Listen to what music says

Since February 2018, RNLD has been posting the music of Aboriginal artists to our Facebook group every Monday – the Music Monday project. Not only are the songs beautifully written and performed in Australia’s first languages, but in fact, music can be a powerful statement of identity, as well as an important means of maintaining and revitalising languages and cultures.
As one of the oldest practices, music carries memories and lessons from ages ago, passed on to generations and generations. Through song, law is transmitted; historical events and environmental changes are recorded; people’s everyday life and connections to the land are depicted. Taking one of our previous posts for example, “Treaty” of Yothu Yindi (1991) featuring Gumatj (a Dhuwal dialect) references a political event in history. Contemporary artists both preserve the tradition and create new content that is meaningful for people. Language revitalisation efforts are also present, as in “milaythina nika” by Dewayne Everettsmith (2012) written in the reconstructed Tasmanian language palawa kani.

Our Training Director Emma recently wrote an article on Gurrumul, one of the greatest artists bringing Aboriginal languages to the world via music. For more fantastic music and artists, stay tuned to Music Monday!

Thanks to our volunteer Yu-Ting for writing this piece!
The start of the new financial year presents both opportunities and challenges. Certainly it seems the challenges for all not for profit organisations become more complex each year. So whatever circumstances or economic environment we find ourselves in, we at RNLD thrive on rising to that challenge!

Our focus over the next twelve months will continue to be the sustainability of the organisation to ensure we can continue to deliver as many training opportunities as we can. We have a number of exciting new partnerships and ventures planned and I look forward to sharing these as they unfold throughout the year. You will find more information in our newsletter, through social media or have a chat to one of our trainers.

One of the key areas that we will be focusing on is a number of fundraising events and opportunities throughout the year. We want to make the most of our deductible gift recipient status and look to your support and sponsorship. We have some wonderful fundraising volunteers lined up to help and we look forward to successfully meeting our objective to increase the funds we have available to deliver training.

Megan Broome
CEO
Hello from our Training Director

The week that I sat down to write this, RNLD got some wonderful news from our funding body, the Indigenous Languages and Arts program, through the Department of Communications and the Arts. We are delighted to announce that we have received funding for two new and significant projects.

Firstly, we are now in a position to offer a new Professional Development opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language activists to come to Melbourne for intensive training in language teaching, linguistics, project planning and other skills they need for their work. Stay tuned for more information about these PD workshops coming up in 2019-2020!

Secondly, we are very excited to partner with AIATSIS to offer a first for Australia: a Canberra-based discovery workshop bringing language activists together from around Australia to explore national archives, study materials related to their languages and communities, repatriate them and create new resources and projects inspired by what they find. This workshop is based on the Breath of Life Institute in the US.

We will now begin the rather large task of planning and designing these two programs, as well as continuing to travel across the country to deliver our ongoing DRIL workshops.

As the training team gears up for a big 18 months ahead, we are lucky and grateful that we have so many wonderful volunteers keen to join us and use their varied skills to support our work: it makes what we do so much easier, and we love having them, so here’s a big thankyou to our growing team.

Emma Murphy
DRIL Training Director
DRIL trainers Ebony and Andrew returned to Geraldton 22-24 May to run a workshop with representatives from the Wajarri and Malgana communities of WA's Mid West. For some participants, this was the third consecutive RNLD workshop they have attended at the Bundiyarra Aboriginal Corporation’s fantastic Irra Wangga Language Centre.
The focus of the workshop was on project planning and the tricky process of writing grant applications for community projects. As part of this topic, the group were lucky enough to hear from Language Centre co-ordinator, Jenni Kniveton-Gregory, about their plans to set up regional language “hubs” across the mid-west, to better enable communities to run their own language work.

By the end of the workshop, participants had drafted project plans and had made up mock grant applications. Watch out for further exciting developments in WA!
Andrew and Ebony were invited by the Mobile Language Team in Adelaide to run a workshop focusing on Master-Apprentice and other language immersion teaching techniques at the University of Adelaide, 27-29 June. A fantastic group of participants, including representatives of no less than five different South Australian languages – Yankunytjatjara, Arabana, Dieri, Adnyamathanha, and Nukunu – learnt about the ideas behind the Master-Apprentice program and the different methods you can use to teach and learn language – regardless of level. It was particularly special to see leading Yankunytjatjara interpreter and activist Rose Lester develop and deliver immersion sessions to learners on how to make a cup of tea and kin terms in Yankunytjatjara.
It was also really great to see and hear about the amazing work the Mobile Language Team is doing around SA. They really feel like a “sister” organisation to RNLD. Keep up the good work, MLT!
This was the second time DRIL Training Director Emma Murphy has delivered one-on-one Professional Development for Mutha, the Yolngu Studies Lecturer at Charles Darwin University. We focused on linguistic analyses of Gupapuyngu - looking at noun suffixes and also the sound system.

Gupapuyngu is a relatively strong language - lots of Yolngu speak it fluently! - but Mutha has the challenge of explaining its complexities to all her non-Yolngu students, many of whom are learning an Australian language for the first time. Looking at language from a linguistic perspective - even if it’s a language we know really well - can help us see the patterns and help others who are learning it for the first time.
DRIL trainers Andrew (Kumanjai) and Amy (Mata) were in Punmu, WA, 23-25 July running a workshop at Rawa school with Martu participants from Punmu, Kunawarritji and Parnngurr communities. They had a fantastic 3 days focused on strengthening Martu Wangka in the communities and schools, and bringing back the richer traditional Manyjilyjarra language which is still spoken by the “pujiman” (desert-born elders).
The group took a few trips out on country, and practised using recorders, tablets and phones to record elders telling stories, talking about different plants, and demonstrating traditional handicrafts. The recordings were then used as the basis for writing and transcription practice, analysis of the complex Martu Wangka morphology, and discussions on how to keep the depth and richness of the language when translating it into English. Wonderful both-way learning in some beautiful country!
DRIL trainers Andrew and Amy headed to Aurukun, Queensland, from 13-16 August to run a workshop at Koolkan Aurukun State School. The school is working hard to reintroduce bilingual education to the community, and is pioneering the integration of Indigenous knowledge and language into the curriculum itself.
Aurukun is one of the strongest Indigenous language communities in the eastern states, with Wik Mungkan - along with other related dialects - spoken by community members of all ages. Alongside experienced local Wik teachers, we helped to train the teaching assistants at the school in the skills they’ll need to educate the next generations of Wik Mungkan speakers.

The big focus of the week was practising reading and writing in Wik Mungkan, which unfortunately hasn’t been taught at the school since the 1980s. These are very exciting times for Aurukun and for the Wik Mungkan language, and we are honoured to play our very small part in it!
Meet a language warrior...

RNLD wants to share some of the great stories we hear from, and work we see being done by, our many training participants around the country! For this newsletter, intern Conor caught up with Rozanne Bilminga and Brian Gallagher.

Rozanne and Brian both work at Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring, the Miriwoong language centre in Kununurra.

What do you do here at the language centre Rozanne?

Rozanne: At the language centre, there’s two teams. There’s one on that side of the building, that’s the language workers, and where I work with my team, with my group, that’s the language nest. And we normally go out to the schools – high schools, primary schools, day-cares, youth centres. ... We go outside and take our language to the students.

Do you enjoy it? What kind of stuff do you usually do with the kids?

Rozanne: It’s really fun, because we teach them about all kinds of things. We teach them about weather, bush tucker, birds, feelings…. And every resource that we teach them with, we’ve got different songs that go with whatever we’re teaching. We’ve got games, we’ve got songs, yeah. It’s good. ... You know, we want to see more of our Aboriginal children, Miriwoong children speaking language. I mean, we’re learning ourselves, but we like to see more of that happen too.
What kind of stuff do you do Brian?

Brian: Me, I’m a language worker. Me and Jimmy, we teach a few types of students, and the age ranges. We teach them bush food, trees with Miriwoong names...all kinds. We play games with them, yeah. And what I think about it is, same again, we want more Indigenous children to learn Miriwoong especially the Miriwoong kids. ... And I’m happy to pass that to them. I started since last year, September, so seven and a half months.

Why do you two think it’s important to do this kind of work that you do here?

Brian: Our elders, you know, they pass it on, and...we were here, once upon a time, when we were kids, and our elders were going to come here and teach more. And because of our elders, we’ll pass it on to the next generation. When we have our kids, we’ll pass it on to them, and they’ll have their kids and...it’ll keep going.

Rozanne: I reckon...it’s important because our language is endangered, and because of our ancestors, you know, there’s no one around, we’ve only got a few of them, we’ve probably got about three left, and then we want to carry a language and have it grow here for us, because language is important. You know, like they say if you’ve got no language you’ve got no culture.

We want to show and prove to people that we do care about our language. And when people can see that, “Oh, this mob, they’re really into their language, and they want their language, they’re fighting for their language, they want their language to keep going strong”. So language is a really important thing in my role, you know, without a language you’re nobody. And I want to prove to people that I do care about my language, you know, because we’ve got a next generation growing, and we want our language to pass, we want to keep it for the next mob.
Staff news

After receiving a swell of interest from many people eager to support RNLD as volunteers, Volunteer Coordinator and Administrative Assistant Freya Scott recently conducted a drive for volunteers, following up on offers we hadn’t been able to provide places for in the past. Our hardworking trainers also recently inspired several people to put their hands up, through lectures at the University of Melbourne and also through participation in May’s special Linguistics in the Pub. Freya has worked hard to put together a rewarding volunteer program, and we’re excited to introduce you to its newest members!

Welcome Anastasia!

Anastasia began volunteering with RNLD in July 2018. She is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts at the University of Melbourne, majoring in Linguistics and Politics/International Relations. She is a speaker of Greek and Italian and is passionate about language education, reclamation and revitalisation. Anastasia hopes to pursue these passions through focusing on linguistic features of Indigenous Languages in her honours year.

Welcome Jahan!

Jahan has been volunteering with RNLD since finishing his BA at the University of Melbourne and the University of Tokyo in June 2018, with a major in Linguistics and Asian Studies. Jahan is passionate about the intersection language has with volunteering, having previously done translation work for refugees. He first heard about the work RNLD does in class, and is now working on our Language in the News and compiling Music Monday posts, the latter of which he is especially interested in.
Welcome Bron!

Bron has been volunteering with RNLD since July 2018. She has a passion for, and is currently studying: Linguistics, Indigenous Cultures and Histories, and Visual Art. At RNLD, Bron is working on our Language in the News feature, compiling Music Monday posts, and working with Emma on resource creation.

Welcome Haoyi!

Haoyi began volunteering with RNLD in August 2018 and helps out with Language in the News, Music Monday posts and creating resources for workshops. She has a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Degree in art history and linguistics (2018) from the University of Melbourne. She is interested in exploring the overlap between art history and linguistics in the context of Aboriginal language, art and culture.

We’re also very happy to have Charlie Whiter and Hugh Coldwell-Ross volunteering with us, though we have yet to pin them down for a photo. Stay tuned!

Binbi Wadyabay

CEO Megan Broome was pleased to attend Binbi Wadyabay (“Good Talking” in Darumbal), the 2018 Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Forum, which took place over two days in May in Rockhampton, Queensland, and which was hosted by Queensland Indigenous Languages Advisory Committee (QILAC). The program consisted of workshops, presentations and discussions around the formation of a Queensland Languages Policy. The forum was a wonderful opportunity to come together with our friends and colleagues, to lay the foundations for a policy that will support Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages into the future.
In Detail...

In this season’s edition of our newsletter we will be sharing with you a description of *Using dictionaries and grammars*. Using dictionaries and grammars is one of our Flexible Documenting and Revitalising Indigenous Languages (DRIL) non-accredited training modules.

Some of our participants come to our workshops with grammars and dictionaries (or other resources) of their languages that are often written by linguists. Sometimes these grammars and dictionaries are hard for people to understand because of technical words that linguists use to describe or explain these languages. As we go through the module *Using dictionaries and grammars* with our participants, we look at different language resources you might be working with and learn about what information might be in your language resources. We go through and try to help you make sense of the technical words that may be used in your resources and also come up with some tips on how to get the most information out of your language dictionaries and grammars.

Upcoming Workshops

Over the next 3 months you will find us in:

September 1 — **Flexible DRIL**: Melbourne, VIC  
September 17-18 — **Flexible DRIL**: Bamaga, QLD  
September 19-20 — **Flexible DRIL**: Umagico, QLD  
September 27-28 — **Flexible DRIL**: Darwin, NT  
October 1-3 — **Flexible DRIL**: Kununurra, WA  
October 5 — **Flexible DRIL**: Broome, WA  
October 30-November 1 — **Flexible DRIL**: Armidale, NSW  
November 12-16 — **Flexible DRIL**: Fitzroy Crossing, WA