Professional Development Stage II

On 30 May, RNLD welcomed back 9 participants from across the country for our Stage II Professional Development Workshop in Melbourne. The group all participated in our Stage I PD workshop in November 2015, and it was great to get everyone back together again. We got stuck into some very complex linguistics over the six-day workshop, with everyone learning about transitivity, pronouns, adjectives, conjunctions, subordination, and tense, along with pronunciation and writing systems. The participants also got started on their own learner’s guides, using what they’d learnt to convert information in their own grammars into more accessible guides for their communities.
Everyone developed a piece of creative writing in their languages, and these were made into a book for the group to take home. The participants recorded their stories in language, and we had a rewarding session on the final day listening to everyone’s work. The participants also teamed up to compare linguistic structures across the 9 languages, using evidence from the stories they had written.
On the Wednesday, we had a break from the classroom and the group braved the Melbourne cold to walk to Melbourne University. Participants chatted to some PhD students and academics in the linguistics department, before visiting the welcoming staff at Murrup Barak – a centre supporting Indigenous students at the university. After lunch we headed to the Melbourne Museum for a private tour of Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre.
All in all we had a stimulating week working with a motivated group of language warriors, and everyone left with some exciting new resources to share with their language communities.
During the last three months, the DRIL training team has chased the sun across Australia and also to the USA to escape the Melbourne winter. Before we made our escape, we were thrilled to welcome nine participants from New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria back to the RNLD office for our fifth Professional Development workshop. In the months since we last met, this energetic group has continued to build their skills and work to support their languages. They demonstrated great determination and courage in taking up our challenge to study more complex linguistic features and begin putting their findings into Learner’s Guides.

In July and August, we headed north to South Hedland and Kununurra to run the second block of the Certificate III. We were very moved by the commitment of participants in both sites and their excitement as they completed more units. We look forward to returning in October for the third and final block and for our first graduation ceremonies.

Alongside our DRIL training activities, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to participate as an instructor in the fifth Institute for Collaborative Language Documentation (CoLang), which was held at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. With 23 hours of daylight, it was easy to forget about the winter blues in Melbourne. The CoLang Institute reminds us of the dedication of community members and linguists from around the world who are working so hard to sustain Indigenous languages.
On 25-29 July 2016 DRIL trainers Margaret Florey, Ebony Joachim and Jessica Solla returned to Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring in Kununurra WA to deliver Block 2 of the Certificate III in Aboriginal Languages for Communities and Workplaces. The team of dedicated language workers completed five of the thirteen units that make up the Certificate III, learning about phonetics, making and editing digital recordings, the skills to form a language team, and the kind of work linguists do. The language workers also continued to develop their public awareness campaigns which they had identified in Block 1, as well as continuing to learn and practise basic oral communication in Miriwoong and Kwini. The DRIL trainers left the team with the homework task of running two language learning and teaching sessions every week for the next ten weeks. We’re looking forward to coming back soon for the third and final block to hear everyone’s stories!
On 8-12 August 2016 DRIL trainers Margaret Florey, Amy Parncutt and Jessica Solla returned to South Hedland, WA to deliver Block 2 of the Certificate III in Aboriginal Languages for Communities and Workplaces. The group of 9 language workers and language activists, representing 7 different languages, worked Monday through Friday to complete their training at the Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre.
The team learnt about linguistics and how to produce sounds in Aboriginal languages, which they then practised in a session about how to make digital sound recordings. They then practised editing the audio recordings using the program Audacity, as well as how to digitise analogue audio recordings. The week ended with the group finalising their plans for their public awareness campaign, continuing to practise basic communication in their languages, and planning out a language team for future language projects. Everyone put in a lot of hard work throughout the week, and both trainers and participants are excited for the completion of the third block and graduation in October.
DRIL trainers Ebony and Amy visited Wiluna from 20-21 June 2016 to run a workshop in the local school. Community members came together to decide on an orthography, and then wrote a wordlist for all of the sounds of Martu Wangka / Mantjiltjarra. The ladies took turns to record some of the words so that an interactive alphabet chart can be created. The participants then compiled a word and phrase list of body parts, medical terms and questions that can be used in the local health centre. Having a writing system in place is an important step in the path towards creating resources and teaching the language in school.
In June, DRIL Trainers Ebony and Amy were very pleased to represent RNLD at the 7th WANALA Aboriginal Languages Conference on the theme “Building Resilience: Identity, intellect and the role of languages”. The conference was hosted by the Goldfields Aboriginal Language Centre in Kalgoorlie WA, and was a wonderful opportunity to catch up with old and new friends, and to learn about different language projects in Western and Northern Australia. Ebony had a standing-room only audience for her presentation on “Building Independence and Control of your Language Preservation Work”, in which she spoke about RNLD’s many training programs and her own journey from DRIL participant to Trainer. It was Eb’s first conference presentation, and we’re proud of how much feedback she received.

There was a large turnout of people for the conference from different parts of Western Australia and the Northern Territory. There were a number of interesting presentations from community members, language workers and linguists, and we enjoyed seeing some of our DRIL and Certificate III participants presenting on their language projects. The conference also provided an opportunity to network with fellow language workers, share knowledge and learn new skills.
In June, Margaret and Jess headed off to the fifth Institute on Collaborative Language Research (CoLang) Conference, which this time was held at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks <https://www.alaska.edu/colang2016/>.

The CoLang Institute brings community language activists and linguists together for two weeks of intensive workshops followed by an optional three weeks practicum in field linguistics. Margaret taught two workshops at CoLang — Project Planning in Week 1 and Grant Writing in Week 2 — with about 30 people in each class. It was exciting to live and work closely with people from very diverse language groups and backgrounds who are determined to keep their languages alive! The weekend between the workshops provided the opportunity to explore the beautiful environment around Fairbanks and Margaret took full advantage by joining eight other instructors on a trip to Tangle Lakes.

Attending CoLang for the first time, Jess found the experience of learning about so many different language journeys incredibly enriching. Through talking with people from all around the world, attending the daily plenaries and applying herself in workshops, she has continued to develop her understanding of language maintenance, revitalisation and reclamation work in both community and academic arenas. Jess is looking forward to incorporating this new knowledge into her training with DRIL participants in Australia.
Every 3 months, we want to provide a brief description of one of our units of teaching. The aim is to unpack the units, giving you a greater insight and understanding of what we are teaching and aiming to achieve. This edition’s unit is **Digitise sound recordings**. This unit helps participants build the skills and knowledge they need to digitise an analogue sound recording. Here is the unit in action!

The unit looks at different mediums of recording, including cassette tapes, reel-to-reel recordings and micro-cassettes, and explores the social and cultural protocols involved with recordings, communities and the workplace. By teaching participants the theoretical and hands-on skills needed to digitise recordings, this unit also strengthens the skills that participants learned in the earlier technology-centred units ‘Make good quality digital recordings,’ ‘Edit sound recordings’ and ‘Operate a personal computer.’
Welcome New Staff!

Penelope Schmidt
Junior Administrative Assistant

After a DRIL internship in 2015 and a stint as Volunteer Team Leader in 2016, Penelope has joined RNLD as Junior Administrative Assistant, sharing the role with Freya Scott. Penelope is currently doing her final year in a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Melbourne, with a major in Linguistics and a minor in Australian Indigenous Studies, and hopes to combine these fields in her Honours year.

Freya Scott
Junior Administrative Assistant

Freya completed an undergraduate degree majoring in Linguistics and French at the University of Melbourne (2015) and is currently taking time off to volunteer and work before continuing her studies.

Our new Volunteer!

Prudence Grant
Volunteer

Prue began volunteering with RNLD in June 2016. She is currently completing her BA at the University of Melbourne, with a double major in Linguistics and Australian Indigenous Studies. She hopes to combine these fields in an Honours year. Prue volunteers on Fridays, helping with resource cataloguing, fundraising concepts and our Language in the News section. She is looking forward to attending a community-based workshop in Ceduna SA this November through the RNLD/RIUL internship program.
Upcoming Workshops

Over the next 3 months you will find us in:

September 6 - 8 — **Flexible DRIL**: Ceduna, SA

October 10 - 13 — **Certificate III Block 3**: Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre, Kununurra, WA

October 24 - 27 — **Certificate III Block 3**: Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre, South Hedland, WA

October 31 - November 2 — **Flexible DRIL**: Halls Creek and Warmun

November 22 - 24 — **Flexible DRIL**: Ceduna, SA

RNLD is funded under the Indigenous Languages and Arts program

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RNLD would personally like to thank you for your continued support

Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity

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