Welcome to the latest newsletter from the Research Unit for Indigenous Language. RUIL consists of a team of researchers from the School of Languages and Linguistics, led by Professor Rachel Nordlinger and Associate Professor Nick Thieberger. This newsletter presents some of the highlights of the last 2 months, and focuses particularly on events, fieldwork, new and continuing projects, and new grants.

For a full list of all publications, conference presentations and current grants, please visit our website: http://arts.unimelb.edu.au/indiglang

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**50 Words Project update:**

**NAIDOC WEEK AND WEBSITE REVAMP**

It’s been an exciting month for the Research Unit’s 50 Words Project! Our online map now showcases 50 words in 65 Indigenous Australian languages from across the country, with more languages on the way soon. If you stop by to have a listen, you might notice that the project’s website has been redesigned to improve map functions, searchability and overall experience. You can check out the new look and features at https://50words.online.

During NAIDOC week, the project received a significant amount of positive media attention and, as a result, lots of interest in contributing from communities around Australia. Project team Prof Rachel Nordlinger, A/Prof Nick Thieberger, Dr Jill Vaughan and Allyra Murray were interviewed about the project by media outlets including SBS, NITV, ABC, BBC News Radio and published a story in Melbourne University’s Pursuit.

As we look forward to building on the project in 2021, we’re calling for new language submissions. If you or someone you know is in a position to make recordings for the project for a language we don’t yet have up on the map, please contact us (RUIL-contact@unimelb.edu.au). We will support you through the process.
Sign languages are an important and valued part of the traditions of Australian Indigenous peoples. Between 1978-1985 Adam Kendon worked with Warlpiri signers at Yuendumu to make a record of the sign language used there. A synthesis of this work was edited into the *Warlpiri Sign Language Dictionary*, a video record presented in five parts and organized thematically in semantic domains. It comprises just over 4.5 hours of material, covering over 1000 signs. A RUIL project is making this valuable resource searchable by annotating it in a program called Elan to link the audio-visual and text records. This project will enable more direct and efficient comparisons with recent recordings of sign languages made in Central Australia as part of as part of the 300 signs project led by RUIL's Jenny Green. The project has the full support of Adam Kendon who wrote “I am very pleased to hear that you are hoping to make my Warlpiri sign demonstrations more available and searchable.”

In November 2020 Eleanor Jorgensen, who has been doing the sign coding work, Jenny Green, and other linguists from across Australia who work with Warlpiri communities, zoomed into the Warlpiri Jinta Jarrimi meeting at Nyirrpi community in the Northern Territory. The aim of the meeting was to consult with Warlpiri educators about developing educational resources for sign based on the *rdaka-rdaka* dictionary. Adam Kendon joined the meeting from his home in Cambridge, UK.
Anindilyakwa speakers from Groote Eylandt, NT, have been working with RUIL linguists John Mansfield, Rosey Billington and Hywel Stoakes to better understand the unique sounds of their language. John made several recordings on Groote Eylandt in early 2020, which Rosey and Hywel helped him to analyse phonetically back in Melbourne. To “close the circle” and keep knowledge flowing back to the community, on 8 December the RUIL linguists held a zoom session with language workers and linguists at the Groote Eylandt Language Centre. The RUIL linguists explained some of the concepts they have been using to understand how Anindilyakwa sounds fit together, while the language centre workers gave their own perspective on these concepts. This was a great two-way learning process for everyone, and we look forward to doing more sessions next year!

Pictured: (Top left) John, Hywel and Rosey in Melbourne (Bottom left) Judy, Kathleen and Colleen at the Groote Eylandt Language Centre.

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**SOUNDS OF THE ANINDILYAKWA LANGUAGE**

In December RUIL hosted its first ever virtual public lecture via Zoom. ‘Always was, always will be Aboriginal Language – Ma!’ was presented by Dr Linda Payi Ford (picture left) and Emily Tyaemaen Ford (picture right), on the work and activities of the Marranunggu Language team and the importance of reviving threatened Aboriginal languages for Aboriginal people.

A recording of the lecture will be available on our website in the new year. Keep an eye out on our social media to be notified. We guarantee you won’t want to miss it!

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**2020 PUBLIC LECTURE**

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HELLOS AND GOODBYES

This year we sadly farewell postdoctoral fellow Rosey Billington, who has been a valued member of RUIL for many years working on the Nafsan language of Vanuatu and also on the South Sudanese language Lopit. Rosey leaves to take up a position in the School of Literature, Languages and Linguistics at the ANU – a fabulous opportunity for her and, while we will miss her valuable contributions at RUIL, we wish her all the very best for this next adventure!

We are also very pleased to welcome Reuben Brown to the RUIL team from 2021, who will be working on his ARC DECRA project ‘Modern diplomacy: understanding ceremonial exchange at Indigenous festivals’. The project involves collaboration with the Research Unit for Indigenous Arts and Cultures as well as Indigenous ceremony leaders from northern Australia. It will investigate how ceremonial performance at Indigenous festivals enacts diplomacy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants, and between different clan and language groups. Welcome Reuben, we look forward to working with you!

INDIGEMOJI

In our last newsletter we welcomed RUIL associate Joel Liddle. This edition we are congratulate Joel and the INDIGEMOJI team for their special feature on the Apple App store during NAIDOC Week 2020.

To read the article and download the app visit: http://go.unimelb.edu.au/rq6i

Language Word Search

We have created a word search using the 50 words website as the resource. You can find 15 words in Ngarrindjeri – good luck!

Yekau (yes) Warn (no) Parragai (firewood)
Kari (smoke) Maiyi (wind) Nanggi (sun)
Tuldi (star) Turni (hand) Plombi (ear)
Yapi (tree) Pinyali (emu) Muldhari (magpie)
Mraiyi (bird) Nangai (father) Ningkawi (mother)