

Ara Irititja

**An Anangu Project
Nganampa warka**

Report for 2017 and to May 2018



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Ara Irititja Mission Statement

The Ara Irititja Project works to accommodate Anangu wishes to collect and preserve records of their history, stories, culture and language. This material is delivered through online, high quality interactive multi-media databases, in Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara/Ngaanyatjarra languages and English, into their communities. The Project is dedicated to maintaining regular Anangu access to these databases and is accountable to Anangu in the management of this historical material.

The new organisation

As we have previously reported, in 2016 Ara Irititja was registered with ORIC and became the Ara Irititja Aboriginal Corporation (AIAC). Wilton Foster OAM continues to guide the new corporation as its Chair. The other Directors are Sammy Lyons (PY Media), Daisy O'Byrne (IRCA), Roma Petermann (NG Media) and Makinti Minutjukur (PYEC).

AIAC is also a member organisation of the recently formed APY Art Centre Collective. The APY art centres are generating very successful art exhibitions, publications and other programs. Ara Irititja is able to help with these activities by providing access to historical photographs, stories and other contextual material. John and Dora attended the opening of the new APY gallery launch in March 2018, where outstanding recent work from the centres was displayed for the first time in their own central Sydney venue.

Netley Office work



Nyarapai Gina Lyons and her granddaughter Delaney working on Ara Irititja at Netley, January 2017

We always enjoy having Anangu in the Netley office in Adelaide. People come in and help us add names to the archive, and tell us stories about things that have happened in the past. Richard Kanari comes in every time he is in Adelaide to talk about the future of Ara Irititja and the Pitjantjatjara Council.

In 2017 we spent many days with Bernard Tjalkuriny and his daughters Amari and Mayana. Bernard was staying in Adelaide for a few months and we took the opportunity to record stories and to document early schooldays at Ernabella. He was able to clarify the identity of almost all of the

children named in the first Ernabella school roll book in 1940. This is a very significant document that has been held by Ara Irititja since 1994 and many of the handwritten Pitjantjatjara names had not been linked to families and Profiles in the database. We located the first day of entry for Bernard at the school in August 1940. There are only a few of those first students still living.



Ernabella school roll book page showing the first day of attendance for Bernard Tjalkuriny, Monday 5 August 1940. This would be the first time ever that his name had been written down. The teacher, Ron Trudinger, also estimated his age at 7 years 3 months. In the absence of a birth registration, this is probably the earliest written record of his age.

Because of the need for personal language stories for the App project, Anangu visiting the Netley office were able to contribute to this. Dora recorded stories from Audrey Brumby and her father, as well as Rose Lester, Makinti Minutjukur and Katrina Tjitayi.

Over the past 12 months around 7,000 new Archive Item records have been added to Ara Irititja. Dora continues to digitise, process, upload, import and document these in the Adelaide office at Netley. From her base in the office in Alice Springs, Linda Rive has sent down thousands of photos, sound files, movies, documents and artworks, coming from all over the Lands in SA, NT and WA.

John, Linda and Dora work continuously on the archive, adding names, dates and locations, tagging, doing batch editing of locations, making sure names are spelt correctly, merging names, etc, etc. This work is essential to a lively, active archive, which is constantly being improved and added to, corrected and annotated, etc. The office at Wilkinson Street in Alice Springs is a lively hub for Anangu wishing to view Ara Irititja.

Alice Springs Office work

In Alice Springs, Linda has continued with her intense work to add and improve information throughout the Ara Irititja online archive. She works closely with individuals, ensuring that they and their families are properly and correctly represented.

Janet Inyika was one of the first Anangu to record her 'living will' with Ara Irititja. Following her death, Linda was asked by a number of others to record wills into Ara Irititja. Yanyi Bandicha and Anyupa Ken recorded very detailed funeral instructions in the event of their deaths. This is one of the many

functions that Anangu have found for Ara Irititja, that were never imagined when we first started in 1994.

We lost some other key people last year, including Belle Davidson. Ara Irititja always supplies photographs for the funeral booklets, and digital images for memorial services. This is normal practice now.



Working with women on Ara Irititja in the Alice Springs conference room in 2017. From left, Valerie Foster, Anawari Mitchell, Maimie Butler, Theresa Nipper, Rene Kulitja, Linda Rive and Jo Foster. Also there on that day was Judy Brumby. We are very sad that she suddenly passed away later in 2017. Judy was a wonderful supporter and worked with Ara Irititja since it first started in 1994.

Linda has been working with Wilton Foster in Alice Springs. He is a post contact person who knew the old people, or knows about them, so we are concentrating on these people.

These are the *Miri Tjuta* - the deceased ancestors. They are *Parkatja Tjuta*. *Parkatja* refers to older generations, or people long gone, or groups of people separated by many generational levels born or unborn. Wilton and Linda are working together to try to name as many of the *Parkatja* as possible. This knowledge will be lost to future generations if it is not recorded urgently, now.

Working with Wilton Foster has been a big highlight of the Alice Springs office, recording oral histories in both English and Pitjantjatjara, as well as writing some down in English. Adding annotations onto the archive, ensuring these get copied into Wilton's larger text where he is working on his life story. Spending time with Wilton is a unique opportunity to record and understand someone who was one of the last of the naked people to walk into Ernabella. He knew both ways of life and he knows intimately a huge number of people on the archive, especially their Anangu bush names, which is particularly valuable as these names often denote position and parentage, as well as place and other personal identifiers.

Wilton's work is invaluable for the SA Stolen Generations Profile and Identification Update project.

Wilton has also been working on Ara Irititja under his own steam, and has become very competent with the archive as he scrutinises archival photos of the first 100 years, checking them for public release. He is also researching his own life history as he goes, and has had the joy of being able to identify the first picture ever taken of him as a child - as a naked nomad still living in the bush, and also some pictures of when he first arrived in Ernabella to attend school. He has also found some pictures of his mother - this gave him great joy. His next goal is to find a picture of his father.

Linda describes Wilton's work:

"Wilton Foster has also been instrumental in adding hundreds of invaluable annotations about people, giving background information and stories. Wilton knows almost everybody's scars, bumps, body marks, wrinkles, size and shape of nose, big toes, hands, cicatrices, warts and injuries. He knows if they are left handed and right handed. He knows if they have one eye or two (and why). We try and note everything down that we possibly can. Just knowing that somebody is left handed is incredibly useful when trying to identify them in an old, grainy black and white photograph. However not everybody will be able to recognize whether a man is repairing a spear thrower in the left-handed way. This requires the specialised knowledge that Wilton has. He uses those sorts of clues and can make decisions on identity quickly and easily. A week ago he identified somebody easily, even though he could not see his face, because of the size of his big toe. He also identified somebody by the way they were drawing kangaroo sinew out of a leg - a job which looked ambidextrous to me - but to him it was obvious the man was a left-hander in the way he was sitting and handling the stick he was using to draw out the sinew. He knew he was doing it left-handedly. This kind of personal and specialist knowledge cannot be underestimated."



Tapaya Edwards, Nyurpaya Kaika Burton, Mary Pan and Ilawanti Ken SINGING THE ARCHIVE in the Alice Springs office in 2017. They came in especially to see an old EVTV video and watched it very closely until they identified the exact verse and dance steps that they needed to practice. They then sang along to the tune, practicing and getting the words exactly right. The older women already knew it, but it was for them to teach Tapaya, who needed to get it right.

Linda Rive also worked with Yami Lester over the last few years of his life. He has left a legacy of Yankunytjatjara words and culture. It was with great sadness that we lost one of our greatest supporters in 2017. Many photographs for his funeral were sourced from the archive. We were fortunate to visit his actual birthplace, with him in his coffin, on the way to Walatinna. This was very special. Photographs were taken. It is the end of an era.

Linda continues to work on the Minymaku Kutju Women's Only Aṛa Irititja archive. Dora and Linda upgraded and prepared new material for the Women's Only archive for access by senior women. This was supported by NPY Women's Council with funds raised by the Larapinta Extreme Walks.

The Digital Collection

In November 2017 the Aṛa Irititja archive held the following digital media files: 162,963 photographs, 5,464 documents (22,539 pages), 574 movies (1,131 clips), 576 sounds (1,777 tracks), and 5,373 objects (6,323 views), a total of 174,950 records. These have come from 504 separate collection sources.

Including all pages, clips and tracks the online database then held a total of 194,733 digital archive media files and their accompanying metadata, features, names, local knowledge, stories and annotations.

The digital information and Indigenous Knowledge base is divided into a number of 'Profile' groups, including *Anangu* (People), *Ngura* (Places), *Punu* (Plants) and Animals. There is an individual profile containing information about each person, place, plant, animal, etc in the database. The volume of this information is now vast and these are the following numbers of individual Profile records in these groups: 15,239 People, 2,214 Places, 1,492 Plants and 495 Animals.

Funding and Grants

The formation of the new AIAC has continued to bring success with grants. This change of governance has placed Aṛa Irititja in a stronger position in the eyes of grant bodies.

The first grant we received through AIAC was from the Federal Government for an Indigenous Language and Arts (ILA) project to create an Aṛa Irititja App for digital devices. This project commenced in November 2016 and presents culture and historical stories in language to Anangu youth. If Anangu are happy then we will launch it for the public in September 2018 and hopefully generate some funding to support more such projects for Aṛa Irititja.

In November 2017 we commenced *Nganampa Tjukurpa* – Our Own History: Aṛa Irititja Profile and Identification Update Project. This is a new project funded by the Stolen Generations Community Reparations Scheme of the SA Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation.

Dora and Linda have been working intensively on the names and family relationships in Aṛa Irititja. We have scanned a number of important registers of births and genealogy charts that have been in the archive, but not previously digitised. These have now been entered and are being integrated into Aṛa Irititja and linked to people and families. Paul Eckert has also donated his collection of genealogy charts and Linda is getting hers ready to be included in the archive too. All these charts need to have their names added so that the information on each one can be cross-referenced. This way we will ensure that the information held in Aṛa Irititja about Anangu families is correct.

The same funding scheme approved a second grant for us in 2018. This is called *Walytjapiti*: Family Kinship – the Aṛa Irititja Genealogy Module. We have engaged Douglas Mann to create a genealogy chart function for the Keeping Culture software. We have tried to obtain funding for this idea for many years and it is exciting that we have now finally commenced the project in April.

We are working hard to set up funding and administrative security to ensure that *Ara Irititja* continues beyond our working lives. The formation of the new AIAC is part of that long-term plan. We are also conducting a review of the project with SA Museum this year and will be furthering our discussions with APY at their Executive Board meeting in July.



John Dallwitz recording stories about Land Rights and family history with Donald Fraser at Pukatja in April 2018. Donald's wife Imuna is exploring *Ara Winki* on the iPad and Linda is writing down genealogical information.

Uluru Rent Money Project

We have also been working on the Central Land Council Uluru Rent Money (URM) project that we have developed since 2008. This started again in 2017 and involves fieldwork in Northern Territory and SA *Anangu* communities. John and Dora carried out 3 field trips for this project in 2017, visiting Mutitjulu, Utju (Areyonga), Watarrka and Imanpa in the NT and Amata and Pukatja in SA. They enjoy working closely with the communities and ensuring that *Anangu* get the most out of *Ara Irititja*. The project installs computer workstations in communities and provides workshops and training in the use of the archive. The fieldwork trips are combined with other projects and enable us to record stories and collect family history information and traditional knowledge to add to *Ara Irititja* and the *Ara Winki* App.

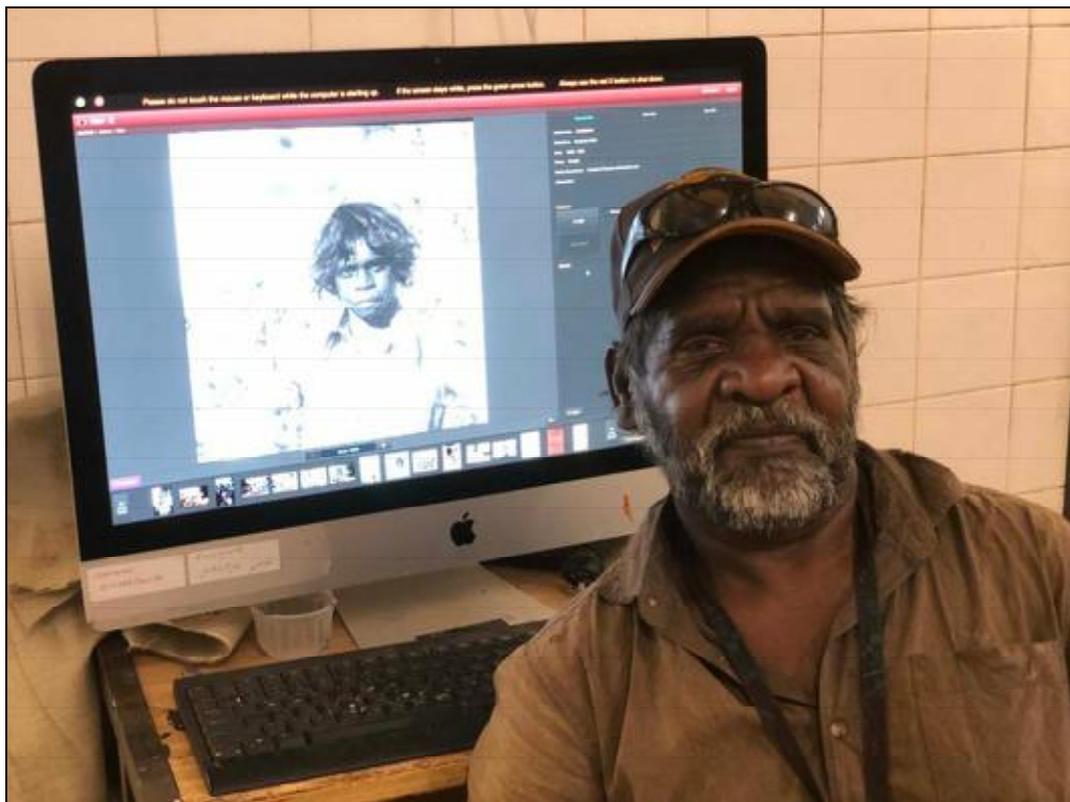
In April 2018 Dora and John visited Utju, Watarrka, Imanpa and Ernabella again. There have been internet network and speed problems at Utju and Imanpa and we are discussing the issues with the Shire Council. It is very disappointing for the communities that they have not been able to get reliable broadband speed. The planned rollout of the NBN and the upgrading of their public internet should vastly improve the access to *Ara Irititja* for these communities. At Watarrka we set up *Ara Irititja* in all of the school computers and had some training sessions with students. There was great enthusiasm for this and students at all levels were quick to learn the methods of working with *Ara Irititja*.

URM computers set up in Tjala Arts at Amata and Ernabella Arts at Pukatja are providing an ongoing source of reference for the artists and are facilitating the selection of high quality images and historical information for publications and exhibitions.

The URM project is planned to develop further in 2018 into a bilingual education project and will take advantage of our experience with the ILA funded language App to produce education resources.



Senior students at Watarrka school finding family in Ara Irititja in April 2018



Thomas Tjilya at Ernabella Arts in April 2018 with a photo of himself as a teenager in Ara Irititja on the computer workstation provided through the URM project.

[The Ara Winki App](#)

The App project has continued successfully during 2017 and 2018 and Dora spent a large proportion of her Ara Irititja time on it. She recorded new material and selected historical material from the archive. This is a big project and we are working closely with Anangu in the field as well as in

Adelaide and Alice Springs to ensure that we create something the youth will like and use. There has been funding in the budget to engage Anangu as expert advisors and storytellers on this project.



Dora working with Wilton Foster on the *Ara Winki* app in the Alice Springs office in April 2017

After much deliberation we named the App *Ara Winki No.1*. There are five chapters: Bush food (*Kuka Munu Mai*), Art and craft (*Kutjupa kutjupa*), Land Rights (*Nganampa manta*), Land care (*Manta kanyini*) and Learning (*Nintiringanyi*) that are now completed. The Art chapter is the largest of all and Dora and Linda have recorded more than 200 new stories in language to accompany the images from the *Ara Irititja* database. Linda has carried out the transcribing and translating of this text, which is all able to be watched while the voice recordings are played.

The App also serves as a gateway into the *Ara Irititja* database. On every page there is a link that can take the viewer directly to the same image in the database, providing much additional information and encouraging people to learn more and to navigate through the database. This will be particularly valuable for Anangu school projects. For this link to occur the user needs to have a password and access to the internet.

As part of the testing process, we have published *Ara Winki* in the App Store and in Google Play to make it accessible by password for Anangu only at this stage. This is giving us the opportunity to seek personal feedback before it is distributed more widely.

This password access is the way we are providing the App at no cost for Anangu, as it continues to be updated. Then when we are ready to distribute it to a wider audience, we plan to have a 'market place' from where it will be able to be sold, along with accompanying educational materials that will be developed separately as a follow-on project.

In April this year Dora, Linda and John made a trip to spend time at Ernabella school and Ernabella Arts, showing people *Ara Winki* and helping them to download it into their phones and tablets. We also spent time at the APY administration offices at Umuwa, where we installed a computer workstation in the visitors' room. It has since been in regular use by Anangu every day.



Screen shots from the *Ara Winki* App.

Conferences and Publications

In June 2017 John and Dora visited the *Museo Novecento* (Museum of the Twentieth Century) in Florence, Italy. We demonstrated the *Ara Winki* App and talked about *Ara Irititja* to a group of art historians and curatorial staff. They were fascinated and have invited us to return to present an exhibition and deliver lectures about the project. We are planning that for 2019.

In September 2017 John and Dora gave a presentation to the Information Technologies and Indigenous Communities symposium at the University of Melbourne. We were joined by art historian Dr Susan Lowish and Douglas Mann to present *Ara Irititja and the Ara Winki App in the APY Lands*. We have since been invited to write an article based on this presentation.

At very short notice, in April 2018, John was asked to speak at the Friends of Strehlow symposium in Alice Springs. He spoke about, and illustrated with *Ara Irititja*, the contribution of Reverend Bill Edwards to *Ara Irititja* and to *Anangu* on the APY Lands.

Following the presentation given by *Ara Irititja* with Janet Inyika at the *Art Centres Art Histories Symposium* in Alice Springs in 2014, Janet, Linda, John and Susan Lowish wrote an article *Our Art, Our Way: Towards an Anangu Art History with Ara Irititja*. This was published by University of WA in 2017 as a chapter in the publication *Indigenous Archives: The Making and Unmaking of Aboriginal Art*, edited by Darren Jorgenson and Ian McLean. This was launched at the ITIC symposium in 2017 and includes illustrations chosen by Janet from *Ara Irititja*. Sadly, Janet passed away before the

publication was completed. Janet was a powerful voice for the importance of culture and history and worked closely with Ara Irititja.

John, Linda, Susan Lowish and Rene Wanuny Kuliŋja presented Ara Irititja at the International Australian Studies Association Conference at Fremantle in 2016 and have since written the story of that presentation. Rene performed her family's inma and talked strongly about the importance of Ara Irititja. This has recently been published in 'un Magazine' in May 2018.

Linda worked throughout 2017 on Nungalka Nura Ward's autobiography *Ninu - Grandmother's Law*. The texts were all translated by her. Linda was part of the project management team, along with Julia Burke and Suzanne Bryce, that completed the book, chose the photographic illustrations, and matched images to the text. The book has now been published by Magabala Books in Broome. They chose to publish this book because of the quality of the hundreds of photographs that were sourced entirely from Ara Irititja. This book is likely to be a best seller. Ara Irititja is uniquely placed to draw on any number of images for publications such as this.

Ara Irititja has worked with the APY Art Centre Collective and individual art centres to supply historical images for publications, including *In These HANDS – Mara nyangangka* the catalogue for an exhibition at Sturt Gallery celebrating 70 years of Ernabella Arts in 2017. We provided almost 300 images for the multiscreen video presentation at the spectacular *Kulata Tjuta* exhibition at the Art Gallery of SA in October 2017. For that presentation Wilton Foster also recorded his personal powerful story about the atomic bomb. We are currently working with Mimili Maku Arts and senior artist Mike Mumu Williams to assist with Mike's book about Land Rights.

[The Ara Irititja software – Keeping Culture KMS](#)

It has been important to ensure that the software that Ara Irititja uses for its community access and Indigenous knowledge is sustainable for the future. It needs to remain up-to-date, viable and functional. Software developer Douglas Mann has recently rebuilt *Keeping Culture KMS* database. This led to the introduction of a totally new system in November 2017. The new software offers many improvements and much new administrative functionality. It has greater capabilities and increased support for mobile devices; but perhaps most important of all, it will provide a flexible platform to facilitate future innovative ideas and enhancements to be incorporated within the software.



The new *Keeping Culture* interface that was introduced on 18 November 2017.



Rosemary Wanatjura Patterson in the Alice Springs office in November 2017. Rosemary was thrilled to find a picture of herself and her brother twenty years ago at Mutitjulu.

Mentoring from the Indigenous Governance Award

As you know, in 2015 we received the *Outstanding Project Award* in America from the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums. Then in 2016 we were runners up in our section of the Indigenous Governance Awards presented biennially by Reconciliation Australia.

Apart from a modest amount of prize money, this award has provided a connection with a partner organisation to help guide *Ara Irititja* into the future and to make sure it survives and thrives beyond John and Dora's working lives. Reconciliation Australia introduced us to Broadspectrum and we are working with Llewellyn Williams from their Brisbane office. This collaboration will focus on the distribution and marketing of the *Ara Winki* app as part of the plan for the future sustainability of *Ara Irititja*.

We are all looking forward to the continuing growth and success of *Ara Irititja*. As Janet Inyika said:
*Nyangatja Ara Irititja tjukurpa mulapa. Ara Irititja is the main one for Anangu.
It holds our true record.*

The *Ara Irititja* Project is proudly supported by the South Australian Museum

