

Welcome



Welcome to the first Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity newsletter. We'll be producing a quarterly newsletter to keep you up to date on RNLD's activities. 2011 has been a big year for RNLD. In June we heard that our funding has been extended for three years. This exciting news is making it possible for us to continue to develop the Documenting and Revitalising Indigenous Languages training program and to deliver it more widely across the country (read more below). RNLD has now moved into a new office at 33 Drummond Street, Carlton South, and several new staff members have joined us. We look forward to further extending our staff through the coming months as we appoint more regional community trainers.

Symposium



From L-R: Stacey Campton (MILR), Carol Genetti (UC Santa Barbara), Miquel Essomba (Linguapax)

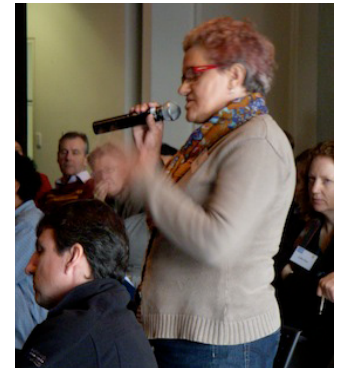


From L-R: Greg Wilson, Mary-Anne Gale, Doris Paton, Lynne Solomon-Dent

RNLD held a symposium on the theme of Strengthening Language Maintenance Through Cooperative Training Strategies in Melbourne from 18 - 19 August, 2011. The symposium was organised in partnership with Linguapax, Barcelona and the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Representatives from Indigenous organisations, networks, government agencies, research centres, and educational institutions gathered to learn about the diverse training programs for language documentation and revitalisation which are taking place across Australia and the Asia-Pacific region, and to discuss ways to strengthen cooperation and collaboration between programs.

All presentations are publicly available on the symposium web site <www.rnld.org/Linguapax-conference>.



Jeanie Bell

Linguistics in the Pub

Linguistics in the Pub (LIP) has now been running for two years, thanks to the efforts of Ruth Singer. Over this time, many topics have been discussed, ranging from how we can support language maintenance and revitalisation activities, to the benefits of collaboration between linguists and musicologists, to methods for documenting child



October LIP meeting

language. For a full list of past topics see <www.rnld.org/events> To date, most LIP meetings have been held in Melbourne, however we encourage people in other locations to organise a local gathering around each topic. The December LIP, held in Canberra, discussed how to do this.

Outreach

RNLD continues to look for more ways to reach people in Australia and around the world who are concerned about maintaining Indigenous languages. Our email discussion list is now in its seventh year, and provides an active forum for members to ask questions and share information and expertise. The archived discussions are easily accessible on RNLD's web site <www.rnld.org/DiscussionList>. Our Facebook group now boasts 455 members, and we recently joined Twitter as @RNLDorg.



Linguist Knut Olawsky and RNLD regional community trainer Vicki Couzens welcoming the audience to the film evening



Audience at Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre film evening

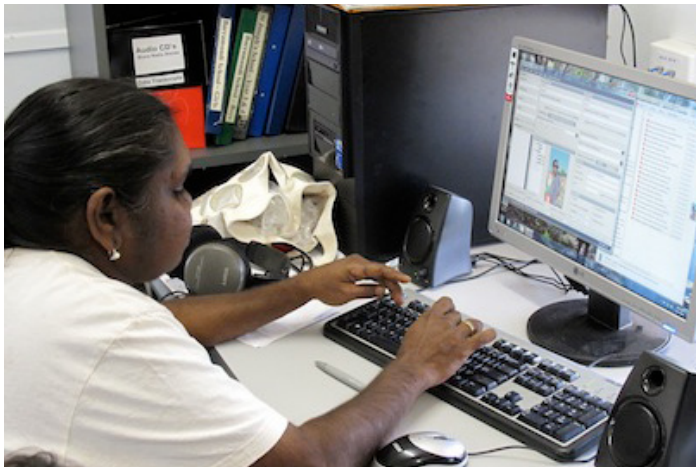
As part of our outreach activities, RNLD has begun organising film evenings in conjunction with our training workshops to encourage wider participation across all age groups in language activities. RNLD and Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre recently co-hosted a free film evening in Kununurra.

Training activities



Batchelor Institute linguist Jeanie Bell working with trainee Bianca Bond (Kabi Kabi) in Brisbane

We run short, intensive on-site workshops which are designed around the specific interests and needs of each participant or group. So far, RNLD staff have undertaken eleven training workshops with members of fifteen language communities across five states and territories.



Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring language worker Glennis Galbat-Newry learning Mirimaa

Some workshops are undertaken with individuals or family groups. Others are organised in partnership with language centres, Indigenous organisations and educational institutions. In several locations, linguists who have worked on a language are sharing their expertise in workshops.

The Documenting and Revitalising Indigenous Languages (DRIL) Program is a major strategy which has been created by RNLD to support the long-term maintenance of Australian Aboriginal languages. DRIL is a flexible, grassroots program designed for Aboriginal people who want to do their own language work to strengthen their language.



RNLD regional community trainer Brad Steadman demonstrating the Jackal recorder to Elaine Olsen in Cobar.

We currently offer 29 modules in this program, covering many aspects of language documentation and language revitalisation and maintenance activities.



Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring language worker Dwayne Newry demonstrating his work to Miriwoong elders in Kununurra, WA



Sharing Culture Director Gadj Maymuru digitising legacy Manggalili recordings



Wangka Maya language workers Esther Quintal and Nora Cooke learning recording techniques

Advocacy

RNLD contributed a submission to the Inquiry into Language Learning in Indigenous Communities, which is being held by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. To date, 137 submissions have been made to the Inquiry, covering many important themes.

RNLD included the recommendations that:

- Australia becomes a signatory to the UN Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.
- Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages be included in the preamble to the Australian Constitution.
- Article 14 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples be implemented and steps be taken to ensure that Indigenous children are offered an education in their own language.
- the language nest model, including L2 classes for parents, be widely trialled in a range of environments and language scenarios across Australia.
- the Master-Apprentice model be widely trialled in a range of environments and language scenarios across Australia.
- the number of hours dedicated to language learning in L2 Indigenous language programs in schools be increased at least to parity with non-Indigenous LOTE programs in schools to ensure a realistic opportunity for language learning.
- the Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records grant scheme be strengthened and substantially increased to offer a realistic possibility for the revitalisation and maintenance of Indigenous languages.

Advisory panel meeting

In August, RNLD held its first face-to-face meeting of our Advisory Panel. We now have six Australian and four international members of the Advisory Panel. They are Rob Amery (South Australia), Margaret Carew (Northern Territory), Kevin Lowe (New South Wales), Paul Paton (Victoria), Anne Poelina (Western Australia), Lesley Woods (Western Australia), Susie Bearune (New Caledonia), Toshihide Nakayama (Japan), Yusuf Sawaki (Indonesia), and Mark Turin (England).

Introducing our staff

Margaret Florey - Co-Director and Senior Linguist

Margaret is a co-founder of the Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity. She was awarded a PhD in Linguistics from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa in 1990. Margaret is an experienced field linguist with particular expertise in the endangered Austronesian languages of Central Maluku, eastern Indonesia, and Australian languages of the Pilbara region of Western Australia. Her work has been directed towards advocacy and capacity development activities with members of endangered language communities. Margaret manages RNLD's activities and coordinates the Documenting and Revitalising Indigenous Languages training program.

Nick Thieberger - Co-Director

Nick is a co-founder of the Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity. He is an ARC QEII Fellow at the University of Melbourne. Nick recorded Paakantyi (NSW) speakers in the early 1980s and then worked with Warnman speakers (WA) when he was setting up the Wangka Maya language centre in Port Hedland. He built the Aboriginal Studies Electronic Data Archive (ASEDA) at AIATSIS in the early 1990. Nick was at the Vanuatu Cultural Centre from 1994-1997 and wrote a grammar of South Efate (central Vanuatu). In 2003 he helped establish the Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures (PARADISEC). Nick taught at the University of Hawai'i (2008-2010) and is the editor of the journal Language Documentation & Conservation. He is developing methods for creation of reusable data from fieldwork on previously unrecorded languages and training researchers in those methods.

Regional Community Trainers

This year, three Regional Community Trainers have been working with RNLD around the country in our Documenting and Revitalising Indigenous Languages training workshops. All the trainers came together at a DRIL workshop in Kununurra in March 2011.

Vicki Couzens (Victoria) co-trained at a DRIL workshop at Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring in October 2011, and developed training materials for the DRIL program.

Brad Steadman (NSW) is supporting the development of training workshops in western NSW.

Lesley Woods (WA) organised and co-trained in several DRIL workshops in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions of Western Australia in 2010-2011 covering ten languages. Lesley is also a member of RNLD's Advisory Panel.

Alison Soutar - Education Officer

Alison is RNLD's part-time Education Officer. She has been involved in language teaching and training in a variety of capacities for a number of years. Her most recent experience has been in Wellington, New Zealand, where she has been involved in community-based training programmes with refugee and migrant communities as well as co-ordinating training programmes in the health industry. Alison has also been involved in language training in Latin America and has several years experience co-ordinating educational tours and university credit courses to diverse countries throughout the world. Alison has a Bachelor of Arts (Linguistics) and a Postgraduate Diploma in Linguistics in Language Endangerment Studies from Monash University and is working towards a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. She has a particular interest in community-based language documentation, revitalisation and maintenance programmes in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.

Felicity Houwen - Administrative Officer

Felicity is RNLD's part-time Administrative Officer and ensures the RNLD office is kept in order. She manages membership, organises RNLD events, and keeps RNLD's website updated, including daily additions to the In The News section. Felicity is building RNLD's social media profiles on Twitter and Facebook, is the Newsletter Editor, and writes occasional blog entries. She has a Bachelor of Arts (English) from the University of Western Australia, and is currently studying an Executive Master of Arts at the University of Melbourne.

Lakmini Welaratne - Bookkeeper

Lakmini Welaratne is RNLD's part-time bookkeeper and manages the financial and HR side of the organisation. She has been involved in the finance industry for several years and is a registered CPA. She brings experience from a diverse range of organisations. Originally from Sri Lanka, she holds an Honours Degree in Finance from the University of Colombo.

Eric Huang - IT Consultant

Eric Huang is RNLD's IT Consultant and manages RNLD's website. He is a software engineer and an IT consultant. He works primarily with internet technologies, and specialises in web application development, data mining and text mining.

Upcoming events

12 - 14 December - Sustainable data from digital research: Humanities perspectives on digital scholarship, University of Melbourne, Australia

20 December - RNLD End of Year Celebration, Upstairs room Prince Alfred Hotel, Carlton (see our Facebook group for details)

6-8 January — World Language Meet and Chotro Four Imagining The Intangible: Languages, Literature and Visual Arts of the Indigenous, Vadodara, India

Participate

If you or your organisation would like to join RNLD's training program please contact us.

Join our email discussion list to ask questions and share information and your expertise.

Join our Facebook group for recent articles and links to sites supporting endangered languages.

Follow us on Twitter for news items, conference calls, updates on our activities and an online dialogue.

Cover photo shows regional community trainer Lesley Woods working with Bruce Thomas in Port Hedland, WA.

RNLD is funded under the Indigenous Languages Support program (formerly Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records).



Australian Government
Indigenous Languages Support

Applications for Indigenous Language Support Grants close on 3 February 2012.

www.arts.gov.au/indigenous/apply