

Developing grassroots training for Australia's Indigenous languages

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Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity

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Australian Government

Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records

RNLD — www.rnld.org

- The Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity (RNLD) was founded in 2004 as a web-based volunteer organization by co-Directors Nick Thieberger and Margaret Florey
- RNLD's mission is
 - *to advance the sustainability of indigenous languages and to increase the participation of Indigenous peoples in all aspects of language documentation and revitalization*
- This mission is activated through 4 key strategies:
 - networking
 - resource sharing
 - advocacy
 - training

**DOCUMENTING & REVITALISING
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES**

RNLD's training strategy

- The *Documenting and Revitalizing Indigenous Languages* (DRIL) training program has been developed by RNLD as a strategic training program with national scope and enormous local flexibility
- DRIL supports the goals of Australian Aboriginal and Islander peoples who want to develop, implement and manage their own language projects
- Participants can take part in the training individually, with members of their family, a small group in a community, or in the workplace
- DRIL combines intensive on-site workshops with online resources, materials and support
- Training capacity is transferred to communities and organizations to develop autonomy and decrease reliance on non-Indigenous partners

Safe learning environment

- The DRIL model
 - does not require any educational background
 - is adaptable to and inclusive of all literacy levels
 - supports learning for people who do not meet the requirements for formal education or who have been deterred by earlier educational experiences
 - builds skills and confidence and may provide a stepping-stone to formal training
 - emphasises autonomy and ownership of language projects
 - builds, repairs and strengthens bridges between community members and external partners

Flexible structure

- DRIL has enormous flexibility to respond to the specific needs of each participating individual or group
- Training is customized for each person or group
- Participants don't have to take all of the modules in the program or even all of the modules in any topic
 - Trainees can start at any point depending on interests and the projects they want to develop
 - They continue to choose different modules as their skills build and interests change
- DRIL is not yet offer a formal qualification — we are currently developing an optional accredited pathway
- Recognition is given for each module that is completed

DRIL modules

- Currently 29 modules grouped into 7 topics:
 - Developing a language project (D01-D05)
 - Recording and archiving (R01-R05)
 - Strategies for language revival and maintenance (S01-S06)
 - Creating language resources (C01-C06)
 - Literacy and linguistics (L01-L02)
 - Publishing and presenting (P01-P02)
 - Training and curriculum development (T01-T03)

DRIL methods

- Hands-on and practical at all stages
- Learning and implementing skills
- Emphasis on planning
- Identifying strengths and interests
- Developing roles in a team and recognizing leadership
- Building partnerships to support language work
- Reviewing and reflecting on learning and processes at each stage
- Passing skills on to others

Recent DRIL training activities

- Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre, Kununurra — Miriwoong language
 - 31 October – 4 November 2011
 - 6 participants
 - co-trained by Vicki Couzens and Margaret Florey
 - 2 modules
 - CO2 audio resources (Jackal recorder)
 - CO4 dictionaries (Miromaa)
 - incorporated train-the-trainer & sharing skills

MDW-g Day 1 sessions



Session 1 — protocols,
reviewing skills & strengths



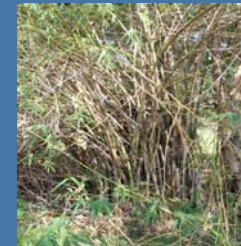
Film night at the language centre



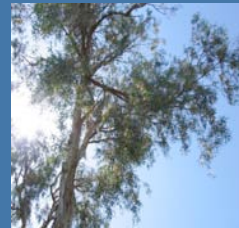
MDW-g Miromaa sessions



marlawarn river mangrove tree. this plant was used to poison the fish for eating.
Category: [Plants](#) , [Plants trees](#).



milinyin Yoon bamboo. Category: [Plants](#) .

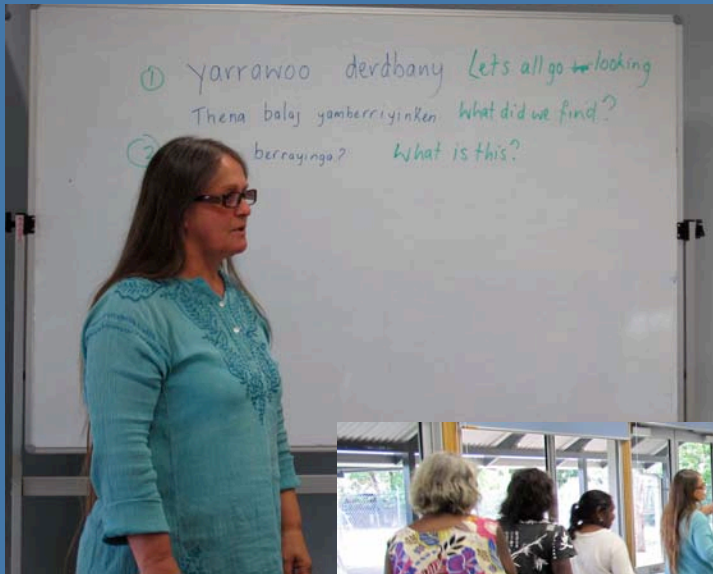


merndang paperbark tree. the barks of this plant was useful to the Miriwoong people for wrapping their food up and many other things.
Category: [Plants](#) , [Plants trees](#).

MDW-g Jackal recorder sessions



MDW-g workshop sessions



Teaching video skills to the girls' language class

Learning a "walking & seeing game"

Feedback from DRIL participants

- Immediate outcomes — "I was able to see firsthand the pride in B as she was able to say her first words in Kabi Kabi as she did a Welcome to Country for Xavier [Rudd] and had over a thousand people saying hello back in her language."
- Community engagement — "This approach acknowledges the importance of re-engaging the local communities and families to maintain language and be involved in its restoration. Through simple teachings we learn the skill of how to record, document and interpret language material."
- Strengthening independence — "Language workers received well-structured training which enabled them to acquire essential skills ... and gained confidence in working more independently".
- Flexibility — "One thing that really impressed me was the flexibility in the training. We all had very different needs, with very diverse knowledge and skills and we all walked away with a strong focus and direction."
- Building pathways — "For some people such as me the course has the added bonus of opening other opportunities and creating pathways for linguistic study and further education."

**REBUILDING INTERGENERATIONAL
TRANSMISSION OF LANGUAGE**

Master-Apprentice program

- Developed in California by Leanne Hinton
- Managed by the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival (AICLS)
- Aims to rebuild speaker communities with conversational fluency
- Method:
 - A fluent speaker (Master) is paired with a (usually) younger non-speaker (Apprentice) from the community, and the pair is trained in one-on-one immersion techniques
 - The team commits to spending 10-20 hours per week together teaching and learning the language
- To date, just two pilot M-A projects in Australia
 - Waalubal dialect of Bandjalang in NSW — run by Bradley Laurie and John Hobson from the University of Sydney's Indigenous Languages Education program
 - Miriwoong, spoken around Kununurra in northern Western Australia — run by Miroma Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre

Master-Apprentice in Australia

- RNLD is coordinating a proposal for a national train-the-trainer workshop to train approximately 30 people to become trainers of the Master-Apprentice method
- Partnership application with
 - Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre (MDWg)
 - Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE)
 - Master of Indigenous Languages Education program (MILE), University of Sydney
- 2 x 3-day workshops
 - Batchelor Institute, Alice Springs, 13-15 March 2012
 - Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring, Kununurra, 19-21 March 2012
- Training to be led by US team from AICLS — Leanne Hinton, Stan Rodriguez and Nancy Steele
- Commitment from all trainees to apply their training in their region through training local Master-Apprentice teams
- Plan to extend the training program over the coming three years

SYMPOSIA

Strengthening language maintenance through cooperative training strategies

- Symposium held in Melbourne from 18 - 19 August, 2011
- Organised by RNLD in partnership with
 - Linguapax, Barcelona, Spain
 - University of California, Santa Barbara, USA
- Aims — to provide an opportunity to learn about the diverse training programs for language documentation and revitalisation in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region, and to discuss ways to strengthen cooperation and collaboration between programs
- 21 papers presented in 8 sessions
- 60 people attended the symposium
- All presentations are publicly available on the symposium web site <<http://www.rnld.org/Linguapax-conference>>

Symposium presentations

Topic	Presenters
<i>Linguapax: Defending and promoting linguistic diversity for decades</i>	Miquel Àngel Essomba
<i>Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records funding program</i>	Stacey Campton and Wallace McKittrick
<i>The CTLDC: International cooperation to support trainers worldwide</i>	Carol Genetti
<i>Making language learning possible - in their own time</i>	Doris Paton and Lynnette Solomon-Dent
<i>Learning and teaching an endangered Aboriginal language</i>	Mary-Anne Gale
<i>Implementing the TAFE Cert 3-4 Program: a process and some observations</i>	Greg Wilson
<i>RNLD and the Documenting and Revitalising Indigenous Languages training model</i>	Margaret Florey
<i>Quqwel'antwal'wimalh kwen nqwalutenlhkalkh (Talk to each other for our languages)</i>	Lorna Williams
<i>Embedding training within language documentation projects</i>	Greg Dickson
<i>Batchelor Institute for Indigenous Tertiary Education</i>	Jeanie Bell
<i>Master of Indigenous Languages Education (MILE)</i>	John Hobson
<i>Fieldwork training at universities</i>	Jane Simpson and Nick Thieberger
<i>Inquiry into language learning in Indigenous communities</i>	John White
<i>Building a skills base for Aboriginal Languages in Victoria</i>	Paul Paton and Christina Eira
<i>Miromaa Aboriginal Language and Technology Centre</i>	Daryn McKenny
<i>Community training for a computer assisted language learning program</i>	Virginia Westwood and Colleen Hattersley
<i>Empowering students and speech community members in language documentation activities</i>	Yusuf Sawaki
<i>Collecting Oral Literature in Papua New Guinea — A progress report on the BOLD:PNG project</i>	Anne-Marie Wanamp and Steven Bird
<i>Training at the Jakarta Field Station of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology</i>	John Bowden
<i>Dimensions of cooperative training at In-Field/Co-Lang</i>	Carol Genetti
<i>A proposal for organizing InField Asia-Pacific</i>	Victoria Rau

Symposium panelists



ADVOCACY & NETWORKING

Inquiry into Language Learning

RNLD's submission recommended that:

1. Australia becomes a signatory to the UN Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.
2. recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages be included in the preamble to the Australian Constitution.
3. 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.
4. the language nest model, including L2 classes for parents, be widely trialled in a range of environments and language scenarios across Australia.
5. the Master-Apprentice model be widely trialled in a range of environments and language scenarios across Australia.
6. 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.
7. 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.

Linguistics in the Pub

- LIP is a monthly gathering that brings language activists and linguists together in Melbourne
- Topics have included
 - *How can we support language maintenance and revitalisation activities?*
 - *The benefits of collaboration between linguists and musicologists*
 - *Elicitation techniques and fieldwork stimuli*
 - *Using video in language documentation*
 - *Documenting child language*
- Those in other parts of Australia and the world are encouraged to organise a local gathering to discuss the monthly topic and support language activities in your area
- Go to <http://www.rnld.org/LIP> for more information

Networking

- You can join RNLD on our
 - email discussion list
 - an active forum for our members to ask questions and share information and their expertise among the community of language maintenance practitioners
 - Facebook group
 - recent news items, updates on events, links to sites that support language documentation and revitalization, and discussions of issues
 - Twitter
 - online dialogue about what's happening internationally with endangered languages, conference calls, publications, updates on RNLD's activities
- Go to <http://www.rnld.org/join>