

# Language, Technology and Young People

## Advantages

- Teaches new vocabulary and literacy in a person's native, heritage, or second language.
- Powerful use of sound, images and videos means it is also appropriate for users with low literacy levels.
- Course creation quick and easy for people with basic computer literacy.
- Users retain ownership of content uploaded to site.

## Limitations

- Requires an internet connection – often not viable in remote communities. Downloading courses for offline use only available to paying users (A\$12/month).
- Format for audio recorded on *Memrise* limited to mp3.
- No guarantee content will remain on the *Memrise* site.
- Uploading content gives *Memrise Ltd* (UK) the licence to copy and redistribute it.

## Recommendations

- App developers working for Indigenous communities should consider other means of distribution (e.g. Bluetooth) over wifi.
- In the meantime, community language spaces with free wifi access are a worthy investment.

*Memrise as a tool for Engaging Young Indigenous Australians with their Traditional Languages*

## Stage 1: Training young Indigenous people to develop *Memrise* courses for their languages – Preliminary results

### Training Period

Session 1  
~3hrs  
0% confident

Session 2  
~3hrs  
50% confident

Session 3  
Self-directed  
99% confident<sup>2</sup>



Selina Grant (PAK) is creating a course for Warlmanpa

*"when I'm doing this work I can see my grandpa smiling"*  
– Randall Japaljarri Morrison

Applying young people's skills (technology, literacy) ... and old people's knowledge ...



*"to learn on and to get strong"*  
– Susannah Nakamarra Nelson

## Next steps: Trialling the resources in schools and the community



*Will the resources be used by the community?*

*How does incorporating local languages and traditional knowledge into classroom activities impact Indigenous children's attitudes to schooling?*

## Context: Tennant Creek

### The Community

52% Indigenous Australian, 28% non-Indigenous Australian, 10.3% born overseas.<sup>1</sup>

Many people speak an Indigenous language or contact language at home, however there are concerns that children are not learning some of the 'traditional languages' (particularly **Warumungu** and **Warlmanpa**).



*"for Warumungu, Warlmanpa people we always want to work together, old people, middle-aged people, young people and pass it [the language and culture] on to [the] next generation"*  
– Sandra Nangali Morrison

The community is also very concerned with issues such as truancy, unemployment, and drug and alcohol abuse.



*Is it possible to address both types of concerns at once?*

### Memrise

An engaging, Duolingo-style application for learning vocabulary and phrases. Freely available and can be used on a range of platforms including IOS and Android phones, computers, and tablets.

<sup>1</sup>Yuhun, Pawinee, and Andrew Taylor. "The demography of the Territory's midtowns': Tennant Creek." *Northern Institute Research Brief Series 5* (2013): 1-18.

<sup>2</sup>Randall Morrison, participant feedback.