

# ***Ngapartji Ngapartji: the consequences of kindness***

**Written by Dave Palmer**



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## **A prefacing story: *Ngapartji Ngapartji*, the gift and kindness**

There was this beautiful thing that happened, a brief but difficult moment in the project when Trevor broke down during one of the early performances in Melbourne. It happened during one of the first seasons of the work and took cast and audience to a very emotional place, making a huge impression and helping configure all future performances.

It was at the place in the script when he recounts the death of his grandmother. This is a very personal moment in the play, a moment when Trevor takes us with him to one of the most saddest places in his family's history. It is done with enormous sensitivity and, on Trevor's part, immense generosity.

This thing, this tender and touching little morsel in the history of an epic project seized us all. It happened during a time in the performance when he stood, centre stage, looking back to the rear at a screen where film footage recounts his father's retelling of the death. In this piece of the film Trevor is sitting next to his Dad on a couch. He asks him to describe what had happened. Gently and, clearly pained, his father tells of how *Tjamu* (grandfather), a heroic figure who was much adored for helping rescue other Anangu from the dangers of the atomic tests, had killed his grandmother in a moment of rage.

Trevor had been like a trooper in the previous three weeks, carrying on with five shows despite a period of family crisis and personal exhaustion. He'd been able to retain his composure in the preceding weeks. But suddenly it had all got too much, tearing at his heart and overcoming him with grief. It was partly the pain of constantly retelling such a heartbreaking story. Partly he felt the responsibility for getting important elements of language and the performance right. It was partly the enormous burden he seemed to carry for the wellbeing of audiences he knew were contending with deep collective and psychological distress from seeing the show.

He lost his lines. He fell silent and sat on the ground. Here he remained in the soil sifting through the ceramic pieces that represented the bones of those taken away from their country for scientific testing. In his hands he held symbols of the systematic death and expatriation of people's remains. The script drifted away and he broke down, quietly sobbing at first and then crying, weeping in front of the whole theatre.

This was one of the most powerful moments of the whole project. People had been treated to a wonderfully colourful show, full of cultural performance, instruction in language, beautiful music, laughter and an introduction to a remarkable and otherwise hidden part of their history. Trevor is masterful at guiding an audience safely through tough and often uncomfortable places. His timing is impeccable, managing to mix intensity and humour, light and shade and confronting people's sensibilities in the most disarming of ways. The subject matter of the show is the history of Anangu dispossession. It is about the country and family of Pitjantjantjara speakers being subject to atomic testing the magnitude of which had never been known in human history. It contends with their experience of unbearably enormous change over a single generation. Ultimately it offers people a remarkable, perhaps once in a lifetime experience, revealing the tenacity of families who insist on holding their language, song and, most importantly, children.

Many Australian's have been moved by Trevor's performance. Many have told us they have been 'lost for words', unable to articulate the depth of their emotional response. People around the country have delivered standing ovations and been swept to the theatre to see, hear and be touched by the show. In a way people have come to be held by Trevor and the story, nurtured by the softness and the disarmament of the show and its story.

Anangu too have been enthused and inspired by the show and the project that sits behind. For five years they have joined us in workshops and made films, music, worked on language, literacy and worked together to give their young people a chance to do new things, learn and, spend time with their older loved ones.

So Trevor had been behind so many great things, offering himself as a wonderful picture of what kids can be if they set their mind to it. He had been like the Pied Piper, followed around in communities and into sound recording studios, in front of cameras and hitting the stage. He had become a symbol of the good that can happen. He had also become the conduit for massive positive energy.

So when he let go like this it all became too much for people to handle. The whole house just burst with grief. You began to hear people whimpering and crying. In the front rows where the light slightly catches the audience you could see tears. You could almost feel the rattling of people's throats, the sudden and uncontrollable expelling of sighs as their attempts at holding back the emotion couldn't be contained. We all began to weep. We cried, men and women, Anangu and non-Anangu, cast and production team.

Initially there was an uncertain pause. This was a stage production that relied heavily on the main actor, who impressively held most of the lines for over two hours. Any idea that 'the show must go on' was suddenly on hold. Not to be unnerved, the Anangu women took on their part. Quietly and softly the ladies began to sing that beautiful song, 'Tjituru tjituru', a Pitjantjantjara rendition of the 80s song 'Sorrow, Sorrow'. If there had been a dry eye in the house it was exorcised at this moment. As they sang, two of the women slowly walked over the where Trevor sat and took him in their arms, stroking his hair and gently, rocking him to the soft momentum of the music. Tenderly they took Trevor's hands and rubbed *irmangka irmangka* (bush medicine) in to his skin. As they sat and sang the words of such a magnificent song of grief, a number of the other ladies headed out to the audience. They saw the distress amongst people and generously offered their consolation, hugging and stroking the hair of those most troubled, sharing bush medicine as well. The sweet smell of the medicine filled the small ACMI theatre space. In this heartrending moment for non-Anangu, when people let their own anguish be released, it was the senior women who offered the strength. As others sobbed at the sight of Trevor's pain and in response to their own remorse and heartache, the ladies walked amongst people, gently and tenderly caring for the sorrow and grief of non-Anangu. After this most poignant of moments, the show went on ... it continued, kind of like the way Anangu have kept on going in in life and in history.

This was an instance of unadulterated kindness that truly and accurately represents how the show moved us all and how it relied so much on the absolute generosity of the Anangu ladies.

We often expect that this project will somehow bring strength to and make changes for

Anangu, help contend with the horrors, the traumas and the tough times they experience. Yet sometimes I recollect events like this and I realize just how much Anangu who, through acts of kindness such as these, are those who often hold the strength (Recollections of Big *hART* colleagues).

### **On '*ngapartji ngapartji*' and kindness**

In the English language there appears to be no adequate translation for the Pitjantjatjara concept, "*ngapartji ngapartji*". Many suggest that its closest equivalent in the Australian vernacular is something like, "I give ... you give in return." Unfortunately, most tend to draw upon modernist ideals and mistakenly assume a kind of market driven exchange in people's social worlds where one needs to immediately return a favour for a favour, or immediately reciprocate a good turn, responding to a gesture or action by making a corresponding one. As with many attempts at direct translation, this appears to be a most unsatisfactory one. Mostly this is because modern Australians take for granted the need for immediacy in exchange, assuming that, just like in the market economy, exchange is premised upon instant reciprocity (so that the exchange draws to a close quickly) and comparative equality (so that we get precisely equivalent to what we deserve from the exchange). As Sennett (2003) points out, this kind of arrangement causes the termination of social connections. The symmetry of exchange (with its obsessions with equality and immediacy) results in people lacking any means of being socially bound to each other.

Perhaps the English idea of the 'gift' takes us a little closer to the Pitjantjatjara concept of '*ngapartji ngapartji*.' In contrast to market exchange, a gift economy obligates people to one another, producing conditions that see people reciprocating their debt. According to Mauss (2002), the gift creates an economy not of altruism but of debt so that gifts must be eventually returned and their value matched. However, the key here is that the gift may not return precisely to the original giver. Rather a gift moves in a circle, with at least three people needed for the gift economy to work. In a classic gift economy the gift exchange moves in complex direction, moving "from one hand to another with no assurance of anything in return" (Hyde 2007, p. 11). In this way, the gift draws us into a mutual dependence upon those involved in the exchange, a formal give-and-take that forces us to acknowledge our participation in and dependence upon each other. It also forces us to respond to those around us, those who are 'other' but with whom we are bound, as part of ourselves, not as a stranger or alien. In this way, the gift brings with it both a built-in check and creates the seeds of what I shall call the practice of 'kindness'.

Kindness is so much a part of our everyday lives that we take it for granted and don't try and think about how it is done and what are its consequences. In part this is because kindness is often associated with human quality rather than human practice, assumed that it is something possessed by some people and treated as a commodity to be used in the private domain. As a consequence, the practice of kindness is rarely associated with matters of public concern, something for business of government or that which an organization should seek to do as part of its plans, 'outcomes' or programmes. Indeed, it would seem to many an oddity if a group or organization were to seek public funds to 'deliver' kindness or set out as part of their methodology to practice the act of kindness.

This is because for some time kindness has been considered to be an act that gets in the way of those who seek to be successful or achieve things. It has become that which is considered to be, as Philips and Taylor (2010, p. 2) put it, "a saboteur of the successful life." Kindness has

come to be treated with suspicion, often dismissed or avoided as moralistic, sentimental and a mark of weakness. Its opposite, that of being self-interested and selfish, has come to be associated with human nature (Philips and Taylor 2010, p. 6). At its worst attitudes to kindness have it as a virtue of losers, unfortunately disallowing those who deliver it from the spoils of success.

However, the original idea of kindness was connected with the act of looking after members of one's own kin. Kindness in earlier times was associated with allied practices such as philanthropia (love of humanity) and caritas (love of one's siblings and neighbours) (Philips and Taylor 2010, p. 4). It also encompassed practices such as sympathy, generosity, altruism, benevolence, humanity, compassion, pity, empathy and the act of being outward looking and 'open-hearted. In essence kindness involved action that has as its goal the wellbeing of the 'Other'. In particular, it involved taking on, bearing or helping relieve the vulnerability and burden of others.

The virtues and values of kindness have roots well established in ancient times. According to the ancient Roman philosopher Marcus Aurelius, kindness is human's 'greatest delight', (Philips and Taylor 2010, p. 2). The Stoics in the first century understood this and preached the social and political benefits of kindness. The Stoic emperor Marcus Aurelius understood the world as a single city, a great "community of reason" where all belonged and were precious to each other because of the need for companionship, support in hard times, trade and to fulfill their need for what they called *oikeiōsis*, or attachment of self to other' (Philips and Taylor 2010, p. 17). "A man's true delight", said Aurelius, "is to do the things he was made for. He was made to show goodwill to his kind." (cited in Philips and Taylor 2010, p. 18).

Some in more recent times have maintained the recognition that kindness has value. During the early Enlightenment period philosophers and economists such as David Hume and Adam Smith insisted that kindness had utilitarian value as it made people feel more human, capable and important, more satisfied and happy with their lives (cited in Philips and Taylor 2010, p. 18). Since the Enlightenment, philosophers and social scientists have observed that kindness can act as a solution to a number of problems. It can serve as a bridge between those who are in conflict, modifying the claims of self in favour of the other, and thereby promoting goodwill and social solidarity (Philips and Taylor 2010, p. 28)

Since Freud, the act of kindness has been recognized for its usefulness as a remedy for pain and suffering. Following Rousseau's claim that, "we are never able to enjoy oneself well without another" Freud wrote that, "we are never so defenceless against suffering as when we are in love." (cited in Philips and Taylor 2010, p. 31). Later day psychoanalytic practitioners observe the value of kindness noting its capacity to heal the soul of individuals and create those who are more "porous, less insulated and separated from others" (cited in Philips and Taylor 2010, p. 31). Once the practice of kindness is mastered there can be no such thing as the isolated self, the sociopath and the socially deficit. Modern psychology also tells us that kindness makes us feel better and creates a healthy mind. A sign in this regard, wrote Winnicott (cited in Philips and Taylor 2010, p. 97), "is the ability of one individual to enter imaginatively and accurately into the thoughts and feelings and hopes and fears of another person; also to allow the other person to do the same to us." Unkindness or failure to imagine the life of the other, therefore not only limits the capacity for happiness, it threatens our sanity and mental health (Philips and Taylor 2010, p. 97).

Using a metaphor with considerable resonance, philosopher David Hume, in his *Treatise of*

*Human Nature (1739-1740)* likened the practice of kindness, where people transfer feelings of goodwill towards one another, to the “vibration of violin strings, with each individual resonating with the pains and pleasures of others as if they were there own.”

In this way kindness’s magic comes from its ability to change people in the doing of it, thereby exercising and reproducing itself. In remarkable and unpredictable ways those who are touched by kindness are caught up in its infectiousness, regard for the other in turn producing more regard for the other. It creates what economist Adam Smith calls an, ‘expansive self’ and a replication of itself. To put it another way, the kind self is more inclined to look further afield, more able to consider how their actions may produce happiness or wellbeing in others. This in turn creates opportunities for more contact with others, thereby increasing the likelihood of kindness. According to Smith, this is the touchstone of any healthy community, always looking towards contact with its other, as a means of creating the conditions for more contact and more trade (Philips and Taylor 2010, p. 30).

What follows is a report of the consequences of the practice of kindness. It is a practical piece of writing in two ways. It has the function of serving the purpose of reviewing a social programme that, during the course of its five years, received significant public funding. It is also practical in that its subject matter is what happens when a group of people practice the ancient art of kindness to build a bridge that brings together Anangu and Anangu, Anangu and non-Anangu, young people and seniors, artists and audiences. It is a report about the business of practicing ‘*ngapartji ngapartji*’, offering the gift of kindness, learning how to receive graciously, learning about indebtedness and looking outward towards others.

## Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements and thanks for the support offered by the Big *hART* team, various members of the Alice Springs, Ernabella and Amata communities, project partners and participants for their willingness to be frank and open with me. In particular thanks to Alex Kelly for her tireless efforts in lining up people to talk. Thanks also to Beth Sometimes, Suzy Bates, Jane Leonard, Dani Powell and Mariaa Randall for their work putting me onto people, clarifying various elements of the project and chasing up material when I asked.

Thanks also go out to the following people from *Big hART* who helped provide a picture of what went on, agreed to have outsiders sit in on workshops, productions and other events or provided generosity while I was in town or visiting tours:

Lorna Wilson  
Thomas Holder  
Neil Simpson  
Genevieve Dugard  
Damian Mason  
Jess Smithett,  
Zoe Churchill  
Mel Robertson  
Rosemary Kelly  
Neil Fischer  
Matt Davis  
Nick Higgins  
Dave Wardell  
Natalie O'Connor  
Peter Dixon  
Sophia Marinos  
Bronwyn Purvis  
Chris Saunders  
Telen Rodwell  
Lex Marinos  
Yumi Umiumare  
Tomoko Yamasaki  
Andrew MacGregor

A special thank you to Carla Foster, Dave Dolman and Tallulah Bieundurry for their hospitality and for providing a bed to my family when we stayed in Alice.

It was terrific to spend time with Trevor Jamieson. Trev treated me to his frank thoughts at various times during the course of my work, offering helpful, moving accounts of the cultural and political landscape he and members of his extended family have to negotiate. I'm particular indebted to Trev for the kindness he showed to my sons at various times and in different places as we traveled through country.

Thanks also to Scott Rankin for setting aside more than my fair share of time. It often seemed like he was subject to a thousand and one requests from staff, performers, the media and audiences. However, he regularly let me jump the queue and get in his ear.

Thanks to those who agreed not to be identified but who none-the-less provided honest and frank responses to questions about their involvement with the various elements of the project. In particular, it was fabulous to listen to young people and senior women talk about their involvement in *Ngapartji Ngapartji*.

Finally thank you to Jennie Buchanan for assistance in the research process, writing and with the business of editing. Often it is Jen's astute observations about the project that readers will see in the report.

Dave Palmer  
April 2010



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## Section one: background

### Introduction

The following report provides a review of *Big hART's* work on the *Ngapartji Ngapartji Project*. The project encapsulates *Big hART's* work in the Alice Springs town camps, APY Lands in South Australia and other remote communities in Central Australia from 2005 to 2010. This includes the creative workshops, community building, language maintenance, literacy development, crime prevention, training and performance elements of their work. Throughout this work arts-based practice has been used in an attempt to help make a difference to the lives of Indigenous people living in the town camps and remote communities *Big hART* people visited. As well as the intrinsic value of offering art and performance to people who live in regional and remote Australia the intention of the work was to 1) create and showcase high quality art and performance 2) bring out the stories of Anangu (Indigenous people from *Pltjantjatjara* and *Yankunytjatjara* backgrounds) 3) encourage interaction between Anangu and non-Anangu across the country 4) provide opportunities for other personal and social developmental experiences, 5) encourage *Pltjantjatjara* language speaking and educate Australians about the urgency of Indigenous language protection, 6) build opportunities for literacy development, 7) experiment with novel ways to respond to crime prevention and 8) help support more active relationships between young people and others in their community. In other words, the intention of *Big hART* was to use arts and cultural practice to help the people in Central Australia to come together to exchange gifts of hope, language, culture and performance so that people's sense of connection to Anangu life, language, family and country could be transformed.

Although not solely restricted to work concerned with community building, the evaluation will begin by examining the achievements of *Big hART* in relation to the plans as set out in its funding agreement as part of the Commonwealth Office of Attorney General's *National Community Crime Prevention Programme*. The report then moves on to discuss some of the lessons learnt from carrying out the work, focusing on the impact on young people and the community, evidence of good practice, and the challenges confronted.

The report concludes that over the past five years *Big hART* has managed to achieve some extraordinary things both in relation to the production of nationally recognised art and performance and socially beneficial opportunities for many Anangu. There is a massive body of evidence of *Big hART's* achievement in relation to the project plans. Those financially supporting the project could not have imagined how much could be achieved when they first made a commitment to the work. Compared to similarly funded ventures *Ngapartji Ngapartji* represents value for money par excellence. A particularly striking feature in this regard is that *Big hART* has been able to deliver these achievements in perhaps the most taxing and difficult circumstances. Indeed most governments, organisations and business groups have found the multiple impediments associated with responding to social needs in remote Central Australia, with young people and among Indigenous Australians demanding to the extent of being impenetrable.

## Background to Big hART

Big hART is a multiple national award winning arts company that uses theatre, film, television, paintings, photography, dance, radio and a range of other creative processes to support groups and communities who are struggling with social problems, isolation or other challenges. It combines multiple art forms to help achieve both art of substance and community with substance. Big hART projects start from the knowledge that the creative process used in arts-based work helps draw out both people's stories and their ability to make connections with others. As their website says:

Big hART is committed to the arts and social change. We are also committed to experimentation and innovation and as such the style, shape, size and work of the company is always changing (Big hART website 2010).

Typically Big hART spends between three to five years working in conjunction with communities. Its approach involves using art, performance, dance, music, film, new media and other creative processes to encourage people to tell their stories, imagine how things may be different and become involved in projects to make changes. The work produced with members of the community is honed and showcased as public exhibitions, stage productions, films, recorded music and other creative pieces. Often this is taken to national and international festivals, performed to a variety of audiences and screened and broadcast through the media.

Founded in 1992, the organisation has worked directly with over 6500 individuals in 32 rural and remote communities. Through arts-based practices Big hART works with these communities to assist them address social problems such as domestic violence, drugs misuse, suicide, low levels of literacy, motor accident prevention, truancy, intergenerational addiction and homelessness.

## Overview of Ngapartji Ngapartji

*Ngapartji Ngapartji* is one of the most well recognized of Big hART's projects operating from 2005 to 2010. During this time project staff were based in Alice Springs and carried out language, literacy and arts-based workshops with Pitjantjatjara people living in town camps and various remote communities through the Anangu Pitjantjatjara, Yuntjatjara Lands. These workshops have then shaped creative development work leading to performances such as the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* and *Nyuntu Ngali* stage shows, an on-line language course in Pitjantjatjara (the 'Ninti' site), short films (including language lessons and music clips), musical recordings and CDs, a project website, a documentary to be screened on the ABC and 'Memory Basket' resources pack for project participants, organizations and other interested groups.

Anangu (or Indigenous people from this region), both old and young, have joined professional non-Indigenous artists as performers on-stage, behind the camera, on-line, with the microphone and in the art gallery. In the process, a range of socially productive 'outcomes' have been achieved, providing opportunities for Anangu in literacy development, crime prevention work, education, language maintenance and arts practice.

The main performance piece shaped by the work was the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* stage theatre production. This show tells the family story of actor and co-founder of the project, Trevor Jamieson. It focuses on the life of Trevor's *Tjamu* or grandfather and his work helping Pitjantjatjara people, living in the desert country between South Australia and Western Australia

who become refugees. This occurs as a consequence of the decision of the Australian and British governments to carry out nuclear testing at Maralinga and Emu Junction from the 1950s. The show moves through the highs and lows of Anangu life, taking audiences through an introduction to Pitjantjatjara language, introducing Australian's to the magic and talent of Anangu song, dance and performance and pressing home to people the strength and resilience of Western Desert people.

The project provided opportunities for young people and other Anangu to participate in many years of creative workshops offering arts mentors in film, music, dance, acting and fine art. Many Anangu, both young and older, joined other cast and crew (including well-known professional actors and musicians) on tours of the show to capital city festivals in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Alice Springs and Perth. In the process they were paid as professional actors, undertook cultural exchange work with local Indigenous groups and gained high profile publicity for their artistic work. In 2008 the show toured to the heartland of Anangu, helping to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ernabella Arts.

As a consequence there is now an enormous body of high quality Anangu work documenting their language, life and performance. Short films, documentary interviews, photographs and music from the project have been carefully archived in the National Library, National Sound and Film Archive and the Pitjantjatjara digital archive Ara Irititja so that future generations of Australians can see both what has been produced and understand how this kind of work can be done.

Although now completed, the project has left a number of important legacies for Anangu, the creative industries and others who seek to carry out similar work. These legacies include the project 'Memory Basket', the stage production *Nyuntu Ngali* (already played a season in Adelaide and set to play another in Sydney) and the project Njamatjira (which will tour later in the year).

### **Ngura: the country**

Although based in Alice Springs, Big hART's work was with Anangu who lived or had cultural connections to Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Ngaanyatjara country. This area is mostly situated in the far northwest of South Australia but also extends across the Northern Territory (including Uluru and Kata Tjuta) and Western Australian borders. This country or 'ngura' is a central part of Anangu culture, life and identity and is rich with stories associated with the distant and recent past.

Most of those involved in the project live in town camps, remote community centres, aged care facilities or small 'homelands' settings in some of the most remote parts of the country. Today there are about 4000 to 5000 Anangu Pitjantjatjara living in these communities. Although having to contend with western economic systems, governance practices and prepare their young for modern life, many of these Anangu communities maintain strong language and many elements of traditional law and culture.

In 1921, 73,000 kilometres of land was set aside in the northwest corner of South Australia for Anangu use. Between this time and the mid 1960s drought and clashes with non-Indigenous doggers and other 'settlers' resulted in Anangu being forced to move eastward towards the Adelaide to Alice Springs railway line in order to survive (Hilliard 1968).

In response an Adelaide-based medical doctor Dr Duguid rallied the Presbyterian Church to set up a mission at Ernabella Station, nestled in the Musgrave Ranges. Over the next 30 years the mission provided support to Anangu, encouraging people to maintain their language, culture and traditions with song and ceremony (inma) (Duguid 1963, 1972).

During the 1950s and 1960s many Anangu were forced to leave their homelands due to the British nuclear testing carried out south of Ernabella at Maralinga and Emu Junction. Some moved north towards Ernabella, some moved south to be settled in Yalata, close to the coast on the Nullabor Plains and some were eventually moved to the Cundalee Mission in Western Australia. There is also considerable evidence that many were exposed to contamination from the nuclear fallout, becoming sick and, in some cases, dying from sickness associated with pollutant clouds (see Cain 2002).

In 1981, after considerable campaigning led by senior Anangu, the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act was passed, granting freehold title over 103,000 square kilometres of land. In 1985 the Federal Government granted a 99 year lease over the Uluru and Kata Tjuta National Park. In 1984 the Maralinga Tjarutja Land Rights Act was passed granting freehold title over 80,764 square kilometres in the Maralinga area. Since this time there has been a movement back to traditional nguru or country to set up smaller homelands communities across the Lands (See Cain 2002).

### **The Evaluation Methodology**

Much of the work associated with *Ngapartji Ngapartji* is well documented in reports, funding applications, artistic reviews, music, films and on-line material produced. This work has been instrumental in shaping the evaluation and forms much of the evidence used to make assessments and critical observations. Indeed the first task carried out was to review as much of this work as possible, checking claims made by *Big hART* against other sources of evidence. This approach is typically described as an 'audit review'. In addition, the evaluation employed the following other methodological devices to help understand and gauge the performance of *Big hART*. This represents what is often described as an 'open inquiry' approach.

- A review of the literature concerned with arts practice and community cultural development to establish features of good practice in order that this could be compared with the approaches taken in the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project;
- An appraisal of media reviews and articles;
- Written feedback from community members;
- Interviews and discussions with *Big hART* staff, participants, community representatives, and a range of representatives of organisations involved in and observing the project;
- Analysis of other data recorded by *Big hART* staff – workshop attendance, audience surveys, employment/training statistics, meeting minutes, audience numbers;
- Direct participation and observation in a number of workshops, film-making, editing, rehearsals, performances and other creative activities involving young people and other community (including the tour of Ernabella in 2008).

Field visits included time spent in Alice Springs, Adelaide, the APY Lands, other parts of Central Australia and Western Australia and included an extended visit of two months during 2009. Visits were timed to allow some first hand observation of various elements of the project and attendance at a number of key events. In addition, various *Big hART* staff were interviewed while visiting other parts of the country.

The audit review elements of the evaluation principally drew on the stated aims and objectives as outlined in four related sets of plans. During the audit review process the most important guiding principal for making assessments was to seek evidence from at least three different sources. Using the well-established social scientific device of 'triangulation'<sup>1</sup>, three different 'positions' were sought to confirm or cast doubt upon the merit of claims made by Big *hART*. In this way rhetoric and practice was compared and the work of Big *hART* was checked to see how it matched with a range of other sources of evidence.

In addition, the open inquiry elements of the evaluation involved identifying factors contributing to the successful implementation of various projects carried out, factors that may have hindered the implementation of the work, and assessing other outcomes from the work that were unintended but socially productive.

### **Preliminary remarks about crime prevention, literacy development and using arts for community building**

Before entering into a discussion of the Project's performance in relation to the crime prevention objectives, it is worth making some preliminary observations about complexities associated with this kind of work. In particular it is worth turning attention to the business of crime prevention work, literacy development and using arts and performance to assist in community building.

#### **Crime prevention**

According to Miller (2001 p. 13), there exists at least three models or approaches to crime prevention: opportunity-reduction, order maintenance and community-centred. The first two approaches are largely dependant upon police intervention, are top-down or managed from central authorities and are principally designed to reduce opportunities for crime. According to others such as White (1997), Sutton (1997), O'Malley (1997) and Wimshurst and Homel (1997) these approaches dominate public affairs and crime prevention practice. The third approach, community-centred, is designed to allow communities to shape strategies and methods and is more likely to see crime prevention as connected to other social programmes and strategies for improving community life.

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<sup>1</sup> Social science has taken this method from the coastal navigational technique of taking readings from at least three distinct markers in order to safely establish one's position.

**Table 1: Three models of community crime prevention (Miller 2001, p. 43)**

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Central Problem</b>	<b>Role of Police</b>	<b>Community response</b>
Opportunity-reduction	Multiple crime opportunities	Teach citizens to avoid crime	Identify and target crimes, target harden
Order maintenance	Disorder and unruly behaviour	Greater police discretion to respond to fear and disorder	Identify disorderly behaviour and work with police to curb that behaviour
Community-centred	Low economic and social development, poor opportunities for 'positive leisure' and diversionary activities	Work with communities and other organizations to identify community-supported responses to particular problems	Identify projects & programs to increase positive development & diversion, buttress local culture, language & sense of community strength; build local education & support services, respond to fear of crime, community safety projects in conjunction with local police

According to the literature, community-centred approaches place great stock in “creating a vibrant living environment in which citizens have an array of viable opportunities for employment, housing, health care, recreation and social activity” (Miller 2001 p. 41). Often the rationale taken is that strong communities and more active citizens are more likely to be responsible, law abiding and involved in socially productive pursuits. Therefore the name of the game is to create activities and programs that increase personal development and divert potential 'law-breakers' away from crime. Often much weight is given to activities that buttress local culture, language and sense of community strength. In addition, some highlight the need to respond to unfounded fear of crime, offering community members the means to respond to and counter external chauvinism and intolerance. Those using this approach also create opportunities for members of the community to get involved in projects that have an employment, training, sport, recreation or arts focus and encourage youth involvement in new opportunities (White, 1997, p. 176). Often this involves initiating community safety projects in conjunction with local police and other organizations.

Groups using this approach may draw upon opportunity-reduction and order maintenance strategies. However these are not treated as the central platform in crime prevention. In addition, those adopting this approach are often wary of directly connecting law enforcement and anti-crime activities with the strategies they choose (Miller 2001, p. 153). Indeed, in a review of Australian crime prevention strategies Coventry, Muncie and Walter (1992) established that preoccupation with 'crime as a central object of concern' can be dangerous and counter productive.

Partly this reflects ideals about the need to move 'upstream' to try and respond to the underlying causes of crime in communities that are experiencing difficulties. The notion here is that conventional crime prevention focuses too much attention on 'downstream' reactions by police and other law enforcement agencies (O'Malley and Sutton 1997, p. 1).

Partly this reflects the criticism that in the past crime prevention work has followed a 'deficit' approach, focusing exclusively on failures, inadequacies and dysfunction in the life of a community. Emerging in part to counter this tendency has been the work of those trumpeting the merits of the Assets Based Community Development (ABCD) approach. Advocates of ABCD suggest that a narrow focus upon the deficits, incapacities and criminal activity of

community lead to stale explanations for crime, unhelpful despair and negativity when conceiving solutions, and hopelessness resulting in people externalising responsibility to police and government. This has a number of other unfortunate effects including the perpetuation of victim-centred identities and blindness to the knowledge, values and 'capacities' of members of the community who daily contend with crime. In contrast those advancing ABCD methods argue for a focus upon the strength and potency of people. They contend that the focus ought to be upon reinforcing the talents, successes and leadership that exists. In part this is because of a belief that "sustainable development emerges from within a community, not from outside, by mobilizing and building upon local resources." In part this is because a 'deficit' approach is not the most effective way to encourage lasting change (Bergdall 2003, p. 1).

Those advocating this kind of approach place considerable emphasis on using novel methods, education, communication and creativity. They argue that the use of arts and creativity can often be instrumental in building success in crime prevention work. According to O'Malley and Sutton (1997, p. 2-7), using the arts and performance has brought considerable success when combined with early childhood or developmental prevention, publicity campaigns, community development, institutionally based prevention, public education and diversion activities.

Additionally community-centred approaches often involve attempts to move beyond one-off interventions, opting instead for work designed to bring about longer-term contact (Sutton 1997, p. 19 and Hayes 2007). This reflects evidence that success (i.e. long-term reductions in rates of detected offending) comes from an extended amount of time in community with a combination of educational, employment recreational and other 'cultural' activities (Sutton 1997, p. 20). Indeed O'Malley (1997, p. 260) concludes that crime prevention projects rarely "produce noticeable effects except in the long-term."

As successful crime prevention work is hard to establish in any cause and effect or direct lineal fashion, the use of indirect indicators also features in community-centred work. For example, it is popular in the evaluation of youth crime prevention work to seek evidence of things such as regular and substantive contact between youth workers and young people, on-going attendance at events, workshops or other youth targeted activities, increased literacy, skills development, involvement in education, employment and training and participation in community service (O'Malley 1997, p. 268).

### **Literacy and language development**

According to emerging research on literacy development (see Hull 2003, Resnick 2002 and Warlick 2006), there are at least two approaches to the assessment and evaluation of literacy development. The more conventional approach to literacy development starts from the premise that reading and writing in Standard English is the central task of the education process. For the purposes of this report the term 'Technicist' approach will be used. In other words, literacy equals the attainment of reading and writing skills in Standard Australian English so that students can participate more fully in the market economy. The task of the teacher is to increase the competency of students in this regard, assuming success equates to a linear and upward progression. Tied in with this approach is the importance of regular and comparative testing regimes, administered by qualified and technically authorized researcher/assessor. Success, according to this approach, can be measured with confidence by standardizing research design so that theoretically all student literacy levels can be rated against a national set of criteria.



An alternative approach to literacy development starts from much broader and more liberal premises. For the purposes of this report the term ‘Multiple Literacies’ approach will be used. As Warlick (2006, p. 92) argues, competent and functioning adults need a range of skills and knowledge in addition to reading and writing in English. In his mind if we are to see literacy development as “developing those essential information skills required to accomplish goals” then students need exposure to a broader range of literacies including mastering a second language, using new forms of communication technology, being exposed to different cultural domains and being able to operate creatively and artfully (see Hull 2003, Sennett 2008).

Furthermore Resnick (2002) argues that conventional approaches to literacy focus too much on retention of ideas taken from outside the student’s frame of reference. He reminds us that ‘people learn best not when they are passively receiving information but when they are actively engaged in exploring, experimenting and expressing themselves (sometimes known as the three E’s)’. In this way both writers call for the broadening of definitions of literacy development beyond a model that involves the transmission, by a teacher, of English skills in reading and writing being transmitted through a teacher. They argue that this broader idea of literacy ought to include visual, digital and multimedia literacy.

As a consequence, the task of evaluating literacy development work ought to include seeking information about students development in alternative literacy domains, particularly those that allow them to build bridges across a range of communication technologies (including but not limited to reading and writing).

**Table 2: Features of ‘Technicist’ and ‘Multiple Literacies’ approach**

Technicist approach	Multiple literacies approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy = attainment of Standard English</li> <li>• Purpose of literacy = preparation for participation in market economy (formal labour market)</li> <li>• Focus upon reading and writing</li> <li>• Start with an assessment of literacy deficits (assume students start without literacy)</li> <li>• Fail to take account of skills other than reading and writing.</li> <li>• Move towards a focus upon ‘learning outcomes’</li> <li>• ‘Outcomes’ shaped by market forces and needs of the labour market (‘mainstream’ demands)</li> <li>• ‘Measuring’ linear and progressive development</li> <li>• Measures assumed to be culturally neutral</li> <li>• Standardised and competitive testing</li> <li>• Measure by establishing base-lines and testing at regular intervals</li> <li>• Tests in English</li> <li>• Work and testing in the classroom</li> <li>• Compared against ages</li> <li>• Tests used as a measure of quality of teaching</li> <li>• Assessed by qualified technician/researcher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy broadly defined as ability to discover, process and utilize multitude of information sources for a multitude of social purposes</li> <li>• Purpose of literacy = preparation for life and intercultural communication</li> <li>• Focus upon a multitude of literacy methods (eg. digital, semiotic, ‘reading’ film and television, dance, music, popular culture, gaming, code switching)</li> <li>• Encourages practice that develops multiple literacies of students</li> <li>• Seeks multiple forms of evidence of literacy development</li> <li>• Processual approach to evaluation of literacy</li> <li>• Work and reviewing in multiple learning environments</li> <li>• Diversity of literacy modes, content and methods seen as a measure of quality of teaching</li> <li>• Experiments with new modes or domains of literacy (eg. texting, blogging, Facebook, arts-practice, dance, performance)</li> <li>• Reviewing literacy development through creation of archive of work.</li> </ul>

During the course of the project there was some tension around which approach to take. In early 2008 Australian National University Researcher Dr Inge Kral undertook NRS literacy assessments whilst young people were on the January Sydney tour of *Ngapartji Ngapartji*. The initial plan was to assess young people at different stages of their involvement in the literacy work. Dr Kral concluded from this assessment that the NRS testing process would not provide instructive in 1) assessing base-line literacy data of Pitjantjatjara speaking young people, 2) assessing the impact of literacy programmes in a Pitjantjatjara context or 3) assessing the potential of work designed to build cultural relevant and 'multiple' literacies (see the discussion of literacy in later sections of the report). In discussion with Dr Kral the Big *hART* Team decided to reconfigure plans for the literacy work so that evidence of literacy development be recorded using a 'portfolio' approach. This decision reflects a shift in assessment and evaluation of literacy, from an externally designed 'technicist' and instrumental measure of immediate literacy outcomes to an internally developed and reflective focus on the processes and expressive elements of people's work. When this work is added to the rich assortment of film, music, dance, photographic and other performance work carried out by young people it provides a remarkable archive of learning and development across a range of 'literacy domains' (Source: Progress Report No 1 March 31 2008).

### **Arts, music, performance and community building**

Before entering into a discussion of the Project's performance in relation to the objectives, it is also worth making some preliminary observations about the business of evaluating the use of arts and culture in conjunction with 'community-based' strategies.

According to a number of writers (see Saggars and Gray 1991; Taylor et al 2008; McMurray 1999 and Kenny 2006), there has been a range of ways of responding to the health and wellbeing of communities. From the 1930s to the 1970s responses to the wellbeing of non-Indigenous communities were characterized by reliance upon a welfarist model. This approach saw the emphasis placed upon the state providing a basic safety net or social services for individuals and families who could not take care of basic needs such as housing, education, income and health. Here resources went to experts who decided what was best for those who were failing to look after themselves. Arts practice was generally seen as having little role in community building. However, art therapy began being used as a means of contending with social pathology and community dysfunction.

During this same period the treatment of Indigenous communities was characterized by either neglect or reliance upon what many describe as a combination of the biomedical approach to health and an assimilationist approach to welfare (see Haebich 1988 and 2000). These approaches saw the emphasis placed upon professionals and bureaucrats understanding and strictly governing Indigenous communities. At the same time, the state placed great stock in attempts to have Indigenous young people 'assimilate' and take on the culture, values and practices of other Australians. During this period governments engaged in the systematic removal of Indigenous children from their family and communities, attempting the eventual 'absorption' of Indigenous people into the 'white' community. Often the consequences for family and community were devastating, resulting in long-term social dislocation, pain and appalling neglect by the state. However, it was also during this period when artists, arts educators and some missionaries began to stimulate an active Aboriginal arts movement. Examples of Aboriginal art 'schools' that grew from this mission led influence, later to enjoy international acclaim include the Carrolup, Ernabella, Mowanjumb, Western Desert, Balgo, Tiwi Island and Fitzroy Valley art movements.

The early seventies saw a shift in approach, away from the welfare state providing for the good of its citizens towards an emphasis upon increased community involvement in decision-making processes. In part it this was shaped by the global trend towards community-led change, human rights and local people's participation in health and social service delivery. In part it was shaped by a crisis in the ability of the welfare state to provide for all but the most troubled and a need to mobilize 'community' as a cheaper way to govern (see Mowbray 2004).

It was during this period when community arts grew in popularity. This movement (initially called 'community arts' but more recently 'community cultural development') was partly prompted by the assessment that the cultural expressions of Aborigines, migrants, women, the poor and workers were rarely appreciated and poorly resourced (Kirby 1991). The movement gained great momentum after the election of the Whitlam Government and their subsequent establishment of the Aboriginal Arts Board and Community Arts and Development Committee of the Australia Council. As a consequence community arts initiatives increased emphasizing 'artswriters' as opposed to 'artists' working with non-elites to help increase broader participation in arts and cultural production, encourage community expressions of culture and promote cultural democracy (Kirby 1991, p. 19). Access and participation were two of the most formative of ideas and characteristics of community arts. The Whitlam Government argued that "access to art and culture were democratic rights and active and equal participation in them was an indicator of a just society" (Hawkins 1993, p. 31). Although more often used than clearly defined, community arts practice came to stand for work that was at least as interested in the process of arts production as the product itself. Not surprisingly important to this process was the forming of relationships between artswriters and communities, particularly communities such as prisoners, Aborigines, the poor and trade union members, who had previously been neglected by artists. Also important was the involvement of community in choosing the artistic medium, the subject matter and the rationale for cultural production (Marginson 1993, p. 255).

At a similar time there began to be a shift in approach to dealing with the lives of Indigenous Australians with the emergence of the Indigenous community controlled organization movement and popularity in ideas about 'community-based' change and community development. As well as being influenced by the global movement towards 'community' as a better means for doing government it was also shaped by calls for 'self-determination' by Indigenous groups. During this time many Aboriginal community controlled art centres grew across the country. This prompted a surge in the growth of the Aboriginal art (and subsequently general Australian export) industry. As well as supporting the local community economy this also served to support the maintenance of culture and law, buttress community claims for land rights and later native title and provide access to and a point of focus around traditional country (McCulloch and McCulloch-Childs 2008, Taylor 1996, 2004 and 2006, Thorburn 2006, Trebeck 2003, 2005, 2007a, 2007b and 2008, Trigger 2005).

During the 1990s, and arguably into the present, there has been shift towards what Taylor et al (2008, p. 94) describe as an instrumentalist approach. Here decisions about community well-being are shaped by the need to provide the best services within a "market model." Here there has been movement away from the idea that community-based initiatives are in and of themselves necessarily the best venues for quality service delivery. Instead decisions about what is best for the health of communities has shifted to new kinds of professionals, those who contract out and manage targets, outcomes, deliverables and consumers in a way that is competitive, accountable and publicly responsible. Art in this context is seen as a means for communities, particularly those who are economically marginalized, to participate more fully in

a global economy. Particularly as globalization opens up new markets and provides new forms of access to remote communities, art, cultural production and new creative economies are seen as a way for community to bridge the geographic and social gaps previously in place. These three approaches have been summarized in the following table.

**Table 3: Approaches to the use of arts in community building**

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Central Problem</b>	<b>Role of arts</b>	<b>Role of artist and community</b>
Welfare/therapy	Minor cracks in the system Family breakdown Illness and social pathology of communities	Community seen as deficit in art and culture Arts used as a tool to combat social dysfunction, community 're-engagement' and 'community healing'. Art used to teach community skills and educate to fill in gaps	Artist skilled in art and therapy Artist lead and/or direct the use of art techniques Community participate in therapeutic process Community take on more self-help learning.
Community-controlled and community-based	Poor economic and social conditions, history of colonization and cultural insensitivity, lack of community involvement in decision making, too much power of government and medical profession	Arts and culture of community already rich Local culture important in the solutions Art healthy way to help build trust and social connections Art and cultural production intrinsically important to health of community Art helpful for building community control	Strong emphasis upon arts workers working with communities to identify community-supported responses to local problems, emphasis on arts as means of participation, prevention and healthy lifestyle Artists help build confidence and capacity of community controlled services, Draw upon local culture and arts
Entrepreneurial model	Welfare dependence	Local art and cultural artifacts quaint, novel and have potential value to the market Seek out opportunities in the arts market Use arts to 'build partnerships' between community and arts companies Arts and arts training useful tool to drawing isolated communities into the market economy	Artist contracted for specialist skills Artist trains community Community become active in the creative economy Community look to develop new art and creative enterprise Community trade in art and culture

## Challenges confronting the evaluation

Given the above complexities associated with crime prevention, literacy development and community building it becomes immediately clear that evaluating the work carried out by Big *hART* is no simple undertaking. Indeed those aspiring to evaluating crime prevention, literacy development and using arts and performance in community building are confronted with a number of challenges.

The first of the challenges facing this evaluation was to establish what those involved understood as crime prevention and what kind of approach the project needed to take. By and large the Big *hART* approach sits within the community-centred model outlined earlier. It carries out its work in association with community members, literally 'sharing centre stage' with those it seeks to support. Big *hART*'s use of arts workers, performance, music and film is designed to support individual and community development. The organisation has a solid track record in working together with other organizations such as schools, welfare groups, arts companies and government. In this project Big *hART* staff committed to a long term strategy, living and working in the region for over five years. Throughout its performance work there is a clear and solid emphasis on helping communities reconfigure social attitudes, fear of crime and misconceptions about Indigenous Australians. A very strong element in the work was attempting to support the role of different generations in maintaining language, law and culture.

However, to suggest that the approach to crime prevention was simple, consistent and always unambiguous would be to misrepresent the challenges facing the work. From time to time there was some evidence of elements of the 'order maintenance' approach. For example, the first objective outlined in the agreement between Big *hART* and the Attorney General's Department implies that the project should identify and curb criminal behaviour (Objective 1: "Reduce participation in crime amongst young Pitjantjatjara people in Alice Springs.") Throughout the project's duration there were moments when staff felt a little unsure about how to tackle the crime prevention aspirations of the work.

As a consequence, it is very difficult to establish simple measures of 'success' when adopting community-based strategies for crime prevention. It is particularly the case if one attempts to definitively demonstrate a cause and effect relationship between arts practice and crime prevention (Williams 1997). In part this reflects the fact that the Big *hART* team were keen to shape the long-term quality of life of communities, not so much directly change individual behaviour. It also reflects Big *hART*'s philosophy of placing great value on art and performance as a way to open up opportunities for people to build relationships, share stories and create high quality work. In this way their approach is less driven by definitive and preconfigured outcomes.

The second main challenge confronting evaluation of this kind of work is that there seemed to be contrasting of ideas about what constitutes 'literacy'. Upon reflection Big *hART* workers confessed that they tended to accept simple and taken for granted ideas about literacy as limited to reading and writing in English. There is certainly good reason to think that a number of senior women were keen on improving young people's literacy in this way. However, as the literacy worker took on her work it became clear that there were good reasons to reconfigure and liberalise project ideas about literacy. Therefore it became difficult to understand and make important observations about the literacy work, particularly when carrying out the audit review elements of the work.

The third set of challenges for the evaluation was that it is very difficult to establish, quantify and qualify what people mean when they use the word 'community'. Regularly throughout the project plans, policy documents and governmental rhetoric people use terms like "the Anangu community", "the community process", "community cultural development", "community producers" and "community capacity building". This is by no means limited to work in this project. Indeed almost all social policy and social development work suffers from this same crisis in definition. As Malpas and Wickham (1998, p. 354) claim, there is considerable arbitrariness when thinking about any community. As a consequence the evaluation was confronted with a massive range of competing and contrasting ideas about 'community'.

For example, some treated community as necessarily tied to geography and place. Others were more inclined to see it as shaped by ideas, values and certain kinds of interests. Often it got used to imply that Anangu represent a single and unified group of people with homogenous values, experiences and interests. There were often considerable romantic ideas of community as something once experienced in a golden age and capable of reviving an unhealthy society. Here community was treated as the harbinger of hope, yearned for and seen as something to be preserved, reignited and sought after (Taylor 2003, p. 3, Delanty 2003, p. 15).

Much of this kind of thinking rests on conceptions of community associating it with a period of innocence when close, intimate and wholesome life was the norm. Here it was taken for granted that in the past Anangu were, much healthier, in control of their destiny and living in a state of perpetual paradise. This way of conceptualizing community is strongly influenced by eighteenth and early nineteenth century romantics who rediscovered the positive qualities of community that they imagined existed in the classical Greek *polis* (Mowbray 1985, p. 43). These kinds of communities, often associated with Tonnies' (1955) pre-industrial *gemeinschaft*, were seen as virtuous until spoiled by the cruel distortions of modernity and *gesellschaft* or modern forms of association.

Allied with this is the difficulty of establishing with any clarity what constitutes evidence of good arts and performance practice, particularly where it involves working with 'the community'. There were times when people seemed to imagine that there is something intrinsically wholesome about using arts and performance. Here it was assumed that there is a natural good in involving individuals in creative workshops, theatre production and film work. Rarely did it seem to be considered that art maybe used for self-serving, sinister or antisocial ends (see Michaels 1989 and 1994 for a discussion of the politics of Aboriginal art).

Another challenge confronting this evaluation is that much of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* work is carried out in what might be called the Anangu domain. In this cultural, social and political space the language, modes of understanding, forms of governance, modes of reasoning and values used are often profoundly different to the discourse, methods and rationales used in western social programme design and evaluation practice. What Anangu see as success, how they demonstrate their participation in activities and when they choose to articulate their views may not easily match conventional evaluation practice (see NPY Women's Council 2003, Foster 2007, Walsh and Mitchell, 2002, Howard 2006, Edwards 1988, Sullivan 1996 and 2007). This means that there is a profound mismatch between the language and conceptual framing used in funding agreements and the way that Anangu articulate what is needed and how to work in an Anangu setting. For example, conceptualizing Anangu needs and aspirations through reference to ideas about things such as 'crime prevention' and 'literacy development' are often unhelpful and carry no great weight.

There were also a number of important practical challenges associated with geographic distance. The fact that much of the project work occurred in remote Australia limited the extent to which regular and direct observation could occur. The expense, time and logistical challenges associated with visiting Alice Springs and the APY Lands made visits infrequent.

The principal means of contending with these challenge challenges was to document and subject to inquiry the processes (as well as the 'outcomes' or key performance indicators) used during the project, noting the shifts and movements in project practice and focusing on a breadth of evidence of the work.

## Section two: review of the work in relation to the plans

### Comparing plans with practice: *Big hART's* performance

What follows is an 'audit review' of the evidence in relation to each of the key objectives as outlined in the plans of *Big hART* in relation to the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* Project. As previously mentioned, during this part of the review process the most important guiding principle for making assessments is to seek evidence from at least three different sources.

#### **Objective No. 1 Reduce participation in crime amongst young Pitjantjatjara people in Alice Springs and region.**

The first formal objective outlined in project plans was to find ways to reduce the involvement of young Pitjantjatjara people in crime. In particular, the project sought to 'divert' young people towards socially productive activities such as digital storytelling projects, literacy development activities, mentoring in Pitjantjatjara language and performance of elements of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* stage production.

In some measure this reflects the paucity of opportunities available to many young people, particularly those living in remote settings and town camps. According to members of these communities, service organizations and a range of reports and reviews, regularly young people respond by involving themselves in crime, substance misuse and anti-social behaviour. Many young people living in these environments have difficulties in participating in 'mainstream' education and have circumstances that present challenges to those seeking to design relevant programmes. Despite these difficulties it is clearly the case that the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project has made it possible for a solid number of young people to enjoy long-term contact and involvement in a range of activities.

It is certainly the case that young people's involvement in the range of workshops, performances and projects provided diversionary activities during the time they were participating. In other words, while they were involved taking part and playing a part in these various activities they were not engaging in criminal activity. There is some evidence that young people involved in various elements of the project avoided more contact with the criminal justice system. One justice worker had this to say:

*Ngapartji Ngapartji is a fantastic diversionary program. In the early days of the project I introduced many young people and their families to Big hART people. Some had a history of using volatile substances. Because I have been doing juvenile justice work most of the young people I introduced had a background in justice related problems. Some of the young people involved come from very difficult backgrounds. But most have done really well. Some young people I introduced are still involved. I saw most of them go from strength to strength. Many of the young people haven't re-entered the criminal justice system. That in itself is very impressive (Source: Evaluation interview 2009).*

During the project's history there have been many opportunities for young people to be involved in socially productive activities. Not only is it the case that these activities stand as solid crime prevention projects, they have also successfully prepared young people to contribute constructively to various communities. This has occurred during the literacy sessions, as part of the development of the *Ninti* website, in rehearsal, tours and performances



of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* theatre production, more recently during creative development workshops and performances of *Nyuntu Ngali*, during times young people dropped in to the Ngapartji Ngaparti office in Alice Springs, and when they participate in community workshops and arts projects using music, theatre and film.

It could also be argued that the work acts to combat crime and anti-social behaviour in a number of ways. As the following discussion demonstrates, over the course of the last five years many young people have been attracted to activities that have brought them into direct working relationships with elders, other Indigenous leaders, Big *hART* staff and a range of arts mentors. Much of the work (such as filmmaking, acting, song writing) placed considerable time demands on young people. Much of it also placed considerable 'disciplinary' demands on them, helping create in young participants a high level of focus, driving them in ways that were new and unfamiliar. It is clear from the excellence of the work produced that arts mentors and young people themselves pushed each other with high expectations of quality. The difficulties associated with mastering each of the creative forms stand as testament to the fact that young people had to exhibit considerable discipline as well as creativity.

The content and substance of the workshops are also influential as indirect crime prevention strategies. During *Ngapartji Ngapartji* workshops great emphasis is placed on encouraging young people's involvement in exercises and activities that increase their active agency or ability to direct their own destiny. A consistent theme in both the stories produced and the skills development work was the ability of young people to represent themselves and their culture positively and powerfully. Some young people also turned their attention to more challenging matters, for example making films about the thorny and complex difficulties associated with petrol sniffing. In this work they relayed positive and powerful messages about the need to challenge and change certain kinds of behavior. In this way they moved well beyond crime diversionary work, tackling head on themes of care and responsibility for others. Critical in this regard was the role of Trevor Jamieson and members of the Pitjantjatjara choir. In powerful ways Trevor represented a model to young people of what can happen when one uses the arts, media, film, theatre and music workshops and presentations. As is demonstrated in film sequences from the documentary, Trevor's presence during the Ernabella tour was appreciated by scores of young people and children.

In a range of ways and in different degrees individual young people also benefited positively from the work. Often this had a direct impact on their community. Their stage, film and musical work certainly had a profound effect on audiences around the country. For example, young people learnt many practical and technical skills in arts production and operating film equipment at community film nights. Some young people built on the skills they had learnt, passing on their knowledge by acting as mentors in bush community workshops in places such as Docker River, Mimili, Ernabella and Kiwirrkurra. As a result of developing media skills through project activity one young participant commenced formal study in a Certificate III in Media. Other young people were directly involved in the post-production process, helping create a project promotional DVD, short films and language lesson films. It is clear from viewing the work that young people had a major role in the design of both the *ninti.org* and *ngapartji.org* websites. A range of young people and adults from various communities toured with the theatre show and were paid under contracts as professional performers and/or language tutors. Different young people and different women toured across the ten seasons that were presented of the two versions of the play. Some people remained consistently involved throughout this time. Both young people and elders shared with project staff in presenting at a number of conferences, radio interviews and public events.

Being able to see individual projects through various stages was also important in helping young people shift and reconfigure their interest, motivation, technical skill sets and imagination. Project staff reported to a teacher about the many achievements of a young person who had a previous history of involvement in crime:

“X was absolutely amazing and dedicated, worked really well as part of a team of professional performers, contributed many creative ideas to the process, responded really proactively to feedback, criticism, encouragement, and was a delightful addition to the team for her sense of humor and energy. She excelled in her performative role, receiving heaps of positive feedback for her work as shadow-maker, singing and playing the car-part instruments with me and a bit of dancing. X and I also spent a day spreading the word and making sure about 20 of the Pitjantjatjara community in Adelaide made it along to see the show’ (Source: Project worker journal 2007).

Representatives from a range of community and service organizations were interviewed as part of the evaluation. A number of these people were able to cite specific examples of young people who had benefited from their involvement in *Ngapartji Ngapartji* work. For example, one juvenile justice officer spoke highly of *Big hART*’s work, in particular their ability to work with young people who were not prepared to participate in other formal programs. She said. “the *Ngapartji* mob have been really important for two reasons: they are one of the few organizations in Alice who work with young people from the Pit lands and because the young people I referred have stayed involved for so long ... and we are talking about young people who often get too shame to even start on programs. I can give you a list of young people I have seen go through the court system who have gone on to do amazing things like joining the cast (she then goes on to list a range of specific individuals and the things they have done in conjunction with the project.)” Another person from an organisation working in the APY Lands said, “I get to see a range of groups who travel into the lands to deliver various youth and community programs. Most of them are trying to combat boredom, crime and anti-social behaviour. The biggest challenges for most of these groups is getting young people’s interest and being around long enough to have the trust necessary to do to the next step. The *Ngapartji Ngapartji* crew, and I can say this from first hand experience, are a top class bunch. Their youth work model is highly developed ... they use things that young people are interested in like music, film and dance to get young people to reflect on what they are doing in their lives. They are very popular in community and very much in demand. They’re work with film is some of the best youth work I’ve seen done.” (Source: Evaluation interview notes from Adelaide, APY Lands and Alice trips 2009).

**Activity:** Workshops in 3-month blocks for young people and elders to train young people in digital storytelling and teaching tools

**Performance Indicators:** Numbers of young people attending workshops. Young people participating attend regularly. Demonstrated initiatives by young people in directing activities

2006

Filming Workshops and Bush Trips with young people from town camps and communities between January & June 2006. Involved 50+ young people & families in Alice Springs, Ernabella & Docker River. Young people mentored in filming process: story making, planning, storyboarding and scripting, filming, directing and performing. This demanded they take on decision making and mentoring each other in setting, lighting, audio and selecting roles. As a consequence of this work, short films were created and later used in the *Ninti* language and culture site, previews and film

nights in local communities and a DVD compilation distributed throughout communities and camps (Sources: 2006 Progress Report, *Ninti* language website, arts workers journals from 2006)

Further evidence of young people's involvement can be seen in the various films and credits. For example the *Ngapartji Ngapartji Promotional video*, the 'Video Compilation for Youth' DVD contain edited films made by young people in the workshops, 5 music video clips of the songs recorded by young people in workshops, 6 short story films made by young people from Docker River in January 2006 (Sources: the various productions cited above).

Various communities were shown the work of young people at film nights. For example: *Abbotts Camp Film Night* was initiated by young people and involved 50 people from the community attending a public screening. A core group of young people were instrumental in managing the evening. This was reported as being the first time something of this nature was carried out at Abbotts Camp (Sources: Project Worker Journal 2006, Film Mentor Notes 2006, Project Reports 2006, DVD - *Ngapartji Ngapartji Documentary: Video Compilation for Youth*, [www.ninti.ngapartji.org](http://www.ninti.ngapartji.org), 2006 Progress Report).

The project Reference Group was established and involved 8 senior women giving advice to the project team and helping develop and monitor work that was created by young people. This was an important element in the development of language and culture and to ensure appropriate and approved content on the *Ninti* site.

Elders also participated in the recording of language, music and story for the films. The *Ninti* site welcome is a key example, as are lessons on waltja (Sources: Project Worker Journal 2006, Film Mentor Notes 2006, Project Reports 2006, DVD - *Ngapartji Ngapartji Documentary: Video Compilation for Youth*, [www.ninti.ngapartji.org](http://www.ninti.ngapartji.org)).

Young people participated in workshops developing self-profiles for the 2006 tour. This included using photos and their own stories, digital media and software to develop profiles for the performance programs and publicity. (Project Worker Report 06, 2006 Progress Report, *Ngapartji Ngapartji Promotional video*)

## 2007

In April 2007 staff visited Ernabella and Amata to provide music and filming workshops and choir work for the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* performance with young people. During the workshops 42 people participated in music work and film. Of these 31 were women, three were young men and eight participated in film and photographic work (Source: Ernabella/Amata Workshop Report 07).

The project team visited Kiwirrkurra in Western Australian and carried out Film Workshops in July 2007. Young people made a series of short films. There was a compilation DVD produced of 6 films. Young people were actively involved in the production process through all stages. For example – "Two Girls Were Left Behind" by MW included a cast of 12 young women. Project workers mentored young people while they carried out the story development and filming. The work included language translation and creation of sub titles. The film credits list all involved. (Sources: Kiwirrkurra DVD July 2007, Project Workers Notes)

*Ngapartji Ngapartji* staff worked in conjunction with members of the Ernabella Children's Choir to produce a CD of the Choir's Tour to the Festival of Music in Adelaide. Recordings were put together in the School Hall and later recorded and produced by *Ngapartji Ngapartji* in October 2007 (Source: Ernabella Children's Choir 2007 Recordings CD).

During the October visit to Ernabella music sessions were carried out with 6 elders who recorded old songs and stories (Sources: Project Worker Weekly Report 8-19<sup>th</sup> October 2007, Recordings of elders 2007).

In November 2007 *Ngapartji Ngapartji* staff travelled to Ernabella to carry out music workshops. These sessions attracted 50 young people over the course of the workshops (Source: Progress Report No 1 March 31 2008).

Young people often visited during times when staff worked in Alice Springs the IAD office. While in attendance young people would be encouraged to participate in impromptu workshops and arts-based activities such as filming, editing and interpreting. The nature of the project made it possible for workers to 'kick off' workshops very quickly by drawing young people into the arts, filming and performance production work. For example, there would often be post-production filming work that young people would be encouraged to help with. Often staff would cleverly incorporate literacy activities, inviting young people to act as cultural translators or co-editors. The attendance or 'dropping-in' of young people was consistent. For example, from October 2007 to March 2008, 60 young people visited. Of this number, there was regular and consistent attendance of 20 young people and 40 young people 'dropped-in' irregularly. Of this group 7 young people maintained consistent involvement to the extent that they were invited to join the 2008 tour of Sydney (Sources: Progress Report No1 March 31 2008, Evaluation field notes from Alice Springs visit, November 2007).

## 2008

In April 2008 staff visited the Pipalyatjara community to carry out filmmaking workshops. Over 50 community members participated with the emphasis of contact being on young people between the ages of 12-20 (including children from 5-12.). During the workshops a DVD compilation was produced. This included 3 short films; one documentary style film; 2 video clips; one edited piece including much of the footage shot by young people showing all the activities in which they participated during the program; one uncut piece including all 'leftover' footage that didn't make a film. Young people later distributed copies of this work throughout the community. Furthermore a community film night was held with all community members invited (Sources: Pipalyatjara Filmmaking workshop Report 2008, CDs of photos from Pipalyatjara workshops showing young people involved in activities including storyboarding, drawing, writing, video and music, Report in APY Youth Worker newsletter, Evaluation notes of interview with local youth worker who was present in Pipalyatjara and participated in the workshops 2009).

In September and October 2008 staff visited Pukatja (Ernabella) to carry out Sound Lab Workshops. Over 100 Pukatja/APY Lands residents participated and were directly involved in recording music and approximately another 50 observed and interacted with the project. Big *hART* arts workers and technicians who also offered song writing sessions and video clip production workshops facilitated the studio. There was regular participation of 24 young men and women, 10 adult women, 6 older women and 70 children. The workshops produced the CD 'Ngurakutu Ara' sold to people throughout the community. The school managed the sale of this CD, with proceeds going towards the purchase of music equipment for the community. 'Tracks of the Desert', a Central Australian based recording company participated in the recording process and offered to manage the production and distribution of Gospel albums that were also produced during the workshops. All music has also been loaded onto the school's media room computer, which is accessible to the entire community after school hours. Copies of CDs have been distributed to all participants. This material will also be archived with Ara Irititja (Sources: Pukatja Sound Lab Project Report, Progress Report 1 March 08, CD of photos documenting workshop activities and young people's involvement, Ngurakutu Ara CD and Track Notes, Gospel CD, Evaluation notes of interview with local women at Pukatja October 2009).

During a number of these sessions young people were invited to participate in digital storytelling workshops. Here they were able to experiment with multimedia technology as a means to develop: their digital literacy, language repertoire in both Pitjantjatjara and English, skills in language 'code switching', public speaking and performance skills. This work also paved the way for similar

presentations to be made in more public settings. For example, a young woman's digital story was presented at the Youth Learning Symposium and Kungka Careers Seminar in 2008. This work has subsequently been used as an example in a literacy development project (Sources: Project Worker's Reports 2008, Literacy Report 2008, Youth Learning Symposium Proceedings DVD 2008).

There is also considerable evidence of young people's on-going and 'deep' participation in the vast archive of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* Documentaries and films. In very detailed ways this film work demonstrates young people's central role as 'on-camera tutors' in the *ninti* language course. Video clips demonstrate young people's participation in writing, recording, performing and filming music. Photo records also show how active young people were during the workshop process. The content of a number of short films reveal an immense depth of interest in topics of social consequence to their communities. For example a petrol sniffing story produced in Docker River and film about social responsibility and care towards others both show that young people involved are absorbed in thinking about their behaviour and the future of their community (Sources: 6 short films from Docker River, Project Promotional Video, Photographic records of workshops).

There is also evidence that taken together with the work of other organizations such as the Pukatja School, NYP Women's Council and local youth workers *Ngapartji Ngapartji* workshops provided young people with socially productive 'work' to do, thereby diverting them from crime and anti-social behavior. As one local community worker put it, "you need to understand that young people don't have much to do in this community ... this means one workshop series that happens over the school holidays is like manna from heaven ... young people have suddenly something of substance to do". There was clearly a depth and regularity of workshops in 2008. Indeed between 6 July 2008 to 25 September 2008 the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* team visited Ernabella 8 times to host workshops (Sources: ArtsSA Grant Documentation 2008, Workshop journals 2008).

## 2009

In preparation for the performance of *Nyuntu Ngali*, creative development workshops were held in Ernabella. Over 50 people attended these workshops and activities over a one-week period. In addition, the performers travelled to Adelaide a month in advance of the performance at the Adelaide Festival Centre and carried out intensive creative development workshops (Sources: Sound Studio Report 09, Song Writing Workshop Report Ernabella Jan 09.doc).

Staff visited Mimili and hosted the Mimili Anangu Dance Workshop series. Over 60 young people and their families participated in dance, music and video production workshops. In part these workshops set the scene for Mimili to field a dance performance at the APY Dance Competition in Ernabella. The workshop process, rehearsals, the performance at Ernabella, the victory celebrations and a couple of additional videos feature on a DVD produced. This DVD provides dazzling evidence of young people's active involvement in the creation of an impressive performance piece. Taken together with project notes the DVD offers remarkable evidence of young people negotiating conflict, rebuilding relationships with others in the community and the creation of high quality dance (Sources: Mimili Report 09, Mimili Dance Workshops DVD, evaluation notes).

Members of the 'Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji' documentary team visited Ernabella four times. The purpose of these visits was to meet with members of the community (including young people), carry out interviews, check about the content of the documentary and show a number of different versions or rough cuts. Sessions varied in purpose and size. However, during the final visit a rough cut was screened to over fifty members of the community. At least 30 of this group were children and young people (Source: Evaluation notes 09).

**Activity:** Literacy component of workshops aimed at increasing literacy skills of participants  
**Performance Indicators:** Literacy skills increase over project, as assessed by literacy professional at intervals shown in Milestones

Prior to the employment of the Literacy Worker considerable literacy development occurred in many of the elements of the project including community-based workshops, film production, music recording and performance of the stage show. Indeed literacy development was a cornerstone of the work that shaped the *ninti* language website lessons. Young people's involvement in this project saw them act as cultural and language ambassadors. The creation of language resources was partly made possible because young people acted as translators in the process of developing and negotiating Pitjantjatjara language. Constantly young people were forced to move between two distinct literacy domains, making it possible for a non-Pitjantjatjara speaking audience to become more 'literate' in Pitjantjatjara language. One could say that they took on the role of being 'literacy tutors', a task that would have no doubt sharpened their own repertoire in Pitjantjatjara and English (Source: *ninti* website, Final report 2010).

## 2008

Australian National University Researcher Dr Inge Kral undertook NRS literacy assessments whilst young people were on the January Sydney tour of *Ngapartji Ngapartji*. The initial plan was to assess young people at different stages of their involvement in the literacy work. In association with discussions with Dr Kral the project team concluded from this assessment that the NRS testing process would not provide instructive in 1) assessing base-line literacy data of Pitjantjatjara speaking young people, 2) assessing the impact of literacy programmes in a Pitjantjatjara context or 3) assessing the potential of work designed to build culturally relevant and 'multiple' literacies (see the discussion of literacy in later sections of the report). The team decided to reconfigure plans for the literacy work so that evidence of literacy development would be recorded using a 'portfolio' approach. This decision reflects a shift in assessment and evaluation of literacy away from an externally designed 'technicist' and instrumental measure of immediate literacy outcomes. The project team decided to replace this approach with an alternative form of recording literacy. This involved documenting 1) the range of non-written forms of literacy young people use, 2) young people's involvement in new and digitally-based 'text' domains (eg. film, photography, performance are recognised as 'texts'), 3) the processes used to encourage young people's use of these new texts, 4) portfolios of work young people produce using digital forms of text. When this work is added to the rich assortment of film, music, dance, photographic and other performance work carried out by young people it provides a solid archive of learning and development across a range of 'literacy domains'. (Sources: Progress Report No 1 March 31 2008, Portfolios of young people's work 2008-2009).

Examples of evidence of young people's literacy development include:

- CD of photos of literacy components of workshops and training in Alice Springs Office. These include examples of young people's involvement in multi media and arts-based learning activities,
- Individual portfolios of the work of young people participating in the literacy project.
- Digitally-based biographies prepared by young people using iMovie (film editing software)
- Film and documentary production
- Participation and public speaking at conferences and workshops
- Written and photographic work posted on the walls of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* office
- Written work in script development and story boarding in film workshops
- Involvement in documenting elements of song writing workshops
- Design and written work in poster and advertising too
- Creation of animation and cartoons for individual portfolios
- Production of digital stories by using software such as iMovie
- Rehearsals and performance of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* production in Sydney, Ernabella

and Alice Springs (Sources: Young people's digital biographies, Evaluation notes on performances, portfolios and workshops, Literacy worker reports 2008, Literacy portfolios 2007-2009)

The Literacy worker and two young women participated in the NPY Kungka Careers Conference. Hamilton Downs. This event was organised by NPY Women's Council. These two young women attended the conference and presented their own DVD film work (Sources: Pipalyatjara Filmmaking Workshop Report, Literacy Report May 2008).

#### 2009

A number of literacy-focused activities were carried out including the March attendance of two young women at Youth Learning Workshop, Thakeperte. This event was a two-day workshop for Indigenous young people to share skills, stories and learn amongst peers. Dr. Inge Kral, a Research Fellow from the Australian National University, convened the event (Source: Literacy worker journal 2009, DVD produced with young people's reports presented in digital story mediums).

The Literacy worker and two young women participated in the Lifespan Learning and Literacy - Youth Learning Symposium in Darwin. The literacy work carried out as part of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project was used as an example of an approach to building literacy skills in young people. Young women demonstrated their skills and products made through their work with other Symposium attendees (Source: Youth Learning Symposium, Darwin 2009. DVD, Literacy Coordinator Report 2009).

**Activity:** Community mentoring to reconnect young people with language and culture

**Performance Indicators:** Numbers of elders and families responding to the process and work

#### 2006

The *ninti* language and culture site development indicates substantial numbers of elders and families have responded positively to the work of young people. For instance, workshops and viewing of films made by young people has afforded elders the opportunity to discuss important language and cultural information amongst themselves, with young people and project workers. Project workers have remarked on the energy and enthusiasm the senior women have for watching the short films made by the young people. This promotes long discussions about the shifts and the continuities in language and practices as well as offering a real indicator of where their young people are at as far as their Language skills and literacy (Source: Project report 2006, Workshop journals 2006, *ninti* language site 2006).

There is clear evidence that elders had direct involvement in the development of the *Ninti* site. For example, the films for welcome and pronunciation feature key Indigenous linguists Lorna Wilson and Pantitji McKenzie (Sources: *Ninti* language course 2006).

Other records show Elders speaking well about the role young people were having in language strengthening, online teaching through the *ninti* site and through the live *Ngapartji Ngapartji* performances (Sources: Project Worker Reports 2006, Feedback Summaries and quotes from elder 2006). For example, one senior woman said, "we highly value work like this which sees our youngfellas, young women and children continuing to build skills and be creative." Another said, "we saw all the good things with young people, video-making, recording, everything...is that part of NN? Cause that part is so good, helping young people think they can DO things, kids taking photographs. Rhoda's video-clip. So many good videos made by *Ngapartji Ngapartji*" (Source: Memory Basket 2010). Artists from Ernabella made comments like: "*Ngapartji Ngapartji* have been coming here for a number of years and helping give our young people things to do, giving them strength and showing us that they can be healthy" (Source: Evaluation notes of visit to Ernabella 2009).

In part this reflects the way *Big hART* staff drew upon culturally relevant processes to encourage young people's involvement. Performer and co-writer Trevor Jamieson described it this way:

"it was good because they (young people) found out how to communicate through the arts, through theatre. Theatre has a certain protocol, has also a similar protocol which has with their traditional ways, their performing and telling stories and such so they understood that this was time to try and integrate them socially with all these other things that are out there" (Source: Memory Basket 2010).

As earlier discussion demonstrates there is considerable evidence that elders and families responded well and participated in events, activities and performances. One young woman said:

"I went to Docker River with Dani and Suzy to make films with young people. I learned about using the camera. I worked with some of my family who live there. We made films in Pitjantjatjara language" (Source: Memory Basket 2010).

Between January and June 2006 the *Big hART* team hosted filming workshops and Bush Trips with over 50 young people and family members attending from Alice Springs town camps and Ernabella and Docker River. This work resulted in the production of a series of films used on the *Ninti* language and culture site. A DVD compilation of these films was distributed throughout communities and camps where young people stay (Sources: *Ngapartji Ngapartji* Documentaries Video Compilation for Youth DVD, Project workshop reports 2006).

Communities responded to the work by attending premieres: For example a film night was hosted at Abbots Camp. Young people who wanted to show their films in their community initiated this event. Fifty people from the community attending. (Sources: Project Worker Journal 2006, Film Mentor Notes 2006, Project Reports 2006, DVD- *Ngapartji Ngapartji* Documentaries Video Compilation for Youth, [www.ninti.ngapartji.org](http://www.ninti.ngapartji.org), Progress Report 2006)

It is also important to note that a Language Reference Group was established. This group was made up of eight senior women all of whom also participated in developing and monitoring work that was created by young people. This both ensured appropriate and approved content was used on the *Ninti* site and also helped build strong connections between young people and elders. Elders also participated in the recording of language, music and story on film. All of this occurred with young people also involved in the film production. The *ninti* site welcome is one example of how this worked, as are lessons on *waltja* (Sources: Project Worker Journal 2006, Film Mentor Notes 2006, Project Reports 2006, DVD- *Ngapartji Ngapartji* Documentaries Video Compilation for Youth, [www.ninti.ngapartji.org](http://www.ninti.ngapartji.org)).

## 2007

In April 2007 42 people participated in music work and film at Ernabella/Amata music workshop. This work was carried out in preparation for *Ngapartji Ngapartji* choir work and development (Source: Ernabella/Amata Workshop Report 07, Project photographs).

In October 2007 a recording session was hosted at Ernabella with six elders to record old songs and stories (Source: Project Worker Weekly Report, 8-19<sup>th</sup> October 2007).

In October 2007 a planning session was held at Ernabella with 9 senior women in order to plan the forthcoming *Ngapartji Ngapartji* Tour of Ernabella. This meeting canvassed a range of items and included a discussion of which elders and young people were to tour and a range of strategies to support relationships between the generations and cultures while on tour (Project Worker Weekly Report 8-19<sup>th</sup> October 2007)



In 2007 *Ngapartji Ngapartji* toured to the Perth International Festival. Cast members included seven young people and eight elder women.

Tours of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* Performance involved considerable contact between elders and young people. The very nature of the theatre piece demands that elders and young people work closely together, singing, acting, dancing and performing on the stage. According to workers and performers, the relationships that developed on-stage were also taken off stage with young people and elders living together, attending events together and sharing meals together.

One young person described it in this way:

Nganana anu ngura patunguru travelingu Citykutu, munula teachermilanu walpala tjuta wangkantjaku kulunypa Pitjantjatjara. Munu ngayuku kamingku nintiningi - Amanyilu Tjukurpa irititja tjuta-puyutjara. Munu ngayuku kami Lornanya-paluru pula tjukurpa irititja tjutatjara wangkangi. Munu nganana nintiningi nyaaku-tjukurpa tjuta kulira nintiringkunytjaku nganampa Pitjantjatjarangka.

We travelled from home a long way to the City, we then teach white people to speak a little bit of our language. And my grandmother Amanyi talks about her story that happened a long time ago - about the smoke. And my grandmother Lorna - they both talk about the story of long time ago, and why are teaching this because they can listen, learn in our language.

In between tours and travel to community there was regular contact between staff, young people and others in the community. At the IAD Office, Alice Springs there was regular attendance with family members of young people routinely popping in to catch up, check photo galleries from workshops and tours and join in with film production. On average at least 30 people visited the office each week (Source: Progress Report No. 1 March 31 2008).

The project also brought together elders and young people in other ways. For example, film was used to 'draw out' the stories of young people and give others a chance to see their work. Film nights were routinely part of workshops and visits to communities. This provided communities with an opportunity to gather young people and elders at the same event, something not regularly achieved in these places. It also provided communities with the means to see what young people were up to and celebrate their achievement. For example, as part of the Kiwirrkurra Film Workshops young people made a series of six short films. A DVD was produced and distributed throughout the community. The films were screen at a community gathering so that elders could see films such as "Two Girls Were Left Behind", enjoy and note the cast of 12 local young women (Sources: Kiwirrkurra DVD July 2007, Project Workers Notes 2007).

## 2008

In early 2008 *Ngapartji Ngapartji* toured to the Sydney International Festival to perform shows over five weeks as part of the Sydney Festival. The show sold out, and cast received a standing ovation every night. As well as eight Pitjantjatjara ladies in the choir, six young people from Docker River and Abbots Camp tour and perform with the show, living in Sydney, and participating in a range of promotional, leisure and cultural activities (Sources: Sydney Festival Guide 2008, Review of the show 2008, Project Report 2008).

As mentioned earlier, in April 2008 members of the *Big hART* team travelled to Pipalyatjara to carry out filmmaking workshops. There were over 50 participants in the work and a DVD was produced that included examples of the film work. As was often the case with trips to remote communities, a film night was held with all community members invited. This kind of event provides an important opportunity for children, young people, parents and elders to share time together. It also provides a powerful venue where young people's achievements can be celebrated and held up as a symbol of their contribution to the community. In settings where elders are increasingly feeling a disjuncture

between themselves and young people events such as these can help create optimism and stimulate more positive contact between generations (Sources: Pipalyatjara Filmmaking workshop Report, Photographic records from Pipalyatjara workshops 2008, DVD of Pipalyatjara films 2008).

As mentioned earlier, in October 2008 the project team visited Ernabella to host the Pukatja Sound Lab Workshops. Over 100 people were involved in recording music and approximately another 50 participated without directly involving themselves in recording. Those involved 24 young men and women, 10 adult women, 6 older women and 70 children. Young men and women recorded songs and clips. There was writing of original music pieces and a very productive CD recording programme. In total five CDs were recorded, including Pukatja ladies producing a gospel CD, women recording a reggae album and a special CD of 'inma irititja' or old songs remembered by the old people. The women also requested the Arts Centre hold this CD for use in the 2008 '60-year' arts centre celebrations. Two discos were also held to showcase live performance and music. Local musicians performed the songs they recorded over the workshop period. Many community members attended. (Sources: Progress Report No1 March 31 2008, Pukatja Sound Lab Project Report, CDs of songs).

Also of importance was that the music workshops prompted considerable discussion amongst senior women about the potential for such an event to bring various members of the community together. Discussion also focused upon control of musical products, the management of distribution, income generation and access to music for children, young people and families. This discussion led to some important decisions being made and plans for community control of the music and management of the income (Sources: Pukatja Sound Lab Project Report, Progress Report 1 March 08, CD of photographic documentation of workshops, Ngurakutu Ara CD, evaluation notes 2009).

The company tour of Ernabella in late 2008 provided one of the most potent opportunities for young people to work closely with senior people, others from the community and a cast and crew from many different backgrounds and locations. As is mentioned elsewhere, the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* production has young people sharing the stage with senior Anangu as well as non-Indigenous actors and musicians. The rehearsal process brought all involved into the most intimate of contact for long periods of time.

In addition, the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* Performance at Ernabella evoked strong feedback from community members and cast. For example, one senior woman said:

*"Walytja (family) is like, grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, big brother, big sister. I think of it like this: If we work together, stand together we are family. You and all of us are together, all of you are our family, all those who work with Ngapartji Ngapartji. Palya"* (Source: Documentary interview transcriptions 2008, Memory Basket 2010).

Another had this to say in a letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2006:

*Ngayulu Naminya. Ngayulu teacher Ernabellalanguru. Nganana mukuringanyi panya nganana kuwari Ngapartji-ngapartjilanguru nyanganyi munu nintiringanyi panya wiru tjuta ngaranyi wati youngfella tjuta munu kungkawara tjuṅangu nyakula nintiringkunyjtaku Ngapartji-ngapartjilanguru. Panya nganana mukuringanyi tjana nyanga palumpa nintiringkula tjana ngula nitiringkuku movie palyantjaku, inma inkanyjtaku munu recordamilantjaku, munu DVD palyantjaku.*

*Panya tjana kutjupa-kutjupa wiru tjuta wiya ngaranyngka kura tjuta palyalpai munu tjituru-tjituru nyinapai, pukulpa wiya, waarka wiru wiyangka. Ka nganana mukuringanyi kuwari wiru nyanga tjuta nintiringkula tjana ninti pulkaringkunyjtaku. Munula kulini tjingarū Ngapartji-ngapartjiku wali nyangangka ngaranyjtaku youngfella tjuta munu kungkawara tjuta nintiringkunyjtaku. Ka tjana ngula nintiringkula tjingarū ankuku community kutjupa tjuṅakutu munu youngfella kutjupa tjuta nintinma. Kaya tjingarū nyakula kulira idea wiru ngaranyngka tjana mukuringkula pitjala*

*nintiringama.*

*My name is ##. I am a teacher from Ernabella. Currently, we are seeing and approving of the good work that is been done by Ngapartji-Ngapartji, teaching and working with our young men and women. This is really the kind of thing we like to see – they are learning meaningful things like making films, playing and recording music and making DVD's.*

*Often our young people are getting into trouble, behaving badly with little to do, and are depressed. They are not involved in good work. We want so much for them to learn positive things and become skilled. We are thinking it would be good to have a building for Ngapartji-Ngapartji, from which to work with our young men and women. Perhaps once they have learnt good skills they could in turn travel to other communities and teach other young people. It's possible that others will see this as a good idea and travel here to learn (Sources: Documentary interview transcriptions 2008, Letter of support from community 2008, Evaluation notes Ernabella tour 2008).*

## **2009**

During the early part of 2009 the *Big hART* team visited Ernabella a number of times to host creative development workshops for the *Nyuntu Ngali* performance. These workshops involved 50 people from a mix of age groups, including senior women and young people. As was the case with development, tours and performance of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* performance the creative development process often brings young people and elders (and the knowledge, stories and language of elders) into intimate contact, working together, sharing ideas and negotiating what and how the performance will be produced (Sound Studio Report 09, Song Writing Workshop Report Ernabella Jan 09, Evaluation notes Adelaide tour 2009).

As mentioned earlier, during 2009 the Documentary Team visited Ernabella four times. The function of these visits were to film additional interviews, check the proposed content of the documentary and give the community an opportunity to see rough cuts of the film. These visits also provided a range of opportunities for senior people to participate in workshops, filming, sound recording, discussions about the film's content and talk about the future of *Big hART's* work in the region. The numbers of people involved varied from visit to visit depending on the work being undertaken. However, this work attracted considerable interest and involvement. For example, at the final rough cut screening there were over 60 people who attended. During the same visit staff consulted with a range of community members about the content of the film and the musical work planned to be released on a compilation CD (Sources: Evaluation notes of Ernabella visit October 2009).

The Mmili Anangu Dance Workshops and APY Dance Competition (discussed earlier) also attracted considerable community involvement. This involvement varied from assistance with rehearsals, community conflict resolution to allow the dancers to travel to Ernabella and attendance at the competition. Over 200 people from the Mimili community attended dance performances in Mimili and Ernabella to watch their children perform. Over 500 people (from all over the APY Lands) attended the APY Dance competition in Ernabella (Sources: Mimili Report 09, Mimili Dance Workshops and performance DVD 2009).

The work attracted considerable community support and gratitude. Key leaders and other members of communities such as Pukatja are acutely aware of the demands and troubles facing young people. Indeed rarely does one see such care and attention for the future of children and young people. Senior people express a strong desire that their young people have opportunities to live in a world with a balanced mix of strong Pitjantjatjara language, traditional culture and participation in the market economy and new forms of culture and technology. A number of senior people expressed unambiguously the view that the work of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* team was very important in this regard.

For example, one senior community member and performer in the 2007 Ngapartji Ngapartji Perth tour had this to say:

*To whom it may concern,*

*Uwa nganana mukuringanyi kutjupa kutjupa tjuta palyara unkunytjikitja. Panya Ngapartji Ngapartjilu warka wiru palyaningi ngura winkingka, communityngka kulu ka nyara palula ngura winkinguru tjunguringkula show wiru nyakula pukalaringi. Tjitji tjutangku, minyma tjuta kulu tjunguringkula wiru palyaningi. Kala palulanguru nganana kutupa kutjupa tjuta palyara unkunytjikitjangku kulini.*

*Tjinguru watarkuringkuntja wiyangku palyara unkunytjikitjangku kulini rawangku kanyintjaku munu rawangku kulintjaku show nyanga palunya. Panya Ngapartji Ngapartjilu, paluru walytjangku kulira palyantja wiya, palaru palumpa walytja tjuta bombnguru wiyaringkuyangka kulira tjukurpa mulapa tjunu showngka, show nyaratja nyakula kulintjaku, irititja tjuta. Unytjangku palyantja wiya, show nyaratja paluru palyanu mulapa. Tjungungkula palyanu, Trevorlu kutjungku wiya.*

*Palu show kutju wiya, panya tjitji tjuta nintiningi munu videongka kulu picture mantjiningi kala watarkuringkuntja wiyangku palyantja tjuta palyara unkunytjikitja mukuringanyi.*

*Panya Ngapartji Ngapartjilu tjuta palyanu – wangkanja, cd tjana palyanu, picture palyanu, ngura tjutanguruya palyanu Docker Riverlanguru, Mimililanguru, Pukatjalanguru, Alice Springalanguru ka panya tjananya pulkara nintiningi, inkantjaku, wangkanytjaku, picture palyantjaku munu tjanampa tjukurpa wangkanytjaku. Tjanampa warka pulka ngarangi.*

*Yes, we are wanting to make something to give back containing all the various creations. Because you know Ngapartji Ngapartji has carried out so much important work in many different locations, in communities too. From all these places, we have come together to create and gain pleasure from seeing and being involved in a great show. Young people and women have joined to create a wonderful production. So we are thinking we would like to make something to celebrate this and distribute.*

*We are thinking about making something to hand out so that we don't forget about the project and have something to keep and are able to remember the show for a long time. You know, Ngapartji Ngapartji, well he, (Trevor Jamieson) didn't make this on his own – he thought deeply about the family who had passed away because of the bombs and placed a true story in the context of a show. The show has given people the opportunity to really consider the past. It wasn't just a quick production – that show was made thoughtfully and truthfully. We made it together – Trevor did not create it alone.*

*But it is not simply a show, it has been about teaching young people about video and film-making etc. We don't want to forget this so we'd like to be able to give out a selection of things that have been created. Because you know Ngapartji Ngapartji have produced many things, language work, they've made CDs, videos – people in many places have created things, from Docker River, from Mimili, from Pukatja, from Alice Springs. They have really taught a great deal – singing and playing music, making films and telling stories. Their work has been vast (Source: Letter of support 2007).*

These kinds of remarks are supported by other groups who worked in conjunction with Ngapartji Ngapartji to create opportunities for Pitjantjatjara language to be maintained and learnt. For example, the Publisher of IAD Press said:

## TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

*IAD Press would like to add its voice to the acclamation already received by the organisers and participants in the “Ngapartji, Ngapartji” project and all they have achieved to date in the promotion of an Indigenous language into mainstream society, while instilling pride in the community participants who have performed admirably with professionalism and proficiency.*

*IAD Press’ published language materials were supported by the Project Coordinator when the performance premiered at the Melbourne Festival in 2005 – securing permission to use IAD Press’s “Language Distribution Map” in the performance to locate the community as the source of language, story and culture. Further, copies of IAD Press’ current catalogue were distributed to audiences of the performance.*

*IAD Press is aware of and supports the proposed extension of the initial performance-based language promotion through the design and delivery of an “on-line” Pitjantjatjara language course. Electronic media knows no bounds and this development has the capacity to extend the reach of language and cultural promotion across many borders.*

*IAD Press looks forward to the opportunity to partner the “Ngapartji Ngapartji” project into the future, by ensuring adequate supply of dictionaries and other published language resources to the Project, so that these publications facilitate further the learning and engagement of people with the language and culture of the Pitjantjatjara peoples.*

*“Ngapartji Ngapartji” is looking outwards from community but also into community, particularly towards young people and using the workshop and production program that will develop the language course materials as a means to instil pride in language and culture, thus reengaging the youth of the community with that knowledge and understanding that will contribute significantly to their health, wellbeing and capacity.*

*IAD Press acknowledges the aspirations of “Ngapartji Ngapartji” and would encourage contributions of financial support to facilitate the outcomes that have already been demonstrated as being achievable and worthwhile (Source: Letter of support 2007).*

**Activity:** Public showcasing of work locally, nationally and internationally, through public events and mainstream media.

**Performance Indicators:** Numbers of public attending public showcasing of work; Number of media mentions of project.

A more detailed list of the tours, performances, workshops, reviews and other events that provided opportunities for showcasing the project’s work will feature later in the report. Examples of these events include:

### **2004**

In September a pilot language lesson was produced and created in Coober Pedy.

In October a concept plan was presented to the Major Festivals Initiative (MFI) in Melbourne.

### **2005**

The *Ngapartji Ngapartji* Theatre Performance played a season at the Melbourne International Arts Festival from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2005. Six young people and a choir from Ernabella

toured with the company. This included a five night pilot season of a 'work in progress'. The key focus of the performance was on language teaching of the audience each night followed by a performance of a small section of the major story. All five performances were sold out. Audience feedback was very positive and demonstrated that the exposure to language worked well for people. It also shows that the experience for audiences was an active one where exposure to language and culture was appreciated. For example, some of those surveyed said,

- Lessons very accessible, some easier than others!
- Good to revise every night.
- Great and the online lessons were helpful.
- Speed ok, I found going over the words (repeating) useful.
- Proper speed
- Perfect I want a good year of this. I love listening to speakers talking to others, it helps to learn.
- They were just right on Sat night.
- Very accessible, pace was fine. But I do already have experience with aboriginal languages.
- Accessible and appropriate pace.
- I'm old so I could have had more repetition.
- Overall very good. Some areas too repetitive but understandable given attendance patterns. Family tree was confusing! Could just be me (Sources: MIAF Program 2005, MIAF 2006 Program, Audience Survey 15<sup>th</sup> October 2005).

## **2006**

In March the first language lessons are uploaded onto '*ninti*' (the language website) and the first subscribers start to learn online. Young people act as 'tutors' (those featuring on short films) and assist with the production of the work (Sources: Project Report 2006, Project website 2006).

A developmental show, attended by over 700 people, was performed at the Araluen Centre. Alice Springs, June 8-9 2006. The performance provided an opportunity to trial music, set and script with an audience. Feedback was sought so that further development could be carried out for the world premiere at the Melbourne International Arts Festival 2006. Audience feedback was generally very positive. For example, one person interviewed said, "The use of language and the songs drew the audience in and ... appealed to all audience members, at any intelligence level. It was entertaining, educational and historical. I liked the old song and the old history. Overall I felt it conveyed the messages very clearly" Another said, "It was great in some ways and not in others. Great story and the opening to other stories round the world. Dragged in places, very long and it was unclear how some things related to others. I didn't get why the video of the brother was so important, though obviously important to Trevor." (Sources: Project Report Feb 06, Alice Springs Audience Feedback June 2006, Phone Interviews by RedHOT Arts Marketing 2007).

A season of the show played at the Melbourne Festival October 31- November 5 2006. All six performances of the show were sold out, received very positive reviews and commanded a standing ovation each night. About 300 people attended in total. Interestingly some people came every night for five nights as there was an option to buy single tickets or one ticket to the entire five nights. About 80 people came all five nights (Sources: Project Report Feb 07, Performance reviews).

A 'boutique performance' of the show (designed to present a smaller show with a stronger emphasis upon language) played at the Message Sticks Festival Sydney Opera House November 2006. The show was sold out with about two thousand people attending. It received glowing reviews (Sources: Message Sticks Performance Program, Performance reviews, Project Report Feb 07, Melbourne Arts Festival Programs 2005 and 2006, Message Sticks Performance Program, Over 40 print and online media reviews and reports have been sighted).

This work was also supported by three short language lessons nationally broadcasted on Triple J Radio. The intention of this broadcast was to “cover the production (*Ngapartji Ngapartji* show) and open audiences up to indigenous languages.” Each lesson was broadcast and repeated across the network for a week, reaching a national audience of over a million people. These provided a direct link for people to the Nint language website (Source: letter of support from Cath Dwyer, Co-ordinator, J arts project 2006).

## **2007**

In February 2007 the show toured the UWA Perth International Arts Festival February 2007. Almost 2500 people attended the sell out shows and reviews celebrated the artistic merit of the work (Sources: Project report 2007, Evaluation notes of performance 2007).

‘Kungu Kutju – Tjituru-Tjituru Anyani’ screened at the Remote Fest 07 Youth Film Festival in Alice Springs. The film’s subject matter is the social consequences of petrol sniffing in remote community and was by Maureen Watson, a young woman from Docker River. In Sydney the film features as part of a presentation at the international conference OURMedia, Nestros Medios VI (Sources: Project website 2007, Project report 2007).

In May a Pitjantjatjara learning group started up in Sydney.

In Alice Springs, Peter Garrett launched the theatre show tour, the new Ngapartji.org website.

In July the promotional DVD was launched at The Dreaming Festival in Queensland (Source: Project website 2007).

The show toured a version of the language show to the Dreaming Festival in Queensland, and the Adelaide Cabaret Festival in South Australia. About 800 people attended the Cabaret festival and about 1500 at the Dreaming festival. The show plays to full houses and prompts positive responses from the media and audience (Source: MFI Acquittal Report 2006).

A new language lesson is added to the website. This is a film made by the young women from Docker River. Young people are also involved in adding photos to the website gallery.

In October members of the community recorded five albums and several music video clips during workshops. These include a reggae compilation, three gospel albums, a recording by the Ernabella Children’s Choir and a selection of songs from the past. As a result, two of the albums ‘Ngurakutu Ara –Desert Reggae’ and ‘The Ernabella Children’s Choir 2007 Recordings’ were recorded and distributed (Source: Project website, Progress Report No1 March 31 2008).

## **2008**

The theatre show is performed for nearly five weeks at The Belvoir Street Theatre as part of the Sydney Festival. The six-night a week show is sold out, and every night receives a standing ovation. Six young people from Docker Rover and Abbots Camp join senior Pitjantjatjara women on the tour. While on tour they participated in cultural exchanges at ‘The Block’ in Redfern, La Perouse Aboriginal Health Centre, the Spiegel tent and attended a number of glamorous festival events such as dinner at the Governor’s House. Over 9500 people watched the show that played 29 times over four weeks. In all 85 media mentions were made of the project during Sydney Festival (Source: Progress Report No1 March 31 2008).

In April 2008 Creative Producer Alex Kelly received the Australia Council Kirk Robson Award recognising outstanding leadership in community cultural development demonstrated by a young artist.

In May 2008 performers Trevor and Jangali Jamieson and their mother Gail profiled on Living Black on SBS. Footage of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* show featured in this show. At much the same time community leader and *Ngapartji Ngapartji* performer Makinti Minutjukur, was interviewed on SBS 's Living Black.

In June 2008 the stage production of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* is selected as a finalist for the Indigenous Innovation Award category at the 2008 NT Innovation Awards.

CAAMA acquires a number of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* community-made films for their youth shows 'Grounded' and 'Kids Rool'.

In July 2008 the project released a background paper on indigenous languages & language policy.

In September 2008 the full theatre show of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* toured to Ernabella, and was presented to Pitjantjatjara participants' families, community from across the APY Lands and visitors, as part of the celebrations of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ernabella Arts. About 800 to 1000 people saw this show. It is performed as an outdoor show in the creek bed and involved a massive logistical undertaking with 50 cast and crew. There is a very positive response from community elders and visitors (Sources: Evaluation notes of Ernabella tour 2008, Project report 2008, Project website 2008, Rough cuts of documentary 2009).

This event attracted considerable interest from a range of media outlets. Examples include:

- ABC TV national news story
- SBS TV national news story
- ABC Radio National Artworks feature
- ABC Radio National news Story
- ABC Radio Toowoomba interview
- ABC Radio Adelaide interview
- SBS Living Black in attendance
- PY Media in attendance
- Self produced doco team in attendance
- DEWHA Artbeat magazine article
- Alice News review
- James Waites blog reviews – <http://jameswaites.com>
- The Centralian Advocate article
- Port Augusta Transcontinental article
- ABC online news story
- ABC Radio Darwin interview
- ABC Hobart breakfast interview
- Triple J Hack program guest

(Sources: Arts SA *Ngapartji Ngapartji* Report 2008, Articles cited by evaluator 2009, Evaluator notes of Ernabella performances 2008, DVD of 30 quick time movies recording the Ernabella performance of NN, children's choir, choir and inma dancing 2008, Documentary rough cuts of main viewed by evaluator 2009)

Following the Ernabella tour the theatre show toured to Alice Springs, performing three nights at Araluen Theatre in front of 850 people. Staff and local performers present at 'Art at the Heart - Regional Arts Australia Conference', in Alice Springs. (Source: Evaluation notes of Alice Springs tour 2008).

The Mobile gallery 'Munta Uwa, Nyangamala!' is completed and debuts in The Alice Springs Airport foyer as part of the Regional Arts conference. This offered an opportunity to promote the project and expose Pitjantjatjara language to fall visitors to Alice Springs (Source: evaluation notes Alice tour



2008, website: <http://www.ngapartji.org/content/view/249/1/>.

Co-writers Trevor Jameison and Scott Rankin travelled to the Deadly Awards Ceremony at the Sydney Opera House and win the Most Outstanding Achievement in Film, TV and Entertainment for their work creating *Ngapartji Ngapartji* (Source: Project website 2008, Documentary rough cuts 2009).

Alex Kelly attended the 'Youth Action Net Program' in Washington DC, USA (Source: Project website, Photographic records 2009).

## 2009

The *Ngapartji Ngapartji* theatre show is nominated for 'Best Mainstage Production' as part of the Sydney Theatre Awards. Trevor Jameison wins 'Best Leading Actor in Sydney Theatre Awards for his role in The *Ngapartji Ngapartji* Sydney Festival season. Scott Rankin was nominated for Best Director (Source: Project website 2008).

In April 2009 staff attend the Sydney Myer Performing Arts Awards in Melbourne where BighART receives the 'Group Award'. Over 400 people attended Myer Performing Arts Awards, getting to see the breadth and extent of the work (Source: Project website 2008).

Through the SBS Foundation Initiative a television advertisement about the rapid loss of indigenous languages is produced and aired. Children from Abbot ts Camp are involved and feature in filming (Source: Project advertisement 2009).

In June 2009 the documentary of the Ernabella tour is awarded support and funding through ABC's JTV Docs Initiative (Source: Letter from ABC's JTV 2009).

Alex Kelly joins Indigenous leaders at a language policy meeting with Minister Macklin and representatives from Minister's Garrett, Gillard and Prime Minister Rudd's offices. This prompts the Commonwealth Government to commence work on drafting an indigenous languages action plan (Source: Project website 2009).

Jennifer Wells' song and film clip 'Ngura Pitlingka' is screened nationally on ABCTV's Rage program (Source: Film clip 2009).

In August 2009 staff, Trevor Jamieson and senior women deliver a keynote presentation at the Garma Festival, Arnhem Land. Over 400 people attended the event (Source: Evaluation interview notes 2009, Garma programme 2009).

At the request of the Mimili school, staff host workshops to support students in final preparations for the APY Schools Dance Competition in Ernabella. The Mimili school entry wins in front of over 500 people (Sources: Mimili report 2009, DVD of Mimili workshops and competition 2009).

In September and October 2009 the *Nyuntu Ngali* theatre production plays at the Adelaide Festival Theatre. The show was produced in conjunction with Windmill Theatre and is considered a 'legacy' project from the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project. The show starred young Pitjantjatjara performers Derek Lynch from Alice Springs and Jennifer Wells from Ernabella. The season involved 10 shows and receives positive reviews and solid audience attendance with 1658 people attending (Sources: Evaluation notes of Adelaide tour 2009, Evaluation interview notes 2009, Final Report 2010, Show guide 2009).

*Nyuntu Ngali* attracted considerable attention from the media. Examples of stories written include:

- [www.artshub.com.au](http://www.artshub.com.au) 12/08/09: 'Windmill selected for National Education 2020 Initiative'

- James Waites 'blog' piece, October '09
- The Advertiser, 15/08/09: 'Remote workshops inspire school show' (Patrick McDonald)
- SA Life, September '09 'Love in a changed climate' (Lance Campbell)
- 'Box Office' (The Advertiser), September 23/09/09 'Weaving outback magic' (Louise Nunn)
- Sunday Mail, 6/09/09: 'Central to Survival' (Matt Byrne)
- 'Rip it Up' Magazine, 30/09/09
- 'Stage Preview – *Nyuntu Ngali*' (Catherine Blanch)

Reviews included:

- Myk Mykyta – Radio Adelaide, State of Play – aired 28/09/09.
- Tony Busch – Adelaide Theatre Guide
- Matt Byrne – Sunday Mail – 27/09/09
- Alicia Norton – Fringe Benefits – 28/09/09
- Peter Burdon – The Advertiser – 6/10/09 (Source: Final Report 2010, Evaluation notes 2009).

In December 2009 *Ngapartji Ngapartji*'s CD compilation 'Wanti Watjilpa' is released. Forty-five musicians from Ernabella, Amata and Fregon contribute to the diverse range of sounds and songs (Source: CD 'Wanti Watjilpa', Project website 2009).

During the course of the project staff, performers and other members of the community presented at a range of conferences, workshops and other public events. This provided the project with many opportunities to present to a variety of general and specialist audiences, many of whom would not get to see the show. Furthermore the structure and form of many of these events provided the project with a chance to highlight the 'community development' elements of the work, provide detailed information to others about the language work and involve young people in debates about literacy development. Conference presentations included:

- September 2006, Keynote address at International Colloquium on Prevention of Crime, Canberra.
- September 2006, Pacific Edge Conference, Mackay
- October 2006, Fallout Symposium, Sydney
- April 2007, 'Kungu Kutju – Tjituru-Tjituru Anyani' film features as part presentation at the International Conference OURMedia, Nestros Medios VI, Sydney.
- May 2007, Shifting Ground, Alice Springs.
- July 2007, Australian Drama Association Conference, Melbourne.
- September 2007, Staff and a senior woman present at the National Indigenous Languages Conference, Adelaide.
- October 2007, 'Maralinga Arts and Justice Symposium' in Sydney, 'This is Not Art Festival', Newcastle and 'the Cultural Institutions without Walls' Salzburg Global Seminar, in Austria.
- November 2007, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islanders (AIATSIS) Languages forum in Canberra.
- Jan 2008, *Big hART* Director delivers 'The Rex Cramphorn Lecture' as part of The Sydney Festival.
- April 2008, Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) Conference, Darwin.
- May 2008, Two young people present digital stories at the Kungkas Career Conference at Hamilton Downs. Other participants include young women from Docker River, Kiwirrkurra and Pipalytjara who present films made with Ngapartji.
- May 2008, 'Friendship Festival' in Melbourne
- May 2008, 'Australian Innovation Festival NT' launch at Desert Knowledge in Alice Springs.
- May 2008, NTCSS Territory Fair "How do we get there?" Conference in Darwin.
- June 2008, Scott Rankin and young performer and artist Elton Wirri, present as part of the

<p>Deakin Lectures in various locations around regional Victoria.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July 2008, The Indigenous Languages Institute's 'Lingfest Conference', Sydney</li> <li>• September 2008, 'Art at the Heart - Regional Arts Australia Conference', Alice Springs.</li> <li>• October 2008, 'Maralinga Arts and Justice Call for Objects', Sydney.</li> <li>• November 2008, Co-written paper with Dr Inge Kral called 'Alternative Learning Pathways: Community based approaches', 2008 Desert Knowledge Symposium.</li> <li>• November 2008, Mobile Gallery displays at the Desert Knowledge Symposium, Alice Springs. November 2008, Literacy Forum First nations e-learning in Canada.</li> <li>• February 2009, 'Cross platform lab-crossover' at the Australian International Documentary Conference, Adelaide.</li> <li>• May 2009, Central Australian Linguistics Circle in Alice Springs.</li> <li>• May 2009, 'National Community Cultural Development Forum', Canberra.</li> <li>• September 2009, 'Youth Learning on remote Indigenous communities' Symposium in Darwin. The <i>Ngapartji Ngapartji</i> mobile gallery is displayed at the Symposium, and digital stories made by young people are shown to attendees as part of the conference program (SourceS: Project records 2010, Evaluation notes 2008).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity:</b> Interstate touring and showcasing of work aimed at providing life skills training  <b>Performance Indicators:</b> Levels of engagement of project participants with criminal activity both pre and post project; Unsolicited letters of support; Contact with police; Interviews with different organizations involved</p>
<p>In a number of ways this set of performance indicators were not entirely suited to the demands of the project. For example, establishing contact with police so as to build intelligence about the criminal activity of participants was neither possible nor relevant. The work of the project stretched across a number of jurisdictional boundaries. Participants routinely crossed state boundaries (from Alice Springs to the APY Lands – the NT to SA). While there is some interstate co-operation between the NT and SA Police Services this is not relevant to the work of this project because not data is available on regional criminal activity across the state boundaries.</p> <p>Early in the project staff decided that seeking out information about the history of participant's offending was invasive, unreliable and counter productive to building relationships. As is discussed earlier, establishing a direct cause and effect correlation between criminal behaviour and involvement in project activities is at best tenuous, at worse disingenuous. However, there is some good evidence that touring and participation in arts production provided opportunities for people to extend their social skills and repertoire of life skills. There is also other evidence of the efficacy of the work in relation to providing 'life skills' opportunities. This evidence exists in the form of letters of support, statements from community members who witnessed the work and observations of representatives from other organizations (such as local schools, art centres, non-government groups and justice organizations). Furthermore, recording the stories of achievements of participants, groups of performers and others in the community during the course of the project serves to demonstrate success in relation to this 'Activity' (Sources: Records of AV Material 2009, various letters of support 2005-2009, Evaluation notes of interviews 2008-2009).</p> <p>In the view of the evaluator, it would have been clearer had the 'Performance Indicators' for this activity been things like: number of opportunities for participants to tour and showcase their work; statements from participants about their involvement in showcase work; statements from others about the quality of the work and life skills opportunities for young people.</p> <p>In earlier discussion there exists considerable evidence of a range of opportunities for participants to be involved in public showcasing of work.</p> <p>The major touring program included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work-in-progress tour of theatre language show, Melbourne International Arts Festival</li> </ul>

(MIAF), 2005

- Developmental theatre language show, Alice Springs, 2006.
- First full scale production of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* theatre production at MIAF, 2006
- The *Ngapartji Ngapartji* production tours to Perth International Arts Festival, 2007.
- The Language show tours to Dreaming Festival, Woodford, Queensland, 2007
- The Language show tours to Adelaide Cabaret Festival, 2007
- The *Ngapartji Ngapartji* production tours to Sydney Festival, 2008
- The *Ngapartji Ngapartji* production tours to Ernabella & Alice Springs, 2008
- *Nyuntu Ngali* Collaborative performance tours to Adelaide, 2009

All the major tours provided many opportunities for participants to showcase their work, publicly demonstrate their active involvement in something positive and extend their cultural and social repertoire. Indeed, following on from the success of the 'legacy' production *Nyuntu Ngali* there has already been considerable interest in extending the opportunities for performance into the future. As the Final Report outlines, *Nyuntu Ngali* has already succeeded in providing further opportunities for three key indigenous participants to develop and showcase their performance skills, language and cultural knowledge. The show has recently played to the Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM) in February, and will play another season as part of the Sydney Theatre Company program in May 2010 (Sources: Final Report 2010, evaluation notes February 2010).

Touring and participating in performances provided many different opportunities for those involved to: immerse themselves in a cultural context that was new and stimulating, develop and showcase their professional performance skills, reveal to a large national audience important language and cultural content relevant to their lives, skills and knowledge. The tours also provided opportunities for people to be exposed to the life of professional performers and artists, offering them chances to see first hand what is required for employment in the arts industry. They were subject to working to schedules, being punctual, rehearsing and practicing. The tours also provided young people with the chance to spend time with senior people from their communities, giving them access to stories, language and cultural protocols. In addition these young people were able to develop life skills through living away from home, cooking, cleaning, budgeting, travelling and negotiating daily demands in unfamiliar contexts, places and with people whose culture was very different. The depth of these opportunities is made manifest in the following comment from a young person who joined a number of tours.

*"We're a long way from home, but it's palya; no worries. We are helping Trevor to tell his story. My grandmother Amanyi from Ernabella is in the show and she always makes stories from long time ago and my other grandmother Lorna from Titjikala is here too. We teaching for language and songs like head shoulder knees and toes. The audience kulini - they listen (young participant and performer) (Source: Ngapartji Ngapartji Program Grant Report 2006/7).*

Tours were often very demanding and provided much exposure to language and culture, exposed the cast to large numbers of people and offered extra-performance opportunities for skills and social development. For example, the Sydney Festival Tour consisted of a 4-week season with 29 shows. Over 9,500 people attended the show. The tour was structured so that a community cast changeover occurred half way through the season. This maximised opportunities for a larger group of people to join the tour and made possible the participation of 8 choir members from Pukatja, Amata and Alice Springs and 7 young people from Docker River and Alice Springs. In addition 3 ladies and 1 young woman stayed on throughout the season, offering the production and those joining a consistent core of participants during the cast changeover (source: Progress Report No 1 March 31 2008) As well as participating in this six-night-a-week show schedule, cast and company visited local Indigenous organizations and ran cultural exchanges at The Block in Redfern, La Perouse Aboriginal Health Centre and the Spiegel tent. Participants attended a number of festival events such as dinner at the Governor's House. As the following comment from a young person demonstrates the tours offered powerful opportunities for young people to experience something radically different from their everyday lives.

*'Me and Julie went to Government House for dinner. People were taking lots of photos of us. There were a lot of pictures on the walls. It has been a great time at Sydney. The shows have been full every night. Some people come back again... After Julie goes I will learn Julie's part... I feel good about going home but sad about the show finishing.'* Young performer (Source: Progress Report No1 March 31 2008).

Additionally, the project provided a series of other opportunities for young people to extend their life skills, social development and self-expression. This often provided considerable public recognition for the work of young people. Examples include:

- Assisting in the creation and updating of *Ngapartji.org* website
- Filming and acting as 'tutors' and language mentors on the *Ninti.org* website
- Having their work reviewed and discussed on supporter Blogs such as *jameswaites.com*
- Having the digital stories and work produced by the young people feature on the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* and Youth Learning sites on the CAEPR ANU website.  
<http://www.anu.edu.au/caepr/learning/>
- Young people's films were submitted and shown as part of 'storywall', public community screenings in the Todd Mall, Alice Springs; broadcast as part of CAAMA programs 'Grounded' and 'Kids Rool', and broadcast to remote communities through ICTV, 2006/7/8. Several films were uploaded to the 'indigtube' website from 2008.
- 'Kungu Kutju – Tjituru-Tjituru Ananyi', a film made by Maureen Watson, of Docker River, about petrol sniffing screened at Remote Fest 07 Youth Film Festival, Alice Springs & OURMedia, Nestros Medios VI, Sydney, 2007
- Young Abbott's Camp performer Elton Wirri performed in the Sydney tour, preparing a background canvas on the stage during the course of each performance.
- Elton Wirri hosted an exhibition of his watercolour paintings in Sydney, 2007.
- Young people's photographic work and narratives were displayed on 'Munta Uwa, Nyangamala!' (the project mobile gallery) around Alice Springs & Darwin, 2008/9
- The music video clip "Ngura Piltingka" by Jennifer Wells was shown on regional television networks such as ICTV and nationally on the ABCTV Rage (Indigenous Episode), 2009.
- Participant's work is currently being archived in publicly accessible databases, libraries and organisations nationally and locally (Source: Final Progress Report 2010).

As well as providing opportunities for participants to showcase their work and move into the 'piranpa' (or non-Indigenous) cultural and social spaces the project provided the chance for participants to take their work back to their Anangu families and community. Young people participated in a range of community events, meetings and feedback sessions. The purpose of which was to buttress relationships between young people, seniors and others from extended families and communities and help maintain cultural exchange, and provide a comfortable and culturally appropriate forum for discussion, planning, consultation and feedback about project activities. These events often occurred in the Anangu cultural and language domain with people speaking in Pitjantjatjara and driven by Anangu knowledges, processes and values. Events included:

- Community film nights at Abbotts Camp, 2007, and as part of all workshop programs on remote communities
- Picnics, lunches and informal gatherings at the Alice Springs Office and surrounding locations such as Olive Pink Gardens or the Telegraph Station
- Bush trips (hunting, for business, or visiting significant sites) to areas surrounding Alice Springs or communities
- Community consultation meetings to seek advice, approval or feedback about project activities, plans or products (eg documentary film) held in both project spaces and in participant community spaces such as homes, schools and community centres (Sources: Final Progress Report 2010, Minutes of community meeting 2007, Evaluation notes 2007)

and 2008).

The extent to which the work was shaped by and occurred within a Pitjantjatjara language environment cannot be underestimated. Arranging events and carrying out discussions and plans in Pitjantjatjara and being led by Anangu family and relationship protocols was central to project practice. Many events were organised in such a way as to allow young people to share their achievements with community at the same time as exposing to young people the importance of maintaining Pitjantjatjara language and life. In bringing together young people and seniors these events helped extend young people's social, cultural and linguistic repertoire in the Anangu domain: forming and reacquainting family, bringing together the old and young, helping identify kinship connections and doing so in a way that often allowed language and culture to be recorded. Evidence of the consequences of providing 'life skills' in the Anangu domain are nowhere more evocative than in the following remarks of one community leader:

"Ngayulu Pitjantjatjara wangkara, tjukurpa kunpu tjuṯa wangkapai, kurun-nguru. Nganana wangka walytja, nganana kunpu wangkanyi, kurun-nguru alatjitu. Like nganana tjinguru kutjupara, mitingka nganana wangkapai Pitjantjatjara alatjitu, pulkara. Munu ngayulu kulilpai mitingka wangkara "Ngayulu Pitjantjatjara wangkantjikitja mukuringanyi, English nyanga – tjinguru ngayulu wangakanyi ka upa ngaranyi."

*When I speak Pitjantjatjara, I am able to get across strong messages, from my spirit. In our own language, we speak with confidence, absolutely speaking from the spirit. Like sometimes we attend meetings and we speak entirely in Pitjantjatjara, forthrightly. I think to myself in meetings "I want to speak in Pitjantjatjara – because it is likely that if I speak in English my message will be weak. – Makinti Minutjukur*

"Kutupangu ngunti wangkangu!" *Somebody said it wrong!*  
"A-LI-PI-RI wangka!" *Say A-LI-PI-RI!* (Pantitji McKenzie and Lorna Wilson in the stage performance of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* reprimanding in a humorous fashion the audience after they struggle through a round of the song: *Kata, Alipiri, Muti, Tjina* (Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes).

"Nganana tjananya nintini, nganampa wangka ma-nintini. Ka tjinguru kutupa tjuṯangu putu wangkanyi, putu arkapai, same as us, nganana English putu wangkapai, putu arkara wangkapai, witu-witu nganampa ngarapai ka palu purunypa, ka tjana putu arkara panya ikaringkupai!"

*We are teaching them – handing over knowledge of our language. Sometimes, some people (in the audience) can't pronounce words, can't get it, just like us, sometimes we can't pronounce English – it's hard for us. So we're sharing a similar experience. And when they can't get their tongues around it, we laugh! – Makinti Minutjukur (source: Final Progress Report 2010).*

**Activity:** Potential international touring and showcasing of work

**Performance Indicators:** Numbers of public attending public showcasing of work  
Number of media mentions of project

Throughout the project there was ongoing discussions with numerous international bodies and individuals about the possibility of taking the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* theatre show on tour to Great Britain. Arrangements for a tour in 2010 were progressing well until concerns relating to the global financial crisis stalled and finally stopped plans for sponsorship and funding opportunities.

Although the tour was not possible the work of the project has received some international exposure. For example, members of the cast and crew travelled overseas to showcase the work, attend conferences and meet with possible sponsors. It is also possible that the work may lead to further international exposure as a consequence of the success of the legacy performance 'Nyuntu

*Ngali*. The Adelaide season of the performance in September 2009 has led to securing further performances at the Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM) in February 2010, and another season as part of the Sydney Theatre Company program from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 2010. It is also anticipated that the documentary 'Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji' will receive considerable national exposure through the ABC and potentially screen to international audiences. Furthermore there are ongoing discussions with Mike Watt Productions (UK Producer) and GNG (Australian touring company) about the future prospects of an international tour (Sources: Progress Report 4 March 09, Final Report 2010, Evaluation notes of field trips to Adelaide in September and October 2009 and February 2010).

**Objective No. 2: Reduce fear of crime, including the public perception of young people from town camps.**

The second objective of the work was to find ways to reduce the fear of crime, both by members of remote communities and town camps and the broader Australian public.

The importance of this objective reflects one of *Big hART*'s central philosophic platforms; that a powerful way of responding to crime is to make public stories of success, achievement and hope. It is most clearly articulated in the phrase attributed to their earlier work: "its harder to hurt someone if you've heard their story."

However, this is no easy task. As Langton (1993, p. 33) points out, stories about the lives of Indigenous Australians have a long and racialised history. Often this has involved the constitution of the 'Aborigine' in negative terms, either as criminal, welfarist by nature and dangerous to the 'settler' classes. Routinely this involves 'imagined' ideas about people in their absence. As she says, "The most dense relationship is not between actual people, but between white Australians and the symbols created by their predecessors. Australians do not know and relate to Aboriginal people. They relate to stories told by former colonists."

Despite the enormous challenges facing this objective the project was able to use a range of strategies to produce stories about Pitjantjatjara strength and achievement. This included digital storytelling projects (which both demonstrated young people's depth of interest and time commitment), creating a multimedia website to showcase positive stories (particularly the talents and professionalism of Pitjantjatjara women), building the *ninti* online language course (featuring many examples of Pitjantjatjara young people as language mentors), create local and national tours of nationally acclaimed *Ngapartji Ngapartji* theatre show (with Trevor Jamieson in award winning form), national media campaigns on Indigenous language, producing many films (including the documentary 'Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji' for ABC screening), conference presentations (demonstrating the depth of intelligence and ability of Pitjantjatjara performers and hosting art exhibitions (showcasing the artistic talents of young people to capital city arts audiences).

The following discussion provides a remarkable list of examples where fear of Indigenous crime is challenged head on with image after image, story after story, performance after performance of Pitjantjatjara excellence. Audiences were clearly moved beyond their expectations. Unsolicited comments and surveyed remarks make it clear that people's clichéd ideas were shaken and confronted. Visitors to the two main websites commented on the magnitude of Pitjantjatjara accomplishments.

Clearly 'mainstream' theatre audiences were exposed to new ways of conceptualising the lives of Pitjantjatjara communities. In addition, many Indigenous communities had their assumptions

about their young people tested. There is good evidence that many members of remote communities were heartened to see their young people energetically taking on media production, music, language and dance. As women from Ernabella said, “it made our hearts come alive to see our young people singing, making films about good things and teaching others Pitjantjatjara.” Bringing out their stories and firing up young people’s creative juices acted to breath life into some of the ‘old people’.

**Activity:** Workshops in 3-month blocks for young people and elders to train young people in digital storytelling and teaching tools  
**Performance Indicators:** Numbers of public attending public showcasing of work. Number of media mentions of project

2006

As discussed earlier, between January and June of 2006, films were created with young people’s involvement in workshops and bush trips. In each of the main settings where the workshops were undertaken there was a public screening of the films in communities and town camps. These included Abbots Camp in Alice Springs, Ernabella and Docker River (Source Annual Report 2006, Workers journals 2006 and Ngapartji website 2006).

The *ninti* online language course also offered a very strong means of making public the positive work of young people. Film, music, content and young people’s tutoring or mentorship to online students provided those visiting the site with solid evidence of young people’s productive contributions. Since the project team’s decision to allow non-paying visits to the site this work has become more accessible to members of the public.

In 2006 ICTV showcased a number of films on to its audiences in Central Australia. This both helped promote the project in remote communities, made it easier for workers as they travelled to new communities and provided a means through which communities were able to see their young members involved in socially productive and culturally respected work (Source: Annual project report 2006).

One of the exceptional achievements of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project has been the capacity of project staff to produce musical clips, digital short stories, language videos, documentary and other film-based material. Indeed the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* archive is striking in its prodigiousness. It is certain that in the future such a grand display of film production will be of immense value to those communities involved.

From the projects earliest stages film production has blossomed. For example in 2006 there was considerable film production including: a DVD Video Compilation for Youth which contains the edited films made by young people in workshops; over 20 language lessons used in the online language course; five music clips of songs recorded by young people in workshops; six short-story films made with young people from Docker River, a project promotional film. This work was distributed to young people, families and schools and screened at community and town camp events (Sources: Project Worker Journal 2006, Film Mentor Notes 2006, Project Reports 2006, Various *Ngapartji Ngapartji* Documentaries, [www.ninti.ngapartji.org](http://www.ninti.ngapartji.org), Final Progress Report 2010).

As outlined earlier, young people participated in a series of workshops to develop self-profiles for the tour. This included using photos and their own stories, digital media and software to create profiles that were later used as promotional material for the tour performance programs and other publicity (Source: Project Worker Report 06).

The work has also been important in supporting and buttressing other local organizations. This secondary outcome is critical in allowing smaller organisations to 1) continue to flourish and 2) to



provide a web of support services and work with the young people involved with Ngapartji work. Two sets of remarks are worth citing to demonstrate the extent to which this level of support was offered.

29 September 2006

To Whom It May Concern,

RedHOT Arts Marketing has no hesitation in writing that the BighART's *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project is the most ambitious, well-planned and innovative project that this organisation has worked with over the last two years. The project has held true to its values of providing a positive contribution to the greater community. Through the hard work and dedication of the management team they have been building strong and meaningful relationships in the community and reaching broad audiences through the cross-cultural theatre experience.

BighART has also been active in providing skill development opportunities in the Alice Springs community. Their mentor program for young people will lead to strengthening capacity and a greater level of health and wellbeing amongst indigenous people.

BighART are achieving a standard of excellence through the theatre production and online language course, raising the profile of the arts in Central Australia both interstate and internationally as well as a greater awareness of the importance of preserving indigenous language.

It's been a pleasure working with BighART to establish an effective communication plan for the project, I am confident of their success in producing quality results in all aspects of this project and believe the model developed will be the benchmark of arts practice in the region for years to come.

Yours Sincerely  
Director RedHOT Arts Marketing

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

February 9, 2006

*NGAPARTJI NGAPARTJI*

dEadly mOb Gap Youth Centre were delighted to work with the Ngapartji project during 2005 and support their ambitious, artistic goals which they achieved with amazing success in Melbourne and Sydney.

We were so impressed with their work with Pitjantjatjara youth to develop a culturally relevant language based piece for the Melbourne International Festival of the Arts that we offered them office space at our facilities on Gap Road.

Both the dEadly mOb and Reconnect program then assisted them identify young people suitable for the project. We also provided use of our facilities for rehearsal space.

We were particularly impressed with the Project Manager (Alex Kelly's) ability to coordinate a very demanding schedule of development and rehearsal while still working in a culturally appropriate manner with young people not used to timelines and deadlines. Her ability to market, administer, relate, imagine, produce and deliver at distance – was stunning and a credit to her organizational abilities, communication skills, creativity, intelligence and 'big heart'!

The result was a breathtaking piece of theatre that has provided both the participant performers and the audience (booked out) with a wonderfully unique 2-way, unforgettable experience of culture, land and language in Australia.

We would be pleased, once again, to support this project in Alice Springs and to provide whatever support is within our means ...

Sincerely,  
Program Development Coordinator, Gap Youth Centre Aboriginal Corporation

Support from members of the Indigenous community is also worth citing. Although public expressions of recognition may not be something regularly associated with Anangu patterns of communication there were a number of powerful remarks offered. For example, one important senior woman had this to say about the importance of the work for young people.

24<sup>th</sup> September 2006

Ngayulu ini Doranya. Nganana pulkara mukuringanyi Ngapartji-ngapartjiku. Munu nganana rawa nintiringanyi. Nganana panya ngurpa nyinanyi nganmanpa munu nganana kulinu Ngapartji-ngapartjinya pakanyangka. Munu nganana pulkara mukuringanyi tjitji malatja tjuta nintiringkunyajaku. Nganana mukuringanyi kutjupa-kutjupaku nganananya alpamilantjaku. Nganana nyangunguru ananyi kala mukuringanyi Ngapartji-ngapartjinya alpamilantjaku. Panya Ngapartji-ngapartji wiru palyanu munu Ngapartji-ngapartji nganananya atunmananyi.

My name is Dora Haggie. We really appreciate Ngapartji-ngapartji. We've been working with the project for some time now. Before, we were unaware of Ngapartji-ngapartji but now we have learnt of its developments. We would very much like for our children to be involved, learning too. We desire strength for projects which help us, especially to travel from here. Ngapartji-ngapartji is doing good work and is looking after us (Source: Letter of support 2006).

## 2007

As mentioned earlier, in 2007 a series of workshops were hosted in communities. Part of the intention of this work was to provide young people with a chance to create work that demonstrates young people's talents, and capacity to contribute positively to their community (thereby reduce fear of Indigenous young people and perceptions that they are dangerous and inherently criminal). These workshops included:

Ernabella/Amata music workshops were held in April 2007 for creative development of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* and to rehearse the choir. During these workshops 42 people participated in music work and film work. (Source: Ernabella/Amata Workshop Report 07)

Kiwirrkurra Film Workshops were held in July 2007 to encourage young people's involvement and skills in filmmaking. A DVD was produced and distributed with 6 films made by young people. (Sources: Kiwirrkurra DVD July 2007, Project Workers Notes 2007).

Ernabella Children's Choir 2007 recording workshops were held in October 2007. A CD was produced and distributed throughout the APY Lands and Alice Springs (Source: Worker Report 2007, CD of Ernabella Children's Choir).

Ernabella Music Studio Workshops were held in November 2007. Workers hosted a community disco and two screening evenings to showcase live bands and songs recorded (Source: Progress Report No1 March 31 2008).

From the combined workshops held in Ernabella a compilation CD (19 songs) called 'Ngurakutu Ara' was released. Over 400 copies have been produced and provided to young people, families and other members of the community (Sources: Progress Report 1 March 08, Ngurakutu Ara CD).

## 2008

As mentioned previously, in April of 2008 project staff visited the Pipalyatjara community to offer filmmaking workshops. A DVD was produced including three short films; one documentary style film; two video clips; one edited piece including much of the footage shot by young people showing all the activities in which they participated during the program; and one uncut piece including all 'leftover' footage. A community film night was held with all community members invited. As well as providing an event for all members of the community to come together it provided older people with the clear message that young people are capable of responsible work. One local youth worker relayed that "these films show young people in a light that old people often don't get to see. They say they don't understand what is happening for young people ... they worry for young people a great deal ... what this did was give them great hope and show that their young people are capable of good things" (Sources: Pipalyatjara Filmmaking workshop Report; CDs of photos from Pipalyatjara workshops showing young people involved in activities including storyboarding, drawing, writing, video, music, indoor and outdoor settings has been viewed by evaluator, DVD of films, evaluation interview notes 2009)

The Pukatja Sound Lab Workshops carried out in September and October 2007 have already been described. Not only did these events attract considerable participation (over 100 Pukatja/APY Lands residents were directly involved in recording music and approximately another 50 interacting with the project), the workshops also produced music, films and video clips that have been distributed and regularly screened. One legacy of the production of this work is that local people regularly use it in their everyday lives. As one arts worker reported, "well one consequence of the work of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* is that the music gets played constantly as background to the work in the arts centre. In fact the songs from one of the CDs is used as a creative stimulant, playing constantly throughout the day, inspiring and generating ideas for paintings" (Sources: Pukatja Sound Lab Project Report, Progress Report 1 March 08, Evaluation interview notes 2009, CD of photos documenting workshop activities Ngurakutu Ara CD and Track Notes).

The use of digital storytelling nurtured the literacy development work. In addition, it provided material that showcased and made public the strength and potential of young people. In this way the choice to use new technologies in work with young people provided the multiple benefits of 1) extending young people's skills in digital literacy and 2) creating digital material that demonstrated young people's involvement in positive pursuits, 3) providing community workers and literacy practitioners with models for how to work with young people, 4) offering members of Indigenous communities optimism, hope and ideas about how young people can be encouraged into crime prevention pathways and 5) creating more publicly accessible positive accounts of young people to counter community fear of crime. For example, two young woman's digital stories were presented at the Youth Learning Symposium and others at the Kungka Careers Seminar in 2008 (Sources: Project Worker's Reports 2008, Literacy Report 2009, Youth Learning Symposium Proceedings DVD 2009).

Another important element in the plan to reconfigure public perceptions about Indigenous young people was the production and distribution of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* Documentaries Video Compilation for Youth. In this DVD young people play a central and visible role, demonstrating that they are active 'civic' contributors. The credits make clear that young people were involved in a range of elements of the production process including 'acting', writing, co-directing, filming and sound work. The DVD includes language lessons (also used in the online language course), five music videos of songs written and performed by young people, six short story films produced in Docker River, the project promotional video (Source: *Ngapartji Ngapartji* Documentaries Video Compilation for Youth).

There was considerable exposure to the work of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* theatre show in 2008. As a result many thousands of people saw first hand young people performing as singers, dancers and actors. In this way many people saw for the first time Indigenous young people (literally encircled by senior people from their communities) involved in high quality theatre. Clearly this had an important impact on the way they saw Indigenous communities, in particular Pitjantjatjara young people. This exposure was both quantitatively and qualitatively significant. For example 9500 people saw the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* show in the Sydney Festival. Reviews and feedback indicated that people were profoundly moved and attitudes and preconceived ideas were thrown into challenge (Source: Audience feedback, Sydney show 2008).

The show received many letters of support and commentary from a variety of different people. One particular example is worth citing:

We saw the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* performance last night and it was tremendous. Not only was it entertaining, educational and timely, considering the Prime Minister's imminent apology to Indigenous Australians, but the hard work and dedication behind the scenes in bringing the performance to fruition was evident. They deserve the highest accolades ... (Source: Letter of Support from senior public official 2008)

In early January 2008 *Ngapartji Ngapartji* became the subject of interest to the national media. There were 45 stories in the print media, 23 online stories, 14 radio interviews went to air and three reviews that went to TV (Sources: National coverage such as SBS TV News, ABC Radio National and The Australian 2008, Progress Report No1 March 31 2008, List and records of media articles 2008, [www.ngapartji](http://www.ngapartji.org) website links to media). There was also considerable coverage in the local media with three mentions in local print media and three local radio-show appearances.

During the Sydney Festival cast and crew were invited to six public forums and took part in multiple media interviews. These included: two sessions at 'Eat Drink Talk Art', the Rex Cramphorn Lecture, a Question and Answer session as part of the Festival, an Indigenous languages session at the theatre and a Festival Kids Club session (Progress Report No1 March 31 2008).

The *Ngapartji Ngapartji* mobile gallery 'Munta uwa, nyangamala' also made its debut appearance at Alice Springs airport during the Regional Arts Conference. This promotional and educational production offered a huge audience a window into the project, an introduction to Pitjantjatjara language and once again painted a positive picture of Indigenous people as active, responsible and capable (Sources: <http://www.ngapartji.org/content/view/249/1/>, 'Munta uwa, nyangamala' gallery 2008, evaluation notes from visit to Alice 2008)

Over 400 people have copies of the Ngurakutu Ara CD – many more than 400 people have been listening to the music in cars, homes and on radio.

One of the peaks of public exposure of the project and its work occurred when in late 2008 Trevor Jamieson and Scott Rankin won the Deadly Award for the creation of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* under the category 'Film, TV and Entertainment.' This award is one of the highest accolades available in Indigenous performance and the arts. As the documentary 'Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji' demonstrates, winning this award provided community members and young people with enormous confidence, pride and a sense of being appreciated by other Australians (Sources: The Australian October 2008, 'Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji' Documentary 2010).

## 2009

Following on from the success at the Deadly Awards in October 2008 the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* theatre show was nominated for Best Mainstage Production as part of the Sydney Theatre Awards. Trevor Jamieson also won Best Leading Actor in Sydney Theatre Awards for his role in the *Ngapartji*

*Ngapartji* Sydney Festival season. Scott Rankin was nominated for Best Director. In April *Big hART* were nationally recognised for their work with communities by receiving the Myer Performing Arts Awards. On the evening when the awards were presented over 400 people attended. These awards further extended the audience exposed to the work of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* (Sources: The Australian April 2009, Final Report 2010).

*Nyuntu Ngali* creative development workshops were held in Ernabella. Over 50 people attended these workshops over a one-week period. After four weeks of rehearsals and creative development, the *Nyuntu Ngali* theatre production premieres in Adelaide with young Pitjantjatjara performers Derek Lynch from Alice Springs and Jennifer Wells from Ernabella. The season involved 10 shows and received positive reviews and good audiences (Sources: Final Report 2010, Evaluation notes from Adelaide trip September and October 2009).

*Big hART* staff hosted dance workshops at Mimili School. These workshops assisted with the preparation of a whole of school dance performance at the 2009 APY Dance Competition. Over 200 people from Mimili community attended the dance performances in Mimili and many then travelled to Ernabella to watch their children perform. Over 500 people attended the APY Dance competition in Ernabella and saw the Mimili group win. The process of workshop preparation, rehearsals, the performance at the competition and a separate production called *Mimili Shadows* were included as part of a DVD. The DVD was distributed throughout the community (Sources: Mimili Dance Workshops DVD, Mimili Report 2009).

Digital stories that had been made by project participants in previous workshops were added to the Youth Learning Page on the CAEPR/ANU (Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy and Research/ Australian National University) website (CAEPR Youth Learning Page website 2010, Final Report 2010).

Project activity continued to be showcased publicly through the mobile gallery display in the foyer of new offices at IRCA (Indigenous Remote Communications Association) (Source: Final Report 2010, Evaluation notes 2009).

Project media material that was produced by young people continues to be accessible via the website 'Indigitube' ([www.indigitube.com.au](http://www.indigitube.com.au) 2010, Final Report 2010).

In December the 'Wanti Watjilpa' CD of music was released. This work was written and recorded by forty-five musicians from Ernabella, Amata and Fregon, including young people from all over the APY Lands (Source: Final Report 2010, 'Wanti Watjilpa' CD).

Throughout its touring career the theatre production of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* received considerable acknowledgment from a range of quarters. This included comments and letters of support from Commonwealth and State Government Ministers, Senior Government Officials, community organizations, audiences, artists, arts officials and members of the Indigenous community.

For example, the WA Minister for Indigenous Affairs had this to say after attending the Perth show:

*Ngapartji Ngapartji was an absolutely brilliant production.*

*It was moving, informative, involved the audience and demonstrated a high level of artistic skill.*

*The audience was taken on an emotional journey from heart wrenching sad and shocking episodes to heart warming and incredibly humorous moments.*

*Ngapartji Ngapartji informed and educated without any sense of preaching or lecturing. To achieve this outcome whilst at the same time providing such an emotionally moving and entertaining piece was a remarkable feat.*

*Knowing this was a personal story for those involved certainly made me feel privileged to be part of the audience.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Michelle Roberts MLA, Minister for Employment Protection; Housing and Works; Heritage; Indigenous Affairs and Land Information.*

Recognition and accolades also came from members of the arts community. For example Robyn Archer had this to say:

*The latest work Ngapartji Ngapartji continues this remarkable run (of Big hART) and gives us stories of courage and love to live by – and at the same time has major festival directors all over the world paying attention and preparing invitations.*

*There's no company I admire more in Australia and I hope you will take advantage of this special invitation to join them, congratulate them, and show your willingness to continue your support.*

Evidence of the production of digital and other media content is enormous. As previously stated, this is one of the strong points of the project. Indeed the archive of film, photography and music is bound to become a highly valued set of resources for Anangu in the years to come.

The full list of audio-visual material produced by the project is 18 pages long. The main media and digital content produced throughout the project included:

- the *ninti.org* website (548 subscribers to online the Pitjantjatjara language program)
- the *ngapartji.org* website (@5000 hits a month according to website data)
- 13,000 still digital images gathered by staff and participants over project duration.
- 20 online video language lessons
- over 70 short films produced by young people (15 were language lessons)
- six music film clips
- a four minute Project Promotional Film, 2007
- a 56 Minute documentary: 'Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji' - Director: Suzy Bates, 2010.
- three digital stories made by young women: 'Sadie in Sydney', 2008; 'Working at Ngapartji', 2008; 'Learning at Thakaperte', 2009.
- 165 songs were recorded (38 reggae songs, 6 young women's/mixed songs, 25 traditional 'inma'/songs, 11 love magic songs (secret women's only), 47 gospel songs, 12 stories, 7 rock/blues songs, 11 *Ngapartji Ngapartji* songs, & 8 children's choir songs).
- two compilation albums - 'Ngurakutu Ara – Desert Reggae', 2007 & 'Wanti Watjilpa', 2009; The Ernabella Children's Choir 2007 Recordings CD, 2007; and 3 gospel albums
- the 'Memory Basket': a multimedia legacy package containing a book of images, a DVD, CD, cultural artefacts and textual information documenting the project activity, achievements and experiences, 2010 (Sources: AV content list 2010, all of the above material has been viewed by the evaluator).

**Activity:** High presence in local and national media through reporting of activities and profiling young people, including establishing columns in local newspapers.

**Performance Indicators:** Numbers of profiles of young indigenous people in local media. Numbers of letters to the editor in local press and talk back radio

A review of media reports, stories, festival and performance reviews shows a solid number of articles where young people and other community members feature as talented and skilled performers and language tutors. This coverage has promoted a positive profile of young people from

town camps and communities to be conveyed nationally and locally.

It is also important to recognise that the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* team have also generated their own forms of media. In particular the project and *ninti* websites stand as media sources, making available updated stories of the positive contributions of young people and other community members. It was regularly updated, carefully pitched so as to provide media release size stories, available internationally, nationally and locally and full of colourful and interactive images and film. As discussed earlier, the production of film, music and other digital media was phenomenal. It represents an enormous contribution to the historical record and will no doubt prove of immense value in the future (Sources: AV content list 2010, *Ngapartji Ngapartji* website 2010).

Local media coverage includes:

- Alice Springs News Vol 12 Issue 14 October 12 2005
- "Pit Hit in City" by Elisabeth Attwood (this article highlights the role of young people from Alice Springs Town Camps as language teachers, film makers and positive members of the community in the review of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* performances and project)

In addition to over 25 print news articles published in 2006/07, *Ngapartji Ngapartji* has featured in a range of radio interviews including RTR FM (Perth), AM (Radio National) ABC Alice Springs, Darwin, Perth, Hobart, Melbourne and Sydney, SYN FM (Melb), SBS Radio (Melb), 3CR (Melb), 3kNd (Melb), Kiss FM (Melb). The *Ngapartji Ngapartji* theatre show also featured in regular newsletters, both print and online including; *Lowdown youth magazine*, *Red Hot Arts Bulletin*, *theprogram.net.au* (Source: Project Report, Feb 07).

Profiles of workshop activities were published in the 'Never Give Up News' and 'Lowdown Magazine'. The Sound Recording Studio advertised in *Yangupala Magazine* (Source: Sound Studio Report 09).

National media stories include:

Message Stick, ABC Online, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2006. *Ngapartji Ngapartji*: "I'll Give You Something, You Give Me Something" wrote:

"At the end of the 26 part lessons, *Ngapartji Ngapartji* will be performed as part of the 2006 Melbourne International Arts Festival. *Ngapartji Ngapartji* was first presented as a "work in progress" at the 2005 Melbourne International Arts Festival, to critical acclaim and sold out houses."

Sydney Morning Herald, January 12, 2008, *Ngapartji Ngapartji*, Reviewer Stephen Dunne wrote:

"It's a discursive, personal story of national implications, a demand about the importance of connection and country and especially the need to retain and encourage indigenous languages. Despite the enormous skill of the production, cast and crew (director Scott Rankin), it is a work of appealing, rough simplicity. A rare, compelling and essential gift indeed."

Australian Stage Online. 14 January 2008, *Ngapartji Ngapartji*: *Big hART*. James Waites wrote:

"*Big hART*'s *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project centres on the concern for lost language, the glue that holds any culture together. Australia has already lost half of its 300 indigenous languages; and 110 of the 145 surviving are on the critically endangered list.

The *Ngapartji Ngapartji* website also offers ongoing reports and profiles available to online users across the globe. In this way the website represents a powerful means by which

accounts of young people's positive contribution to their community, their role as cultural ambassadors and their importance as performers and subjects of the story itself."

The Sun Herald , 2008

"...9/10... THIS IS THE ONE SHOW YOU SHOULDN'T MISS. It's the gift that keeps on giving"

The Sydney Morning Herald, 2008

*"an emotional, educational, effective and deeply affecting experience of indigenous history"*

The Daily Telegraph, January 16, 2008, Gary Smith

"There is nothing preachy in the storytelling here, simply raw honesty, self-deprecating humour and a history lesson marking down the mistakes from which we are meant to learn."

Herald Sun, Sybil Nolan

*"It's a magical piece of theatre"*

Artszine, Andi Moore

*"The most important event for local audiences to see this Festival"*

Stage Noise, Sydney Festival 08, Ngapartji Ngapartj, Diana Simmonds - January 13th, 2008

"The version that now exists must be pretty much the optimum for stage performance with its dynamic central performance from Jamieson, the powerful, moving presence of the "chorus" of elder women and the honing of the story strands to a discursive, rambling (think *Ten Canoes*) series of narratives that are both charming and illuminating."

Theatre Notes, Alison Croggon

*"A pure gift"*

The Age, John Slavin, October 16, 2006

*"a rewarding theatrical experience. This is due in part to Jamieson's charisma. He is a storyteller and mime artist of elegant range and he can be very funny as he satirises white occupation, and equally moving ... as he dramatises the black response ... presents a case for tolerance of racial and ethnic difference through an exploration of language. The magnificently dignified female elders and performers who act a chorus to the epic telling sing, dance and give the audience a snap lesson in Pitjantjatjara in order to draw us into the magic circle of their culture. It does honour to the festival that has presented it."*

Sydney Morning Herald, Emily Dunn, November 1, 2006, 'The skill of Namatjira's grandson'.

"Even when cut into tiny pieces, 16-year-old Elton Wirri's desert landscapes are eerily familiar ... Elton's father, Kevin Wirri, was taught to paint by Namatjira's son, considered a brother through the kinship system. His work now forms the backdrop for *Ngapartji Ngapartji*, a performance at the Sydney Opera House which tells the story of the Spinifex or Pitjantjatjara tribe of Central Australia and their encounter with atomic testing at Maralinga in the 1950s."



Message Stick, ABC, *Ngapartji Ngapartji*, Sunday, 29 October 2006, Karen Dorante wrote:

"The show is actually part of a larger project between art organisation, *Big hART* and the Pitjantjatjara community. It's hoped the project will raise awareness about the status of indigenous languages in Australia and support their maintenance and survival.

*Ngapartji Ngapartji* brings together marginalised young people from Alice Springs, senior Pitjantjatjara people, linguists, local and national artists and YOU the theatre going audience.

Speaking Out catches up with key performer is actor and dancer Trevor Jamieson who worked with director Scott Rankin for six years to produce the story."

Legit, *Posted: Wed., Jan. 16, 2008 Ngapartji Ngapartji*, Michaela Boland wrote:

"As the aud enters the theater, the grandson of acclaimed artist Albert Namatajira is sketching an exquisite bush landscape on the back wall. The set of black sand features a single copper wave-like curve across which the performers dance and climb like a skaters' ramp."

Australian Centre for the Moving Image, 2005, *Ngapartji Ngapartji*

"Each night of the five night pilot season, audiences will be taught a little more of the Pitjantjatjara language. After each lesson a short excerpt of the story is performed. Each evening's performance is stand alone, but undertaken sequentially over the five sessions you will learn more of the language and experience a richer understanding of this exceptional story."

RealTime, Issue #70 Dec-Jan 2005 pg. 8, Rachel Maher wrote:

"Trevor incorporated Pitjantjatjara words ("my waltja... my ngura") in his telling of the tragic events around the tests—and how the international political climate of the early 20th century has left a distasteful legacy for his people and country. Young people and elders joined him on stage in a performance that was collaborative and at times highly emotional. From these short stories, says Alex, "the show is being developed into a more elaborate performance that fleshes out the themes related to this episode in Australia's colonial history. The full-scale version of the show will be performed almost entirely in Pitjantjatjara language with the inclusion of English words that have no translation, such as Cold War."

Artzine, Andi Moore wrote:

*"this is more than just a night out at the theatre. From the very beginning there is real exchange between audience and performers ... the extremely moving story of the Spinifex people and an important reflection on Australia's darker past. Although this is an ensemble piece, the energetic and charismatic Trevor Jamieson is the key performer and he gives an incredible performance. At times moving, funny and always thought provoking."*

Theatre Notes, Alison Croggon wrote:

*"Ngapartji Ngapartji means, " I give you something, you give me something", a literalisation of what is always an implicit exchange in the act of theatre ... You are not buying a ticket to a show: you are being invited to participate in a ceremony. Tried and true audience participation, Wiggles style, but curiously unembarrassing, perhaps because it is so transparently friendly. One remarkable aspect of this work is that it is never narrow or*

*accusatory in its focus ... This kind of theatre is often done badly, relying on the goodwill and sympathy of an audience to get it through the shaky bits. Ngapartji Ngapartji miraculously avoids any such trying of patience: what could easily be sentimentality or just plain dagginess becomes, instead, a pure gift."*

Theatre News, Christina Cass wrote:

*"an experience of a nation's journey told by master storyteller and co-creator of this work, Trevor Jamieson, and it's not to be missed. Through monologues in native tongues and English translations, and sublime movement and projection we begin to understand that this is not one man's tale, but the tale of many ... he switches between English and Pitjantjatjara and moves with (such) catlike ease and humour that the audience barely realises they've been witness to 60 years of cultural history. No finger pointing here, just a story that's been missing from this nation's narration; a story that should not be overlooked any longer ... By signing up for online language classes or attending performances, you are not only broadening your own scope of knowledge, but you are helping a nation rebuild and redefine itself."*

The Australian, Miriam Cosic wrote:

*"Jamieson is a charming and persuasive storyteller. Through gesture as well as words, he is the tour guide on a voyage that veers between laugh-aloud humour and silence-inducing anguish. This is an inclusive plea for understanding and justice and a sharp reminder that we have strong sympathy for the dramatic stories of foreigners while ignoring tragedy at home."*

Henry Thornton Online, Fiona Prior, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2008 wrote:

*"The singers of the Ngapartji Ngapartji Choir and assorted talented cast and crew befriend the audience at the beginning of the work. The choir exchange Pitjantjatjara words for our English ones (mother, father, toes, nose, etc) and we're given enough vocabulary to enter into the play with some play. We are then carefully guided by the Ngapartji Ngapartji Choir; an ensemble of very large and visually dramatic women who manage us with care and humour."*

MIAF: *Ngapartji Ngapartji*, La Fille de Cirque, Tuesday, October 17, 2006, Festival Dairy #2

*"Ngapartji Ngapartji is only one of seven projects it is currently running around the country. This piece of theatre is itself part of a larger work that includes an online site that teaches Pitjantjatjara and is a focus for weekly meetings between young people and elders of various communities in the Northern Territory and South Australia."*

The Adelaide season of *Nyuntu Ngali* attracted considerable attention from the media. Examples of stories written include:

- [www.artshub.com.au](http://www.artshub.com.au) 12/08/09: 'Windmill selected for National Education 2020 Initiative'
- James Waites 'blog' piece, October '09
- The Advertiser, 15/08/09: 'Remote workshops inspire school show' (Patrick McDonald)
- SA Life, September '09 'Love in a changed climate' (Lance Campbell)
- 'Box Office' (The Advertiser), September 23/09/09 'Weaving outback magic' (Louise Nunn)
- Sunday Mail, 6/09/09: 'Central to Survival' (Matt Byrne)
- 'Rip it Up' Magazine, 30/09/09
- 'Stage Preview – *Nyuntu Ngali*' (Catherine Blanch)

Reviews included:

- Myk Mykyta – Radio Adelaide, State of Play – aired 28/09/09.
- Tony Busch – Adelaide Theatre Guide
- Matt Byrne – Sunday Mail – 27/09/09
- Alicia Norton – Fringe Benefits – 28/09/09
- Peter Burdon – The Advertiser – 6/10/09 (Source: Final Report 2010, Evaluation notes 2009).

It must also be mentioned that the project was extremely successful in gaining publicity through nationally and internationally recognized awards and public events. These include:

- Federal Labour Minister Peter Garrett officially launches the *ngapartji.org* website and promotional DVD, Alice Springs, 2007.
- *Ngapartji Ngapartji* cast and crew invited to dinner at Government House, Sydney, 2008
- Creative Producer Alex Kelly receives the Australia Council Kirk Robson Award
- *Ngapartji Ngapartji* selected as a finalist for Indigenous Innovation Award Category, NT Innovation Awards, 2008
- Co-creators Trevor Jamieson (also performer) and Scott Rankin (writer and Director) win 'The most outstanding Achievement in Film, TV and Entertainment' category, Deadly Awards, Sydney, 2008
- The *Ngapartji Ngapartji* show is nominated in 'Best Mainstage Production' category of Sydney Theatre Awards, 2009
- Scott Rankin is nominated in 'Best Director' category of Sydney Theatre Awards, 2009
- Trevor Jamieson is awarded 'Best Leading Actor', Sydney Theatre Awards, 2009
- the *bigART* organization is awarded 'the Group Award' at The Sydney Myer Performing Arts Awards, for its work (including the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* production), Melbourne, 2009
- The documentary film project 'Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji' is awarded support and funding through ABCTV's JTV Doco Initiative, 2009
- The documentary film project 'Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji' is commissioned by ABCTV guaranteeing national broadcast in late 2010.
- The *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project is awarded national broadcasting airtime on SBS for its community advertisement promoting awareness of indigenous language loss, through the SBS Foundation Initiative, 2009 (Sources: Final report 2010, Project website 2007-2010, Various awards 2007-2009, 'Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji' 2010).

**Activity:** Participation in local forums by project participants as advocates for their communities.

**Performance Indicators:** Numbers of people attending public events. Response of audiences-gauged through audience surveys and web forums. Attitudes of local people towards participants and young people in town camps. Assessed by media monitoring - particularly letters to editor and call back radio.

The numbers attending public events have been noted in earlier sections of the report.

Many of the earlier cited media reports, stories, festival and performance reviews focus upon young people from town camps where they are highlighted and talented and skilled performers and language tutors. This coverage has promoted a positive profile of young people from town camps and communities to be conveyed nationally and locally.

Likewise, much of the project workshops included community events where 1) young people's work was showcased, 2) community had the opportunity of seeing first hand the productive work and leadership of young people, 3) in a number of cases young people were able to make short public presentations and 4) young people were able to join senior people and members of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* staff at conferences and presentations.

A very strong feature of the project through its many elements was the practice of encouraging young people to present themselves as optimistic, upbeat, accomplished and talented. Indeed a central platform in the ethos of the project was “creating opportunities for, and facilitating participating individuals and communities, to express and share their strong positive stories, views, values, knowledge, and achievements.” By using young people’s stories, various narrative based genres such as film, music and dance the project was regularly able to present to its various audiences an alternative image of the lives of Indigenous young people. As staff put it, one of the project’s major successes was its ability to offer to Australia “the opportunity to understand the complex ‘human’ side of issues that are more commonly reduced to statistics, and to experience the dignity and strength of marginalised peoples who are most commonly portrayed and represented in negative and single dimensional ways” (Source: Final report 2010).

Examples of events, on-line sites, performances and other forums where this occurred include:

- The *Ngapartji.org* website
- The *Ninti.org* website
- Supporter Blogs such as *jameswaites.com*
- The *Ngapartji Ngapartji* and Youth Learning sites on the CAEPR ANU website. This includes digital stories and work produced by the young people
- Young people’s films submitted and shown as part of ‘storywall’, public community screenings in the Todd Mall, Alice Springs; broadcast as part of CAAMA programs ‘Grounded’ and ‘Kids Rool’, and broadcast to remote communities through ICTV, 2006/7/8.
- Several films were uploaded to the ‘indigtube’ website from 2008.
- The film, ‘Kungu Kutju – Tjituru-Tjituru Anyani’ by the young woman Maureen Watson, of Docker River, screened at Remote Fest 07 Youth Film Festival, Alice Springs & OURMedia, Nestros Medios VI, Sydney, 2007
- Exhibition of watercolour paintings by young Abbott’s Camp performer Elton Wirri, Sydney, 2007.
- Images and information is displayed on ‘Munta Uwa, Nyangamala!’ the mobile gallery around Alice Springs & Darwin, 2008/9
- The music video clip ‘Ngura Piltingka’ by Jennifer Wells is shown nationally on the ABCTV Rage (Indigenous Episode), 2009.
- Ongoing archiving of all project media in publically accessible databases, libraries and organisations nationally and locally (Sources: Final Report 2010, CAEPR site, indigtube 2010, ‘Kungu Kutju – Tjituru-Tjituru Anyani’, [www.anu.edu.au/caepr/learning/](http://www.anu.edu.au/caepr/learning/), [www.ninti.au](http://www.ninti.au), [www.ngapartji.org](http://www.ngapartji.org), Rage, Indigenous Episode 2009, Evaluation notes trips to Alice Springs 2008 and 2009).

Another important feature of the work was that *Big hART* staff regularly organised planning, consultation and feedback sessions with elders and young people. Sometimes this occurred as planned meetings. Other times this occurred as part of the process of running workshops. At other times this happened with small gatherings or one on one, as opportunities arose. This part of the work provided another means through which staff and community members built and developed relationships, found ways to bring young people and elders together, provide information to participant’s extended families and communities, began to share ‘two-way’ cultural exchange, and most importantly provide a comfortable and culturally appropriate place for staff, community and young people to strengthen their relationships. Without this emphasis upon building strong relationships it is unlikely that the project would have been able to move beyond plans and aspirations.

This approach taken by *Big hART* staff involved allocating as much time as possible to sitting, listening, sharing food, enjoying family and company, learning language and yarning about the everyday goings on in community. Often this was done as moments became available and during the ‘natural’ course of everyday life. Often it was done as part of activities hosted by *Ngapartji Ngapartji* staff. This element of the work was foundational for creating the trust, understanding and

legitimacy necessary for involvement in later activities. Additionally, the practice of strengthening relationships was in itself a critical 'outcome' of the project, particularly where it involved young people and elders revisiting and reconfiguring their connections. This helped 1) make evident to elders the strength of young people's achievements (providing as form of intra-community promotion of young people) and 2) strengthen and give substance to those who later went on to act as advocates and promote the achievements of others in their community. In other words, time spent together as a community helped 1) reconfigure internal community attitudes about young people and 2) motivate members of the community to act as advocates and promoters of their young people.

Evidence of success in this regard can be found in the willingness of large numbers of remote community members to attend film-screening events, documentary screening and feedback sessions and music CD feedback and consultation sessions. The shift in attitudes people had towards young people is partly reflected in the frequency with which community members requested copies of songs, photos and films produced by young people.

Examples of some of the events that were successful in bringing young people and elders together included:

- Community film nights at Abbots Camp, Ernabella, Amata and Docker River as part of filmmaking workshops.
- Picnics, lunches and informal gatherings at the Alice Springs Office and surrounding locations such as Olive Pink Gardens or the Telegraph Station
- Bush trips (hunting, for business, or visiting significant sites) to areas surrounding Alice Springs or communities
- Community consultation meetings to seek advice, approval or feedback about project activities, plans or products (eg documentary film) held in both project spaces and in participant community spaces (homes, community centres)
- Tours and various associated promotional activities where young people and elders shared time living in close quarters, sharing food, performing on stage, singing together and presenting to a large and very different group of people (Sources: Final Report 2010, Evaluation records of Ernabella tour 2008, Workshop reports 2006, 2007 and 2008).

Audience responses from various performances, feedback from people using the *ninti* site and emails and other unsolicited communication all provide considerable evidence of people who have 1) been moved by the work and 2) have been prompted to reconsider the way they think about the lives of Indigenous young people and their families. Examples in this regard include:

From audience feedback of the 2005 show:

*'Yes it gave a better understanding of the enormity of not being able to return to your Ngura and your relation to it and family.'*

*'Particularly relevant and effective for the night on 'family'.'*

*'Yes the explanation eg of relationships were touching and made it all the more meaningful.'*

*'An excellent idea and great to see so much interest from non-indigenous people like us. If everyone got as much out of it as I did you have touched a lot of people. Thankyou all.'*

*'Thankyou for sharing your stories (tjukurpa) with us. You have really given us a lot.'*

*'Thankyou for your wonderful gift to me and my family. The performance was a sober reminder of our cruel and destructive history but it was also full of hope.'*

*'I enjoyed very much. I was "transported" to "your" country and I felt welcomed. I thank you all.' 'Fantastic. As a linguist seeing such an innovative way to get people aware of, involved in and keen to learn language it is the most wonderful project I have ever seen and I would love to see the Yolngu of North East Arnhem (whom I work with) do something like this. Thankyou so much.'* (Source: audience feedback 2005).

From audience feedback from 2006:

*'Language lessons were fun and interesting, got us thinking. Great stage production and informed me about something I didn't know about. I will find out more.'*

*'The cross cultural and multicultural aspects of the performance were incredible. Singing absolutely beautiful'.*

From audience feedback books of the Sydney show in 2008.

*'Thank you cast for educating me, inspiring me, and making me realise how important the languages of our indigenous brothers and sisters is (are)...'*

*'Thank you for Ngapartji Ngapartji - it did - ngapartji - give me something very special.'*

*'You make a black person feel proud to be Aboriginal. You are an inspiration and you made me cry'*

*'You were amazing! Your humanity, toughness and care on what matters in this world were inspiring. This was a rare and wonderful experience - you make a difference in a hard world, show us what matters and help us understand what life means....'*

*'That was both touching and informative, you have breached the cultural boundaries of our Country.'*

*'What a story, what a piece of theatre.'*

*'I want to learn more Pitjantjatjara.'*

*'Thank you for teaching us the importance of country'*

*'I went to see Ngapartji last night ... and wanted to write to say how much I enjoyed and appreciated it. I found the emotional impact and relevance even stronger than when I saw it in Melbourne ... Trevor's performance ... The strong presence of the women and other performers, the questions raised by the material and so many other aspects of the show will linger with me for a long time.'* Josephine Ridge, General Manager Sydney Festival

*'To all the cast and behind-the-scenes people of the Ngapartji Ngapartji show, well done, it was a great performance! ... I invited a young Malaysian colleague from work, his only experience of aboriginal people were those begging in Adelaide... he really enjoyed the show, and while he admits it hasn't erased all his prejudices, it has obviously made him think.*

I also liked the mirroring on stage of roles in the community - the older women, mainstays of the community, strong in standing together, the unobtrusive backbone, teachers too. The young people, present, quiet in front of strangers, but listening, learning and feeling. The extended family - there is grace in acknowledging and welcoming the extended (non-Koorie) family, thanks for that - it enriches us all. And Trevor -the ability to make fun of himself, and us, in an accepting, cheeky way - really helped us be able to hear the rest of the story' (Sources: audience survey 2008, unsolicited emails 2008).

Subscribers to the *ninti* site said:

*"Can't tell you how much I love the language course and the show is icing on the cake for*

me. Warm wishes”

“As a Victorian Secondary teacher I am inspired by this approach. The website is great! Kind regards” (Source: emails from subscribers 2008).

**Activity:** Participation in national forums for self promotion using cultural tourism tools, including both Pitjantjatjara and English languages

**Performance Indicators:** Local and national policy decisions pertaining to young people and town camps informed by project outcomes.

As is discussed earlier, there were many opportunities created for promoting the project, the positive elements of the lives of Indigenous young people and their communities, the art and musical work of participants and a number of the policy challenges related to town camps and remote communities. The list of films produced, the many music CDs, the creation of the documentary “Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji”, the various tours of the stage production of *Ngapartji Ngapartji*, the *ninti* language site, the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project website, the presentation by staff and performers at various conferences, the preparation of a number of scholarly articles and reports, the countless media reviews and the leading involvement in a campaign for a national language policy makes for an impressive list of ways perceptions, cliché ideas and stereotypes of Indigenous young people from Central Australia were challenged. In powerful ways each of these examples provide an inspiration to those shaping policy in areas such as literacy development, crime prevention, language maintenance, social policy and Indigenous Affairs.

The project and its approach to digital literacy development was also documented on the CAEPR (Centre for Aboriginal and Economic Policy Research) website and in academic literature released in October as part of a research showcasing the benefits of youth learning and literacy in arts and out of school contexts. This work has been undertaken by Kral & Schwab of Australian National University and carried out in association with *Big hART* staff. This research has been used in a number of policy and educational forums to prompt debate and discussion about literacy development, learning and education in remote contexts (Source: CAEPR website 2010).

Most impressive in this regard was the role *Ngapartji Ngapartji* played in prompting the Federal Government to develop a national Indigenous languages policy. This was a leading aspiration of senior Pitjantjatjara women and *Big hART* staff from early in the development of the project. The campaign was most solidly shaped by the emphasis on language maintenance in the stage production. Key public figures such as Ministers Jenny Macklin and Peter Garrett attended the performance. *Big hART* staff then coordinated a campaign and served Minister Macklin with 40 letters of support for a national policy from linguists and language centres. Staff then attended a meeting with Federal Ministers to follow up this campaign and discuss the development of a national Indigenous languages policy. In August of 2009 Minister Macklin announced the creation of the National Indigenous Policy (Source: the policy document can be viewed at: [http://www.jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/jennymacklin.nsf/content/preserve\\_indigenous\\_languages\\_10aug09.htm](http://www.jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/jennymacklin.nsf/content/preserve_indigenous_languages_10aug09.htm), Progress Report No. 4 Sept 2009).

### **Objective No. 3: Pilot and promote a model using language as a tool for crime prevention, based on community capacity building and cultural pride**

The third objective was to trial an approach that used the teaching of language as a means to combat crime. Specifically this approach involved mobilizing young people's efforts to create language tools for those interested in learning Pitjantjatjara language. Implicit here is the idea that the act of teaching others one's language both helps foster pride and community solidarity at the same time as fashioning lasting skills, knowledge and leadership in young people.

The importance of this objective reflects one of the key features of *Big hART's* practice; that involving young people in projects of relevance to the cultural milieu in which they live is inherently in the interests of themselves and their community. It also reflects the aspirations of those who were the initial architects of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project; that there is a fundamentally important connection between Pitjantjatjara language maintenance and the future of Pitjantjatjara communities. It is most clearly articulated in the choice of the Pitjantjatjara term '*Ngapartji Ngapartji*' (I give, you give in turn) as the project name, the stage production name and the central conceptual idea that shaped the various projects, workshops, the ethos and the practices of staff.

Clearly the exchange of Pitjantjatjara language and culture and the national politicisation of language maintenance is the most recognised feature of *Ngapartji Ngapartji's* work. Work concerned with this objective is undoubtedly evident in key elements of the project such as the *Ninti* on-line language course and the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* and *Nyuntu Ngali* theatre shows.

The consequences of working in this way are difficult to establish in definitive terms. However, it is unimaginable to think that a project of this scale and magnitude could be achieved without significant use of Pitjantjatjara. For example, it is impossible to imagine that the project would have attracted any interest from young people with poor histories of school involvement unless Pitjantjatjara was the principle language being used. Many of the women involved in leading the project and performing on stage are much more capable of articulating their ideas, expressing their views and giving instructions using Pitjantjatjara.

Not only was the choice to operate so much in a Pitjantjatjara language domain important because it increased interest and people's involvement. It also had many positive consequences for being able to build depth in participation and extend people's repertoire and stories. As Trevor Jamieson explains operating in one's first language allows one to intensify involvement:

*People are limited in what they can give as a story if they have to go to English, so you'd always get this same basic story: 'I went to school blah, blah'. It's like me in another language, I'm gonna give a simple representation of what or who I am. And I've been really frustrated with this as an arts worker because I've felt that I can't go any further until I learn the language (Source: Memory Basket 2010).*

Recording the work bilingually (using two-way exchanges and subtitles) also had provided the advantage of allowing the work to be taken to two different language audiences. As Trevor explains, creating work in two languages is important for two reasons:

*"...when we do the film-making we do subtitling, there's two reasons for this, they (community members) want subtitles on their stuff if it's in language ... because they*



*know it can go elsewhere ... it's not just gonna be for the community ... they know that if it's subtitled it can go somewhere else. And I think they know that if it has English it has value as well, it means it's good quality it's not just a 'language film' but it's got both" (Source: Memory Basket 2010).*

Using Pitjantjatjara in a stage show also provided a clever and powerful way to draw audiences into the show, the themes of the project and the relevance to their lives of Indigenous languages. Christina Cass from Theatre News articulated this when she described the show in this way:

*"an experience of a nation's journey told by master storyteller and co-creator of this work, Trevor Jamieson, and it's not to be missed. Through monologues in native tongues and English translations, and sublime movement and projection we begin to understand that this is not one man's tale, but the tale of many. The tale of Diaspora – or the displacement of people and cultures throughout man's history – unfolds before us ... he switches between English and Pitjantjatjara and moves with (such) catlike ease and humour that the audience barely realises they've been witness to 60 years of cultural history. Although this shameful topic is uncomfortable for many people, it is performed with great humour and intelligence. No finger pointing here, just a story that's been missing from this nation's narration; a story that should not be overlooked any longer ... Jamieson's and the ensemble's performance is not only highly entertaining and timely, but it is pure Aussie-born and bred theatre. By signing up for online language classes or attending performances, you are not only broadening your own scope of knowledge, but you are helping a nation rebuild and redefine itself" (Source: Memory Basket 2010).*

**Activity:** Establish Language and Culture Reference Group

**Performance Indicators:** Project successfully conducted in Pitjantjatjara. Number of participants. Language agencies, linguists and other language groups interested in the process

The Language Reference Group was established by 30 September 2007. Members of this group were involved in the development of both the language and project websites, participated in the theatre performance, assisted in creative development and acted as advisors throughout the course of the work. In particular, they were instrumental in the development of the literacy components of the work, drove the campaign for a national Indigenous languages policy and led the development of the legacy basket (Source: website credits, minutes of meeting 2007, evaluation notes 2007 and 2008).

The following letter provides evidence of the breadth of involvement of Indigenous women in this group.

*Thursday March 30, 2007*

*Re: Big hART Community Partnerships Key Producer Status*

*To Whom It May Concern:*

*Pitjantjatjara is my first language, and I have been teaching the Pitjantjatjara language for over 25 years, in and around Central Australia, for the Institute For Aboriginal Development, and for the Department of Education in South Australia.*

*I provide advice on linguistic and cultural appropriateness of material for Ngapartji Ngapartji*

online language course.

*I provide advice on linguistic and cultural appropriateness of material for Ngapartji Ngapartji script.*

*I provide guidance to Ngapartji Ngapartji team regarding the curriculum for the online course.*

*I liaise with the Ngapartji Ngapartji team and provide cultural advice regarding appropriate project development*

*I Provide advice on key cultural and language organisations and individuals for the project to engage with.*

*I teach language live in the Ngapartji Ngapartji performance.*

*I mentor other people to teach Pitjantjatjara.*

*Working with Big hART is very important for us and our language as we are aware of our language may one day become lost. Big hART has given us the opportunity to work with technology by documenting our language, whether on stage or in rehearsals or just having fun.*

*Kind Regards,*

*Loma Wilson - Kamikuarangka*

As is clear from the evidence presented thus far, an impressive feature of the project was the extent to which Pitjantjatjara language shaped the various achievements. Indeed Pitjantjatjara language was the hub around which the project spun. Indeed Pitjantjatjara language was central in a range of ways: 1) a key motivation for establishing the project was to promote the maintenance of language, 2) from its earliest days the project's aims and methods were driven by Pitjantjatjara language and conceptual ideas, 3) much of the discussions and planning occurred in Pitjantjatjara, 4) Pitjantjatjara shaped the content, form, rhythms and poetics of the production of *Ngapartji Ngapartji*, 5) almost all of the lyrics in the music were in Pitjantjatjara, 6) a key element of the project work in the early stages of the project involved the production of the *Ninti* language site, 7) non-Indigenous audience members and language students were mentored in Pitjantjatjara, 8) film work was produced using a two-way language relationship so that Pitjantjatjara and English were used in unison.

Clearly the depth of this work acts in important ways to buttress existing forms of Pitjantjatjara language use and continuity. In addition, the production of so much digitally recorded language work will prove invaluable to future generations of Pitjantjatjara speakers and teachers. The fact that this work is being carefully archived and stored in public facilities demonstrates the extent to which the project will 'sustain' itself well beyond its life (Sources: list of films and music productions 2010, Final Report 2010).

**Activity:** Document the project process using film, photographs, surveys, interviews and media clippings

**Performance Indicators:** Report outlining project process and model produced

There is remarkable evidence that the project has used film, photography, music, written documenting processes and has recorded media responses to the work. As mentioned earlier, a highlight of the project has been the use of a variety of digital recording approaches for three allied processes: 1) as tools for involving young people in a range of activities with others in their community 2) as a means of challenging popular misconceptions and promoting to a wide array of audiences the positive achievements of Indigenous communities, 3) as a method for assisting in the production of high quality art, music, performance and film, 4) as a way of recording Pitjantjatjara culture, language and life for future generations and 5) as a way of documenting the model or approach used by Big hART.

During the final year of the project one of the principal activities of staff has been to sort and archive the 13,000 photographs, films, digital footage, music recordings, media clippings and interview transcripts. The point of this exercise is to allow for ongoing access by participants, local communities, academics, and researchers (Source: Final report 2010, Evaluation records 2009).

In addition to the thousands of photographs, hundreds of hours of film, and many recorded musical pieces the *Big hART* team have also kept up to date with reports, maintained a very detailed and updated website with news of activity, recorded professional workshop journals and created learning portfolios with young people involved in the literacy development work. As this report demonstrates, there is an enormous array of sources from which to seek out evidence of the achievements of the work. One example of this is the careful documenting and archiving of postings placed on the project website. The text of these postings include over 50 pages of news items and stories of project activities (Source: Ngapartji.org Website News Postings 2006-2009).

The detail and care with which these records have been kept is also worth noting. Records of video and raw footage indicate a concerted effort to record processes used as well as outcomes or artistic products. Records held include details about the dates and names of those involved in activities and highlight the role of young people and children in assisting the process of translating in communities. In part this is why work is so often well translated, particularly important given that most speaking occurred in Pitjantjatjara. An enormous amount of time has gone into this process, often transcribing large amounts of narrative. For example, over one hundred and fifty pages of dialogue were transcribed from vox pops, interviews and other footage recorded by the documentary team. Many meetings were likewise carefully transcribed in great depth and detail. This stands as excellent evidence of the long term and wide commitment to record process and the approaches used on the part of the *Big hART* team Sources: Project film archive 2005-2010, Project photographic archive 2005-2010, Workshop reports 2005-2010, Project media archive 2005-2010, Project website archive 2005-2010).

Also indicative of the success in documenting and recording of various elements of the project is the extent of video recording of the work. For example:

In its inception year (2004) the project produced two pilot language lessons. In 2005 twelve finished videos were made with young people's work featuring as films for the language website. There also exists one tape of raw footage documenting workshops, tours, film making and other language material and songs for the *ninti* website. In 2006 32 films were completed, including work by young people and children for language lessons, short films made during workshops, theatre performance, music clips from song writing and song recording workshops and various slideshows. In addition there are 20 tapes of raw footage and 69 tapes for future documentary footage. This includes rehearsals, tours and performances. In 2007 19 films were produced. Eight tapes of raw footage were recorded from the Docker River trip, documenting young people's involvement in film making activities. Additionally there are eight tapes of raw footage from a Kwirkkurra trip, 11 tapes from an Ernabella Trip documenting music trip- song writing, performing, dancing and music clips (Source: Ngapartji Ngapartji AV Content List 2010).

**Activity:** Evaluate the process

**Performance Indicators:** Report outlining project process and model produced

This report represents the work in relation to this Activity.

**Activity:** Pilot replication with Arrernte community for 2008 Regional Arts Conference

**Performance Indicators:** Process and implementation replicated in Arrernte

In 2007 project staff began initial conversations with the Central Land Council who had expressed interest in using a similar process to that used in the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project (Source: Progress Report 1 March 08). However it soon became apparent that resources were unavailable for *Big hART* to set up a new language and culture reference group, find another filmmaker and create new content in Arrernte. Furthermore discussions with Qantas and Art at the Heart did not open up opportunities for platforms for this content as hoped. Therefore it was decided to not pursue creation of materials in Arrernte, but to provide support and advice to people who were interested in pursuing

such a project (Source: Evaluation notes 2010).

**Activity:** Present project and its replication at Arts at the Heart conference 2008

**Performance Indicators:** Project included in Arts at the Heart program

The project was successfully showcased at the Arts the Heart Conference, Alice Springs in 2008. A presentation by *Big hART* staff was accepted and included as part of the program of the Art in the Heart Conference (Alice Springs October 2008). Approximately 50 people attended the presentation by *Big hART* staff and *Anangu* performers. In addition, three nights of the full production of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* played at the Araluen Theatre in Alice Springs during the conference. This performance was included as part of the conference programme and many hundreds of conference attendees chose to see the show. As a consequence the show was another sell-out. In addition, the Mobile Gallery was exhibited at the Alice Springs Airport during the period of the conference (Sources: Progress Report No 1 March 31 2008, Art in the Heart Conference Proceedings 2008, Evaluation notes of Alice Springs tour and conference attendance 2008).

**Activity:** Collate and produce project history, documentation, model pack

**Performance Indicators:** Project pack produced

Planning, content production, photo selection and community consultation for a 'legacy pack' occurred between May and August of 2009. As a consequence of discussions with senior Pitjantjatjara people involved in the project it was decided to rename the 'legacy package' a 'Memory Basket'. The work was delivered to a designer in early September with the view to creating 'proofs' to show community participants for feedback. All funding required for the work was raised by this stage.

During 2009 a number of workshops took place to decide on the content and style of a 'Memory Basket' to be created at the conclusion of the project's work. During this period post production and editing work continued on the documentary (at that point called "Lost for Words" but later to be renamed "Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji"). It was decided that this documentary would be included in the Memory Basket. The Memory Basket has now been launched and is being distributed to community and other individuals and organizations (Sources: Progress Report 2009, Final Report 2010).

In addition to the production of a 'Memory Basket' as a legacy record of the work there has also been considerable discussion of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project activities, outcomes and processes in various academic and research papers by both *Big hART* staff and independent authors. As mentioned previously the project has worked in association with a national research project concerned with alternative education programmes with Indigenous young people. The *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project has been one of five sites used as part of a three year research study called 'Lifespan Learning and Literacy in Remote Indigenous Communities 2007-10' carried out by Inge Kral and Jerry Schwab from the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University (Source: CAEPR website 2010, CAEPR Research Project Brief 2007, Evaluation notes from field trip to Canberra 2008).

Over the last four years there have been eight requests from Masters and Doctoral students to discuss various aspects of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* work (Source: Final Report 2010).

In addition, a range of papers have been produced including:

- 'Indigenous languages and Language Policy – a background paper' Melanie Gillbank & Alex Kelly, 2008
- 'Alternative Learning Pathways: Community based approaches' 2008, by Jane Leonard and Dr Inge Kral. (Presented at Desert Knowledge Symposium 2008)
- 'Lifespan learning and literacy in remote indigenous communities: 2007-10', 2009, Inge

- Kral and Gerry Schwab, (presented at Youth Learning Symposium, Darwin, 2009.)
- 'I cant get to class today –my clothes got stolen again', Jane Leonard, 2010 (Entry in NT literary awards essay Category, 2010)
- '*Ngapartji Ngapartji*: Indigenous Language in The Arts', 2009, By Beth Sometimes & Alex Kelly (for 'Re-awakening Languages: Theory and Practice in the Revitalisation of Australia's Indigenous Languages' edited by John Hobson, Kevin Lowe, Susan Poetsch & Michael Walsh. Also appeared in 'Noonjook', published by Batchelor Institute, 2009)
- 'Indigenous languages – Now or Never', 2009: A collated document containing copies of 40 letters of support for action supporting the promotion, preservation and maintenance of indigenous languages. (Distributed widely and handed to federal government ministers in Canberra).
- Aboriginal performance: politics, empathy and the question of reciprocity. Helena Grehan, draft due for publication in *Australasian Drama Studies* April, 2010.

#### **Objective No. 4: Pilot and promote a model that builds digital literacy and participation to assist in prevention of crime.**

The fourth objective was to trial an approach that attempts to prevent crime by building the digital literacy of Pitjantjatjara people. This objective came about at the direct request of senior people who had been involved in the earlier stages of the work. They felt that the project should integrate literacy by having this become a more formalised educational component of the work. As a consequence a special literacy worker was employed to work in conjunction with a reference group of Pitjantjatjara community people.

In part this involved using the *ninti* on-line language course as a way for younger people to act as 'translators' or 'tutors'. In this way Pitjantjatjara speakers could teach others while improving their own literacy across two languages. In part the approach taken by the literacy worker was to draw out and document literacy opportunities that emerged from the creative work. Much of this work occurred through the use of multimedia projects so that,

“we often started with ideas about films or music ... for example the young people would usually come to the music workshops with their ideas ... sometimes they had half written lyrics, sometimes they had learnt a riff from a popular song and wanted to add lyrics, some of the songs were really well formed. So through the creative workshops we would work on what they had maybe taking it all the way to producing a video clip. At various stages and in many different ways we would gently encourage them to do some literacy work. For example, they would start with a song in Pitjantjatjara so we would ask them to write down a translation. There is lots of work in speaking, writing and reading out these translations. They might be ready for some filming so we would get them to do some storyboarding and ask them to write script. Some might be starting out so we would get them to write lyrics on butcher's paper. The idea was always to try and extend what they were capable of doing, gently moving them to new places that they thought might be just a little beyond their reach. The beauty of using music and performance is that it is fun and they really like it.” (Source: Worker interview, evaluation notes from Alice Springs field trip 2009).

This objective was not without its difficulties. As the literacy elements of the work grew it became apparent that different people had different ideas about 'literacy'. Some saw literacy in fairly limited terms as skills in reading and writing whereas others had a much broader conception of literacy as a person's capacity to negotiate their way through the highly complex web of communicative technologies, languages, economies and cultural domains that confront

them in modern times. In this way to be literate in the modern world is to be able to move across a vast array of these domains, able to move in and out of different social contexts, able to speak across language codes, able to shift across an ever changing global economy. One way of putting this is to say that rather than simply being a good reader and writer, to be literate in modern times demands that one must be like an accomplished dancer, artfully drawing upon a vast and sophisticated repertoire of moves.

More conventional approaches to literacy are shaped by ideas about student deficit and the need to contend with educational failure. As Friere (1972) puts it, in the conventional approach to literacy development one sees literacy in very specific and limited terms; it has to do with one's capacity to read and write text-based material in order to communicate and negotiate one's way through life. Here teachers see education as an exercise much like banking where one starts with an empty account and makes regular small deposits in an attempt to fill what was previously a shortfall in the balance. In this style of literacy development practitioners and policy people often pursue statistical equality over equity (Altman, 2009; Cousins, 2003; Kral & Schwab, 2003; Pholi, Black and Richards, 2009). Citing the literature, *Ngapartji Ngapartji's* literacy worker said that those following this approach require "a range of baseline data on what is *wrong* with Indigenous people. Deficit data then forms the basis of what is *known* about Indigenous people. This in turn sets the strategic goals for action to *fix* Indigenous people". In this approach one identifies what "mainstream skills Indigenous young people haven't got" and put this right by depositing the identified skills. Here there is little focus on 1) the skills and interests (literacies) Indigenous young people do have, 2) any skills, knowledge or relevant learning (literacies) that may be useful in the Indigenous domain and 3) modes of learning that may act as 'bridging literacies' between mainstream educational and Indigenous domains (such as multimedia, arts, dance and language).

An alternative approach to literacy (and one taken on by the project workers) starts from the recognition that written literacies have a short history in many more orally based cultural settings (eg. Pitjantjatjara culture). For those growing up in these settings reading and writing-based literacy often has less relevance (see Kral and Schwab 2003). However there often exists highly developed other forms of literacy. Sometimes these are more spatially focused, sometimes more aural, visual and artful. For example, in the experience of *Big hART* workers Pitjantjatjara young people often had high developed musical literacies and often very quickly developed filmic and photographic literacies.

An alternative approach to literacy starts from the premise that all students have considerable literacy assets, skills and strengths. As Friere (1972) puts it, an alternative approach to literacy development sees the task of the educator as that of 1) looking for other forms of literacy (eg. language capacity in non-English languages, use of the new technologies, knowledge of family systems), 2) encouraging people to demonstrate these capacities (eg. producing work in their language and literacy technologies), 3) looking for opportunities for 'bridging literacies' (eg. image-based technologies, dance and music can work well to build a bridge between the literacy worlds of mainstream Australia and Pitjantjatjara communities. In this approach educationalists are on the look out for 'bi-literacy' opportunities, helping young people move across literacy domains, able to code switch, perhaps even 'dancing' from Pitjantjatjara to English literacies.

As is outlined later in the report, this tension was felt early on the working life of the literacy worker when she began the process of literacy testing of young people. The results from the initial tests concluded that the young people performed very poorly by conventional measures.

Feedback from young people was that the testing process, was unhelpful and demeaning or in their words, made them feel 'shame'. In contrast, they spoke highly of and enjoyed the way project workers had previously drawn them into the use of new digital technologies, film, music and performance. This prompted workers to reconsider the value of adopting a conventional approach to the literacy work, instead choosing an approach that looked for opportunities to use the creative process to provide opportunities for young people to pick up and advance their digital literacy skills. In this way, the project moved away from its earlier plans to use national literacy tests as a measure of its success. This was replaced by the plan to keep detailed records or portfolios of young people's work in order to demonstrate the depth of exposure to learning digital literacies.

Although considerable literacy work was carried out in earlier element of the project, a targeted digital literacy and learning program ran from 2007-9. This program involved both running special literacy-based workshops using multimedia and digital arts activities and 'tagging along' with other *Ngapartji Ngapartji* creative development and touring work to draw out literacy opportunities. The idea was to enhance young people's use of a range of multimodal literacies, including, but not focusing solely on the English literacy skills of reading and writing. The project was in a unique position, given its involvement with creative production, to provide activities in a non-school based literacy and learning environment.

Most of those involved in this work were young Indigenous participants who are often variously described as 'at risk', 'school non-attenders', 'young offenders' or 'young people living rough'. As one *Big hART* worker said, many of these young people "identify strongly with both youth culture and their indigenous culture, and are influenced by their community ties, obligations and relationships. They are very capable and enthusiastic at navigating and participating in community life but their opportunities for doing so in wider mainstream forums can be limited by their own perceptions, negative community perceptions and by their low English literacy levels."

It is certainly the case that the project was attractive to young people who had poor participation rates in other more formal literacy programs and "extremely low levels of textual English literacy and numeracy, limited capacities to approach text based tasks, and much shame around doing so" (Source: Final report 2010, Interview with Inge Kral 2008). These young people were offered the chance to experiment with new and interesting digital technology using it to develop and express stories, build reading skills and compose text without feeling diminished or ashamed.

The workshops gave participants the chance to work with highly talented professional technicians and artists, producing multimedia such as music, songs, images, posters, collages, digital stories, films, personal profiles, comic stories or family trees. They were able to direct the process by choosing the themes, content, language, images and style of presentation. In this way they learnt elements of planning and production both on their own and in association with artists, both Pitjantjatjara and non-Pitjantjatjara. In this way the program offered activities that were of high interest to young people at the same time as giving them the chance to 1) represent themselves meaningfully and positively in public forums, 2) learn much about multimedia and 3) also extend their reading and writing skills in the process.

Those *Big hART* staff involved in this work regularly found ways to 'get the stories out' to wider audiences. For example, young people learnt how to burn copies of digital content and save and retrieve work on the computer and websites so they could take the work home to show family and others in the community. As is discussed later, some young people also were given

the chance to present their work in other public settings. For example, a number of young women presented at the 'Kungkas [Pitjantjatjara women] Career Conference'.

As the following review of outcomes demonstrates, there is much evidence that young people responded well, extending their repertoire in multimedia production and the use of digital technologies. Clearly the exchange of Pitjantjatjara language and culture and the national politicisation of language maintenance is the most recognised feature of Ngapartji Ngapartji's work in this regard. Young people's participation is undoubtedly evident in key elements of the project such as the *Ninti* on-line language course and the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* and *Nyuntu Ngali* theatre shows. Young people assisted in the production of language videos by acting, filming, performing and translating. Visitors to the *Ninti* site can see young people taking learners through various elements of the language lessons. The credits of other films show young people took up roles in all elements of the production and post-production work, writing, editing, carrying out sound recording and directing. Audiences of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* show get to see young people acting, singing, dancing and painting as part of the performance. Impressively, two young people take up central roles in the *Nyuntu Ngali* show, one as a leading actor, the other as a key musician and performer.

There were also other more subtle but powerful ways in which the use of Pitjantjatjara language shaped the project. Pitjantjatjara was the mother language for most who participated. It was used as the language of choice during much of the workshop activity, in everyday exchanges between members of the community and some staff and as the first language for many people to articulate their ideas and express themselves. Most of the songs created during the project had Pitjantjatjara lyrics. Often communication occurred across Pitjantjatjara and English with 'two-way' communication occurring so that English and Pitjantjatjara being used in dialogue. For example, during the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* show much of the dialogue shifts back and forward between Pitjantjatjara and English. In the *Nyuntu Ngali* show the two central characters act as translators for each other, often with the young non-Indigenous woman speaking Pitjantjatjara and the young Indigenous man speaking English. Much of the film work used subtitles so that when English was being spoken Pitjantjatjara subtitles appeared and visa versa for the Pitjantjatjara spoken word.

<p><b>Activity:</b> Establish Literacy Reference Group  <b>Performance Indicators:</b> Literacy Reference Group established by 30 September 2007 in accordance with Milestones</p>
<p>The Language Reference Group was established by 30 September 2007. This group also gave advice in relation to literacy work. Members of this group were involved in the development of both the language and project websites, participated in the theatre performance, assisted in creative development and acted as advisors throughout the course of the work. In particular, they were instrumental in the development of the literacy components of the work, drove the campaign for a national Indigenous languages policy and led the development of the legacy basket (Source: website credits, minutes of meeting 2007, evaluation notes 2007 and 2008).</p>
<p><b>Activity:</b> Develop relevant and engaging literacy component to project using project texts, such as performance script, media transcripts, as basis for language exchange. Literacy experts to be closely involved.  <b>Performance Indicators:</b> Numbers of workshop participants demonstrating improved literacy skills through literacy status testing</p>
<p>As discussed in the previous section, after some experimentation with the use of the NRS literacy assessment tool by Australian National University Researcher Dr Inge Kral, a decision was taken</p>



to replace the use of literacy status testing with the production of portfolios of young people's work and involvement in project production activities. In this way young people's work and participation stands as evidence of literacy development rather than test results from a measuring tool that has little cultural or project relevance.

The rationale for this decision in part reflects the failure of conventional approaches to literacy development and in part the evidence from emerging research about what it takes to involve those who previously have failed to show interest. According to *Big hART* staff, evidence shows that it is not helpful to adopt a model of literacy that is characterised by the transmission of mainly English skills in reading and writing through a teacher. Rather, "people learn best not when they are passively receiving information but when they are actively engaged in exploring, experimenting and expressing themselves (sometimes known as the three E's)" (Resnick, 2002 cited in Leonard 2009).

Prompted by this work project staff adopted an expanded idea of literacy as 'developing those essential information skills required to accomplish goals' (Warlick, 2006, p92 cited in Leonard 2009). This meant that they could include visual, digital, musical and multimedia literacies as legitimate forms of literacy. Accordingly project activity focus shifted from limiting itself to reading, numeracy and writing to accessing information in digital forms, in film, in sound recording, in dance and in other performance and forms of expression. One advantage of this approach is that the project was able to keep the interest of those young people who had previously fallen out of the reach of conventional literacy programs. For example, it meant that the project could work with participants with extremely low levels of textual English literacy and numeracy, limited interest and ability in taking on text-based tasks, and much shame around their perceived low skill levels. It also meant that project staff could use a range of forms of information to excite young people's interest, encourage them to 'play' with new forms of literacy, build the courage necessary to jump across literacies and make it possible for them to experiment with conventional forms of literacy with some safety and confidence. For example, by encouraging young people to work with film production as a form of literacy workers were able to gently create opportunities for young people to also extend their reading and writing repertoire through involvement in film production tasks such as story boarding, script production, text creation in subtitles and credits.

One worker described the process used in this way:

In the learning program workshop activity focused on participants producing multimedia such as music, songs, images, posters, collages, digital stories, films, personal profiles, comic stories or family trees. They chose their own themes, content, and undertook significant aspects of planning and production independently or collaboratively with facilitators, each other or older community members. The production processes focused on building upon existing competencies through acknowledging and reflecting on participant achievements with other parts of the program, or calling upon their rich cultural capital. Approaches and activities provided room to seek support, expand such existing competencies and engage in choices around problem solving.

The project also emphasised developing an appropriate learning environment and network so the focus is not just on technology but participation, support and moving between different roles. Learning settings in the Alice Springs Office were welcoming and intimate to encourage collaboration, and sharing ideas. Participants could undertake activity in their own time, way and language, for example, write songs or record film voiceovers in Pitjantjatjara, and could choose a variety of ways of approaching tasks that centred around learning with peers by creating or producing some form of relevant and meaningful media. Arts and learning workers were on hand to provide a range of opportunities to learn (Source: Final Progress Report 2010).

Evidence of the achievements in relation to literacy work include:

Active involvement by young people in the development, filming, 'tutoring' and production of videos for the *ninti* website language lessons series. This includes young people's direct involvement in the production of 20 online language lessons with at least one movie each lesson. In this way, young people have worked with elders and literacy and arts mentors, creating language resources and acting as the online teachers or tutors (Source: *ninti* website 2006-2009, film and footage 2005-2009).

This work involved constant exposure and interaction with different modes of photographic, filmic, performance and music literacies and necessitated young people moving across at least three languages codes: English, Aboriginal English and Pitjantjatjara. In this way, young people routinely extended their repertoire across different modes, using different communication technologies and developing an understanding of different genres and performative styles. Additionally young people were asked to practice their language skills across three distinct languages, learning and developing their knowledge at the same time as acting as teachers and interpreters for others. This highly complex set of skills necessitated young people navigating their way around layers of different literacies, often shifting and code switching (Sources: portfolios of young people's work, *ninti* language site, Workshop records 2006-2009, Evaluation notes from visit to Alice Springs in 2008).

Examples of this work include the following:

In January to June 2006 workshops and bush trips were undertaken in Alice Springs, Ernabella and Docker River to prepare language and culture content for the *ninti* website. Over 50 young people and their families participated in the development of language, music and film content with the purpose of language exchange. During the same time young people assisted in the production of a DVD compilation created for distribution to community and to be made available on the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* website. This DVD includes: language lessons used in the online language course, five music video clips of songs created and performed by young people in workshops, six short films of digital storytelling made by young people in Docker River and a project video promotion of *Ngapartji Ngapartji*. It is clear that young people were centrally involved in the production of all of this work (Source: *ninti* website, *Ngapartji Ngapartji* website, DVD compilation 2006).

During 2007 there were many examples of projects where young people and other community members were centrally involved in creating texts related to the performance and workshops media and advertising. For example, in the Alice Springs office young people would drop in to work on digital media. Project workers used the opportunity created when young people 'dropped in' to work with individuals and small groups developing literacy in written, graphic and digital media. The work created and the workshop reports both stand as solid evidence of young people's increased proficiency in the use of film, photography, sound and other digital media. In addition to creating film they produced advertising material in the form of posters for upcoming events. In another example a young woman was supported with training, equipment and mentoring at an event where she was approached to act as a camera operator filming the 'Bush Bands Bash' (Sources: "Working in photoshop with a young woman to develop Pukatja Recording Workshop Posters", Project Worker's Reports 2007).

There also exist records from a range of workshops (cited elsewhere) that stand as evidence of literacy development work. Examples include:

During songwriting and filming workshops in Ernabella in October 2007 young people "spent 3 to 4 hours on the lyrics in Pitjantjatjara". The process was filmed and young people participated in some post-production work that acted as a scaffolding exercise to further exercise their language and reading skills. (Project Worker's Reports 2007). During a similar movie making session young women began by drawing and writing ideas for filming on paper. This planning work for a film

became an excellent platform to encourage young people to practice their writing. As a one project worker described, the group of young people “drew and scripted a story and were very intent on getting the spelling right. I was really impressed with their Pitjantjatjara literacy (Source: Project Worker’s Reports 2007).

In much the same way recording sessions with musicians and singers, with them using the ‘Garage Band’ necessitated young people’s use of a range of literacy skills including musical, digital, computer and written and spoken language skills. Creating musical recordings, often filming clips and making DVDs acted as way to spark young people’s interest in work that included writing, reading, language development, performance and speaking (Source: Project Worker’s Reports 2007).

Because of the difficulty associated with encouraging young people’s involvement in much of the ‘formal’, conventional or accredited literacy programmes *Big hART* staff had to adopt different strategies for literacy development. The approach most often taken by project staff was to attempt to integrate literacy development components of the work into other project activities, utilising opportunities in existing arts and media project workshops, performances and tours. For example, bilingual song-writing and recording workshops and the consequent CD production was something that young people often enjoyed. This work was carried out for a variety of purposes including creative production, community development, language maintenance and artistic merit. In addition, those involved were also thrust into an environment where bilingual literacy was paramount. Sometimes, because of the nature of the demands, young people were asked to act as translators. Other times they needed to shift backward and forward from English to Pitjantjatjara. Indeed, in their role as tutors on the *ninti* site young people inadvertently had to practice their own bilingual skill. Similarly community consultation, filming and translation around both the *Nyuntu Ngali* and film documentary productions generated frequent and ongoing opportunities for language exchange and development for two young Pitjantjatjara performers who guided the audience through an experience of language exchange (Sources: Project workshop reports 2006-2009, Evaluation notes of Adelaide trips to see *Nyuntu Ngali* 2009 and 2010).

Joining the various tours also provided powerful opportunities for exposures to new literacies. Those on tour were forced to confront a range of unfamiliar literacies, negotiating spaces, sounds and sensory stimulations that are profoundly different to that which they were exposed to in the Western Desert. In addition, project staff encouraged them to take part in the range of jobs confronting a company on tour. As a result they helped write media releases, programs for the theatre show, programs for conferences, scripts for the show, tour schedules, performance plans, and presentations (Source: Literacy Coordinator’s Daily Progress Report 2008).

**Activity:** Conduct literacy status tests at regular intervals to monitor the level of literacy amongst project participants

**Performance Indicators:** Literacy status tests conducted at intervals as set out in Milestones. Results compared with previous tests.

As outlined earlier, the first formal literacy testing was undertaken in January 2008. (Progress Report No1 March 31). At the conclusion of this testing it was decided to reconfigure plans in relation to the literacy elements of the work. As a consequence staff moved from a plan to carry out regular testing, instead choosing the creation of portfolios of young people’s work as a means of providing evidence of project achievements.

Although not ‘measuring’ progress the literacy portfolios and other project records (such as workshop journals, film, performance and music work) provide good evidence of the work produced by young people. This evidence is strongest in relation to the digital literacy.

It is also worth noting evidence of young people’s increasing competence in dealing with the demands of everyday life, including managing communication with government departments,

using emails and facsimiles to make contact across remote communities. One approach taken by *Big hART* staff was to find ways to draw out the literacy demands in young people's everyday problems and challenges. This approach, sometimes referred to as an experiential or problem-centred education methodology, involved capitalising on the immediate and pressing needs in young people's lives and encouraging them to find solutions by using new forms of literacy. For example, regularly project workers challenged young people to extend their literacy repertoire as a way of dealing with their obligations to bodies such as Centrelink and various education and training organizations. Workers offered their support while young people wrote letters and fulfilled their training and education reporting. Involvement in the project also gave some young people the confidence to carry out work on behalf of others in their community. One example was cited by a project worker:

"This is a story involving a couple of the young women that have been involved in Ngapartji for a few years now. Often it has been hard to interest them in the literacy elements and sometimes I have questioned what we are doing. But something happened recently that made me realise what we are doing is relevant. There had been a death in a remote community where the families of the young people had extended family and obligations. The funeral arrangements were happening but information ... as is often the case in remote communities ... was not very forthcoming. Without any notice and great announcements two of the young women came into the office, drafted out a letter to the family expressing their sympathies and asked for permission for their family to visit the community for the funeral. The letter was clearly written and faxed off ... all without asking for help and all on behalf of others in their family" (Source: Evaluation notes 2009).

There is also some evidence that young people used the office as a safe place to gain an understanding of how non-Indigenous people carry out their work, use language to negotiate their work and manage the demands in the 'whitefella' domain. According to staff a number of young people came into the Alice Springs office because it represented a rare opportunity to see first hand in a relatively intimate environment how things work in a world very different to that which they occupy. The following journal entry from the evaluation notes offer one example of how young people extend their knowledge of 'literacy' in a principally *piranpa* or 'whitefella' workplace.

On Wednesday afternoon I was meeting with the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* staff in their Alice office. While we were talking ### (a young woman) rolled up. According to the workers, this was a typical 'drop-in' event where young people turned up without notice and without necessarily a workshop or project work to do. ### was introduced to me and asked whether she wanted to see the latest photographs of a recent community visit she had taken part in. She was also invited to listen to a series of new songs that had been recorded during the same workshop series. She settled in to the computer not far from where we were sitting, organised herself with a coffee and navigated her way to the IPhoto site to watch the pictures and the ITune site to listen to the music. Within a couple of minutes it became apparent that the music was getting too loud for us to concentrate on our meeting. One of the workers then suggested ### turn down the music or plug in some earphones. Initially ### plugged in earphones but soon unplugged them so the music played openly for all to hear. The worker then reminded ### that we needed to be able to talk. Instead of putting in the earplugs ### turned the music down marginally. This was a bit of a mystery to us until we realised that ### found the exclusivity of the music via earphones made it impossible for her to listen in on our discussion. ### was then invited to join us. She replied, "no, I can hear right here ... As we continued the meeting I noticed that ### was deeply interested in what was being said, sometimes slightly turning to help her hear. Perhaps just as using the new technologies provides portals into the network society sitting in the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* office provides a small portal into 'whitefella' work (Source: evaluation notes from Alice Springs trip 2007).

**Activity:** Train students as teachers by developing teaching materials in Pitjantjatjara for use in an online program which will celebrate knowledge of Pitjantjatjara while building digital skills.

**Performance Indicators:** Numbers of workshop participants demonstrating teaching and digital skills following workshop block.

As has been discussed previously, there is considerable evidence of young people's involvement in the production of film and other learning material for the *ninti* language website. Those visiting the site are offered language guidance through short films where young people act as 'tutors'. Young people are certainly credited as 'Language Tutors' in the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* Festival Programs, in films and on the *ninti* site (Sources: *ninti* website, Woodford Festival material where 27 young people are credited).

In addition, there is good evidence that those young people joining the tour of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* production are involved in a broader process of educating non-Indigenous audiences about language, culture and history.

Furthermore *Big hART* staff have noted through their workshop journals and in interviews as part of the evaluation that there have been a number of instances where young people and children have acted to educate project workers and visitors about language and names for people and places (Source: Workshop journals 2006-2009, Evaluation notes 2007-2010).

Young people have also attended events where they demonstrate their language, performance and digital skills, sharing at learning forums such as the 'Youth Lifelong Learning Symposium' in 2009 and the Kungka Careers Conference in 2008.

Also importantly, there is good evidence that the opportunity of participating in filming, dance and other performance work has given young people the chance to act as mentors and 'teachers' to each other. Indeed a number of the films feature this as a theme, creating stories that model mentoring, acts of care and the practice of obligation to other young people (Source: range of films 2005-2008, Mimili report 2008, Music workshop reports in *Ernabella* 2007).

It is also worth noting that there is some ambiguity in the language used to describe this 'Activity'. The idea that young people were 'trained as teachers' could be rather misleading, easily misunderstood and may be taken to mean that young people could expect to receive formal qualifications as professional teachers. There is certainly not evidence that the project sought out or was able to achieve anything that resembles the training of young people as teachers in the conventional sense. Perhaps this 'Activity' could be reframed by using terms such as 'cultural mentors', 'language guides' or a Pitjantjatjara concept such as 'malpa'.

**Activity:** Language exchange where non-Pitjantjatjara people are mentored by project participants in Pitjantjatjara and, in return, mentored in English. This *Ngapartji Ngapartji* language process is fundamental to the project.

**Performance Indicators:** Numbers of non-Pitjantjatjara people who take up on-line Pitjantjatjara course. Improved Pitjantjatjara skills by students of online course.

#### 2006/2007

The *ninti* (*to know, to be competent at, able to do, experienced with*) site was launched in April 2006. Over 220 people (nationally and internationally) signed up to take the on-line course. Over 3,000 people have logged in using the guest log-in and over 30,000 unique users have checked the site. As has been mentioned earlier, young people acted as 'mentors' on a range of the films used on the *ninti* language site. In this way young people take on the dual tasks of introducing others to Pitjantjatjara language at the same time as improving their own use of English and becoming more confident in publicly presenting. As these two remarks from young people indicate, this process of teaching and learning are bound up together:

*'Our story is very important that we tell in Ngapartji-Ngapartji. We talk about stories that happened a long time ago. What are we doing this with Trevor-we are learning little bit at a time with Trevor, with Lorna and the others.'*

*'...teaching and telling story's to our non-indigenous friends and also to the younger girls and from there we came back to Alice Springs and now we are showing them work today on the computer and at the same time they are showing us their stories Ngapartji Ngapartji and I am giving them my story as well.'* (Sources: Project interviews 2008, Project report 2007).

Some users indicate they have attempted learning Pitjantjatjara before they see the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* show. Others who are living and/or working in the APY Lands and using the *ninti* site to assist their language skills (Sources: Project report 2007, Evaluation notes from Adelaide trip 2008).

Examples of feedback from people taking up the course include:

*Thanks for this website. Unlike many websites where you feel like you're "on the web", Ngapartji takes you to places beyond the computer screen. It helps you get ready to learn the language by putting the learner in a context. I love it! The song for week one is really effective.*

*I'm loving the course, just wanting send some encouragement to the team. It's so refreshing to see language taught in an aboriginal teaching style (Source: unsolicited emails 2008).*

The *Ngapartji Ngapartji* website has been archived by the National Library and AIATSIS who are collecting "nationally significant electronic publications by and about indigenous people and issues" (Sources: Project Report. Feb 07, *Ngapartji Ngapartji* Program Grant Report 07).

## 2008

Over 350 people subscribed to the *Ninti* site (Source: Progress Report 2008).

## 2009

366 people enrolled in the *Ninti* site during the year. Ongoing positive feedback from site participants (Source: Progress report 2009).

During the various tours of the performance of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* young people assisted as language tutors to members of cast and crew and audiences. There were also instances where young people acted as educators for project workers and visitors, particularly in relation to language, nomenclature and names for people (Source: Project Workers' Reports 2005-2008).

There is some good evidence that those who visited the site both enjoyed the experience of learning Pitjantjatjara and were able to build their capacity to listen and learn a little Pitjantjatjara language. The following remarks stand as evidence of the fruitfulness of this element of the project.

*'Can't tell you how much I love the language course and the show is icing on the cake for me'.*

*'As a Victorian Secondary teacher I am inspired by this approach. The website is great!'*

‘Visiting the *ninti* site and being able to meet with the Trades Hall group has been one of the most invigorating things I have done in a long time.’

“This is a wonderful language resource. I have taken courses in Pitjantjatjara but being able to see as well as hear people speak has really helped me ... what a great idea for helping people learn.”

“There is something about being able to watch young people on country that makes the exercise of learning more powerful ... perhaps its because more of your senses are stimulated and so more of your memory and learning is switched on ... perhaps its just because country starts to sing to you through the young people.”

‘we taught them tjukurpa, to talk language, and told them big stories, so that they can listen and learn - white people.’ young performer – young participant (Sources: unsolicited emails 2008, Evaluation interview notes 2008 and 2009).

**Activity:** Document the process for future replication

**Performance Indicators:** Report outlining project process and model produced

As indicated in other sections, extensive visual and audio documentation of the project has occurred. Hundreds of hours of films, videos, DVDs and CDs have been recorded, produced, distributed and, most recently archived. Importantly the *ninti* language course has become openly available to any one who wishes to log-in and participate.

A range of people have joined the project throughout its life. Researchers from ANU have included the project as one of five case studies in a national review of literacy programs. Since 2007 an independent evaluator has been visiting project staff, joining the Ernabella tour, reviewing the work, interviewing young people, community members, performers and others involved, attending performances and participating in workshops. There have been eight requests from Masters and Doctoral students who have written about various aspects of the project. The arts and performance reviewer James Waites has likewise travelled along with the project, recording project activities and writing regularly in his blog. Staff have carefully and consistently recorded their activity, reflections on lessons learnt and detailed the varying methods they use. A team of filmmakers meticulously recorded the tour to Ernabella and a documentary of the trip has been produced. A legacy package, now called the Memory Basket, includes an essay, various artefacts of the project, music and a selection of comments from community, cast, crew and audience. In April of 2010 the Memory Basket will be launched with 2000 copies produced and distributed (Sources: James Waites blog 2008-2010, CAEPR website 2010, Progress Report 4 March 2008).

### Section three: challenges and thinking about the future

In addition to understanding the successes of a project it is also important to consider the barriers confronted during the project and turn attention to the lessons learnt in order to shape future work of a similar kind. What follows is a discussion of both the challenges that stood out and how the project team dealt them with. These challenges included:

- Working across two very different languages, Pitjantjatjara and English.
- Building relationships with Anangu young people, particularly those who have a poor history of contact with education programs and service organizations.
- Nurturing these new relationships and operating sensitively between the Anangu domain and other non-Indigenous domains (particularly given the significantly large involvement of non-Indigenous artists, production team members, filmmakers, musicians, youth workers and others who joined the core workers).
- Encouraging work and contact between young Anangu and others in their community.
- Managing projects and events during a period of intense policy reform.
- Staying healthy and contending with remoteness, isolation, 'country' and climate.
- Supporting participants with a breadth and depth of chronic health, community needs and social problems.
- Readjusting plans to reflect the needs of various funding bodies to create accountability at the same time as responding to the needs & interests of the community.
- Encouraging the participation of Anangu in the management of the project.
- Managing the reporting and accounting demands of various funding objectives such as crime prevention, language maintenance and literacy.
- Increased expenses associated with the global economic crisis, particularly associated with rising fuel costs.
- Working with high levels of transience in the Indigenous community services industry.
- Contending with the technical demands of arts and production work, particularly in remote settings.
- Managing the tension between the project's reflexive and responsive approach and achieving socially productive outcomes and high quality art and performance.

The struggles facing Indigenous communities in Australia represent one of the nations most "deep-seated, complex and intractable" policy dilemmas (Dillon and Westbury 2007, p. 176). Unlocking the conundrums that confront many Indigenous communities (such as those living in Alice Springs Town Camps and the APY Lands) has become one of the nation's most pressing challenges.

According to Dillon and Westbury (2007, p. 178) there are at least four main institutional constraints that reduce the capacity of governments and other organizations from supporting Indigenous communities. These include:

- The existence of parallel funding and programme arrangements so that there is a mismatch between 'mainstream' and Indigenous run programmes
- The operation of fiscal federalism so that funding for essential services is disproportionately distributed and uncoordinated across different regions and different jurisdictions.
- The systematic 'disengagement' of government, universities and other civil institutions from the everyday lives of Indigenous people.



- The consistent failure of governments and service providers to acknowledge the important of Indigenous law and culture in shaping good outcomes and community development.

A general challenge confronting the project was in contending with movement between what some (such as Rowse 1992 and 1996, van Sturmer 1984, Harris 1990 and Trigger 1986) have described as the **Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal domains**. In other words, Big *hART* staff were routinely faced with the challenge of 'travelling' in between Pitjantjatjara and English, Anangu systems of governing and Western institutions and organizations, urban life and remote communities, Western Desert and post-enlightenment knowledge practices and houses and camping and makeshift living arrangements. Language, cultural practices, politics and social relations were often complex, interrelated, sometimes contentious, well established and often considerably different to social systems outside of Pitjantjatjara country. Indeed operating in such a complex and different cultural domain presented a plethora of challenges.

There were moments when existing intra-community politics and moving alliances between key players impinged on project plans. For example, in between workshops to prepare young people for a dance competition there emerged some serious conflicts between groups of young people. This conflict threatened the attendance at the competition and worried other young people, families and the school, who were keen to the problems sorted so they could keep the dancing happening. Fortunately, through a process of mediation and negotiation these tensions were resolved and the group went on to enter and win the competition.

Big *hART* staff also had to contend with tensions about the control, sale and distribution of the work that was produced. For example, different people had different ideas about whether music that had been produced by senior people should be made accessible to the broad community, whether it should be copied and sold so that individuals could benefit from their creative work or songs should be stored in some other form.

The work also involved contending with practical difficulties and contests associated with **recording and archiving** of the work. This choice proved a wise decision as it made possible some remarkable work with young people and the community and has produced some remarkable and evocative films that have become available to a wide audience. However, there were considerable costs and challenges that arose as a consequence. For example, the decision to make film so central to the project resulted in the need for huge resources and time to put into post-production work and archiving. It also placed extra demands on key staff who needed to negotiate with community over content, involvement and access to the work. As one person remarked:

This has been very different work (producing the documentary). The time and expectations needed are far in excess of what you would normally need if making a documentary. For example, when doing documentary work it is very rare that you consult people during the editing process. We have constantly been moving backwards and forwards checking and rechecking what we are doing, the story, the people involved, what has been said, what is in the background, the translations in the subtitles, where things have been filmed. Often we needed to change elements for cultural reasons. We were always dealing with sorry material and people who had passed away. We were constantly getting technical approval from elders. All the things that Trevor is worried about in the doco. It is always hanging over you that anything could be a problem (Source: Evaluation notes 2009).

Constantly throughout their work, particularly while on the APY Lands, Big *hART* staff had to carefully consider traditional and cultural protocols. They had to ensure that their work was consistent with their obligations under the APY Lands Media Policy and keep to the agreements they had made as part of the permit arrangements. At times this became difficult, particularly when large numbers of outsiders joined the main *Ngapartji Ngapartji* Team or other media people were in the same location. This was particularly testing during the 2008 tour of Ernabella where over forty members of the Big *hART* cast and crew stayed on the APY Lands for up to two weeks. Setting up and rehearsing for the performance (carried out over two nights) necessitated much movement in and around Ernabella. Many of those joining the tour had travelled to the APY Lands for the first time and were unfamiliar with local language, obligations, cultural sensitivities and conditions. Members of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* team contended with this challenge by offering sessions to by all members of the cast and crew in order to introduce them to language, culture and the project.

An associated challenge confronting the project has been **establishing and maintaining contact with Aboriginal young people**, particularly those who have a poor history of involvement in education, training and other support services. One pressing difficulty in this regard was getting information about the various activities or 'getting the word out' to a broad cross section of the community. Many of those who most benefited from the work do not respond well to conventional program promotional methods such as local newspaper advertising, brochures or referral from schools. Another challenge was in maintaining young people's ongoing interest in a project from the beginning to completion. One worker articulated the difficulties associated with encouraging young people's involvement in post-production film work. They also provide others with a sense of how they responded to the challenges.

I'd liked to have involved more young people in the process of editing. While I think we have developed a very participatory process of storymaking, directing and filming, the next stage is hard to involve young people in, particularly in the context of being visitors to a community during school holidays. Editing is a technical skill and many young people won't have the patience for it. It is unlikely during a school holiday program, with so many young people/kids around, that we can really impart the skills of editing and if we did we would have to work with one or two people only. In this situation I think the best option is to ... show the 'rushes' or takes to as large a group as possible, particularly to the storymakers and directors, and get their selection of takes. We had an idea to do some editing with the computer screen projected on the wall but facilities weren't the best with only a dusty shed to work in and we'd have to work at night, which would make people think we were having a movie night. Would like to try this in the future (Source: Worker Report 2007).

Another entry explains the further difficulties associated with involving young men,

Trying to break down the process of filmmaking with younger kids and with males, was more difficult than with young women in general. Perhaps the young women who were more involved were more literate or more familiar with this kind of situation as many of them were still at school. It was difficult to engage the young men in anything other than filming some activity, such as football or climbing the hill, though some did hover on the fridges and watch the process. We were successful in getting a story made into a film by a couple of young boys who stuck it out as the others drifted off. They got their payoff when everyone wanted to be part of the filming which turned out to be full

of action, which seems to be what appeals to the boys (Source: Worker Report 2007).

Managing communication across a range of **language and cultural domains** was perhaps the greatest challenge confronting the project.

Most difficultly in this respect was the need for the project to contend with the fact that **Pitjantjatjara is spoken as the first language** of most of the participants. In other words, the work was carried out in the Pitjantjatjara domain with Pitjantjatjara language being the principal language of communication. This was of particular importance for two reasons. The first is that most English speakers find it very difficult to master use of Western Desert languages such as Pitjantjatjara. Many of the sounds (particularly teeth sounds or laminodentals) are not found in English words. A range of distinctions made in English between sounds (such as p and b, t and g and k and g) is irrelevant to Pitjantjatjara speakers. Many of the points of familiarity often found across European languages are simply not there when moving from English to Pitjantjatjara (Goddard 2006). The second reason why language use was so important was because a key goal of the project was to support the maintenance of Pitjantjatjara language. Indeed developing the Ninti on-line course, performing the stage show across English and Pitjantjatjara, supporting literacy development, building a depth in relationships, encourage Pitjantjatjara participation and direction, lobbying for a national Indigenous languages policy, producing music and film across two language domains and operating respectfully in the Pitjantjatjara domain all necessitated that staff either learnt to speak Pitjantjatjara or used translators.

Making this challenge even more demanding was the fact that many, including funding bodies, audiences and some other organizations, **used profoundly different languages** to communicate. There was considerable diversity in the language use with some organizations preferring the use of highly bureaucratized language, what Don Watson (2003) calls the 'New Public Language'. This often shifted across governmental areas with crime prevention policy language (hence expectations) being different from social policy language. Often there were enormous demands upon staff to interpret and shift across different language domains, in the same day having to negotiate the language of community building, literacy and education, Indigenous Affairs, arts and culture, social science and crime prevention. In addition, the project had to contend with the different language, styles and genres of different generations, sometimes moving between young people's forms of communication (with its love of new technologies, fashions and the interweaving of global influences) and older forms of communication (with its love of tradition, conventions and stability).

Often the language and cultural **differences between the generations** resulted in tensions for the project. For example, the choice to spend time with young people, invite them to translate and speak in their languages, with their interests and their colloquial use of language meant that the project was sometimes subject to criticism that its language work was not accurate or 'proper'. The choice to encourage young people's adoption of new technology as a way of expressing and creating culture and language did not always sit well with senior people's ideas that these technologies are breaking down Pitjantjatjara culture and language. Indeed there appears to be some resistance to new forms of cultural expression, particularly by some senior people who are hurt by the idea that young people are keener to adopt new cultures, music, dance styles and technology and less inclined to want to practice old forms of law and culture (see 'Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji' for an exploration of this tension). However, some senior women appear to have a much more liberal view of youth culture and new cultural influences. One woman said,

Some old people think that the young one's are drifting away from culture and traditional things. Some do not want cameras and film and hip hop in our community. But some of us are learning that young people want these things and, thanks to the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* mob we are learning that things like video cameras can bring our young ones back to language and culture (Source: Evaluation interview 2009).

These **intergenerational tensions** appear to have been foremost in the minds of Big *hART* workers when carrying out their work and undertaking postproduction work. The approach they took had to contend with senior people's worry that young people maintain respect for culture. It also involved regularly checking back and sensitively dealing with the content and the relationships. One worker described how, in her daily workshops with young people, some of these tensions were dealt with:

While I have made great advances in Pitjantjatjara my language is still limited. While the young people also have English we encourage the story making to happen in their own language at least at first so they are not limited by language. Where it becomes difficult is if I am assisting the direction and am not sure what has transpired in terms of drama or story or what may be needed to make the story make sense or work better. This can be challenging as if you miss this when filming it is unlikely we can return to the 'set' at a later stage. Sometimes it's not until we play the footage back later that we can translate what's been said and see the gaps in the storyline and this can be too late. So we do rely on young people being on the ball in terms of story and direction and we are guided by them. The best way I have been dealing with this to date has been to try to get a good grasp of the story at storyboarding stage and keep a keen eye and ear out for seeing that what was planned happens. I value the language I did have for this as ### (arts worker) said without language he found this quite hard and relied on me to stop the filming when I saw certain things hadn't happened as they needed to (Source: Worker journal 2007).

Adding to these complexities was that often outside groups, including funding bodies, audiences and other organizations, expected that Pitjantjatjara people learn to speak, write and operate in English. Not only then did Big *hART* staff need to build their own skills in language speaking, they needed to be advanced enough to be able to carry out high levels of communication.

A number of the key Big *hART* staff were able to **learn Pitjantjatjara** to the degree that they could understand and, in a few cases, communicate well to people from the community. Indeed, a range of people remarked on the remarkable language ability of staff, particularly two of the key workers. Some artists and others recruited to work on the project also had had varying degrees of Pitjantjatjara speaking ability. Some of these people had an ability understand others but not a great ability to speak.

Of critical importance in dealing with these challenges was advice from the **Language Reference Group**. Members of this group gave advice, helped staff seek out the support and clearances for use of certain ideas in the stage show, various films and the Ninti site. The project also recruited translators and linguists (both Anangu and non-Anangu) to assist, particularly in the development of the Ninti site and on-stage as part of the acting team to mediate the audience's experience.

However, taking on the **role of translator** (whether by this was carried out by Anangu or project staff with a high fluency in Pitjantjatjara) also brought with it new sets of difficulties. Often the person with the greatest competence in translating was called upon to carry out a range of other functions. For example, on the Ernabella tour one of the most talented Pitjantjatjara speakers on staff was constantly asked by Anangu, production team members, actors and others on the tour to fill them in on the day's schedules. Given the size of the group at this point was over 50, the demands became a huge burden on one person. Often people in the position of translator were constantly being asked to translate more than simply words or meaning. They were also being asked to mediate politics, check cultural protocols, manage the whereabouts of others, shape the participation of others and represent the interests of a range of parties. It also meant that these people were often expected to spend all their time in the Anangu domain with little time for socialising and other work with other members of the tour.

Another difficulty confronting the project concerned the **competing expectations** that various people had in relation to the outcomes of the project. Funding bodies were keen to see various social impacts such as crime prevention, literacy development, language maintenance, creative arts and performance production. Expectations from these groups were often ambiguous and at times in conflict. For example, it appears that Anangu had different expectations about the social outcomes of the project. Some seemed keen to build a literacy program so as to help young people read and write in English. Others saw it as an opportunity to assist in the maintenance of Pitjantjatjara language. As one would expect motivations varied for participating in tours with people sometimes keen on travelling to cities to catch up with family obligations, manage health care, visit shops, get paid and educate outsiders about Anangu life and Anangu challenges. Even the focus of different Big *hART* staff varied from time to time. For example, while on the tour to Ernabella members of the production crew spent enormous time maintaining the safety of the stage area, particularly during an intense storm where monumental winds threatening to cancel the show and make the whole area dangerous. During the same period, performers were driving their attention towards delivering a high quality show in very difficult conditions. While this was going on literacy work was continuing with young members of the cast.

At times Big *hART* staff had to accommodate other organizations and their ways of doing things. For example, understandably schools were keen on encouraging maximum student attendance. Initially there was some fear that Big *hART*'s workshops might detract from school work and compete for student attendance. It was therefore important that Big *hART* staff both were seen to encourage school attendance and not compete by arranging workshops during school hours. Sometimes other groups and their aspirations represented a problem for the project. For example, at times the involvement of some young people in Christian rallies and church attendance resulted in the absence in communities of highly talented musicians. This sometimes detracted from the work and created some divisions between young people (Source: Evaluation notes 2009).

There were also other organizations consistently moving through the Lands. These included various youth service organizations, visiting health practitioners, employment and training groups and welfare providers. At times it was difficult planning sessions when participants also had obligations to have time with these other groups. As one community worker said,

One of the big challenges facing the Ngapartji mob is that there is so much going on and some many different expectations from people. Ngapartji became one in a hundred programs who come to Anangu Lands and many Anangu are program weary

with frustrations high because these outside groups have very fixed ideas about what can be done. In this environment it is easy to lose sight. Ngapartji were very adept at being flexible and meeting these many demands (Source: Evaluation notes 2009).

One of the features of life for many participants is regular movement and **high mobility** between town camps and remote communities. As Taylor (1998, 2004) points out, there is considerable short term mobility across a range of locational spheres in regional Indigenous Australia. People move across remote communities, from remote communities to key administrative centre such as Alice Springs and often to major capital centres such as from the APY Lands to Adelaide. In part this reflects the necessity of individuals moving to chase part-time and casual labour market opportunities, travelling made necessary by the location of health care facilities, being forced from remote to regional towns because of the high cost of essentials such as food and transport and moving for family and cultural maintenance (Taylor 2006, p. 81).

Contending with **remoteness, isolation, 'country' and climate** was a key challenge that workers had to tackle. The distance between Alice Springs and many of the remote communities is significant. For example, the distance between Ernabella and Alice Springs is almost 500 kilometres. In good conditions, by road this trip can take up to six hours. Docker River is over 650 kilometres from Alice Springs. Many of the other communities were in even more remote settings. This presented workers with huge challenges contending with long periods of travel, contending with isolation, managing logistics and dealing with the conditions of 'country'. The weather and climatic conditions had a great impact on people, equipment and technology (both soft and hardware). Access to remote communities was rarely straightforward. Trips needed to be carefully planned in advance to ensure that permits were arranged, trips did not clash with culture and law, that participants were available and that events worked in conjunction with other organizations (eg. NPY Women's Council activities, youth centre events, schools, and visiting service providers). One community worker acknowledged these challenges in this way:

What makes it hard is the enormously long distances you have to travel. Add to this the heat and isolation ... often you have to live and sleep without the relief of air-conditioning ... in poor accommodation. You have to move out of your comfort zone by a long way. Travelling and living 'on country' is very demanding on the body and the soul. People who haven't had to contend with the heat and the dust and the conditions just can't imagine how tough it can get (Source: Evaluation notes 2009)

As this person says, the impact of **climate and conditions** is not something regularly considered by those who have not worked in remote settings. Richardson (2002, p. 255) observes, "community development practitioners are required to work in diverse environments, and the climate and culture in which they work shape their practice. The influence of climate and culture on practitioners is, however, rarely theorized in community development literature." At times during the work the climate was unrelentingly hot. During the Ernabella tour the company camp was all but destroyed by a massive dust storm. This was followed by piercingly cold weather, particularly during the evenings. A gastric infection tore through the company with one member of the cast being forced to perform in between bouts of vomiting (Source: worker journals 2008, Evaluation records 2008).

Routinely staff members were struck down by illness during and immediately after trips through the Lands. According to those who have longstanding experience of working in this context,

this is not unusual. As one person put it, "its almost mandatory for whitefellas to get crook after the fourth or fifth day. The water, the dust, the workload and the emotional burden all combine to get you in the end. The respiratory systems are usually the first things that inevitably shut down." (Source: Evaluation notes 2009).

Using her experiences of living and working the Kimberley region Richardson (2002) makes the case for the need to recognise climate and conditions as critical in shaping community work practice. She says,

A climatic dimension to theory emphasizes the need to maintain physical well-being in a climate inherently threatening to health; a stoic mindset in a climate that destroys good intentions ... and strategies to manage stress unknown in well-resourced urban areas. The climate is unrelentingly hot and oppressively humid, with violent tropical storms in the monsoon season and ubiquitous biting insects, some species of which carry serious diseases.

Confronting these challenges is no easy task. However, failure to recognise the force of climate, particularly upon plans for community projects, is naïve and risky. Also referring to work and conditions in the Kimberley, Edwards (1991, p. 1) says,

To set a Kimberley schedule by clocks and calendars is to risk having nature impose her own program. When the Fitzroy (river) swirls in flood to the sea cutting roads and bridges, bush-fires rage on a 100 km front, or drought dries and cracks the earth, a confrontation achieves nothing. Waiting for the right time is the only answer, patience the only virtue.

Another time-consuming set of activities confronting the program has been the **demands placed on reporting and accounting** to a number of different bodies. The project workers prepared reports to a range of bodies as part of funding obligations. They also prepared press releases to promote the production work, regularly updated the website so that project supporters could be kept informed, maintained records for the evaluation and, particularly over the last eighteen months of the project, spent enormous time archiving the enormous body of work produced. The language reference group also received updates and reports when it met. Many researchers, students and journalists requested written details and verbal reports of the project. The workers also generously offered many hours over the course of the last three years with the author of this report reviewing progress towards program objectives. As is outlined earlier considerable time has been spent participating in various conferences, promoting the project and offering others insights about the approach used. This work placed considerable time commitments on staff, particularly the Producer, and magnified the demands of reporting to a number of different groups, all with slightly different requirements and expectations (Source: Evaluation records 2009).

At times this made it rather difficult to keep up with the many demands of various funding groups. The following entry from a worker journal demonstrates some of the difficulties of managing a number of sets of expectations, some of which were not entirely clear:

Being certain about what ### (who funded the work) wanted and what the community wanted wasn't always clear. With so, so many kids and young people about there was a certain tension between second-guessing the above and providing what we do. The main question was were we expected to be providing activities for all these kids

everyday or just being present and offering our activity to those who wanted to do it ... This tension arose one day when I was asked by the ### (a local community workers) that the kids help make posters for the Centre one morning. As I'd planned a kids' morning I told her to come over and we could work at the same time. When she came it was clear she wanted me to facilitate the poster-making in an atmosphere not unlike a childcare centre. I felt a bit compromised in this situation because it was not my work (nor the age group I work with) and didn't know what obligations I had to the community. I need to talk to ### about what they expect and what is communicated to the community (Source: Workshop report 2007).

However, there were a number of positive consequences borne out of the necessity of seeking funding from a range of sources. For example, it resulted in the needs and struggles of the community becoming known to a range of government departments and funding groups. It also allowed the project some flexibility in responding to social needs that might cross a range of bureaucratic portfolio areas. In other words, it allowed the project to carry out its work without some of the 'fixed' demands of only one body with its particular foci on one element of the community's challenge. The capacity of the project to draw upon arts funding also gave it scope to develop more creative solutions than may sometimes emerge in projects with a welfare or community services focus.

Also important in this regard is that each of these accountability 'regimes' uses slightly **different systems** and employ varied discursive repertoires (language). The skill needed to negotiate this 'language terrain' is significant, particularly when one recognises the distance between language, concepts, planning systems and policy aspirations in the Indigenous policy, crime prevention, theatre, arts administration and 'Pitjantjatjara' domains. Moving between these language and governmental domains is an extraordinarily complex and difficult task.

Another challenge has been encouraging local **Pitjantjatjara involvement** in decisions about the future direction of the project. In part this is because of the demands of the approach used by Big *hART* team, with its emphasis upon creating a constantly circle of feedback between members of the community, artists, production and project planning. It is also because to involve *Anangu* demands that Pitjantjatjara language be used. It is also because those who need to be consulted and involved are also often those with the busiest schedules and the greatest demands upon their time. Many of these people also have pressing family obligations, sometimes suffer from chronic health problems and are contending with the list of demands from other organizations. As one person close to members of the community observed:

People can't imagine what life is for many of the people who were involved in *Ngapartji Ngapartji*. While all these people have had a remarkable life with incredible changes happening from when they were young things are terribly hard for many of them. Many are now so busy. ### (a key performer in the stage show) is run off her feet (Source: Evaluation notes 2009).

However, the project has had some important success in encouraging local people's input and involvement. The **Language Reference Group** provided a level of opportunity for local people to participate. This group both met and were invited to provide advice about a range of elements of the project. A number of their key suggestions were taken on early, inspiring the literacy work, some of the content in the stage show, helping to configure the way *Nyuntu Ngali* was developed and directing the Ninti language course. Many of the members of the Reference Group are themselves key people in their community, often people with considerable cultural



and familial influence and in a position to shape both community and organisational change. A number of these people were able to 'participate' and provide important input into the project through their ongoing involvement in the stage show. Not only did their role as singers and actors stand as an example of artistic participation, it also provided them with the chance to oversee what was going on in creative development, script and the narrative structure of the show. In this way the women's presence on stage acted as a symbolic and practical mechanism for them to oversee and shape elements of the project. This represents an important strategy for encouraging almost daily contact, routinely feeding back and keeping an eye on the work.

Workers also used a number of ways of encouraging Pitjantjatjara input in the way they **approached their everyday practice**. Indeed, workshop journals routinely report on the practice of consulting with at least three people on matters to do with language and culture. Often this occurred on a daily basis. For example, one worker notes that when recording the process of editing one of the online language lessons she sought out translation advice from more than four sources. The young people involved in making the film were the first source. She then sought out the project linguist's view. Finally she went to two of the members of the Language Reference Group to "see what they think". In addition, before proceeding she made sure that the senior women were offered all of the ideas for their deliberations. The language in the diary is worth noticing too. The worker's mother tongue is English but she uses Pitjantjatjara words as she describes particular events and moods in her diary. In this way her ideas, concepts and reflections are being shaped by her own developing literacy in Pitjantjatjara language.

Another regular challenge confronting the program has been maintaining a **specific focus on crime prevention and literacy development** when at times other social issues appear more pressing. Particularly during the early stages of relationships and the project was not well understood, community members often presented with problems that are not always directly associated with the objectives. For example, people sought assistance from staff so they could deal with Centrelink, arrange housing assistance, care for their grandchildren and organise transport to hospitals for acute conditions. As one local justice worker said,

I would seek their (*Ngapartji Ngapartji* staff) assistance with young Pitjantjatjara people who were having trouble in the criminal justice system. What people ... governments in particular ... don't often understand is that these young people are usually dealing with multiple social problems, substance misuse, overcrowded housing, alcohol and violence, income management. If you look at every young person I just mentioned ... there is an extended family behind them ... all with complex and difficult backgrounds. There is no alternative outlet or services for Pitjantjatjara families in Alice. The fact that *Ngapartji Ngapartji* has been able to support this groups is in itself very impressive (Source: Evaluation interviews 2009).

In part this reflects the fact that project workers were constantly confronting a range, depth and immediacy of **new and pressing personal and family problems**. Indeed it was not uncommon for many of those involved in the various activities to have to deal with a combination of chronic health conditions, facing housing issues, being responsible for the care of grandchildren and contending with family grief. In part this reflects the project's reason-for-being, of offering support to Pitjantjatjara people with complex and multiple social needs. However, this meant that participants often brought with them to the activities social issues and problems that were more immediately pressing than project activities.

This challenge reflects the **general difficulties and circumstances facing the community** and the nature of the work, given the dual aspirations of offering support to a community with multiple social problems while helping them create high quality art. At other times community wide problems, such as the financial struggles of local groups, the impact of the global recession and the death in a car accident of local young people, had to be carefully and sensitively dealt with by project staff. Indeed the very thing that triggered the project, the day-to-day struggles of a community living in regional Australia, presented the project with some of its greatest challenges. As one community worker put it, “one of the greatest difficulties would have been dealing with everyday Anangu struggles like overcrowding, poor nutrition and health and how this impacts on Anangu participation in programs. But then that was what *Ngapartji Ngapartji* was there for” (Source: Evaluation notes 2009).

There were other times when the boundaries between the pressing social needs of the community and the personal interests of individuals became blurry. At times workers questioned whether certain individuals were exploiting the project, placing additional demands on workers with their requests for time and attention. For example, in one workshop report a worker said,

Over a few days, some bad feelings came up for all of us ... towards the way ### was responding to the project. She is always friendly and supportive but it felt for a time like she was asking a lot of us outside of normal project parameters ... I was concerned that others would see her as getting more out of the project and that her and associated families had more ownership over the project than others (Source: Project worker report 2008).

At times the consequences of these problems were also felt by Big *hART* staff, particularly when they were living in communities for a period of time. For example, housing shortages and a lack of space to work and live made the practical challenges of running workshops even grander. One worker expressed this in her workshop journal:

It was a little difficult **being accommodated in the neighbouring community** as the nature of this activity (filming workshop) is often spontaneous or flows according to the momentum of ideas. For example, if there is focus and energy for a story we might find ourselves following this through all day and into the night. Having to go home to eat, get equipment (and sometimes rest!) meant we might come back to find everyone playing softball and didn't feel we should distract them from another great activity. Other holiday programs found it better to set activity hours and stick with them but this doesn't really suit the work we do. Also we would have been happy to take one or two people home with us to involve them in the editing process, which we did on one occasion, but were concerned that this would look exclusive if the community didn't know what we were doing (Source: Worker journal notes 2007).

A number of people, including staff, spoke of waves of **social despair** in community life and moments when there was a general feeling within the community of being depleted of energy. In part this reflects the day-to-day pressures of living in an isolated region. In part this reflects the conditions facing a community with a multifarious set of obligations across broad and geographically dispersed social networks. This was perhaps most felt by senior women who struggled with the time demands of the tours and creative preparation while being weighed down by many competing expectations (Source: Evaluation notes 2007-2009).

This also reflects the large degree of **transience in the Indigenous community services industry**. Due to long standing problems associated with chronic labour shortages, skills deficits and relatively poor employment conditions in the industry, many welfare groups and community organisations find it difficult retaining the services of their staff for long periods. As a consequence of this pattern of regular turnover, project staff were forced to commit considerable time maintaining relationships with people, many of whom had a short involvement in projects. As one Big *hART* worker put it, “in the space of a month or two I will see a mass turnover of staff from other agencies. I came back from the last tour, had a month off for leave and then returned to a cross agency meeting. I only knew one or two people. The rest were all new in town (Alice Springs). As a consequence, maintaining professional networks and educating other organizations about the project was a time consuming task (Source: Evaluation interviews 2007).

Of some difficulty during the life of this project, particularly since the **Commonwealth Government's 'Intervention'**, was the imposition of reforms upon town camps and the shifting Indigenous Affairs policy environment. The 'Intervention' purported to be an urgent response to the crisis facing many Indigenous communities. However, it did shift governmental attention away from community-based projects, throwing weight being reforms such as widespread alcohol restrictions, reforms to income support payments to stem the flow of cash going to alcohol, enforced school attendance, police, welfare and armed forces presence in remote communities, plans for mandatory health checks for children, banning of pornography, acquisition of leases to Indigenous townships owned leases on Aboriginal housing and the appointment of business managers in remote communities (Hinkson 2007, p. 1-2, Altman and Hinkson 2007). Particularly during the first twelve months of the Intervention there was considerable uncertainty about what it might mean for communities. Faced with these uncertainties many community members expressed some fear about their future, in particular young people's ability to remain in remote settings.

One important strategy for dealing with the breadth of these problems was to encourage people to **focus attention on these challenges as content** for film, music and other performance pieces that young people produced. As mentioned earlier, in much of the creative development work young people were encouraged to start by telling their stories of life as Pitjantjatjara. As a consequence film and music often contended with topics such as petrol sniffing, social obligations and social responsibility to kin, love, fun and healthy living, taking care of others, country and places of connection.

This problem also felt by those living and working in remote communities (such as remote area teachers, arts centre managers, youth workers and community organizations). One youth worker said,

One of the real benefits to a community from a Ngapartji Ngapartj visit is that it generally lifts people. Not just Anangu but also others like teachers and people like me. We got to see themselves represented in films. Western Desert people don't get to see themselves in films all that often. They get to see their peers mastering technology and they get to see people represented positively. Yes, it is very uplifting and really gives people a sense of hope (Source: Evaluation notes 2009).

Big *hART* staff contended with these challenges in a number of ways. Generally they would begin a visit to a community with a whole of community film night, screening work produced on

earlier trips. Members of the team went to stay in communities for a period of up to eight weeks during the workshop process. They maintained a regular agenda item on team meetings where local 'issues' and community information was discussed. They kept up regular telephone contact with key members of the community and/or community workers. They regularly readjusted project plans to meet the regular contingent demands of the community.

As is the case with any production work, during the main public performance a number of minor technical '**hitches**' or problems occurred. At times isolation and a lack of easily available resources accentuated the difficulties. For example, the task of lighting the stage during the performance of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* at Ernabella proved to be a major logistical challenge. Two days before the performance at Ernabella the region was powerful dust storm that swept through the stage site and camp jeopardising the whole production. A project worker from another organisation noted the extent to which this would have been magnified while touring:

Many people can't imagine how difficult the work would be. They have done so well negotiating this. Like ... how do you put on a performance when artists are dealing with a tsunami of problems? You have to deal with things like funerals and child protection notices that suddenly restrict your access to people and places. On a technical level, there would be a hundred reasons for the show not to go in somewhere like Adelaide. On the Lands there would be a 1000 reasons. Even if someone came up with big money it would not guarantee success. The *Ngapartji Ngapartji* mob have been flexible enough to do this and be successful. They seem to have navigated all this very well (Sources: 'Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji 2010, Evaluation notes 2009).

The project and production teams were able to deal with these challenge by 1) drawing upon a vast network of contacts, largely gained through the team's longstanding work history in the region 2) keeping regular communication (through daily meetings) between members of the production team, 3) asking local community partners to assist at short notice and 4) recruiting an enormously talented and resourceful production crew.

The **state of the global economy** also presented the project with a number of challenges. Plans and aspirations for a tour of the stage show to Britain had to be withdrawn because of the crisis and downturn of the global economy. Largely this was due to the sudden inability of key philanthropic sources to commit funds that had been previously sought. The state of the global economy has also resulted in the high cost of fuel. A comparatively large amount of the project's resources being committed to transport costs. This was always going to be the case given the nature of the work with participants living in isolated areas of the state. However, the timing of the heating up of global fuel prices was particularly disadvantageous to this project.

The project's **reflexive and responsive approach** also created some challenges. The health and energy levels of workers was sometimes compromised because they took on new and often unexpected additional work. There appears to have been a tendency to accept too many opportunities and embrace the possibilities that emerged as the project unfolded. This produced expectations that could not always be met or sustained. This in turn created extra work and produced a burden for workers. This was often most pronounced when members of the team carried out workshops while they were away in remote communities. It seems that different workers dealt with this in different ways. Some accepted all requests to produce film, music or support with other creative work. This practice involved labour for long hours, often into the early morning to complete editing and postproduction work. So the Big *hART* rhetoric and aspiration for creativity, responsiveness and flexibility sometimes conflicted with the need

for clarity, certainty and manageability.

This also produced in some people the perception that the project was **'fluid'** and could account for 'drop-ins' and an unlimited supply of requests. While this may be a fair observation it was at time interpreted as 'disorganised' or 'too flexible'. It also meant that workers were under pressure to adopt a 'contingent approach', highly adaptable to a range of forces, always at the ready and able to change plans, prepared to do new things, accepting the many and varied short notice demands and sitting comfortably with uncertainty. The personal cost to workers of taking on this approach was considerable. Many spoke of being exhausted, particularly while on tour or visiting remote communities. Some articulated that they felt the pressures unfairly sat on their shoulders. One claimed that the work often created "too many heads with not enough shoulders to bear them." A number of people who left the project maintained that the workload and of atmosphere of uncertainty was the main reason for their decision.

While the burden on workers was considerable (with some people choosing to leave the team at various stages), there is also good evidence that the levels of support for each other were considerable. Staff contended with these pressures by using a number of strategies. Big *hART* took the decision to invest in the employment of a number of key staff members. This meant that people could often work in a small team in workshops, have at least two staff travelling together on most occasions and cover each other during times of absences. The company also encouraged a culture of regular staff meetings, debriefing sessions together and building in celebratory occasions. Big *hART* also encouraged workers to take time away from their regular projects and visit projects in other locations around Australia. For instance, during tours of other projects some *Ngapartji Ngapartji* staff joined to lend a hand, refresh and catch up with how others were doing their work. From time to time the company Creative Director visited to review progress, debrief staff and help contend with staff difficulties. On at least one occasion an outside consultant was employed to assist with the resolution of a problem (Source: evaluation notes 2007-2009).

It also appears that an early difficulty for the project was in trying to **spark the interest of local media**. Getting stories written about the success of Anangu artists and performers was not something that happened with ease. As one worker put it,

Local media were not ready to engage with the project and its emphasis upon good stories. In Alice media there seems to be a long history of not writing positively about Indigenous people. When I approached them they started digging for stories of despair, instead of writing about the good things that Anangu were doing they wanted a dark twist, they wanted stories about misery. This was a bit of a shock to me at first ... I'd expected a much better reception given my experience of Melbourne and Sydney media (Source: Worker reports 2005-2006).

Often there are difficulties encountered by organizations keen to both produce **high quality art and performance at the same time as encouraging socially productive outcomes**. It takes considerable time, resources and talent to create and carry out good quality theatre, film and musical productions. It also takes much skill, time and artfulness to support individuals and groups who are struggling with social problems. When time is running short, money running out and patience running on empty one or other of these aspirations get more attention. As a consequence, good quality art can get produced at the expense of attention to social and community wellbeing. At other times, the community work process is solid but the art is

unremarkable. This tension has been noted by others writing about 'community cultural development' (see Palmer 2009, Putland 2008, Mulligan 2007, Mills and Brown 2004).

The Big *hART* team was also confronted by this tension **between time spent on high quality art and solid social outcomes**. Earlier in the report there is considerable evidence of both excellence in art and remarkable social consequences. However, these tensions were felt, particularly by Big *hART* staff. A number of people who spoke about the work noted that at times it felt as if the paramount goal of the project was to take the performance work to as many audiences and help impact at the highest levels. This is clearly and publicly stated in project plans and company literature and, in the view of many, is valuable and legitimate. However, this aspiration was not always compatible with what people often called the "community process" work.

At times, particularly when production work was at its most intense, there was less time to combine the ideas, work and interest of young people who had earlier been involved in artistic creation through the workshops. The fact of the matter was that only three or so young people could join the tour. As the script and form of the stage production became well established there was less possibility of the workshop process with young people "feeding into the creation process for the stage production" (Source: Worker journal 2009). Sometimes the costs were that staff had limited time to catch up with each other. As one person said, "the opportunity to debrief was not always good, particularly on long workshop trips and tours." Another put it this way,

I sometimes struggled with the difficulties associated with Big *hART* people coming and going from Alice. For example, ##### and ### were not based in Alice Springs and would fly in for periods of time. When they come to town everyone wants them. During the tours people come together from all over Australia and it is just go, go, go ... We get so busy with everyone and everything (Source: Evaluation notes 2009).

## Section four: other observations about the practice

Notwithstanding the challenges associated with 'measuring' project success, it is possible to make important observations (in addition to those made in the audit review section) about the project: the outcomes achieved, the activities carried out, the methods used and the lessons that were learnt about this kind of work.

Obviously of central importance is an examination of what was achieved. Sources that are instructive in this regard are many and varied. Project staff kept good quality records of daily activities, workshops and tours. The literacy worker recorded the efforts of young people, kept records of activities and wrote a number of discussion papers. There are many thousands of photographs that track community involvement in filmmaking, music projects and literacy work. The music and film making sessions are beautifully captured in digital form. Project films of the highest quality also provide a window into community participation, the careful and sensitive treatment of important local issues. The 'Ninti' online language course both acts as compelling evidence of language maintenance and regularly demonstrates community leadership and involvement. The project website was frequently updated and provides very detailed accounts of workshops, performances, tours, trips to communities, conferences and awards events. The stage production of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* also stands as dual evidence of high quality arts and performance work as well as remarkable layering of community involvement. The documentary production (and the many hundreds of hours of footage including community interviews and vox-pops) provides an array of details that help illustrate what went on during the tour of Ernabella.

Also important is an examination of how Big *hART* achieved so much. Reviewing the methods used is important for two reasons. Firstly, it helps others understand how similar achievements can be repeated elsewhere. Secondly, it is with a review of the methods that we can gain considerable insights into the likely long-term consequences of the work. In addition to observing what was achieved, if we compare the methods used by Big *hART* to similar practice carried out elsewhere we can draw inferences about the quality of the work. In other words, one can extrapolate that certain methods are more likely to increase the likelihood of positive social consequences. It follows that by comparing Big *hART*'s work with the available research on sound or 'good practice' it is possible to draw reasonable conclusions about the positive social consequences. To put it another way, if *Ngapartji Ngapartji* staff were using practice that has been established to be successful elsewhere then it follows that we can expect to see some measure of success.

To assist in this regard, it is instructive to turn to what the international literature says in relation to 'good practice' in similar kinds of work.

### What does good work look like?

According to Gooda (2009) there is considerable evidence from the literature about what assists with the provision of services and projects designed to improve the social and educational outcomes for Indigenous communities. The content of this research varies with some of it concentrating on macro level or systemic policy reform (such as Dillon and Westbury 2007); regional development (such as Altman 2006), local service delivery and community development (Hunt and Smith 2007), and micro practice in schools (such as Bourke et al 2000) and natural resource management (such as Holcombe 2004a, 2004b, 2006). Given the objectives of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project and Big *hART*'s emphasis on community and local

level change, the most instructive knowledge tends to come from research concerned with 'on-the-ground' practice.

There is also helpful research that turns its attention to the impact and consequences of good practice in crime prevention, literacy development, language maintenance and the use of arts with community. Longitudinal research, ethnographic field-work, evaluation of similar projects and case studies from elsewhere all shed light on what is likely to happen when projects adopt methods and approaches discussed previously.

What follows is a discussion of this literature.

There are some important studies that point to the features of good practice with **Indigenous young people**. For example, Bourke et al (2000, p. 48 & 49) list a series of principles used to shape successful teaching with Indigenous students. This includes:

- Providing professional development training for staff, particularly concentrating on Indigenous history, culture and contemporary lifestyle;
- Recognising that Standard Australian English is not the 'mother tongue' of the majority of Indigenous students;
- Finding ways to demonstrate respect of the depth and diversity of Indigenous languages;
- Focusing on early years literacy development ;
- Incorporating Indigenous patterns of discourse;
- Introducing bilingual education and 'two-way' schooling;
- Adopting a student-centred approach that accounts for the special learning needs of individuals (particularly for those with hearing impairment);
- Valuing the culturally acquired knowledge that students bring with them to the classroom;
- Integrating computer-based and digital learning media into the learning environment;
- Adopting a 'whole-of-school' approach rather than relying upon systems that truncate students on the basis of age;
- Recruiting Indigenous staff, parents and community members throughout all elements of the school environment;
- Providing safe, secure and culturally respectful settings for students;
- Encouraging students to participate in decision-making processes in the school and the community
- Choosing and using appropriate, up-to-date, interesting and culturally relevant teaching resources.

There is also some helpful research concerned with what happens when **language is kept alive** in communities. For example, the recent report-card on the performance of Australian Government's social justice initiatives canvases the international literature concerned with the preservation of Indigenous languages. According to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, work that buttresses Aboriginal language and culture has a range of other positive social consequences. These include:

- Promoting resilience, particularly in children and young people (cited in Utsey et al 2007, Maclean 2004 and Lee 1996)
- Improving health (cited in Rowley et al 2008)
- Improving cognitive functioning (cited in Lee 1996, Kovacs and Meyer 2009)



- Increased employment options (cited in Green 2008)
- Economic development and maintenance of other social infrastructure (cited in Memmott et al 2001)
- Encouraging intergenerational exchange (cited in The Aboriginal Healing Foundation 2009)

This report identified the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project as one example of successful practice in language maintenance. Commenting on *Ngapartji Ngapartji*'s novel use of arts, theatre and music the report makes national its recognition of the many "layers involving language learning, teaching and maintenance, community development, crime prevention, cross-cultural collaboration, creating new literacy training models as well as film, art and theatre making." (Citing the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* website). The report concludes that:

The combination of language, culture, music, art and performance is irresistible for many Indigenous school-aged students. Combining these programs with input from elders and other community members establishes the potential for a rich language-learning environment. Programs that combine languages with the arts can achieve many positive outcomes including language and culture preservation and revitalisation (Gooda 2009, p. 17).

There is considerable evidence from research of the efficacy of **using arts and performance** practice in work with community. This body of work, the study of what is often called 'community cultural development', examines what happens when groups use of creativity, arts and performance to help artists, performers, community organizers, funding bodies and participants join together and make changes at the individual and community level (Sonn, Drew & Kasat, 2002 p. 12, Boal 2007). The intention of this style of work is to use a range of visual, theatrical and textual arts forms to help bring people together, draw out their taken-for-granted or tacit knowledge (Kuppers and Robertson 2007, Polanyi, 1967), help them produce wonderful art and assist them take action for a better future using creativity and imagination (Kins & Peddie, 1996). The objective is to not only produce art but to encourage people to work together to make changes in their lives and communities (Adams & Goldbard, 2002 p. 33, Cunningham 2007). As Sonn, Drew and Kasat (2002, p. 12) put it, "the community arts are not only end products but provide a medium through which community members engage in the joint identification and production of images, symbols and other resources which index their visions and aspirations."

Reviewing literature concerned with the use of arts in community work Green and Sonn (2008) conclude that often social, educational and economic value extends well beyond arts events, activities and projects. In addition to producing art and performance the changes that occur are many and varied (Matarasso 2007). Indeed different projects using arts and cultural development have been able to:

- Increase **civic development**, social cohesion and active citizenship; build cultural bridges and a better understanding of different cultures; develop community identity, decrease social isolation, strengthen community work, volunteerism, activism and civic dialogue; help create, strengthen and build friendship networks, community associations and organizations; help children development values and civic practice and raise public awareness of an issue (Netherwood et al 2007, Matarasso 2007, Purcell 2007, Cultural Ministers Council 2004, Issa 2007);

- Help create **neighbourhood** renewal such as contributing to urban regeneration, alleviate impact of poverty, change perception of an area, help build outside links for insular communities and manage some environmental impacts (Comedia 2002, Holford 2003, Kay and Watt 2000, Hawkes 2001);
- Help members of the community **express, represent, reconfigure** and take action on matters of importance to them (eg. racism, poverty, illness, crime) (Matarasso 2007, Wright and Palmer 2005);
- Assist with reduced levels of **crime** and anti-social behaviour, build diversionary opportunities, help community work in conjunction with police and other authorities, encourage community policing, used in conjunction with safety auditing, build an **environment** where they feel **safe** and able to live with others (Cameron 2007, Clover 2007, Kaimal and Gerber 2007, Matarasso 2007, Wright and Palmer 2007);
- Provide opportunities for **personal development** such as improvement in self confidence and self esteem, improvement in the communication of ideas and information, increase in creativity and thinking skills, offers positive role models to people living in deprived community, helps develop self confidence, flexibility and self-reliance, bring out hidden talents, help people express anger and other emotions, improve sociability (Matarasso 2007, London Arts 2001);
- Resist and **reconfigure negative ideas**, images and accounts about their community (Putland 2008, Clover 2007);
- Promote **education**, skill acquisition, economic development and life-long learning such as formal educational attainment of children and young people, improved economic and employment opportunities and employment rates, help reduce truancy, improve academic performance, increase ability of people to work on tasks from start to finish, relationship between music and enhanced reading ability, enhances spatial-temporal performance for children (Stubington 2007, Catterall 1997, Butzlaff 2000, Hetland 2000, Palmer 2009);
- Offer opportunities for people to have fun and experience joy (Clover 2007, Putland 2008, Green and Sonn 2008, Wright and Palmer 2005);
- Improved **health** such as enhanced mental and physical health and wellbeing, better and more equal standards of health, healthy eating, healthy parenting, less reliance on medical support, feeling better, stress reduction, fewer admissions to psychiatric hospital, promotes recovery from illness, decrease in blood pressure (London Arts 2001, Green and Sonn 2008, Palmer and Buchanan 2009);
- Spend more time with family (Green and Sonn 2008);
- Foster intergenerational exchange and cooperation (MacCallum et al 2006);
- Build bonds and social cohesion (social capital) between people and create a sense of pride in their social group (Purchell 2007, Matarasso 2007);
- Assist Indigenous groups to maintain **culture and law** (Palmer 2006);
- Assist **Indigenous groups develop governance** and plan projects (Walsh and Mitchell 2002);
- Help people and organisations **switch between cultural codes or zones**, allowing them to experiment with ways of working together (this has been variously described as work in the 'contact zone' or 'cultural borderlands') (Somerville and Perkins 2003);
- Create opportunities for community members to participate in formal governmental institutions, improve skills in **planning**, organizing activities and injecting creativity into organizational planning, increase referral to other services, opens up access to community for service providers (Walsh and Mitchell 2002,

- Saggers et al 2004);
- Extend people's ability to **use new technologies** and digital communication systems (Palmer 2009);
- Development of **arts** related outcomes such as increase in creativity and thinking skills, increased appreciation of the arts, creation of public art and a sense of public ownership, provide members of the community with skills and points of entrance into the arts, cultural and creative industries (Palmer 2010, Wright and Palmer 2007).

Evidence suggests that using arts and performance work can help free people from the "traps of habit, help [them] see things from a different perspective, suggest connections between varied subjects and transform communities and the way in which government agencies operate" (Mills 2007, p. 36). Boal (2007 p. 13) adds that using performance and arts work can also help to enliven imagination and provide opportunities for people to 'rehearse' what might be possible. In other words, this approach can help people take on the character of the person they could become.

Particularly critical is the use arts workers can make of a variety of artistic forms and styles. Members of a community can experiment with digital animation software, produce masks, make instruments, create costumes, learn how to use makeup, perform, create music, learn about the production process and design and make beautiful lanterns. Often this can allow people to experiment with some of the most up-to-date art forms. As a teacher in one study said when talking about the animation work of her students, "these kids are learning to use software that I have never seen let alone used." Impressively many get to work directly with professional and recognized actors and very talents artists (Palmer 2009).

Also important in this work is that members of the community are often able to participate, often for the first time in their lives, in performances of high quality. This often gives those involved a sense of shared pride in something of a magnitude rarely seen in these community settings. When asked to talk about her experience of a project of this kind one participant said, "the fact that it was a worthwhile production with fireworks and lighting and sound ... the fact that it wasn't dodgy ... had the potential to give kids the message that if they want to pursue things like this themselves then it can be done ... it is possible." (Palmer 2009).

As well as its success in producing community events, this kind of work can offer much in the way of artistic and performance opportunities to communities with limited access to professional artists, arts education and creative mediums. Often for the first time community members get to experiment with a range of soft and hardware, playfully learning with arts mentors how to use digital cameras, sound devices and manage lighting desks. They record in digital sound recording studios and edit on state of the digital art film suites such as 'Final Cut Pro'. This is particularly important in rural and remote settings. As a consequence community members (particularly children and young people) are exposed to a breadth of artistic forms. Not only is this important for providing new opportunities for students, it also had considerable merit in relation to the development of teachers. As a remote area principal in one study observed,

to be perfectly frank, schools in places like this have a large number of graduate teachers who, as you would expect, a limited arts education repertoire. Mostly arts curriculum consists of a bit painting and elements of other fine art forms. What this project did was bring into the school, and hence the professional development of

graduate teachers, a whole range of artistic forms that you just don't get out here (cited in Palmer 2009).

Used in tandem with the creation of multi-dimensional arts and performance genres these new and digital technologies have provided possibilities for participants to reconfigure otherwise taken-for-granted ideas about things such as 'Aboriginality', 'youth', 'ageing', young parenthood, rural life and community identity. This has been particularly popular since the recent Macintosh led innovations in easy access multi-media platforms. This has allowed those working with the media to join an emerging international movement of community-based organizations shifting the balance of representation towards local and independent content (Palmer 2009).

### **Markers of *Ngapartji Ngapartji*'s quality**

There is clearly very convincing evidence of success provided up to this point in the report. To assist in further testing the efficacy of the project it is also important to draw inferences about its quality by comparing it to what works elsewhere. The following table provides an overview of what stands in the international literature as 'markers of success' in projects designed to help build healthy communities, particularly in communities keen on arresting crime. In discussion that follows these markers will be compared with the methods and approaches used by *Big hART*. As suggested earlier, if *Big hART* is using practice that has been established to have been successful elsewhere then it follows that they will see success.

Before reviewing this next section it is worth noting that there is also an important deductive means of testing the usefulness of the approach taken. From the evidence already cited and that which follows it is clear that there exists an intersubjective relationship between the five main pillars of the work carried out by *Big hART* (literacy development, language maintenance, community building, creativity and the use of arts and performance and crime prevention). Rather than a cause and effect relationship existing between any two factors evidence suggests that literacy development, language maintenance, community building, creativity and crime prevention work are intricately tied up together. Success in any one pillar is most likely when the others are also present (see the sources cited in the following table). Therefore a cycle of influence exists between these five activities with each to some extent being important in shaping the others. To put it another way, there is evidence that without these activities it is more difficult to build the others. As early discussion demonstrates and as the following discussion will show there is good evidence that the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project has delivered solid achievements on all of these fronts. By definition then the work of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* represents very good practice.

**Table 4: Markers of success in Indigenous community work**

Marker of success	Source
Feature one: ' <i>ngura</i> ' - connecting the health of people with the health of 'country' and place	Walsh et al 2002 Nesbit et al 2001 Cummins et al 2008
Feature two: ' <i>Ngapartji Ngapartji</i> ' - having a reciprocal approach to community participation and development i.e. 'give and take' involvement of local (Anangu) people in governing, accountability, decision-making, workshops and other activities.	Foster 2007 Woods et al 2002 Cummins 2008
Feature three: ' <i>nintingu palyani</i> ' – having local (Pitjantjatjara) language and conceptual ideas shape program planning, content and methodology	Stanner 2009 Collard & Palmer 2006 Trudgen 2000
Feature four: ' <i>walytja</i> ' - local (Anangu) family relationships are at the core of work with 'community' and opportunities are created for contact and work between families and different generations in the community	Cummins et al 2008 MacCallum et al 2006 Kaplan et al 2002
Feature five: maximising local (Anangu) people's opportunities for employment, housing, health care, training, sport, recreation, social activity and arts	Taylor et al 2008 Miller 2001
Feature six: ' <i>Kunpungku palyani</i> ' - building on the strengths of people, extending social and skills repertoire of members of the community and encouraging them to seek excellence and high quality work	Mills & Brown 2004 Saggers et al 2004 Taylor et al 2008
Feature seven: ' <i>inma palyani</i> ' – using novel and active methods including arts, creativity and 'Indigenous cultural forms'	MacCallum et al 2006 O'Malley and Sutton 1997
Feature eight: ' <i>rawangu warkarinyi</i> ' - moving beyond one-off programs, spending an extended amount of time in community, creating a constellation of programs and setting out a range of activities to cater to a wide variety of interests and needs of local (Anangu) people	Taylor et al 2008 Sutton 1997 Palmer 2006 & 2009 White 1998
Feature nine: ' <i>tjutangka wangkanyi</i> ' – going along with others, adopting multi-agency involvement, creating long-term solutions and connecting local people's troubles and challenges with broader regional, national and global influences	Foster 2007, Palmer 2006, White 1998, Sutton 1997, Ife and Tesorio 2009
Feature ten: ' <i>anangu piranpa palya tjunanyi</i> ' - employing competent staff (including local people), in particular those who possess a combination of skills and experience in working with local (Anangu) community	Taylor et al 2008 Cummins et al 2008
Feature eleven: ' <i>kuranyukutu kulini</i> ': building in evaluation, recording and archiving of the work	Taylor et al 2008 Palmer 2009 McMurray 1999

**Feature one: '*ngura*' - connecting the health of people with the health of 'country' and place**

In work involving many Indigenous Australians the connection between people and country is paramount. Largely this reflects the fact that in traditional law and culture there exists an irrepressible link between people, family and country. Indeed to think about the future of a community without reference to country is akin to talking about the future of a child without reference to its mother (Bird Rose 2004 p. 153). As Edwards (1988) further explains, for Anangu, country is an extension of family, the place where present living family, ancestors and as yet unborn children dwell. As a member of one's family country demands care and in turn offers care. To visit country, to travel through it, hunt on it, make fire on it and sing to it much like visiting an older relative. In both acts one maintains relationships, obligations and 'keeps

alive' one's family. In this way, keeping country healthy (by visiting it, dancing on it and warming its soul by fire) also involves the act of keeping community healthy (Collard 2008).

One of the key features of this project was the extent to which 'country' and place shaped how things got done. As discussed earlier, the project took as inspiration a set of stories about the country or 'nguru' of Western Desert people. The central theme in the stage production was the love, loss and relationship between country and people dispossessed as a consequence of atomic testing around Maralinga and Emu Junction in the 1950s and 1960s. Routinely workshops with young people took place 'on country' in a variety of locations that have long-term cultural significance and meaning to people. Regularly senior people took young people and project workers hunting and looking for food, visiting people and places and paying respect to places of importance. The approach taken contrasted with conventional education and training work (with its reliance upon classroom-based learning), film and music production work (which is often studio-based) and community work (which is often limited to meetings in office blocks or board rooms). One of the project's striking features was its ability to take the work 'to country', packing equipment, people and other material into one of the two blue 60 Series Toyota Landcruisers. When this happened young people and other members of the community were able to exercise their obligations to country, filming on it, singing on it, dancing on it, swimming in it and sustaining themselves on it. Perhaps the penultimate event occurred in September 2008 when over forty members of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* cast and crew took the work 'back to country', performing the show in the creek in Ernabella. In this way Big *hART*'s Pirnapa (non-Anangu) staff joined Anangu in maintaining a form of inma or ceremony whereby people met, sung, danced and celebrated in the act of visiting as a mark of respect 'for country'.

In some ways one could say that 'country' was the central actor in the project, the workshop venue, the rehearsal setting, the stage on which the project was set and performed and the means through which people could build and maintain their relationships with each other.

**Feature two: '*Ngapartji Ngapartji*' – having a reciprocal approach to community participation and development i.e. 'give and take' involvement of local (Anangu) people in governing, accountability, decision-making, workshops and other activities.**

In a range of ways the *Big hART* team took very seriously the importance of building its work mechanisms to encourage a reciprocal or gift economy whereby members of the company and the community exchange in governing, planning and mutual obligations to one another. Indeed in adopting the Pitjantjatjara conceptual idea of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* as the project name Big *hART* symbolized and made obligatory their intentions to carry out its work in association with Anangu. This they did in many ways. One key feature of the *Big hART* approach, particularly in the early elements of its projects, is that it commits considerable attention to seeking direction and ideas from key community members. Early in the project they invited a number of senior women to act as a reference group advising them on the development of a language strategy. Throughout the process of the development of the *ninti* on-line language site these women provided linguistic services, acted on the language films, read and directed the content of the website and led in the call for literacy work (Source: *ninti* website 2009, Project website 2006-2009, Project report 2009, Minutes and correspondence of Language Reference Group meetings 2006-2008).

During various elements of the work *Big hART* staff maintained a vigilant approach to checking back with key Anangu participants. During workshops, on tour and at different stages of the

creative process there was an almost constant process of to-ing and pro-ing that went on between arts workers and senior people. It was clearly noticeable when reading worker journals and reports. For example, when one worker was writing about the process of editing a short film for the online language lesson website she noted how important it was to seek out translation advice from more than three sources. The young people involved in making the film were the first source. She then sought out the project linguist's (An Anangu woman) view and then turned to two of the members of the Language Reference Group. In this long and demanding process (often described in diary entries) worker demonstrates that she is 'walking the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* talk' (Source: Worker report 2008).

This process of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* is also evident in the stage show. As was mentioned earlier, Anangu (both old and young) toured, singing in the choir, acting in the performance and, in one case, producing artwork as a backdrop. Those involved were paid for their work. Throughout the show senior women led elements of the language and cultural work, driving the performance with their song and overseeing the script, enveloping Trevor Jamieson (the lead actor) with a semi circle of Anangu.

Likewise the decision to take the stage show to Ernabella in 2008 reflects the serious way in which Big *hART* approached its obligations to 'take the show back to Anangu'. This represented the will on the part of Big *hART* staff to give people on the APY Lands a chance to see what had been taken elsewhere in the country. It also provided the company with a most profound mechanism for checking to see that the project was true to its word, in keeping with the sentiments of those involved, linguistically accurate and culturally well-mannered. In this way the shows at Ernabella also represented a means of 'government' (reporting back, encouraging broad participation, contemplation and involvement in decisions) that was broad in its reach and as true to old forms of Anangu decision-making conventions as was possible (Source: Edwards 1988, p. 67).

There is ample evidence from Anangu that this was appreciated. Feedback from the documentary 'rough cuts' (carefully transcribed) affirms the style Big *hART* workers used. Asked how they felt about being involved two woman said:

*Person one: We were absolutely a team*

*Person two: making it together*

*Person one: every night we wanted to make it a GREAT show, for everyone.*

*Person two: and after the show we were so excited, analysing how the show had been.*

*Together (Laughing) except ### would always say something was lanma!!!! Usually something she'd done. But we never heard it. She's funny (Source: records of community meeting 2008).*

### **Feature three: Feature three: 'Nintinku palyani' – having local (Pitjantjatjara) language and conceptual ideas shape program planning, content and methodology**

Another stand out feature of the project was the extent to which Pitjantjatjara language shaped work. As mentioned earlier, Big *hART*'s way of working with Anangu involved a layered approach to language. The survival of Pitjantjatjara language was the *raison d'être* for the project. Having Pitjantjatjara ideas and conceptual devices set up how the project would work configured the relationships between Anangu and Piranpa (non-Anangu) and it provided the means through which creative work (music, film and stage work) was shaped. Not only was Pitjantjatjara the bridge between Anangu and Big *hART* staff it became available to a wide and

large Piranpa (non-Anangu) audience in theatres, on-line language courses, music and through the 'memory basket'.

As mentioned, the history of Anangu struggles as refugees from the Maralinga homelands provided the central theme for the project. People's individual and collective stories were the topic of workshops, creative production, the performances, films, music and the 'memory basket'. The scripts for the various versions of the stage performance of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* and *Nyuntu Ngali* involve constant weaving Pitjantjatjara and English. Anangu ideas helped craft and reconfigure scripts during creative development and then in response to advice during rehearsals and in post-production company reviews. Anangu personal accounts laid the foundation for the storyline of much of the work. Their words and commentary, almost always in Pitjantjatjara, featured in film work, letters to Ministers and the general public, media releases, project reports and the 'memory basket'. Senior Indigenous people gave directions on all manner of content including locations, stories, people and themes to be included.

The project emerged when the Lead Actor and Co-Writer, Company Director and the person who would become the Creative Producer had the idea for a show that would 'test' people on Pitjantjatjara language, only allowing those who could pass a test to see the show. Although this novel idea was not taken up when pitched to arts festivals Melbourne and Perth Festivals were keen on the idea of a show with language learning elements. This in turn resulted in a film maker joining the three other founding members of the project so as to create a series of language lesson videos with Anangu senior women acting as linguists and young people assisting with the filmmaking. This represents the genesis of the project and, importantly the content and style of producing the show and other creative material (Sources: evaluation notes 2007-2009, project website 2006-2010, Final report 2010).

Critical here was the fact that the project's founding Producer spent much of the first twelve months in 2005 putting great stock in listening carefully to accounts of Anangu. Carefully this person listened not only to what people said but how they spoke about their lives. As she said,

I moved to Alice and spent six months just making contacts and talking with Anangu. The first year or year and a half our main emphasis was in listening and recording people's stories so that this could form the basis of what we did and how we did it (Source: evaluation notes 2008).

This set the foundations for a central practice adopted by *Big hART* workers, listening intently and recording copiously the ideas and stories of Anangu in their own language, carefully recording the lexicon of Anangu using film, performance and music. The words of Anangu, visibly and audibly accessible via digital sound and film recording, became the basis for much of production work. *Big hART* also took many of the great one-liners and personal stories that Anangu offered and adopted them to help frame the language of media releases, promotional material, conference addresses, letters to public officials and ways of talking about their work. Often this language drew on metaphors, synonyms, and other picture painting poetics. This was beautifully added to the film and stage work to literally and metaphorically take Anangu voices to the nation.

During the performances audiences are softly invited into the Pitjantjatjara speaking domains. For example, from the early parts of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* stage show people are addressed in Pitjantjatjara, taught songs including 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes', standing up to join with the actions, helping to symbolize the project's aspirations for Piranpa (non-Anangu)



participation in language maintenance. As Grehan (2010) points out, language makes possible new kinds of cultural proximity, reminding people of their alienation from Anangu while also providing people with a means through which to combat social isolation. Speaking about the use of Pitjantjatjara during the show she says:

This is a technique that creates intimacy and makes non-Indigenous audience members aware of the lack of knowledge they have of Indigenous languages. Audiences are also reminded that they know (mostly) how to say hello in French but not in Pitjantjatjara. It is interesting to note that rather than feeling embarrassed as one might expect, spectators willingly stand up and engage in this activity with humour and a sense of shared enjoyment ... The use of the Pitjantjatjara language during the performance also contributes to the sense of building or constructing something and audience members who do not speak Pitjantjatjara are given insight into the importance of language for the Spinifex people ... Stories are also mostly told in both languages and certain keywords are shared with the audience. The preservation, sharing and importance of language as a link to culture, are core elements of the performance and the outreach programmes.

As a consequence, the language used in the production work was highly evocative, in part because it was 'authentic' to the experiences of people, in part because it contrasts enormously with the language and conceptual ideas normally available to audiences. It also worked in unique and profound ways to draw non-Anangu into the work. It is this simple decision to choose local language terminology over alien, professional and often highly abstract conceptual tools that reminds one of the tradition inspired by the work of Paulo Freire (1972). According to this tradition, any attempt at development with a community must begin by community workers bracketing their often reductive conceptual devices, instead spending time noting what Freire called the 'generative themes' and language forms of a community.

**Feature four: 'walytja' - local (Anangu) family relationships are at the core of work with 'community' and opportunities are created for contact and work between families and different generations in the community**

In a range of ways the project sought to bring children, young people and other age groups together. This kind of work is what in the US and Britain people have described as 'intergenerational exchange'. The asserted benefits of intergenerational exchange are many and varied and include the idea that they help instil important civic values (Woffard 1999, 92), strengthen mutual understanding (Berns 1997), rebuild social networks and create inclusive communities (Granville and Hatton-Yeo 2002, 197), increase tolerance, a level of comfort and intimacy between the old and young and dispel clichés and myths about the aging process (Manheimer, cited in Intergenerational Strategies 2004).

As outlined earlier, from its outset this project was motivated by the desire on the part of a number of key people (including Trevor Jamieson and senior Anangu people) to encourage young people to better understand their history and language. One senior woman put it this way, "Walytja (family) is like, grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, big brother, big sister. I think of it like this: If we work together, stand together we are family. You and all of us are together, all of you are our family, all those who work with *Ngapartji Ngapartji*. Palya." (Source: Documentary transcriptions 2009).

In part this involved a desire to bring young people back into contact with their broader 'walytja' or family systems in order that they could learn much more about their own history. One senior

person explained it:

Ngayulu kulini, alatji, nyanga palumpa purunypa, *Ngapartji Ngapartji* kuwari ngaranya, palu purunypa nyaa, Piranpa tjutangku kutju nyakupai, cityngka, ngura kutjupa tjutangka. Ka Anangu tjuta nyanga palumpa purunypaku ninti wiya, Anangu tjuta munu tjana kuwari kutju, kuwari kutju alatjitu nyakula urulyaranu alatjitu. Munuya pulkara kulini munuya pulkara alatjitu mukuringanyi, kuwari kutju nyakula, show nyangatja kuwari kutju nyakula urulyaranu alatjitu “Ai! Wirunya alatjitu!” Tjitji tjuta kulu-kulu, young one, young people tjuta, tjana ninti wiya nyaaku, bomb panya iriti. Panya palumpaku tjana ninti wiya, tjana urulyaraningi alatjitu. Ngurpa. Ninti wiya.”

*I think, in this way – the show Ngapartji Ngapartji that is on now, things like this are only seen by non-Indigenous people in the city, in other places. But Pitjantjatjara people are not too aware about this kind of thing. So seeing something like this for what really is the first time, people really have been shocked and surprised. And they’ve been deeply considering it and thoroughly impressed by it, taking this show in for the first time. Really surprised and saying “Hey! This is excellent!” Kids too, young people – they are unaware you know, about the bombs that occurred in the past. Because they didn’t know about that they’ve really been shocked. Unaware – they didn’t know (Source: Documentary transcriptions 2009).*

Earlier sections of the report outline the benefits to young people of this contact with others in the community. However, there is also much evidence that contact between the generations had an important recharging effect on senior people. Explaining his reaction to seeing the show one senior man described with gusto the impact *Ngapartji Ngapartji* had upon his spirits. In this poetic and metaphoric response he signals just how critical young people are to the process of cultural regeneration:

*I got Tjukurpa from my feet going up to my knees, to here, here, here, here. Ears, when they’re pointing, to the ears, singing “Pina, kuru, winpinpi, mulya” Ears – that means you must understand, listen, with those ears. With your eyes you can see clear, your Tjukurpa. Winpinpi, lips, you can use those, to the young people, to understand. With your nose you can smell the wind blow, where they wind comes from and where it goes (Source: Documentary transcriptions 2009).*

As was discussed in a number of places in the audit review section of the report, from its inception this project took seriously the need to work in conjunction with ‘walytja’ or family, find ways to encourage contact across the generations and build opportunities to reconnect young people with local social systems and family networks. Indeed, a number of the project funding criteria were designed to see that this became an instrumental element in the project. For example, project activity statements include plans to use: “community mentoring to reconnect young people with language and culture” and have “young people, elders and families responding to the process and work.”

The project put into practice the task of encouraging contact across the generations in a number of ways. As outlined, senior people took on important roles in storytelling, offering accounts of what it was like to grow up in earlier times. Often these accounts were recorded by young people who worked literally right next to Big hART staff, using cameras, operating sound equipment or performing on stage. As was just noted, senior people provided advice about elements of local cultural protocols that needed to be maintained. They were assisted by

others, not quite so old, who worked closely with artists and young people, also offering histories, advice and carrying out preparation work more directly with younger participants. Older young people also took on the role of mentors or younger people. For example, a number of the younger musicians played instruments on other's sound tracks, sometimes also supporting the music recording of older people's songs. The various stage shows themselves provided one of the most significant intergenerational opportunities with senior people, middle aged people, young people and children literally working side-by-side in the lead-up, during and after the performance (Source: Evaluation notes 2007-2010).

The *Ngapartji Ngapartji* stage show itself was intergenerational in its content and substance, examining and throwing up for public consideration topics relevant to the development of intimate and long-standing relationships between the young and elderly, the 'sustainability' of the region for future generations and the complex and intertwined connection between looking after country and looking after others in the community. Likewise the storyline of *Nyuntu Ngali* (one of the legacy performances) is about what happens when rich and deep exchanges cease between the generations. In it the key character (played by Trevor Jamieson) is the spirit child 'Petrol' who represents the future speaking to his parents about the need to quietly care for and consider what will happen if intergenerational contact is neglected. This key character acts as a prophecy of what might happen if 'waltja' (family) is compromised. The relationships that made possible *Nyuntu Ngali* are highly intergenerational and intercultural with creative work involving senior people and young actors in recording background sound work and music and young performers working in conjunction with established actors and musicians (Source: evaluation notes 2009-2010).

There were a number of other ways the project continued with a theme of working across the generations. Young people worked with visiting artists (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) who ranged in age and experience. They consistently worked with people outside of the conventional teacher/student or child/adult relationship in workshops, creating props, and in the community performance itself. Many of the various events and performances involved evenings that a number of people described as 'family friendly'. The 'memory basket' standing as a record of the project is full of photos of the cross generational connections occurring. One might say that the 'memory basket' acts as a legacy for those generations that follow behind, offering a symbolic gift to future generations from senior Anangu, project participants and Big hART workers.

#### **Feature five: 'tjalkanypa': maximising local (Anangu) people's opportunities for employment, housing, health care, training, sport, recreation, social activity and arts**

According to Altman (2006), evidence from elsewhere demonstrates that improvements in the health of remote communities are more likely if local people are involved in a combination of activities in the market economy, the governmental economy and the customary economy. Altman (2006) describes this kind of mixed participation in a range of domains as the 'hybrid economy'.

As mentioned, the project had measurable success in getting different groups of people to come together and work on something of shared interest. It also provided many individuals with new opportunities to participate in an array of workshops and activities, create and maintain culture, act as mentors for others, provide training and take on training, get paid work, travel to new places, visit adjacent communities and carry out their cultural and family obligations. As has been described in the audit review section of the report, the magnitude of the opportunities

offered was enormous.

There is some good evidence that participation in the Ngapartji Ngaparji project has better prepared people for involvement in this hybrid economy. According to local sources, there is some evidence that some young people have improved their involvement in schooling since their participation in the project. As was noted earlier, there is good evidence that the literacy elements of the work were important in sustaining young people's interest in more formal training and income security obligations. There are certainly a number of young people who have become more interested in a future in the arts. For some of these young people this future is beginning to be realised with their success in hosting art exhibitions, creating music CDs that are being sold in the marketplace, taking on acting and other performing work and joining tours and successfully taking on professional filming work. It is certainly the case that workshops, tours, creative production activities all provided young people and others with opportunities they would otherwise not have had.

Furthermore, there was some indirect links between the project and Anangu involvement in other work in the hybrid economy. For example, the connection between the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* performance and activity in art centres was something noted by a number of people. According to those working in one remote area arts centre, music from and involvement in the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* show helped generate energy and create a productive environment for women as they painted. One person said,

because of the way things are with Anangu you can't always easily tell how they feel about a project or an event ... it is just not the Anangu way to come right out and say 'I liked that' or 'thanks' ... however, there are Anangu ways of expressing appreciation ... like I knew how important they (*Ngapartji Ngapartji* Project) were because the women would play the music from the stage show over and over and over ... and over while they were painting in the Centre ... it was like the sound track that made this such a productive place ... the music would create a wonderful feeling of pride and really make the place a warm and enjoyable place for the women ... they sing along, laugh, reminisce, talk about what is happening in the community and love each other's company ... from a productivity point of view it was really powerful (Source: evaluation notes 2009).

There is certainly evidence that the project assisted the capacity of local schools. Having artists work with students, using school facilities and during school holidays at almost no cost to the schools was very much appreciated by teaching staff. As one teacher said, "having the music recording workshops run here during schools was very helpful. Not only did it give kids positive things to do in a place where there is very little else to do, it gave them things with learning involved and, as is so important in this community, supported our whole music focus here" (Source: evaluation notes 2009).

**Feature six: '*kunpungku palyani*' - building on the strengths of people, extending social and skills repertoire of members of the community and encouraging them to seek excellence and high quality work**

Another important feature of the style adopted by Big *hART* is to adopt what many have describe as a 'strengths-based' approach. As mentioned earlier, Big *hART* staff adopted a way of working that involving starting with the 'assets', the achievements, the strengths, talents and the positive accomplishments of people. Staff attempted to follow a different course of action

than what has been described elsewhere as a 'welfarist' or 'deficits' approach (see Green and Haines 2002). One worker explained:

We tried to avoid concentrating too heavily on community problems or start by looking at the dysfunction. People we work with have so much good things going on in their lives and often have great talent ... I mean here (APY Lands) there is such a strong and magnificent tradition of music ... we have got so much more chance of doing wonderful things if we concentrate our work on these positive things (Source: evaluation notes 2008).

One of the observations made by participants and others is that the project's focus "on the positive" has been a key to its success. For example, one community member said, "They (Big *hART* staff always came to ### (a remote community) in a really positive way ... they were always kind, brought happiness and treated everyone well." Another said, "we talk about the good things that are happening, not just the problems and the sadness. We enjoy the tours because we laugh all the time, and we enjoy being with ### (name of Big *hART* staff) because they are so positive ... it makes you feel good and then you do more good things when you are around people who are happy and cheerful." (Source: Evaluation notes 2009).

This style of working seems to have been appreciated by Anangu, particularly senior people who supported the work. It both created confidence in people and set the mood for much of the creative work. One key person involved observed:

we saw all the good things with young people, video-making, recording, everything...is that part of NN? Cause that part is so good, helping young people think they can DO things, kids taking photographs. ### video-clip. So many good videos made by *Ngapartji Ngapartji* (Source: documentary transcripts 2009).

Another described how it felt working in this environment:

I have been very happy while staying in Sydney. We've seen so many great shows – our wonderful show and other great shows. We are constantly making each other laugh, telling funny stories. We are very happy! (Source: documentary transcripts 2009).

The program has a number of features that are consistent with what many describe as an 'assets-based approach to community building', where the strengths of the local community are identified, celebrated and put to use (McKnight and Kretzmann 1993, Green and Haines 2001, Kelly and Sewell 1991). Indeed, one important feature of Big *hART* worker's approach is that, from the earliest stages of the project, they routinely seek out the expertise, talents, local knowledge and skills of participants.

In part this involves creating chances for local people to be involved in producing good quality art and performance work. This is by no means easily achieved when one recognizes the challenges and limitations facing the community and the time and resource constraints facing organizations. Indeed part of the 'art' of the work is balancing the need to support groups who are 'doing it tough' while attempting to create high quality art and cultural productions.

There is very good evidence that as a consequence of working in this way the project helped extend community skills and quality in the arts. The workshops were well attended and

prompted a keen interest in others who attended community events such as film nights. Many Anangu maintained their involvement over many years and indeed continued their involvement in post-Ngapartji productions such as *Nyuntu Ngali*. Many expressed their joy and appreciation in seeing the stage show being performed in Ernabella. Examples of what people said include:

And I feel so proud to be a part of telling this story.

I was you know, performing with the show, and as I was up there I was thinking, 'Oh, I wonder what people are thinking as we perform this show. Perhaps they think that it is acceptable, or perhaps not.' And then after the show, I went home, and they were really excited, my family, saying "Hey! That was really great! You mob performed really well!" And I was thinking 'Hey!' My spirit was cheered and I was able to say to them "Yes, we performed really well!" and so everybody was impressed by us making this show in our home ... and telling us that we had done a good job.

So seeing something like this for what really is the first time, people really have been shocked and surprised. And they've been deeply considering it and thoroughly impressed by it, taking this show in for the first time.

I felt good about acting in the show (Source: documentary transcripts 2009).

### **Feature seven: '*inma palyani*' – using novel and active methods including arts, creativity and 'Indigenous cultural forms'**

The central and most recognized feature of Big *hART* is that it is first and foremost an organisation committed to encouraging creativity, performance and arts production. The style adopted is often described elsewhere as 'community cultural development', an approach to working with community using creativity, arts and performance to bring artists, performers, community organizers, funding bodies and participants together to carry out art-based work in an attempt to encourage changes at the individual and community level (Sonn, Drew & Kasat, 2002 p. 12, Adams & Goldbard, 2002 p. 33). The intention with this style of work is to use various art forms to help draw out people's taken-for-granted, or tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1967) and help them take action for a better future (Kins & Peddie, 1996). Sometimes the work attempts to shift the routines, perspectives and responses of individuals so that from the "traps of habit, help [them] see things from a different perspective, suggest connections between varied subjects and transform communities and the way in which government agencies operate" (Mills 2007, p. 36). Often the work seeks to use performance and arts work to help to enliven the imagination at the level of community and provide opportunities for people to 'rehearse' what might be possible. In other words, this approach can help individuals and groups take on the character of the person or community they could become (Boal, 2007 p. 13).

Particularly critical in this work is the importance of using a variety of artistic forms and styles. The idea is that participants get exposure to a range of forms so they can experiment and play with the act of being artful in life. In this case Big *hART* set up opportunities for people to create music, performance on stage, produce film, use digital software to record, make instruments, create costumes, learn how to use makeup, hold cameras, sound equipment and learn about the production process and design.

In keeping with Big *hART*'s other work Anangu and others involved were able to participate in a performance that was of high quality. As one community worker remarked, this gave those

involved “a chance to really build their confidence levels through working in a very disciplined way and seeing through something”. As mentioned earlier, this helped create in people a sense of shared pride in a community. One person said, “palya ... it was a really worthwhile show .... really worthwhile project ... it means a lot to Anangu to know that people all around Australia got to see such a palya (good) show.” Lead actor and co-creator Trevor Jamieson expressed these sentiments when talking to the media after winning Best Actor in a Lead Role at the Sydney Theatre Awards in 2008,

I am immensely proud of this play, its evolution over a nine-year period has helped hundreds of people both indigenous and non-indigenous explore new ways of working together and encourages cross cultural awareness, recognizing the importance of Indigenous languages (Source: Memory basket 2010).

This use of arts and performance is important in a number of ways. First of all arts, performance and the new creative technologies are increasingly shaping the lives of communities, particularly in communities where young people live. Indeed over the past five to ten years there has been a rapid take-up of creative and digital technology by young people. Secondly, these creative forms are being owned and used by young people. Young people are now picking up and using multimedia appliances such as stills cameras, video cameras, iPods and MP3 players and other multi-functional devices. They are also operating ‘user-friendly’ applications for post-production such as iMovie, iTunes, iPhoto and GarageBand. This is partly because the technology has become fast, accessible, highly portable and more publicly available. Thirdly, young people are learning things through the use of this technology. In fact most young people are now routinely logging on and into a vast and complex digital culture largely unfamiliar to their parent generations. This world is “symbolic-rich, language-saturated and technology-enhanced” (Hull 2003, p. 232). The associated skills, knowledge and cognitive repertoires that young people are gaining from this are changing the way that they ‘participate’ in the social world. Fourthly, in new and novel ways young people are leading the way in reconfiguring how they are seen by others, forging new identities and transforming global ideas from an ever increasing pool of sources. Fifthly, these social and technological changes provide enormous economic potential for young people who are leading the way as experts in the various creative industries. Discussing this movement Cunningham (2007, p. 19-20) cites the Carnegie Foundation, who suggest, “the new forms of newsgathering and distribution, grassroots or citizen journalism and blogging sites are changing the very nature of who produces news’ ... the 18-34 demographic is creating the inexorable momentum.”

This style of using arts and performance opened up opportunities for young people to work with professional actors, directors and production people. In particular this provide them with the rare chance to see and experience what it is like to manage a range of tasks, manage strict regimes and take on guidance and direction from older people, both Anangu and non-Anangu. One person who spent considerable time watching the production process noted:

(In) the theatre, in that experience young people are taking positive criticism from directors, but they are also being guided by those older women ... two things are happening at the same time in that learning moment that is unlike what they are like in everyday life when they can sit there and go grumpy, ‘don’t want to do it’. Something in that environment brings out an openness to listening, to taking instructions, to redoing it in a way that’s perfect, seeking that perfection. It’s different, they move into a different space, it’s an unusual and special experience, unlike learning in school or learning in a TAFE college where it’s somehow not strong enough but this environment

has those elements that make them take notice (Source: cited in memory basket notes 2009).

It is likely that the success of the work is attributable to the central role that music played in the project. In part this is because of the strength of music in Anangu history and tradition. In part it is because contemporary music forms are so important to young Anangu. Therefore it is worth understanding a little about music and Anangu and other indigenous Australian culture.

As many have observed, singing, dancing, painting and performing ceremony has long been used to help maintain and build Indigenous people's connection to country and to each other. Indeed for Anangu, country, community and 'singing' are inseparable. The practice of singing is literally a way of life, a way of bringing country to life and in turn the way one comes to life in country (Muecke 1997). As Catherine Ellis (1985) so clearly put it, for those Anangu old people she worked with, "music is the central repository of knowledge." Ellis's mentor Ted Strehlow made similar observations about Arentte. Outlining Strehlow's poetics on song in Central Australia, Hill (2002, p. 44) said,

The whole life of the region was, in a sense, conducted according to song, the secrets of which were central to the laws of the culture ... the whole region was animated by song that gave almost everything – fauna, flora, much of the topography – meanings. The terrain was a narrative, and song, like rain, united the sky with the earth, and day with the stars of the night ... The songs were important among the deeds of the land. To sing the song was to transmit proprietorial responsibilities to others. A song served to locate men and women in totemic terms, and this in turn mapped individuals with regard to birth place and place of conception. A man or woman, and the clan to which they belonged, owned the song as they owned the land ... they belonged to the song and its country, as much as the singer's voice belonged to his or her body.

In this way, one's status, one's identity, one's being in the world is ultimately linked to one's ability to sing. Attempting to explain the pivotal role of music for Anangu long time friend and advocate Bill Edwards explained that:

If Descarte were a western desert man he would not have said 'Cogito ergo sum' ('I think therefore I am'), rather he would have said 'canto ergo sum' ('I sing therefore I am') (Source: evaluation notes 2008 and 2009).

To separate the practice of looking after the health of community from singing, dancing and performing is an abstraction that often does not help to explain life in places such as Central Australia (see Langton 1994; Bird Rose 2004; Richards et al. 2002, Marshall 2001, Turner 1982).

This happens in a number of important ways. Not only do Indigenous understandings of country see people as being brought into being by country, but their "daily and yearly interactions with country are communicative events" (Bird Rose 2002, p. 43). When traveling through country Indigenous people often call or 'sing out' to country to announce themselves. Music literally becomes the way of addressing country (Dunbar-Hall and Gibson 2004, p. 26). Through the performance of practices such as lighting fires, cooking food, walking, dancing, telling stories and singing, Indigenous people "communicate their presence to country" (Bird Rose 2002, p. 43).



It also happens because singing about a place (or singing about country) involves 'singing a place'. As Dunbar-Hall and Gibson (2004, p, 220) put it, "by performing a song about a place, the events of the past, through which that place came into being, are re-created in the present." Through the performance of a song about a place the place comes again into existence, being reborn through the act of singing. The evocative ability of song was beautifully articulated by one Anangu man who said after the Ernabella show,

When you singing, when Trevor's singing, all those things, I know, I understand, my heart is crying. He's telling a very important story. It is (Source: vox pop transcriptions 2008).

In part this works because country is seen as something that moves, that creates rhythms, that maintains a (heart) beat. Like a rich and many instrumental orchestra country holds a communicative system rich in rhythms and beats, as well as cycles and returns. Such a communicative domain then demands one learns how to work with "beat and interval, presence and absence, departure and return, actions and connections ... (linking the body) with its heartbeat and other rhythms" (Bird Rose 2002, p, 45-46). This process reflects longstanding cultural practices that link the act of 'singing' and making music with being on country and maintaining spiritual, economic and familial ties (Bird Rose et al 2002). Operating in this cultural time and space then demands that one finds the beat, paying attention to the tempo of country. It demands the embodiment of a musical sensibility.

In this way performing songs and dancing about places act as a critical part of Anangu cultural practice, the maintenance of places and important cultural affiliations between people and those places. In other words, singing about a place is important in traditional law and custom as it allows people to both maintain the spirit of that place (sing up a place) and reinscribe certain places with meaning and importance.

"Singing for country" also works because it offers a means of young people sharing the experience with elders. This is more profound than at first it may appear. Deborah Bird Rose (2004) observes that the process of being on country and singing for country not only involves the young and their living elders "going along together," but it also demands a shared relationship with elders and ancestors long passed away. She recounts the guidance received from her friend and teacher Jessie Wirrpa, who taught her the practice of calling out to the "old people for country" – those guardians of country who had returned to their country upon dying. Wirrpa taught Bird Rose about the need for those walking on country to be guided by the presence of ancestors who, if respected and asked for guidance, would lead and care for the living walkers. Bird Rose (2004) describes 'singing out to country' in this way:

*When she took me walkabout she called out to the ancestors. She told them who we were and what we were doing, and she told them to help us. 'Give us fish', she would call out, 'the children are hungry'. When she was walking through country she was always with a group, and that group included the dead as well as the living (p. 167).*

Important here is the conception that the 'old people' (including those who have passed away) are an integral part of the maintenance of Aboriginal life and the education and experience of the young and living. Also important here is that the Aboriginal practice of singing out to country implicitly involves communion between the young (the living) and the old (the dead). There is nothing morbid about this. On the contrary, it involves what Muecke (1997 p. 228) describes as "paying dues" to the ancestors and respecting the cycle of life in death and death in life.

In this way, singing out to country becomes a means by which Anangu can recognize that their place in the world is shaped by the prior existence of other beings. This practice introduces to children and young people the importance of respecting the legacy that has been left by those (both human and the inanimate environment) who came before them (Muecke 2004 p. 69).

The nexus between 'singing out', performance or protocols and care for country reflect long-established ontological traditions that connect the health of country to the health of persons. Bird Rose (2002 p. 14) puts it beautifully when she says:

*In Aboriginal English, the word "country" is both a common noun and a proper noun. People talk about country in the same way that they would talk about a person: they speak to country, sing to country, visit country, worry about country, grieve for country and long for country. People say that country knows, hears, smells, takes notice, takes care, and feels sorry or happy. Country is a living entity with a yesterday, a today and tomorrow, with consciousness, action, and a will toward life. Because of this richness of meaning, country is home and peace; nourishment for body, mind and spirit; and heart's ease.*

Using music, arts and other cultural practice is also powerful because there has long been a desire on the part of non-Indigenous audiences to draw upon Indigenous styles and cultural forms. Through the inspiration of their symbols, images and signs Indigenous people have contributed much to both the national economy and the marketing of Australia to the world. Aboriginal imagery, motifs and music are now "strewn thickly around the modern Australian landscape" (Rothwell, 1996, p. 1), so much so that it is now impossible to walk into a tourist agency or pick up brochures promoting Australia as a destination and not see the face and hear the music of Indigenous Australia.

The contributions of Indigenous people in culture and the arts have most certainly been enormous. For over a century Indigenous imagery and the artistic work of Indigenous people has been appropriated consistently as a 'marker of Australian identity' (Langton 1998, p. 106, Fry and Willis, 1996, p. 199). Particularly in the past thirty years Indigenous Australians have generated an enormous output of visual art, film and television, music and other performing arts (Langton, 1994, p. 13). It is certainly the case that Indigenous art is a major economic force. According to Fink and Perkins (1997, p. 60) "Aboriginal art is now Sotheby's second highest growth market." Rothwell (1996, p.1) cites work postulating that 100 million dollars are spent annually on Aboriginal art produced in rural Australia. Similar trends have occurred within the cultural domain of music and music making. Johnson (1997, p. 148-149) claims that part of the success of the emerging original and popular Australian music genre is the distinct influence of Indigenous musicians and musical styles.

At the same time Indigenous music and Indigenous musicians have long been formative in shaping Australian styles of music. For example, from the late 1930s until the 1950s the composer Clive Douglas set out to encourage the formation of distinctly Australian style of music by drawing upon Aboriginal legend, language and music. In a similar fashion and during a similar period, John Antill was moved by Aboriginal rhythms from the La Perouse community and collected recordings of Aboriginal music, creating works such as the famous piece called Corroboree. Throughout the 1970s many musicians saw Aboriginal music as a way of creating a distance between Australian music and its European roots. More recently "the timbres of Aboriginal musics have also been highly influential, with the drone of the didgeridu assuming a

widespread significance.” (Richards 2007, p. 4-10).

Another important observation to make about music and performance for Indigenous people is that consistently throughout the history of colonial encounter music and arts practice has been central to attempts by Indigenous people to give expression to their political aspirations. In particular music, dance and performance has regularly been used in the campaign to reclaim land tenure lost through colonial conquest and governmental acquisition of Indigenous land title. As Blekbala Mujik’s songwriter Apaak Juperrula has said,

*Music is perhaps one of the few positive ways to communicate a message to the wider community. Take, for example, politicians. They address an issue but people will only listen if they share those particular political views. Music has universal appeal. Even if you have your critics, people will still give you a hearing (cited in Dunbar-Hall and Gibson 2004, p. 214).*

Others, such as Reynolds (1998), Haebich (2000), Attwood and Marcus (1998) Mickler (1998) and Magowan and Neuenfeldt (2005) have suggested that Indigenous people, their film, theatre and music has been active in changing the course of politics and public policy in Australia. Particularly since such events as the Gurindji, Yirrkala and Noonkanbah struggles for rights to land, the 1960s lobby for citizenship rights and the Aboriginal tent embassy outside Parliament House in early 1970s, Aboriginal music, art and performance has had considerable political influence on public affairs (Magowan 2007, Stubington 2007, Peterson and Sanders, 1998, p. 24). According to Mulgan (1998, p. 190) a regular political weapon in this regard has been to draw on Indigenous protest music that holds a rhetoric and politics of shame and embarrassment to “disturb the conscience of the nation” and “unsettle its governments”. Indigenous groups have also been able to exploit international trends towards self-government and developed alliances with previously colonised peoples, progressive political organisations and international bodies in part through their deploying unique musical interventions.

There is certainly good evidence that *Ngapartji Ngapartji* as a performance, the CDs and films, the documentary, the Memory Basket, *Nyuntu Ngali* and other production work has indelibly stamped Anangu sensibilities on those who have attended and listened around the nation. Children, parents, young adults and other audience members, government ministers, policy makers and the people who listened to CAAMA radio or NITV or the ABC have all been influenced by the ideas, the talents and the aspirations of young and older Anangu.

**Feature eight: ‘rawangku warkarinyi’ - moving beyond one-off programs, spending an extended amount of time in community, creating a constellation of programs and setting out a range of activities to cater to a wide variety of interests and needs of local (Anangu) people**

Big *hART*’s presence in the region extended from 2005 until early 2010. This represents an attempt on their part to signal their difference from many other organizations offering arts and cultural development in regional Australia. Indeed this kind of presence stands in contrast to the conventional approach of ‘touring’ through regions for days or weeks.

However, it would be disingenuous to claim that the project team had sustained contact with a single community over an extended period of time. It needs to be recognized that the project’s base was Alice Springs, with short trips spent on the APY lands (ranging from days to an eight week workshop) and tours to the various festivals.

Clear feedback from the community was that one of the reasons for the Project's success was that substantial and consistent contact was maintained between key staff over many years. For example, a group of women from a remote community said,

### three named Big *hART* staff were always coming back ... they were always running things for young people, always off somewhere making films ... they kept coming back all the time (Source: evaluation notes 2009).

This regularity of contact allowed the project to be easily recognizable particularly (by young people) whenever they were in communities or town camps. When people saw the iconic blue 60 series landcruiser rolling into a community it signaled to locals that there were opportunities coming up to work with the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* team. The following journal entry describes the reception received by people traveling in one of the blue Toyotas.

I'd heard from people that this would happen. After a five-hour trip from Alice we slowly pulled into the edges of the community. I happened to be driving because the Big *hART* team were exhausted. At first it was a bit of a surprise for me. I'd driven into many remote communities and even in the one's I am familiar with I never received this kind of reception. The kids couldn't have possibly known me so I couldn't quite figure why they were so overjoyed, running alongside the car, doing the sexy dance thing, doing backflips and yelling out '*Ngapartji Ngapartji*'. I felt like I was a member of a circle coming to town. Then it occurred to me. I was driving the blue Toyota with the signs on the side of the door (Source: evaluation notes 2009).

Another important feature of the work was that the Big *hART* team had used a multi-dimensional approach, created a range of small workshop led projects, used a range of art forms and technologies, devised performance pieces, experimenting with many forms of new media. This had given them the opportunity to work with a diversity of ages and had incorporated people from many different areas. As outlined in the audit review section, the project was multifaceted in its methodology, encouraged intergenerational and intercultural exchange, responded across social needs and catered to a number of interests. This is clear when one examines the project records, including reports, photographs, the films and indeed the documentary (Source: final report 2010, '*Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji*' documentary 2010, evaluation records 2007-2010).

**Feature nine: '*tjutangka wangkanyi*' – going along with others, adopting multi-agency involvement, creating long-term solutions and connecting local people's troubles and challenges with broader regional, national and global influences**

Another clear feature of the way the project was managed was the way the Creative Producer and others worked in close contact with a range schools, local community workers, art-centres, youth workers, welfare organizations and local families. Many of these people made very positive remarks about the extent to which they received support, good information and practical assistance from Big *hART* representatives. For example, one representative from a remote area school said, "they are among the best of the organizations that come into the Lands ... they spend more time, have been around for a good while and, importantly have people with good use of Pitjantjatjara language." Others had the following to say about the project's ability to work in association with others,

They were good at forming partnerships

They are capable of bringing along others, like they did on the tour to Ernabella.

Excellent at making connections between people in town camps and the remote communities

I would seek their assistance with young people who were having trouble in the criminal justice system. It was really important for me to have them to work with because there are not many people available in Alice who can work with Pitjantjatjara speakers.

(Strengths of *Ngapartji Ngapartji*) are that they have been great at interacting positively with elders, fantastic at engaging young people, great at community engagement and very good at casting the net wide and including other groups and individuals (Source: evaluation notes 2009).

Another important highlight of the work was its ability to work across layers of social need, linking people's individual change with community change and national policy reform. As outlined in the discussion of the impact of the project, a key focus was encouraging young people to take up opportunities and reconfigure what they have been doing. This was most evident in relation to the opportunities created for involvement in the development of the *ninti* on-line language course, the various tours of the stage shows, the creation of films and the recording of music. Using these activities as opportunities to constantly extend young people's literacies was a clever way to try and shape change in individuals. As one person put it, "the literacy and learning work in the project is a very creative way to engage young people who are not involved in the school system. It is a very effective way of getting English literacy and new technology literacy ... dual literacy into the world of these people" (Source: evaluation notes 2009).

This work with individuals regularly occurred in conjunction with activities involving Anangu families and communities. This occurred through the intergenerational activities outlined earlier, and in powerful ways through the stage production of *Ngapartji Ngapartji*. Indeed the stage show provided a bridge through which local people's troubles, history and strengths could be mediated for non-Anangu audiences across the nation. It provided a powerful platform for politicizing the lack of support for the maintenance of Indigenous languages. The play, in conjunction with the project website, *ninti* on-line language course, targeted media releases and invitations to events, provided the means through which key politicians and people of influence could be introduced to the urgent need for a national and coordinated approach to Indigenous languages. Indeed the play became a powerful instrument to lobby the federal Government to introduce a national Indigenous Languages Policy (Source: letters to Federal Ministers 2008, project website 2007-2009, National Indigenous Languages Policy 2009).

According to a number of reviewers, academic papers and Big *hART* workers, the story of *Ngapartji Ngapartji*, the stage production itself, was an important instrument for taking Anangu struggles to a national policy stage. Nowhere is this described with more clarity than in the description of those involved in creating the production. One Big *hART* person explained Trevor's on-stage role in this way.

Trevor had a story that perfectly touches on things the project is trying to do and say. Much of the difficulty facing Aboriginal Australia, the family violence, drinking, poverty

and lack of opportunity is all their in Trevor's family and their story. In the person of Trevor Jamieson you have all that white Australia sees with their negative stereotyping yet is a strong example of someone who has not turned away from this in his family and life. But he is also charming, handsome, talented and a strong role model. In this way he is a person, almost an icon, you have both hope and despair, tragedy and talent, respect and recognition of the need for leadership. This is all tied up to the epic story of Maralinga which is hugely dramatic. It is the story of deception, theft, exploitation and lies, not to mention a story about atomic annihilation, linked as it is to Hiroshima. It is wonderful material for a dramatist and something that white audiences have cherished. Trevor is also the master at inclusion. On stage he spends much of his time carefully including the white audience into the story, neither insulting them, pushing them too much or allowing them to drop too much into despair. The use of language is huge in this. Once people know a couple of words of someone else's language they feel a lot closer, as if you are kind of within. This helps to break down white guilt and take the audience deeper. It allows them to feel happy and sad, in possession of dreadful facts but not paralysed from thinking about things. In this way the play, with Trevor as the guide, responds well to audiences with a hunger to have some connection with Australia's history and with Aboriginal people but who do not quite know where to start (Source: evaluation notes 2009).

Another described the role of senior women who acted as guardians of the story, always present in the background and often taking centre stage in support of Trevor's monologue.

In my mind music is the thread that runs through everything in this project. Through theatre community stories were articulated, literally and symbolically sung, for all of Australia to hear. It was the ladies who were crucial here. Their music gave Trevor legitimacy. They sung the story into an emotional bed for the theatre work and Trevor's story to sit. It involved quite old Anangu conventions with Trevor being the dancer and the ladies the singers. Just like it has always been, no one would dance without the singers. Because Ernabella has such a strong singing traditions the ladies were in just a perfect position to hold this story in the way they did. It worked too because there is an amazing hunger in a lot of Australians who are confused about Aboriginal Australia. Some of it is guilt. Most people in cities don't feel they have an entry point. The ladies held Trevor, literally enveloping him on stage and this gave the invitation to audiences to join them (Source: evaluation notes 2009).

**Feature ten: '*anangu piranpa palya tjunanyi*' - employing competent staff (including local people), in particular those who possess a combination of skills and experience in working with local (Anangu) community**

There is excellent evidence both from community perceptions, observations from outsiders and the quality of the work, that a considerable amount of the project's success can be attributed to the quality and talents of key members of the Big hART team. The organization was able to attract some exceptionally talented people capable of contributing particularly in the areas of creative production, community filmmaking, music production, community development, lobbying, linguistics and language development, literacy and theatre.

Indeed a mark of the project's quality is that neither the Creative Producer, Musical Director, Creative Director, Co-Writer and Actor, Filmmaker and Arts Mentor, Key Language and Culture Consultant, Literacy and Learning Coordinator, Company Manager, Musician, Choir

Coordinator and Arts Mentor, Community Producer & Assistant Director can be singled out as the key reason for success. Rather the breadth and talent of the team is clearly behind the project's remarkable achievements.

Big *hART*'s ability to attract highly talented staff resulted in the project's ability to achieve a range of things. Staff were able to build good local contacts, create high quality production and manage events with confidence. They were able to maintain a consistent and regular presence in the region, combat a string of problems associated with working in remote settings, host good quality creative workshops and draw out the talents of community. This talent and the style adopted meant that, very quickly, the project had a considerable network of locally-based people to draw upon. In particular, Big *hART* recruited people (both Anangu and non-Anangu) with experience in working with Anangu communities. This meant that the team had a vast stock of knowledge in relation to Anangu language, cultural sensitivities and sensibilities.

To a large extent the success of programs of this kind rests on the skills, experience and commitment of staff (see Palmer 2009). According to a vast array of people, the team members were the single most important ingredient shaping the project's success. For example, one person said,

The technical capacity of the team was well outside of what I have seen in this kind of work.

Bringing in such a big and capable team to Ernabella was really quite something. The way they spent a week or more setting up a high tech stage in the creek helped make the anniversary (60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ernabella Arts) a big time event. Having the show perform for two nights was really impressive. But a real stand out was that after setting it up in such an impressive way, they then handed it over to the community to use it for the celebrations. It was like bringing in a performance for the Opera House, bringing the Opera House and all its facilities with you and then handing over the Opera House for you to use.

It was hard to go past the fact that *Ngapartji Ngapartji* had such a massive amount of talent that it generously gave to communities (Sources: evaluation notes 2008-2009).

There is ample evidence that Anangu delighted at the quality of staff. The fact that Anangu expressed their gratitude is a measure of how profound was the ability of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* team to make an impact. According to a number of people interviewed (including Anangu) it is not always conventional for Anangu to make public expressions of their appreciation. As one person said, "you need to pay close attention to how people respond because it has not been a part of Anangu culture to respond by saying what they think or signalling what they think by answering questions, clapping at the end of performance or giving away too much." (Source: evaluation notes 2008). However, despite this being the case there is still considerable commentary coming from people about the regard they had for the Big *hART* team.

Sometimes we ask ## if she will take us all out. She is a very nice lady, well, to me she is a very nice young lady. Also ### and ### and ###. ### is a good mate and person to speak to (Source: Documentary transcripts 2009).

We loved teaching the team. That's our part, teaching language. ###'s language was

good. ### and ###'s language is good (Source: vox pop transcriptions 2008)..

Yes, right now we are very happy because for the first time, in our home there is a show being performed – *Ngapartji Ngapartji*. All the kids are happy, and all the young people are excited and today we are coming together to do something special in our home place. So now the team are working really hard, the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* group, this is good. So we today are very impressed. This show is starting today and other good things are being done by kids and young people (Source: vox pop transcriptions 2008).

I've heard the name '*Ngapartji Ngapartji*' for such a long time and thought "What is it?" and I've seen it now and it's a great show. A truly excellent production. It's teaching things about the past, about the Maralinga bomb (Source: vox pop transcriptions 2008).

I was really surprised and very pleased. They are teaching us things as they perform ... Tonight, while watching many great things be performed I have been thrilled. On our land, as this is performed, we are genuinely pleased. We are observing steadily and are thoroughly pleased with what we see (Source: vox pop transcriptions 2008).

Yes, now we are extremely glad to have seen this show *Ngapartji Ngapartji*, and we're excited to see them performing here in our country, in our home, this very talented group of people (Source: vox pop transcriptions 2008).

As outlined earlier in the report, Big *hART* staff's daily lives were extraordinarily full. They covered a vast array of activities with many different dimensions, worked with a diversity of people across generations and cultures and were confronted by considerable challenges. Big *hART* staff had to contend with a number of divergent planning regimes and reporting demands. The project itself morphed and reconfigured a number of times to contend with opportunities and respond to challenges.

Staff's roles demanded some considerable breadth in skills. For example, the Creative Producer would shift from working 'on the ground' with Anangu young people at the same time as generating a national campaign to influence language policy. The project Filmmaker reconfigured her world on a daily basis between the Anangu 'cultural domain' and high quality postproduction film work, shifting languages, work environments, technological platforms and negotiating different professions and artists groups. The Choir Coordinator and Arts Mentor constantly shifted language codes between Pitjantjatjara and English and acted as a conduit for people to shift between musical genres between country, rock, hip-hop, reggae, gospel, the famous Pitjantjatjara five-part choir style, Anangu singing and a plethora of 'funky' and independent, alternative, 'garage', 'rap', electronic and indie rock. The Community Producer was routinely on the road, moving across country, community and housing situations, frequently acting as a translator between the Director and Anangu actors and singers. The Literacy Worker's role also demanded that she work across literacy styles, weave in her activities with artists and creative development and function in a way that respectfully took account of the many contingencies that confronted young participants. This constant need for workers to crosscut language, cultural, artistic, professional and social domains is perhaps best symbolised by the person and stage character of Trevor Jamieson who constantly shape-shifted in front of audiences, both Anangu and non-Anangu, oscillating between languages, genres, geographies, historical moments and social classes. Indeed there could be fewer stage



roles that have demanded such dramatic 'cultural code switching' right before the eyes of its audiences.

As a consequence the team took on a style of working that befits the conditions they found themselves. They were flexible and responsive, planning activities and logistics while being sensitive and astute to the possibilities and opportunities that materialized. As evident from the earlier review of the work against the plans, the team demonstrated a remarkable capacity to carefully plan and set out ahead of time how the various elements of the project would be carried out. At the same time, they constantly reviewed plans, taking account of the many contingencies, particularly the events and circumstances of Anangu. As has been noted in earlier reviews of Big *hART*'s work, the organization is known for its ability to improvise, both on stage and in the way it contends with community (see Farmer 2005, Wright and Palmer 2007 for a discussion of community work as improvisation).

### **Feature eleven: '*kuranyukutu kulini*' - building in evaluation, recording and archiving of the work**

It has been an important part of the Big *hART* team's systems and practices to establish a range of mechanisms for reviewing and documenting the work. From the outset they have been keen to leave a record of what happened and the processes used as part of the project's legacy. In part this involved recording work well, archiving material clearly and setting in place regular forums to share what they had done and what they had learnt.

From the early stages of the project staff set aside regular team meetings where people would verbally report on activities, canvas ideas and arrive at shared decisions. These meetings had a standard meeting structure and staff would note action to be taken. Meetings with Anangu language reference group were recorded (Source: evaluation notes 2007, Reference group meetings 2007-2008).

In addition, key staff members each had systems for recording project activity, particularly for creative workshops, music and film production and when on tour. As a result there are a range of detailed accounts of the work in journals, diaries and workshop reports.

In addition to reports in written formats there is a vast collection of photographic records of the practice. These photo files provide a very helpful record of the activities, offering evidence in a way that is both more evocative and reliable than written accounts. There are tens of thousands of photographs in the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* collection including pictures of Anangu active in workshops, on country trips, during the filmmaking process, on tour, on the stage, during creative development, having fun and experiencing joy, at conferences, attending cultural events, doing some of the literacy work, preparing the stage, rehearsing, caring for each other and 'doing the business of community' (Source: photographic gallery 2005-2010). Targeted research and intelligence gathering further supported this review work. A number of audience surveys were commissioned. Audience feedback was taken in 2005 and 2006 (Source: records of audience feedback 2005 and 2006). RedHOT Arts Marketing undertook audience surveys in 2006 (Source: RedHOT Arts Marketing 2006). Feedback was also sought from those who joined the company tour of *Ernabella* in 2008 (Source: *Nagapartji Ngapartji 2008 Tour feedback*). During this tour, members of the film documentary crew in association with crew carried out vox pop interviews with Anangu (Source: *Vox pop transcriptions 2009*). Records of feedback sessions with Anangu interviewed in *Ernabella* and Alice Springs were kept (Source: *Community feedback 2008*). Detailed records of the work of the documentary

crew are also recorded in both digital film and as transcribed written accounts (Source: transcriptions of interviews of rishes from 'Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji' documentary 2009).

Furthermore, all of the entries on the project website and the *ninti* on-line website have been archived. A file of solicited and unsolicited letters and emails of support was kept throughout the duration of the project. Performance reviews, news stories and television reporting were also collected and stored. Some correspondence associated with worker employment and exit commentary was kept on file.

Over the final six months of the project much staff attention went into carefully archiving production material such as the films, interviews, documentary footage, photographs, music and work associated with stage shows.

As part of their commitment to providing a legacy or gift of production work staff, in conjunction with senior Anangu and young people involved in the project, produced a 'memory basket'. This record of the project has been reproduced so that all participants, staff, key organizations and others involved are given a set of 'artifacts' from the project. The memory basket includes a CD with music and other sound recordings, a DVD including the final version of the documentary and some of the work from the ninti site, a short written account of the project from journalists, the staff and an essayist, a photographic collection and a broach created from a large canvas art piece produced by one of the senior Anangu women.

In keeping with this culture of action-based evaluation and in order to comply with the requirements of funding agreements and assist with its internal review processes Big *hART* commissioned this report.

### **Impact on young people and other community members**

Investigating the merits of community development using the arts also benefits from an examination of the relationship between the work and the 'impact' on individuals, groups or community and broader social consequences or social policy.

Before examining work in this regard it is important to recognise that, as with all social programmes, evidence of the impact upon individuals is always partial. There is never a direct, linear or cause and effect relationship between an individual's development and their involvement in a project of this kind. Neither is it easy to establish whether a community has improved, built capacity or set off in new directions.

It is also worth noting that many of the positive achievements of individuals and communities are often because of their own tenacity, resilience and hard work. It is unhelpful to ignore that people were highly skilled. Indeed, before their involvement in *Ngapartji Ngapartji* many people had well-developed skills, previous achievements and were strong, autonomous and successful, particularly in music, art, dance, language and culture and law. Therefore to attribute all of the achievements of the community to the work of Big *hART* would be remiss.

On the other hand Big *hART* staff often worked in such a way as to seek, draw out and build upon the aptitude, flair, and dexterity of young people and others involved. It would be equally unreasonable to ignore the many and varied achievements and the countless opportunities created by Big *hART*. What follows is a brief summary of some of these opportunities taken up by young people and other individuals, including details about what was achieved and how

people talked about their involvement. To assist in this regard the report will provide short vignettes into the lives of young people, highlight what some members of the community said about the work, and set out how outsiders described the achievements of the project.

### **First young person**

This person was a resident of an Alice Springs town camp. As a consequence she was constantly living in overcrowded housing with all its profound social challenges. She was continuously responsible for the health of family members and had obligations for the care of her mother and siblings. She had little previous involvement in formal education and, according to an NRS assessment test had conventional literacy levels predominantly at 1s and 2s (very low scores on the test).

Earlier in the life of the project she participated in bush trip film making workshops at Docker River, a number of digital storytelling workshops, sound recording and editing sessions and assisted with the preparation of language lesson videos. She regularly visited the Alice Springs Office for group sessions and one-on-one work on digital technology, learning about and using software applications such as iMovie, and Comic Life. As a consequence she developed web site skills such as uploading images and text onto photo galleries and caption writing for online photos. This involved considerable and consistent reading of text and images. During much of the filmmaking she participated in storyboarding in written format and on canvas. She also learnt and operated email systems including Gmail. In addition she participated in forums and learning sessions with Big hART staff (Source: Big hART staff journal entry 2007 and 2008).

Throughout the life of the project this person regularly participated in story making, story boarding, scripting, filming and mentored younger people at community film making workshops in 2007.

Due to her skills learnt in earlier film workshops this person was able to work as a camera operator (alongside a Big hART filmmaker), recording the Bush Bands Bash event in September 2007. In a worker report of the event it was recorded that,

*It went really well... and she was one solid camera operator. It was tough as we were in the drunken crowd, and she knew a lot of the people there, and had to fight them off to concentrate on the camera work (Source: Worker Report September 2007).*

The digital story skills learnt in workshops and sessions resulted in this young woman making digital stories that were then shown in small group and conference settings. Furthermore this person requested that a film night be arranged in her town camp community. She then helped plan the event, set up for the evening and operated film equipment during the proceedings. In a journal entry after the event one worker noted: “..she is proud of her work and “ultra engaged” after witnessing a horrible and traumatic event ... she has incredible strength” (Source: Big hART staff journal entry 2008).

This person also participated and presented at a number of public events and conferences. This included the Kungka Careers Conference held at Hamilton Downs in late 2008. During this event the young person spoke publicly about her involvement in various elements of the Ngapartji Ngapartji project. A worker noted:

*The conference enabled someone who was shy to stand and speak and share her*

*experiences with many others in a conference setting. It allowed for her to reflect and recognise her own achievements with the project, as well as share them with her family and community (Source: worker journal 2008).*

She also participated and presented at an event called 'Lifespan Learning and Literacy in Remote Indigenous Communities: Youth Learning Forum at Thakaperte Outstation in 2009. Remarks from a worker describes how this person's involvement was shaped by the process Big hART staff use:

*### for example, said what she wanted to write then started to sound out the words. Though this situation could have easily given rise to great self-consciousness and shame ... ### seemed more at ease with getting my help. That is, I felt she knew that she had knowledge, had something to offer, but needed help in their area of weakness, that is English literacy. I am sure this can be attributed to both their involvement in the project, which continuously reinforces different skills/equal value, and specifically their work in developing their learning (Source: worker journal 2008).*

As a consequence of her involvement with the project this person also started a residential training course in Certificate 3 in Media Studies, offered at the Batchelor Institute 'Top End Campus' in 2009. She also toured and performed as a member of the Sydney, Ernabella and Alice Springs *Ngapartji Ngapartji* stage show tours and took part in cultural exchange including visits to the Block at Redfern and dinner at Government House. Describing her experience of being on tour and joining trips she said:

*Me and ### went to Government House for dinner. People were taking lots of photos of us. There were a lot of pictures on the walls. It has been a great time at Sydney. The shows have been full every night. Some people come back again... After ### goes I will learn her part... I feel good about going home but sad about the show finishing.'*

*People loved the show. We met lots of people. We went to government house for dinner. We showed films to kids and to people at Redfern. We also got to go to the beach and shopping and to see places with other people in the show.*

*I went to Docker River with ### (Big hART staff) to make films with young people. I learned about using the camera. I worked with some of my family who live there. We made films in Pitjantjatjara language.*

*I felt good about acting in the show (Source: March 2008 Progress Report).*

## **Second young person**

This young person grew up in a remote community on the APY Lands and was of school age during much of the project. As discussed earlier, this brings with it many challenges for young people with many living in overcrowded accommodation, caring for family members with multiple health problems, having to contend with poor access to services and few opportunities for involvement in the labour market and 'mainstream' economy. However, despite these challenges it is worth noting that this young person had already begun a career as a musician, singing in the school choir, developing her work as a song writer and taking up some opportunities to record.

This young person took up the opportunities offered by *Ngapartji Ngapartji* with considerable gusto. She attended a range of the song writing and recording workshops. She began by carrying out some theatre performance work in the *Ngaspartji Ngapartji* show and later went on to tour with the *Nyuntu Ngali* show. During much of the work she acted in an adviser role, helping Big *hART* staff work with other young people and community members. During this process teachers from the school worked in conjunction with Big *hART* staff to build some of her study units around performance.

Clearly one of the important consequences of her involvement in *Ngapartji Ngapartji* was that community and professionals took her seriously as a musical artist. Her work received considerable airplay on local and national media and her music video clip, "Ngura Piltingka" was shown nationally on the ABCTV Rage show (Source: ABCTV Rage 2009). As one worker said,

*### is most certainly the superstar of our project – having gained a huge sense of identity as a musician through both the previous recording project, song-writing workshops, workshops provided by other services and through her work with the choir at school (Source worker reports 2008-2009).*

### **Third young person**

This young person lived in a town camp in Alice Springs. However her family is originally from Docker River. Previous to her involvement she undertook schooling in a college in a remote location. This young person experienced significant problems with alcohol with it having an adverse affects on her health and sometimes limiting her ability to participate in project activities.

Despite this Big *hART* staff saw that this young person had many strengths and, as a result, decided to offer this young person the opportunity to perform with the stage production. She rehearsed, performed and toured with the Sydney stage production. While she was on tour she expressed considerable stress at being overwhelmed by city and being forced to change her diet. She suffered headaches and fatigue in the first week, the result of an ear infection.

While on tour this young person participated in the NRS literacy testing. According to this mechanism for literacy assessing she possessed poor literacy at the level of 1 and 2 (Source: NRS testing 2008).

During the project this young person regularly visited the Alice Springs office, participating in group sessions and one-on-one work in areas of digital technology, learning about and using software applications such as Imovie, and Comic Life. She learnt web site skills while uploading images and text onto photo galleries and writing captions for online photos. As a consequence she read text and wrote work on various images. She also was a regular participant in film workshops and many of the bush trips in addition to digital story telling workshops.

This young person joined the stage production in Melbourne, Sydney, Ernabella and Alice Springs. The Melbourne tour was the first time she had been involved in performance and the first time she had been on stage. Workers noted that she had an amazing commitment to the production, regularly taking risks while on stage, increasing her participation and developing her performance sensibility. In the early performances she simple joined others in the choir. When she had built confidence she worked in conjunction with the Director to increase her role,

dancing and taking a more central role in the later stages of the story. As one worker said:

*### expressed a desire to dance in the Ngapartji Ngapartji show which I asked ### and ### to encourage. ### danced on stage in the last few shows, a risk she was extremely proud of and excited by. Each night after the performance ### was happier than I have ever seen her (Source: worker report 2008).*

While on tour she participated in a number of other activities including: teaching the women's dance at the Kid's Club performance called 'Wai palya', assisting in the creating of ceramics, teaching kids to make crows and nests out of clay for the performance of 'Wai Palya'. She also experimented with 'grooming' and fashion while in Melbourne, something very new and outside of her previous experience. According to those present, "each day she paid more attention to her appearance, trying makeup and new clothes and hairstyles. She told me she'd never looked like this before and by the number of photos that were taken I sensed that she felt really good about herself" (Source: worker report of Melbourne tour 2006).

Clearly the demands of touring would have been onerous. Living and performing in a cultural environment that is so distant would have placed considered stress on this young person and others from remote communities. Commenting later she

*We're a long way from home, but it's palya; no worries. We are helping Trevor to tell his story. My grandmother ### from Ernabella is in the show and she always makes stories from long time ago and my other grandmother ### from Titjikala is here too. We teaching for language and songs like head shoulder knees and toes. The audience kulini - they listen (Source: Performer Survey 2006).*

The digital story skills learnt in workshops and sessions resulted in this young woman making digital stories that were then shown in small group and conference settings. For example, she participated and presented at a number of public events and conferences. This included the Kungka Careers Conference held at Hamilton Downs in late 2008. During this event this young person spoke publicly about her involvement in various elements of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project. She also participated and presented at an event called 'Lifespan Learning and Literacy in Remote Indigenous Communities: Youth Learning Forum at Thakaperte Outstation in 2009. She was also credited as a language tutor on the *Ninti* website for her role in language films and development.

From her own accounts, involvement in the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project was an important part of her life over the last four to five years. She had this to say about her involvement:

*And my grandmother told them about the story that happened a long time ago. And we taught them in Pitjantjatjara "Kata, Alipiri" and we taught them to sing in Pitjantjatjara - "Grandfather, Grandmother ... we taught them tjukurpa, to talk language, and told them big stories, so that they can listen and learn - white people ... Our story is very important that we tell in Ngapartji-Ngapartji. We talk about stories that happened a long time ago ... we are learning little bit at a time with Trevor, with ### and the others ...teaching and telling story's to our non-indigenous friends and also to the younger girls and from there we came back to Alice Springs and now we are showing them work today on the computer and at the same time they are showing us their stories' (Source: Memory Basket 2010).*

#### **Fourth young person**

This person was a resident of an Alice Springs town camp. Like others living in similar camps, she was constantly living in overcrowded housing with all its profound social challenges. In addition she was continuously having to contend with her own and other family members' ill health. In particular, she had previously been a petrol sniffer, suffering from a number of ailments.

During the course of the project this young person participated in a number of creative workshops including the Docker River Film Workshops in 2007. During these workshops she made a short digital film about petrol sniffing. She explained:

*I made a video about sniffing in January when Dani and Batesy from Ngapartji Ngapartji came to Docker River. I wanted to do a serious film about petrol sniffing. First we wrote the story down and a little bit of pictures. I asked who wants to do this one and we got six main young people. I was going to be the director but those other girls didn't want to do the part of Lin [the petrol sniffer]. They was getting shame. So I did it. And ### helped directing and telling them how to walk. Suzy Bates and ### were filming. After we did the filming I helped Suzy do the work to finish that little film. I put that song and the voice to tell people 'don't sniff petrol' (Source: Project Quotes in Memory Basket 2010).*

This involvement prompted her ongoing leadership in script writing, film making and performance skills. Later her own ideas and script was made into the film "Kungka Kutju Tjituru Tjituru Ananyi (One Girl Going Sadly)". This film was screened at numerous events including Remote Fest, Story Wall Alice Springs 2007, the Australian Innovation Festival 2007. She also requested a film night at a town camp and operated the equipment on the evening.

She also led a number of language films, drawing into the work younger people and using her 'word ideas'. According to workers her film and sound editing skills continue to improve as a consequence of her involvement in recording voice overs and sound effects for her films and language videos.

Her work represents how powerfully film was used to encourage young people to articulate their own experiences of pain, rejuvenate their lives and communicate to others how they may reconfigure their lives (Source: Evaluation notes 2009).

#### **Fifth young person**

This young woman was 17 when she first became involved in the project. She comes from a number of remote communities in the APY Lands and, as she put it,

This young woman shares a similar history to others who lived in town camps. She regularly experiences family difficulties, participates in some drinking, and has episodes of running away from her family. It is worth noting that despite some very hard physical, mental and emotional challenges this young woman carried on performing during an important and distressing tour. Like others who participated in the NRS Levels assessment she scores poorly on formal literacy scales with 1 and 2 ratings (Sources: worker journals 2006, NRL testing 2008).

According to the Director and Producer of the stage production this young woman's artistic

development represents what can be achieved by using theatre and the arts. In the early days (2005) of her involvement in the performance of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* she was described as extremely shy and having minimal involvement in the onstage performance of the Melbourne 2005 showing, Later she was able to move across the stage, sing and usher the audience onto the stage as part of the performance.

Like some other young people this person had to contend with a number of challenges faced when touring and filming. These included physical illness, being homesick and receiving 'sorry news' or hearing about the death of a close family member.

This person rehearsed and performed in the stage production of *Ngapartji Ngapartji*, touring to Melbourne, Sydney and Perth. She joined bush trips film making work shops, participated in story boarding, scripting and filming, editing, sound recording, voice-over sessions. She was also a regular at the Alice Springs office, joining group sessions and one on-one-work in digital technology, learning about and using software applications such as Imovie, and Comic Life. During these sessions she developed web site skills such as uploading images, text onto photo galleries and caption writing for online photos. She also worked with the literacy officer on an online Maths lesson package (Sources: Project website 2007, Ninti online course 2006-2010).

The development of this young person's confidence occurred slowly and with much sensitivity. Clearly this was shaped by her involvement in performance. One of the workers captured this in her journal:

*###'s development from her initial involvement in the performance of Ngapartji Ngapartji in 2005 is a great case study of a young person's development in terms of self-esteem and self-expression. From being described as extremely shy and having minimal involvement in terms of performance in the Melbourne 2005 showing, ### was able in Alice Springs to walk across the stage as part of the performance.*

*In preparation for Melbourne we did some workshops around stage presence and some basic movement workshops which we followed up a little in Melbourne. We gave ### a little bit more each rehearsal until we were ready to ask her to be carried by Trevor. Her agreement to this was partly timing, environment and Trevor's respectful encouragement.*

*The other major development from ### was for the first time she took responsibility for her queues. In Alice she had been reliant on me to tell her what she had to do and when. From the start in Melbourne I moved away from the stage and gave her visual or audio queues to listen for. By the time the show was up ### had these down which meant staying focussed on stage throughout the show which is a big ask given the length of the show and the text within which her queues were buried. This focus meant she also took control of the midden site and directed the other young people on their queues as well as lead the beat for the songs (Source: worker report 2006).*

Her experiences on tour enabled her to meet people from different backgrounds and learn about other places and cultures. These exchanges as well as the regular performances with *Ngapartji Ngapartji* and the bilingual language of every performance improved her spoken English. As one worker wrote, "*### as well as the other young people on tour with NN, had a noticeable improvement in their English speaking, which the elders had expressed as being*



*another important part of this project.”*

It seems clear that this person was very happy to participate in the work and join the tours. She had this to say:

*I like the show, I like my part. I like to wear my costume. When the audience are there I feel a little bit shame, but it gets better. – Julie (young participant and performer) (Source: Survey of Performers 2006).*

As a result of working with the project this young person was able to gain significant digital film making experience and expertise. She made the film, ‘Kungka Kutju - Tjituru-Tjituru Ananyi’ which was later screened at Remote Fest 07 Youth Film Festival, Alice Springs and OURMedia, Nestros Medios VI, Sydney, 2007 (Source: project report 2007, project website 2007). She also mentored other young people in film making workshops in 2007 and led the way for other young people’s involvement in the workshops because of her own energy and interest and understanding of the process. She was one of a number of young people who requested a film night, operating film equipment at this event, which was the first of its kind in the region (Source: worker reports 2007). She was also credited as a language tutor and can be seen offered instructions on a number of the films that feature on the ninti website (Source Ninti website 2006-2010).

### **Sixth young person**

This young person lives in an Alice Springs town camp. As a consequence she has to contend with overcrowding, poor health, the need to support a large family, poor schooling and limited involvement in the labour market. According to results she gained from the NRS assessment undertaken in Sydney she has poor literacy, scoring 2s and 3s.

This young person performed as part of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* stage show in Sydney 2008.

### **Seventh young person**

This young person lives across a range of settings including town camps and remote community. Like many others living in similar conditions she has much more limited access to opportunities such as employment, education and training, health and activities that help build young people’s sense of confidence in the future. During the project she was a strong participant in a number of remote area workshops including the Docker River film workshops in 2007 and the Pukatja film workshops in 2008. According to workers she showed strong leadership in filmmaking in the Docker River workshops and was then keen to make movies in the Pukatja Film Workshops of 2008 (Source: worker journals 2007 and 2008).

### **Eighth young person**

This young person lives in a remote community in the APY Lands and had been attending school. However, according to a teacher she had not been doing well at school and was described as “highly precocious and constantly in trouble”. In contrast Big *hART* workers found her to be completely charming, thoughtful and good at listening to instructions.

She was a solid contributor and highly active in song-writing workshops and at a sound recording workshop. During one of the extended workshop series she wrote a song that was

recorded and included on a CD collection. Indicative of many others, this young woman began the process with a little nervousness. To combat this Big hART workers encouraged her to invite a friend to accompany her to the workshop. Very soon she became completely comfortable recording and playing her various instrumental parts alone. This allowed her to draw out her musical skills and creative talents. As one worker reported: "She was very clear about her musical ideas and very capable musically and recorded tracks on the tuned pistons, the conga, a melody and harmony vocal track and on melodica." Of significant interest is that her song work bore a strong similarity to traditional women's *inma* or ceremonial song. (Source: worker journal 2008).

Subsequent to this work it has been reported by other community members that this young woman has really embraced the opportunity to create and record music. Her foster mother/aunt and grandmother reported that she is constantly making up songs. She has also recently written and recorded a song that has been included on a CD (Source: worker journal 2009).

### **Nineth young person**

Early in the project this young man was described as incredibly shy. He is a resident of an Alice Springs town camp but comes from a family who herald from remote communities in Central Australia.

According to NRS testing regimes he has poor levels of literacy. However, like many other young people, before his involvement in *Ngapartji Ngapartji* this young man had developed enormous skill as an artist, painting for a local gallery.

This young man also had to contend with a number of sensitive cultural matters connected with his involvement in the project and his obligations as a man. During the tours this was also made more difficult when there were few other young men accompanying him.

This young man regularly attended the Alice Springs office for group sessions and one-on-one work in digital technology, learning about and using software applications such as Imovie, and Comic Life. These assisted him in developing web site skills such as uploading images and text onto photo galleries and caption writing for online photos. He was also credited as a language tutor on the *ninti* website for his role in language films and development.

He was involved in the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* stage production from the early days of the project and became a well-respected member of the cast. He joined the tours to Melbourne, Perth and Sydney.

His particular skill has been as a visual artist and this was incorporated into the stage production so that he became the touring visual artist, producing onstage art pieces during the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* performances.

When they recognising this skill Big hART workers strongly encouraged him to pursue his talent and produce for exhibitions. They then made arrangements with him to show his work in public exhibition in Sydney and later in Alice Springs. His story and his work then became the subject of numerous national media articles. In turn this prompted many approaches from galleries and his profile as an artist grew. This appears to have been considerably gratifying to him. One worker wrote:

*In Sydney #### had a major role in terms of his art in the show. While he did indicate he found it a bit tedious to produce a work night after night the audience and media response (not to mention Sydney gallery offers) seemed a great Source of pride for #### who has agreed to have an exhibition in Sydney in 2007 (Source: worker journal 2008).*

There is clear evidence that this young man responded well to the opportunity to tour with others. As the following remark from a worker demonstrates, this young man benefited from the chance to be away from the day to day struggles and obligations associated with family and community life.

*What was evident and great to see was how relaxed #### became on tour, more and more vocal and playful with everyone involved. It felt in this way the tour gave him some relief from home pressures and the opportunity to be young in a way he doesn't always show back home. He seemed to come to really enjoy the company of the other young men who seemed to respect him greatly (Source: worker journals of Sydney tour 2008).*

### **Tenth young person**

This young adult man is a musician who was born and raised in communities in the APY Lands. He had played guitar for some years before his involvement in *Ngapartji Ngapartji* but also got to increase his musical repertoire by learning to sing and play keyboards, drums and bass guitar. Like many young people living on the APY Lands this young man has struggled with petrol sniffing, involvement in the justice system and had limited opportunities to undertake formal education and training. One Big *hART* worker described this young man's relationship with the justice system as "on the cusp ... he has been in prison and is on the verge of going one way or another" (Source: evaluation notes 2009).

During the course of the project he was involved in many of the song writing, recording and film production workshops. Important in this regard was the role he took in assisting other younger people to participate, acting as a musical mentor and youth leader.

In a number of their written journals of workshops Big *hART* staff noted that he moved from being someone who attended activities to a person who began to lead them. For example, it was recorded that he was:

*of great assistance to us, communicating with other studio users, helping keep kids under control. The most amazing part was watching him help less experienced musicians, kids, and people such as #### put tracks together. His methods were relatively direct and at times unsympathetic (to *piranpa* or *whitefella* eyes!) but also displaying a lot of warmth and patience. He seems to have a genuine love for all music and is passionately involved. As time went on, he developed a strong sense of agency within the studio framework. Others referred to him as the "*Mayatja*" (holding power) of the studio and he seemed to take this role very seriously (Source: worker journal 2008).*

His involvement in this work led to him writing, recording and releasing a number of his songs on the CD, "*Ngurakutu Ara*". In this way his work received airplay and exposure on local and

national radio. He was also credited as a 'language tutor' on the *ninti* website for his role in language films and development. In addition he joined a number of the tours of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* stage performance. Workers recorded that his contributions while on tour developed with his confidence. They said:

Though the degree of his involvement in the show was unknown at first his willingness to take on suggestions and participate in telling Trevor's story meant he was given more and more.

He was such a solid presence in the cast and despite limited early involvement remained focused and positive throughout. Trevor's generosity and general charisma I think was an important part of ####'s sense of place in the piece and the new elements featuring the young men felt to be a strong inclusion in the show. He takes his participation seriously, took on notes and was sharp on queues meaning he was totally reliable (Source: Worker Report 2008).

### **Eleventh young person**

This young man was raised in remote communities, Alice Springs town camps and has lived in South Australia. He is one example of a person with enormous talent that has been developed through his own hard work, formal training in the arts and performance and tenacity in chasing opportunities. Indeed, this young man sought out involvement in the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project, keen on working in conjunction with Big *hART* staff as a consequence of seeing earlier versions of the stage production.

Subsequent to his contact with the project he took part in creative development workshops, rehearsals and performed in the *Nyuntu Ngali* stage production in Adelaide 2009. Indeed he played a principal part in the performance. This allowed him to also work in conjunction with South Australia's Windmill Theatre Company. Recently he has begun working with Trevor Jamieson on the new Big *hART* production called *Njamatjira*.

This young man has considerable previous involvement in the performance industry, training at two South Australian-based arts schools. However, his involvement with Big *hART* has allowed him to take his skills on stage and on tour, providing him with significant personal and professional mentoring in the person of Trevor Jamieson (Source: worker reports 2009, evaluation reports 2009).

### **Twelfth young person**

This young man suffered a motorbike accident at the end of 2006 and coupled with his off-and-on petrol use he has some acquired brain damage. As a consequence this young man has to contend with many difficulties, including social problems associated with family disputes. He is one of many young people who have shifted their residence from town camps to remote communities. However, he is a musician of considerable capability.

Like a range of other young people he took part in a number of song writing, music and film recording workshops offered in remote communities in the APY Lands. As a consequence he was able to produce work that was included on the CD, "Ngurakutu Ara". Like others who produced music in this way his work received airplay and exposure on local and national radio (Source: worker report, April 07).

### **Thirteenth young person**

This is a young man who also lives on a remote community in the APY Lands. He too has a background that involved petrol sniffing and, according to one report had “been in rehabilitation in Adelaide”. However, this young man was much more likely to be described as possessing “a peculiarly exuberant nature” and being a “source of amusement to other community members for being different.”

Along with other young people he wrote, recorded and released songs on the “Ngurakutu Ara” CD, offering him a chance to showcase his work through APY communities, more broadly across Central Australian community radio and to national audiences.

Like a number of young people involved in writing and recording workshops this young man had independently developed a love of and talent for music, writing and experimenting before his involvement with the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project. However, Big *hART* staff were able to build on this love and skill, encouraging, endorsing and pushing him to move ahead with his music making. Indeed the story of this young man’s involvement is instructive of the style and method Big *hART* staff adopted.

He began his involvement by attending music workshops and recording sessions in his home community. Workers encouraged him to build upon his musical repertoire and experiment with new styles, using familiar melodies, reconfiguring other people’s music, blending styles and introducing individual flamboyance and flair. One worker described the process he experienced as a participant whose style, previous skills and work was respected and nurtured,

He had written a new song in January and we had worked out guitar etc for it then. I had noted that his song was a borrowed melody with lyrics that were his own (about rain and place). His mental capacity for remembering lyrics and tune and being focussed and aware of the process of recording had improved vastly from when we recorded his first song in 2007. In the recording process he was clear-headed and confident and evidently gaining a huge sense of pride and self-worth from the process. I noted to a co-worker that he work with music hugely impacted upon his sense of identity and also his identity to many other adults and children in the community. It says a lot that he shared this relationship with us and has this capacity and enthusiasm for music (Source: worker report 2008).

### **Fourteenth young person**

This young man is from a remote community from the APY Lands and, like many others involved with the project, started playing music many years previous. Indeed, he plays the keyboards for two successful local bands.

He was involved in the early stages of the project and was credited as a ‘language tutor’ on the *ninti* website for his role in language films and development.

His involvement with the project also included joining the cast of the stage production on a tour to Melbourne. This was no easy task given that he did not know any of the touring group except for one worker. The drawback for him was the possibility of recording music in a Melbourne studio. Like a number of other young people he found the demands of touring quite onerous. One worker described his struggles in this way:

He was soon quite homesick and found the demands of rehearsals a bit challenging. He mostly remained in good spirits although he was becoming emotional and resistant in the last week. He complained of being treated 'like a robot' in response to being asked to go from rehearsals to a kids show to the big show on one day which was hugely demanding for all young people. I think we can also say that part of being here was learning about the real demands of making a show. If he decides it's not for him in the future it will be an informed decision. His passion seems to be sport and he has recently been asked to play in Adelaide so perhaps he won't stick with Ngapartji but even being in the city and with English speakers might contribute to his ability to spend time away from home, whether it's to play basketball (Source: worker report 2006).

### **Fifteenth young person**

This young man is also from a remote community in the APY Lands and, like many others, started experimenting with music many years previously. He was able to extend his skill in playing drums by participating in a series of sound studies and recording workshops offered by Big *hART* staff in his home community. As well as recording his own songs and during this work he took on a lead role as a 'session musician', playing for others on a range of tracks.

Clearly this young man possessed a considerable amount of talent and interest in writing and recording music before his involvement in the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project. He is described by a number of people as "particularly skilled drummer". However, the project gave him the chance to consolidate his composition skills while writing his first two songs during the recording studio time. Like a number of other young people this man was also able to use the work to consolidate his leadership skills, acting as a "great help with other musicians and less-experienced young musicians in guiding their process/playing" (Source: worker reports 2008). It also provided him with a chance to build his interest in other kinds of music, broadening his horizons rather than limiting himself to one genre (eg reggae) and sticking with the pre-formed notions of what constitutes a song. Workshops also provided him with a chance to articulate to others important ideas about life for himself and others. For example, the second song he wrote was a dub-reggae style song with lyrics about children playing happily in his home community.

### **Other observations about the social consequences of the work**

There a range of ways in which the project provided other opportunities for young people, particularly in creating the chance for them to work **in conjunction with others in their community**. There is evidence of considerable work that involved young people and others in their communities singing, recording, filming, performing and creatively developing music and stage production work. For example, the films produced as part of the *ninti* on-line language course show much intimate contact between senior people and young people. The project provided some important opportunities for young people to visit and sit with family in communities, allowing them to travel between town camps and more remote communities. Often this gave young people a chance to travel and work alongside senior people and, importantly be taken seriously and taken notice of. Many young people were also given the chance to take on roles as mentors and role models, training children and younger people in the various aspects of recording and creative production, passing on the knowledge they had gained in earlier work.

Young people also often took on work in **building community relationships**, taking on important responsibilities in the project. For example, a number of young people acted as translators and negotiators between different people and outside bodies. There are accounts of young people taking the lead in organising arrangements for funerals, working in conjunction with Big *hART* staff to set up meetings amongst government representatives. Later in the project some young people took the lead in organising messages for family using faxes, email, text and phone contacts. There is also some good evidence that some young people were instrumental in helping others build relations between communities and across sites. They were important during the various workshops, dance competitions, film evenings and other community events.

They were clearly key players in the various **language elements** of the project. As mentioned elsewhere, young people were the public face of the *ninti* on-line language course, introducing others to Pitjantjatjara language. Many possessed an important and often unique set of skills in shifting between various language codes, providing useful help to others as they tried to move between Pitjantjatjara, Aboriginal English and English. One person enrolled in the *ninti* course made the observation that “as a person trying to learn Pitjantjatjara it was really helpful to watch young people who seemed to be able to easily move backwards and forwards between Pitjantjatjara and English. My guess would be that they’d be few people who could do this.” A number of young people also possessed unique abilities and dexterities, allowing them to shift between written, spoken, digital and musical genres. Having them involved helped Big *hART* staff think carefully about how to design the various films, theatre productions and on-line resources (Source: evaluation notes 2010).

There is also ample evidence that the project provided opportunities for young people to participate in a **range of other programmes and activities**. Through careful planning Big *hART* staff avoided workshop and other activities clashing with school attendance. A number of workshops in remote communities were carried out in conjunction with or as part of school holiday programs, providing meaningful activities during times that were described by one teacher as ‘periods of boredom and possible petty criminal activities’. As the audit review section outlines, some of the work was designed to create a bridge to more formal training, further education and employment. In particular the literacy staff member worked carefully with young people to help them fulfil their various obligations under training programs, work experience and job searching activities.

Clearly one of the project’s strong points was its ability to provide young people and other community with opportunities to participate in **arts and performance activities**. As mentioned earlier workshops, creative development sessions, various film projects and the tours resulted in young people doing narrative and film work, story boarding, story telling, script development and script writing, editing, subtitling, visual arts, digital production, power point production, creating photo books, animation software, text and titling, emailing and phone texting, photography and stills production, filming and camera work indoors, outdoors, night and day, sound recording, music recording, singing, building and playing instruments, using garage band software, participating in a choir, solo singing, creating film clips, song writing. Some attended research and training workshops, visited and in one case, enrolled in an academic program of study. Young people were directly involved in production of DVDs and CDs, airplay of music and film in local and national media. Others in the community also participated in production of CDs. For example, some senior people were involved in creating the ‘*Wanti Watjilpa*’ CD from Ernabella. Fourteen young people were able to record their music on the Ngurakutu Ara CD. This was released at the end of 2009 and is receiving airplay on the 5NKY network via PY

Media and Ngaanyatjara Media and on the CAAMA network, and is reported to be selling well at the CAAMA shop (Source: Final report 2010).

The project most certainly provided a solid number of young people with unique opportunities to **attend a broad range of cultural events** and public arts activities, exposing them to worlds well outside their taken for granted and everyday lives. They travelled to other communities and capital cities as part of the tour. They visited other Indigenous groups from elsewhere in Australia. They travelled to new country. They shared meals with important leaders. They performed in front of some of the countries premiere leaders in the world of arts and performance. They stayed in accommodation profoundly different to their homes. They dressed up for the show and experimented with new fashions and different ways of presenting themselves in public. They saw how others lived, how others ate and how others performed and created.

Highlights in this regard included **visiting Koori community organisations** in Redfern, Sydney, running a workshop for Koori children and taking day trip to Healesville to be welcomed to Melbourne by Wurundjeri elders. The Aboriginal Children's Choir from these areas performed a number of songs in different Aboriginal languages including a song in Wurundjeri. Members of the cast of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* then exchanged some of the songs from the show and were impressed at how quickly the kids picked up the new words. This event was described as inspiring by one young person (Source: worker report 2006-2008).

The chance to join a tour of the stage production of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* was clearly a remarkable opportunity. One worker made this important observation:

Several young people from Abbots Camp have now been on up to nine tours around Australia with (the stage show), engaging with a dynamic bunch of industry professionals and building performance and communication skills across cultures. This in and of itself is an important opportunity (Source: Project website 2010).

The project also provided some chances **for new economic relationships**. Some, particularly those who toured with the stage production, were able to earn as professional actors, musicians and artists. For a small number of people, the project launched new careers or exposed existing artists to a new audience. Two young people have taken on a pivotal role in the new productions *Nyuntu Ngali* and *Namatjira*. A range of young people have been introduced to music loving audiences by having their music recorded on CDs and playing on radio and community television. The soon to be screened documentary *Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji* will be sure to take the work of community members to its largest audience yet.

There is an **impressive list of community performers and participants** in the busy and extensive *Ngapartji Ngapartji* tours. The list of forty or so performers includes large numbers of senior women, who literally and symbolically held and watched over the performance, on stage and on tour. There is also a much larger list of workshop participants, filmmakers and musicians including over 300 individuals.

As part of this experience young people and other Anangu have been **matched up** with some of the country's leading actors, song engineers, musicians, filmmakers, stage productionists and writers. They have worked with performers such as Trevor Jamieson, Lex Marinos, Tomoko Yamasaki, Saira Luther, Andrew MacGregor and Damian Mason. They also were able to work with an impressive list of filmmakers, musical producers, lighting designers, web



programmers production technicians and production managers. This exposed young people to the possibilities available for future work in a range of industries such as website construction, multimedia work and production.

There is also very good evidence that young people's involvement had a powerful impact on their **levels of self confidence**, pride, social identity, self discipline levels, sense of possibilities for the future and hope. A number of those who worked in conjunction with the project noted examples in this regard. For example, one local community worker said,

I definitely saw young people develop as people ... look at ###, when she started to tour she was very timid ... she really came out from each performance to each performance. One of the impressive things about how they (Big hART) work is they work hard to push young people to come out of their shell ... they are gently guided along with arts mentors and the community workers always looking for ways to get them to be more public (Source: evaluation notes 2009).

The following remark reflects the project's impact on people's ability to present publically. It was recorded by a Big hART worker and made by a community worker and long time Pitjantjatjara speaker :

"Oh and by the way, this is something interesting I've noticed. People like ### - her English is out of sight!! And ### - her ability to sit and tell a long oral history chronologically now, is amazing! Anangu were never the most understandable when it came to chronologically telling a story because of cultural reasons I suppose - but I've noticed those who have come into contact with *Ngapartji Ngapartji* have developed those skills in a very fine way (which is great for whitefellas!)"

Performing in front of large audiences in capital cities and as part of a professional cast was also an incredibly important opportunity, particularly for young people. The experience of having audiences offer a standing ovation clearly had a significant impact. As one worker remarked, "Each of the six nights of our season in Melbourne audiences were moved to a standing ovation, which was wonderful for the ensemble cast, some of whom were performing on a stage of this scale for the first time" (Source: worker report 2006).

Another ex-community worker noted the concise ability of the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* performers to engage visitors and inform them about important cultural obligations. She said, "one of the direct consequences of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* for some of the Anangu women I know is the confidence they have developed in speaking to piranpa (whitefellas) ... you just didn't see this as much (Source: worker report 2008).

Critical in helping create more positive developments in communities is that **joy, fun, laughter and energetic activities** emerge from the work. There is ample evidence of this happening during various elements of the project. The *ninti* on-line website is full of instances where young people are clearly having fun. One can see young people incorporating fun and acrobatics into the language film work. Young people are regularly seen racing in and out of the camera frame, laughing, adopting cheeky poses and clearly entertaining themselves. The documentary *Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji* features children laughing adoringly at Trevor Jamieson's stage antics, showing off and chasing after him when he visited their communities. The final moments of the film feature the faces of children, young people and senior people with looks of exuberance and high in spirits. The stage production, films and workshops are littered with

humour and frivolity. Project photographs are full of smiling faces, people elated to be in each other's company and regularly delighting in their involvement. As one *Ngapartji Ngapartji* choir member said,

'Ngayulu pulkara pukularingu ngura nyanga Sydneyla nyinara. Nganana show wiru tjuta nyangangi – nganampa show wiru mulapa munu kutjupa tjuta wiru mulapa. Munu nganana pukulpa nyinanyi munu nganana ikaringkupai tjukurpa wiru tjuta wangkara. Nganana pukulpa nyinanyi!'

I have been very happy while staying in Sydney. We've seen so many great shows – our wonderful show and other great shows. We are constantly making each other laugh, telling funny stories. We are very happy! (Source: Memory Basket 2010).

The project has also given a number of young people, particularly those involved in the literacy elements of the work, the chance to **develop their own portfolios** including resumes, images, short films and personal profiles. This work has also served to help build young people's confidence in presenting to people who are strangers or outside their immediate family. Being equipped with a multimedia presentation that has been prepared ahead of time has helped young people feel more able to promote themselves and their achievements (see earlier references to the literacy work).

It is also worth recognising the value of providing young people with **activities and positive things to do**. This is particularly important for young people living in remote communities where access a diverse set of experiences is often missing. It is also important where young people have limited opportunities to work in conjunction with others. As the following account demonstrates, often music workshops offered young people much more than simply a chance to make music. At times it provided them with the chance to concentrate on something important. Recording also demanded they confront any problems with their own confidence. It also had an important impact on their ability to work together, helping them cement into their relationships and develop important social and civic skills. Reporting on what happened in one set of recording sessions one worker noted:

These three boys were endlessly keen to come into the hall, mostly to play the drums and record songs. Two of the boys are incredibly talented musically – both amazing singers ... ### is an incredible drummer. ### can't sit still with anything for more than 2 minutes. Normally we let them 'jam' for a while to let off steam before the difficult task of trying to achieve something productive. We made it clear that the studio was for recording and tried to instil in them the sense that they were a 'band' and needed to make a decision together about what song they would record and who would play which instrument. We found it interesting that despite ### being about 200 times better at playing the drums that he let ### play drums on the recording several times. They had fairly good grasp on song structure etc but poor concentration. Recording vocal tracks they were often capable of singing the song perfectly with bravado off-mic but became very shy when recording. We negotiated between the number of times through they could practise a song to get it to a more competent level and the number of times at which they would lose focus. This all helped them push themselves (Source: Worker notes 2006).

As mentioned earlier, the tours also provided some of the performers with an important chance to showcase their talents and gain media and artistic exposure. Describing the Sydney

experience one worker said,

Audience members returning night after night to get a taste of the project, enthusiastically repeating the language they learned throughout the show. One of the features of this version of the show is ###'s artwork, mounted as a torn-up painting which is slowly revealed by the young people piecing it together throughout the show and a landscape drawn with chalk in real time during the performance echoing the western desert style of his grandfather. This young man, who has been involved in *Ngapartji Ngapartji* since its beginning, received much well deserved attention for his talents and we hope an exhibition of his work will accompany the return Sydney season in 2007 (Source: Project website 2007).

Members of the community had many things to say about the impact of the project on themselves and others.

Important also was the impact on the **memory and recollections** of the community. Both the subject matter and the way in which the stories were told are likely to have a significant impact on the capacity of Anangu to maintain cultural identity and a sense of history of those people living in the APY Lands and surrounding regions. Indeed as one senior woman said, "our ability to pass on Anangu history and language is part of what we do ... it is how our children become who they need to be and how they teach their children to be Anangu" (Source: evaluation notes 2009). Indeed, Anangu have made it clear in other work that passing on history to young people is one of the main objects of Anangu cultural business (see Edwards 1988).

So in providing one means through which this can occur the *Ngapartji Ngapartji* project offers to buttress Anangu culture and law, Anangu family and social relations and Anangu life. At the very least, it is fair to say that the project provided people with a chance to tell and be told stories about important moments in Anangu and Piranpa history. One member of the choir nicely captures this experience of oscillating between telling history and learning history.

When I am watching *Ngapartji Ngapartji*, watching Trevor's performance (from on stage)...well I just think, that it's amazing. Every night I understand new parts of the story, what Trevor is saying. When he talks about sad things I feel truly sad. When he talks about bad things, I feel MAD! When it is about happy things, I can't help but smile and laugh, every night! And I feel so proud to be a part of telling this story (Source: Project website 2007).

The project also provided some people with a chance to visit country, **be with others and maintain elements of culture and law**. As was mentioned earlier, the project's emphasis upon Pitjantjatjara language maintenance was of critical importance. Additionally, it offered people the chance to visit country. During some of the workshops, the tour to Ernabella, in creative development work for *Nyuntu Ngali* and in film work with young people there was an opportunity to visit places of significance, collect food and maintain involvement in the customary economy, be with others and in this way exercise people's obligations to country and culture.

Another senior woman involved in the project articulated how important this was in the project:

That's why I love to come down to *Ngapartji Ngapartji* a lot - because I have made lots of mates there. We sometimes go out bush, sometimes to collect bush food to teach

the young kids when we take them out. We sometimes tell the kids if this food is good to eat or not. Sometimes we ask (worker) if she will take us all out. She is a very nice lady, well, to me she is a very nice young lady (Source: Memory basket 2010).

Another woman said similar things about the importance of the project in respect to culture and law:

'Ngayulu kuliningi *Ngapartji Ngapartji* yaaltji-yaaltji? Munu ngayulu pitjangu nyakunyitjikitja munu kulintjikitja mununa tjanala tjunguringkula showngka ngarala kuliningi "Ai! Mulapa, nyangatja wiru mulapa!" Tjukurpa wirutjara munu tjituru-tjiturutjara panya iriti nganampa walytja tjuta wiyaringkunyitja. Mununa pukularingi wiru mulapa nyangatja mununa kulini panya ngayuku kangkuru Kunmanaranya show nyangangka ngarapai munu paluru ayini-ayini tjuta palyara ikaritjingalpai – munu paluru malpa tjuta palyani. Kana palunya kulira tjiturutjitururinyi munu pukularinyi wiru tjuta kulira, palunyatjara.

I was thinking, what is this *Ngapartji Ngapartji* really about? So I came to see and to understand and while working together to make this show I've been thinking "I see! This really is worthwhile!" (This show contains) good stories, sad stories and talks about what happened to our families all those years ago, how they died. And so I've been really impressed and happy to be working in this show – particularly because my older sister Kunmanara was in it and used to clown around making people laugh, and making friends everywhere. When I think about her I become sad but I also feel happy thinking about the good things she did. Alright! (Source: Memory basket 2010).

The various activities, workshops and tours also offered people the chance to spend time with their kin and community in circumstances where they were not overburdened. One member of the choir was grateful for the chance to perform in something her older sister had previously been involved.

Ngayulu nyakula pukularinyi *Ngapartji Ngapartji* panya show wiru mulapa. Panya ngayuku kangkuru ngarangi *Ngapartji Ngapartjila*. Munu nganana show wiru tjuta nyangangi.'

I have been greatly rewarded by being involved in this amazing show, *Ngapartji Ngapartji*. Especially because my older sister used to be a part of it. Also, we have seen many other good shows (Source: Project website 2008).

Although much of the positive consequences of the project are indirect there was also some **evidence of immediate impact on social problems** and community challenges. As is discussed elsewhere, there is good evidence that the project was able to extend young people's broad literacy experience, provide positive options to crime and antisocial behaviour, make available a range of language resources, offer school holiday activities, produce high quality art, film and performance work and extend the social repertoires of the community, particularly in English language and cultural domains. There was also some solid evidence that the work helped people begin to articulate their experiences of some of the more difficult social problems confronting their communities. For example, one young person had this to say about petrol sniffing:

I made a video about sniffing in January when #### and #### from *Ngapartji Ngapartji* came to Docker River. I wanted to do a serious film about petrol sniffing. First we wrote

the story down and a little bit of pictures. I asked who wants to do this one and we got ### (young people). I was going to be the director but those other girls didn't want to do the part of Lin [the petrol sniffer]. They was getting shame. So I did it. And ### helped directing and telling them how to walk. ### (Big hART worker) and ### (young person) were filming. After we did the filming I helped finish that little film. I put that song and the voice to tell people 'don't sniff petrol' (source: Memory Basket 2010).

It is worth acknowledging the difficulties associated with eliciting Anangu views about projects of this kind. Language provides a barrier for those keen on finding things out about Anangu experience. Relying on a question as a device for finding out things from people is also often unhelpful. Outsiders to any community will usually require considerable time with new communities before they can be trusted to convey their thoughts. Likewise it is difficult for outsiders to interpret and translate the gestures, signifiers, manners and cultural practices of Anangu and understand how people are responding to activities such as stage shows, music, film or dance. Despite these difficulties, a range of members of the community had many important things to say about the project and its impact. What follows is a **small collection of Anangu remarks** about *Ngapartji Ngapartji*. Many of these remarks were made late in the project, after the stage show had toured to Ernabella. It is clearly the case that the project was well received, often to the point of being loved.

*I was you know, performing with the show, and as I was up there ... I was thinking, Oh, I wonder what people are thinking as we perform this show. Perhaps they think that it is acceptable, or perhaps not. And then after the show, I went home, and they were really excited, my family, saying "Hey! That was really great! You mob performed really well!" And I was thinking 'Hey!' My spirit was cheered and I was able to say to them "Yes, we performed really well!" and so everybody was impressed by us making this show in our home. Heaps of people were happy about it saying "Very well done!" I was thinking, that maybe I would be hearing them say "It's no good" But no! They really were impressed and telling us that we had done a good job (Source: Ngapartji Ngapartji choir member).*

*"Apparently it was really good! "You mob performed really well." (They said) Some people said it was like a movie what we were making." (Source: Transcriptions from documentary 2009).*

*"It's probably the first time that they have seen an Aboriginal person like Trevor, speaking and performing alongside of us. So they were surprised and thinking 'This is really great – these people performing are our family and they've put together a great show, an important story.' They really are impressed. Heaps of people have said this." (Source: Ngapartji Ngapartji choir member).*

*"They've been saying "Hey! Ngapartji Ngapartji should be on when Sports is on at Ernabella – tell them to put it on again!" But no! We're going - to Alice Springs. But many people from many places, from Papunya, from many places are coming, maybe many people would see it!" (Source: community member).*

*"Ngayulu kulini, alatji, nyanga palumpa purunypa, Ngapartji Ngapartji kuari ngaranyi, palu purunypa nyaa, Piranpa tjutangu kutju nyakupai, cityngka, ngura kutjupa tjutangka. Ka Anangu tjuta nyanga palumpa purunypaku ninti wiya, Anangu tjuta munu tjana kuwari kutju, kuwari kutju alatjitu nyakula urulyaranu alatjitu. Munuya pulkara*

kulini munuya pulkara alatjitu mukuringanyi, kuwari kutju nyakula, show nyangatja kuwari kutju nyakula urulyaranu alatjitu "Ai! Wirunya alatjitu!" Tjitji tjuta kulu-kulu, young one, young people tjuta, tjana ninti wiya nyaaku, bomb panya iriti. Panya palumpaku tjana ninti wiya, tjana urulyaraningi alatjitu. Ngurpa. Ninti wiya."

*I think, in this way – things like this, the show Ngapartji Ngapartji that is on now, things like this are only seen by non-Indigenous people in the city, in other places. But Pitjantjatjara people are not too aware about this kind of thing. So seeing something like this for what really is the first time, people really have been shocked and surprised. And they've been deeply considering it and thoroughly impressed by it, taking this show in for the first time. Really surprised and saying "Hey! This is excellent!" Kids too, young people – they are unaware you know, about the bombs that occurred in the past. Because they didn't know about that they've really been shocked. Unaware – they didn't know (Source: Ngapartji Ngapartji choir member).*

*"It's been great – I'm really happy. Before we were thinking 'Shame! What are they going to say about Ngapartji Ngapartji?' I was thinking, 'Shame! Let's not do it and put other people in our places!' – We were feeling a sense of shame and getting frightened about it! A little bit nervous. But once it was all happening in the creek-bed and after the show, you know we heard so many people, kids too, saying how great they thought it was. They were telling us what a good story they'd seen. They were truly impressed saying "Ngapartji Ngapartji is really good!" So we were really happy and relieved, hearing this" (Source: Ngapartji Ngapartji choir member).*

*"People, you know, were feeling sorry as they listened to the story, about traveling with the children, dying half way along their journeys. They became sorrowful as they listened. Poor things. Many important stories were being transmitted. Some people were really feeling sorry and some were gladdened and saying "This show is so good! We heard that you only perform this in the city but now you've come to our country, here, and you've put on this really great show." So we are so thrilled that our families like it. It's great" (Source: community member).*

*"Now all the Ngapartji Ngapartji people have come to Ernabella! And now I am here in a wheelchair. But they still absolutely want me! They've been saying to me, "No, there's a part for you". And I've been thinking, "Why are they calling me again? I'm lame! How am I going to get up and speak?" My story is there to be told, my story stands, about the smoke, but how will I get up and tell it, but I've been asking, "Is it OK, maybe I'll tell it from the wheelchair, sitting, for them to see? For them to see a person telling it." I am really very happy about this. They are still seeking me out; upon arrival they've come to see me and invited me back into it. And I'm really pleased with them. Ngapartji Ngapartji is ours, together. We've made it together" (Source: Ngapartji Ngapartji choir member).*

*"They've come wanting to record the stories of Anangu - our stories. So what are you all thinking? Are you happy? We are handing over our stories to them. To Ngapartji Ngapartji. Laying down our histories. So they will be very pleased, as we speak. Yes maybe I will say that, "What are you all thinking, people? This Ngapartji Ngapartji, this is ours! We made Ngapartji Ngapartji and they wanted to take our stories, carry them, they are listening to us." Dear things" (Source: Ngapartji Ngapartji choir member).*

*"I got Tjukurpa from my feet going up to my knees, to here, here, here, here. Ears, when they're pointing, to the ears, singing "Pina, kuru, winpinpi, mulya" Ears – that means you must understand, listen, with those ears. With your eyes you can see clear, your Tjukurpa. Winpinpi, lips, you can use those, to the young people, to understand. With your nose you can smell the wind blow, where they wind comes from and where it goes" (Source: senior community leader).*

*"Well they know about the bomb and how it killed many people, they are aware of what happened so it's really special that they've been able to experience this and think about their grandfathers who have passed away, and others. Senior men and women have thought about their fathers and mothers, crying - because they understand. They have been made happy and made to laugh and also been saddened. It's very good and everyone has stated that Ngapartji Ngapartji showing in Ernabella has been a huge success. Some people have said "It should play again! Ngapartji Ngapartji!" but I've been telling them "Perhaps it's really just this once." (But they've been saying) "No! Put it on again!" (Source: Ngapartji Ngapartji choir member).*

*"Ngapartji Ngapartji show panya ngarangi nyangatja. Ka Anangu tjuta wangkanyi "Ai wiru ngarangi kuwari watjil-watjilpa ngaranyi, karungka." Tjana watjilarinyi!" The Ngapartji Ngapartji show was performed here. And all the people have been saying "It was lovely having them here and now it's lonely without them in the creek." They're missing it! (Source: Ngapartji Ngapartji choir member).*

*"Ngura nyaraku ini 'karu' panya wiyaringu! Paluru tjana 'Ngapartji Ngapartji' wangkapai. Tjitji tjutangku alatji wangkapai "Arala, Ngapartji Ngapartjikutu inkantjikitja!" That place isn't called 'the creek-bed' anymore – they call it 'Ngapartji Ngapartji'. The kids say "Let's go play at Ngapartji Ngapartji!" (Source: young person).*

Ngayulu pulkara pukularingu panya Ngapartji Ngapartjingka warkaripai tjuta pitjanyangka nganampa community Pukatjalakutu. Munu wati piranpa kutju tjana ngalya-katingu inma tjuta recordamilantjaku ka uwankara pukularingu munuya rawangku inma tjuta recordamilaningi. Munula inma tjuta recordamilila wiyaringkula nganampa copy mantjira pulkara pukularingi. Ka Ngapartji Ngapartjingku tjitji kutjupa tjutangku movie palyara nintiringangi munu tjana kulu pulkara pukularingi movie wiru tjuta palyantjatjanu. Ka ngayulu nyakula kuliningi wiru mulapa kuwari ngaranyi youngfella tjutangku music wiru tjuta palyaningi munu inkangi – tjana inma tjuta palyantja. Munu tjana kutjupa tjuṭaku tjana watarkuringu. Problem wiya nganampa ngurangka ngaranyi. Ka tjitji nyitayira kulunypa tjuta palu purunypatu, pukulpa recordamilaningi inma wiru tjuta ka youngfella tjutangku tjananya alpamilaningi music wangkatjingira. Munuya recordamilila wiyaringkula walytja tjuta-kutu katingi munu wangkatjingira kuliningi. Ka ngunytyu tjuta pulkara pukularingi munu tjitji tjuta kurunpa unngu kanany-kananyparingu. Ngayulu mukuringanyi nyanga palu purunypa youngfella tjuṭangku, kungkawara tjuṭangku munu tjitji tjuṭangku rawangku palyantjaku munu nintiringkunytjaku.

I was very happy to see Ngapartji Ngapartji workers return to our community, Pukatja. This time they bought with them a man whose role was to record music – everybody here was very pleased and have for weeks been enjoying recording many songs. On completion of recordings, they have been taking copies home for themselves and been

rapt with results. *Ngapartji Ngapartji* have also been working with other young people learning about film-making and the kids are in high spirits after making movies.

So I am seeing great things happening with the youngfellas playing and singing music that they have written. They are forgetting about the other things. It has reduced the problems we often face in our community. Also younger boys have been ecstatically recording music in the same way, and the youngfellas have been helping them to play their songs. When they finish recording they take the music back to their families and put it on to listen to. When mothers hear their music they are very happy and the childrens spirits become proud. I highly value work like this that sees our youngfellas, young women and children continuing to build skills and be creative (Source: senior community member).

## Conclusion - light and shadows

This was a project with many dimensions, nuances, jagged edges, pot-holes and patchy bits. Indeed the expectation that this would be so was what prompted the Big *hART* team to agree to be involved. The workshops were often tough with highs and lows in youth participation and successes and failures in the individual development of people involved. The ninti website is a beautiful story of youth involvement but a slow story of Piranpa (non-Anangu) take-up. There were some young people who dropped out of involvement as there were workers lost to the project. Anangu communities experienced their unfair share of trauma and tragedy.

Some organisations might want to avoid contending with this in any project report, only focus on the positive achievements or 'manage' how this appears in public accounts. However, in this project the tragedies, the highs and the lows, the lights and the shadows became the subject of the work. Indeed the theme of light and shadows became content and form used in a range of the productions.

The stage show story of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* itself involved 'bringing to light' part of the 'shadowy' or covered up history of Anangu dispossession, political intrigue, military deception, secrets and lies. Long shadows of performers, the prop of the remnant bomb, shadow puppet figures of crowds and the figure of characters were creatively used for effect. Throughout the performance audiences were confronted by the shadows of the bombs that were dropped, casting as they did an ominous gloom across the continent.

A number of times during the creative process with young people shadows were used as a means of building people's confidence in using their bodies in dance, film and performance. For example, during the preparation work for Mimili's involvement in the 2009 APY Dance Competition Big *hART* artists deliberately used shadow work so that young people were not so self-conscious about using their bodies during movement work and film. Rather than ask them to dance directly in front of the camera and thereby reveal their identities and bodies (something often associated with deep 'shame' amongst Anangu young people) arts mentors arranged for work to be done behind a hanging white sheet that was lit from behind. The effect was spectacular with young people cheekily dancing and moving with great style. In a similar way, three shadow boxes were lit as part of the *Nyuntu Ngali* backdrop. During one scene in the show three young people dance behind this background, providing a half anonymous space where they can dance without having to directly see the audience or reveal the entirety of their identity.



This intentional use of shadows in this way provided a means by which young people could get involved in very public work, despite self-consciousness about their bodies and the intimate and imposing gaze of strangers. It made it possible for them to dance the dances and experiment with the shadow that they cast. These shadows gave them another self, something that could be seen, a reflection and means of looking back and within.

There was also much use of shadows in photos and film work carried out by young people. Noticeable was the number of photographs and films that were framed to include the shadow of the young photographer, indirectly and anonymously emanating part of their identity onto the shot without directly or obtrusively pushing themselves into view. In this way young people were able to experiment with the power of casting their own shadow upon the landscape.

The project also often used the practice of shadowing in the way artists worked with young people and other Anangu. To shadow something is to go along with it, in a way that is subtle and not obvious, close yet often unnoticed. At other moments, when the sun or light is behind the shadow will lead ahead, always reaching the destination slightly earlier. Likewise, the shadow often walks along to the side, just to the periphery but ever present. Metaphorically and literally Big hART people worked a little like a shadow, sometimes travelling along side, sometimes behind and sometimes in front of Anangu.

Shadows are also sometimes treated as things more closely aligned to the spiritual, often associated with another world, as the other, as something from another time and another dimension. What goes on in the shadows is often associated with the ghostly, the uncanny and the underworld, often (at least in older western traditions) as that which scares and unsettles. Here the shadow is the third space, the ambivalent zone between extremities. This theme seemed to find its way into the work of the project. Young people appeared keen to work with Anangu characters of the otherworld in their film-work. Mamu or Anangu spirit beings were regularly the subject in young people's film productions. Without question the stage show dealt with tensions in the geist or spirit of relationships between different Australians. Many audiences were 'spooked' by its intensity and entranced by its spiritual themes. Reviewers confessed to being spellbound, captivated and mesmerised. They regularly reported being "lost for words" and "taken away for days afterward by the intensity and sheer spiritual gravity". One person even said they had been "overshadowed by feelings of joy and grief" (Source: evaluation notes 2007).

There were also times in the project when Big hART people worked carefully with shades, noting their existence and the way people use them. Nowhere is shade more important as protection from the harsher elements of life than in the country of *Ngapartji Ngapartji*. Indeed the Australian desert is where the sun and the conditions are at their most dangerous to life. A mark of Anangu competence in this country is their ability to look for and find shadows and shade. Even in the most devoid of vegetation Anangu seek out and find the tiniest of bushes to offer the smallest of protection in the form of shade. Mothers will recast the position of their bodies in order to cast a shadow in a direction of their child so their skin will be protected from the heat.

For those making films, creating music, stage productions and visual art shade was an important metaphor, a device to give texture and substance to flatness and a way of artfully casting illumination on things that would otherwise remain single dimensional. In the performance work, films and photographs shadows were used to give the audience a sense of time, allowing them to see night, day and moments in between.

The story of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* is the story of Anangu 'living in the shadow ...' of so many things. They have had to contend with dispossession and dramatic cultural change. Some bear witness to literally living under the shadows of clouds of atomic fallout. Today, Anangu live with social trauma, overcrowding, poverty and the under the shadow of language and cultural loss. This shadow is ominous and triggers an inordinate amount of distress, particularly in senior people.

In this way *Ngapartji Ngapartji* has provided a means through which young people have had the opportunity to learn, think about, express and experiment with their shadow, casting light on what it is like to grow up being Anangu. In this way they have been given the chance to learn different ways of being able to walk through life with an awareness of what their bodies can do in the world. They are now more likely to be 'directors', capable of reconfiguring the shadow they cast on the world.

A profound mark of the quality of the work is that the shadow cast by the Big *hART* team, a shadow of huge proportions, is set to remain for some time to come. This shadow sits in the form of a rich archive of work, a powerful legacy of language resources, beautiful music, stage shows to take young performers to places yet unknown and a wonderful array of memories for those involved. The work has also shone a light on the past and offered illumination on the power of using arts, language and privileging Anangu cultural forms. Most importantly the huge body of work that remains will continue to cast its light upon many people for some time to come. As one young woman so poetically observes, so deeply felt has been the impression of *Ngapartji Ngapartji* that it has even become inscribed upon the landscape.

"Ngura nyaraku ini 'karu' panya wiyaringu! Paluru tjana '*Ngapartji Ngapartji*' wangkapai. Tjitji tjutangku alatji wangkapai "Arala, *Ngapartji Ngapartji*kutu inkantjikitja!"

That place isn't called 'the creek-bed' anymore – they call it '*Ngapartji Ngapartji*'. The kids say "Let's go play at *Ngapartji Ngapartji*!"

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