NYAMBA BURU YAWURU LTD

12 Coghlan Street | PO Box 425 BROOME WA 6725
Ph: (08) 9192 5155 | Fax: (08) 9192 5166
[redacted]
ABN: 87 137 306 917

House of representatives standing committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander affairs inquiry into language learning in Indigenous communities

Submission from Mabu Yawuru Ngan-ga the language resource centre at Nyamba Buru Yawuru in Broome Western Australia

1. What are the languages spoken in your community?
English, Broome English (a dialect of English), Yawuru, Karajarri, Bardi, Nyulnyul
By visitors from other communities: Nyikina, Walmajarri, Kriol and a range of other Kimberley languages.

2. How well are they spoken by children, adults and elders?
English and Broome English are spoken fluently by many.
There is a handful of Yawuru first language speakers. Family members of these elders have a strong passive knowledge of Yawuru from growing up listening to the language. A small number of adults are fluent speakers. Many adults and children have knowledge of Yawuru words and phrases from lessons in school that have been conducted for twenty years.

3. Describe your group and project:

- Why was it important to start up?

Mabu Yawuru Ngan-ga, the Yawuru language resource centre at Nyamba Buru Yawuru was set up to support Yawuru language teaching in Broome schools, language learning in Yawuru homes, recording Yawuru language in a systematic manner for future generations and other strategies that are part of the Yawuru language revitalisation program.

- How long have you been running?

Mabu Yawuru Ngan-ga was set up in April 2011.

- What age group(s) are you working with?

5 years through to adults with a plan to begin with younger students in a local child care centre.

- How many people are involved?

30 (excluding students in school and adult classes)

1 full time employee
6 part-time employees
3 elders
2 fluent Yawuru speakers (attend meetings and provide advice)
3 teachers and their classes
15 Nyamba Buru Yawuru staff

4. What activities do you do to record or encourage the use of languages, including local languages?
In April 2011 it was decided to set up Mabu Yawuru Ngan-ga, a Yawuru language resource centre supported by Nyamba Buru Yawuru Ltd (NBY). They are providing office space, equipment and administrative assistance. Since April a teacher/linguist has been employed to oversee and coordinate the

activities of Mabu Yawuru Ngan-ga. A team of six part-time Cultural Consultants have been engaged to work on language centre projects.

NBY staff are very involved in the activities of Mabu Yawuru Ngan-ga making big efforts to use Yawuru language on a daily basis. All staff have a copy of the Yawuru Ngan-ga Phrasebook on their desks to consult when writing emails and other documents. They have been very receptive to PowerPoint presentations of phrases to use during meetings that we have circulated. They have asked for and taken home, copies of songs to use with their children.

Since April the team at Mabu Yawuru Ngan-ga, NBY's language resource centre have undertaken the following work:

- finished a set of images for use in the Cultural Management Plan as icons on maps, illustrations for seasonal information etc;
- worked with a graphic artist to complete a set of posters on the Yawuru Seasons and an updated Yawuru Seasons Wheel;
    - further work is planned to developed season wheels related to seafood; bush food and hunting on land;
- checked Yawuru language and place names being used in the Cultural Management plan;
- designed sets of children's picture books for use in schools;
    - sketched the main characters and other features for the stories;
    - outlined the text in English;
    - translated the text into Yawuru;
    - currently in the process of using Photoshop to set out the text and illustrations for the final printing of the books;
    - books to be printed in-house for use in Yawuru lessons in the schools and adult classes;
    - some books will be offered to Magabala for publishing.
- designed a set of four images and accompanying Yawuru language for use on t-shirts;
    - quotes from six suppliers obtained
    - currently negotiating with a supplier to print 500 t-shirts
- helped NBY get Yawuru words for signage around Broome;
- 108 Yawuru language recordings from AIATSIS in Canberra have been retrieved;
- Hosokawa's 1986 thesis about Yawuru language from the ANU in Canberra has arrived;
    - Pindan Printing have made five hard copies;
    - With permission the PDF has been made available to appropriate people;
- copies of Hosokawa's Yawuru dictionary have been retrieved from the AIATSIS library;
- a Lexique Pro template has been set up for storing Yawuru language recordings, words, sentences, photos, drawings and stories in an organized, systematic way;
    - 3,600 words with meanings and some other information have been entered so far;
    - audio recordings of 100 entries have been loaded;
    - this program allows the printing of a dictionary at any stage;
    - copies of the draft document will be made available to Yawuru teachers before the end of the year;
    - NBY are developing a website and this database can be easily uploaded to the Language section of the website.
- Yawuru language lessons are delivered to a class of about fourteen students for one hour each week then students take away homework to reinforce the lesson on a daily basis. Six of these students are Yawuru Rangers employed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management. The rest are a mix of Yawuru and non-Yawuru people interested in learning the language.

Two trained Yawuru teachers work with the team to:

- provide language suggestions for signs, the naming of programs etc to be circulated for wider community consultation and final sign off by the Heritage and Culture Sub-committee;
- provide Yawuru language sentences for use in the children's books we are producing;
- provide Yawuru language translations requested for other projects;
- check and record Yawuru for the data base;
- bring in resources she has produced for her language classes to be digitized; reproduced for other Yawuru classes and saved on the NBY server;
- check language used in the Cultural Management Plan;
- share PowerPoint presentations of Yawuru statements for use by NBY staff;
- share PowerPoint presentations of Yawuru songs and stories for use in Yawuru classes;
- meet with other Yawuru teachers for an hour once a week to provide Yawuru language expertise and help with lesson planning and classroom management.

The Yawuru community is working hard to find people, particularly young people, interested in a teaching career to become Yawuru teachers in our schools. These people may begin as part-time workers in Mabu Yawuru Ngan-ga and as they gain Yawuru language skills and confidence move into positions available in the Education Department schools as well as St Mary's College. Mabu Yawuru Ngan-ga will provide ongoing support for all Yawuru teachers.

- How are local schools involved?

The WA Education Department has an Aboriginal Language Teachers Training Program. This program is available to Yawuru teachers in non-government schools. Several Yawuru speakers have trained and taught through this program. Two Yawuru teachers are currently teaching and training through this program. The teacher/ linguist based at the Kimberley District Education Office and organiser of this program in the Kimberley, has worked with Yawuru teachers and elders to develop resources and programs.

- What help do you receive from the government or other organisations to carry out your activities?

We received a MILR grant. Nyamba Buru Yawuru provide funding, office space and administrative services to Mabu Yawuru Ngan-ga. In January we applied for a grant from Lotterywest and are waiting for news on that.

- Can you describe how your project's activities may have helped the whole community?

Yawuru people have signed off on a Native Title Agreement over the township of Broome and surrounding areas. The work of Mabu Yawuru Ngan-ga supports the activities of Nyamba Buru Yawuru (the company established to manage the Yawuru implementation of the agreement) including the development of a Yawuru Cultural Management Plan to underpin joint management of the Yawuru Conservation Estate; providing Yawuru language advice for place and street naming, signage; cultural induction training programs.

Yawuru language and cultural knowledge is being made available to all people living in Broome. A strong proud Yawuru Community strengthens the whole community of Broome and marks it out what makes this community special and different from others around Australia and the world.

5. How are your languages, including your local languages taught in school?

During workshops teachers prepare units of work that are based around a book they have written. The unit has a song and associated games. Where teacher knowledge allows lessons are delivered exclusively in Yawuru. Lessons run for 30-40 minutes once or twice a week.

- What difference has the teaching of local languages made to children's attendance and achievement at school?

Yawuru language lessons help local Broome children feel a sense of pride in their culture and heritage. It keeps them in touch with the Yawuru community. Non-Yawuru children can know they are living in a

special place and are privy to language and information only available in the Broome area and given to them by the traditional owners.

6. What interpreting and translating services are available in your local languages? How useful and effective are they?

Yawuru people tend to have a good command of English. It is generally their first language. Broome English is an English dialect. Speakers of Broome English can generally speak and understand Standard English without any need for an interpreter.

Broome is home to the Kimberley Interpreting Service. This organisation trains interpreters and provides interpreters and translations for members of more remote communities where English is spoken as a second language.

7. What are the main difficulties facing your project?

Building the pool of people with sufficient knowledge of Yawuru language to teach children in school and to take adult classes is not easy when so few fluent speakers exist. The learning situations need to be constructed ones such as the classroom. Individualised learning materials are being developed but again the pool of people with skills to do this is small.

The two first language, native speakers of Yawuru are elderly, frail women who can only work for short periods when they are feeling up to it.

People who have trained as Yawuru teachers have skills that are in demand in other areas and are often busy on unrelated work.

8. What are you aiming to achieve in the future?

We would like to see Yawuru increased fluency in Yawuru language and its practical application including:

- Language used publicly and in the homes of the Broome community;
- Reinforcing cultural maintenance through practical application of Yawuru language in for example land management and cultural mapping.

Ongoing Development of Yawuru Literature

- work with the Yawuru community to publicise the Yawuru orthography
- develop a Yawuru dictionary
- collect, transcribe, edit and publish traditional stories in bilingual format
- write and publish contemporary Yawuru language picture books
- collect, transcribe and publish traditional Yawuru songs
- write and publish contemporary Yawuru language songs
- process and publish stories collected previously
- make recordings and produce audio books

Ongoing Development of Yawuru Oral Language Materials

- digitise archival recordings of the language
- make digital recordings of Yawuru language spoken by fluent speakers
- select material for use in educational programs

Ongoing Development of Yawuru Digital Language Materials

- store all recordings digitally
- store written material digitally
- develop a Yawuru language website

Education

- produce materials for use in Yawuru language classes
- support the training of Yawuru language teachers by the WA Education Department
- support adult education Yawuru language classes
- develop interactive, digital language learning materials for individual and group instruction
- shape Yawuru language learning materials into a sequenced, systematic, dynamic curriculum
- undertake training as identified and according to desired career pathway

Support of Yawuru Culture and History

- facilitate the recording and archiving of Yawuru oral histories
- collect and store, in an efficient and systematic way, Yawuru language material and images produced previously

Support the Activities of Nyamba Buru Yawuru (NBY)

- provide NBY with Yawuru language translations and artistic input for signage around the township of Broome
- provide a Yawuru language editing service for NBY and other agencies
- help NBY develop and implement protocols and processes for the use of Yawuru language by other parties

Community Engagement

- produce interesting Yawuru publications to inform and engage the wider community
- support Yawuru language lessons for the wider community
- produce materials for use in Cultural Induction programs
- promote the Yawuru language website to the wider community