Emma, Amy and Freya took themselves off to Hawai‘i in February to attend the 6th International Conference on Language Documentation and Conservation (ICLDC) in Honolulu, and the He ‘Olelo Ola Hilo field study on the Big Island.

The conference was an amazing opportunity to meet language activists from all over the world, and hear about how they’re working in their communities to revitalise their languages and decolonise linguistics and language work. There was a wealth of knowledge and experience among conference attendees, and the conference provided a wonderful opportunity for language workers, technology developers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous linguists, and others to come together, share their experiences, and support each other to reach their language goals.
We each attended four full days of presentations, plenary talks, workshops and roundtable discussions led by language activists from Hawai‘i, Canada, USA, Mexico, New Zealand, Pacific Islands, Pakistan, Japan, Iceland, Philippines, Australia and more. We also had our turn in the spotlight, presenting alongside our colleague Ebony via video, about RNLD’s training model.

We could write pages on all the things we learnt and stories shared at the conference, but for us one of the greatest things we can bring home to the language activists we work with is the knowledge that so many people around the world are in similar situations to language communities in Australia, and they are succeeding in their revitalisation efforts.

What started in Hawai‘i 40 years ago as a small group of parents getting together to teach their preschool aged children language, has now grown to 3400 students attending immersion Hawaiian schools, and university students able to complete degrees up to Masters level in Hawaiian. All of the revitalisation stories we heard about started with just one or two dedicated language activists, but in time they’ve grown to incredible success stories.

You can read more about this conference on page 12.
It has certainly been a very busy and positive start to the year - where has the time gone?

This issue of the newsletter provides updates on a range of exciting projects and with the activities and training still to come, the year promises to continue being positive, busy and productive.

One of the really exciting developments is our new relationship with Ripponlea Institute as our Registered Training Organisation (RTO) partner. We are pleased and excited to be working with Ripponlea to recommence our nationally accredited training (Certificate III in Aboriginal Languages for Communities and Workplaces and; Certificate II in Master-Apprentice Language Learning Program) with the aim of being able to deliver the training from early 2020. If you are interested in this training you will find more details on the website or you can contact one of the training team.

We have also been working on a number of fundraising activities. Now that we have deductible gift recipient status we are able to accept tax deductible donations. This is a significant step for the organisation as the funding we receive does not fully cover the cost of the programs we deliver and fundraising is an important part of supporting these services.

So a big thank you to everyone who has supported the organisation. We couldn’t continue to effectively provide the range of services that we do without the ongoing assistance and advocacy of individuals, partners, friends and communities.

Megan Broome
CEO
RNLD is very excited to be launching our very first Annual Fundraising Raffle this year, in the UNESCO International Year of Indigenous Languages! As well as securing yourself a chance to win some special prizes, purchasing a ticket will help support community-run language work and projects throughout Australia. This includes:

- the development of an Indigenous regional training model with past participants joining RNLD as co-trainers
- the creation of a community-friendly ‘how-to’ guide for language activists wanting to write an accessible learner’s guide for their own community, led by a reference group of Indigenous language representatives
- fundraising for Indigenous participants to attend a 2-week “Breath of Life” style workshop with RNLD in partnership with AIATSIS.

For information on purchasing a ticket, please email admin@rnld.org or call us on (03) 9077 9500. To make a donation, visit www.rnld.org
Hello from our Training Director

There are so many exciting things happening as part of the International Year of Indigenous Languages - it’s great to see the spotlight being shone on Australia’s first languages and the incredible work people are doing around the country to strengthen, share and celebrate them!

I was reminded of the importance of protecting and celebrating heritage languages in March this year, when I travelled to Shepparton for a Treasure Storytelling event there - A Twist in the Tale - as part of the Shepparton Festival. At these events, refugees, migrants and Aboriginal people from the local community tell stories in their own languages, as a way of displaying the linguistic diversity of the area and celebrating their right to speak their mother tongue. It was wonderful to be there and hear Hazaragi, Nepali, Dinka, Visayan, Tobelorese and Dari spoken by people who now call Shepparton home.

Of course, a highlight was the MC, local Yorta Yorta woman and DRIL Trainer Ebony Joachim speaking her language to kick the event off. While we often see Ebony in action when she comes to Melbourne, or when we travel with her to workshops supporting other people and their languages, hearing her speak Yorta Yorta, in public, in her own community, gave me goosebumps - it was a very special moment.

At an upcoming lecture I’m delivering with Andrew, we will consider why Australia’s first languages matter - not just to the people whose languages they are, who RNLD supports through our training and advocacy - but actually, for all of us. They have so much to teach us, about the history and people of this continent, and about different ways of seeing the world and each other.

So, thankyou to everyone doing the hard work - not just this year but every year, even when the spotlight isn’t there - to keep these languages alive and strong, heard and on the agenda. It inspires us every day.
Ebony and Andrew spent three days in Port Augusta, SA during the first week of March, working with an amazing group of Adnyamathanha language warriors – some local, and some travelling from as far away as Leigh Creek and Copley on Adnyamathanha country. The focus was on the Master-Apprentice learning method and other kinds of language immersion activities for use in the classroom and the home, in order to ensure the Adnyamathanha language continues to be passed down to the next generations. This workshop was organised by the fabulous Mobile Language Team in Adelaide.
At the end of April, RNLD trainer Ebony, along with former RNLD trainer Jess Solla (engaged on a freelance basis for this one), held a workshop at Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language Centre in Kununurra, WA. The workshop was chock-a-block full of language teaching, lesson planning, teaching resource making and Miriwoong verb fun. The Centre’s language workers have been working on and building knowledge around using their language materials. It was great to see their confidence over the time that we were there. Being able to use their language materials will help language workers with their teaching and resource-making in the future. It was a big, productive three days.
Trainers Kumanjayi (Andrew) and Mata (Amy) have been in Parnngurr community this week running a workshop in partnership with Kanyninmpa Jukurrpa and Martu people from Parnngurr, Punmu, Kunawarritji, and Jigalong communities. The focus of the workshop was on recording oral histories of the old people, who still remember growing up in pre-contact “Pujiman times”. The workshop started with Martu-led discussions (in Martu Wangka) about what stories should be recorded and passed down, and where they wanted to go to tell the stories of those places. We then trained the young people in how to use recorders, and they practised recording some stories from the old people.
On Friday we all drove out onto Country, and visited three special sites where the young people recorded elders telling the stories of those places. For some young Martu it was the first time going out to those places and hearing those stories, and it was very special for them to hear the stories of their grandparents’ country. These recordings will be able to be used by the younger generations not only to learn about their heritage but also to hear the more traditional Manyjiljarra and Kartujarra languages that are starting to be mixed with English in modern Martu Wangka. As always, it was such a privilege to spend time in this incredible part of the country, and we can’t wait for the next Martu language workshop.
An optional two-day Hilo Field Study (on the Big Island of Hawai‘i) took place immediately after the ICLDC conference, at the Ka Haka ʻUla O Keʻelikōlani College of Hawaiian Language (University of Hawai‘i at Hilo). The program was designed to showcase various language revitalisation programs in action.

The field study began with an excursion to Nāwahīokalaniʻōpuʻu School, a Hawaiian language immersion charter school founded in 1994 for Kindergarten to Grade 12 students, with the aim of developing, enhancing and maintaining the language through education and in the home. Parents are required to take Hawaiian language lessons to support their children’s language learning, and students only begin learning English at school in Grade 5.

We sat in on some classes and witnessed what the students were learning, and heard from some of the teachers about the ways they incorporate Hawaiian cultural knowledge into the curriculum. Some examples of this were in the subjects of Maths and Science, where students learn traditional Hawaiian body measurement units and vocabulary alongside the metric and imperial measurement systems, or learn about the laws of physics by studying traditional Hawaiian voyaging canoes and designing and building their own models.
We also learnt about language revitalisation through music, and heard some Hawaiian language performances from musicians affiliated with the University. There was also a showcase of Kani ‘Āina (Voices of the Land), an online educational resource and digital corpus of Hawaiian speech recordings, which provides interactive access to recordings and transcripts.

Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani offers students a Hawaiian Studies B.A. at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, offering both a multidisciplinary track and a track taught entirely in the Hawaiian Studies Department. Introductory levels focus on grammar and translation between Hawaiian, Hawai‘i Creole English, and Standard English, and aim to provide a strong base in the fundamentals of Linguistics to equip students for graduate study. Students can also go on to complete various Masters degrees in Hawaiian language, and even complete a Ph.D in Hawaiian and Indigenous language and Culture Revitalisation.

The programs and work being done at the College and school, and the drive and passion of the students and teachers we met there, were incredibly inspiring. To learn more about the College, visit http://www.olelo.hawaii.edu/, and to learn more about Nāwahiokalaniʻōpuʻu school, visit https://www.nawahi.org/
Meet a language warrior...

We were very pleased to announce the winner of RNLD’s inaugural Margaret Florey Scholarship late last year. The scholarship, in honour of our co-founder and previous director, was set up to support a language worker to access training and professional development, to assist their language revitalisation work.

The inaugural winner was Nathan Schrieber, from the Gurugulu Gunggandji people of Yarrabah, near Cairns in Queensland. The scholarship provided financial assistance to Nathan so he could attend and present at the recent ICLDC in Hawai’i (see article on front cover). Nathan completed the Masters of Indigenous Languages Education (MILE) at Sydney University, while teaching his language at the school in Yarrabah. He gave an inspiring talk at the conference about the incredible results of his MILE research project, which compared language learning of children learning on country versus in the classroom.

DRIL Training Director Emma Murphy presented the award to Nathan during the conference, and asked him what his language means to him, and what he got out of the ICLDC conference.

My language is important to me, because first and foremost, I stand as a representative of my people and language is not an isolated element; it’s part of who I am, it connects me to my people, it connects me to my country and it connects me to my ways, or my culture. So, it’s important for me to keep my language going because without language, and the important links between language, land and culture, we start to lose other elements of us as a people. As for me specifically, losing language is like losing my identity, of who I am and where I come from.
ICLDC has been really eye opening for me. I’m hearing different stories from around the world, but they’re all giving the same message. Obviously different mob are on different journeys, or different parts of their journeys, but no matter where these mob are coming from, the goal is the same: we’re all trying to keep our languages alive. Some are just starting out, some have been doing it for a very long time.

It’s been interesting to hear about the different stages of their journeys and the stories behind them, coming from different communities from all over the world. The thing I’m going to take home from this conference is the message from the opening speech given by Te Taka Keegan [Maori lecturer/activist] who spoke about language activism and being a language activist. That really resonated with me because in my short journey of language revitalisation in our community, I’ve hit the wall at certain times and to hear him speak and to reassure me that I’m on the right path and I’m doing the right things – that’s something I’ll take away and it’ll keep me going. Not only reenergise me but it’s that sense of assurance that I’m on the right track and that it’s not just me alone.

Even though Yarrabah is a small community, I feel confident in the fact that other mob around the world, who are doing the exact same thing, who are facing the exact same challenges, are still pushing ahead. They’re still doing whatever it is they need to do to keep our languages alive.
Staff news

Welcome Marg!

We are very happy to have Marg Murphy working with us at the moment on the reaccreditation of the Certificate III in Aboriginal Languages for Communities and Workplaces. Marg has joined the organisation on a part-time short term contract to coordinate our reaccreditation application to ASQA. This is a very involved but important process and we are fortunate to have Marg’s guidance as she brings her wealth of knowledge of the vocational education sector to the application process to ensure we meet requirements. Thank you and welcome Marg!
Upcoming Workshops

Over the next 3 months you will find us in:

June 18-20 — **Flexible DRIL**: Croker Island, NT
July — **Flexible DRIL**: Brisbane, QLD
July — **Flexible DRIL**: South Hedland, WA