

**RNLD/RUIL Internship Program Report:
Katerina Forrester**

I had the exciting opportunity to accompany Senior Linguist Margaret Florey to two DRIL training sites; Adelaide (1st Nov) and Port Augusta (3rd-5th Nov). It was a great pleasure to be able to take part in two very different sites, and to get a proper insight into the diversity of Australian Aboriginal languages. The two language groups were Inhaadi Adnyamathanha Ngawarla and Dieri that, although the groups are now spread across different towns, are neighbouring languages.

The first workshop was in Adelaide with the Inhaadi Adnyamathanha Ngawarla group. The main organiser and her family greeted us in a community church hall where herself and her husband has produced a spread of delicious food and offered us coffee. I was also struck by the friendly and trusting rapport that Margaret had built with the participants. It was evident that they really appreciated RNLD's support in their language projects. The eldest kids showed great interest throughout the whole day and it was a pleasure to work with them. That day, we concentrated predominantly on the module focusing on metadata and cataloguing. The family had made an excess of fabulous resources, but had no system in place to easily retrieve resources for classes or any language work. The participants learnt plenty of skills in the short time that we were there; the basics of Excel, and the girls got started straight away on cataloguing the resources. The eldest daughter mentioned that she was developing an Adnyamathanha phrasebook, and we discussed how I could provide assistance with contacting publishing houses in Australia.

The second workshop was held in Port Augusta with the Dieri Aboriginal Corporation. I once again felt very included in the group, and many of the participants were sharing language with me, and using my zero knowledge of Dieri to establish basic teaching methods. The DRIL modules focussed on documenting language, creating and editing resources, and using technologies. Margaret also incorporated a Master-Apprentice approach throughout the three days, which was used as the model for the resources. This enabled the group to also experience a scaffolding approach to teaching materials, and then see them in use.

The group consisted of about 15 people with an age range of 10 - 90. This provided a huge challenge to involve everyone and teach a diverse range of skills. I aided in working with the participants on tasks to better understand their current skills and work out what they wanted to learn to help aid their language work. It is a very cohesive group, and therefore they achieved so much in the short three days, I was astounded. The team leader has put together backpacks with recording equipment and laptops, which she hands out to participants to document the language, especially to work independently with the few Elders left. It was exciting to see that they would be able to directly use the skills learnt in the workshop to firstly, understand the recording devices and use them to the best of their abilities, and secondly, understand what they could do with those recordings, such as make resources or radio programs. All of the participants gave very positive feedback, and by the end were already planning when they could next organise another RNLD workshop.

What I appreciate about the DRIL program is that it offers a flexible schedule and program. This way, the trainers are able to manipulate the modules to suit the needs of the community, and produce the best results in a short amount of time. It certainly worries me that RNLD is one of very few organisations that aid communities in such a way to enable autonomy. For example, Margaret never assumes knowledge in any of the Aboriginal

languages and always gives them time to explore the language for themselves. At the same time, she will support them with the right framework to produce consistent results. Not to mention, it was apparent to me that the DRIL program enables community members to step-up in leadership/mentoring roles and enables the community to work closer together. I feel that this is a huge step to enable big future results in language work in Australia.

Outside of the workshops also enabled me time to spend with Margaret who was extremely valuable for me as an intern. Margaret not only delivers wonderful work to communities, but also acts as a mentor herself to the interns. She offered plenty of advice in the general field of linguistics, and also got me to critique and analyse the DRIL program while we were on the road. Participating as an intern enabled me to see a side to linguistics that isn't offered at a university. Direct contact with an experienced linguist, and engaging with Aboriginal communities has now given me a wider understanding as to what is needed in the community setting, not just in an academic environment.