Aboriginal Languages Trust

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES TRUST
STRATEGIC PLAN
2022-2027

LANGUAGES ALIVE, CULTURE THRIVES

NSW GOVERNMENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The NSW Aboriginal Languages Trust acknowledges and pays respect to Aboriginal Peoples who are the Custodians of Country.

We acknowledge their unbroken connections to this place through Story, Kinship and Language, from time immemorial.

We pay our respect to their Elders past and present, and we acknowledge the leaders of today, those who continue to carry Language, Culture and Truth for their People.

THANKS TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE CONSULTATIONS

Throughout 2021 the Aboriginal Languages Trust conducted state-wide consultations on our Strategic Plan. The consultations were an important opportunity to hear Community voices, ensuring our Strategic Plan reflects the perspectives, needs and concerns of Community members and those involved in Language activities. The Trust would like to sincerely thank everyone who participated in the consultations. We appreciate the depth of Knowledge and diversity of experiences that were shared by all.

The full summary of what we heard during these consultations is available in the Consultation on the Aboriginal Language Trust's Strategic Plan Outcome Report.

ARTWORK

'The Voice of Country' by Gumbaynggirr and Bundjalung artist Amy Allerton.

At the beginning of creation, the land gave birth to Language, a living force, spreading out far and wide, connecting us to our creator, our Ancestors, our Country and our Culture. The voice of Country speaks to us through the water, the earth, the stars and the spirits of those past, present and future. The winds of Language travel through each tribe and Nation, it is diverse and yet it is one, bringing strength, Knowledge and healing. "The Voice of Country" tells the intertwined story of Identity and sovereignty.

It represents the foundation of Language which is ingrained in Culture, Community and Country across NSW, and speaks of the unyielding resilience of the world's oldest living Culture. It shows the inseparable nature of the physical, intellectual and spiritual manifestations of Language that shape the identity of Aboriginal peoples, and connects them to each other and the land. "The Voice of Country" is an invitation for all peoples to come together in partnership to share in the dawn of a new, enriched and thriving future, where Language is heard, people are seen, connection is strengthened and Culture is celebrated.

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OUR VISION

All NSW Aboriginal Languages are strong and healthy.

OUR PURPOSE

We aid in the growth and nurturing of NSW Aboriginal Languages by responding to the aspirations of Communities and participating in their self-determining work to reclaim and reawaken their Languages.

Image: Ngurruy thina - Emu Feet. Credit: Maddy Hodgetts, Kapata Dreaming.

OUR PRINCIPLES

- Language belongs to Country and as Custodians Communities determine their Language needs and priorities.

- Language thrives when we share Knowledge and learnings.

- Language weaves Kinship, Country and stories together.

- Language is central to identity and wellbeing and it must be invested in.

Image: Yuwaalaraay Language classes Image: Amanaki Studios.

Image: Dharawal Language students, Gujaga Foundation. Credit: Rob Hookey Images.

WHO WE ARE

In 2017, NSW became the first jurisdiction in Australia to enact legislation to recognise the importance of Aboriginal Languages – the Aboriginal Languages Act 2017.

The Aboriginal Languages Trust is an Aboriginal-led NSW Government agency established in March 2020 to provide a focused, coordinated, and sustained effort in relation to Aboriginal Languages at local, regional and State levels.

More information about who we are can be found at our website at www.alt.nsw.gov.au

OUR PLAN ON A PAGE

VISION:

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PURPOSE:

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PRINCIPLES:

- Language belongs to Country and as Custodians Communities determine their needs and priorities.
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- Language weaves Kinship, Country and stories together.
- Language is central to identity and wellbeing and it must be invested in.

NURTURE & GROW

1.1 Resource and promote Community designed and led Languages events and activities, including the development and implementation of Community Language plans.

1.2 Support Communities in their efforts to determine and control the use, growth and Cultural integrity of their Languages.

1.3 Work with Communities and government and non-government institutions to improve Community access to and ownership of archival material, as well as the storing of Languages Knowledge, resources and teaching materials.

1.4 Raise awareness and promote opportunities for Aboriginal Communities to gain access to technology and Country for Language education.

MEASURE

1.a Aboriginal Languages activities across NSW are mapped, and information and data are available to inform strategic investment and program development.

1.b Steady increase in investment in Aboriginal Communities for Languages activities.

1.c Place-based Aboriginal Community designed approaches in place supporting Communities access to and ownership of archival materials, and storage of Language resources.

1.d Relevant and accessible resources and materials are produced and translated for Community engagement and promotion and advocacy, including access to Aboriginal Cultural and Intellectual Property, access to Country, and access to online Language education platforms.

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

2.1 Foster genuine and respectful partnerships with Aboriginal Communities and Languages stakeholders at all levels, to support Communities to achieve their Languages aspirations.

2.2 Identify and promote networks to aid in reawakening, growing and nurturing NSW Aboriginal Languages, including harnessing technology to share information and resources.

2.3 Create in-person events to connect NSW Aboriginal Languages Communities and stakeholders and to share and learn.

2.4 Work with Communities to explore the role of Aboriginal Languages centres in growing and sustaining Languages.

MEASURE

2.a Formalise partnerships with Aboriginal Communities, including Languages reference groups.

2.b Alignment with Aboriginal Languages networks, alliances and institutions, and their work informs the work of the Trust.

2.c NSW Aboriginal Languages Gatherings bring together stakeholders and showcase Languages revitalisation work.

2.d A rich and diverse Aboriginal Languages ecosystem is visible and accessible and is supporting NSW Languages revitalisation.

2.e Research is carried out on Aboriginal Languages centres and informs future policymaking and strategic investment.

2.f Aboriginal Languages networks are digitised and increase Languages revitalisation efficiency, mobility and collaboration.

CELEBRATE & PROMOTE

3.1 Work with Communities to set high-impact research priorities that help grow and nurture NSW Aboriginal Languages.

3.2 Work with Communities to determine the appropriate collection and use of data about their Aboriginal Languages activities.

3.3 Develop and promote practical information and resources about NSW Aboriginal Languages.

3.4 Provide evidence-informed advice and policy leadership on NSW Aboriginal Languages, including on the NSW Government's work to progress Closing the Gap targets.

3.5 Build and deliver campaigns to celebrate and promote NSW Aboriginal Languages to increase support and investment for Communities' Languages work.

MEASURE

3.a Protocols are developed and promoted and support effective engagement with NSW Aboriginal Communities, including their rights to determine how Language data is collected and used by the Trust.

3.b A multi-year research agenda is developed and implemented, and research is translated into meaningful and useful resources.

3.c Participate in high-impact forums and give high-quality and accurate advice that informs policymaking and investment.

3.d Highly visible campaign and media strategies are delivered and increase awareness of NSW Aboriginal Languages and activities.

SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

4.1 Work with Communities and the education sector to design Aboriginal-led solutions to increase the number of Aboriginal adult Languages speakers and teachers, including through the development of alternative qualification and learning pathways that recognise Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge and ways of knowing.

4.2 Grow Community capability by investing in skills development, including through Language education scholarships and grants writing.

4.3 Build sector partnerships to support the development of training and job pathways for Aboriginal People in the Languages sector, including business enterprise and tourism, linguistics, research, archiving and teaching.

MEASURE

4.a Qualification and learning pathways are designed, piloted and evaluated to grow the number of Aboriginal adult Languages speakers and teachers.

4.b Skills development programs are developed, piloted and evaluated to increase Community capability.

4.c Sector partnerships are providing Aboriginal people with opportunities to access training and jobs in the Languages sector and related industries.

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

5.1 Develop and implement strategies to build and maintain a reliable and trusted brand to instil confidence in our stakeholders.

5.2 Establish baseline-data for NSW Aboriginal Languages informed by Aboriginal Community perspectives.

5.3 Design and implement an impact measurement framework underpinned by Aboriginal Communities' definitions of success to effectively measure and transparently report on outcomes, and to inform continuous improvements.

5.4 Maintain a safe and collaborative work environment and observe best practice human resource approaches, including learning and development and succession planning at all levels.

5.5 Maintain the Cultural capability of our team, including adopting strengths-based and trauma-informed ways of working.

5.6 Develop systems and processes to support the Trust meet a high standard of governance.

MEASURE

5.a Highly visible strategies and campaigns are delivered to increase awareness about the Aboriginal Languages Trust and its work.

5.b NSW Aboriginal Languages baseline-data is established in partnership with Communities and informs growth in Languages.

5.c Impact of the Trust's work is measured, evaluated and reported on and informs policymaking and investment.

5.d Attract and retain a diverse and high performing workforce, including a target of at least 70% Aboriginal workforce.

5.e Protocols and frameworks are developed and support the Trust's Cultural capability.

5.f Systems and processes are in place and support compliance and good governance.

OUR GOALS

We will focus our work on the following areas to support all NSW Aboriginal Languages be strong and healthy.

Image: Gumbaynggirr Giingana Freedom School Opening, Gumbaynggirr Country. Credit: Marley Morgan, Barefoot Wandering Photography.

> "The land has heard our Language spoken for thousands of years before colonisation. When we speak Language in the bush and call out the names of the animals and plants, they react to us.
>
> When we sing in Language it brings the bush back to life, it comes back stronger and prouder."
>
> Warren Ngarrae Foster (Yuin)

GOAL 1: NURTURE & GROW

Aboriginal Communities are diverse and complex and each Community's Language journey is unique. There is no 'one size fits all' when it comes to the work being done by Communities to reawaken, nurture and grow Languages. We will take a place-based approach to work alongside and invest in Aboriginal Communities so that their Language needs and aspirations can be realised.

OUR ACTIONS

1.1 Resource and promote Community designed and led Languages events and activities, including the development and implementation of Community Language plans.

1.2 Support Communities in their efforts to determine and control the use, growth and Cultural integrity of their Languages.

1.3 Work with Communities and government and non-government institutions to improve Community access to and ownership of archival material, as well as the storing of Languages Knowledge, resources and teaching materials.

1.4 Raise awareness and promote opportunities for Aboriginal Communities to gain access to technology and Country for Language education.

OUR MEASURES

1.a Aboriginal Languages activities across NSW are mapped, and information and data are available to inform strategic investment and program development.

1.b Steady increase in investment in Aboriginal Communities for Languages activities.

1.c Place-based Aboriginal Community designed approaches in place supporting Communities access to and ownership of archival materials, and storage of Language resources.

1.d Relevant and accessible resources and materials are produced and translated for Community engagement and promotion and advocacy, including access to Aboriginal Cultural and Intellectual Property, access to Country, and access to online Language education platforms.

GOAL 2: CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

The dedicated and collective effort of many is needed to help grow and sustain NSW Aboriginal Languages, including Aboriginal Communities and Language speakers, governments and institutions, volunteers and workers in the Languages sector, the business community and corporate and philanthropic supporters. We will build strong relationships and promote and grow active and engaged networks to nurture NSW Aboriginal Languages.

"Language is healing because of the past. Language is also a showing of respect for our Elders and our Ancestors who were denied Language."

Priscilla Strasek (Yuwalaraay & Wailwan)

OUR ACTIONS

2.1 Foster genuine and respectful partnerships with Aboriginal Communities and Languages stakeholders at all levels, to support Communities to achieve their Languages aspirations.

2.2 Identify and promote networks to aid in reawakening, growing and nurturing NSW Aboriginal Languages, including harnessing technology to share information and resources.

2.3 Create in-person events to connect NSW Aboriginal Languages Communities and stakeholders and to share and learn.

2.4 Work with Communities to explore the role of Aboriginal Languages centres in growing and sustaining Languages.

OUR MEASURES

2.a Formalise partnerships with Aboriginal Communities, including Languages reference groups.

2.b Alignment with Aboriginal Languages networks, alliances and institutions, and their work informs the work of the Trust.

2.c NSW Aboriginal Languages Gatherings bring together stakeholders and showcase Languages revitalisation work.

2.d A rich and diverse Aboriginal Languages ecosystem is visible and accessible and is supporting NSW Languages revitalisation.

2.e Research is carried out on Aboriginal Languages centres and informs future policymaking and strategic investment.

2.f Aboriginal Languages networks are digitised and increase Languages revitalisation efficiency, mobility and collaboration.

> "We grew up surrounded by Elders speaking in Language and only by learning Language now can we understand what our Old People were saying to us back then. This gives us the opportunity to pass on our Old People's perspectives and world views."
>
> Gary Williams (Gumbaynggirr)

GOAL 3: CELEBRATE & PROMOTE

Aboriginal Languages across NSW have been spoken for time immemorial, but their value has not always been recognised. Languages help maintain and strengthen Aboriginal wellbeing and identity. They also enrich the culture and identity of NSW. We will celebrate Aboriginal Languages and build and promote a strong NSW-centric evidence-base to transform how Aboriginal Languages are recognised and valued.

OUR ACTIONS

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GOAL 4: SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

The silencing of Aboriginal Languages by past Government decisions means that much work needs to be done to strengthen and grow Languages. An investment of funding and resources is required to grow the number of Aboriginal Languages speakers and teachers. Greater support for Aboriginal ways of learning and transferring Aboriginal Languages is also needed to grow and sustain Languages. We will work with Aboriginal Communities and government and non-government sectors to find solutions to these challenges.

"Our Language reminds us to care for each other. Language flows between our communities and connects us this way."

Cheryl Penrith (Wiradjuri)

OUR ACTIONS

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4.2 Grow Community capability by investing in skills development, including through Language education scholarships and grants writing.

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> "Language is the missing piece, it is connection, identity and who I am as a Birrbay woman. I can't fully have my connection to Culture, Country, Kin and Ancestors without language."
>
> Mandy Davis (Gathang)

GOAL 5: OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Operational excellence is achieved when every member of the Trust has the right tools and support to focus on the bigger purpose of why we exist. We will invest in our people, workplace culture, systems and processes, so that the Trust adds value to the self-determining work of Communities to reclaim and reawaken Aboriginal Languages.

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"We want to revive the Language as much as we can. We know fluency realistically won't happen in our lifetime, so we want to make sure the structure is there for the future generations."

Drew Longbottom (Gumiia Dharawal)

Image: Yuwaalaraay Language
Class Credit: Amanaki Studios

CONTACT US

For more information and to connect.

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