

# “Our languages matter – Kulinin?”

Reimagining remote education through Red Dirt Thinking

## Karina Lester

University of Adelaide

## Sam Osborne

University of South Australia

The 2017 NAIDOC week theme ‘Our Languages Matter’ provides opportunity for reflection on the place of Aboriginal languages in Australian society and in education. The concept of Red Dirt Thinking provides an innovative framework to developing education approaches that are culturally and contextually responsive to local community needs within a global education context. Sam Osborne and Karina Lester work with Anangu (Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara) communities in the tristate region of Central Australia. Current remote education policies are focused on resourcing school attendance strategies, English language instruction and metropolitan boarding school programs. These policies are disconnected from the cultural values of the community, ignoring the strength and importance of local languages, kin structures and cultural codes.

This lecture argues for building

the capacity for “Red Dirt” approaches to teaching, in both remote locations and metropolitan boarding programs where children attend from ‘other’ cultural, geographic and linguistic contexts. This requires effective teacher preparation and ongoing professional engagement opportunities, to enable educators to appropriately support young people in taking up Red Dirt Aspirations rather than conforming to externally imagined narratives of who young people must become. Finally, we propose a Pitjantjatjara language frame of ethical listening (kulinin) as a tool for use in dual language and educational contexts.

**Ms Karina Lester** is a Yankunytjatjara Anangu woman from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands (APY Lands) in the far North West of South Australia. Karina grew up in the remote community of Mimili in the beautiful Everard Ranges, with her father’s people. Karina is very determined to keep her language alive and ongoing for the future generations. Karina currently works for the Mobile Language Team (MLT) as Co-Manager and Senior Aboriginal Language Worker at the University of Adelaide, supporting

the Aboriginal languages of South Australia in revival, maintenance and reclamation programs. She hosts a weekly radio show at Radio Adelaide called Nganampa Wangka ‘Our Languages’, talking up SA Aboriginal Languages and is an interpreter and translator. Karina was also part of the team for the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize.

**Dr Sam Osborne** is the Associate Director for Regional Engagement (APY Lands) at the University of South Australia covering teaching, research, community engagement roles and Pitjantjatjara language programs. Sam has worked in Aboriginal Education since 1995 including teacher and Principal at Ernabella Anangu School from 2002-2008. From 2009 he worked in a range of roles including research and evaluation, corporation interpreting and Central Australia consultant for the Principal Australia Institute’s Dare to Lead program. In 2014 Sam was awarded for outstanding contribution to Aboriginal Education in the Northern Territory by the Association for Independent Schools of the Northern Territory (AISNT).



Thursday, 9th November  
5.30pm - 6.30pm

Old Arts Public Lecture Theatre  
Building 149  
The University of Melbourne  
PARKVILLE VIC 3010

**Admission is free.**  
**Bookings are required.**  
**Seating is limited.**

To register visit: <http://alumni.online.unimelb.edu.au/OsborneLester>

For further information please email RUIL-  
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