YUUINGAN DHILLA YARI

Indigenous Languages Symposium

Tuesday 29 April 2025 | State Library of Queensland



PROGRAM

TIME	EVENT
8 am	**Registration plus complimentary coffee and tea, level 2**
9 am	**Start of symposium** Welcome to Country by Gaja Kerry Charlton and introduction from Vicki McDonald AM FALIA, State Librarian and CEO
9:25 am	**Welcome** Master of Ceremonies: Kgiyarrah Elizabeth Walker, Indigenous Science and Engagement, CSIRO
9:30 am	**Opening keynote: Creating a first languages reality using regenerative AI practices** slq Auditorium 1, level 2 Michael Running Wolf The hype of AI offers an opportunity to change the narrative of language loss but also creates unprecedented risk. Michael will discuss how Indigenous language communities can embrace advanced technology while balancing the impact AI has on Indigenous ways of knowing.
10:30 am	**Morning tea on the Queensland Terrace, level 2**

CHOOSE ONE SESSION PER TIME SLOT

	SESSION 1	SESSION 2	SESSION 3	SESSION 4
11 am	**Reviving language: translating and preserving the voices of southeast Queensland's elders** slq Auditorium 1, level 2 Presenter: Gaja Kerry Charlton Gaja Kerry presents her work translating tape-recordings of elderly southeast Queensland language speakers by University of Queensland academics between 1939 and 1963. She will identifiy how cultural knowledge and training address inconsistencies in written sources and publications, and is the precursor to developing accurate phonology for community language learning and dictionaries.	**Digital technology for language growth** slq Auditorium 2, level 2 Presenter: Ben Foley This presentation will explore the use of digital technology in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language growth and the challenges and opportunities that come with it.	**Mapoon language project** Heritage Collections Learning Room, level 4 Presenter: Jason Jia The Mapoon language project continues the groundbreaking work of linguist Dr Bruce Sommer, with a mission to preserve not only the traditional language but also cultural, environmental and historical knowledge. Hear how Mapoon elders, local educators and the Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council's Cultural Heritage Advisor are working together to bring this work to completion.	**Black gloves experience** White Gloves Room, level 4 Facilitator: Tania Schafer Explore State Library's extensive materials on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in a hands-on collections experience.
11:40 am	**Using virtual songlines and large language models for First Nations language revival** slq Auditorium 1, level 2 Presenter: Brett Leavy This project seeks to explore the intersection of advanced AI technology, specifically large language models, and Indigenous knowledge systems to support the revival and revitalisation of First Nations languages. The project aims to bridge the gap between modern digital tools and traditional cultural practices, empowering Indigenous communities to preserve, teach, and reclaim their languages in innovative ways.	**Caretakers and collections panel discussion** slq Auditorium 2, level 2 Chair: Des Crump Panel: Clarice Stanley and Raelee Lancaster Explore the challenges of caring for and sharing First Nations collections and gain insights into the role of caretakers in safeguarding Indigenous knowledge. Panelists will discuss the balance between preserving cultural heritage, ensuring respectful access, and navigating ethical considerations in cultural stewardship.	**Story, language and place: the power of digital storytelling** Heritage Collections Learning Room, Level 4 Presenter: Gemma Pol Join Gemma, CEO, Common Ground, as she explores how digital storytelling strengthens language and deepens connection to place. Through the evolution of digital stories *Dreamy* and insights from community-led knowledge recording initiatives, this talk highlights how First Nations people are reimagining how we record our stories, our way, for future generations.	**In conversation: Megan Cope** kuril dhagun, level 1 Presenter: Megan Cope Join us for a special community conversation with artist Megan Cope, where we'll explore the powerful connection between art and language revival.

12:30 pm	**Lunch on the Queensland Terrace, level 2** Includes a **special performance** by Western Gugu Yalanji and Birri Gubba Songman Jungaji at 1 pm.

TIME	EVENT			
1:30 pm	**Keynote: Our lingo, our way – the rise of First Nations languages through Australian media** slq Auditorium 2, level 2 Tanya Denning-Orman, First Nations Director, SBS Tanya will explore the power and impact of seeing and hearing our languages in media, highlighting how NITV and SBS are championing First Languages through innovative and engaging content. She will showcase how this work strengthens connections within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities while fostering greater understanding and engagement among all Australians.			
CHOOSE ONE SESSION PER TIME SLOT				
2:30 pm	**SESSION 1** **Kala Lagaw Ya Learning Songs – producing songs to learn Kala Lagaw Ya** slq Auditorium 1, level 2 Presenters: Jessie Lloyd, Leonara Adidi and Louise Manas This presentation showcases the creation of educational songs in Kala Lagaw Ya, designed to teach beginners key words and phrases. Combining music with language learning contributes engaging resources to the Kala Lagaw Ya ecosystem, perfect for online platforms.	**SESSION 2** **waganha winhanga-gigu - dancing for the purpose of remembering** slq Auditorium 2, level 2 Presenter: Nicole Reilly Wiradyuri language speaker and creative producer Nicole Reilly explores the role of creative practice in driving nation rebuilding efforts. Through storytelling, performance, and cultural projects, she shares insights into the power of language revitalisation and artistic expression in strengthening First Nations sovereignty.	**SESSION 3** **Miromaa Pulli Piriraal – keeping language strong through cultural survival** Heritage Collections Learning Room, level 4 Presenters: Sophie Brennan and Jacqui Allen This presentation will explore the importance of a traditional seasonal calendar from an Aboriginal Australian perspective, highlighting its role in language and knowledge. This approach will guide you in creating your own traditional seasonal calendar, using language as a foundation for learning and understanding.	**SESSION 4** **Black gloves experience** White Gloves Room, level 4 Facilitator: Tania Schafer Explore State Library's extensive materials on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in a hands-on collections experience.
3 pm	**Afternoon Tea on the Queensland Terrace, level 2**			
3:30 pm	**SESSION 1** **Language revival in the digital age panel discussion** slq Auditorium 1, level 2 Chair: Elizabeth Walker Panel: Caroline and Michael Running Wolf and Brett Leavy Explore how technology is helping revive Indigenous languages in the digital era. Experts will discuss the role of digital technology and AI in preserving and passing on languages, while addressing challenges like digital access and intergenerational knowledge transfer. Learn how digital tools can empower communities to reclaim and revitalise their cultural heritage.	**SESSION 2** **PUT THE PaP IN POP: preservation and protection of Indigenous languages through embracing popular culture** slq Auditorium 2, level 2 Presenter: Scott Wilson Scott Wilson, co-founder of *Indigiverse Comics*, explores how popular culture can serve as a vital tool for preserving and protecting Indigenous languages and stories. Discover the power of pop culture to celebrate, safeguard, and share our languages and stories for generations to come.	**SESSION 3** **Empowering community led First Language revitalisation and digitisation** Heritage Collections Learning Room, level 4 Presenters: Lala Gutchen and Eric Brace This session will explore the role of community-driven digitisation and revitalisation using the Living First Language Platform as a case study, and drawing on real experiences to address themes of data sovereignty and intergenerational collaboration in language preservation.	**SESSION 4** **In conversation: Des Crump** kuril dhagun, level 1 Presenter: Des Crump Join us for an inspiring community conversation with Des Crump as he shares his personal journey in language revival. Des will discuss his deep connection to his heritage and the importance of preserving and revitalising Indigenous languages, as well as his passion and dedication to keeping languages alive for future generations.
4:15 pm	**Language revival and the arts** slq Auditorium 1, level 2 Chair: Elizabeth Walker Panel: Fred Leone, Nicole Reilly, Scott Wilson and Tanya Denning-Orman This panel explores how the arts—music, visual art, screen, and performance—play a vital role in preserving and revitalising Indigenous languages, fostering cultural resilience and community empowerment.			
5:10 pm	**Closing performance** slq Auditorium 1, level 2 We invite you to conclude your day with a special musical performance by Butchulla Aboriginal Songman and award-winning artist Fred Leone.			
5:30 pm	**End of symposium**			

SPEAKERS, PANELISTS AND PERFORMERS

Leonora Adidi from the Suy-Baydham Clan of Bamaga and Saibai Island, is a cultural educator, linguist, and fluent in Kalaw Kawaw Ya. A NAATI-accredited interpreter in Yumplatok and Kalaw Kawaw Ya, she specialises in intercultural communication, training, and research.

Jacqui Allen is a proud Wonnarua kulpari, who has lived and worked in Awabakal Barai her whole life. Jacqui has been working in the First Nations Language sector for the past 15 years, teaching children and youth from all over Awabakal.

Eric Brace is the Director of First Languages and Digital Innovation at the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation (ALNF). Eric has extensive experience managing the creation of ALNF's digital tools in collaboration with Indigenous communities across Australia.

Sophie Brennan, a proud Kamilaroi woman, works on Awabakal initiatives that promote language learning and cultural awareness. She develops resources to help preserve the Awabakal language.

Megan Cope is a Quandamooka artist from Minjerribah. Her site-specific sculptural installations, video works and paintings investigate issues relating to colonial histories, the environment and mapping practices.

Gaja Kerry Charlton is a Yagarabul Elder and traditional owner in Quandamooka, Kabi Kabi, and Yuggera Ugarapul Peoples native title claims, with ties to the Gulf. A Language Fellow and podcaster, Kerry's work includes *Wulara-Nguru historical language mapping and handbook* (2019); Judy Watson's *Women of Brisbane* (2021) and *Meanjin Winter* (2023).

Des Crump of the Gamilaroi Nation, supports school language programs and is an Industry Fellow at the University of Queensland. He also serves on the Office of Arts National Directions Group and AIATSIS Languages Advisory Committee.

Tanya Denning-Orman is a proud Birri and Guugu Yimidhirr woman from Central and North Queensland and Director of First Nations at SBS. She has over 30 years of media experience, and is SBS's first Director of Indigenous Content. She's on the boards of Screen Careers, the World Indigenous Broadcasters Network and the Starlight Foundation.

Ben Foley has collaborated with people documenting their languages for many decades. Recently, Ben developed speech-recognition systems and now works with the Language Data Commons of Australia and Indigenous language centres, to maintain long-term access to their collections.

Lala Gutchen is of the Meuram tribe from Erub Island, Torres Strait. She is the First Language Programs Facilitator for the Erubmer Language Living First Language project, part of Australian Literacy & Numeracy Foundation.

Jason Jia is the Cultural Heritage Advisor for the Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council and is the Mapoon IKC Coordinator. He preserves cultural heritage through the management of the Cultural Keeping Place, recording oral histories, and providing educational resources on cultural heritage and conservation.

Jungaji is a Western Gugu Yalanji & Birrigubba Songman whose 30-year journey spans R&B roots to a cultural rebirth. He now shares powerful stories through music, art, theatre, and advocacy, inspiring strength and resilience.

Raelee Lancaster is a librarian and writer descended from the Wiradjuri and Biripi peoples, raised on Awabakal lands. Raelee is passionate about enriching the metadata of Indigenous collections, advocating for Indigenous governance and sovereignty within libraries and archives, and promoting information literacy.

Brett Leavy is a proud First Nations descendant of the Kooma people of western Queensland. A visionary in digital storytelling and interactive media, he's passionate about using his three decades of experience in media, communication and ICT to preserve and promote First Nations cultural heritage, knowledge and histories.

Fred Leone is a Butchulla Songman with Aboriginal, Tongan, and South-Sea Islander heritage and hails from the Garrwa and Butchulla tribes. As a Songman, he preserves the Butchulla tribe's songs and language, ensuring contemporary stories are woven into their oral history and ceremonies.

Jessie Lloyd, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander singer and social historian, is the founder of the Ailan Songs and Mission Songs Projects, which explore and share Australia's First Nations cultural identity through music.

Louise Manas of Mualgal descent and Soegun clan, is fluent in Kaurareg and Mabuyag dialects of Kala Lagaw Ya. She specialises in teaching, interpreting, and cultural advice, with experience in language and cultural programs for both government and community sectors.

Gemma Pol is a Wiradyuri, Ngemba and Paakantji woman from a small coastal town on Worimi Country. She's a freelance writer, support worker, and the CEO of Common Ground.

Nicole Reilly is a proud queer Wiradyuri yinaa. She's the Senior Producer at BlakDance with experience as a creative producer, director, performer, and teaching artist. She received the Enoch Scholarship from Queensland University of Technology and is the inaugural Wandima Fellow in partnership with Brisbane Powerhouse.

Caroline Running Wolf (née Old Coyote) is an Apsáalooke Nation citizen, language activist, and XR/AI producer dedicated to Indigenous language reclamation, data sovereignty, and ethical tech.

Michael Running Wolf (Northern Cheyenne and Lakota) revitalises Indigenous language and culture through immersive technologies and AI, emphasising ethical practices that respect Indigenous knowledge. His work has earned the MIT Solve Fellowship, Alfred P. Sloan Fellowship, and Patrick McGovern AI for Humanity Prize.

Tania Schafer (née Bostock) is a Mununjali and Bundjalung woman who has worked at State Library since 1992. She specialises in family history, languages, and community connections, with a focus on sharing and preserving First Nations heritage.

Clarice Stanley is the Discovery Lead, First Nations Strategy, Queensland State Archives. For a decade Clarice has been supporting Aboriginal peoples' and Torres Strait Islander peoples' access to historical Government records.

Kgiyarrah Elizabeth Walker is a Quandamooka woman who has dedicated her career to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. With experience in government agencies and community, she is passionate about delivering programs that address the needs of communities, as defined by them.

Scott Wilson is a Gooniyandi and Gajerrong man from the Kimberley, with family ties from Broome to Kununurra. He is the co-founder/writer and author of the *Indigiverse Comics* series.

Yuuingan Dhilla Yari *Friends, basket, talk* in Yuggera Language
[YOO-IN-gan DIL-ah YAR-ee]

Cover art: *Woven Voices* Kykoe
(Saisarem, Butchulla and Barada Barna)

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their continuing connection to land and as custodians of stories for millennia. We are inspired by this tradition in our work to share and preserve Queensland's memory for future generations.

Supported through the Australian Government's Indigenous Languages and Arts program.

Australian Government
Indigenous Languages and Arts

STATE LIBRARY QUEENSLAND

Queensland Government