

Lajamanu Women's Ceremony: Keeping Yawulyu Strong

An Indigenous Languages and Arts (ILA) project, in partnership with Warnayaka Art & Aboriginal Cultural Corporation, Lajamanu, NT, the UNSW Big Anxiety Research Centre and emLAB.

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This Indigenous Languages and Arts (ILA) project supports Lajamanu Warlpiri women to record and transcribe Warlpiri women's *Yawulyu*. The project builds collaborative capacity for intergenerational knowledge transfer through developing new methods for maintaining *Yawulyu* through digital resources and workshops to nurture the next generation of ceremony leaders.

In October 2023, four senior Warlpiri women, Biddle and Dowsett, travelled to Canberra to the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) for archival research on Warlpiri *Yawulyu* collections held by the institute.

In September 2024, the *Lajamanu Wardingki Mardukuja-Patu-Kurlangu Jukurrpa Warlpiri-Patu-Kurlangu Yawulyu* poster was launched in conjunction with Warnayaka Arts and Aboriginal Corporation in Lajamanu, NT, accompanied by a 12-song playlist with 57 songs (song segments), distributed on USB flash drives, downloaded onto phones to be shared via Bluetooth or downloaded from a restricted access Google Drive.

The *Yawulyu* database includes ~200 audio recordings repatriated from the AIATSIS archive of Warlpiri women's *Yawulyu*; 27 song recordings from Jennifer Biddle's AIATSIS (then AIAS) 1989–1990 archive (digitised with support from PARADESIC, Sydney University); 30 new recordings by Warlpiri women and Sudipta Dowsett 2018–2023; and 10 in 2024 by Warlpiri women, Biddle and Dowsett; 30 Milpirri (with support from Tracks Dance Inc.) archival videos of women's *Yawulyu*, including song, dance, ritual object forms and ochre-based *kuruwarri*.



(L-R) Lynette Napangardi Tasman, Agnes Napanangka Donnelly, Myra Nungarrayi Herbert, Jennifer Biddle, and Judy Napangardi Martin check poster draft in Lajamanu, NT, September 2024. Photograph by S. Dowsett.



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