Speakers and Presenters

Lil Gordon
Facilitator

Lillian Gordon is a proud Aboriginal woman from Nyiampaa (Ngemba) and Gamilaroi country in Brewarrina in Northern NSW. Lil has over 30 years of experience working in education and with Aboriginal communities in a range of environments including high school, Juvenile Justice, Correctional Centres, TAFE NSW and as CEO of the Barang Regional Alliance.

Lil has experience MC’ing a number of conferences, gatherings and awards ceremonies for a range of audiences and facilitating many Aboriginal cultural education programs for different organisations. Lil is currently working with Aboriginal Affairs NSW as the Director for First Languages and Kimberwalli.

Charlie Trindall
Facilitator

Charlie is a Gamilaroi man from north western NSW. Charlie has extensive experience in group facilitation and uses his knowledge and skills within his current roles as a Senior Project Officer within the Healing and Reparations directorate at Aboriginal Affairs NSW.

Charlie has continued to broaden his group facilitation skills and interest over the years in a diverse range of areas such as, government meetings, community discussions, song writing workshops and Aboriginal cultural education workshops.
Jason Ardler PSM
Deputy Secretary, Aboriginal Affairs NSW

Jason's cultural ties are to the Yuin people of the NSW south coast. As Deputy Secretary and Head of Aboriginal Affairs NSW, he is leading Aboriginal affairs strategy and reform across such diverse areas as economic participation, community governance, land rights, culture and heritage, community safety, environmental health and service accountability.

Jason is responsible for the delivery of OCHRE; the NSW Government’s Aboriginal affairs plan, which emphasizes healing, Aboriginal language revitalization and regional agreement making.

Prior to joining Aboriginal Affairs NSW, Jason was Executive Director, Culture and Heritage in the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) and that department’s lead Executive on Aboriginal affairs.

Jason was awarded the Public Service Medal (PSM) in the 2018 Queen's Birthday Honours for outstanding public service to Indigenous people in NSW.

Dr Uncle Stan Grant
Wiradyuri (Wiradjuri) Elder

Uncle Stan Grant is a senior Wiradjuri educator and researcher. The intellectual, cultural, spiritual and language leadership of Dr Uncle Stan Grant Snr continues to govern and protect the integrity of the Graduate Certificate in Wiradjuri Language, Culture and Heritage at Charles Sturt University.

Uncle Stan is unable to attend in person and therefore will deliver a video reflection of the language revival journey specifically on Wiradjuri. Acknowledging those who have come before us and the immense contribution they have made to language revitalisation.

Yuin Ngadhi Yarraman Budhang
Baladhu Wiradyuri
Ngadhi Gawaymantha Nginyalgar

“My name Black Horse, I am Wiradyuri. I welcome you all.”
Dr Ray Kelly spoke on the floor of NSW Parliament as part of the passing of the *Aboriginal Languages Act 2017*. Over the past 12 months he has held an advisory role on the Aboriginal Languages Establishment Advisory Group, providing advice and guidance to Aboriginal Affairs NSW in the establishment of the Aboriginal Languages Trust. He holds a role as an Academic researcher and is Deputy Head of Institute, PURAI Global Indigenous and Indigenous Diaspora Research Centre, University of Newcastle.

Dr Ray reflects on his personal journey around language revitalization as well as the significance and symbolism of the *Aboriginal Languages Act 2017*. This includes what the establishment of an Aboriginal Languages Trust could mean for communities across NSW.

The Honorable Don Harwin MLC
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Minister Harwin is Sydney born and bred, and graduated from the University of Sydney in 1985 with a Bachelor of Economics (Honours). Before he started his life in Parliament, Minister Harwin established his own public affairs and government relations consultancy business.

His political career includes serving as a member of the New South Wales Legislative Council since March 27, 1999 and the 20th president of the Council between May 2011 and January 2017, and as the leader of the Government in the Legislative Council since January 2017. In the 1999 state election, Minister Harwin was elected to the NSW Legislative Council and then re-elected in 2007 and in 2015 for eight-year terms.

Minister Harwin is currently the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, Vice-President of the Executive Council, Special Minister of State, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for the Arts.
Rahera Shortland, MNZOM
Aotearoa, New Zealand

Rahera Shortland was born in Okaihau which is a community in Northland, New Zealand. She is married with six children.

Rahera currently tutors 20 Māori speaking people to become teachers of the Māori Language in homes, communities and schools. She has extensive experience and involvement in a wide range of Māori language revitalisation and education based initiatives, nationally and internationally. She has taught Māori language and kapa haka in secondary schools in the Auckland area, establishing the first total immersion Māori language unit in Secondary schools in New Zealand.

Rahera has had a long and distinguished involvement with Te Ātaarangi, and is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Te Ātaarangi Educational Trust. Rahera is also currently the representative for Te Ātaarangi on Te Pūtahi Paoho (the Māori Electoral College of Whakaata Māori). She has been a member of The Board of Trustees of Te Hononga o Tamaki me Hoturoa PHO, and also of Te Taumata Tamaki PHO. Rahera has exceptional language skills, and is a licensed translator and interpreter for the courts, a tutor at Ngā Kura Reo o te Motu, and a published author. She is the Director of Te Maunga Enterprises who provide consultancy services and language programmes for Māori Television.

Aunty Fay Stewart-Muir
Senior Community Engagement Specialist, Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages

Aunty Fay Stewart-Muir is an Elder and Traditional Owner of Boon Wurrung Country. She is the senior community engagement specialist and Elder in Residence at the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages in Melbourne. Aunty Fay is working with her own Boon Wurrung language, recording and putting language into the database for future and present generations. She presents language-related workshops to community members who are reclaiming their languages, as well as universities and TAFEs that are interested in understanding the many and challenging aspects of language reclamation. She also works with schools to educate the students about language and culture and to teach language.
Brendan Kennedy
Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages

Brendan Kennedy was born in Robinvale on Tati Tati Country and is a descendant of the Tati Tati, Wadi Wadi and Mutti Mutti tribal lands and language groups. Brendan is a member of the First Peoples Yulendj Group who collaborated with Museum Victoria to produce the award winning First Peoples exhibition; has previously served on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee; is a Tati Tati delegate for Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations and is the Director of the Tati Tati Aboriginal Corporation. Brendan is an artist who specialises in painting and creating cultural and ceremonial objects.

“I have a passion for my past, my peoples and my ancestral history. Language is imbedded within the landscape and it’s not fair that our language doesn’t receive the respect and recognition it deserves. Our people have been speaking our language on our country since time began. Our people need our language. Our language shouldn’t stop because other people are here on our country”.

Ngahiwi Apanui
Chief Executive Officer, Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori - Māori Language Commission

Ngahiwi Apanui joined the Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (Māori Language Commission) as Chief Executive Officer in August 2015 following six years as the Deputy Director Māori of Ako Aotearoa, The National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence.

Mr Apanui has a wealth of experience in education and the government sector, plus 10 years’ experience in Māori broadcasting as manager of Māori radio station and CEO of the Māori Media Network. He is a certified translator and an award winning musician, recording both contemporary Māori music as well as traditional Māori chants and has served on the New Zealand Music Commission Board and as Chair of the Māori Arts Music Committee (Pūhatangii). In both his professional and personal life, he is passionate about te reo Māori and can be counted as one of its staunch advocates.

The Māori Language Commission was set up under the Māori Language Act 1987 and continued under Te Ture Reo Māori 2016 / Māori Language Act 2016 to promote the use of Māori as a living language and as an ordinary means of communication.

The vision of the Commission is that all New Zealand will resonate with our indigenous language.
When you take something out of its natural environment to study, you take it out of context. It loses its relevance, its wholesome functionality and once something is out of context, it is out of relationship with the very world it belongs in.

Dr Bennett will give an overview of her work in language retrieval, regeneration and reclamation over the past 25 years as a practicing artist and academic. Dr Bennett's project, Sovereign Language Repatriation (SLR) examines the importance of Indigenous research methods and practice-led research to the task of 'repatriating' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

SLR involves collaborative processes of Indigenous song arrangement, composition and notation to develop and evaluate an Indigenous pedagogy for language retrieval that aligns with the diverse contemporary learning contexts and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, especially those who do not speak their languages fluently on a day to day basis. At present SLR goes beyond the classroom of four walls, placing individuals, family and community back to sing and speak to country and each other.

Clark is a proud Gumbaynggirr and Bundjalung man living in Coffs Harbour. He is the founder and Chief Executive of Bulari Muurlay Nyanggan Aboriginal Corporation (BMNAC) meaning two path strong – strong in culture and strong in education. BMNAC was established in 2010 and delivers Goori Learning Centres, Gumbaynggirr Language Revitalisation Programs, Cultural Camps and Cultural Engagement Training. BMNAC also developed Cultural Tourism Experiences in partnership with Forestry Corporation NSW. The Giingan Gumbaynggirr Cultural Experience was set up to create a long-term sustainable financial income stream for the BMNAC programs. All profits from the Giingan Experience are directly reinvested into their programs.

Over the past 12 months he has held an advisory role on the Aboriginal Affairs NSW Gumbaynggirr language revitalisation. He is currently a Board Member of the Goori Language Revitalisation Training and Cultural Engagement Training and a Gumbaynggirr Language Revitalisation Program Officer. Clark will give an overview of the Gumbaynggirr language revitalisation initiatives and their community-based strategies. The production of a short film in collaboration with Aboriginal Affairs NSW on Gumbaynggirr language revitalisation highlights the project’s community success.

Clark will also report on BMNAC’s new partnership with Aboriginal Affairs NSW and their ongoing collaboration, which includes a partnership with Gumbaynggirr Elders to deliver the Gumbaynggirr Language Revitalisation Program. The program is designed to support language reclamation for the Gumbaynggirr language and promote cultural awareness.

The project will involve working with Gumbaynggirr Elders to develop a new language learning curriculum that aligns with the diverse contemporary learning contexts and needs of the community. The program will be delivered through the Goori Learning Centres and Cultural Engagement Training programs and will provide language reclamation opportunities for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
Rhonda Ashby is a Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay descendant and worked most of her life in the education arena in NSW. She has broad knowledge of Aboriginal culture and language and has implemented culturally appropriate programs and developing resources in schools and the wider communities. She has worked closely with schools, Elders, community members and organisations to facilitate and organise cultural camps for schools and communities.

Rhonda was also involved with the recent NSW Aboriginal Languages Act 2017 which is the first for any kind in the State and Australia wide. She is an active committee member on the NSW Aboriginal Languages Establishment Advisory Group.

Rhonda was awarded Aboriginal foster carer 2018 with the NSW Advocate for Children and Young People.

Her passions includes supporting and advocating Social Justice regarding First Nations mob, Education, Sport, Culture and Language, Environment and Aboriginal Heritage, women and children. She has a broad range of cultural knowledge including bushfoods, medicines, women cultural practises, Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay language and its Country including placenames.

The production of a short film in collaboration with Aboriginal Affairs NSW on Yuwaalaraay language revitalisation highlights the journey of the Lightning Ridge community.
Craig Ritchie is an Aboriginal man of the Dhunghutti and Biripi nations and is the Chief Executive Officer at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). Craig joined AIATSIS as Deputy CEO in April 2016, and formally appointed CEO in May 2017.

Craig has worked in other senior roles within the Australian Public Service (APS), most recently in the Department of Education and Training 2011-2016 in roles heading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education, higher education access and participation for people from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds, and international student mobility, as well as founding Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health in the ACT Government. Craig has extensive experience in the community sector, including as CEO of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) – the peak advocacy body for Aboriginal community controlled health services.

Craig is the only Indigenous Commonwealth Government agency head and a founding member of the APS Indigenous Senior Executive Service (SES) Network. He is an Adjunct Professor at the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research at the University of Technology Sydney where he also serves on the Vice-Chancellor's Industry Advisory Board. Craig studied History, Classics and Education at the University of Newcastle and has a post-graduate qualification in management and is currently completing his PhD at the Australian National University. His thesis topic is Culture and Policymaking: Towards Better Aboriginal Policy and explores the cultural basis of contemporary policymaking and researching the recalibration of policymaking systems on the basis of Aboriginal culture.