

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 five 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>

LEARY TRUST FOR AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AWARD

The Research Unit for Indigenous Language is excited to congratulate Dharug woman Tula Wynyard (pictured) as the inaugural winner of the Leary Trust for Australian Indigenous Languages Award. This award was established in 2020 to support and encourage the study of Australian Indigenous languages by Australian Indigenous honours students at the University of Melbourne. The award will support Tula as she undertakes her honours year in Linguistics in 2021.

Tula says “Our Aboriginality was a secret kept by the older generations of my family for many years, so I feel a strong sense of responsibility to learn as much as I can about my culture, stories and country. I believe that the study of Australian languages challenges widespread misconceptions about Indigenous culture and history — it also highlights the beauty, complexity and diversity of the languages themselves.

“My Honours thesis focuses on morpheme boundary phonotactics in northern Australian languages such as Kayardild, Wubuy and Ndjébbana. The intersections of morphemes in polysynthetic languages such as these exhibit interesting phonological patterns that are often different from the patterns elsewhere in a word.

It’s an honour to receive the inaugural Leary Trust for Australian Indigenous Languages Award to support my studies. It helps relieve the additional pressures of work and enables me to make the most of my Honours year coursework and research.”



Congratulations Tula! We look forward to working with you and seeing your research develop.

To read more about Tula’s study, visit <http://go.unimelb.edu.au/p3fi>.

Follow us @indiglang

To hear about upcoming RUIL events and connect with other organisations talking about Indigenous languages





PARADISEC CELEBRATES

100 TERABYTES!



Demangar dwonk-kaadidjiny: Vois blong bubu i kam bak: Entendre les ancêtres: Fa'aro'o i te mau tupuna: Hearing the ancestors (Noongar: Bislama: French: Tahitian: English)

This conference celebrated the digital archive PARADISEC's collection reaching 100 terabytes. In fact, by the time the conference was run, the collection had already topped 120 terabytes and keeps growing.

In 40 online presentations from around the world and a small group of in-person presenters in Sydney, we heard about the exciting developments in what opening plenarist Nick Evans called 'dialogic repatriation', in which records inform current and new cultural practices, and this, in turn, refreshes information in the archive. We were welcomed to Sydney by Uncle Allen Madden of the Metropolitan Aboriginal Land and then had a morning of presentations in honour of Linda Barwick, the founding director of PARADISEC. A list of titles (<https://go.coedl.net/PDSCProgram>) will give a feel for the conference which included talks from all over Australia, and also papers from the Pacific, from Nepal, and other plenaries from Linda Payi Ford, Tony Seeger, and Richard Widdess.

The online format allowed participation from Alice Springs, Canberra, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Hawai'i, Tahiti, San Diego, Paris, London, Nijmegen, New Haven, Kyoto and Cologne.

We were also treated to the launch of the most recent podcast by Jodie Kell and Steven Gagau (<http://go.unimelb.edu.au/7s4i>), taking items from the collection and working with knowledgeable people connected to those items to discuss their importance.

All presentations can be seen here: <http://go.unimelb.edu.au/43fi>.

Pictured: In front (L-R) are Nick Thieberger, Myfany Turpin, Amanda Harris, Sally Treloyn, Allan Marett, Linda Barwick, Jodie Kell and Georgia Curran. On the screen behind are (L-R) Emily Tyaemen Ford (Payi's daughter) and Payi Linda Ford. Photo: Liana Molina.



CELEBRATING THE WESTERN DESERT VERBAL ARTS PROJECT

Between 2012 – 2019 Ngaatjatjarra linguist Elizabeth Marrkilyi Ellis, Inge Kral (Australian National University), Jennifer Green (The University of Melbourne and RUIL) and Jane Simpson (Australian National University) worked together to make an enduring record of verbal arts and oral traditions from the Ngaanyatjarra Lands communities of Western Australia. The collaboration has resulted in two books, recently published by UWA Press, as well as a rich archival collection of audio-visual records. The significance of this collection has recently been recognised by their inscription, in 2021, on the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Register.

In the Time of their Lives (Kral and Ellis) is a rich exploration of ‘*wangka kutjupa-kutjuparringu*’: how communication and social interaction has altered among the Ngaanyatjarra, Ngaatjatjarra and Pitjantjatjara peoples of Australia’s Western Desert. The book weaves memory and history together and details the lived experience of Western Desert people across multiple generations since first contact with Anglo-Australians in the 1930s. In tracing these changes through text, recorded interviews, archival and contemporary photographs, and film, the authors explore the unique oral traditions of the Ngaanyatjarra.

As part of this broader project the research team also filmed the traditional Ngaanyatjarra practice of *tjinytjatjunku* or *mirlpa* (telling stories while drawing in the sand) with women and girls. They then loaded up some iPads with a drawing app and recorded ten younger women using this new technology to draw with as they told stories about everyday life in their desert communities. Sixteen iPad stories are presented in *i-Tjuma: Ngaanyatjarra stories from the Western Desert of Central Australia* (edited by Kral, Green & Ellis) and readers can view the films with via QR codes.

The books were launched in a zoom meeting, hosted from ANU but attended by people from many far-flung locations including Mozambique, Malaysia, Norway, the USA, Perth, Melbourne, Broome and Sydney as well as the Western Desert communities of Warburton, Blackstone and Warakurna.

Speaking from Papulankutja (Blackstone) one of the Ngaanyatjarra elders and a project participant Maimie Butler said, “I would like to say we are really proud of our language, Ngaanyatjarra, we are really proud for the language, and for our culture and for the *ngurra* (country), that land that we live in, and all the things that are around us, we are proud. We have to hold it and keep it strong. *Palya*. We are doing it for our new generation, so they can see it, and read it and know, ‘Oh yeah, this is how our grandparents went, we have to follow in their footsteps.’”

To purchase each book please visit <http://go.unimelb.edu.au/iv4i> and <http://go.unimelb.edu.au/iv4i>.

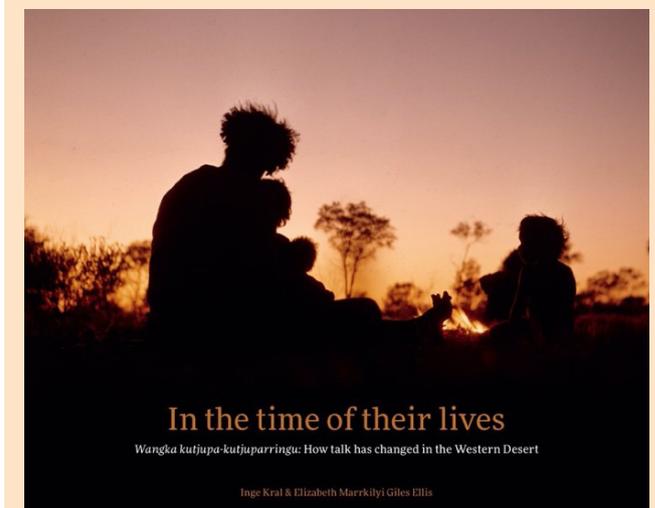
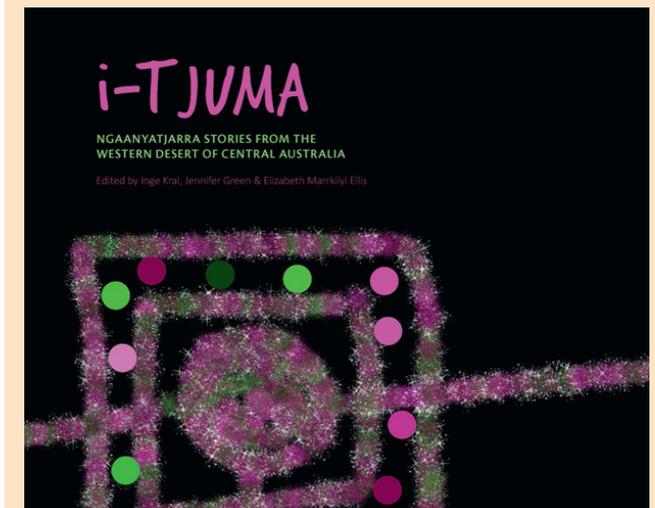


Image (top): Western Desert Verbal Arts project team (L to R) - Elizabeth (Lizzie) Marrkilyi Ellis, Jennifer Green, Jane Simpson, Inge Kral, Natalie O’Toole and Alexandra Grant.

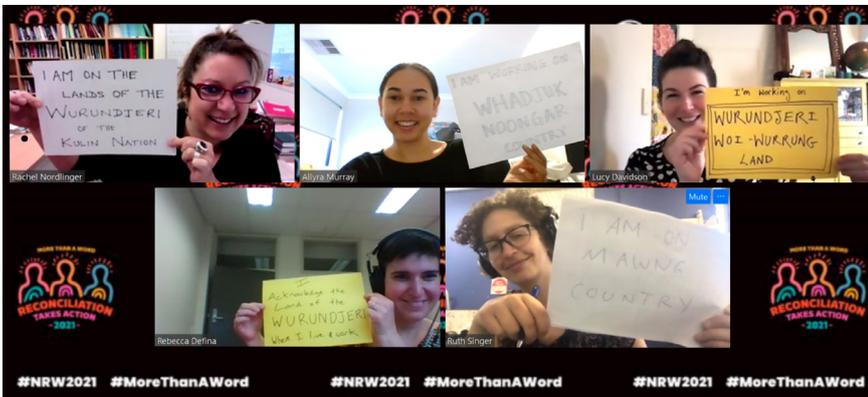


RUIL'S INDIGENOUS SCHOLAR SCHEME

Do you have a language-related project idea that you would like help with?

If so, consider applying for our Indigenous Scholar Scheme. The Scheme funds Indigenous language experts to work on a small project of their design with the support of a RUIL team member. Depending on the nature of the project, RUIL can provide relevant training, collaborative support, library access and relevant resources. Applicants can apply for up to \$5000, which can be used to fund such things as travel, salary buyout to enable time to work on the project, research assistance costs, publication costs, etc. If you are interested, please contact us at RUIL-contact@unimelb.edu.au for further information about the application process.

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK



The RUIL team hosted a Zoom meeting in recognition of the beginning of National Reconciliation Week (NRW), where we took a moment to acknowledge and pay respects to lands we live and work on.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 outbreak in Melbourne our planned NRW events has been postponed to NAIDOC week. For more information on National Reconciliation Week, including events visit: <https://nrw.reconciliation.org.au/>.

We've updated our website!

Visit the RUIL website (<https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/research-unit-for-indigenous-language>) to read more about our academic projects, RUIL news and events and resources such as "The sounds of Australian Aboriginal Languages".

Language Word Search

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

- ayyang (hello) thum (fire) kurk (ashes)
- wunt (wind) kinch (sun) aak (sky)
- kuman (thigh) kuchek (head) minh panch (bird)
- minh nga' (fish) wukal (money) puk (child)
- piip (father) kaath (mother) inman (today)



Research Unit for Indigenous Language
 School of Languages and Linguistics
 University of Melbourne
 Victoria 3010 Australia
RUIL-contact@unimelb.edu.au
arts.unimelb.edu.au/indiglang

Find us on Facebook and Twitter to hear about upcoming RUIL events and connect with other organisations talking about Indigenous languages:
 @indiglang

