



## Ara Irititja

An Anangu Project of the  
Pitjantjatjara Council Cultural Heritage Unit

*Nganampa warka*

Annual Report to Pitjantjatjara Council, APY and all Anangu, December 2015



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## International award

This year has been a big year for Aṛa Irititja. We received a very special award in America. The *2015 Outstanding Project Award* was presented by the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM), and is an international award recognising the project's achievements. Sally Scales accompanied John and Dora to Washington DC where she spoke to over 600 participants in Pitjantjatjara, thanking them and sharing her culture. It was very exciting and moving to see Sally on the stage.

John also spoke about the project to this international audience and on the next day John and Sally demonstrated the project in a conference session convened by Barbara Mathé, Archivist, American Museum of Natural History along with two other eminent speakers Kimberly Christen Withey, Washington State University and Jim Enote, A:shiwi A:wam Museum and Heritage Center.



Sally Scales and John Dallwitz on the stage at the ATALM conference in Washington DC, September 2015



John and Sally with other award winners at the conference, September 2015

## Netley Office work

Over the past 12 months more than 14,000 new Archive Item records have been added to Aṙa Irititja. Dora Dallwitz continues to upload and import these from the Adelaide office at Netley. She also files away the original materials in safe archival storage at the SA Museum.

Collections are received from the office in Alice Springs, which come from all over the Lands. This has included approximately 65 different collections. Nearly 6,000 photos came from Don Fehlberg in Aputula and nearly 2,000 photos from Vicki Bosisto in Tjukurla. It was also great to receive a collection of photos from Indulkana School. We wish many more of the schools would send photos to us for inclusion in the archive. We would also love it if more of the Art Centres across the Lands shared their collections with Aṙa Irititja so that all Anṙangu can see the great work they do.

In November 2015 the Aṙa Irititja digital archive holds 147,600 photographs, 5,166 documents, 491 movies, 523 sounds, and 5,196 objects, a total of 158,976 items.

Dora has typed out more than 20 years of John's daily diaries about the origins and history of the Aṙa Irititja Project. She has created a new website about the Pitjantjatjara Council - <http://pitjantjatjaracouncil.com.au/index.html>.

Dora spent many days transcribing John Millar's documents. These are historically important, as they tell about the lead up to Land Rights on the Pitjantjatjara Lands. We now have a lot of archival material about Land Rights, including old home movie and newsreel footage and oral history tapes.

We always enjoy having Anṙangu in the Netley office in Adelaide. Sometimes people come in and help us add names to the archive, and tell us stories about things that have happened in the past. Recently Richard Kanari was here for important discussions about the future of Aṙa Irititja.



Richard Kanari at Netley office with Lisa Jackson and Dora Dallwitz, November 2015



Lisa Jackson with the Aṙa Irititja archive at the Netley office, Adelaide 2015.

### Documentaries and publications

Aṙa Irititja is often asked to advise and supply archival material for documentary films and publications. In Pipalyatjara Dan Clarke has made documentaries with Sean Williamson, Molly Miller and Frank Young, all including historical photos and information from Aṙa Irititja. This year Dan and Sally Scales recorded many interviews and put together a documentary on the history of Pipalyatjara. Aṙa Irititja helped with the research and supplied historical photos for the production. All of these films were premiered on NITV, helping to inform the Australian public about Anṙangu history and issues, in the words of the people themselves.

This year Aṙa Irititja has supplied rare archival film footage to the acclaimed New York film company Jigsaw Productions for a film made with local Aboriginal producer Curtis Taylor and Martu community elders in WA. Such projects, over the years, help raise awareness about Aṙa Irititja internationally and also contribute in a small way to the project's income.

John Dallwitz and our New York University colleague Dr Sabra Thorner collaborated to author a chapter about Aṙa Irititja in *Technology and Digital Initiatives: Innovative Approaches for Museums*. The new publication includes illustrations taken from the Aṙa Irititja computer interface and was launched by Rowman and Littlefield in July.

### Linda Rive's work in Alice Springs and on the Lands

Linda continues to keep the office in Alice Springs a welcome place for Anṙangu to visit and access the Aṙa Irititja computer. She has many notes that she has taken and information she has received from Anṙangu that she is adding to the archive. This year she has worked particularly on Tjukurpa, Anṙangu and Ngura names and profiles.

Linda has represented Aṙa Irititja at the *Remote Indigenous Archives* group since 2014. She has appreciated working with the group towards supporting remote indigenous archives. While Aṙa Irititja is a long way ahead of everyone else, and is always referred to as the ultimate in digital archives, there is still always more to learn. Linda attended an audio-visual workshop at CAAMA, run by Susan Locke and Daniel Featherstone from IRCA and Mick Newnham from National Film and Sound Archive. After learning from this workshop Linda launched into a big cassette digitising program, and has almost completed the task. In August Linda was invited to attend a National Film and Sound

Archive gathering of people associated with digitising indigenous collections. Following this event the NFSA made a short film interviewing Linda about her work with Aṛa Irititja and the digitising program. Some of the tapes completed by Linda this year include:

- Linda Rive, Pirpantji Nelson, Yami Lester and Diana James collections (47 cassettes)
- NPYWC meetings and varied material (383 cassettes)
- NPYWC Women's Only material (28 cassettes)
- Pitjantjatjara Council Maralinga Royal Commission collection (33 cassettes)
- Congress Alukura collection (80 cassettes)

This huge volume of work by Linda is building on our extensive audio collection, now spanning a period of more than 60 years, making Aṛa Irititja one of the greatest digital archives of the Aṅangu voice anywhere in the world – covering so many dialects on so many topics.

Linda has given presentations of Aṛa Irititja to various groups this year, including many gatherings of Aṅangu who come into the office. Presentations included NPYWC new staff and Jawun Secondees, Tjanpi Desert Weavers, Children's Ground and University of Melbourne art history students.

Wilton Foster and Linda jointly delivered a presentation to CLC consultants who are preparing to deposit their material onto the CLC's Aṛa Irititja.

Linda has continued to visit Yami Lester, recording stories. Together they visited the last place that he ever saw with his failing eyesight - Nick Of Time Bore, on Lambina. In very difficult hot conditions, they visited many sites in the Walatina and Lambina area and Linda filmed Yami telling stories. Yami is keen for Linda to continue this work with him.

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

John has spent a lot of time and effort securing the Aṛa Irititja software for the future. It is important that the software remains up-to-date, viable and functional. Our software developer Douglas Mann has taken over the management, development and distribution of the software, which is now called *Keeping Culture KMS*. With the new arrangements we do not have to pay to have the software developed any more, but we will also no longer sell licences.

Douglas made changes to the software this year and Aṛa Irititja can now be viewed on iPads and other mobile devices as well as on computers. This means that Aṅangu can access the archive, wherever there is good internet, on their own devices. We are hoping to be able to have some workshops on the lands to make sure that Aṅangu know how to get the most out of their archive.

### [Uluru Rent Money Community Development Project](#)

Since 2008 Uluru Rent Money CDP have funded the project to give NT communities access to Aṛa Irititja. Mutitjulu, Docker River, Imanpa, Finke, Watarrka area, Tiṯjikala, Utju and Yirara College in Alice Springs were each supplied with a special standalone Aṛa Irititja computer and printer.

Through the Rent Money project, we employed an NT Field Officer, Shannyn Palmer, to focus specifically on the NT communities in 2013/2014. Shannyn visited each NT community several times in 2013, training people and helping people to record information. She started again in July 2014 and continued until the end of June 2015. Shannyn did field trips and visited Imanpa, Mutitjul/Yulara, Docker River and Yirara twice this year. Shannyn's visits brought in a lot of new community material and information into Aṛa Irititja. Unfortunately there is no more funding for this project.

During these trips she checked out where the computer was situated in the communities and made sure they were working properly. Sometimes she had to send them back to Adelaide for repairs or relocate them into a better place. All the Aṛa Irititja computers were being used a lot.

Shannyn helped many people in the communities to understand how to use Ara Irititja and to do searches to find what they are looking for. She spent a lot of time helping people add stories and names on large collections of photos that they had never seen before. All Arangu love the family photos and want more of them to keep being put into Ara Irititja.

Shannyn put a lot of work this year into demonstrating the archive in schools. She explained how Ara Irititja started and why it is so important for keeping culture. She showed students around the archive looking at photos and movies of their families and communities. We all feel that Ara Irititja could be being used a lot more in the schools and that a lot of student projects could be centred around the archive. Students can show Ara Irititja to their relatives and ask them to tell stories about the old days. This would be good for the students and valuable for adding to the archive.

Shannyn saw how students have a lot of knowledge about plants and animals. They could be adding this to the archive if they were given time and encouragement at school. There is much talk about school attendance and literacy and numeracy levels of Aboriginal children. Students interacting with Ara Irititja on a daily basis could help with these things.

Shannyn also noticed that many schools have wonderful collections of photos. As we said earlier, these photos should be sent to us at Netley to get into the archive. Then the students can add names and stories directly into the computer, to go with the photos from their own school.

Eileen Brady approached Shannyn when she was at Docker River to tell her that she thought Ara Irititja was wiru. She said that it was important for people to see and remember the olden times and family. Eileen told Shannyn that when she used Ara Irititja is made her feel good and happy inside. Eileen sat at the computer with her young son, who was in control of the mouse and choosing photos. She talked him through the places and people in the photographs, explaining about the olden days. Shannyn then sat with the both of them and showed them some of the PY media story videos. It was a special experience sitting with Eileen and her son and listening as she talked to him about different things in the archive and seeing how interested he was with Ara Irititja.



Eileen Brady and her son using Ara Irititja, Docker River, 2015

Shannyn would like to continue to work together with schools in all of the communities. She did a lot of good work with the school in Utju last year and would like to do more of this kind of work and will

talk to teachers about working with students on special projects for Aṛa Irititja and how they can use Aṛa Irititja as part of the school curriculum.

### Pitjantjatjara Council

This year the Pitjantjatjara Council was registered with ORIC and is now the Pitjantjatjara Council Aboriginal Corporation. Wilton Foster retired from the Chair and Richard Kanari became the Chairman of the Pitjantjatjara Council. Wilton was happy to see Richard take his place after 24 years and to continue his good work. Wilton continues as a director and will help guide Aṛa Irititja.



Wilton Foster working on Aṛa Irititja, Alice Springs 2015

### Project funding

As we have previously reported, we are receiving ongoing annual funding from the SA Government, through SA Museum for one salary. This is very important for the long-term sustainability of the project.

It is important to know that the amount of funding available to Aṛa Irititja for other personnel, and for its core activities, has fallen substantially over the past four years and it is imperative that further sources of funding are identified. The project continues to need the ongoing help of our regular contributors, such as the schools and communities.

Through the Netley office this year Dora has spent many weeks researching and applying for grants. She made 10 submissions to funding agencies, including Aboriginal Benefits Account, Mutitjulu Foundation, Lotterywest, Perpetual, Centrecorp Foundation, Telstra Foundation and Sunshine Foundation. Although many people praised the project, none of these were successful. In these difficult times Pitjantjatjara Council has been helping to keep Aṛa Irititja afloat but doesn't have enough income to continue this support.

We trust that all Anangu are pleased with the way Aṛa Irititja is going. The project team is proud to help look after this history and we hope funding times will get better soon. **Palya!**

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

