

Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring



Language and Culture Centre

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Project Linguist for our app development project 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 early childhood program, bilingual radio programs, language classes and the development of language resources.

We now invite applications from suitably experienced persons for a Project Linguist position for an exciting new 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. Our Miriwoong Language Nest currently reaches 400 children on a weekly basis and additional language classes are taught to other groups and age classes. In order to support and strengthen the language learning process, the Advanced Miriwoong Language Learning App (AMLLA) will develop a digital learning resource that can be used by all learners outside teaching hours at various levels of difficulty. We believe that this is an important and essential step in Miriwoong language revitalisation, as it will give participants of our face-to-face teaching activities, as well as the broader community the opportunity to learn Miriwoong in their own time and at their own pace.

Details

The objective of this project is to develop a comprehensive digital learning resource that incorporates all components of language learning - hearing/understanding, speech production/speaking, reading and writing. While technology cannot replace these layers of learning entirely, we expect it to support all four layers as much as possible. MDWg has already developed a dictionary app, currently involving 1,300+ entries; however, the new resource will go beyond the word level and encourage some level of fluency.

As part of our funding agreement with the Indigenous Languages and Arts program (ILA), we will make use of an adaptable digital platform called Our Lingo, which facilitates the teaching and learning of Indigenous languages and is consistent with the Australian Curriculum by aligning with the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority – Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages.

The role of the Project Linguist will be to work with our team to develop learning contents based on existing and emerging teaching structures and apply these to an electronic database. MDWg engages with Elders (mainly semi-fluent speakers of Miriwoong), Indigenous Language Workers and Miriwoong teachers, and

linguists on a variety of activities to revitalise the Miriwoong language. Virtually all of these activities will be relevant for linkage with the app to be developed.

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:

Essential:

1. Australian residency and full work rights
2. Police clearance and valid Working with Children Check - or ability to obtain these
3. Background in linguistics, language teaching, and/or curriculum development
4. Demonstrated ability to learn a new language in a relatively short time
5. Demonstrated skill to work with and embrace innovative technology
6. Ability to positively communicate and interact with Indigenous people
7. Willingness to follow cultural protocol such as gender-specific behaviour and limitations
8. Enthusiasm and commitment towards preserving an endangered Indigenous language
9. Readiness to take directions from Management as well as work in a team
10. Availability on a short notice

Desirable:

11. Demonstrated basic knowledge of Miriwoong or a related language
12. Valid driver's licence

We request that you address each criterion separately in your application.

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.

This is a fixed-term position over two years from its start date (under negotiation), most likely until September 2020. Remuneration for this position will be at an entry level under the SACS (Social and Community Services) Award for up to 38 hours per week, with a total package value of up to \$70k p.a. (subject to negotiation).

Applicants are requested to submit a covering letter addressing the selection criteria and a detailed CV as soon as convenient. We expect the successful applicant to start as soon as possible and encourage immediate contact. Applications will be open until the position is filled.

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