Professional Development Stage III

From 29 May to 2 June, fourteen participants from our Professional Development Stages I and II came from all over Australia to brave the Melbourne cold and undertake the third stage of our PD workshops. It was truly inspiring for trainers and participants alike to have so many determined language warriors in the same room, sharing their ideas and passion for Indigenous language maintenance and revival.
Trainers conducted sessions on writing complex sentences; historical linguistics and language change; project planning and grant proposals; and semantics and creating new words. We were lucky enough to have guest trainer Lesley Woods (Ngiyampaa) travel down from Port Hedland to lead discussion sessions on building Indigenous leadership in language work. We also welcomed back our former trainer, Jess Solla, who was able to take leave from her new job in Canberra to run some workshops on strategies for creating new words that traditional languages might be lacking (such as laminator, Facebook, texting, and iPad).
It was so wonderful to catch up with old friends and see how far everyone has progressed with their language work. We are sure that all the participants will return to their communities with renewed passion to pass on their languages to the next generations!
A final word from Margaret Florey, who retired in July...

“It’s time to say goodbye! Inevitably, it is with mixed emotions that I farewell this organisation that has been such an important and rewarding part of my life. As some of you will know, I co-founded RNLD in 2004, and it has been a great privilege to have worked with the organisation for the past nine years since we were first awarded Federal Government funding in 2009. At that time, I could not have imagined that RNLD would grow to become the organisation that it is today. For the first two years, I worked out of my home study and somehow covered the training, administrative and management tasks by myself. Now, RNLD has ten staff members, a team of volunteers, workshop training facilities, and offers four different strands of training.

Looking back over the eight years since the Documenting and Revitalising Indigenous Languages (DRIL) training program was launched, we have run 130 Flexible DRIL workshops, trained over 600 Indigenous people from all Australian states and territories, and supported 147 separate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. Since early 2014, we have delivered six Professional Development workshops to twenty-seven participants in two cohorts. Readers of this newsletter will also know that we have developed and piloted a Certificate II in Master-Apprentice Language Learning Program and Certificate III in Aboriginal Languages for Communities and Workplaces. Eighteen people from two sites graduated with the Certificate III in 2016.

While these statistics capture one picture of RNLD’s birth and development over the years, the experiences and memories that I take with me capture the more important picture. There has been laughter, tears, frustrations, moving stories and precious light bulb moments in each of our workshops. The learning has very much been two way! I am grateful for the trust that people have shown and the warmth with which I (and all of our team members) have been welcomed into homes, communities and workplaces.
In many ways, it is fitting that the sixth Professional Development workshop which is featured in this issue was my last training activity. This workshop brought back together fourteen of the participants who have been in our two PD cohorts over the past three years. This strand has pushed the edge of our training in linguistics and has been crucial in deepening our understanding of how we can most effectively share linguistic skills and support the aspirations of Indigenous people who are passionate about reclaiming and revitalising their own languages themselves. It was wonderful to join this hard-working and dedicated group of language warriors to celebrate the end of the workshop!

I am proud to be leaving RNLD in such a strong position. Our wonderful team of trainers and office staff will continue to serve Indigenous communities across Australia and to reach out internationally to people who are keenly involved in language revitalisation activities. RNLD will also continue to build on this foundation and grow and develop in new, as yet unimagined, directions.

In parting, my heartfelt thanks for your strong and ongoing support go to our staff (both present and past), everyone who has taken part in our training workshops, funding agency, partner organisations, and all of you in Australia and internationally who connect with us and contribute to RNLD’s mission. Every moment has brought me joy!”
We were very grateful to be invited to speak at the Living our Languages symposium in June, organised by State Library NSW and University of Sydney. DRIL trainer Amy Parncutt attended the two-day event in Sydney on behalf of the training team, and had a wonderful time meeting so many people working so hard to revitalise their languages.

The first day was held at State Library NSW, and included talks from Jaky Troy (Ngarigu woman and Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research at University of Sydney), Rob Amery (Head of Linguistics, University of Adelaide), and Jack Buckskin (Kaurna and Narrunga man, and teacher of Kaurna language and culture). This day also included the very special launch of *My Weekend with Pop – Stories in Aboriginal Languages* – a fabulous new educational resource featuring digital storybooks in five NSW languages.

The second day was a less formal series of workshops held at the University of Sydney, by Rob Amery, Jack Buckskin, John Hobson (Director, Graduate Indigenous Education Programs at University of Sydney) and RNLD trainer Amy Parncutt. This day was all about the sharing of ideas, skills, games, and resources to assist with the teaching and revitalisation of Indigenous languages, and it was great to see the amazing work that is being done in this area by everyone in attendance.
From 2 to 9 July, Australians across the country celebrated NAIDOC Week 2017. This year's National NAIDOC Theme was one especially close to our hearts at RNLD: “Our Languages Matter”. The focus was on the importance, resilience and richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. It affirmed our belief at RNLD that for Indigenous communities, Indigenous languages are a priceless inheritance, with their strong links to both cultural heritage and Indigenous identity.
As part of NAIDOC celebrations in Shepparton, RNLD DRIL trainer and Yorta Yorta language activist Ebony Joachim was invited to speak at the opening Flag Raising Ceremony. She spoke about her role at RNLD and the language work she does around the country with people in communities who are working to maintain and revitalise their languages. We at RNLD feel privileged to be a part of this movement and acknowledge the tremendous work of all those who are learning more about their languages and ensuring that they are passed down to the next generation.

As National NAIDOC Committee Co-Chair Anne Martin put it, “Aboriginal and Torres Strait languages are not just a means of communication, they express knowledge about everything: law, geography, history, family and human relationships, philosophy, religion, anatomy, childcare, health, caring for country, astronomy, biology and food”. Through their languages, Ms. Martin said, Indigenous nations are connected to their ancestors, land and law.
Farewell Ali!

We are very sad to be farewelling Ali Head, who has been bringing her flare and creativity to the role of RNLD’s Creative Communications Officer for the last 18 months. You will all have seen the impact of Ali’s design capabilities in RNLD’s new logo and in this newsletter, which she has transformed! More importantly for our training work, Ali took on the strategic task of designing the Study Notes and Workbooks for our Certificates II and III. Her designs had to pass the scrutiny not only of our training team but also of the first groups who enrolled in the certificates. Not surprisingly, she has received a lot of praise for the user-friendly layouts. Ali has taught us all a lot and we will miss her greatly. She leaves to pursue her career goals in community development, after some well-earned rest and travel. Ali, we wish you every happiness in your future endeavours!

Office Upgrade

Through the assistance of Margot Matthews of COLAB (Committed to Collaborate and to Connect with Community); a Western Australian based not-for-profit organisation that facilitates community building projects for other not-for-profits, we have been able to access pro bono assistance to upgrade our office. We are extremely fortunate to be working with Andrew Campion and Talia Contini of Interite Interiors to provide a healthier, more sustainable and contemporary working and training space for our hard working trainers, staff, and community participants.

COLAB connects community organisations with architects and engineers who need pro bono assistance with projects. COLAB (www.COLAB.org.au) helped to connect RNLD with Interite Interiors.

We are really excited about this wonderful opportunity and extremely thankful for the assistance of COLAB and Interite Interiors. We’ll be providing regular updates on progress!
Welcome Emma!

We are very pleased to welcome our new Training Director Emma Murphy who commenced with RNLD on 21 August. As a previous trainer with RNLD Emma comes back to the organisation with a wealth of knowledge and experience of the DRIL programs. Emma has an extensive background in linguistics and training in the revitalisation of Aboriginal languages and many will already know her and her fabulous work. More recently she has been working with community in the Northern Territory. We are very lucky to have her with us again to lead the DRIL training team.

Hello from our new Director...

I am incredibly excited and privileged to have re-joined the RNLD team as DRIL Training Director. Like always, this edition of the newsletter reminds me of everything I loved about this organisation when I last worked here: the ambition, the passion and most of all, the people.

It is such a wonderful time to be part of this important field. The recent NAIDOC celebrations, with a focus on the centrality of language, reminded us all why we do what we do, and how many inspiring people and communities are walking this path.

I look forward to reconnecting with the broader RNLD community – those who work with us (or have in the past) in different capacities, those who’ve attended workshops, advised and assisted us, and colleagues in the Australian languages field more broadly: we have much to learn from, and offer, each other! Over the coming months I look forward to many conversations with you all as we here at RNLD discuss our future directions and priorities.

Finally, I must pay tribute to all of those who have contributed to RNLD in the past, such as departing staff members and particularly the previous Director and Co-Founder of RNLD, Margaret Florey. We all owe much to her vision and passion, and I look forward to working with the wonderful team she has left behind to continue the invaluable project she started.

Emma Murphy
Training Director, DRIL Program
In Detail...

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 **ALCPAL301A Produce sounds in Aboriginal languages**, part of our accredited Certificate III course. Participants learn about the way linguists think about vowels and consonants, where in the mouth they are made, and what happens to the air as it passes from the lungs and out through the mouth to make speech sounds. Participants also look at different ways of representing speech sounds in writing, including the special alphabet used by linguists to describe pronunciation: the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Finally we discuss how other languages spoken in the community can influence the way our own language is pronounced.

Upcoming Workshops

Over the next 3 months you will find us in:

- **August 15 - 17** — **CERT II Assessment Block**: Ceduna, SA
- **September 12 - 14** — **Flexible DRIL**: Groote Eylandt, NT
- **September 19 - 21** — **Flexible DRIL**: Geraldton, WA
- **October 3 - 5** — **Flexible DRIL**: Woorabinda, QLD
- **November 14 - 16** — **Flexible DRIL**: Newman, WA