols. Communities must be allowed to set their own agendas. Jenny Gregory-Kniveton summed it up:



'Language belongs to the people and should be driven by the custodians of that language on Country.' – Jenny Gregory-Kniveton

Jennifer Gregory-Kniveton and Edie Maher, Irra Wangga Language Centre.

Rarrtjiwuy Melanie Herdman, Pirrawayingi Marius Puruntatameri and Jenny Manmurulu reported on the Top End Language Forum held in Darwin. The forum brought together over 65 representatives from more than 10 languages in the Top End, many of which are still spoken fluently by all generations. Delegates established a cultural governance board and produced a draft Strong Languages 2032 Statement to articulate their goals for the UNESCO International Decade of Indigenous Languages.



Pirrawayingi Marius Puruntatameri, and Jenny Manmurulu co-presented alongside facilitator Rarrtjiwuy Melanie Herdman on the recent Top End Language forum.

Beau Williams, CEO of First Languages Australia (FLA), a national member of the Coalition of Peaks, spoke about the Languages Policy Partnership (LPP), which is co-chaired by Beau, in his capacity as CEO of FLA, and Dr Stephen Arnott, Deputy Secretary, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA). The LPP, set up in December 2022, is one of five policy partnerships established under Priority Reform One of the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap: 'Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making'. The LPP will make recommendations to the Joint Council on Closing the Gap on language policy affecting Indigenous stakeholders.



Beau Williams, Chief Executive Officer, First Languages Australia.

Pauline Halchuk, Director of the Indigenous Language Policy Taskforce in the Office for the Arts (OFTA), discussed the government's participation in the International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022–32 (IDIL). Pauline spoke of OFTA's commitment to partnering with stakeholders for IDIL through the establishment of an IDIL Directions Group. The Directions Group comprises 18 members: 13 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members, including 2 representatives from FLA, and 5 ex officio members from key government agencies. The key purpose of the Directions Group was to develop Australia's National Action Plan for IDIL: *Voices of Country—Australia's Action Plan for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022–2032 (The Action Plan)*.¹³ The Action Plan was released 23 August 2023 in Darwin at the biennial PULiIMA Indigenous Languages and Technology Conference.

¹³ First Languages Australia & Commonwealth of Australia 2023, *Voices of Country – Australia's Action Plan for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022–32*, <https://www.arts.gov.au/publications/voices-country-australias-action-plan-international-decade-indigenous-languages-2022-2032>

Edie Maher and Jenny Gregory-Kniveton from Irra Wangga Language Centre in Western Australia reported on their pilot 'language hubs' program, which is designed to ensure language communities determine their own language journey through the correct cultural protocols:

- The first step for a hub is for community members to come together and decide on cultural protocols for working with their language.
- The group decides on a plan for their language and invests funds from native title income or another source.
- The group then works in partnership with the local language centre to capacity-build the hub, doing so via a service agreement with the language centre.

This removes some of the burden from the language centre, which is very poorly resourced, and puts control of the language firmly in the hands of the language community members. However, it is important to note that not all language communities across Australia have the necessary resources to deliver this model, nor are they all serviced by a language centre.



Irene Davey (left), Kimberley Language Resource Centre, and James Bednall, Charles Darwin University.

Indigenous leadership by people who are actively working for their languages and communities ensures the diversity of language situations is included and that language communities decide what's best for them. We heard examples of Indigenous leadership in four different language contexts:¹⁴

- **Maintenance situation:** The Yolngu and Arrernte delegates expressed the view that children in their communities had the right to learn in their first language. They had worked hard throughout the course of their careers to support this and want their voice to be heard.
- **Revitalisation situation:** Lorraine Injie presented on the work undertaken by the Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre since the 1980s to record the last fluent speakers of the many Pilbara languages and produce language learning resources for community. Likewise, Marmingee Hand in the Kimberley and Josie Lardy in the Top End have worked with Elders to pass on their languages to younger generations.
- **Revival situation:** Jasmine Seymour and Corina Norman showcased their Dharug community language course, which is not supported by a language centre or a NSW government-funded language nest. Their Aboriginal-led organisations supported an Indigenous Languages and the Arts (ILA) grant application. Both Jasmine and Corina had undertaken the Master of Indigenous Languages Education to enhance their abilities to research, design, develop and deliver Dharug language revival lessons.
- **Recognition¹⁵ situation:** New Indigenous language speaking communities want speakers of Kriol, Yumplatok or other creoles and mixed languages to be recognised and catered for, as well as having the opportunity to learn their traditional languages.

14 Many terms have been used in this space, including maintaining, (re-)awakening, rebuilding, renewing, returning, bringing back, reigniting, reconstructing, reclaiming, reviving, revitalising etc. See Gale 2023 for a discussion of some of the r-words used in language revival. Gale, M 2023, 'Language revival' In C Bower (Ed) *The Oxford Guide to Australian Languages*, Oxford University, Press United Kingdom.

15 The lack of recognition of new Indigenous contact languages and their speakers is flagged often in the National Indigenous Languages Report (Commonwealth of Australia 2020, pp 21, 54, 78). The importance of implementing processes for recognising new Indigenous contact languages — and ramifications of misrecognition for speakers — are outlined by Angelo (2021); Angelo, D 2021, *Countering misrecognition of contact languages and their ecologies in Australia*, PhD Thesis, Australian National University, Canberra. Retrieved from <https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/227145>

Language workers wear many hats while caring for language

Several delegates also reflected on the personal challenges arising from language work. Language work requires vast technical, administrative and emotional labour, most of which is unpaid. Many delegates are one of the only, if not the only, person in their community to manage this workload.



'If I don't do it, I don't think anyone else is going to.'
– Lorraine Injie

Lorraine Injie, Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre.

This work is almost exclusively in addition to other careers, work as parents or carers, and social and cultural responsibilities in the community.

Facilitator Rarrtjwuy Melanie Herdman spoke about wanting the non-Indigenous attendees to understand that these additional burdens on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language workers — especially women — delay progress on language work.

These challenges relate to the short-term and inconsistent way that languages funding is available in Australia, another recurring challenge identified by all attendees.



'I want our supporters, our advocates, organisations that are supporting our language programs to understand that when you meet someone like me, language work is not the only job they are doing ... I don't want that story to continue. We need the time and space [and resources] to do our work.'
– Rarrtjwuy Melanie Herdman

Facilitator and presenter Rarrtjwuy Melanie Herdman.

Need for different funding structures

Attendees expressed concern over the current funding structures for Indigenous language work. In particular, several delegates highlighted that the competitive and restrictive application process for Indigenous Languages and the Arts (ILA) funding creates division within Indigenous Australia. The fight for funding does not foster cooperation between communities. The inconsistency of whether a particular language is covered by a language centre or not also means that different languages can have access to vastly different levels of support.

In addition, different state policies create different funding environments and opportunities for Indigenous languages across Australia. ILA funding is only available for traditional Indigenous languages (such as Central Arrernte, Bardi and Gamilaraay). There is no federal funding or policy initiatives to support speakers of new Indigenous languages (such as Kriol and Yumplatok) and other less well-recognised creole or mixed languages, even though they constitute the first language of whole communities. Nor are Aboriginal varieties of Auslan (Australian Sign Language) recognised or supported. The end result is that any two Indigenous languages can have very different resources available to them.

For example, the greater Sydney area is home to around 11.2% of Australia's entire Indigenous population.¹⁶ Despite this, Dharug — the language of place — has no federally-funded language centre nor a state-funded language nest. Jasmine Seymour and Corina Norman described how instead, Dharug community language lessons have relied on welcome but ad-hoc federal grants, and low-cost venues, including a free workshop space recently provided by Western Sydney University.

The fact that so much language funding is ad-hoc and inconsistent makes planning difficult and forces most language workers to do their work in addition to full-time careers. Jenny Gregory-Kniveton described this as 'little drips of money'. Jasmine Seymour summed this up:



Jasmine Seymour and Corina Norman, Dharug language teachers and activists

'One-off or project funding doesn't support the continuous language work essential to make more languages strong ... [It] closes the door on developing real, ongoing, sustainable language programs.' – Jasmine Seymour

¹⁶ ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2021a, '2021 Census Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people QuickStats: Australia', *ABS Website*, accessed 31 July 2023, <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/IQSAUS>; ABS 2021b, '2021 Census Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people QuickStats: Greater Sydney', *ABS Website*, accessed 31 July 2023, <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/IQS1GSYD>

Need for training pathways

Building on concerns about funding, delegates expressed the need for formalised professional pathways for Indigenous language speakers, teachers and workers. At present, across Australia, accreditation and training opportunities to become an Indigenous language worker or teacher are very limited. Accreditation opportunities in an Indigenous language, even if spoken fully as a first language, are almost non-existent.

There are some Indigenous language teaching accreditation programs with a long-term track record. These include the Master of Indigenous Languages Education (MILE) program as well as Aboriginal language teacher training in Western Australia. The MILE program is offered at the University of Sydney for Indigenous teachers from all over Australia. In order to be eligible for entry to this master's program, participants require a bachelor's degree and two years of teaching experience.

The Western Australian education department offers an excellent program of Aboriginal language teacher training and accreditation over two years, with an additional practical year. This gives a Limited Authority to Teach (LAT) qualification (which can be expanded to full teacher qualification and registration with further university study if wanted). Both this and the MILE program are 'block release', delivered through intensive blocks of study time away from base for relatively short periods of time (e.g. MILE has 1 week-long blocks). The 'block release' mode is often considered amenable to Indigenous participants' many family and community responsibilities, and is less disruptive to employment situations, especially for schools.

These programs are excellent, but more pathways are required. Community members may be qualified to work with their traditional language in the eyes of the community, but this does not automatically translate into the qualification or skillset to work in schools. The training opportunities for language community members who would like to work as school language teachers are both limited and variable across states and territories.

Language learning and/or studying pathways should be continuous. There should be Indigenous language programs at school which can dovetail with TAFE and university opportunities, undergraduate to postgraduate. There should be options for remote learning too. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be able to choose to study their language and to gain academic credit for this, but very few Aboriginal languages are taught at tertiary level.

In addition, there has been a real lack of attention to pay standards for Indigenous language workers and teachers across Australia. This has the potential to contribute to conflict and frustration in the sector. Given the slender training and accreditation opportunities, Indigenous language speakers, workers and teachers have almost no professional career pathways, and limited scope for advancing in this area.

At Ltyentye Apurte school, most of the teachers were trained in the 1980s and 1990s and are approaching retirement age. There are very few young Arrernte teachers coming through to replace them. A significant contributor to this is the dismantling of Batchelor College's Remote Area Teacher Education program which supported so many of the present (older) generation of Aboriginal teachers to gain their qualifications. Also, over the past two decades, many bilingual education programs in the Northern Territory were disrupted or halted, which has left many

younger Aboriginal people lacking confidence in reading and writing in their first language. The Batchelor program has recently been restarted, but a generation has essentially been skipped.¹⁷

Support for children's first languages has been highly inconsistent across the jurisdictions and languages. Individual Indigenous language educators nevertheless seek to harness students' first and main languages to improve their educational outcomes. Delegates reported on their many local initiatives. For example, Baressa Frazer spoke of the bilingual schooling that used to be in place in Aurukun. She is once again seeking to support the Wik Mungkan-speaking students in school.



Baressa Frazer, Koolkan Aurukun State School.

New Indigenous languages, which have the largest speakership of all Indigenous languages, are often omitted from Indigenous languages policy, initiatives and funding, including in first language initiatives. However, like other strong Indigenous languages, these are the essential ingredient in students' education success.

¹⁷ The new Remote Aboriginal Teacher Education program, recently re-established at the Batchelor Institute of Tertiary Education (BIITE), consists of a vocational education level Certificate III and Certificate IV. It is not a bachelor's degree level teaching qualification.

Common ground, diverse pathways: policy solutions for all

The symposium aimed to give a platform to language workers from across Australia, representing the full spectrum of language contexts and ecologies. While the themes discussed above highlight the **common ground** between language communities, policy makers must also consider the **diverse pathways** required for different groups.

The importance of traditional Indigenous languages constitutes **common ground** between all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples all value their traditional languages, and their connection to Country and identity.

However, different languages are learned to different degrees and have different levels of support. So Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language communities are on **diverse pathways** as they seek to realise their aspirations for their languages.

This was well articulated by Jasmine Seymour (Dharug):

'There is such a large range of language stories here today. Our languages all weave together into the language picture of this continent.' – Jasmine Seymour

Key types of 'language stories' include:

- **maintenance:** local traditional language is learned automatically as the main language by young children; or
- **revitalisation:** the local traditional language is spoken fluently by an older generation, but younger people know less and might not use it; or
- **revival:** the local traditional language is being revived from archival sources and some remembrances; or
- **recognition:** a new Indigenous contact language is spoken as the main language of community members and the local traditional language may be being revitalised or revived.

Delegates all demonstrated how language workers have a keen sense of the languages spoken within their communities, and the needs of their languages and communities. In turn, it is important that governments better recognise both the common ground and the diverse pathways of communities across Australia when designing policies and services for Indigenous languages. It is hoped the Languages Policy Partnership will provide a forum for this connection to be made.



(from left to right) James Bednall, CDU; Gordon Marshall, Kimberley Language Resource Centre; Sheridan Williams, Office for the Arts.



Peter Perfremet, National Indigenous Australians Agency.

Appendix A – Symposium Program



AIATSIS

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PROGRAM

Strengthening Australian languages: Between policy and practice

Monday 26 September – Tuesday 27 September 2022
Mabo Room, AIATSIS, 51 Lawson Cr, Acton

Monday 26 September 2022, Mabo Room, AIATSIS

Facilitator: Melanie Rarrtjwuy Herdman

In-person attendance only

Time	Speaker	Title/subject
12.30-2.00	<i>LUNCH</i>	
2.00-2.15	Caroline Hughes, Executive Director of Collections Services Group, AIATSIS	Welcome to Country (MC: Housekeeping)
2.15-2.45	Craig Ritchie, CEO, AIATSIS	<i>National Indigenous Languages Strategy and Policy</i>
2.45-3.15	<i>AFTERNOON TEA</i>	
3.15-3.45	Melanie Herdman, Pirrawayingi Marius Puruntatameri & Jenny Manmurulu, Top End Language Forum, NT	<i>Top End Languages</i>

Research and Education Group | 1

3.45-4.15	Carmel Ryan & Bernice Cavanagh, Ltyentye Apurte School, NT	<i>Arremte rterke atyene-tyeke. History, achievements and needs for keeping Arremte strong into the future at Ltyentye Apurte</i>
4.15-4.35	Tracey Cameron, Lynette Riley, Denise Angelo & Susan Poetsch, NSW Aboriginal Languages Trust	<i>Findings from: Learning Journeys: A literature review and guide for communities researching, learning and teaching Aboriginal languages in NSW</i>
4.35-4.55	Jasmine Seymour & Corina Norman	<i>Reigniting Dharug</i>
4:55-5:15	Audience discussion and commentary (scribed)	

Tuesday 27 September 2022, Mabo Room, AIATSIS

Facilitator: Melanie Rarrtjwuy Herdman

In-person attendance only

Time	Speaker	Title/subject
9.00-9.10	Caroline Hughes, Executive Director of Collections Services Group, AIATSIS	Welcome to Country (MC: Housekeeping)
9.10-9.40	Lorraine Injie, Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre, WA	<i>Language centres: Challenges and opportunities</i>
9:40-10.10	Jennifer Gregory-Kniveton and Edie Maher, Irra Wangga Language Centre, WA	<i>Policy decisions and the impacts for language centres</i>
10:10-10:20	Audience discussion and commentary (scribed)	
10.20-10.50	<i>MORNING TEA</i>	

Research and Education Group | 2

10.50-11.20	Marmingee Hand, Josie Lardy & Juanita Sellwood	<i>Supporting multilingual communities: contact languages and traditional languages</i>
11.20-11.50	Michael Jarrett, Gumbaynggirr Language Nest, NSW	<i>What's happening with Gumbaynggirr language</i>
11.50-12.20	Yalmay Yunupiju, Natasha Yunupiju & Bamuruju Mununggurr with Jill Wigglesworth, Yirrkala Community School, NT	<i>Yäku ga Rirrakay</i>
12.20-12.30	Audience discussion and commentary (scribed)	
12.30-1.30	<i>LUNCH</i>	
1.30-2.30	Denise Angelo and Jane Simpson	<i>Launch and discussion of OECD report: Common Ground Diverse Pathways: Learning (in) Indigenous Languages. Findings from OECD working paper for Promising Practices - Supporting Success for Indigenous Students in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada</i>
2.30-2.30	Beau Williams, First Languages Australia	<i>Languages Policy Partnership</i>
2:30-3:00	Pauline Halchuk, Director, Indigenous Languages and Arts, Office of the Arts	<i>Languages policy and partnerships</i>
3:00-3:30	Audience discussion and commentary (scribed)	
3:30-4:00	<i>Afternoon tea</i>	

4.00-4.10	Reprise of main points of presentations	
4.10-5.00	Panel discussion	Discussants: Desmond Crump, Ian Gumbula, Lorraine Injie
6.30	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>SYMPOSIUM DINNER for all participants</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Hellenic Club</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>13 Moore Street, Canberra</i></p>	

Appendix B – Presenter bios

The following bios were submitted by delegates prior to the symposium for the event program.

Tracey Cameron

Tracey Cameron is a Gamilaraay person and Gamilaraay language teacher with family connections to her father's Gamilaraay ngurrmbaa (Country), Burra Bee Dee and Coonabarabran in northern NSW. She is involved in strengthening her community's language through learning, teaching and researching her Gamilaraay language, and mentoring and collaborating with other Gamilaraay teachers. Tracey is a qualified teacher with extensive teaching experience in schools with Aboriginal enrolments. She currently holds the position of lecturer, teaching and researching Gamilaraay language, and teaching in Aboriginal Education and History courses, in the School of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney. Tracey is also involved in the Sydney Speaks project, looking at Aboriginal English in the inner-city area.

Bernice Cavanagh

Bernice Cavanagh is a senior community member at Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa) and works part-time in the school's Literature Production Centre. This Centre houses Arrernte teaching materials developed by collaborative teams in the 1980s–1990s, including traditional stories, sets of readers and themed kit sets. Bernice has been involved in digitising some of the materials, including transforming printed books into PowerPoints with text and image. Some of the storybooks have been scanned and made available on the Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages, hosted online by Charles Darwin University.

Jennifer Gregory-Knivetton

Jennifer Gregory-Knivetton was born in Geraldton, WA, and has lived there all her life. Jennifer is a Kija/Bard woman with links to the West and East Kimberley, and has worked extensively in the Kimberley, West Kimberley and Pilbara for many years in her role as a Manager for DEETYA (CES), Manager for Aboriginal Education, Coordinator for Aboriginal Education and as an Aboriginal consultant with Kimberley Group Training in the early 1990s. Jennifer moved back to Geraldton and has worked for the Bundiyarra Aboriginal Corporation and the Irra Wangga Language Centre for the past 20 years. She is a current member of the First Languages Australia Management Committee and is passionate about language, policy and community and anything that can influence change in her community. Jennifer is semi-retired and works part-time as a Community Engagement Consultant with the Irra Wangga Language Centre.

Pauline Halchuk

Pauline Halchuk is the Director of the Indigenous Language Policy Taskforce in the Office of the Arts. The Taskforce is the Commonwealth lead on the UNESCO Decade of Indigenous Languages and Closing the Gap, Outcome 16 — *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing*. She is an ex officio member of the International Decade for Indigenous Languages Directions Group and co-chair of the Core Working Group to establish a Language Policy Partnership under Closing the Gap. Pauline is originally from Ottawa, Canada, and has an Honours Degree in Economics and a Masters Degree in Development Economics. Her strong interest in becoming an ally for Indigenous languages and culture was ignited by two events — the first, a First Nations leader coming to her primary school to share creation stories, and the second, a poem by Barbara Whitby called *The Last of the Beothuks*. Fun fact — Pauline was legitimately conflicted about a choice to move to Karachi, Pakistan or Adelaide, Australia.

Marmingee Hand

Marmingee Hand is a Walmajarri woman based in Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley Region of Western Australia. Marmingee is a qualified teacher with a deep commitment to Aboriginal languages, cultural knowledge, and community health and wellbeing. She teaches Walmajarri, coordinates and supports the school Aboriginal languages program which includes the Bunuba and Gooniyandi languages, and recognises Kriol as students' first language. Marmingee has a Bachelor of Applied Science (Management and Aboriginal Community Development), Bachelor of Education and a Master of Indigenous Languages Education. She has extensive experience as a researcher and a co-author in the areas of health (Lililwan project on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders [FASD] in remote Aboriginal communities; longitudinal Bigiswun Kid project), culture and the environment (Voices of Martuwarra Fitzroy River; Two-way Science) and Aboriginal languages teaching (From the Ground Up).

Michael Jarrett

Micklo Jarrett is a member of the Baga-Baga clan of the Gumbaynggirr language group on the mid-north coast of NSW. He grew up surrounded by Elders who taught him Gumbaynggirr ways of knowing and thinking, just as taught by the Ancestors. As an adult, he increased his knowledge with assistance from Murrumbidgee Aboriginal Language and Culture Cooperative and key knowledge holders in the community. Micklo has an early childhood teaching qualification and holds a Master of Indigenous Languages Education from the University of Sydney. With his ancestral knowledge, connection to Country and aptitude for storytelling, together with his understanding of modern education, Micklo welcomes you to a personal, unique and authentic cultural experience.

Josie Lardy

Josie Lardy is an Aboriginal educator, researcher, and interpreter and translator. She is a qualified early childhood teacher who has taught bilingually in Kriol-English with her students and supported a Mangarrayi language program in school. Josie has also worked as a researcher on a couple of projects alongside Western Sydney University, most recently on the development of a Mangarrayi language learning app. She became a Kriol-English translator through living in community and seeing the need for her mob to have a translator. She has also undertaken different translation and interpreting jobs over the years and has done a suite of translations of popular early childhood books for Kriol speaking children and their caregivers. Josie currently works for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation where she has also worked as a consultant and regional coordinator.

Edie Maher

Edie Maher was born in Mullewa, WA, and grew up in the Murchison region on a sheep station and went to school at Tardun Mission via Geraldton. She is a qualified teacher and language specialist with many years of experience developing language programs for both community and schools. Edie was heavily involved in the development of the National Curriculum for languages to develop strategies for implementation of Aboriginal Languages into the WAIS curriculum for all WA schools. Edie is a member of the WA State Education Department Language Reference Group. She has worked as a Senior Language Consultant at the Bundiyarra Irra Wangga Language Centre for the past 6 years and works part-time developing language programs with local schools. Edie is now semi-retired but still currently teaching language in Northampton schools and working one day per week supporting the Language Centre.

Bamuruṅu Munuṅgurr

Bamuruṅu Munuṅgurr attended Yirrkala Community School, graduating in Year 12 with her NT Certificate of Education. She was a trainee in the Literacy Production Centre where she is now a literacy worker and has been there for twelve years. In this role, she develops resources in Dhuwaya, the local language, for the classroom, and works in the classroom with the children to support their first language literacy.

Corina Norman

Corina Norman is a Dharug/Dharawal woman. She works as a language consultant, teacher, weaver and multi-disciplinary artist, and has an interest in respectful memorialisation. Corina is a qualified teacher and is in her 28th year working in education. She is a First Nations language activist and advocate with a Master of Indigenous Languages Education from the University of Sydney. Corina collaborates with other Dharug Custodians, researching, developing and delivering Dharug language lessons to community members with a view to reignite the Dharug language, and is regularly invited to speak about this work by education bodies and media. She also facilitates cultural knowledge in a contemporary framework through On Country immersion programs for community, Government and other organisations. Corina is currently undertaking a master's program by research at Western Sydney University.

Susan Poetsch

Susan Poetsch is a lecturer in undergraduate and postgraduate Teacher Education programs at the University of Sydney. She coordinates units of study in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education more generally, and has a special interest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages education. As a Linguistics PhD student, she worked on children's language acquisition with school staff and Arrernte community members at Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa).

Pirrawayingi Marius Puruntatameri

Pirrawayingi Marius Puruntatameri is a Tiwi traditional cultural ceremonial Elder, delivers traditional cultural ceremonies on Tiwi Islands, and is a strong advocate for the maintenance and retention of traditional Tiwi language. Marius has taught in primary and secondary schools for a decade, including teaching language and culture in Tiwi, and trained as a linguist and a teacher. He is currently continuing over two decades of work co-delivering Cultural Awareness Training to non-Indigenous employees of various departments, NGOs and Tiwi Islands organisations. He is also mentoring Tiwi prisoners in recognition, pronunciation, reading, writing and correct spelling of traditional Tiwi, and assists in Tiwi translation of the Bible as well as the spelling in Tiwi names on sign boards and notices for Tiwi stakeholders.

Carmel Ryan

Carmel Ryan is a senior community member and experienced Arrernte educator. She has been teaching the Arrernte language and culture program at Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa, NT) for many years. She is responsible for developing and delivering the program for all students in the school, from Transition through to senior years. She has also taught Arrernte to non-Indigenous students at schools in Alice Springs. Carmel gained Arrernte literacy skills and became a fully qualified teacher in the 1980s–1990s when such educational pathways and opportunities were readily available.

Juanita Sellwood

Juanita Sellwood is a Torres Strait Islander educator and researcher. She has worked in the tertiary sector with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education for preservice teachers. She is currently working for Catholic Education in far north Queensland and also works as a language and cultural researcher, adviser and evaluator. Juanita is interested in the roles of traditional languages, recognising contact languages and the invisibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are learners of English as an Additional Language/Dialect.

Jasmine Seymour

Jasmine Seymour is a Dharug woman belonging to the Burubiranggal people. She is a Dharug language teacher, researcher and activist. Jasmine is a registered primary school teacher (BEd) with a Master of Indigenous Languages Education (University of Sydney). She teaches Dharug language at her school and also delivers Dharug lessons in community to adults. Jasmine is the author/illustrator of *Baby Business*, winner of the CBCA Best New Illustrator Award in

2020 and is also the author of the 2020 Prime Minister's Literary Award-winning children's title, *Cooee Mittigar*, illustrated by Leanne Mulgo Watson. As a researcher, she is engaged with documenting Dharug, has collaborated with Grace Karskens on the Real Secret River project and is a co-curator for the Dyarubin exhibition at the State Library of NSW. Jasmine is the secretary of the Da Murrytoola Aboriginal Education Consultancy Group (AECG). She is currently studying a master's program by Research at Western Sydney University.

Jane Simpson

Jane Simpson studies the structure and use of several Australian Aboriginal languages: Warumungu, Kurna and Warlpiri. She has worked on several dictionaries. She has concentrated on revitalisation and maintenance of Indigenous languages in the Tennant Creek area, and on reclamation projects for Muruwari and Kurna, as well as on a longitudinal study of Aboriginal children acquiring creoles, English and traditional languages across Australia. She has also promoted the teaching of Indigenous languages at universities including through co-developing University Languages Portal of Australia. More recently she was part of a team working on the National Indigenous Languages Report and OECD reports on promising practices for education involving Indigenous languages. She is Deputy Director of the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language based at the Australian National University.

Natasha Yunupijū

Natasha Yunupijū has worked at Yirrkala School over a number of years, helping with the development and piloting of the Yäku ga Rirrakay app in the school and with the testing of the children on the assessment app before the app was introduced into the school.

Yalmay Yunupijū

Yalmay Yunupijū is a Yolŋu Rirratjijū woman from Yirrkala, NT, who is an Honorary Fellow in Indigenous Leadership, CDU. She was awarded 'Teacher of Excellence (Remote Community)' by the NT Department of Education in 2005 and 2024 Senior Australian of the Year for her contributions as Teacher Linguist at Yirrkala School for over four decades and as an advocate for bilingual education. In 2013, she was one of four finalists for the Human Rights medal awarded by the Australian Human Rights Commission. She delivered a powerful keynote speech at the inaugural National Indigenous Human Rights Awards in 2021.

Jill Wigglesworth

Jill Wigglesworth is Professor of Linguistics and Applied Linguistics at the University of Melbourne and chief investigator in the ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language. Her major research focus is on the multilingual communities in which Indigenous children in remote areas of Australia grow up, the languages they acquired as their first languages, and how these interact with English once they attend school. She has worked with Yirrkala Community School since 2008 on various projects, including the development of the Dhuwaya app.

Appendix C – About the Authors

Lauren Reed

Lauren is the Senior Linguist and Assistant Director at the Centre for Australian Languages at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). Lauren also works as a casual tutor of Gamilaraay language via the Tjabal Centre, Australian National University. She is a fluent Auslan signer and has previously done collaborative research with signers of Western Desert traditional sign languages.

Alison Mount

Alison is a Senior Research Officer at the AIATSIS Centre for Australian Languages (ACAL). Alison also works at the Australian National University as a Research Officer, supporting descendants of Jimmie Barker to revive the Muruwari language from archival audio recordings.

Denise Angelo

Denise Angelo is a researcher and sessional lecturer at the Australian National University and University of Sydney. She works with Aboriginal and Torres Islander community members to support traditional language teaching, learning and description as well as the recognition of new Indigenous contact languages. She is currently part of a research team with Indigenous co-researchers, conducting in-depth studies on their own language ecologies and investigating the roles of traditional languages, new Indigenous contact languages and Englishes. Denise also has experience with developing language curriculum and resources, implementing school and adult language programs, and delivering training for preservice and in-service teachers.



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