

MEETING THE NEED FOR INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE TEACHERS

John Hobson, Koori Centre
University of Sydney

CREATING A CRISIS

- ✘ NSW Aboriginal Languages K-10 (2003)
 - + Generic, flexible syllabus
 - + 'If we build it they will come'
 - + But:
 - ✘ Variable standards/levels of existing programs
 - ✘ Lack of language-specific curricula
 - ✘ Lack of trained, experienced & fluent teachers
 - ✘ No accredited training
 - ✘ Strong community resistance to professionalism
 - ★ Initial 'no go' zone

RECOGNISING THE PROBLEM

- ✦ In 2005, several other local schools expressed an interest in introducing Gumbaynggirr language classes. The main reason these have not gone ahead is the lack of Gumbaynggirr teachers.

David Prosser (2006)

Gumbaynggirr teaching & learning. *Voice of the Land: FATSIL newsletter*. 33. (9-10).

RECOGNISING THE PROBLEM

- ✦ Muurrbay recognises that simply knowing some language is not enough, people need to develop their teaching skills before they can comfortably take on a room full of excited children!

David Prosser (2006)

Gumbaynggirr teaching & learning. *Voice of the Land: FATSIL newsletter*. 33, 9-10

SURVEYING THE FIELD

- ✘ Impediments to initial teacher training course:
 - + Low demand, poor economic viability
 - + Diverse, small, distributed, revitalising languages
 - ✘ Ten currently taught by 65 schools (NSW)
 - + Variable documentation, few teaching materials
 - + None regularly taught to Year 12
 - ✘ Technical/higher education only to beginner level
 - + Few potential practicum locations
 - + Long lead time/delayed supply

PROPOSING A SOLUTION

- ✘ Professional development model
 - + Currently involved/aspiring trained teachers
 - + Adding a discipline area
 - + Rapid development/ rapid supply

DEVELOPING A PROGRAM

- ✘ Final Structure
 - + One year Masters
 - ✘ articulated with Graduate Certificate & Diploma
 - + Mixed mode/ 'block release'
 - ✘ Three 1 week blocks each semester (4 in school holidays)
 - + Indigenous candidates only
 - + No entry/exit fluency requirements

DEVELOPING A PROGRAM

- ✘ Units of study, Semester 1
 - + Sounds & Writing in Indigenous Languages
 - + Words & Meaning in Indigenous Languages
 - + Sentences & Texts in Indigenous Languages
 - ✘ Generic typological and analytical units for Australian languages, drawing on class languages
 - + Theories & Methods in Language Learning
 - ✘ Aquisition theory and teaching methods

DEVELOPING A PROGRAM

- ✘ Units of study, Semester 2
 - + Language Curriculum Development
 - + Technology & Language Learning
 - + *Research Methods in Languages Education*
 - + *Research Project in Languages Education/ Learning an Indigenous Language (dispreferred)*
 - ✘ classroom-based research situated in the student's own teaching

DEVELOPING A PROGRAM

- + Graduate Certificate
 - ✘ All first semester units
 - ✘ Second year teacher training entry
- + Graduate Diploma
 - ✘ All first semester units
 - ✘ Plus two (non-research) second semester
 - ✘ Graduate Certificate entry

DEVELOPING A PROGRAM

- + Master
 - × All first semester units
 - × Plus four units in second semester
 - × Four year teaching degree entry
 - × Direct entry from Graduate Certificate
 - * with 70%+ GPA

MEETING THE COSTS

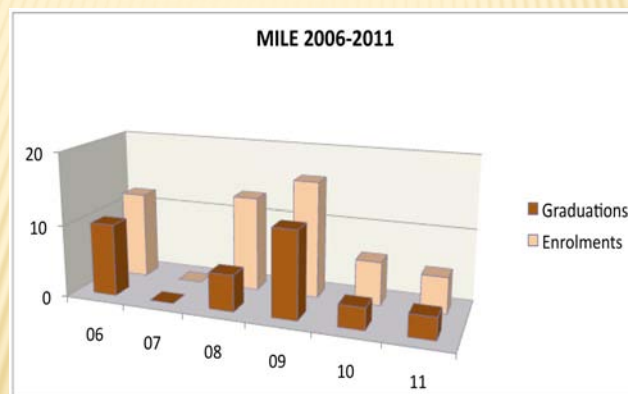
- × Travel, accommodation & meals paid by Commonwealth
 - + Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives
- × Higher Education Contribution Scheme
 - + Priority band
- × NSW Education cadetships (bonded)
- × USyd graduate scholarships
- × Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme

GETTING RECOGNISED

The NSW Department of Education & Training acknowledges the availability of the *Master of Indigenous Languages Education* offered at the University of Sydney and accepts this program as providing appropriate training for qualified Aboriginal teachers seeking additional approval to teach an Aboriginal language.

Aboriginal teachers completing the *Master of Indigenous Languages Education* up to the end of 2010 will be eligible for approval to teach Aboriginal languages. In 2009 the Department will reconsider the *Master of Indigenous Languages Education* and any other available Aboriginal languages programs in terms of the requirements for Aboriginal languages teachers after 2010.

THROUGHPUT TO DATE



SOME AFTERTHOUGHTS

- ✘ Far from ideal, but clearly positive outcomes:
 - + Most graduates become agents for change in classroom, community and policy contexts.
 - ✘ some just want the degree
 - + Several placed as designated language teacher or curriculum/professional officer.
 - + Expertise recognised by linguists, other languages teachers, communities and government.
 - ✘ “The language teacher at school speaks to me now!”

SOME AFTERTHOUGHTS

- ✘ Ongoing issues:
 - + Dwindling enrolments risk cost-effectiveness.
 - + Growing management interest in biennial offering.
 - ✘ Has it run its course?
 - + Initial teaching qualification still required.
 - + Non-teacher *revitalisation* training still required.

A MODEST PROPOSAL

- ✘ Articulated Certificate/Diploma/Bachelor
 - + 1/2/4 year candidature
 - ✘ staged implementation
 - + Multiple exit points/pathways to degree study
 - ✘ BEd, BA, B Indig Lang?
 - + Language learning, language teaching, linguistics, revitalisation, documentation, resource production...
 - + Generic, nationally relevant
 - + Block release in two three-week 'institutes' annually
 - ✘ modelled on AILDI/CILLDI and existing USyd Dip/BEd
 - ✘ summer and winter schools
 - ✘ outside school terms

A MODEST PROPOSAL

- + Maximal integration with CALL(BIITE), DRIL(RNLD), TAFE, Muurrbay Summer School, USyd Dip/BEd, etc.
 - ✘ credit/RPL where possible
- + University accredited language learning
 - ✘ meet teacher accreditation standards
- + Students fully funded
 - ✘ HECS, Away-From-Base
 - ✘ subsidy for non-award language learners?
- + Staffing
 - ✘ class size threshold for casual teachers?
 - ✘ travel and accommodation funds an issue
- + Scoping in Semester 1, 2012
 - ✘ statements of support and candidate estimates needed!