



**RECOVER  
RE-VOICE  
RE-PRACTISE**

**IMPLEMENTATION  
PLAN  
ABORIGINAL  
LANGUAGE AND CULTURE NESTS [ALCN]  
IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Dr Shayne T. Williams



**NSW AECG Incorporated**

Supported by



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## **ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE AND CULTURE NESTS IN NSW**

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**DOCUMENT 1.**  
**DOCUMENT 2.**

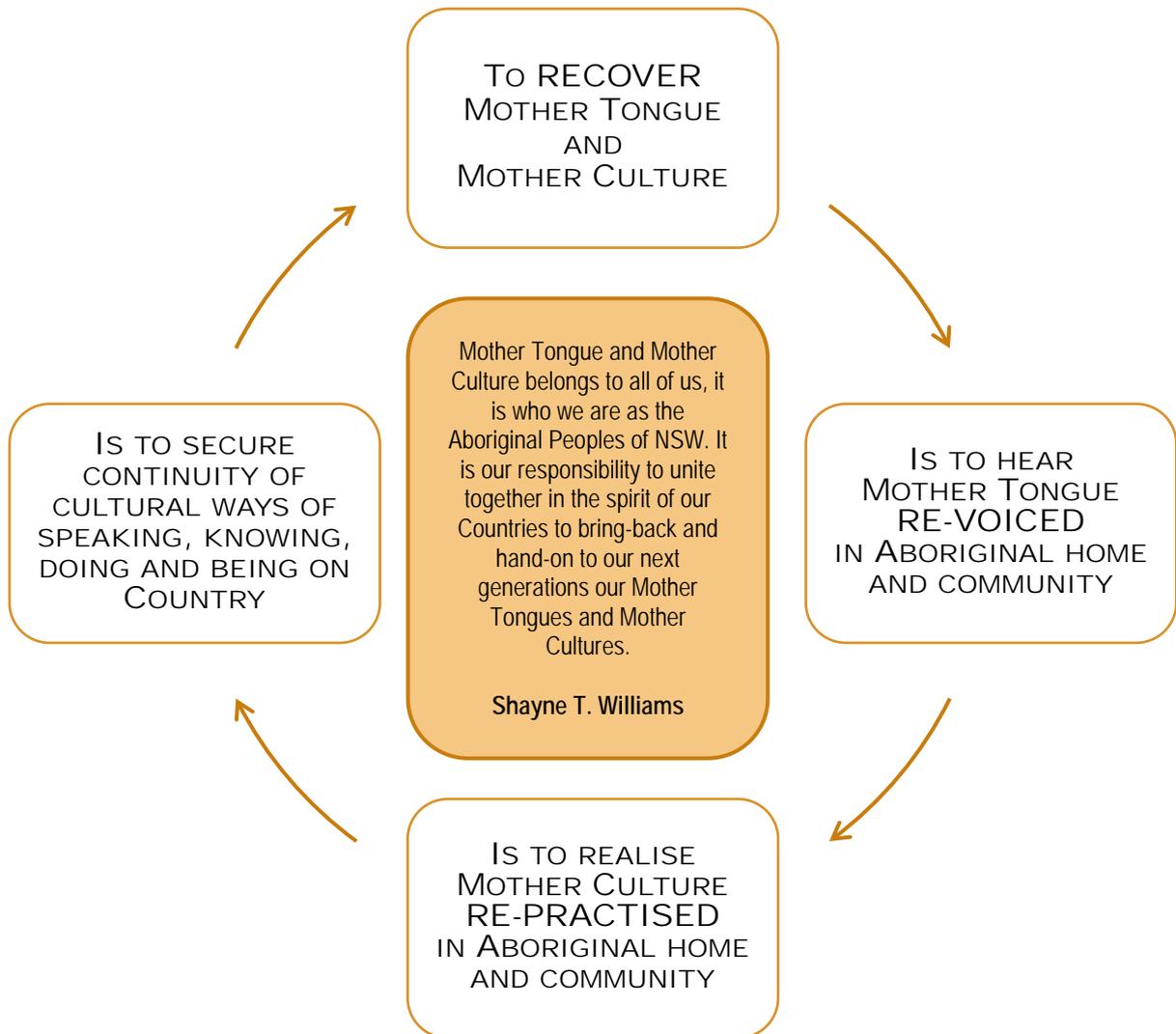
**FOUNDATIONS FRAMEWORK**  
**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>FIGURES AND TABLES.....</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>KEY TERMINOLOGY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>AUTHOR PREFACE.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>IMPLEMENTATION PLAN – AN OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY.....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Phase 1 - Preparing for Practise .....	4
1.1.1 <i>Getting Organised</i> .....	4
1.1.2 <i>Gauging the Present</i> .....	8
1.2 Phase 2 - Recovering Language and Culture.....	10
1.2.1 <i>Undertaking Research</i> .....	11
1.2.2 <i>Corroborating Research</i> .....	16
1.3 Phase 3 - Re-Voicing Language Re-Practising Culture.....	19
1.3.1 <i>Education Programming</i> .....	19
1.3.2 <i>Education Delivery</i> .....	24
<b>2. OPERATIONAL QUALITY.....</b>	<b>30</b>
2.1 Cultural Issues and Resolutions .....	30
2.2 Measuring Performance .....	33
2.3 Continuous Improvement .....	36
<b>3. SOURCES OF SUPPORT .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>48</b>





## FIGURES AND TABLES

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Figure 1	First Roles and Responsibilities for Commencing ALCN, page 6
Figure 2	Possible ALCN Support Relationships, page 7
Figure 3	Advantages and Disadvantages of Meeting/Workgroup Frequency, page 7
Figure 4	Template for Yarning-Up, page 10
Figure 5	The Core Cultural Business of Established ALCN, page 11
Figure 6	Sources of Language and Culture Knowledge, page 12
Figure 7	A Cultural Methodology for Engaging with Informants, page 13
Figure 8	ALCN Workgroup Responsibilities for Engaging with Informants, page 14
Figure 9	ALCN Workgroup Research Teams, page 17
Figure 10	Main Points of Contention Over Language and Culture Data, page 18
Figure 11	Model for Cultural Education Programming, page 21
Figure 12	Spectrum of Lifelong Learning, page 24
Figure 13	Aboriginal Pedagogies, page 28
Figure 14	Ways of Thinking Strategically, page 35
Figure 15	Areas for ALCN Continuous Improvement, page 38
Figure 16	Skills Development Options, page 38
Figure 17	Resources Development Options, page 40
Figure 18	Business Opportunity Options, page 41

Table 1	Key Terminology, page 2
Table 2	Cultural Immersion Block Template, page 27
Table 3	ALCN Code of Conduct, page 32
Table 4	Operational Indicators for ALCN, page 35
Table 5	Cultural Indicators for ALCN, page 36
Table 6	Ethical Indicators for ALCN, pages 36 - 37

## KEY TERMINOLOGY

A number of key terminologies have been used throughout this *Implementation Plan*. These key terminologies embed cultural consciousness into the operational strategy that is the functional bedrock of this plan. These key terminologies culturally re-configure the processes of preparation, research and education as Aboriginal actions enveloped within Aboriginal ways of knowing, doing and being.

<b>ABORIGINAL ENGLISH</b>	<i>Aboriginal English</i> is a cultural dialect. It varies quite significantly from mainstream English and can also vary from one community to another. Within <i>Aboriginal English</i> there are redefined English words that hold specific cultural meaning, specific cultural phrases, cultural abbreviations, distinct phonic nuances and words of mother tongue.
<b>BRINGING-BACK</b>	The term <i>bringing-back</i> as it appears in this document reframes the investigative action of research as a cultural practise aimed at returning historically disenfranchised Indigenous mother tongues and mother cultures. The term <i>bringing-back</i> evokes the right to repossess, re-connect and re-internalise Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being.
<b>CONNECTING-UP</b>	The term <i>connecting-up</i> as it appears in this document encapsulates cultural gathering as a collective practise that facilitates Indigenous bonding within the spiritual realm of Country.
<b>CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE</b>	<i>Cultural knowledge</i> denotes all aspects of Indigenous knowing, doing and being, including language. Indigenous knowledge systems are underpinned by ontologies, epistemologies and axiologies embedded within spiritualism and collectivism.
<b>HANDING-ON</b>	The term <i>handing-on</i> as it appears in this document reframes the instructional action of education as a cultural practise aimed at the re-voicing of Indigenous mother tongues and the re-practise of Indigenous mother cultures. The term <i>handing-on</i> evokes the right to repossess, re-connect and re-internalise Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being.
<b>LISTENING-UP</b>	The term <i>listening-up</i> as it appears in this document emphasises the importance of hearing silently Aboriginal cultural informants as they talk-up their cultural knowing.
<b>PLACES OF CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE</b>	The term <i>places of cultural knowledge</i> as it appears in this document reframes the educational concepts <i>subject</i> , <i>field</i> and <i>discipline</i> as spiritually flexible knowledge realms that coalesce cultural knowing rather than compartmentalise cultural knowing into disconnected specialisations.
<b>REACHING-BACK</b>	The term <i>reaching-back</i> as it appears in this document emphasises the importance of creating time and space so that Aboriginal cultural informants can reach back into their cultural memory without feeling undue pressure.
<b>SHAME</b>	<i>Shame</i> is an acute form of cultural humiliation.
<b>STORY</b>	Within Indigenous cultures <i>story</i> is a foundational medium for packaging, storing and transmitting spiritualised knowledge.
<b>TALKING-UP</b>	The term <i>talking-up</i> as it appears in this document emphasises the importance of creating time and space so that Aboriginal cultural informants can articulate their cultural knowledge without interruption.
<b>YARNING-UP</b>	The term <i>yarning up</i> as it appears in this document denotes collective cultural dialogue as cultural intellectualisation.

**Table 1 - Key Terminology**

## AUTHOR PREFACE

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*Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests in NSW* Document No.1 *Foundations Framework* and Document No.2 *Implementation Plan* have been written as companion documents. Both documents have been commissioned by the New South Wales Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Incorporated (NSW AECG) in partnership with the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities (NSW DEC) to support the implementation of Aboriginal language and culture nests (ALCN) within New South Wales (NSW). The *Foundations Framework* presents a theoretical platform for establishing ALCN within NSW whilst this *Implementation Plan* translates this theoretical platform into a blueprint for applied action.

I have consciously chosen to write both documents using a first person approach, as though I were talking directly to my own peoples, that is the Aboriginal peoples of NSW. I have taken this approach in order to ground my cultural position, and therefore my authorship, as purposed towards empowering Aboriginal community self-determination. I sincerely hope that together these documents will be of operable value to all of us out in our communities, as we work together to recover our languages and cultures, so that we can re-voice our mother tongues and re-practise our mother cultures within our own communities.

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## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN – AN OVERVIEW

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Document No.2 *Implementation Plan* has been consciously structured to enable us, the Aboriginal peoples of NSW, to set up, run, monitor and extend our own community based language and culture initiatives for ourselves. The underlying intent behind each action recommended in this plan is *Aboriginal empowerment*.

This *Implementation Plan* is divided into three sections:

### SECTION 1 – OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

This section directs action. It is sub-divided into three discreet phases that lockstep the processes that will need to be undertaken in order to set up an ALCN, and set in motion the core business of an ALCN.

***Phase 1 – Preparing for Practice** is pertinent to Aboriginal communities in NSW who do not have any existing language and culture initiatives in place and wish to establish an ALCN within community.*

***Phase 2 – Recovering Language and Culture** is pertinent to Aboriginal communities in NSW who have already begun the process of connecting with mother tongue and mother culture, and are ready to undertake a more concerted research approach to recover further language and culture knowledge.*

***Phase 3 – Re-Voicing Language Re-Practising Culture** is pertinent to Aboriginal communities in NSW who have already undertaken extensive research into language and culture, and are ready to develop cultural education programmes for community.*

### SECTION 2 – OPERATIONAL QUALITY

This section presents culturally healthy pathways for managing the cultural complexities likely to arise and impact the operational quality of ALCN. Performance measurement and continuous improvement mechanisms are suggested in order to encourage the long term cultural productivity of ALCN.

### SECTION 3 – SOURCES OF SUPPORT

This section identifies some key sources of support for Aboriginal communities in NSW seeking to run ALCN. These sources of support should be sufficient to enable Aboriginal communities within NSW to locate material relevant to language and culture recovery and education.

## 1. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

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The following operational strategy centres on three primary phases of applied action. *Phase 1 – Preparing for Practise* focuses on what needs to be done in order to set up an ALCN and get it running. Once an ALCN is up and running it will be ready to embark upon deeper cultural business. This cultural business will centre on research, which is the focus of *Phase 2 – Recovering Language and Culture*, and education, which is the focus of *Phase 3 – Re-Voicing Language Re-Practising Culture*.

### 1.1 PHASE 1 - PREPARING FOR PRACTISE

Preparing for practise will differ, sometimes significantly, between our communities because our start point for setting up our ALCN will rest upon what we have already done at our community level to recover our languages and cultures, and how far this recovery has evolved as a whole of community cultural development initiative. In our communities where no significant language and culture recovery action has taken place we will need to begin by connecting-up, setting up and yarning-up.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.1.1 Getting Organised

If our languages and cultures are to be widely recovered so that they can be re-voiced and re-practised within our communities we need to unite together to assume responsibility for their retrieval and maintenance. One of the best ways we can do this is establish our own ALCN within our communities. All it will take to get things going is one or two of us to be interested and motivated enough to convene public community discussion about forming an ALCN. Initiating public community discussion will enable others within our communities to consider whether or not they wish to participate. Our ALCN will evolve as we connect-up through these public forums.

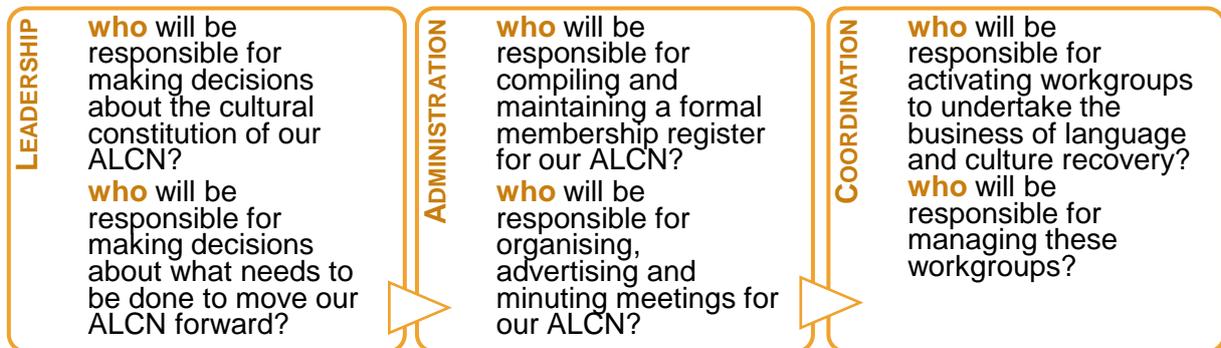
To ensure that our public forums are productive we should steer our initial discussions toward exploring key questions such as:

- *What is our purpose behind seeking to set up an ALCN?*
- *Do we have a vision for what we would like to achieve with our language?*
- *Do we have a vision for what we would like to achieve with our culture?*
- *What direction do we want to take with our ALCN?*
- *Do we have definite goals for realising what we want to achieve with our language?*
- *Do we have definite goals for realising what we want to achieve with our culture?*
- *How will our ALCN contribute to the cultural development of our next generations?*
- *Do we have enough people willing to undertake the cultural work of our ALCN?*
- *Will we need external help with what we are wanting to achieve?*

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<sup>1</sup> See *Key Terminology* for an explanation of connecting-up and yarning-up, p.2.

This list of stimulus questions is by no means complete, it is merely illustrative of the range of issues that we may seek to address as we work to inaugurate our ALCN. The *Foundations Framework* has been specifically designed to expedite this by putting in place a vision and set of goals<sup>2</sup> that will meet our needs in awareness, reclamation and revitalisation contexts.<sup>3</sup> As we work through these questions we will also need to decide:



**Figure 1 – First Roles and Responsibilities for Commencing ALCN**

The question that relates to external help is particularly weighty for us because what we choose to do in this regard will directly influence the character of our ALCN. We can choose to set up independently, eventually recruiting assistance from support agencies when necessary, or alternatively set up in partnership with support agencies as stakeholders. We will need to keep in mind, however, that there is a distinct difference between a stakeholder and a support agency. A stakeholder is in effect a shareholder who will have a vested interest in every aspect of our ALCN. A support agency, on the other hand, can participate in the activity of our ALCN, but always under our invitation and direction.

The matter of funding should not be an influencing factor for us when we are still in the process of connecting-up. Funding bodies often seek to impress their own operational criteria and timeframes, and these may put undue pressure upon us when we are still mapping out our cultural priorities and directions. This does not mean that we should not seek funding in the long run, it only means that we should be organised at an operational level first. Once we are more completely operational we will be ready to meet the expectations of funding bodies, who will always have the right to expect timely reporting and outcomes from us.

Of course, the idea that we can set up independently, without initial financial input or initial stakeholder partnerships, may at first seem improbable. In counterbalance to this, we need to stay alert to the prospect that autonomy will enable us to keep the development of our languages and cultures firmly under our own control. This will not preclude us from seeking external research and repository services when we are ready to research our languages and cultures, nor will it preclude us from seeking

<sup>2</sup> See 'Vision Statement' and 'Goals' in *Document No.1 Foundations Framework*, pp. 6-7, 8-9.

<sup>3</sup> See 'Key Terminology' in *Document No.1 Foundations Framework*, p.2.

the services of external education providers when we are ready to create cultural education opportunities. Autonomy won't stop us from developing:

**diverse support relationships that include**

- professional and academic consultants
- libraries and archives
- museums and cultural centres
- AIATSIS
- TAFE's, universities
- pre-schools, primary schools, high schools
- Aboriginal organisations
- Government and non-government agencies
- philanthropic organisations

**Figure 2 – Possible ALCN Support Relationships**

The decision to enter into any form of relationship, whether it is support or stakeholder based, should always be negotiated with reference to our cultural rights.<sup>4</sup> Once we have thought about how we might constitute our ALCN we can ready ourselves for cultural practise. One of the most productive ways we can do this is instigate workgroups in anticipation of yarning-up, as detailed in *1.1.2 Gauging the Present*. We should also forecast a meeting and workgroup schedule for the future, bearing in mind that the frequency of our meetings and workgroups will determine the overall pace of our cultural output. In particular, we will need to calculate the frequency and duration of our workgroup sessions in a way that strikes a balance between achieving cultural progress and avoiding burnout:

WEEKLY MEETINGS/WORKGROUPS	FORTNIGHTLY MEETINGS/WORKGROUPS	MONTHLY MEETINGS/WORKGROUPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ will ensure progress is made quickly</li> <li>✦ will ensure continuity is maintained</li> <li>☐ may feel demanding and impositional</li> <li>☐ may negatively compress spiritual space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ will also maintain continuity</li> <li>✦ will provide more space and time</li> <li>☐ may moderately slow progress</li> <li>☐ may still feel rushed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ will be less impositional</li> <li>✦ will provide extended space and time</li> <li>☐ may delay progress and reduce continuity</li> <li>☐ may negatively impact enthusiasm</li> </ul>

**Figure 3 – Advantages and Disadvantages of Meeting/Workgroup Frequency**

Of course, at the outset we will need to locate a venue where we can hold our initial public community forums. Since it is highly probable that our dialogue will flow freely on these occasions it will be important to secure a venue that offers a longer timeslot. Venues should be equipped with refreshment facilities, restroom amenities,

<sup>4</sup> See 'Indigenous Language and Culture Rights' in *Document No.1 Foundations Framework*, p.10.

and offer disabled access. Once we are ready to progress beyond these initial forums, we should try to procure stable long term space for our ALCN. In doing so we may need to consider:

- *Does it matter whether or not our ALCN is located on Country?*
- *If it does matter, should our ALCN be located within a specific area on Country?*
- *Will it be important for community harmony to have our ALCN neutrally located?*
- *Does the place we are considering meet occupational health and safety standards?*
- *Is the place we are considering comfortable and easily accessible?*
- *Is the place we are considering large enough to support our meeting and workgroup needs?*
- *Does the place we are considering have kitchen and restroom amenities?*
- *Will we need additional space for secure file and consumables storage?*
- *Will we need additional space to set up office equipment, i.e. computers?*
- *Will we need to establish phone/fax connections at our ALCN?*

Because it may be difficult to find permanent space we may need to continue meeting at temporary locations for an extended period of time. If this is the case we will need to organise ongoing access to suitable meeting and workgroup facilities, bearing in mind that the space we will require for our meetings will differ significantly from what we will need for our workgroups. For meetings our key considerations will be availability, accessibility and convenience of amenities. For workgroups, our key considerations will be availability of adequate desk space and web connected computers<sup>5</sup> as well as availability, accessibility and convenience of amenities.

Additionally, if we are going to be using temporary meeting spaces some of us will need to volunteer to undertake administrative tasks such as preparing meeting minutes using our own resources. Similarly, if we are going to be using temporary workgroup spaces some of us will need to volunteer to store and transport workgroup files and other essential materials, including stationery items. If this becomes problematic, it may be possible to negotiate work and storage space at local venues, such as local councils, TAFE's, Aboriginal organisations, philanthropic agencies and so on. What can be organised in this regard will very much come down to what is available within each local region.

When we are fully organised and up and running we will be better positioned to substantiate ourselves as worthy of financial sponsorship. Certainly, if we ultimately intend to set up as an ongoing autonomous community cultural organisation with independent premises we will need to have reliable sustained funding. This may need to be procured externally if we are unable to develop our own funding opportunities.<sup>6</sup> Beyond thinking about what we will need in terms of space, we will then also need to think about running costs such as staff wages, property rental and

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<sup>5</sup> Local libraries often have reservable rooms or history spaces that can be used for group activity and have bookable web connected computers available for public use.

<sup>6</sup> Transitioning ALCN into financially viable community cultural organisations is discussed in 2.3 *Continuous Improvement*.

public liability insurance, as well as how to pay for consumables such as communication and power costs, equipment, furniture and stationery.

### ***1.1.2 Gauging the Present***

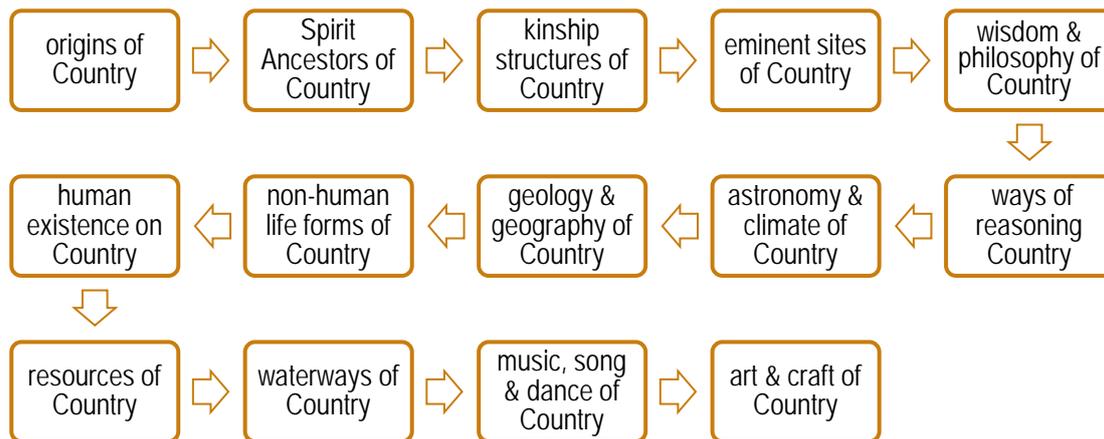
As part of the process of preparing our ALCN for practice we should seek to gauge our current knowledge reality. It will be important for us to establish whether or not we will be commencing the cultural business of our ALCN at the point of awareness, where our current levels of knowledge are limited, reclamation, where our current levels of knowledge are moderate, or revitalisation, where our current levels of knowledge are high. The most effective way we can do this is through our cultural process of yarning-up.

Yarning-up is our way of invoking our collective cultural dialogue and energising our cultural intellectualisation. To undertake yarning-up our ALCN should form workgroups, as previously indicated. If our ALCN is small our ALCN as a whole can form the one workgroup. If our ALCN is large, we can form a number of workgroups. These workgroups can be holistic language-culture workgroups or distinct language and culture workgroups. Holistic workgroups will suit all anticipated knowledge levels, whereas distinct workgroups will only be useful when high knowledge levels are anticipated.

The idea behind forming workgroups is to enable all of our ALCN members to work together in smaller teams so that we can concentrate effectively on yarning-up what we know about our languages and cultures. Yarning-up is not about ‘testing’ each other’s individual knowledge levels, it is about us collaborating with each other to gain a practical sense of what our current ALCN knowledge base is in terms of our languages and our cultural ways of knowing, doing and being. When we know this we will be able to see more clearly what we need to recover if we want to increase our chances of re-voicing our mother tongues and re-practising our mother cultures.

Undoubtedly, some of us may find the prospect of yarning-up language and culture daunting, and feel a need to seek external academic support to help us research our current cultural knowledge position. If we do this we have to be aware that a formalised research process may transition our yarning-up into an external study that effectively looks in at us and our communities as research subjects. Perhaps our confidence will be strengthened if we understand that yarning-up is a spiritually empowering experience that connects us with Country, especially if we take our yarning-up onto Country. Walking our Country will invigorate our yarning-up of Country.

As we evaluate our knowledge reality we may find it productive to maintain our focus on our foundational ways of speaking, knowing, doing and being in terms of:



**Figure 4 - Template for Yarning-Up**

We will also find it productive to remember that our knowledge has always been packaged within story,<sup>7</sup> and categorised as either general, female or male. Whilst much of this foundational structure has been impacted we may find instances where gender specific story has been maintained. Under these circumstances we may need to set up gender specific workgroups. Additionally, because our foundational knowledge was fundamentally ecological in nature, we will undoubtedly find that we have multiple words to name the same flora, fauna and environmental conditions and so on, though these words will likely indicate subtle nuances.

It is also the case that many of our languages encompass non-verbal modes of interaction as well as vocabularies embedded within dance, music and song.<sup>8</sup> Beyond this, all of us in NSW should make provision for what can be described as ‘Aboriginalised’ terms when we are evaluating our current levels of cultural knowing. These terms were engineered<sup>9</sup> post-invasion by our ancestors to cope with new introduced resources. For example in Dhungutti the word ‘bull-ung’ was created to name cattle, whilst ‘djook-ar’ was created to name sugar. These words may not be strictly foundational but they are nonetheless legitimate words of mother tongue.

Whilst we are yarning-up our cultural knowledge we can build a platform for our future language and culture recovery work by documenting and/or recording what we recount. In terms of our yarning-up of language, we can begin to create preliminary word, phrase and sentence lists. We can do this by jotting down phonetic impressions of the syllabic sounds contained within words using dashes to separate syllables, i.e. gool-ung [wombat in Dharawal] or boodj-aarn [bird/s in Dharawal]. We will also need to annotate their meanings. When we do this we should not become too side-tracked with precise spelling,<sup>10</sup> this can be resolved further down the track.

<sup>7</sup> See *Key Terminology*, p.2.

<sup>8</sup> ST Williams, *The Importance of Teaching and Learning Aboriginal Languages and Cultures*, Aboriginal Affairs, NSW, 2011 <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/138443/20130125-1412/www.daa.nsw.gov.au/publications/Final%20report%20final%20version.pdf>

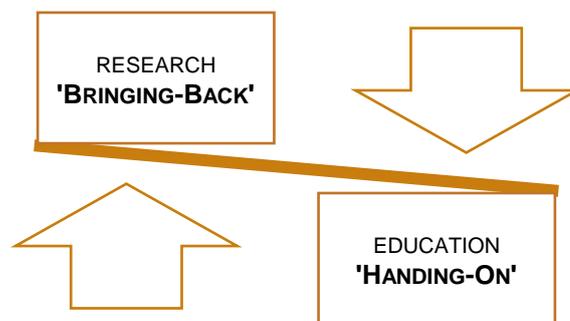
<sup>9</sup> Language engineering is discussed in 1.2.2 *Corroborating Research*.

<sup>10</sup> Because our Indigenous languages were foundationally oral we had no established pattern for correct spelling. Establishing spelling protocols falls under the scope of language engineering.

Of course, if creating phonetic impressions of words, phrases and sentences becomes too difficult for us, we can simply make a note of what we are able to name, i.e. geographic sites, animals, body parts, emotions and so on. This will be enough to indicate what we currently know. It needs to be emphasised here that we will not need, at this stage, the input of anthropologists or linguists. This sort of academic input may be required by us later on when our work begins in earnest on the recovery of our languages and cultures, but at this point all we should be doing is developing profiles of our current ALCN knowledge levels.

In terms of our yarning-up of culture, it may be difficult for us to document in written format ourselves recounting our knowledge stories. Because of this we may find it easier to sound and/or video record our yarning-up. Pre-agreement from all our workgroup members will be required before we can go ahead with this. If, however, our ALCN decide that it is too early to start documenting and/or recording cultural information during yarning-up we could still prepare a programme for the future that articulates priority areas for the recovery of language and culture, and identifies non-ALCN knowledge holders within our communities who may be able to help us.

Our ALCN workgroups will need to ensure that everyone in our ALCN gets to know exactly what our knowledge start points are going to be. There may be instances where this makes us shame,<sup>11</sup> especially if we find that we are at an awareness level. It is crucial that we do not become burdened by shame; it does not matter how much we currently know. Yarning-up current knowing, at the end of the day, only sets a beginning cultural platform from which to grow our cultural knowledge, which we will do when we embark upon the core cultural business of our ALCN, which is:



**Figure 5 – The Core Cultural Business of Established ALCN**

## 1.2 PHASE 2 - RECOVERING LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Once we have set-up our ALCN and profiled our current cultural knowledge position we will be ready to commence work on recovering our languages and cultures through research. In this *Implementation Plan* research has been re-conceptualised, under the banner bringing-back,<sup>12</sup> as a cultural process that we can use so that we

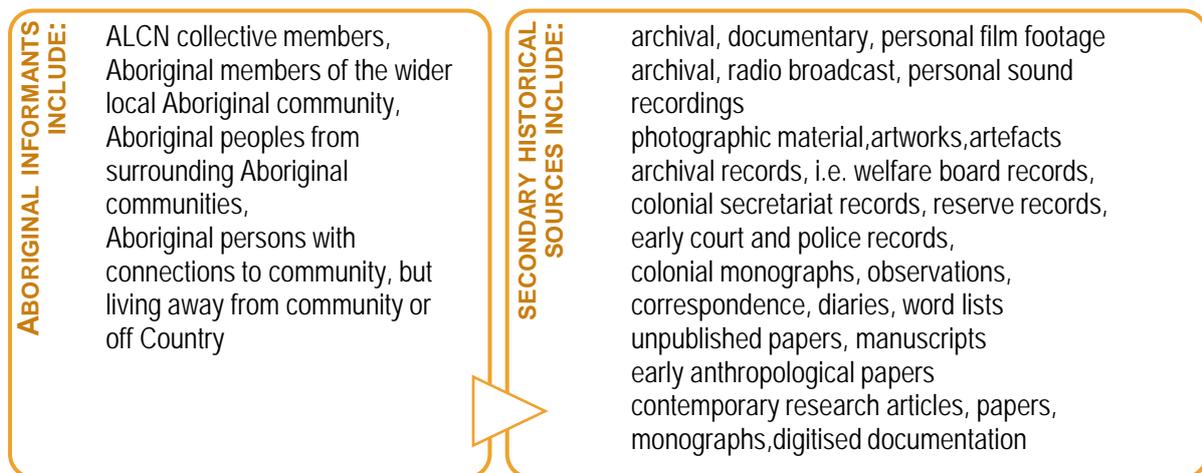
<sup>11</sup> See *Key Terminology*, p.2.

<sup>12</sup> See *Key Terminology*, p.2.

can return our mother tongues and mother cultures to Country. Essentially, bringing-back will involve us in locating, recording and collating language and culture data.<sup>13</sup>

### 1.2.1 Undertaking Research

Any language and culture data we accumulate during our yarning-up will form a productive basis for the development of a cultural databank,<sup>14</sup> which we will need when we move on to the other core aspect of our cultural business - education. There are essentially two informational pathways we need to research thoroughly if we are going to successfully bring-back language and culture data additional to what we currently know. These pathways are living Aboriginal informants<sup>15</sup> and secondary historical sources:



**Figure 6 - Sources of Language and Culture Knowledge**

To advance the work of bringing-back we should seek to reactivate the workgroups that we formed for yarning-up. We will then need to decide which of our workgroups will be responsible for researching our languages and cultures through engagement with our informants, and which of our workgroups will be responsible for researching our languages and cultures by consulting secondary historical sources. Although both sets of workgroups can begin their research activity simultaneously, there may be some benefit in delaying activation of workgroups focused on secondary historical sources because the data collected through engagement with informants may be solid enough to significantly hone the research approach of these workgroups.

Our ALCN members who are recognised as significant cultural knowledge holders may find it more beneficial to become involved in collaborating with other informants as they will be particularly well positioned to facilitate engagement. To facilitate our engagement with our informants it may be worthwhile to instigate sharing circles that enable reaching-back, talking-up and listening-up.<sup>16</sup> These culturally embedded conventions together with yarning-up create an ideal cultural environment for us to

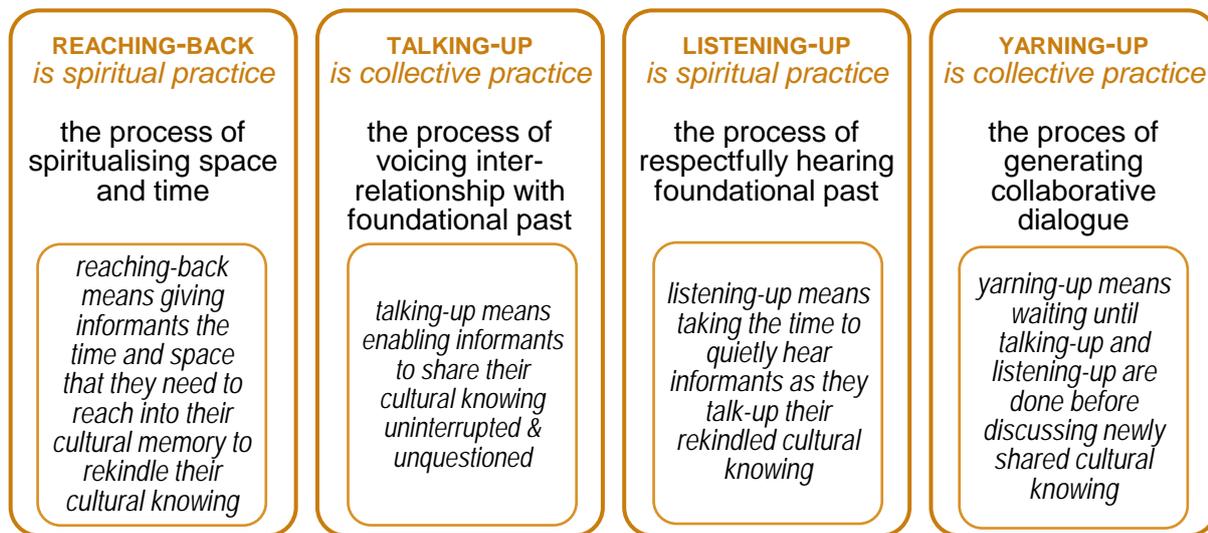
<sup>13</sup> The word data is used in this document to denote discrete items of language and culture knowledge.

<sup>14</sup> The term cultural databank denotes an aggregated set of language and culture data as cultural data.

<sup>15</sup> Hereafter referred to as informants.

<sup>16</sup> See *Key Terminology*, p.2.

bond with our informants. Combined they constitute an appropriate research methodology for motivating our cultural dialogue in a way that reflects the core values and guiding principles set down in the *Foundations Framework*:



**Figure 7 – A Cultural Methodology for Engaging With Informants**

The importance of using a culturally germane research methodology cannot be overemphasised. Our older informants in particular may well require open-ended time to comfortably recall what they have often learnt in childhood. Direct inquiry, typical of Western style interviewing, will intimidate those of us who feel unable to respond promptly to pre-constructed questions such as – *do you know the word for...?*, or *do you know the story behind ...?* Utilising a culturally embedded research methodology not only reduces the potential stress of induced inquiry, it enhances cultural productivity by removing any pressure to recount language and culture knowledge on cue in favour of supporting the natural flow of cultural interchange.

To be effective in the way we engage with our informants we will need to:

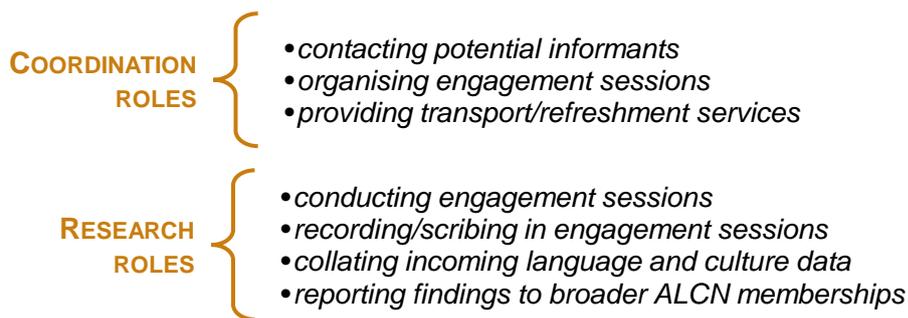
- *formally invite potential informants to participate in bringing-back<sup>17</sup>*
- *be open to walking Country with informants to re-energise reaching-back*
- *be prepared to provide transportation and refreshment services to informants*
- *be prepared to experience multiple engagement sessions with the same informants*
- *be prepared for engagement sessions to extend over long periods*
- *enable informants to talk-up in a one-on-one or group context*
- *keep in mind that informants may share both language and culture knowledge so any distinct language and culture workgroups will need to work collaboratively*
- *be prepared for informants to talk-up when the time is right for them*
- *keep in mind any priority focus areas flagged during yarning-up*
- *respect talking-up by listening-up without interjection*
- *avoid becoming embroiled in disagreement over any aspect of talking-up<sup>18</sup>*
- *refrain from making judgements over the veracity of shared cultural data<sup>19</sup>*
- *stay solely focused on locating, recording and collating language and culture data*

<sup>17</sup> Issues related to Aboriginal reluctance to participate are addressed in Section 2 *Operational Quality*.

<sup>18</sup> Issues related to Aboriginal cultural discord are addressed in Section 2 *Operational Quality*.

<sup>19</sup> The veracity of language and culture data is covered under 1.2.2 *Corroborating Research*.

We will also need to establish who will be responsible for:



**Figure 8 – ALCN Workgroup Responsibilities for Engaging with Informants**

Once we become involved in formally researching our languages and cultures it will be absolutely necessary for us to document and/or record our engagement sessions with our informants. If we are going to document what is said in a written format more than one of us will need to volunteer to be scribe or note taker because it will be very easy to miss valuable information if only one of us takes on this responsibility. We will also need to categorically understand that when we seek to collect language and culture data from our informants we will be bound to adhere to strict ethical obligations:

1. All our potential informants must give us permission to document and/or record their cultural knowing –
  - i. consent can be obtained by inviting informants to sign a written pro-forma agreement or by inviting informants to give a verbal agreement at the beginning of any audio recording or video footage they appear in
  - ii. if informants do not give their formal written or recorded consent we cannot document and/or record their cultural knowledge or utilise it later on
2. All consenting informants will have the right to -
  - i. amend/approve any written or audio-visual record of their cultural knowledge
  - ii. receive an exact unedited final copy of their recorded cultural knowledge
  - iii. be formally acknowledged as a holder of the cultural knowledge they have shared
  - iv. remain anonymous if that is what they prefer
  - v. expect that their recorded cultural knowledge will be kept securely
  - vi. expect that their recorded cultural knowledge will not be mishandled in any way
  - vii. expect that their cultural knowledge will be recorded in full
  - viii. expect that their recorded cultural knowledge will not be prematurely disseminated

There will of course be circumstances throughout NSW where we may not have access to informants, or the number of informants we do have access to is very small. When this is the case, we will find ourselves predominantly working on bringing-back by exhausting secondary historical sources. Researching secondary historical sources can be daunting, especially for anyone not readily familiar with formal repositories such as libraries and archives, or using the internet. It is at this point in particular that we may find it beneficial to recruit external support. Ideally this external support will empower us to maintain bringing-back as our own enterprise.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Ideally, external support agencies like TAFE will provide us with research training skills so that we can independently research secondary historical sources. Skills development is discussed in Section 2 *Operational Quality*.

As far as possible we should undertake all aspects of bringing-back ourselves. This is because we bring into the research process valuable cultural insight that enables us to better recognise cultural significance in data. When we are researching secondary historical sources we will need to remember that our sole purpose is to locate, record and collate as much language and culture data as possible. Much of this data will be embedded within broader historical text and commentary, so there is some risk that we may become side-tracked. If we have distinct language and culture workgroups our workgroups will need to work collaboratively because language and culture data are often found within the same source. Our workgroups will need to be diligent about funnelling data between one another.

Researching secondary historical sources will involve us in the following:

### 1. Locating potential secondary historical sources –

- ≈ We will need to find out if any of our ALCN members have in their possession relevant cultural documentation and/or sound/video recordings of cultural knowledge holders that they may be willing to share. Old sound recordings of speakers of mother tongue in particular will be invaluable to the recovery of mother tongue.
- ≈ We should use our local council libraries. Many local libraries now offer online catalogues, have local history collections and employ local history librarians.
- ≈ We should use the State Library of NSW. The State Library of NSW is a primary repository of historical material. It employs Koori Librarians who are able to help us with inquiries related to researching our languages and cultures.
- ≈ We should consider the value of museum collections. Museums often hold within their collections cultural items that offer us valuable culture data, and some also hold within their collections original transcripts written by early anthropologists.
- ≈ We should use the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). AIATSIS is a primary repository of Australian Indigenous/Aboriginal language and culture data.
- ≈ We should also make use of Section 3 *Sources of Support*. This section offers a wide-ranging list of significant avenues for locating secondary historical sources likely to contain our language and culture data.
- ≈ We should keep in mind that there is a surprising amount of language and culture data dispersed throughout secondary historical sources.
- ≈ We should begin by concentrating on the priority areas we flagged during yarning-up.

### 2. Accessing potential historical sources –

- ≈ Accessing non-online historical material may be problematic for us because original sources are often held in special collections bound by access regulations that restrict usage, usually to onsite viewing.
- ≈ Copying documents or audio visual sources will be restricted to that which is allowable under copyright law.
- ≈ We should find out what access services are available through our local libraries, for instance interlibrary loan and document delivery services. Often fees are charged for these types of services.
- ≈ We may be able to negotiate special services and/or special viewing of collections.

### 3. Studying potential historical sources –

- ≈ We will need to exhaust every potential secondary historical source that we identify as relevant and accessible in order to locate as much language and culture data as

possible. This means we will have to thoroughly read all historical text, listen to all sound recordings and view all film/video footage.

- ≈ We will need to be emotionally prepared to deal with early colonial anthropological commentary, which can be highly offensive. It will be necessary for us to find ways to cope with this because a great deal of our valuable language and culture data has been chronicled in records made by early colonists and anthropologists.
- ≈ We should study all potential historical sources of language and culture data with a local cultural eye to ensure that we only extract local cultural data.
- ≈ We will need to separate language and culture data from extraneous historical data.

#### 4. Recording language and culture data –

- ≈ Recording our language data found in historical text will primarily be a matter of copying down words, phrases and sentences as they appear and coupling them with their suggested meaning. Because all written references to our mother tongues are phonetic impressions it is highly likely that we will find multiple spellings. We should note down all phonetic impressions we find.
- ≈ Our language data held in an audio visual format may also need to be transcribed into a written format in order to expedite the collation of language data. Noting down words, phrases and sentences found in non-written sources will necessitate the creation of phonetic impressions of what has been heard.
- ≈ Recording our culture data held in historical text may necessitate taking written transcriptions of tracts of information, especially if our culture data is found to be held within fragile original sources held under restricted access that doesn't permit copying or photography.
- ≈ Our culture data inscribed on tangible cultural items, for instance patterning on boomerangs and shields, can usually be photographed. We will need to make a written observation report if photography is not permitted by holding organisations.
- ≈ It would be worthwhile to obtain a written transcription of any culture data held in audio or visual format, even if copies have been acquired. Transcriptions can be circulated far more easily and are more productive when it comes time for data to be collectively corroborated. Professional transcription services are available for a fee.
- ≈ Whenever any form of language and culture data is recorded, whether it is in a written, photographic or audio-visual format, the source of the data should be annotated. In the case where informants have chosen to remain anonymous this should be noted in place of their name. There will be a need to be able to identify the source of all language and culture data when corroborating data, including whether or not it has come from an anonymous informant.

#### 5. Collation of recorded language and culture data –

- ≈ All our recorded language and culture data should be fused to make a raw cultural databank ready for the next step – corroborating research, which will need to be completed before any data can be included within a corpus of cultural knowledge.
- ≈ One of the most useful ways of collating and storing language data is to use a computer spreadsheet. Spreadsheets enable recovered mother tongues to be catalogued effectively within a master spreadsheet as a master lexicon.
- ≈ Written records of culture data, including transcripts, are best transposed into word documents that can be easily and logically clustered into themed computer files.
- ≈ Language spreadsheets and culture files can be brought together into the one master file system which in effect becomes a raw cultural databank.
- ≈ Language and culture data also held in audio or visual format can be easily downloaded, interfiled and stored within this master file system.
- ≈ It would be wise for us to have our master files kept in one location, but we should also produce back-up copies in order to avoid accidental loss of data.

As can be seen from what has been noted thus far there is a great deal of work to be done to bring-back our languages and cultures. To do all of this work effectively, and in a way that is equitable, we could organise our ALCN workgroups into teams:

<b>ENGAGEMENT TEAMS</b> <i>These teams should concentrate on:</i>	<b>DATA LOCATION TEAMS</b> <i>These teams should concentrate on:</i>	<b>READING &amp; RECORDING TEAMS</b> <i>These teams should concentrate on:</i>	<b>DATA ENTRY TEAMS</b> <i>These teams should concentrate on:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• undertaking all aspects of engaging with informants</li> <li>• forwarding all recorded data on to Data Entry Teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• searching information repositories and the internet to locate all possible sources of language and culture data</li> <li>• organising access to these sources for Reading and Recording Teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extracting and recording language and culture data from the material gathered by Data Location Teams</li> <li>• forwarding this data on to Data Entry Teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• setting up and managing a master file system</li> <li>• entering all language and culture data forwarded on by the Reading &amp; Recording and Engagement Teams</li> </ul>

**Figure 9 – ALCN Workgroup Research Teams**

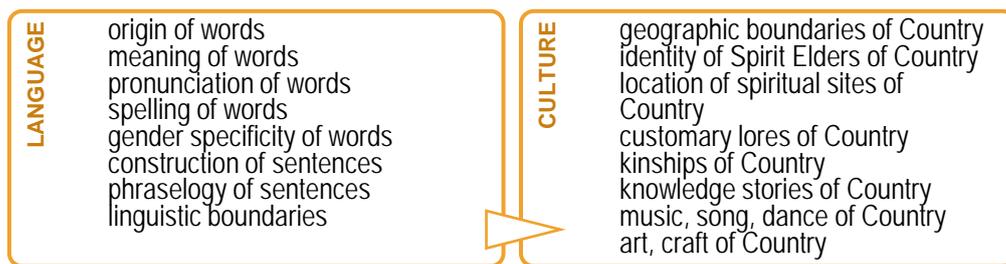
Workgroups teams could function with as few as 2 people, though clearly more people will enable workloads to be shared with greater equity. Larger teams may need to appoint a coordinator. Engagement, reading and recording and data entry teams may also need to have male and female sub-teams to deal with gender specific data. With our larger ALCN operating multiple workgroups, and therefore multiple workgroup teams, it will be vital to ensure that all workgroup data entry teams coordinate with each other so that all recovered language and culture data can be collated into the one master file as a raw cultural databank.

### **1.2.2 Corroborating Research**

When we have created our raw cultural databanks we will have completed the first step in recovering our mother tongues and mother cultures. The next step for us will be to corroborate the authenticity of these raw cultural databanks. This will involve us in a process of checking the validity of raw language and culture data in order to agree its cultural veracity before endorsing it as our legitimate cultural knowledge. The need for us to reach consensus in this way is a by-product of colonisation. When the foundational sovereignty of our mother tongues and mother cultures were forcibly usurped through colonisation our cultural continuity was severely fractured.

When cultural continuity between generations is fractured gaps inevitably appear in cultural knowing. Even when larger amounts of knowledge have been retained, knowledge gaps will still exist. This means that the veracity of any recovered language and culture data can be questioned. It also means that the raw cultural databanks that we have created through engagement with our informants and exhaustion of secondary historical sources will not yet be useable as corpuses of cultural knowledge. Before we can use our cultural databanks as corpuses of cultural knowledge we have to measure the data they contain against standards of evidence.

The most contested aspects of our cultural knowing for us tend to be:



**Figure 10 – Main Points of Contention over Language and Culture Data**

Beyond that which has been listed above we also contend with issues centred on what can be thought of as hearsay knowledge, which is information that is perceivable as being newly invented, exaggerated, sensationalised or skewed through Western misinterpretation, and therefore not readily identifiable as foundationally consistent. Because of all these myriad points of questioning, the process of corroborating the language and culture data that has been collated as a result of bringing-back will be time consuming and involve us in the following:

### 1. Agreeing a set of basic standards to check cultural data against –

- ≈ Standards will need to be set that enable us to establish whether or not the cultural data we are considering can be agreed as authentically belonging to Country.
- ≈ Standards should reflect criteria based on evidence, for instance:
  - Has the language and culture data under consideration been talked-up by more than one informant?
    - Have informants shared the same words, phrases, sentences?
    - Have informants shared the same meanings, pronunciations and/or phraseologies?
    - Have informants shared same or similar culture knowledge and explanation?
  - Has language and culture data under consideration been recovered from more than one secondary historical source?
    - Do the same words, phrases and sentences appear in these sources?
    - Are the same meanings cited in these sources?
    - Are there phonetic similarities in the way words, phrases and sentences have been reproduced in text sources?
    - Is there consistency in pronunciation/phraseology in audio-visual sources?
    - Is the same culture knowledge and explanation offered in these sources?
  - Has the language or culture data talked-up by informants been corroborated in any secondary historical source?
  - Has the language and culture data extracted from secondary historical sources been corroborated in the talking-up of informants?
  - If language and culture data has only been talked-up by one informant and not corroborated through secondary historical sources:
    - Is the informant a recognised knowledge holder within the community?
    - Is the informant a recognised knowledge holder beyond the community?
    - Has the informant chosen to remain anonymous?
  - If language or culture data has only been extracted from one historical source and not corroborated through talking-up:
    - Is the source concerned a reliable Aboriginal source?
    - Is the source concerned a respected historical source?
    - Is the source concerned a first-hand or interpretive account?<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> First-hand accounts are made at the time, interpretive accounts are made at a later date.

## 2. Presenting a raw cultural databank for review -

- ≈ Once our workgroup data entry teams have finished collating the language and culture data recovered during bringing-back and developed raw cultural databanks the raw cultural databanks can be presented to all of our ALCN members so that they can be checked, agreed and endorsed.
- ≈ All data held in written format can be printed out and distributed to our ALCN members prior to our ALCN meetings. It would be wise to schedule a series of specific data review meetings so that we can properly check, agree and endorse our language and culture data without feeling rushed.
- ≈ Language and culture data held in audio or visual format can be played/screened directly in the format it is held in, as well as distributed in transcript form.
- ≈ It will be important to ensure that all of us know whether we are considering data that has been shared by one or more informants, whether an informant has chosen anonymity or whether the data has been extracted from one or more secondary historical source.
- ≈ Gender sensitive language and culture data will need to be presented in appropriate closed female and male forums.

## 3. Agreeing on a raw cultural databank through majority consensus -

- ≈ For language and culture data to be endorsed it must be agreed upon by a majority of our ALCN. A  $\frac{3}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  majority should be sufficient to enable endorsement, provided that set standards of evidence have been satisfactorily met.
- ≈ We need to achieve consensus in terms of the:
  - origin, use, meaning and pronunciation/phraseology of recovered words, phrases and sentences
  - origin, content and context of culture data
- ≈ All language and culture data checked and agreed by the majority of us can be considered endorsed.
- ≈ All language and culture data not agreed by the majority of us should be referred back to our ALCN workgroups so that the data source can be rechecked and additional corroborating sources pursued.

## 4. Dispute resolution -

- ≈ When we have not been able to reach consensus over language and culture data, even after a second round of investigation by our ALCN workgroups, a problem solving process will need to be put in place.
- ≈ Problem solving will involve inviting those disputing a particular aspect of language and/or culture data to articulate their concerns in detail. If there is insufficient evidence to support their concerns, together with insufficient evidence to support the veracity of the language and culture data under question the data cannot be included in our endorsed cultural databanks.<sup>22</sup>
- ≈ If we have not reached agreement over language and culture data submitted by anonymous informants, and that data has not been supported by any other corroborating source, this data should not be included in our endorsed cultural databanks.

## 5. Undertaking language engineering -

- ≈ Language engineering encompasses the creation of new words and phrases to cope with new phenomena and neologisms (contemporary Western expressions).
- ≈ Language engineering also involves finding ways of filling grammatical gaps to enable whole sentences to be formed.

<sup>22</sup> Dispute resolution centred on issues related to the cultural veracity of language and culture data can be complex and involve broader difficulties. These issues are addressed in Section 2 *Operational Quality*.

- ≈ Language engineering in an Indigenous context additionally involves the complex matter of translating oral based languages into a written form, usually through alphabetic, grammatical and syntactical conventions derived from English language.
- ≈ Our ALCN who have recovered substantial raw cultural databanks with large amounts of language data will be better positioned to undertake language engineering.
- ≈ If our ALCN decide that language engineering is a real possibility the process of corroborating research will be protracted because our ALCN workgroups will become involved in deeper language development work.
- ≈ Our ALCN workgroups involved in language engineering will need to collaborate with linguists. Linguists have been trained to translate the subtle sound nuances heard in the verbal expression of words into written impressions that mirror these sounds. They are also trained to develop spelling conventions that cope with these sounds.
- ≈ Any linguist working on language development in an external support role for our ALCN would have to agree to work with the phonation we have already established by a majority consensus of our ALCN.
- ≈ ALCN as a whole will need to meet to check, agree and endorse any newly engineered language data.

### 1.3 PHASE 3 - RE-VOICING LANGUAGE RE-PRACTISING CULTURE

Once we have endorsed our raw cultural databanks we will be ready to embark upon sharing the knowledge contained within them with our wider communities. Sharing this knowledge will shift our cultural practise out of research and into education. In this *Implementation Plan* education has been re-conceptualised, under the banner handing-on,<sup>23</sup> as a cultural process that will empower our re-voicing of mother tongue and our re-practise of mother culture.

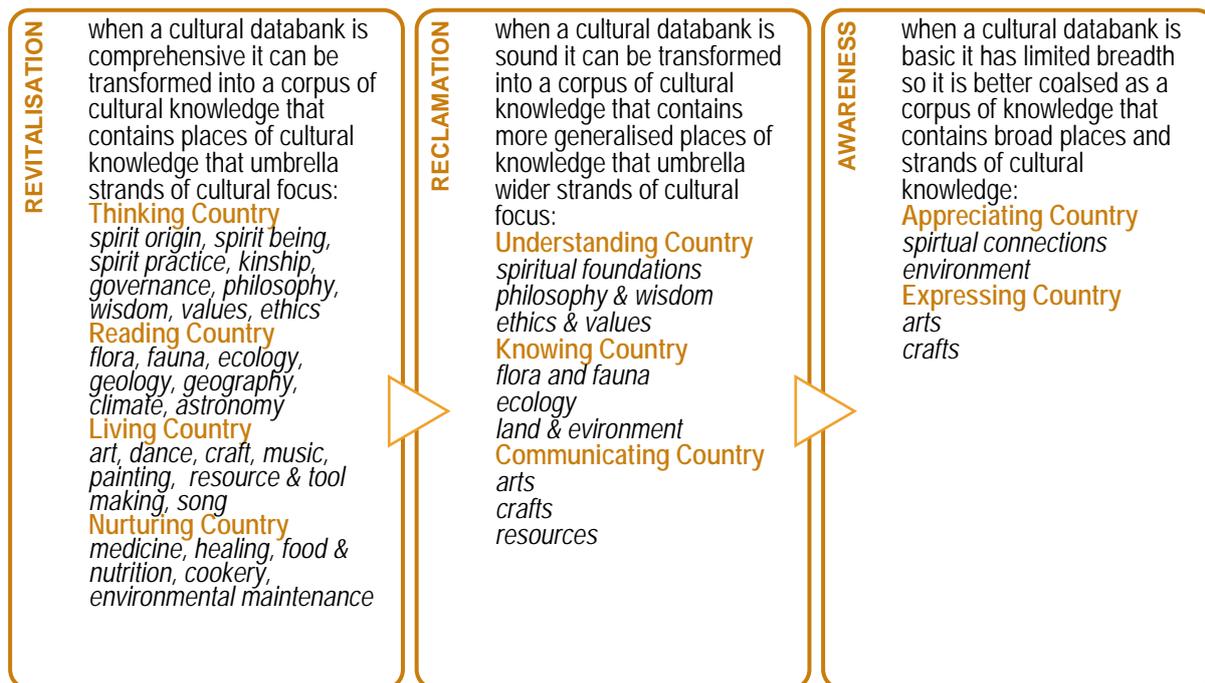
#### 1.3.1 Education Programming

The most obvious way for us to share our endorsed cultural databanks with our communities is for us to teach it, so that it finds renewed presence within Country. Education, however, is complex. The teaching-learning interchange that visibly defines education is in actuality an end product of a wider process that synthesises knowledge into a programme for education. Before we can teach the knowledge content of our endorsed cultural databanks we first need to transition these cultural databanks into logically ordered corpuses of cultural knowledge that prepares knowledge for education delivery.

The files that our workgroup data entry teams developed in order to create our cultural databanks will be a useful start point for doing this because our language and culture data will have already been logically aggregated into a master filing system. Using these master filing systems as preliminary templates our workgroups can seek to identify overarching places of cultural knowledge<sup>24</sup> into which our language and culture data can be clustered and sequenced, and where possible additional specific cultural strands as cultural focus areas within these places of cultural knowledge:

<sup>23</sup> See *Key Terminology*, p.2.

<sup>24</sup> See *Key Terminology*, p.2.



**Figure 11 – Model for Cultural Education Programming**

The above model presents an example of the kind of cultural structure that our ALCN can use to develop localised corpuses of cultural knowledge. As can be seen in this model our ALCN who collate comprehensive cultural databanks will have scope to develop a wide range of places and strands of cultural knowledge, whereas our ALCN who develop basic cultural databanks will have less scope, and may only be able to develop a limited number of places and strands of cultural knowledge. The exact name to be given to each place and strand of cultural knowledge will very much depend upon localised interpretation of Country together with the amount of language and culture data contained within our endorsed cultural databanks.

If the master file systems that hold our endorsed cultural databanks already cluster language and culture data in a manner similar to that suggested above our workgroups may not have to do much in terms of shifting data about. If, however, a master file system has been set up using generalised labelling language and culture data will have to be shifted about into new more specific labels until a corpus of cultural knowledge emerges. We will, of course, need to stream<sup>25</sup> knowledge into gender specific zones wherever necessary. We can then name our corpuses of cultural knowledge to accentuate identity of Country, i.e. *‘Living Dhungutti Way.’*

Once we have evolved our endorsed cultural databanks into localised corpuses of cultural knowledge we will be able to operationalise these corpuses as individual localised ALCN cultural curriculums.<sup>26</sup> Our places of cultural knowledge can thus be

<sup>25</sup> Streaming is an educational term that usually denotes ability grouping of learners. Streaming as it has been applied in this document specifically conveys a need to prepare for gender grouping of learners.

<sup>26</sup> Curriculum is an educational term that denotes programme or course of study.

operationalised as cultural syllabuses<sup>27</sup> that sit within these curriculums, and we can use our strands of cultural knowledge as lesson modules within these syllabuses. Together our curriculum, our syllabuses and our lesson modules become our cultural education programmes.

As can be inferred from Figure 11, ALCN are being encouraged to consider the merit of developing a holistic cultural education programme, premised on a singular integrated language-culture curriculum, in preference to developing a cultural education programme premised on separate language and culture curricula. There are meaningful reasons for this:

- *Our mother tongues are inseparable aspects of our mother cultures.*
- *Our learning of mother culture will stimulate our learning of mother tongue.*
- *It is likely that for a number of our ALCN bringing-back will not yield enough language data to facilitate the development of speech fluency based education programmes that are thorough enough to reinstate mother tongue as first tongue within community, suggesting that our learning of recovered mother words and phrases may be better enmeshed within our broader learning of Country.*

We need to be realistic when it comes to cultural education programming. We have to ask ourselves –

- *Do we genuinely have enough distinct language and culture knowledge content within our corpuses of cultural knowledge to support cultural education programmes that envelop separate language and culture curricula, bearing in mind that these programmes will need to be strong enough to anchor syllabuses under these curricula?*
- *If we do go ahead and create cultural education programmes that separate the learning of mother tongue from the learning of mother culture are we going to lock culture learning within English as the language of instruction in order to avoid duplicating the content of a separate language curriculum? Conversely, if we use, as far as possible, mother tongue as the language of instruction for culture learning will we be facilitating a healthy repetition of language learning through culture learning, or will we simply be repeating ourselves?*

It may well be desirable to make a distinction between Indigenous/Aboriginal language and Indigenous/Aboriginal culture within formalised education programming<sup>28</sup> when language knowledge is linguistically strong. Before we support this kind of distinction we need to stop and critically consider whether or not we have been able to recover:

- *expansive word/phrase lexicons that enable us to continually grow our vocabulary,*
- *sufficient speech conjunctions to facilitate our sentence formation,*
- *enough sentence making capacity to enable us to produce tracts of dialogue,*
- *sufficient linguistic convention to regulate our speech grammar*
- *sufficient linguistic convention to regulate our written grammar*

If we are unable to meet these fundamental standards we may not be able to support a discrete language curriculum without the risk of it collapsing into a pseudo culture curriculum.

<sup>27</sup> Syllabus is an education term that denotes a subject within a broader programme or course of study.

<sup>28</sup> Education programming for pre-schools, primary schools, secondary schools, TAFE's and universities.

By structuring cultural education programmes that embed language learning within culture learning we will maximise our potential to create operationally successful cultural education programmes, irrespective of whether or not we have come anywhere close to recovering substantial amounts of language and/or culture data. As it is, we may find ourselves struggling to create multi-syllabus cultural education programmes even when we fuse language and culture together. If this is the case we should not become despondent. We can still develop meaningful cultural education programmes, but we will need to be prepared to broaden our outlook and become culturally pragmatic.

It is the case in NSW that we tend to think that each of our Aboriginal nations needs to stand on its own so that each language and culture is taught independently. It is also the case in NSW that we have neighbouring cultural nations that have foundational linkages, and commonalities in terms of mother tongue and ways of mother culture. If we are unable to develop more than a basic corpus of cultural knowledge, and therefore limited cultural education programmes, we may find it worthwhile to explore working at a regional level. *Should we consider allowing our neighbouring corpuses of cultural knowledge to sit side by side in order to create more dynamic regional cross-cultural education programmes?*

Any cultural education programme developed through pragmatic compromise will be amazingly worthwhile for bringing back into our contemporary life mother tongue and ways of mother culture that might otherwise only be taught in a very limited way or not at all. Being culturally pragmatic in this way may also help us resolve complications over cultural boundaries.<sup>29</sup> Even at the more developed revitalisation level the idea behind region based cross-cultural education programming may prove productive, especially if our ALCN wish to negotiate the development of full scale multi-year stratified courses of study for formalised education contexts.

Beyond thinking about regional cross-cultural education programming we can additionally look at the utility of Aboriginal English.<sup>30</sup> In any circumstance where our mother tongue has not been substantially recovered, the words that we have left can be rewardingly enveloped within Aboriginal English so that we are able to speak in linguistically richer localised cultural dialects. We can also seek to position Aboriginal English as the language medium of our cultural education programmes. We can do this by following strategies such as couching foundational story within Aboriginal English and replacing as many English words as possible with words of mother tongue. Following strategies such as this will enable us to hear foundational story as closely as we can get it to its foundational spoken origin.

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<sup>29</sup> For further discussion see Section 2 *Operational Quality*.

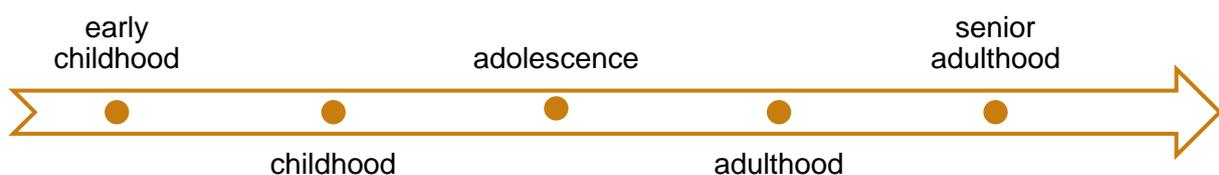
<sup>30</sup> See *Key Terminology*, p.2.

Of course, as has been flagged previously, we may not feel sufficiently skilled or confident to develop our own cultural education programmes without the input of external support agencies, especially if we find ourselves collaborating with external education providers to develop cultural education programmes for formalised education. We should not let these feelings disempower us as architects of our own cultural education programmes. At the very least we need to maintain a strong cultural leadership role so that we can directly influence the way our cultural education programmes are structured for formalised education.

Perhaps the best approach we can take when we are collaborating with formal education providers is to negotiate dedicated space for our cultural education programmes so that our cultural content is not subsumed or otherwise dissipated within broader syllabuses or subjects. In NSW public schools in particular, this can be achieved through mechanisms like the NSW Board of Studies Board Endorsed Course option. A Board Endorsed Course can take the form of a Content Endorsed Course, which enables learning content not covered in Board Developed Courses to be taught across the public school system, or it can take the form of a School Developed Course, which enables a school to create a specific course to meet learning needs at a more localised level.

Similarly, specific cultural course programming can be negotiated within the TAFE system, which is likewise open to facilitating localised learning. Some universities as well may be amenable to localised learning, either as part of a wider award structure or as a non-award public education forum. For us, our core aim will be to negotiate localised learning opportunities with local education providers because our cultural education programmes are going to be highly localised in terms of content, possibly regionalised, but not wider than this. We have to keep in mind that our first priority is to develop our own cultural education programmes so that we can expedite handing-on of our language and culture knowledge to ourselves; that is our communities.

The only other significant issue we will need to face regarding programming for cultural education is working out how to meet the needs of all our community members. To do this we need to conceptualise education as a lifelong learning process. Although in recent times the concept of lifelong learning has been applied specifically to highlight the value of adult vocational education, in its broadest and most helpful context lifelong learning promotes the viewpoint that anyone at any age can learn, and that we all learn continuously throughout our lifespan:



**Figure 12 – Spectrum of Lifelong Learning**

Taking a lifelong view of education is important because our languages and cultures cannot be successfully re-voiced and re-practised within our communities unless they are known across all our generations. Our children can learn language and culture at school, but the benefit of this learning diminishes significantly if our children then have no opportunity to apply their learning outside the school in our homes and communities. Expanding our cultural education programmes so that they scope across the entire life spectrum means thinking about the intellectual level that cultural knowledge is pitched at.

Cultural knowledge will need to be specifically constructed and expressed in a way that meets the cultural development needs of early childhood learners. From childhood through to adolescence cultural knowledge can be gradually spiralled<sup>31</sup> in ever increasing cycles of complexity. Spiralling is a particularly pertinent educational programming approach for us, especially if we are dealing with smaller corpuses of cultural knowledge, because spiralling encourages us to value reiteration of the same knowledge content, but in a way that progressively uncovers and extends the deeper spiritual layers that underpin cultural knowledge.

Using foundational story as an example, we can see that with spiralling we might introduce our foundational stories at an early childhood level, but in doing so we might hold back on explaining the deeper spiritual logic and knowledge interconnections that intellectualise story at a deeper cultural level. As learners increase in age we may seek to teach the same foundational stories again, but with greater explanation by introducing the intellectual layers embedded within story. This can continue to wind forward along the lifelong learning spectrum until senior adulthood where the deepest layers of spiritual consciousness become known.

Whatever we decide to do to progress the development of our cultural education programmes so that they are ready for teaching, we will need to present them in their finished format to our ALCN memberships so that they can be authorised as legitimate cultural products before they are used. If there is any disagreement within our ALCN memberships over how our language and culture data has been brought together as cultural curriculum's the persons disagreeing should be given due time and space to articulate their concerns and present their alternative suggestions. If these suggestions are accepted by our ALCN memberships our ALCN workgroups will need to re-work what they have previously done.

### **1.3.2 Education Delivery**

Once we have evolved our cultural education programmes we next need to consider how we are going to deliver them within our communities, schools, TAFE's and universities. In this regard we need to think about the dynamics of the teaching-learning interchange. The way a cultural education programme is taught will directly

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<sup>31</sup> Spiralling is an education term that expounds the value of exponentially growing the knowledge levels of learners by re-introducing the same knowledge to learners, but at increasing levels of depth.

influence how it is learnt, and this in turn will impact whether or not learning results in the re-uptake of mother tongue and mother culture. If educational delivery centres too heavily upon platforms that facilitate learner memorisation of knowledge as opposed to learner practise of knowledge, there is a real risk that learners will not internalise what they are absorbing beyond a theoretical level.

With language learning in particular, language should embed within the mind of a learner. Optimally this means that language should find presence within a learner's psyche as a language of thought.<sup>32</sup> If this cannot happen because of language diminishment language at the very least should find enough organic presence within a learner's psyche for words to automatically roll off the tongue. A mother tongue will not become a language of thought or an automatic speech response unless it is continually practised. There are educational platforms that will promote initial knowing of mother tongue, and indeed mother culture, but these platforms may be ineffective in the long run if they don't action ongoing cultural maintenance.

As noted in the *Foundations Framework* immersion is a favoured platform for galvanising re-uptake of Indigenous languages, usually when mother tongue is complete enough to enable full speech fluency.<sup>33</sup> The most appealing aspect of immersion, particularly in terms of reversing under-use and risk of loss of Indigenous languages, is that it is predicated on continuous language maintenance. The fundamental idea behind immersion is to empower the learner to re-voice their language as they are learning it. The first sessions within an immersion context focus on language skills development, but this changes exponentially as learners become skilled speakers of mother tongue. As this happens the learning environment can be opened up to embrace any other learning content.

Accordingly, in a conventional language immersion scenario the language of instruction moves as quickly as possible out of a coloniser or introduced tongue into a first Indigenous tongue. This is seen by many Indigenous communities, internationally and nationally, as particularly progressive for pre-school, school, TAFE and university contexts because students can learn across a mainstream curriculum within their own Indigenous language, which not only benefits their ability to learn in key learning areas when mother tongue is first tongue, it ensures that younger Indigenous generations actively use their language.

Language immersion thus presents as a best practice educational platform for full speech/full culture contexts. The question for us in NSW is:

- *Does immersion hold potential as a best practice educational platform for language-culture revitalisation, reclamation and awareness contexts where language and culture knowledge is likely to remain incomplete?*

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<sup>32</sup> ST Williams, op. cit.

<sup>33</sup> See *language immersion* in 'Key Terminology' in *Document No.1 Foundations Framework*, p.2.

Before we can gauge any possible benefit that immersion might hold for us in NSW we first need to associate immersion with culture instead of only associating it with language. We thus need to reconceptualise immersion as an intensive cultural enrichment environment instead of narrowly defining it as a language enrichment environment. We will also need to characterise immersion as having a twofold purpose: *cultural education* and *cultural maintenance*. If we do this we can open immersion up as a worthwhile platform for the delivery of our cultural education programmes in NSW. An immersion platform for us would become a platform where we not only teach culture, and within that language as a conduit of culture, but where we also calculatingly activate use of what is being taught.

Time will be a critical factor in the success of an immersion platform of this nature because immersion not only posits a learner within a deliberately constructed learning environment, immersion also amplifies learning through prolonged intensive interaction. To capture the essence of this our ALCN could seek to offer block based cultural education-maintenance immersion opportunities such as:

2 HOUR BLOCK		½ DAY BLOCK		WHOLE DAY BLOCK	
<i>calculated in minutes</i>		<i>calculated in hours [based on 1 x 4 hour session, with 1 x 30 minute tea break factored in]</i>		<i>calculated in hours [based on an 8 hour day with 2 x 30 minute tea breaks &amp; 1 hour lunch break factored in]</i>	
education	maintenance	education	maintenance	education	maintenance
120	nil	3.5	nil	6	nil
80	40	2.5	1	5	1
60	60	1.5	1.5	3	3
40	80	1	2.5	1	5
nil	120	nil	3.5	nil	6
multi-weekly or weekly		multi-weekly, weekly or fortnightly		weekly, fortnightly or monthly	

**Table 2 – Cultural Immersion Block Template**

The above template is by no means absolute; it merely demonstrates a sample range of immersion block timetable options that our ALCN may like to consider. As can be seen in the above table, it is suggested that the immersive experience be planned to commence with cultural education, but progressively shift until it is entirely centred on cultural maintenance. All blocks, whether they are education based or maintenance based, should be premised on Aboriginal pedagogies<sup>34</sup> so that the immersive environment is genuinely fixed as an exclusive Aboriginal cultural enrichment zone:

<sup>34</sup> Pedagogy is an educational term that denotes the science of teaching. Pedagogy encompasses all aspects of teaching including methods of teaching.

Aboriginal pedagogies nurture cultural learning and cultural maintenance by spiritualising experience and expression -				
on Country	inside circle	through story	within gender	across dance, music, song, art, craft

**Figure 13 – Aboriginal Pedagogies**

Undoubtedly there are culturally founded approaches to teaching and learning that can be added to this list, but these pedagogies at the very least will ensure that our cultural immersion blocks are secured within the spiritual domain of our Aboriginal identities. Because our knowledge systems are entirely enveloped within the spiritual being of Country it makes sense, as far as possible, to locate education and maintenance on Country. Country is our foundational classroom and workshop. It is where we are best able to experience and express our synergy with our spirit ancestors. Western classrooms, whilst useful, are nonetheless artificial learning environments that detach us from Country, even if they are sitting on Country.

Similarly founding education and maintenance inside circle spiritually and democratically positions us all as learners of Country. Our cultural facilitators<sup>35</sup> may lead us to understand and know, but they too remain learners. Circle learning is organically conducive to sharing knowing through talking-up, listening-up and yarning-up. In Western classrooms a teacher is typically positioned at the front and away from learners. It is a tacit means of asserting teacher authority, but it also creates an imbalance that diminishes the spiritual reciprocity that we need in order to share knowing, especially given that we do this primarily through the power of story.

As far as possible our immersion blocks should not only occur on Country they should align with our foundational knowledge constructs, so they must be flexible enough to transition in and out of gender specific zones as and when required. Again this is especially important when our cultural facilitators talk-up gender specific story, or when we express through gender specific dance, song, music, art and craft. All of these modes are primary mediums, beyond yarning, that we use to package, store and transmit our knowledge ways. They are what we use to render story. They are what we must learn and do in order to fully experience and express our knowing.

The type of immersion experience being advocated will work well within a community context or a formalised education context. With formal education, however, such as school based education, whole and ½ day cultural immersion blocks will have to be wound back to match up with pre-set start, finish, lunch and recess times. Likewise the application of cultural pedagogies may have to be negotiated so that there is an

<sup>35</sup> The term cultural facilitator has been used in preference to teacher in order to include all voluntary community knowledge holders who are prepared to hand-on cultural knowledge by facilitating ALCN cultural education programmes.

equitable division between excursion on Country and facilitation of circle learning in the classroom. Transforming a formal classroom setting into a conduit of Country will require at the very least a reconfiguration of the role and place of the teacher as well as the geography of classroom furniture.

Of course, deciding whether to offer set hour blocks, ½ day blocks or full day blocks together with whether to offer them multi-weekly, weekly, fortnightly or monthly will depend upon i. the overall amount of language and culture data that constitutes the corpus of cultural knowledge that will underpin the cultural education programme that will be the substance of the cultural immersion block, ii. sustained regular availability of cultural facilitators, iii. sustained regular availability of suitable education-maintenance venues when on Country education and maintenance is not practicable, and iv. overall levels of interest within our community populations. All of these will be uniquely local matters.

These local matters will influence what our ALCN are able to determine in terms of the duration of a cultural immersion cycle; that is the total number of individual cultural immersion blocks likely to be required in order to:

- *successfully hand-on a cultural education programme in full, and*
- *successfully galvanise handing-on by intentionally orchestrating cultural maintenance activity so that learning of mother tongue transitions into routine re-voicing of mother tongue and learning of mother culture transitions into routine re-practise of mother culture.*

Each of our ALCN will need to establish how many cultural immersion blocks should be centred wholly on cultural education, how many should progressively shift the balance between cultural education and cultural maintenance, and how many should be dedicated exclusively to cultural maintenance. Our ALCN will need to take into account that cultural maintenance will require a greater devotion of time if it is to precipitate cultural transformation within our homes and communities.

Locally based cultural immersion cycles may well run over several months in terms of the education component, and possibly extend over the greater part of a year in terms of the cultural maintenance component. Regional cross-cultural immersion cycles may exceed a year because they will have multipart education components. The cultural maintenance aspect of regional immersion cycles, however, may be more involved. Some ALCN may feel more comfortable devolving immersion blocks centred wholly on cultural maintenance back to local communities, or indeed splitting cultural maintenance between local settings and regional settings.

Our ALCN workgroups undertaking cultural education programming will be best positioned to map out cultural immersion cycles. In particular, our ALCN workgroups should concentrate on mapping out cultural immersion cycles which include dedicated cultural immersion blocks in the form of *Cultural Learning Circles (cultural education)* and *Working for Country Circles (cultural maintenance)* as well as transitory *Learning/Working for Country Circles* reflective of Table 2. These circles

would be offered exclusively to us by our ALCN, and conducted in accordance with the cultural protocols set down in the research methodology shown in Figure 7. They could be set up to specifically target younger children, adolescents, adults and senior adults, with gender specific immersion sessions as needed.

Of course, as previously discussed many of us may feel that the delivery of our cultural education programmes may be better placed within schools, TAFE's and universities. All of these formalised education contexts are invaluable educational avenues to consider, and our ALCN would do well to seek to negotiate delivery of cultural immersion cycles within these settings in the long run. Notwithstanding this, what is crucial in the first instance, is *what happens now on the ground in our communities*. If we are really going to re-voice what we have recovered of our mother tongues and re-practise what we have recovered of our ways of mother culture we cannot afford to ignore the urgency of setting up, running and maintaining our own community based cultural immersion initiatives.

We have to be realistic about cultural education. Not all of us will willingly attend TAFE or university, and not all of our children will feel comfortable undertaking cultural learning at school. We need to provide for this because *if we don't we may well lose our fight to keep our cultures vibrant and contemporary*. Even when we have developed our cultural education programmes and synthesised these programmes into well-structured cultural immersion block cycles that offer significant learning opportunities to our communities it may take years to bring about effective change. In Phase 1 an unequivocal statement was made that it is our responsibility to bring-back and hand-on our mother tongues and mother cultures. There is no point in pretending that assuming this responsibility will be easy. It will require a lot from us, both in terms of time and effort, but it is imperative that we work together, setting aside our differences and scepticisms for the sake of our next generations.

## 2. OPERATIONAL QUALITY

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Whilst the above operational strategy offers a structure for applied action its practical value will be largely rhetorical if it is not effectively balanced against a similar structure that addresses the cultural complexities that we are likely to face as our ALCN become operational. Performance measures will need to be in place as well as continuous improvement mechanisms in order to ensure that our ALCN remain sustainable cornerstone community cultural organisations into the future.

### 2.1 CULTURAL ISSUES AND RESOLUTIONS

In 1.2.2 *Corroborating Research* colonisation was cited as the key reason behind why we need to check and authenticate any language and culture data we recover before we endorse it and disseminate it as legitimate cultural knowledge. It was pointed out that enforced inter-generational cultural discontinuity has caused us to suffer varying degrees of disenfranchisement from our ways of speaking in mother tongue and our ways of keeping Country through practise of mother culture. We may well remain strong in terms of knowing ourselves as the first peoples of NSW, but our history is such that it will trigger a raft of complex cultural issues that we must confront as we work to sustain our cultural resurgence.

As soon we open up the idea of an ALCN for community public discussion some of us will have to face these issues, and they will be emotive. We can therefore expect to hear sceptical statements and questions such as:

- *those days are gone now*
- *what's the point you can't get it back once it's gone*
- *all that stuff went with the old people*
- *no one knows that any more*
- *I haven't heard of that before*
- *I don't here anyone speaking lingo*
- *you're just making that up*
- *you don't know anything*
- *what would you know?*
- *that language doesn't come from here*
- *how do you know that?*
- *who told you that?*
- *how will this help our kids?*

These sorts of statements and questions can be articulated accusingly, and because of this they can embroil us in volatile arguments that pit community against community, family against family, individual against individual. Sometimes these arguments even evolve into intractable standoffs, especially over disputed cultural borders. These standoffs can be vitriolic enough to stagnate cultural progress. Notwithstanding this, it is essential that we do not see these issues of scepticism as insurmountable; certainly we cannot allow them to continue to thwart us in our efforts to bring-back and hand-on within our communities our languages and cultures.

It is likely that the full weight of scepticism will be felt most keenly as soon as our ALCN begin the process of yarning-up. We will therefore have to prepare ourselves in advance by formalising a code of conduct as a regulatory countermeasure so that we can:

- *prevail upon all potential ALCN members to commit to these standards of conduct before taking up membership of our ALCN*
- *withdraw ALCN membership from antagonistic disputants if they are unable to consistently adhere to these standards of conduct*

Agreeing a code of conduct should be our first point of business in the very first public community forum we hold to float our ideas about setting up and running an ALCN. Before anything else can be done we first need to ensure that we are all going to conduct ourselves in a positive, productive and non-confrontational manner.

The following rubric suggests a basic code of conduct, inspired by the guiding principles of respect and collaboration as set down in the *Foundations Framework*:

<b>ALCN CODE OF CONDUCT</b>
I ..... agree that I will:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• respect the right of every individual to speak</li> <li>• respect the right of every individual to be heard</li> <li>• respect the right of every individual to feel safe</li> <li>• respect the right of every individual to articulate their point of view</li> <li>• not engage in confrontational dispute</li> <li>• not use offensive or inflammatory language</li> <li>• not threaten, insult or harm any individual</li> <li>• not make accusations against any individual</li> </ul>
Signed _____

**Table 3 - ALCN Code of Conduct**

This code of conduct models the type of regulatory mechanism that our ALCN can institute and work with at a local level. Our ALCN may also wish to include matters to do with securing our ALCN as dry areas and so on. The degree to which this may be necessary will very much depend upon local circumstance. Once we have set these standards in place and we have all agreed to abide by them we will have at least given ourselves the means to circumvent unnecessary discord within our ALCN. We have to recognise that even if we believe strongly in our own point of view, none of us as individuals has a monopoly on language and culture, it belongs to all of us.

Whilst a code of conduct will benefit us in terms of our interpersonal relationships it will not allay our scepticisms. To effectively deal with scepticism we will need to think deeply about our motivations. If we attempt to project a view of our ALCN as capable of instigating a cultural nirvana where we are all speaking fluently in mother tongue and following foundational ways of mother culture, we will face reasonable critique that says our view is unattainably idealistic. If, however, we project an image of our

ALCN more wisely, we will be better positioned to address many scepticisms. We need to ensure that our communities see that our ALCN are motivated towards:

- *reinforcing our Aboriginal identities*
- *culturally empowering our future generations*
- *advancing our cultural education opportunities and experiences*
- *improving our socio-economic circumstance*

Even with a proactive approach that deals with behavioural concerns and projects realistic motivations we may nonetheless encounter a lack of wider community interest because of the collateral damage of scepticism, and the tensions that emanate out of it. This has in the past led us to clam up, withdraw, and hold onto what we know within ourselves, so it will come as no surprise to many of us that we will find in our communities a reasonable percentage of persons who will prefer not to participate, especially from the point of yarning-up onward. Whilst we have to respect a person's right not to participate, it may be imprudent to assume that they are not interested. We may need to stop and think about how this silent percentage within our communities can have input in a way that is comfortable to them.

In order to encourage as many people as possible from within our communities to become members of our ALCN or volunteer to become informants our ALCN could:

- *Seek to offer our ALCN members and potential informant's access to a neutral party during yarning-up and bringing-back. A neutral party would ideally be an Aboriginal person not associated and/or related through family to community, or a non-Aboriginal person willing to work under the direction of our language and culture workgroups. Offering access to a neutral party will suit persons in our communities who feel more comfortable sharing what they know by talking-up to someone they don't know.*
- *Establish a designated 'drop-in' meeting place where anyone in our community can come along to talk-up what they know with members of our ALCN language and culture workgroups. This drop-in meeting place could be set up once the process of bringing-back is under way. A drop-in place of this nature would enable potentially interested informants to link up with workgroup members, which they may prefer to do before agreeing to share their language and/or culture knowledge. To expedite this our ALCN workgroups could advertise that they will be available at a set place for a set time for anyone who wishes to talk-up language and/or culture.*

In thinking beyond scepticism, a common issue we tend to face whenever initiatives are set up within our communities is member stacking. Member stacking is a problem for us when single or aligned family groups have disproportionate influence. There may be no easy way around this, other than to be conscious of this and work to ensure that our ALCN memberships are as representative of all families within our communities as possible. If it is obvious that there are particular family groups who are not involved targeted effort will have to be made to invite their involvement. Alternatively, a limit could be placed on the number of individuals from any one family group being involved in the decision making processes of our ALCN.

Limiting family representation may be most important when the process of corroborating research is underway. Even with the advantage of established

standards of evidence, there may be some risk that undue pressure may be brought to bear to compromise these standards. This will be especially likely if there is a move being made to reject the language and culture knowledge shared by a particular informant, even when their knowledge has been validated through additional supporting informant testimony or research of secondary historical sources. This form of pressure can only be alleviated by limiting voting rights where family group pressure is at issue and by adhering staunchly to evidence protocols.

Alongside member stacking sits the equally problematic issue of factionalism. Factionalism occurs within our communities when clashes, usually sparked by cultural competitiveness, surface between family groups or individuals. Unfortunately, factionalism could potentially lead to a proliferation of splinter ALCN within our communities. Duplication due to factionalism will be highly retrograde and it will undoubtedly foster disagreement over who found what first, who is the real ALCN and so on. Apart from being detrimental to community cultural advancement, factionalism will dreadfully confuse external education providers, such as schools, as they will be put in the position of having to work out who they should seek to partner.

Beyond this, we need to think about the effect factionalism will have on the long term viability of our ALCN. Our ultimate ambition, in terms of longevity, should be to cement our ALCN as cornerstone community cultural organisations. As such we can expect that we will be well positioned to attract external funding and expand into other avenues of cultural enterprise. If, however, our community has a number of non-cooperative splinter ALCN, funding bodies may well withdraw their interest in us. If we cannot work collaboratively together we risk further decline of our mother tongues and mother cultures. Instead of creating robust cultural environments for our children to grow up in, all we will have done is quarantine our mother tongues and mother cultures within isolated community pockets.

## 2.2 MEASURING PERFORMANCE

To ensure that our ALCN are set up and run as effective cornerstone community cultural organisations, free of negative issues such as scepticism, member stacking and factionalism, we will need to progressively measure our performance,<sup>36</sup> that is assess what we are doing in terms of the vision, goals, core values and guiding principles that we have set for our ALCN. Whilst these benchmarks will undoubtedly be individualised to meet the local needs of each of our ALCN, it is possible to model a set of performance indicators as i. operational indicators, ii. cultural indicators and iii. ethical indicators against the benchmarks set down in the *Foundations Framework*. These indicators can be modified to fit local circumstance.

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<sup>36</sup> Performance measurement is a business term that umbrellas assessment of activity using set indicators.

In order for us to see value in performance measurement it may help us to know that performance measurement is a hallmark of quality assurance,<sup>37</sup> a process that is integral to any organisation, as a matter of critical self-review. Critical self-review entails identifying strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities; in other words a SWOT<sup>38</sup> analysis. Our ALCN may find it worthwhile to undertake a SWOT analysis after becoming fully operational to the point where handing-on is being actively pursued. This may be at least 1 - 2 years on from the commencement of setting up. A SWOT analysis will enable us to critically reflect upon our progress thus far and assist us to plan, with greater foresight, the long term viability of our ALCN.

Gaining foresight means thinking strategically so that we don't just see what we want to see. We can widen our thinking by looking:



**Figure 14 – Ways of Thinking Strategically**

We can devise *operational indicators* that will facilitate us to think strategically by using our vision statement<sup>39</sup> as our point of reference. We can ask ourselves:

VISION	STRATEGIC THINKING
<p><i>i. actively pursue recovery of our foundational languages and cultures</i></p> <p><i>ii. actively re-voice what we have recovered of mother tongue and re-practise what we have recovered of mother culture</i></p> <p><i>iii. actively teach our recovered mother tongues and mother cultures for cultural self-renewal</i></p>	<p><b>inward</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Is our ALCN up and running as a viable community cultural organisation?</i></li> <li>• <i>Have we set in motion processes to actively pursue the recovery of mother tongue and mother culture? Are these processes working?</i></li> <li>• <i>Have we set in motion processes to actively re-voice mother tongue and re-practise mother culture? Are these processes working?</i></li> <li>• <i>Is there an alignment between what we are doing and our vision?</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>outward</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Has our ALCN been accepted as a community cultural organisation?</i></li> <li>• <i>Is our ALCN facilitating cultural change at the community level?</i></li> <li>• <i>Is our ALCN increasing positive presence of mother tongue and mother culture within our community?</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>forward</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Does our ALCN have a sustainable outlook for the future?</i></li> <li>• <i>Will we be able to form effective partnerships with external agencies?</i></li> <li>• <i>Will we be able to network effectively with other ALCN?</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>selectively</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What are our immediate priorities for the future?</i></li> <li>• <i>What are our long-term priorities for the future?</i></li> <li>• <i>Have we set in motion processes to actively meet these priorities?</i></li> </ul>

**Table 4 – Operational Indicators for ALCN**

<sup>37</sup> Quality assurance is a business term that umbrellas prediction and prevention of issues that impact output.

<sup>38</sup> SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) is a business tool utilised as part of strategic planning.

<sup>39</sup> See Figure 2 'Vision Statement' in *Document No.1 Foundations Framework*, p.7.

We can devise *cultural indicators* that will facilitate us to think strategically by using our goals<sup>40</sup> as our point of reference. We can ask ourselves:

GOALS	STRATEGIC THINKING
<p><i>i. language and culture</i>  <i>ii. education</i></p>	<p><b>inward</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Have we been productive in working with our informants and searching secondary historical sources?</i></li> <li>• <i>Have we been able to establish a cultural databank and transition this databank into a corpus of cultural knowledge?</i></li> <li>• <i>Has our corpus of cultural knowledge been transitioned into a cultural education programme?</i></li> <li>• <i>Have we agreed a mode of delivery for our cultural education programme?</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>outward</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Is our cultural education programme being delivered within our community?</i></li> <li>• <i>Are we delivering our cultural education programme through our ALCN or are we relying on it being taught by formal education providers?</i></li> <li>• <i>Will all members of our community, across the life span, have an opportunity to experience our cultural education programme?</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>forward</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Have we established sufficient language maintenance opportunities to secure future wider re-voicing of mother tongue within our community?</i></li> <li>• <i>Have we established sufficient culture maintenance opportunities to secure future wider re-practise of mother culture within our community?</i></li> <li>• <i>Are we actively securing a strong cultural future for our next generations?</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Selectively</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Have we set long-term priorities for the future expansion of our corpus of cultural knowledge and our cultural education programme?</i></li> <li>• <i>Have we set long-term priorities for the future delivery of our cultural education programme as a rolling initiative?</i></li> <li>• <i>Have we set in motion processes to ensure that our cultural education programme is an effective tool for securing cultural self-renewal?</i></li> </ul>

**Table 5 – Cultural Indicators for ALCN**

We can devise *ethical indicators* that will facilitate us to think strategically by using our core values and guiding principles<sup>41</sup> as our point of reference. We can ask ourselves:

VALUES & GUIDING PRINCIPLES	STRATEGIC THINKING
<p><i>i. collectivism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>collaboration</i></li> <li>• <i>self-determination</i></li> <li>• <i>autonomy</i></li> </ul> <p><i>ii. spiritualism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>respect</i></li> <li>• <i>responsibility</i></li> <li>• <i>obligation</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>inward</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Is our ALCN reflective of our entire community?</i></li> <li>• <i>Does our community have a sense of ownership over our ALCN?</i></li> <li>• <i>Are we working together in harmony and with respect for each other?</i></li> <li>• <i>Are we being distracted by discord?</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>outward</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Is our ALCN encouraging positive inter-relations within our community?</i></li> <li>• <i>Are we promoting a greater sense of obligation to Country?</i></li> <li>• <i>Are we effecting positive reinforcement of cultural identity?</i></li> <li>• <i>Are we laying down a strong platform for a brighter cultural destiny?</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>forward</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Are there opportunities within our community to share our language and culture with our wider non-Aboriginal community?</i></li> <li>• <i>Are we creating opportunities for our children to take responsibility for the care of Country?</i></li> <li>• <i>Have we effected positive connectedness within our community between our past, our present and our future?</i></li> </ul>

<sup>40</sup> See Table 2 'Goals' in Document No.1 Foundations Framework, pp.8-9.

<sup>41</sup> See Figure 3 'Core Values' & Figure 4 'Guiding Principles' in Document No.1 Foundations Framework, pp.7-8.

	<p><b>selectively</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Have we set priorities for developing a more inclusive conduit between our Aboriginal community and our wider non-Aboriginal community?</i></li> <li>• <i>Have we set priorities so that we can ensure that our ALCN remain a strong base for collective community cultural enterprise?</i></li> <li>• <i>Do we have a set of priorities for negotiating representation of our language and culture in wider non-Aboriginal community services?</i></li> </ul>
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**Table 6 – Ethical Indicators for ALCN**

The questions posed above only sample the type of self-reflective, self-critical inquiry that we can set to get us thinking strategically around the indicators that we might choose to use in order to measure our performance. To undertake an inquiry of this nature our ALCN may like to consider instigating a quality assurance workgroup, or alternatively schedule a series of quality assurance meetings open to all members of our ALCN. The process of quality assurance will involve:

- *identifying performance indicators to facilitate strategic thinking at the local level*
- *connecting-up so that we can yarn-up the critical questions we set ourselves*
- *thinking critically so that we can identify what we are doing well and where we need to improve*
- *planning and prioritising action*
- *setting concise localised objectives to direct action towards new priority areas*
- *setting a timetable for regular performance review*

Timetabling a regular schedule for performance review will very much depend upon local circumstance. If our ALCN is functioning well in terms of meeting the benchmarks set down in our vision, goals, values and guiding principles, it may not be necessary to undertake a further SWOT analysis for some time. Many organisations seek to initiate SWOT analyses in 5 – 10 year rotations so that they can develop specific long range strategic plans. If, however, our ALCN are struggling to meet these benchmarks, it may be more judicious to undergo a SWOT style analysis more frequently, so that we can establish more manageable shorter range objectives for the future. In all of this it will be important for us to ensure that our way of thinking is not just present centred, but also future centred.

### **2.3 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

If we are future centred in our thinking we will become focused on continuous improvement.<sup>42</sup> In general, as an organisation works to establish what it is and what it is not doing well it simultaneously looks for pathways to enhance performance so that it can move forward in a more productive continually improving manner. With our ALCN it will be important for us to consider continuous improvement when we are measuring our performance, though we may actually begin considering one aspect of continuous improvement, skills development, as soon as we embark upon bringing-back. Overall though, there are five key areas of continuous improvement that we can productively consider:

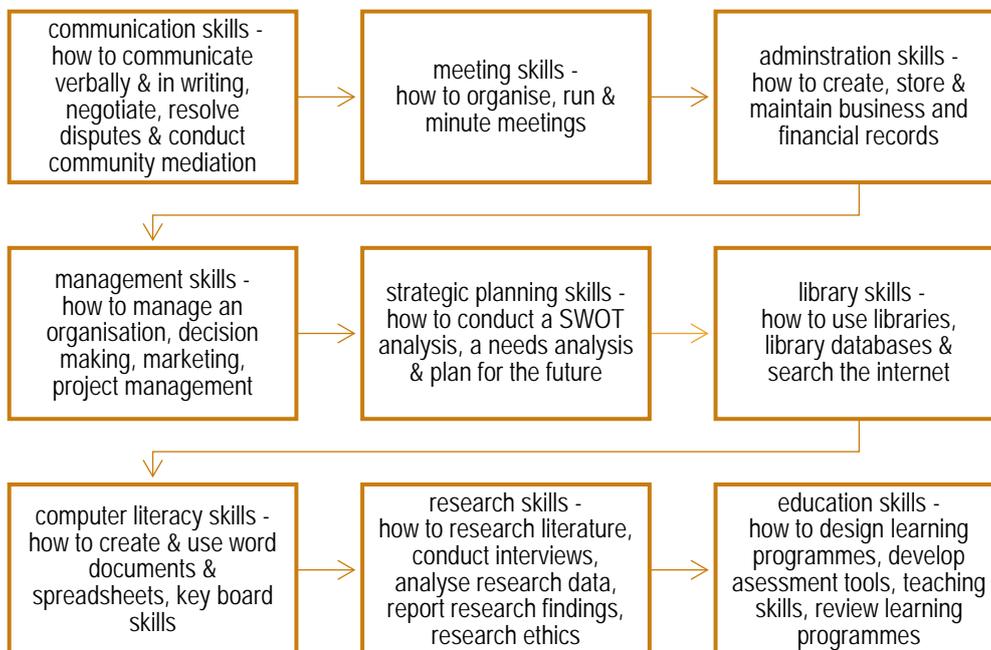
<sup>42</sup> Continuous improvement is a business term that umbrellas improvement of services and customer satisfaction.



**Figure 15 – Areas for ALCN Continuous Improvement**

In order for us to effectively set-up, run and maintain our ALCN as viable long-term community based cultural organisations we should seek to enhance our skills in the areas of research, education and business. Improving our research skills in particular will be important because without research it will be extremely difficult to systematically bring-back our languages and cultures. Interestingly, in terms of education skills, the Commonwealth House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs has specifically recommended "flexible and accessible training for Indigenous people to gain limited authority qualifications to teach".<sup>43</sup>

Our ALCN who flag at the point of bringing-back and/or handing-on a need for external help because of a deficiency in skills may find it helpful to approach TAFE, as they are specialist providers of adult skills development courses. Certainly, our local ALCN could group together to negotiate a regional based course with TAFE. A course of this nature would fulfil continuous improvement for us because once it has been established it can be run on multiple occasions, in multiple years, enabling our ALCN members to develop their skills when they are ready to do so. Our skills development course needs are likely to encompass:



**Figure 16 – Skills Development Options**

<sup>43</sup> House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, *Our Land Our Languages: Language Learning in Indigenous Communities*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2012, recommendation 16, p. xx.

[http://www.aph.gov.au/parliamentary\\_business/committees/house\\_of\\_representatives\\_committees?url=/atsia/languages2/report.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/parliamentary_business/committees/house_of_representatives_committees?url=/atsia/languages2/report.htm)

Of course, it may well be that many of our ALCN members will feel uncomfortable attending a formal skills development course of study. If that is the case our ALCN can alternatively seek to negotiate in-house skills development workshops that can be run by local professionals who may be willing to provide their services gratis. Negotiating in-house skills development workshops will certainly take away any fear or pressure we may feel in terms of formal assessment, attendance regulation and so on. Local professionals can often be located by approaching libraries, schools, TAFE's, universities, local councils, local government offices, local historical societies and local philanthropic organisations.

Whilst skills development is an important aspect of continuous improvement an equally important aspect for our ALCN will be ongoing bringing-back. The research that we will have undertaken to initially bring-back our languages and cultures can never be considered final. It may be enough to structure a beginning cultural education programme, but for those of us working at awareness and reclamation levels our programmes will not be comprehensive. Because of this there will always be room for improvement. Even at the revitalisation level ongoing growth of language and culture knowledge will be possible. We should therefore never completely wind down bringing-back, rather we should maintain at least one ALCN language and culture workgroup to consistently look for new language and culture data.

The research process for a maintenance based language and culture workgroup would centre on conferring with new informants as they are identified, as well as conferring with known informants within our communities who at first did not want to participate in bringing-back but now wish to. Maintenance based bringing-back would also involve re-searching library and other collections of secondary historical sources in case new relevant language and culture material becomes available. Additionally, the rules governing access to restricted collections may have precluded the inclusion of potential language and culture data into our raw cultural databanks. A maintenance language and culture workgroup would follow up on these sources.

As ongoing bringing-back yields new language and culture data there will be a natural flow on effect that prompts ongoing handing-on. This is because as soon as our existing cultural databanks expand our cultural education programmes will have to be reviewed so that they can likewise be expanded. It is often thought that once an education programme is developed it is a finished finite product, but in actuality sound educational praxis determines otherwise. Knowledge is ever evolving, so it stands to reason that education would also be ever evolving. It is therefore necessary to regularly evaluate and update curricula, syllabuses and lesson modules so that educational programming remains up-to-date.

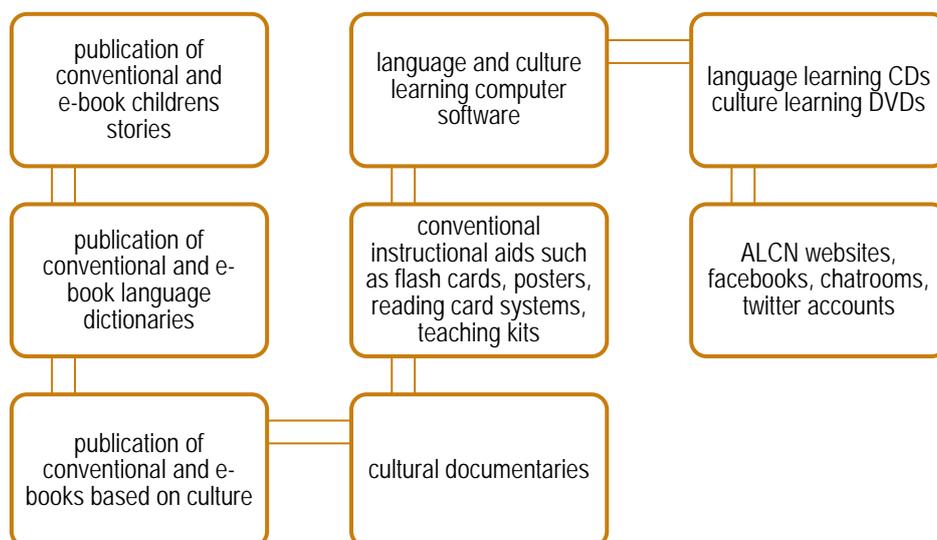
Our ALCN maintenance based language and culture workgroups will be well positioned to transition any new knowledge added to our raw cultural databanks into our existing corpuses of cultural knowledge. Of course, any incoming new

knowledge will have to be corroborated by our ALCN membership beforehand. Once this new knowledge is corroborated it can then be subsumed within our corpuses of cultural knowledge and thus become available for inclusion within our current cultural curricula, syllabuses and lesson modules. Of course, as we review and update our cultural education programmes we will also need to:

- *offer update education-maintenance blocks to hand-on our new knowledge to anyone who has already completed our original cultural immersion block cycle*
- *expand our existing cultural immersion block cycles so that new knowledge is integrated into what we offer our community and formal education partners*

As part of the continuous improvement process we can also think about how handing-on can evolve into a more enduring maintenance pursuit that encourages us to purposefully connect-up to safeguard our re-voicing of our mother tongues. One of the ways we can do this is to set up ALCN cultural yarning circles. Ideally, these cultural yarning circles would take place on a weekly basis so that our cultural communication remains strong. These cultural yarning circles could be a natural conduit to our regular ALCN meeting schedules, in that they can be immersion driven forums where cultural business is discussed in a more free flowing way, using as much mother tongue as possible.

Similarly, we can seek to set up enduring mechanisms to ensure that we are actively re-practising our mother cultures. In this regard one of the best approaches our ALCN can take is to incept specific projects centred on initiatives such as environmental protection so that we regularly and actively get out and work on Country. Alongside this form of active re-practise of mother culture we can seek to advance the scope and direction of our ALCN through resources enterprise and business enterprise. Resources enterprise is particularly worthy of consideration because without adequate resources our cultural education programmes may well stagnate. The sorts of resource development we could consider include:



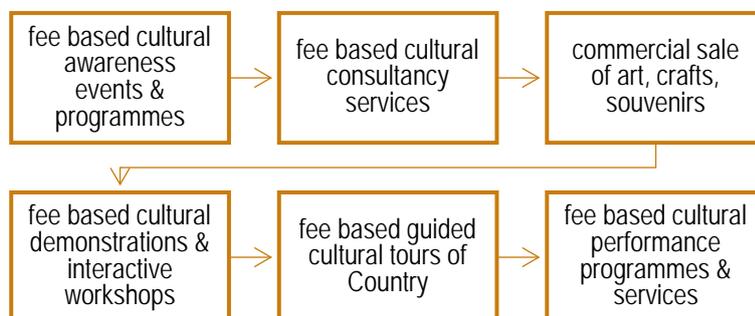
**Figure 17 – Resources Development Options**

Resources development can be very dynamic and involve a whole range of products and options. It can also lead on to further advances such as the creation of permanent keeping places. An ALCN keeping place could be local or regional, and take the form of a library or museum in a conventional sense, or it could be in the form of an online clearing house that brings all e-resources together under the one site. The imperative to permanently record our recovered corpuses of cultural knowledge through resources development and to house our resources in community based centres, online or otherwise, enmeshes precisely with our vision and goals, and addresses our need to support our own cultural self-renewal.

Of course, resources development usually requires the input of financial support so that necessary materials and equipment can be purchased or hired. This is where seeking out external funding really becomes necessary, at least in the first instance. It is also the point at which our ALCN will be best positioned to attract funding because we will have already completed bringing-back, and we will be actively working on handing-on. This will ensure that our ALCN are convincingly visible as long-term community based cultural research and education organisations with strong prospects for the future, thereby negating sponsor doubt.

There are other significant advantages if our ALCN choose to become involved in resources production enterprise. Firstly, by developing resources under the auspices of our ALCN we will secure collective intellectual property rights in the form of copyright over our own knowledge. Secondly, by creating our own resources we will generate a commercial avenue for our ALCN. Any proceeds derived through the sale of resources could be funnelled back into our ALCN, so that we can eventually realise our ALCN as self-sustaining ventures. This then, brings into view the potential for our ALCN to become involved in business enterprise.

Once we begin to work towards evolving our ALCN as a production hub for cultural resources we can begin to explore other cultural business opportunities such as:



**Figure 18 – Business Opportunity Options**

It would be impracticable of us to assume that our ALCN can continue over the long-term to run purely on the basis of dedicated voluntary action. There will undoubtedly be individuals who are dedicated enough to keep working to secure our languages

and cultures because they have made a personal lifelong commitment to do so, but for some of us this may not be the case. Continually improving what we do so that our ALCN eventually transition into community based financially independent cultural enterprises will widen the reach and viability of our ALCN by creating employment and contract opportunities within our communities.

At the end of the day continuous improvement is about sustainability – *how do we keep our ALCN going?* We need to keep our ALCN going because without community based cultural hubs dedicated to bringing-back and handing-on mother tongues and mother cultures our ambitions centred on re-voicing mother tongues and re-practising mother cultures will not progress beyond an initial hiatus of activity. Yes, in the long term it will mean changing the nature of our ALCN by registering them as businesses, with all the attendant business instruments such as ABN's, but all of this can take place over a period of years. All we need is ambition, positive community will and a strong belief in ourselves and our capacity to do this for the sake of the survival of our cultural identity, health and well-being.

### 3. SOURCES OF SUPPORT

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The list provided below should not be considered definitive. It is indicative only of the many sources of support that can be accessed by ALCN.

#### **ACARA (AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING AUTHORITY)**

ACARA is responsible for developing Australia's national curriculum.

<http://www.acara.edu.au/default.asp>

#### **'AHA PŪNANA LEO**

'Aha Pūnana Leo is an Indigenous Hawaiian language website. It is worth consulting to see what other Indigenous peoples are doing in the area of language recovery and maintenance.

<http://www.ahapunanaleo.org/index.php?/about/>

#### **ALASKA NATIVE KNOWLEDGE NETWORK [ANKN]**

ANKN is a useful website worth consulting to see what other Indigenous peoples are doing to advance Indigenous knowledge systems.

<http://ankn.uaf.edu/>

#### **AN AUSTRALIAN LANGUAGE AS SPOKEN BY THE AWABAKAL ... L E THRELKELD 1892**

This is a primary historical source of NSW Aboriginal language data that is now available online. To find out what other primary historical sources have been digitised and made available online search Trove, which is listed under the Australian National Library.

<http://archive.org/details/australianlangua00threrich>

#### **AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES [AIATSIS]**

AIATSIS is a national repository of ATSI language and culture resources. It contains many valuable historical sources.

<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/>

≈ to use Mura, AIATSIS's online catalogue go to:

<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/collections/muraread.html>

≈ for Language resources go to:

<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/research/language.html>

≈ to use the AUSTLANG (Australian Indigenous languages database) go to:

<http://austlang.aiatsis.gov.au/disclaimer.php>

#### **AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM**

The Australian Museum is a major repository of tangible ATSI cultural heritage items. These items are invaluable sources of culture data.

<http://australianmuseum.net.au/>

≈ to learn more about the Museum's ATSI collections go to:

<http://australianmuseum.net.au/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Collections>

≈ to browse the Australian Museum's research online library catalogue go to:

<http://library.austmus.gov.au/publicRMS/>

### BOARD OF STUDIES NSW [BOS]

BOS is responsible for all NSW K-12 syllabus documents. Use this site to access the Aboriginal Studies and Aboriginal Language syllabuses, and also information about Board Endorsed Courses.

<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/>

≈ for Aboriginal education go to:

<http://ab-ed.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/>

≈ to access information about Board Endorsed Courses go to:

[http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus\\_hsc/course-descriptions/board-endorsed-courses.html](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/course-descriptions/board-endorsed-courses.html)

### CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY [CSU]

CSU offers a Graduate Certificate in Wiradjuri Language, Culture and Heritage. This course of study provides an example of the type of cultural education product that can be offered at the tertiary level.

<http://www.csu.edu.au/>

≈ to find out about the Graduate Certificate go to:

[http://www.csu.edu.au/courses/postgraduate/wiradjuri\\_language/course-overview#.UkpKkCE\\_6dl](http://www.csu.edu.au/courses/postgraduate/wiradjuri_language/course-overview#.UkpKkCE_6dl)

### EDUCATION AND COMMUNITIES NSW – [NSW DEC]

NSW DEC brings together Aboriginal Affairs, the Office of Education, Public Schools NSW and TAFE NSW under the one portfolio.

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/>

≈ Aboriginal Affairs:

<http://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/>

≈ to access the OCHRE plan go to:

[http://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/AA\\_OCHRE\\_final.pdf](http://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/AA_OCHRE_final.pdf)

≈ Office of Education:

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-us/office-of-education>

≈ for information about the Connected Communities Strategy go to:

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-us/careers-centre/school-careers/focus-areas/connected-communities>

≈ to access the Aboriginal Education and Training Policy go to:

[https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/students/access\\_equity/aborig\\_edu/PD20080385.shtml](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/students/access_equity/aborig_edu/PD20080385.shtml)

≈ NSW Public Schools

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/>

≈ TAFE NSW

<https://www.tafensw.edu.au/>

≈ TAFE offers a range of Aboriginal language courses, modules and units. These courses, modules and units demonstrate the type of cultural education product that can be offered at the adult vocational level. To view what TAFE currently offers go to:

<https://www.tafensw.edu.au/howex/servlet/Course?Command=GetAdvancedSearchResult&WindowName=&cen=null&URL=%2Fservlet%2FCourse%3FCommand%3DGetSimpleSearch&SemesterDropList=20132&VTEXT1=aboriginal+language&VLOCATION=&VLOCATION=&VLOCATION=&VFOE=&VCAREER=&VINDUSTRY=&TPs=>

### FIRST PEOPLES CULTURAL COUNCIL

On this British Colombian website there is a practical toolkit for getting language initiatives up and running and additional research material relevant to language revitalisation.

<http://www.fpcc.ca/Default.aspx>

≈ to access the language toolkit go to:

<http://www.fpcc.ca/language/toolkit/>

≈ to access research resources go:

<http://www.fpcc.ca/language/toolkit/LanguageResearchProjects.aspx>

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS

≈ to access the Government's landmark report 'Our Land Our Languages' go to:

[http://www.aph.gov.au/parliamentary\\_business/committees/house\\_of\\_representatives\\_committees?url=/atsia/languages2/report.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/parliamentary_business/committees/house_of_representatives_committees?url=/atsia/languages2/report.htm)

### IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

This study was undertaken by the author in 2011 for Aboriginal Affairs. It contains useful language information and a useful bibliography.

<http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/138443/20130125->

[1412/www.daa.nsw.gov.au/publications/Final%20report%20final%20version.pdf](http://www.daa.nsw.gov.au/publications/Final%20report%20final%20version.pdf)

### KIMBERLEY LANGUAGES RESOURCE CENTRE [KLRC]

KLRC is a useful website for seeing what other Aboriginal peoples in Australia are doing to maintain language and culture.

<http://www.klrc.org.au/index.php>

### INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION: ENCOURAGEMENT, GUIDANCE AND LESSONS LEARNED EDITED BY J. REYHNER AND L. LOCKARD

This is an instructional publication that can be accessed online at:

<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/ILR/>

Another similar publication well worth tracking down is L Hinton & K Hale (eds) 2001, *Green Book of Language Revitalisation in Practice*, Academic Press, San Diego, CA.

Unfortunately this title is not available online.

### MUURRBAY ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE AND CULTURE COOPERATIVE

Muurrbay is a community-based organisation on the mid-north coast of NSW. It provides a solid example of the sort of website ALCN can consider developing.

<http://www.muurrbay.org.au/>

≈ for Muurrbay language courses go to:

<http://www.muurrbay.org.au/muurrbay-resources/courses/>

≈ for Muurrbay publications including language dictionaries go to:

<http://www.muurrbay.org.au/muurrbay-resources/>

### NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

The National Library is a primary website for conducting research into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, language and culture.

<http://www.nla.gov.au/>

≈ to find out about the NLA's Indigenous collection go to:

<http://www.nla.gov.au/what-we-collect/indigenous>

- ≈ to use the NLA online catalogue go to:  
<http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/>
- ≈ to use Trove go to:  
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/>  
*Trove is an impressive online database that references a wide range of publications and resources pertinent to Aboriginal language and culture. The database can be searched by using keywords. Trove provides detailed information about each item listed, including where the item can be located, and provides online weblinks when they are available.*
- ≈ to use the Australian Library's Gateway go to:  
<http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/libraries>  
*This is a significant site for locating individual libraries throughout Australia. Public libraries are listed on this site. Where possible direct weblinks to public libraries have been provided.*

### NATIONAL MUSEUM AUSTRALIA

The museum concentrates on social history, but does also focus on Australia's first peoples. There are tangible cultural items from NSW within this collection that will provide valuable culture data.

<http://www.nma.gov.au/>

- ≈ to search the collection go to:  
<http://www.nma.gov.au/collections-search/>
- ≈ for Indigenous histories and cultures go to:  
[http://www.nma.gov.au/history/aboriginal\\_and\\_torres\\_strait\\_islander\\_cultures\\_and\\_histories](http://www.nma.gov.au/history/aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_cultures_and_histories)
- ≈ for artefacts from North West NSW go to:  
<http://www.nma.gov.au/collections/highlights/19th-century-north-west-new-south-wales-aboriginal-artefacts-collection>

### NSW ABORIGINAL EDUCATION CONSULTATIVE GROUP INC. [NSW AECG Inc.]

The NSW AECG Inc. is a not for profit Aboriginal advocacy group focused on education.

<http://www.aecg.nsw.edu.au/>

### OUR LANGUAGES

Our languages is a national website dedicated to sharing information about the recovery and maintenance of Aboriginal languages in Australia.

<http://www.ourlanguages.net.au/>

- ≈ for NSW language news go to:  
<http://www.ourlanguages.net.au/news/nsw.html>

### RE-AWAKENING LANGUAGES: THEORY AND PRACTICE IN THE REVITALISATION OF AUSTRALIA'S INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES (2010)

This volume, edited by J Hobson, K Lowe, S Poetsch and M Walsh, discusses language revitalisation within NSW. To access chapters in this volume online go to:

[http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/6647/browse?type=title&submit\\_browse=Title](http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/6647/browse?type=title&submit_browse=Title)

### RNLD [RESOURCE NETWORK FOR LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY]

This is a not for profit international organisation aimed at supporting the protection of Indigenous languages.

<http://www.rnld.org/>

### STATE LIBRARY OF NSW

The State Library is a primary website for conducting research into NSW Aboriginal languages and cultures.

<http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/>

≈ for Australian Indigenous Services at the State Library go to:

<http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/indigenous/index.html?HomeLink=Services>

*The State Library's Koori Librarians can be contacted via this link.*

≈ for Indigenous Australian Discover Collections go to:

[http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover\\_collections/history\\_nation/indigenous/index.html](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover_collections/history_nation/indigenous/index.html)

*This page is extremely useful. It contains links to electronic copies of Aboriginal vocabularies.*

### STATE RECORDS (NSW)

This is a primary website for learning about NSW Aboriginal families and communities.

<http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/>

≈ to visit the State Archives collection webpage go to:

<http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/state-archives/state-archives>

≈ to visit the State Archives Indigenous Communities webpage go to:

<http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/state-archives/resources-for/indigenous-people/indigenous-communities>

≈ to find out specific information regarding how to access the State Archives Aboriginal records go to the 'Archives In Brief 78 - Access to records relating to Aboriginal people' webpage:

[Archives In Brief 78 - Access to records relating to Aboriginal people — State Records NSW](#)

### TRADE AND INVESTMENT NSW

Trade and Investment is a State Government department that provides support to businesses in NSW.

<http://www.business.nsw.gov.au/>

≈ for a guide on how to develop Aboriginal businesses go to:

<http://www.business.nsw.gov.au/assistance-and-support/online-resources-and-tools/aboriginal-resources/a-guide-to-developing-aboriginal-business>

≈ for Aboriginal business development go to:

<http://www.business.nsw.gov.au/assistance-and-support/grants/aboriginal-business-development>

### UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

[http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf)

### UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

This university offers courses in Indigenous languages education, demonstrating the type of cultural education product that can be offered at a tertiary level.

<http://sydney.edu.au/>

≈ to find out about these courses go to:

[http://sydney.edu.au/courses/study\\_area/aboriginal-and-indigenous-studies](http://sydney.edu.au/courses/study_area/aboriginal-and-indigenous-studies)

'Our Land Our Languages'  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander Affairs  
Inquiry into Language learning in Indigenous Communities  
2012, p.213

***LANGUAGE IS INSEPARABLE FROM  
CULTURE, KINSHIP, LAND AND FAMILY AND  
IS THE FOUNDATION UPON WHICH THE  
CAPACITY TO LEARN, INTERACT AND TO  
SHAPE IDENTITY IS BUILT. UNDER THE  
CLOSING THE GAP FRAMEWORK, VALUING  
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES WE CAN MAKE A  
SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT IN AREAS OF  
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, HEALTH,  
JUSTICE AND WELLBEING.***

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<<http://www.deakin.edu.au/dro/eserv/DU:30023289/williams-indigenousvalues-2007.pdf>>





New South Wales  
Aboriginal Education  
Consultative Group Inc.

[www.aecg.nsw.edu.au](http://www.aecg.nsw.edu.au)

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