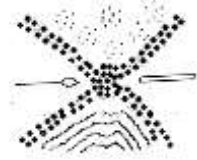


# Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring



Language and Culture Centre

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## Project Linguist at Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring

Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre (MDWg) is an Aboriginal organisation seeking to preserve and revitalise the Miriwoong language of the East Kimberley region of Western Australia. MDWg manages a range of activities such as the Miriwoong Language Nest and a Master-Apprentice program, as well as the development of language resources, bilingual radio programs, and language classes.

We now invite applications from suitably experienced persons for a part-time Project Linguist position for an exciting project as part of our language revitalisation activities.

### Background

The Miriwoong language is critically endangered and has very few fluent speakers remaining, though there is a growing number of new language learners. One of the obstacles in the language transfer process is the lack of vocabulary for items and concepts which were introduced by Western culture. The *Modern Miriwoong* project aims at expanding the traditional lexicon by developing and introducing Miriwoong words for all areas of modern life, ranging from technology and modern consumer products to the economy. A particular focus during this stage of the project will be on collaborating with local businesses in order to identify and develop relevant terminology for a range of economic sectors such as tourism, hospitality, and environmental work, which will then be used as signage to increase the visibility of Miriwoong throughout Kununurra.

### Details

Lexicon expansion uses different strategies to introduce new words to an existing language, which may include semantic expansion, creation of descriptive terms based on a range of properties of the item or concept, and lexical borrowing, which at this stage is a less desirable strategy for expanding the Miriwoong lexicon.

The role of the Project Linguist will be to work with Elders (mainly semi-fluent speakers of Miriwoong), Indigenous Language Workers and other linguists to find suitable vocabulary for the main areas of interest. Typically this will involve organising and conducting meetings with the above groups, mediation of talks, and recording the results of consultation.

## **Selection criteria**

This role is suited to someone who has a solid understanding of linguistic structures, some talent to quickly learn the basics of an Australian Indigenous language, and the ability to immerse themselves in an Indigenous culture. The following is an overview of criteria which will play a role in the selection process:

1. Australian residency and work rights, Police clearance
2. Background in languages or linguistics; documentary linguistics and/or knowledge of dictionary development preferred
3. Demonstrated ability to learn a new language in a relatively short time
4. Ability to positively communicate and interact with Indigenous people
5. Willingness to follow cultural protocol such as gender-specific behaviour and limitations
6. Enthusiasm and commitment towards preserving an endangered Indigenous language
7. Readiness to take directions from Management as well as work in a team

We request that applications address each criterion separately.

## **What we can offer**

MDWg offers a unique multicultural work environment and the opportunity to contribute to a successful language revitalisation program, involving a hands-on learning experience in the field of language documentation and development. It should also be noted that, while Kununurra is a remote location, our region also is a major tourist destination for travellers from around the world. The East Kimberley offers National Parks, rivers, lakes and untouched wilderness with countless outdoor adventure possibilities.

Since funding for this project is limited and at this stage only covers a 12-month period between July 2017 and the end of June 2018 we would like to negotiate the details of engagement with the successful candidate. An extension of this offer will be subject to availability of funding beyond mid-2018. Based on the current situation we can guarantee entry level employment for 20 hours per week, including all benefits associated with the Western Australian Social and Community Services Award (SCSA). Subject to negotiation, one option would be to combine the role with some volunteering, or by starting the engagement with an internship. We are happy to discuss the details in person with any promising applicants.

Applicants are requested to submit a cover letter addressing the selection criteria and a detailed CV as soon as convenient. The suggested starting time for this position is 1 July 2017, with the option of an earlier start through an internship as early as April/May 2017.

### Contact:

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