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Sustainable futures for music cultures

Towards an ecology of musical diversity

Indigenous Music Case study report

Central Australian Women's Traditional Music: Yawulyu/Awelye

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Sustainable futures for music cultures: Towards an ecology of musical diversity seeks to identify key factors in musical sustainability and to make this knowledge available to counteract the risk of decline and loss of music cultures. Centring on nine in-depth studies from both vibrant and endangered music cultures across the globe, Sustainable futures aims to deliver a model to empower communities to build musical futures on their own terms.

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Abstract

This report concerns *yawulyu/awelye*, an important ceremonial genre of traditional songs performed by women in Central Australia. Drawing on extensive published literature, our fieldwork in the area over many years, and a series of interviews we conducted as part of the Sustainable Futures Project, we discuss various issues and ideas concerning the sustainability of the tradition.

1 Introduction

Australia's Indigenous people produce and participate in every imaginable variety of music and other performance genres today, from opera to hip-hop, from performance poetry to traditional ritual performances. For the purpose of this report, we are concentrating on just one of many traditional ritual genres, the *yawulyu/awelye* ceremonial genre performed by women from various country-based groups in central Australia. Music is only one (albeit essential) aspect of this ritual complex. In most languages of the area, there is no one word for 'music' or even song (Ellis, Ellis, Tur, & McCardell, 1978), rather such terms as the Pitjantjatjara *inma* cover the whole gamut of intertwined music, ceremonial action (including dance), body painting and ritual objects. Sustaining the musical future of *yawulyu/awelye* cannot therefore be separated from maintaining all the other social practices that surround its performance. All traditional music in central Australia is ceremonial. Even traditional children's music is embedded in larger activities; there is no music whose sole purpose is entertainment.



Figure 1 Julie Napurrurla Gordon being painted with *yawulyu ngatitjirri* (budgerigar) design for her mother's father's country, Wirliyajarrayi, 27 June 2009. Photograph by Myfany Turpin.

1.1 Background

Yawulyu (in Warlpiri and Warumungu) and *awelye* (in Arandic languages) are cognate names for women's country-based ceremonies in central Australia. Groups of people identify with particular country, Dreamings and associated *yawulyu/awelye* repertoires. Ceremonial performances constitute a collective expression of knowledge surrounding the particular country, lifestyles and Dreaming stories to which the ceremonies relate. This knowledge is presented in different modalities including song text, rhythm, melody, movement (gesture, dance), ritual designs, ritual objects, and spatial organisation and orientation. There are differentiated individual roles and relationships to *yawulyu/awelye* within the complex whole, and formalised procedures for transmission and exchange of ownership.

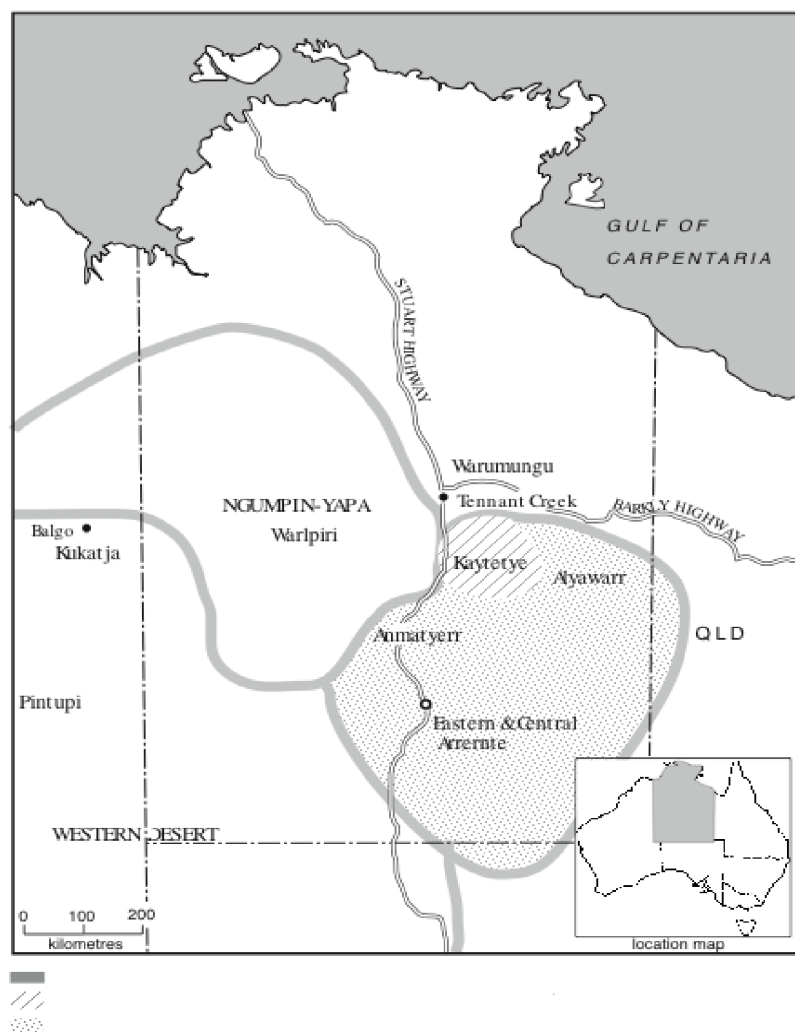


Figure 2 Broad linguistic cultural groupings in Central Australia referred to in this report. Map © Jenny Green. Do not reproduce without permission.

The term 'Yawulyu' is a genre name for land-based women's ceremonies in the Warlpiri (Ngumpin-yapa) and neighbouring Pintupi and Warumungu areas, while the cognate Arandic word 'Awelye' is used for the genre amongst the Anmatyerr,

Alyawarr and Kaytetye speakers (in the Eastern and Central Arrernte areas, ‘awelye’ has a narrower meaning concerning particular ceremonies for healing and social influence, and can be performed by men as well). *Yawulyu/awelye* is not the only ceremonial genre performed by women in these areas: women may also perform alongside men in other public performance genres (such as Warlpiri *purlapa* or the Arandic *angkwerre*) and in other sacred/secret genres of women-only ceremonies such as *yilpinji/ilpentye* ‘love songs’, or *jarrarta*, some of which can be sold or traded between neighbouring groups along traditional exchange routes (Poirier, 1992). In the Western Desert area, which has different social organisation including relations to land, the several women-only songlines do not have a collective genre name but are rather classified along with other sorts of song as *inma*; nevertheless, there are clear parallels in music, dance and text construction to *yawulyu/awelye*.

Yawulyu/awelye, and related women’s ceremonial genres amongst neighbouring language groups (such as the Pintupi, Western Desert and Warumungu – see Map 1), have been discussed very widely in the literature by such scholars as Linda Barwick (Barwick, 1990, 2005; Papulu Apparr-kari Aboriginal Language and Culture Centre & Barwick, 2000), Diane Bell (Bell, 1993), Catherine Berndt (Berndt, 1950), Georgia Curran (Curran, 2010, 2011), Megan Dail-Jones (Morais) (Dail-Jones, 1984; Morais, 1995), Françoise Dussart (Dussart, 2000, 2004), Catherine Ellis (Ellis, 1970; Ellis & Barwick, 1988, 1989; Ellis, Hercus, White, Penny, & Buckley, 1966; Morais, 1995), Barbara Glowczewski (Glowczewski, 1991, 1999), Annette Hamilton (Hamilton, 1982), Grace Koch (Koch, 1994, 1997), Mary Laughren (Laughren, Turpin, Morton, & Willowra Community, 2010), Richard Moyle (R. M. Moyle, 1979, 1986, 1997), Nancy Munn (Munn, 1973), Helen Payne (Payne, 1984, 1989, 1992), Silvie Poirier (Poirier, 1996), Myfany Turpin (Koch & Turpin, 2008; Turpin, 2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2011; Turpin & Ross, 2004), Isobel (Sally) White (White, 1974) and Stephen Wild (Wild, 1984).

1.2 Cultural and social positioning

1.2.1 History

The pervasiveness and significance of *yawulyu* and other ceremonial genres of the Warlpiri throughout life is encapsulated well in Françoise Dussart’s observation: ‘Long before they are born and long after they die, the Warlpiri of Yuendumu are directly and inexorably implicated in a complex repertoire of ceremonial activity.’ (Dussart, 2000, p. 47). *Yawulyu/awelye* is the principal means by which women demonstrate their patrilineal clan identity, as belonging to a defined clan estate (Peterson & Long, 1986). Each clan estate has one main *yawulyu/awelye*, usually named for the principal Dreaming (totem) of the estate (‘country’). For example, *Yawulyu ngapa* (‘water/rain’) is the main *yawulyu* for Kulpurlunu, country belonging to one of the Warlpiri patrilineal clans. The Dreaming tracks may cross more than one country, in which case two estates may own a *yawulyu* named after the same Dreaming (such is the case for *Yawulyu ngurlu* ‘seed’). In such cases, however, particular segments of the track that pass through their country (equating to a sequence of song items naming places and activities of the Dreaming) are owned by clanswomen of the relevant estate. The songs, dances and associated stories, objects, designs and ceremonial actions for each *yawulyu/awelye* are handed down within the clan from women to their brother’s daughters (since the rights to the country and

songs are inherited patrilineally). The songs come from eternal Dreaming Law (*jukurrpa* in Warlpiri; *altyerre* in Arandic languages), a time-out-of-time in which Dreaming ancestors laid down the laws for humankind and formed the country and all beings that live upon it. Most individual songs within a *yawulyu/awelye* series are of unknown origin, though it is clear that others have come into the repertoire in living memory, usually through dreams in which songs (and associated dances, body designs, etc.) are revealed to the dreamer by an ancestral being (Dussart, 2000; Payne, 1992). Even in such cases, the songs are regarded as having always existed (Wild, 1987).



Figure 3 Kathy Sampson Nangala from Wirliyajarrayi leads a *yawulyu* performance at the unveiling of the Coniston Massacre memorial plaque at Athimpelelengwe (Baxters Well), 2008 (photograph by Jane Hodson, copyright Central Land Council, used with permission).

1.2.2 Social functions

Amongst the social functions of *yawulyu/awelye* are: expression of group solidarity and identity, healing of the ill, celebration of the unique features of the relevant country, instruction to younger generations of women about their sites, history, cultural practices and Aboriginal law more generally, and creation of positive emotions to defuse conflict and build social cohesion (Myers, 1986, p. 112). Agnes Abbott Pwerrerle, an Arrernte songwoman, commented:

Wele utnenge atyenhe, wele nhakwe apeke-arle, nhakwele-arle alheme, you know, utnenge nhakwele aneme. Funny you know I feel just like I'm singing out there when I sing. When you sing that song you feel real good you know, utnwenge ngkwenhe you awerle-arle mwerre-arle when you sing.

When I sing (awelye), it's as if my spirit travelled over there (Therrirerte). It's strange, but I feel like I am at that place. ... When you sing that song you feel happy, your spirit feels happy when you sing. [Agnes Abbott Pwerrerle, T100316a]

1.2.3 Performance for particular gender or classes in society

As explained above, the genre is performed only by women, and originally for women only, but is now performed on a range of different public and private occasions. Each *yawulyu/awelye* series belongs to a particular clan (group of patrilineally related women). To mount a performance the presence of leaders ('bosses') (that is, women who are owners of a particular *yawulyu/awelye*) is absolutely essential, with the participation of 'managers' (that is, women who are the daughters of female 'owners') also highly desirable (especially in Warlpiri and Warumungu *yawulyu*). The 'owner' role is called *kirda* in Warlpiri, or *apmerew-artweye* in Kaytetye, while 'managers' are called *kurdungurlu* in Warlpiri or *kwertengerle* in Arandic languages. Others may join in both singing and dancing, but only bosses can explain the songs and their significance, hold custody of the ceremonial objects, and direct the painting up and decide the sequence of activities in the performance.

Bush-werne anwerne iwethe again alhemele, re atherre anwernenhe ileke, 'All right you song nhenhe mape, you atnyenerle akwete kwenhe. Don't impetyeke.' Corroboree nhenhe, like grandfather atyenhe, country atyenhe-arle apetyeke-arle. Right up to Santa Teresa. Travel-irreke, arelhe mape-arle travel-irreke Mission-werne. Ikwere-werne travel-irreke, altyerrengere re. Kele nhenge akaltye anthurre aneme ayenge irreke. Nhenge everywhere ikwerarle aneme anwerne alyelhetyarte ampe kweke mape-arlke aneme teachem-iletarte.

We went out bush again and my mother and older sister said, 'You must remember these songs forever, don't forget them.' They explained how this ceremony was from my father's father's country, and that it goes all the way to Santa Teresa. In the Dreamtime the women travelled all the way to where Santa Teresa mission is. That's when I really started to learn about ceremony. That's when we started doing lots of singing and teaching the children. [Agnes Abbott Pwerrerle, T100316a]

1.3 Formal features

Yawulyu/awelye performances are multimodal. The singing is performed by a group of women led by one or more bosses, with body percussion accompaniment (either handclapping or lap-slapping by the singers). There is no limit on the size of the singing group. Some dances include only one or two dancers, while others involve larger groups dancing in a line (usually organised on the dance ground according to their relationship to the Dreaming/ceremony in question). Each Dreaming has a different characteristic melodic contour, which is repeated for each item in the performance expanding and contracting to accommodate the song texts.



Figure 4. Kathy Sampson Nangala explaining meaning of a song text to linguist Mary Laughren (photograph by Myfany Turpin).

Song texts are isorhythmic (that is, they set the same text to the same rhythmic pattern, with regular beating accompaniment always aligned with the same text syllables), and are repeated strictly throughout the song item. Most texts consist of couplets (pairs of lines), frequently occurring in the repetition pattern AABB, with the string repeated over and over again throughout the item (e.g. AABBAABBAA) (this characteristic is often referred to as ‘cyclic repetition’). The song leader fits the text to the melody in the moment of performance, meaning that rather than learning songs as a rhythmic/melodic unit, the learner initially needs to follow the leader (Barwick, 1989; Turpin, 2007a). A performance consists of a number of discrete song items: for a danced performance, the sequence begins with songs performed while the dancers are being painted up with traditional designs under the direction of the bosses. Performances may last for many hours, or even days. Between the performance of individual songs (which typically last about a minute) and their accompanying dances, participants including dancers and singers may discuss the meanings of the song texts and details of the myths that are told in the song texts and re-enacted by the dancers. The body designs of the dancers and the decorations on the ceremonial objects are also related to aspects of the Dreaming ancestors being celebrated in the performance (Ellis, 1970). The song texts are typically quite cryptic and/or phonologically altered by being sung as opposed to spoken, and may include placenames, names referring to particular incidents in the ancestral episodes, and sometimes words in different languages or untranslatable utterances of the Dreaming ancestors concerned (Turpin,

2007a, 2007b). This is why the authoritative interpretation of the senior owners of the *yawulyu/awelye* is necessary. As previously mentioned, new songs may enter the repertory from time to time through revelatory dreams, but their source is attributed to the Dreaming ancestors rather than human agency, although those who receive the songs in dream may derive considerable social prestige through their composition (Dussart, 2000, 2004; Wild, 1987).

1.4 Section summary

Yawulyu (in Warlpiri and Warumungu) and *awelye* (in Arandic languages) are women's country-based ceremonies in central Australia. Ceremonial performances constitute a collective expression of knowledge surrounding the particular country, lifestyles and Dreaming stories to which the ceremonies relate, which are owned by particular clans of people. Each clan estate has one main *yawulyu/awelye*, usually named for the principal Dreaming (totem) of the country. Most individual songs are of unknown origin, but some have come into the repertoire in living memory usually through dreams in which songs and associated dances and body designs are revealed to the dreamer. *Yawulyu/awelye* are performed by women only, but in some circumstances can be overheard by men. Since the 1970s they have been performed publicly for various events including legal proceedings, graduations, and arts festivals.

2 Systems of learning music

Traditionally learning of *yawulyu/awelye* songs took place informally, through progressive immersion in performances and ongoing contact with the country and stories to which they relate. Today this type of learning is much more difficult due to social change and dislocation, so younger learners are developing new strategies.

2.1 Philosophies of learning and teaching

2.1.1 Approaches to explicit vs implicit teaching

Central Australian ceremonies are not explicitly taught. Teaching singing is not formally recognised as a distinct skill from performing. Learning the songs, dances, paintings and meanings mostly occurs in performances, through constant repetition and (initially) imitation, as we discuss below (see also Ellis, 1985, p. 112).

The interview below, from a conversation with Kathy Sampson Nangala and Lucy Martin Nampijinpa at Wirliyajarrayi (Willowra), was conducted in Warlpiri, and later transcribed and translated into English by Mary Laughren. The station at Willowra was established in the 1930s, but began to be developed more extensively after 1946 (Vaarzon-Morel, 1995). First we asked the women about how they had acquired their knowledge of *yawulyu*.

Mary: How did you learn *yawulyu* songs? Who taught you?

Lucy: I was taught the songs for my Dreaming by my aunt (father's sister), Nangala (now deceased). Only one Nangala for that Dreaming is left now who knows those songs; (she is) Kathy Nangala. She is a younger Nangala than those old aunties who taught me the songs. Topsy Nangala, who lives at Alekarengge and who is suffering from kidney disease, is the only one from the older generation still alive.

Mary: Where were you living when you started learning *yawulyu*?

Kathy & Lucy: Right here at Willowra, before there was any station here or buildings.

[...]

Kathy: We would go to Pawu (Mt Barkly) and then come back this way.

Lucy: Our mothers and grandmothers would take us around with them. We grew up here, we didn't grow up in some other far away place.

Kathy: We were children here and we have grown old here.

[...]

Lucy: The Dreamings for Pawu are ngapa 'water' and ngurlu 'seeds.'

Kathy: We paint the designs and then we dance.

Mary: Nangala, where did you learn the songs and dances for ngurlu?

Kathy: Here. I didn't move around all over the place, I just lived around here.

Mary: Who taught you?

Kathy: My elder sisters.



Figure 5 Kathy Sampson Nangala (centre) and Lucy Martin Nampijinpa (right) preparing for a *yawulyu* at Wirliyajarrai, June 2009 (photograph by Myfany Turpin).

From this interchange, we get a picture of the fairly traditional life these women experienced in the early post-contact period before World War 2, and how *yawulyu* along with the associated knowledge of *jukurra* [Dreaming], country, and family relationships to country was passed on from one generation of women to the next as

women went about their lives in multigenerational groups of closely related kin, or extended families. As young girls moved around the country in the company of their mothers and grandmothers they were shown how to live off their country, were told about people and events associated with specific sites, especially waters, in their country and also about the creative period. As they got older they were taught the songs and dances for their own patriline, specifically their own patricouple, by the senior female members of that group, their paternal aunts and elder sisters.

Learning primarily comes from paying attention and participating in the ceremonies. The onus of learning ceremonies is very much on the learner (Hale, 1984). In Kaytetye the verb *arrit-arenke* 'to pay attention to something in order to learn how to do it' (a compound based on the verb 'to see') describes specifically how ceremonies and other aspects of Aboriginal law are learnt:

Awelye warle tyampe arrit-arerrantye kalyarrerrane, kalyinterantye kwere. Arrit-arerrantyeelke mpelarte learn-arrewethe. Arrit-arengele atyenge erlwarerrantyaawe, intarerrantye apeke arrit-arengele. Arrit-arerrantye iterrtye kwerrpe anteyane tyampe, law-angkwarre. (Kaytetye Dictionary database, JA, IAD/University of Queensland, 2001)

People learn women's ceremonies by paying careful attention at performances, that's how ceremonies are taught. A person watches carefully in order to learn. Someone might learn how to do something by watching me (do it), they might be staring and paying close attention (to what I am doing). A person pays close attention during a ceremony if they don't know it.

Anmatyerr elder Aileen Campbell recalls a childhood of constant exposure to her ceremonies, and this is how she learnt them. As an eight- or nine-year-old, she would be painted up with her ceremonial designs by her aunts and grandmothers, thus affirming her relationship to the ceremony, country, totems with all the rights and responsibilities that go with it.

Pwety-warl alhetyart map. Nheng warl-eng anetyart, iter-el alyelherl-alpetyart, arlkeny werrrerl-alpetyart. werrkel pwety-el. Amarl map alhetyart. Artwang map warrk-irretyart. Kel anwern alhetyart, ayeng pwert-antey alhetyart, mother-el angetyart ayeng.

We used to go back out bush away from the station, to sing and paint up. The women used to go while the men worked. My mother used to take me. [Eileen Pwerle, T10021a]

Then, as a teenager, she gradually started joined in the singing of songs where she felt she knew the words. Crucially, her involvement was her own decision and it occurred at her own pace (T100721a). Her mistaken belief that the older women were laughing at her when they were actually joking amongst themselves highlights the prevalent fear of making a mistake.

Kel awetyart 'alyelhang' kwenh ntwā too-kwenh, ntwang alyelhay! Ayeng mother-el iletarty ntwā catchem-il-erl-alpem yanh. Kel alyelhetyart, kwek war. Kel ntert-am-arl anetyart ayeng alakenh kwek-am-akwek alyelherl-alpem. Kel inang arrken atherrem-arl, kel ayeng ntert-arl-irr-erleng, alakenh.

'You sing too,' the older women would say. My mother used to tell me 'you know the words now,' and I would be singing bit by bit. I used to be silent, but then I

sang little by little. When they used to laugh amongst themselves I would go quiet [embarrassed]. [Eileen Pwerle, T100721a]

Ellis (1985) conducted much research in Western Desert regions of central Australia on how ceremonies are learnt. While we did not conduct research in this geographic region, some of her findings apply to traditional learning throughout central Australia. In her book *Aboriginal Music: Education for Living* (1985), Ellis describes how traditional singers taught traditional songs in an urban setting at the University of Adelaide. Here, as back in their community, learners were not to ask questions, because this was regarded as questioning the authority and skills of the teacher. Teachers stopped the lesson when this occurred. The relationship between the master/student is of utmost importance, as it is in all areas of traditional learning. Asking questions to clarify understanding threatens this relationship, and thus threatens further learning:

The student must be motivated to accept the elders unquestioningly as the models of master musicians and wise people, while at the same time learning the strictest self-discipline. (Ellis, 1985, p. 125)

A positive aspect of the master/student style of learning is that it involves both people singing together, which students find conducive to learning (Ellis, 1985, p. 125).

Ellis describes how this approach to learning begins with confusion (Ellis, 1985, p. 125). Learning is at first done through imitation of a respected person and able performer (p. 123). It is usually at a much later stage, even years, that the learner discovers for themselves how to unravel the words and structures that underlie the songs. Hale (1984) raises the question of whether this style of learning might be one factor that led to the re-analysis of musical structure that has occurred in the songs of neighbouring regions. Hale also points out the intellectual pleasure that can be derived from uncovering these structures that have hitherto been only confusion.

Although there is no formal teaching of songs, there is holistic teaching. The goal of this teaching is much more than being able to perform ceremonies, and it doesn't occur unless a student is willing: '(no student) is ever taught unless that student sees the need to learn and expresses interest in being taught' (Ellis, 1985, p. 112). Generally, an elder does not take on the responsibility of teaching or training a younger person until they have demonstrated that they want to learn and are ready to learn. Ellis states that '[a] student shows his or her readiness to learn by being prepared to follow the model of the master teacher and seeking him out for help' (p. 120).

There are no named stages of learning. Learning begins informally just by being present during ceremonies, with no expectations, although children are 'constantly being reinforced to develop motivation for more formal learning' (p. 122). More formal learning occurs first in relation to beating and then dancing. Singing tends to be the last aspect of performance that is taught (see also Ellis, 1985, pp. 121–122).

We found that elders generally commend learners on their involvement, as noted also by Ellis:

Not only were they [the Aboriginal elders] patient in repeating material as often as necessary, but they were ever ready to praise and encourage no matter how small an improvement had been made. (Ellis, 1985, p. 127)

In relation to correcting errors, Ellis finds that teachers do not emphasise mistakes but wait for the students themselves to observe what was wrong (Ellis, 1985, p. 127). We have also observed singers verbally correcting errors made by other singers, possibly after the singer herself fails to correct the error. People of all ages that we interviewed mentioned that as learners they were fearful of making a mistake, because elders might laugh at them. This is an issue in learning across all domains of traditional knowledge. Shaming is one of the most important methods of social control in central Australian society (Myers, 1986, pp. 120–124). Whilst group participation may be an excellent strategy for minimising mistakes and ensuring the accurate transmission of songs, one impact of this may be that only few people pluck up the courage to participate in the singing, and participation is crucial for learning.

For example, where traditional performance practice demanded that women sing loudly and in unison, Kathleen Fitz Nappanangka and Bunny Naburula were concerned that nowadays younger women were singing too softly, perhaps for fear of making a mistake such as singing the wrong words. This change in performance practice was evident already in 1996 when the first performances for the *Yawulyu mungamunga* CD were recorded at Mary Ann Dam north of Tennant Creek (Papulu Apparr-kari Aboriginal Language and Culture Centre & Barwick, 2000).

You can hear it on that record when we were singing at the dam, it's important to sing properly. [You can't hear anybody else singing on that recording,] only me. [Kathleen Fitz Nappanangka, T100715a]



Figure 6 Bunny Naburula and Kathleen Fitz Nappanangka discuss *yawulyu*, Tennant Creek. Photograph by Myfany Turpin.

At Wirliyajarrayi we also asked Lucy and Kathy about whether the generation of women who attended school, now in their forties and fifties, knew the *yawulyu* songs and were able to sing them.

Mary: Do younger women like Kathy's daughter know the *yawulyu* songs?

Kathy: No. They don't know them.

Lucy: Only her mother here, Kathy, knows the songs.

Kathy: I'm the only Nangala who has these songs for Pawu (Mt Barkly).

Lucy: Pawu only has one Nangala (who knows its *yawulyu*) now. We have only one Nangala now.

Kathy: I know the Dreaming songs and dances for the Jangala from the west who comes to Pawu to steal the rain, that Brown Falcon (*kirrkirlanji*) man.

Mary: Are the young girls learning to sing the *yawulyu* songs?

Kathy & Lucy: No.

Mary: Do they know the dances?

Kathy: Not really. They only do little bits of dancing.

Lucy: A few of the young ones dance well. One young one danced with us at the opening of the new Central Land Council building in Alice Springs.

There's one young Nakamarra who dances well.

[...]

Mary: Do the young girls not like to dance?

Lucy: They are too shy to dance. They feel shame. They don't carry on the ceremonies and songs belonging to their maternal grandmothers (*jaja* 'mother's mother'). Nor do they carry on the ceremonies for their paternal grandmothers (*yapirliyi* 'father's mother').

In this last reply, Lucy is referring to the role of *kurdungurlu* or 'policeman' in which members of the opposite patrimoiety to the patrilineal owners of a ceremony have the responsibility for the correct running of ceremonies, for placing the ritual paraphernalia in place and for putting it away at the end of a performance (Peterson & Long, 1986). In saying that the young women 'feel shame' to dance in public with their painted torsos exposed, Lucy is touching on a theme often brought up by women of her generation, that of the changing sensibilities of the younger generation brought up under the influence of European mores—disseminated through their schooling, television and travels beyond their community—which has led to a heightened awareness of the values of the majority culture.

2.1.2 Teaching tangible versus less tangible aspects of the genre

A number of elders we spoke to believed that one of the reasons young people are not able to learn their ceremonies is because these people are not familiar with the country to which the songs refer. There is a strong relationship between knowledge of country and knowledge of songs. When singing, elders visualise the country to which the songs refer (see also Ellis, 1985, p. 130). Discussions during performances also show that the movement from site to site undertaken by the protagonists in the songs is at the forefront of the performers' minds. New songs too, are only received when out on country, not within a community or town. The practice of holding land claim hearings on country arose because it was found that Aboriginal people were better able to discuss totems, songs and affiliations to land when physically at these sites. In

section 7 below we discuss several initiatives that combine learning ceremonies with being on country as a way to accommodate these less tangible aspects of the genre.

2.1.3 Perceptions of suitability for being a learner or teacher

Traditionally, the individuals that one spends time with and observes in order to learn from them are specific categories of kin. For women's *yawulyu/awelye* songs these are usually a woman's father's sister(s) and father's father's sister(s). This is because ownership of ceremonies, like country and totems, is passed on patrilineally through one's father's father. Owners make decisions about performances and explaining the meanings of songs. Elders we consulted recalled these categories of kin as the people from whom they learnt. Whilst people own the ceremonies belonging to their father's father, people also have a relationship to the ceremonies belonging to their mother's father. This relationship is one of caretaker or manager. A person is expected to be able to partake in the ceremonies of their mother's father's country, though not make decisions or explain the meanings of these ceremonies for which they simply manage rather than own. People generally learn the ceremonies for which they are managers from their mother, her sister(s) and mother's father's sister(s). Understandably, most people we spoke to talked only about the ceremonies that they own, not those that they manage.

2.1.4 Perceptions of talent

In addition to the established rules of kin from whom one can learn, the skills of particular individuals no doubt also plays a role in how successfully ceremonies are passed on. An aunt or grandmother who sings well, organises performances frequently, and explains the songs in a skilled narrative fashion is likely to have more success in passing on her ceremonies than someone who does not have these skills. Good singers and dancers are recognised as such by the community, and they are often called upon to be part of a performance, but this does not equate to that person having rights to teach or make decisions about a ceremony for which they are not an owner. Two senior performers and owners of one particular song series that is very well known and relatively large (over 60 songs), recall their father's sister and father's father's sister as two very skilled performers. The current two senior performers are also highly motivated and talented singers, equipped with detailed knowledge of the song's meanings. Whilst their daughters also live in the same community, there are no nieces. It is not clear whether the daughters will be able to pass on this ceremony without the involvement of any owners.

Within the restrictions on who can learn ceremonies, and from whom, as well as learners' fear of shame if they make a mistake, the skills and personalities of individual performers and the relationships between specific aunts and nieces are no doubt further factors influencing whether ceremonies are taken up by people.

2.2 *Learning and teaching practices and approaches*

The teaching of songs, as with language, is primarily oral and holistic. As stated above, learners would traditionally join in by clapping the rhythm, dancing, and humming the tune before being expected to join in the singing. There is no formal institution for instruction, and most people were expected to learn informally through participation in many different performances. Nevertheless, in the 1970s and 1980s Ellis spearheaded the formal teaching of traditional music by Pitjantjatjara elders within the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) established at the

University of Adelaide. Ellis reported how the Pitjantjatara elders instructed urban students at CASM in the way to learn:

You can only master a tune by listening very carefully and concentrating while we sing for you. Then you can join in, softly at first, gradually louder. Close your eyes and do not look at the others. Your concentration will then not be distracted and you can listen more intently. You must be patient and not expect to learn a great deal in a short time. Think of learning a little properly rather than half-learning a great deal. (Ellis, 1985, p. 126)

2.2.1 Notation-based versus aural learning

The tradition of literacy in Aboriginal communities is relatively new (although literacy was first introduced in some parts of central Australia as early as the 1890s) (Harris, 1990; Strehlow, 1915). While both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people have engaged with literacy in recent years, including writing down song texts, there has been little use of any musical notation (at least that we are aware of).

2.2.2 Learning aids

In relation to reading and writing the song texts, Ellis found that the elders who taught songs at the University of Adelaide very quickly came to rely on written versions of the songs to help their students to learn, because this was how people experienced in literacy learnt quickest (Ellis, 1985, p. 126). Ellis found that the use of literacy enabled more songs to be learnt more quickly, though the depth of this learning was not so great. As one student stated ‘I have never forgotten what was learned when we worked without writing’ (1985, p. 127).

Ellis herself regarded literacy as eroding the traditional oral method of learning (1985, p. 131), yet she also acknowledged that elders themselves chose to use literacy. In the current era where the tide of literacy is everywhere—and most Aboriginal people use it in at least some aspects of everyday life—to insist on purely oral learning might be akin to insist on hunting with a spear instead of a gun.

Many women in the older generation accept that younger generations may need the assistance of writing in learning songs. Bunny Naburula suggested involving language workers from the Papulu Apparr Kari Language and Culture Centre in this effort:

But we [older generation] can still do it [sing *yawulyu*], the language centre mob can write it down. [Bunny Naburula, T100715a]

There is evidence that documentation and recordings of songs have been used for many years even by older generations as part of the transmission process for *yawulyu/awelye* (Barwick, 2005, p. 7; Poirier, 1992, p. 774), but in the past this type of learning was more of an adjunct than the primary means. The recordings and other documentation of traditional knowledge were treated with the same reverence as other ceremonial objects. For example, when we visited Tennant Creek, we were told that the booklet of songtexts Barwick had assembled for Nappanangka in 1999 for approval before publication of the *Yawulyu mungamunga* CD was subsequently included in the bundle of ceremonial objects Nappanangka had recently handed over to the new owner of the *yawulyu* as part of the formal transmission process [Kathleen Fitz Nappanangka, T100715a].

In recent years DVDs, audio recordings and written texts of ceremonial songs and their meanings have all been embraced by younger generations who experienced schooling (people who were born approximately post-1960). These younger people are comfortable with a more individual style of learning using books, and audio and video recordings which they can pick up and learn from at their own pace and in a more private space.

It's hard to pick up the song unless we have it written on the paper. ... When you are telling a story it's a bit slow, and there's little spaces in the story. But when you are singing there's those sentences all together, long sentences, and it's really hard. [April Campbell Pengart, T100720a]

As we have argued elsewhere (Barwick, Turpin, & Laughren, 2011), the pressure for younger women to learn in this way arises from a fear of making mistakes as well as greatly diminished opportunities for traditional situation-based learning. For many younger people with multimedia skills, the creation of these resources offers them a chance to be meaningfully engaged during ceremonial performances without the pressure of being a learner and the responsibilities that entails. We discuss this further in §5.

2.3 *Non-musical influences on learning and teaching*

2.3.1 Influence of non-musical activities, philosophies and approaches

As already discussed above, the pool of potential performers and opportunities to learn are restricted by a person's inherited birthright to the knowledge (including song/dance knowledge) about their father's or mother's country. Owners (*kirda* in Warlpiri) inherit ownership rights in particular *yawulyu/awelye* through their father, and should learn from aunties (father's sisters), while managers (*kurdungulu* in Warlpiri) inherit their interest in a *yawulyu/awelye* through their mother, and have a responsibility to ensure that the songs are correctly performed, so may also play a role in instructing younger generations of owners (e.g., their mother's brother's daughters and grand-daughters). All the older generations we consulted stressed the importance of learning out bush, away from the distractions of town and community, and preferably at the sites being sung about.

2.3.2 Organisational or institutional influences

Because the traditional model for learning was an informal one, there are no organisational or institutional places for learning (such as music conservatories). Recognising the importance of ceremonial performances in upholding Aboriginal Law, some Aboriginal organisations have sponsored bush trips for learning of *yawulyu/awelye* at various times, and other bodies such as Aboriginal health centres, language centres, libraries and other institutions (often government-funded) may also contribute on an ad-hoc basis that is often dependent on staff with specific interests in this area.



Figure 7 April Campbell on a country trip to document *awelye* (photograph by Jenny Green).

Many organisations also commission traditional performances to mark significant occasions, such as the Central Land Council, a body established to act in the interests of traditional owners in managing their rights to land (see more discussion below). The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) has programs to disseminate knowledge about its collections and to promote community understanding of Indigenous culture, and mainstream educational institutions such as Universities and schools may also create opportunities for elders to teach some traditional songs.

2.4 Section summary

Yawulyu/awelye ceremonies are not explicitly taught, and there are no institutional places of learning. Learning mostly occurs holistically through participation in performance. Concern was expressed by all generations about the difficulties younger people experience in learning. Many elders believe that young people have difficulty in learning because they do not have regular access to the country to which the ceremonies relate. Knowledge about their ceremonies can only be passed on to women by certain categories of kin (e.g., their father's sisters). Another constraint on intergenerational transmission may be the learner's shame and fear of making mistakes in this important domain of knowledge. While writing was not traditionally used, younger learners make use of written song texts in association with audio and video recordings to facilitate private study. Various government and community institutions may sponsor bush trips and other opportunities for learning and teaching *yawulyu/awelye* on an ad hoc basis.

3 Musicians and communities

Performing their clan's *yawulyu/awelye* is expected of senior women traditional owners, who usually also demonstrate their knowledge in other channels and media such as narratives, sand-drawings, visual arts, dancing and upholding their cultural knowledge and traditional values in appropriate domains of public life. Members of several different clans reside in a community (for example, a woman's clan is different from that of her children). In the past *yawulyu/awelye* ceremonies were regular evening events in some communities

3.1 *The musician-community relationship*

3.1.1 Social role and position of musicians within the community

As stated above, there is no differentiated category of musician or performer in central Australian Aboriginal society; all people are expected to be able to sing, dance and paint their land-based ceremonies (e.g., for Kaytetye *awelye*, *ltharte*, *angkwerre*). The role of singer, dancer, hunter etc. only lasts for the moment of that activity; and it can be taken up by anyone with the necessary skills in their own ceremonies. The women's law and culture meetings, which began in the 1980s (Turpin, 2011, p. 18), are an annual event in which women may perform for up to a week. Apart from that, most people are performers for much shorter durations.

3.1.2 Advent of the audience

The concept of audience now exists in contemporary performances of land-based ceremonies (*awelye*, *ltharte*, *angkwerre* (Kaytetye)). Traditionally these ceremonies were performed in various contexts, one of which was when meeting up with other groups. In this context one group would remain watching while the other group performed. This would then be reversed. Thus, there was still no 'audience' in the sense of a category of people who do not perform at all (children, the sick, injured, lazy, or infirm might not be expected to perform, however these are exceptions and do not constitute a role in ceremony). In recent years land-based ceremonies have been performed at inter-cultural gatherings where both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are present. In these contexts there is a clear audience-performer distinction, as there is no expectation on non-Indigenous people to perform their songs.

3.2 *Being a musician*

3.2.1 Recognition of skills

Whilst there are no distinct roles as performer, some people are recognised as being particularly skilled at either singing, dancing or painting, just as some people are recognised as being a good hunter, an intellectual, or having a particular behavioural or personality trait. A person regarded as a good singer tends to be someone who knows lots of songs, has a strong voice and likes singing.

3.2.2 Issues of remuneration: Payment for skilled people

For initiation ceremonies and the *ilpentye* genre, individuals who are known as good singers are often recruited by the individuals or families that require these ceremonies and songs to be sung. Recruitment involves payment (*tyenkarre* (Kaytetye), *ngijinkirri* (Warumungu)) in the form of cash or consumable items such as food. Traditionally *tyenkarre* involved only food and tools. We are not aware of these

ceremonies being performed in intercultural gatherings where there is an audience (i.e., non-participants). Initiation ceremonies require the participation of everyone present. In the past no-one was allowed to remain in the community and not participate, but this law has now been relaxed to account for the now complex patterns of non-Indigenous and Indigenous relations. *Ilpentye* and healing ceremonies are always performed in private with the individuals concerned, so again there is no audience. The *tyenkarre* paid to singers varies, depending on the relationship between people, the need for money at the time, and what else is on offer. Sometimes no *tyenkarre* is paid at all, especially if there are perceived favours owing. Although people recognised as good singers may get *tyenkarre*, this prestige does not always cross over into other domains. That is, a person may not receive any additional benefits (other than the *tyenkarre*), privileges or favourable treatment from other members of the community for being a good singer.

3.3 *The diaspora*

Traditionally people lived and travelled on their own country. However since the forced relocation of many Aboriginal people to reside in large communities in the 1950s, subsequent generations may grow up no longer familiar with their own country. On the other hand, since the 1980s there has been increased mobility due to greater access to vehicles and opportunities to study in capital cities, which has meant that people's social networks cover a much greater distance than in the past. People now marry into communities far from those in which they grew up; sometimes into areas where the ceremonies and languages are vastly different from their own. Children from such marriages often grow up not knowing the language, ceremonies and country of the 'married-in' parent.

3.3.1 Implications of the diaspora: logistics for performance

There is a lack of public transport in remote Australia and, especially for older people, a lack of access to private vehicles. This is even more so the case for women than men (see section 5). Some distances are vast, up to 600 kilometres, and so travel can be very costly and logistics extremely difficult. Traditionally, everyone was expected to be able to maintain their own ceremonial responsibilities. However, since colonisation the performance of ceremony has become difficult for a variety of reasons. For any performance it is necessary to gather particular people; namely, the most senior owners. If the songs are not known by many of these senior owners and there are others who for one reason or another do know the songs (a situation that may occur for a variety of historical reasons), then it is necessary to gather those who know the songs in addition to the owners. The logistics of this can be expensive and complicated, as these people sometimes live far away from each other. The politics of getting these people together can also be complicated.

As mentioned previously, for historical reasons some people are skilled in particular ceremonies they do not own. Sometimes owners need these people to help carry out a performance. In some cases these non-owners may be the only singers who know the particular ceremony. A younger owner wishing to learn these songs must obtain permission from the owners to have the non-owner teach the younger owner the songs, but senior owners may deny this permission unless they have well-established relationships with the prospective teacher. There are cases where the complex negotiations involved have been successful. For example, AC recently obtained agreement from the senior owners of her country to attend a one-week camp

on country to learn and document her ceremonies, sites and Dreaming stories from a senior woman who is not an owner of her country. Arranging such a performance and context for learning involves great initiative, sensitivity and complex negotiation skills.

3.4 *Difficulties in involving younger people in the tradition*

As stated above, motivation, self-discipline and respect for elders are pre-requisites for learning. Some elders cited these as absent in the current generation. Although these are common complaints between generations in any culture, it should be noted that compared to previous generations, today there is much more pressure to engage in mainstream western culture rather than traditional culture. The introduction of video/DVDs, TV, internet, electronic games and mobile phones in remote communities in the last ten to twenty years has led to greater engagement in mainstream culture than ever before. The strong desire to avoid situations of shame is also prevalent amongst younger generations.

3.5 *Section summary*

All people are expected to be able to sing, dance and paint their land-based ceremonies. Traditionally *yawulyu/awelye* were performed in mutual exchanges, whereby each clan group in a gathering would take turns in performing for the others. In most contemporary performance contexts for non-indigenous audiences there is no expectation of reciprocity. While there are no professional musicians, for certain private ceremonies people known to be good singers are recruited to perform and may be paid in cash, food or tools. Success in this domain does not necessarily translate to more general social prestige. There is a lack of public transport in Central Australia, but social networks are more extensive than in the past so it is not uncommon for individuals to marry into communities far away, thus losing the opportunity for themselves and their children to participate regularly in learning through performance of their own ceremonies. Women's knowledge transmission suffers particularly from lack of access to vehicles and resources to teach or learn from the right kin in distant communities. At the same time younger generations are increasingly engaged with mainstream media and technologies such as video games and smartphones.

4 **Contexts & constructs**

Yawulyu/awelye and other forms of ceremony have always served as way of displaying and managing group identity within a complex social landscape involving diverse complementary groups, and many gradations of social difference. For example, describing the Warlpiri people who came to live on Kaytetye country at Alekarenge in the 1950s, Fanny Walker Napurrurla commented:

The old people brought the songs and ceremonies for Miyikampi, Jiparanpa (*ngurlu*), Pawurrinji (*ngurlu*), and Kulpurlunu (*ngapa*). The Nangalas and Nampijinpas danced for Rain (*ngapa*). The Napanangkas and Napangardis danced for Miyikampi. The Nakamarras and Napurrurla danced for Jiparanpa (my side) and for Pawurrinji. Also the Jarrajarra groups (NapaJarri-Nungarrayi) had their business and the women would dance for their own father's father's country and Dreaming. (Edited translation from Warlpiri by Mary Laughren.) [Fanny Walker Napurrurla, T100718a]

4.1 Cultural and social contexts

4.1.1 Cross-cultural influences

While the dramatic social changes that have occurred since colonisation have had major effects on when, where, why and how ceremonies occur, it is notable that they have had very little effect on the actual music itself. That is, there is very little cross-cultural influence in the actual music, dance and visual designs on ceremonies. This is no doubt partly due to the fact that ceremonies are part of Aboriginal law and not simply entertainment.

4.1.2 Explicit and implicit approaches to cultural diversity

Australian Aboriginal societies display and recognise a huge range of linguistic and cultural diversity, and ceremony has always been a primary means of intergroup communication. Even though a considerable proportion of Australia's estimated 250 languages are no longer spoken (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) & Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages (FATSIL), 2005), today most Aboriginal communities include people from a range of different language and culture groups. As Fred Myers observed of the Pintupi:

singing provides a salient image of sociability. Whenever large groups came together in traditional times, they would sing together at night. Ceremony—song and dance—was the real content of most intergroup relations. (Myers, 1986, p. 112)

Ceremonial genres like *yawulyu/awelye* can serve as a vehicle for communication of cultural identity to neighbours through shared conventions in music, poetics, dance, body decoration and song subjects, even though each individual *yawulyu/awelye* repertory stresses particular features that distinguish it from its neighbours (e.g., body designs, place names and mythological references that are tied to the particular country being celebrated).

The traditional use of *yawulyu/awelye* and other ceremonial genres to show cultural identity has been extended over the previous fifty years or so to legal contexts where performance of songs naming places and Dreamings has been accepted as evidence of traditional ownership. When we visited Tennant Creek in 2010 we interviewed Dianne Stokes Nampin, a community leader who has a long history of eloquent speech-making and advocating for Warumungu interests. She has been a member of the Central Land Council and other community organisations and has participated in several land claims. When we visited in 2010, she and other senior women were involved in various court hearings regarding potential government use of Aboriginal land. She regarded maintaining knowledge of *yawulyu* as essential for ensuring a continued voice for Aboriginal people in legal disputes.

Dianne: It's important for language and *yawulyu* to be very strong. *Yawulyu* and *pujjarli* [men's public ceremony], they're the main ones for anyone in the whole of this country. If you've got your cultural songs and your cultural dances and if you've got something coming up in in whitefella way [i.e., a court hearing], you can break it up with your dancing. You can show them, you can do your challenging, and tell them what you've got for the ground.

That's the main important thing I always say to my kids. Not only to my kids, to everyone else. I tell them, 'That's the main thing you have to hold, your cultural dancing, and your language.' There's two kind of things in your cultural way. You have to talk in language, then you have to translate it in English. Then you do your dancing; you tell them what you're dancing for.

That's how you show these people, so they know, 'Oh yeah, they've got the strongest ceremony,' you know, 'and the cultural way of showing us.' [Dianne Stokes Nampin, T100717a].

Although the main focus of our interview was *yawulyu*, the main women's ceremonial tradition, Nampin broadens the frame of her remarks here to include *pujjarli*, men's public ceremony that is sometimes performed in similar public contexts, including land claims and native title hearings (there also exists another much larger body of men's songs that are restricted and not suitable for public occasions). Throughout Aboriginal Australia, songs and ceremony are tied to particular places, and often name them and recount aspects of their foundation myths (Ellis, 1992b). As such, ceremonial performances have been accepted in court hearings under both Land Rights and Native Title legislation as evidence of attachment to country—'you can tell them what you've got for this ground' (Bell, 1993; Koch, 1994, 1997, 2004, 2013). Traditional knowledge management protocols dictate that only the senior owners of the country can elucidate their meanings, so Dianne Stokes regards the explanation of the performance in language and then translation into English as a guarantee of the authority of the owners and as an integral part of the 'cultural way.'

Like Dianne Stokes Nampin, Bunny Naburula was concerned that in the future her descendants might be disadvantaged by not carrying on knowledge of their *yawulyu*:

But in the future, you know government people are going to ask young people, 'Do you know your culture?' What are they going to say? Nothing, they can just look at it [not perform it]. That's why I say to my family, 'You're going to have to learn your culture.' [Bunny Naburula, T100715a]

4.1.3 Obstacles

Yawulyu/awelye is most strongly sustained in remote Aboriginal communities that are disproportionately affected by poverty, poor health and lack of access to services. Part of what sustains *yawulyu/awelye* in these locations, however, is comparatively greater access to the country and social power that comes from it. Some communities that were originally established as Christian missions had a history of suppression of traditional ceremonial religious practices such as *yawulyu/awelye* because they were considered 'satanic' (Carter, 1996; Harris, 1990), but in other instances Christian missions supported the continuation of traditional languages and ways of life. Today the main threats to *yawulyu/awelye* stem from disruption of traditional languages, lack of access to country (see further below), and the lack of knowledgeable singers living, or able to get together, in the one place. In addition, a number of government policies such as the closure of bilingual programs in Northern Territory schools and the focus on mainstream employment in the NT Intervention have had the possibly unintended effect of encouraging people to abandon traditional practices.

4.2 *Constructs*

The underlying values and attitudes steering musical directions, for example musical tastes, aesthetics, cosmologies, socially and individually constructed identities, gender issues, (perceived) prestige, attitudes to recontextualisation, attitudes to authenticity, have already been addressed above.

4.3 *Section summary*

Despite extensive social changes in the ways and means by which ceremonies occur, there is remarkably little cross-cultural influence on the actual music, dance and visual designs used in ceremony, which are consciously preserved and revered as originating in ancestral precedent. There are shared conventions in music, poetics, dance, body decoration and song subjects, though each repertory stresses the Dreaming stories and places that are specific to that clan's identity. This traditional use has extended in the last forty years to legal contexts where performance of *yawulyu/awelye* has been accepted as demonstrating native title to land. Significant threats to sustainability of *yawulyu/awelye* today stem from disruption of traditional languages and loss of access to country, combined with young peoples' increasing engagement with the mainstream entertainment industry through TV, DVD, and electronic games.

5 **Infrastructure & regulations**

Yawulyu/awelye ceremonies have developed a remarkably flexible and resilient performance practice requiring little material infrastructure, but heavily dependent on human infrastructure (knowledgeable elders and keen learners) and the resources to bring the right people together and support them during performance. The most important regulatory framework is Dreaming Law (*jukurrpa* or *altjerre*), which established the precedents for human behavior including ceremony and which continues as the primary point of reference for ongoing replenishment of the practice through dreaming of new songs, dances and stories.

5.1 *Infrastructure*

5.1.1 Places to perform, compose, practise and learn

Because *yawulyu/awelye* performance (though not necessarily audience) is restricted to women, the preferred location for performances is generally in a private location, preferably out bush 'on country' (within the estate of the relevant land-owning group). Dancing requires an open space, usually selected to have a windbreak provided by rocks or trees. Such bush trips require access to four-wheel drive vehicles, firewood, food and camping supplies. Many women complain that they have difficulty gaining access to four-wheel drive vehicles in particular for these purposes. As already mentioned, many younger learners these days prefer to rehearse through private study of books or recordings, usually in private homes. We are not aware of any use of social media for these purposes.

5.1.2 Availability / manufacturing of instruments

Yawulyu/awelye is a sung genre and does not normally employ musical instruments (though wooden clapsticks are sometimes used for percussion alongside body

percussion such as handclapping and lapslapping). Clapsticks are sometimes made for sale to tourists, manufactured from readily available woods such as mulga.

5.1.3 Availability and accessibility of other tangible resources

Materials for body-painting (e.g., ochres) and decoration (e.g. feathers, cloth) as well as ritual paraphernalia such as *kuturu* (digging sticks, decorated and used to mark the ceremonial ground) were traditionally sourced from known sites and carefully looked after by senior owners. Male relatives are sometimes involved in manufacture of wooden objects. These days there is some use of modern materials such as acrylic paints instead of ochres, or cardboard boxes in place of bark, but generally traditional materials are preferred if available.



Figure 8. Ceremonial objects (coolamon and feathered sticks) used in danced performances of *yawulyu mungamunga*. The objects were arranged by the senior owners to be photographed for use in the CD package (photograph by Linda Barwick).

5.2 Laws, regulations, and funding

5.2.1 Artists' rights and copyright legislation

Artists' rights for published materials are covered under Australian copyright legislation, which now includes moral rights as well as mechanical and author's copyrights. Otherwise Aboriginal Law (as previously outlined) protects the rights of the owners to display and make decisions about their *yawulyu/awelye*. The Australia Council for the Arts has published a series of recommendations regarding copyright protection for traditional music (Australia Council for the Arts, 2008). The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies also covers relevant questions in their *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies* (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2011).

5.2.2 Sound restrictions or laws limiting artistic expression

There are no relevant sound restrictions or laws limiting artistic expression.

5.2.3 Funding and grants processes

The costs involved with *yawulyu/awelye* performances principally concern the cost and logistics of bringing the necessary people together, and feeding and housing them through the performance. These costs may be covered informally, e.g. through co-opting researchers and relevant bodies such as the land council, health centre or language centre, or through formal grant applications such as those supporting Indigenous festivals in the region (Yeperenye, DanceSite, Mbantua, see 7.3.3 below). The federal government's Maintenance of Indigenous Language Records program has been one source of funding for some groups in recent years. *Yawulyu/awelye* performances may also be commissioned by government or commercial bodies for public events—such as art gallery openings, book launches, or the opening of new buildings—in which case performance fees are expected to be paid. Traditionally, some women's ceremonies circulated as part of regional exchange networks, and passing on of a ceremony from one group to another was expected to be paid for in blankets and other goods (Berndt, 1950; Ellis, 1992a; Poirier, 1992).

5.3 Section summary

Infrastructure surrounding *yawulyu/awelye* is minimal. Opportunities to practice and rehearse 'out bush' and preferably on clan country may be limited by lack of access to vehicles and resources, but once in location performances can be adapted to suit almost any outdoor area with suitable shade and cleared areas for dancing. Use of instruments (clapsticks) is optional. Ceremonial objects and materials for bodypainting are sourced from traditional sites and looked after by senior owners, sometimes with the involvement of male relatives in manufacture of wooden objects. Ownership of ceremonial knowledge is carefully guarded and formally handed on when necessary. In Australia copyright protection and guidelines developed by government bodies, in combination with traditional regimes of knowledge management, provide adequate legal protection. The main infrastructural requirements are resources to support bringing the necessary people together and feeding and housing them for the duration of the performance. Occasions for performance (and hence teaching and learning) are supported in an ad hoc way by a variety of government and commercial funding sources.

6 Media and the music industry

Yawulyu/awelye is not a commercial music genre and thus has only incidental presence in the broadcast media and little to no relevance to the music industry.

6.1 Media engagement

6.1.1 Presence of the genre in mass media (radio, television, internet)

The main occasions for appearance of *yawulyu/awelye* in the mass media concern incorporation of *yawulyu/awelye* into public events such as festivals, art openings, and other public events (see 5.2.3 above). Usually there is little or no attempt to explain the significance for any outsiders, rather the performances are iconic, marking the respect of the commissioning group for Aboriginal culture in general.

6.1.2 Performers' response to / engagement with media

As previously mentioned, documentation of *yawulyu/awelye* for the purposes of teaching and learning has been increasingly requested and carried out by younger generations. In some cases, such documentation has also had limited public release (Harrison, O'Shannessy, & Turpin, in press; Laughren et al., 2010; Turpin & Ross, 2004, 2013; Watts, Campbell, & Turpin, 2009).



Figure 9. Fanny Walker Napurrurla and family work with Laughren and Barwick to document *Yawulyu ngurlu* song texts, Alekareng, 19 July 2010 (T100719-1.jpg) (photograph by Myfany Turpin).

6.1.3 Impact of media presence on the genre

In our opinion, one impact of media presence has been to increase the opportunities for performance through the staging of public events, which contributes in some small way to public recognition and hence the maintenance of the tradition. Perhaps such public displays, by increasing the visibility of the tradition, assist in persuading supporting and funding bodies of the need to keep the tradition viable.

6.2 Presence in the music industry

Some *yawulyu/awelye* recordings have been published by ethnomusicologists: some tracks are included in published recordings (A. M. Moyle, 1977/1992) and in recordings published with books, such as Richard Moyle's *Alyawarra music* (R. M. Moyle, 1986). In 2000 the Papulu Apparr-kari Language and Culture Centre in Tennant Creek facilitated the publication of a CD, *Yawulyu mungamunga* (Papulu Apparr-kari Aboriginal Language and Culture Centre & Barwick, 2000), in a release timed to coincide with the Sydney Olympic Games (see also Barwick, 2005). One reason the publication was supported by the Warumungu women elders was to raise

the prestige of *yawulyu* amongst younger generations by demonstrating that it was valued in the commercial music market.



Figure 10. Coolamon and feathers for *Yawulyu mungamunga* photographed by Linda Barwick for the CD cover.

6.2.1 Changing modes of distributing, publicising, and supporting music

As mentioned, audio and video recordings have been used for some time to assist in teaching and learning. Since these are private recordings used for private purposes, distribution takes place within networks of personal acquaintances and there is no need for publicity.

6.2.2 Role of audiences, patrons, funding bodies and governments

As already mentioned, traditionally *yawulyu/awelye* did not involve a passive audience. Rather, all present were expected to participate or reciprocate by performance of their own *yawulyu/awelye*. While tourists may be present at the public events previously described, we are not aware of any regular performances for tourists. There have been some attempts to set up such regular performances, e.g., at the Nyinkka Nyunyu Museum and Art Gallery in Tennant Creek, but these have so far been unsuccessful, perhaps because the main interest of tradition holders is in educating their own future tradition holders rather than the general public.

6.3 Section summary

Yawulyu/awelye is not a commercial music genre and thus has only incidental presence in the broadcast media and little to no relevance to the music industry. On occasion more detailed information about songs and associated knowledge has been made publicly accessible through limited release of documentation initially compiled for teaching and learning purposes. Private recordings also circulate between teachers and learners. When ceremonies do appear in events open to the general public (such

as arts festivals) there is little or no attempt on either side to explain their significance. Performers are mainly interested in educating their own future tradition holders, while commissioning bodies often include the performances as indicators of a general respect for Indigenous culture without any real interest in the meaning of the ceremonies. Nevertheless demand for public performances of *yawulyu/awelye* has significantly increased the frequency of occasions for learning through performance. Although tourists may be present at such public events, attempts to mount regular *yawulyu/awelye* performances specifically for tourists have never met with success.

7 Issues and initiatives for sustainability

7.1 Overall vitality

Cath Ellis, who worked with Aboriginal singers from the 1960s to the 1990s, was deeply involved in the issue of how to assist Aboriginal people in maintaining their traditional ceremonies. In reflecting on her fieldwork, she sees the main question for sustainability as:

...whether the means were available to these performers to preserve a living tradition that, although differing from their old one, was comparable to it in terms of the processes of creating, of controlling the world through song, and of stating identity through performance. How can they go on performing creatively while adapting their traditions to the circumstances in which they now live? This is a difficult transition, which may require some outside assistance, but it is not an impossibility. (Ellis, 1992a, p. 160)

7.2 Key issues for sustainability

As suggested above, the key issues around sustainability of *yawulyu/awelye* concern support for the intergenerational transmission of the ceremonies. The right people need to be educated and trained to take charge of the future of their own *yawulyu/awelye* tradition. We have seen how some of the major factors affecting this concern much broader cultural questions, and include:

- knowledge of country, Dreamings and language
- the ability to bring together the right people to perform, teach and learn
- the ability to access traditional country
- understanding of the historical importance of *yawulyu/awelye* in securing and demonstrating rights to land
- empowering younger generations to apply their own creativity and cultural understandings in adapting the *yawulyu/awelye* tradition to the modern world.

In the past *yawulyu/awelye* was learnt by observation. When participation began, dancing took place before singing. Leading performances, composing new songs, explaining meanings and painting up was and is performed only by the most senior women. While family-based learning continues, there are diminishing traditional opportunities to perform *yawulyu/awelye*, although new avenues are emerging.

Older people are anxious about the social consequences of not handing on *yawulyu/awelye*, and are conscious of difficulties in gaining access to resources and time to allow learning to take place on country in the old way. Younger people desire written and recorded documentation of *yawulyu/awelye*, especially so that they can learn the difficult song words, which they find hard to pick up in the infrequent performances that take place these days. This is partly due to the difficulty of song language itself, and partly due to younger people's relative lack of experience of the traditional knowledge and lifestyles referred to in songs (places, hunting techniques, ecological knowledge). Indeed, documentation sessions working on *yawulyu/awelye* can create an enjoyable social environment for both young and older people. Perhaps the multimodal and flexible nature of traditional practice facilitates recognition and incorporation of new modes of learning for younger women (Barwick et al., 2011).



Figure 11 April Campbell Pengart creating a DVD to document *awelye*, with her mother Eileen Pwerle behind her. Photograph by Jenny Green.

7.3 Past and current initiatives

7.3.1 Research projects on songs

These projects inspire people to learn, provide performance opportunities and produce resources for learning. Ellis reports how documenting women's songs in northern South Australia resulted in Aboriginal women there reviving ceremonies which had not been performed for years '...my requests for songs stimulated an interest in them, so traditions were again passed from one group to another, and children began to be taught long-neglected songs' (Ellis, 1992a, p. 156).

Recordings of songs enable people immediate access to listening them. Recordings are not only a by-product of researchers, but they are also made by community members for the purposes of learning, for providing back-up in performances, for enjoyment, and for creative multi-media works which more and more younger Aboriginal people are engaging with. A good example is the works created in Yirrkala through the Mulka project (Kral, 2012). Recall that songs are regarded as a significant part of Indigenous identity and so engaging in songs can assist in social and individual well-being.

Maureen O’Keeffe Nampijinpa commented on the factors motivating her to document the songs known by her mother’s sister Mona Hayward Nungarrayi:

I really want to learn that [*awelye*], keep it, because it’s my mother's songs. I’ve always been interested in *yawulyu*. ... These days everything is changing, some have lost their culture already, and by doing this [teaching and documenting *awelye*] we can keep it strong, our culture. ... Because this old lady [Mona Hayward], she’s the last member of our family. As the elder in our family she's the only one who knows the cultural ways you know, our cultural knowledge. If she goes, all will be lost. [Maureen O’Keeffe Nampijinpa, T100718c]

7.3.2 Inclusion of song documentation in language programs

The Australian federal government’s Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records (MILR) program provides funding to assist Aboriginal people in research and teaching projects on Aboriginal languages. Although some projects on songs have been funded (Turpin & Ross, 2013), the guidelines do not specifically include song.

Maureen O’Keeffe Nampijinpa commented:

I’ve wanted everything to be recorded on tape or maybe write a book or something, DVD. We’ve got history stories, but we need to know Dreamtime stories and traditional songs. We don’t know about traditional songs. These are the ones that need to be recorded, traditional songs. [Maureen O’Keeffe Nampijinpa, T100718c]

Songs should be specifically included in language documentation, or else, as advocated by the National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia, a separate fund for work on maintaining Aboriginal traditional songs should be established, to be administered by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (The National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia, 2011, pp. 6–7; Yunupingu et al., 2005).

7.3.3 Festivals

Festivals at which many different Aboriginal groups come together are an important avenue for performance. The Yeperenye festival held in Alice Springs in 2001 was probably the biggest performance of traditional music in Alice Springs for 100 years. Arrernte co-producer Rachel Perkins Kemarre describes the first day of the Yeperenye festival:

When [Aboriginal] people realised what was going to happen, that everyone was going to dance and all these people were going to watch, ... people became very proud and competitive. People started forming dance groups on the day, because I think they saw a demonstration of culture and pride, and the audience were really appreciative of it. [Rachel Perkins Kemarre, T100625a_02]

Festivals also provide a healthy competitive atmosphere. Four recent festivals in the region are described below.

- DanceSite (2007-2012). Organised by Artback NT, this was an evening of traditional Central Australian Aboriginal music and dance held in Tennant Creek, and included one or two acts from elsewhere in Aboriginal Australia. *Yawulyu/awelye* was the traditional genre most performed.
- Mobfest (2008-2010). Organised at Ti-Tree School by the non-profit Music Outback Foundation, a festival was mounted initially for the Central Australian schools that incorporated its music program. In subsequent years it included traditional ceremonies from surrounding communities. *Yawulyu/awelye* was the traditional genre most often performed.
- Milpirri (2006-). Milpirri, run annually at Lajamanu, was conceived by Warlpiri schoolteacher Steve Jampijinpa Patrick, who secured the involvement of NT dance company Tracks in 2005 to create a new ceremonial genre that fuses contemporary western dance and traditional Warlpiri ceremonies. This festival involves predominantly Warlpiri people. While not initially conceived as a forum for *yawulyu/awelye*, the genre is now an integral part of the festival.
- Yeperenye festival. Held in Alice Springs in 2001, Yeperenye was possibly the largest ever national event of Indigenous ceremonies (and it also included many other arts). Whilst calls from Aboriginal people to make this a regular event were not successful at attracting the necessary funding and support, the momentum the festival spurred no doubt influenced the inception of DanceSite and Milpirri, and has been cited by individuals as an event that triggered their own desire to learn *yawulyu/awelye* (Turpin, 2011, pp. 18–19).

Describing the showcasing of state-by-state ceremonies at the Yeperenye festival, co-organiser and Arrernte film-maker Rachel Perkins recalls that when the Tasmanian representatives came on stage to say: ‘We don't have any [songs and] dances and that’s because of our history; and we are not going to make them up, but we are proud to be here,’ she understood how important these things are, and how important the solidarity that such a festival enables is amongst Aboriginal people [Rachel Perkins, T100625a_02]. In October 2013 Perkins and co-organiser Nigel Jamieson will again co-convene a major Indigenous arts festival in Alice Springs: the Mbantua festival.

7.3.4 Meetings and workshops

Since the 1980s, Women’s law and culture meetings have been held almost annually in Central Australia with support from Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women’s Council and the Central Land Council. These non-public events have provided a valuable performance opportunity for women and inspired a number of younger people to learn their ceremonies (Turpin, 2011, p. 18).

Two staff members who worked at these meetings for over twenty years state that there has been undeniable deterioration in the state of ceremonies over this time. As these events are not recorded (at the performers wishes) it is not possible to identify the exact nature of the change.

7.3.5 Country Trips

Since 2007, Dancesite Artback NT has ran the Indigenous traditional dance program, which involves taking Aboriginal people back out on country to learn the songs, experience the sites and learn the stories. Sometimes these visits also give people the time and space to resolve conflict. Staff on this program acknowledge the everyday difficulties Aboriginal people face, but they are necessarily apolitical because the aims are to support people to maintain, revive or develop their performance traditions.

In 2003, the Arrernte healing Centre, Akeyularre, was established in Alice Springs to promote and support traditional healing in the Arrernte region (Abbott, 2004). A large part of their focus is traditional songs and ceremonies through organised trips on country, where learning songs and dances is one aspect of a holistic learning program. Increasingly, teaching and learning the traditional songs and ceremonies, for both men and women, has become a major focus of their work. Being out on country is vital for learning, not only because it provides a focused learning environment, but also because learning songs and dances involves learning about the sites, plants, animals and landscape to which the songs refer. As a result of this learning on country, new generations of performers have been empowered to perform for outside audiences at public events such as the DanceSite festival [Agnes Abbott Pwerrerle, T100316a].

7.3.6 Teaching and learning through state education projects

While there are some schools that do incorporate the teaching and learning of traditional songs, most schools do not include this in their teaching for a variety of reasons.

- no funding identified for paying elders to teach;
- lack of understanding of the Indigenous teaching process and how students' learning is assessed;
- elders uncomfortable or unfamiliar with school environment;
- lack of logistical support to take learning onto country;
- lack of knowledge on the part of many non-Indigenous teachers as to how traditional ceremonies can fit in with the education system outcomes.

At Tennant Creek, Warumungu cultural worker Rosemary Plummer Narrurlu recounted an occasion in which she had helped to incorporate *yawulyu mungamunga* songs into a high school performance of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*:

When I was working at the high school we used one part of it [*yawulyu mungamunga*] for that *Romeo and Juliet*, because they were lovers. We spoke to Mrs Fitz, that old Nappanangka, [to ask] which one we're not allowed to use, so she told us which number to use. Mrs Fitz said, 'Nope, don't use this one, don't use that one, use this one!' I think it was number four. She [told us not] to use number nine. [Rosemary Plummer Narrurlu, T100716a]

7.3.7 Teaching in Universities

In the 1970s, Cath Ellis established a program at University in SA where elders from northern South Australia came down, four at a time, for periods of a few weeks 'to teach their chosen songs to city Aboriginal people and to university music students' (Ellis, 1992a, p. 161) (see also Ellis, 1985). This program seemed to have positive

effects on the maintenance of the tradition by inspiring Indigenous people to learn their songs, reinforcing the value of their traditions in society, as well as benefiting many non-Indigenous people and university institutions. Ellis also noted that

The presence of competent non-Aboriginal singers from the city at a traditional performance in the outback has stimulated many young Aboriginal performers to respond to the need for preservation of their own traditions in some form in the present time. (Ellis, 1992a, p. 161)

The program was costly and required a staff member from within the University to work full-time for the period in which the elders are teaching, as well as a week either side to ensure that the organisation of the event ran smoothly.

When considering past initiatives, it is important to think about how these initiatives might have different results in a different era. In recent years the NT government put an end to bilingual education that operated in some NT schools where English was not a first language; and insisted that the first four hours of all NT schools must be in English only. At the same time schools in NSW and Victoria were beginning to implement Aboriginal language programs and some sought permission to use NT language materials in their schools. Indigenous language teachers may have felt angered at requests to teach other children their language, whilst the right for their own children to learn their language was being denied.

CASM was established in an era of federal policies that recognised the importance of Aboriginal culture (e.g. NT Land Rights Act, bilingual education). In contrast, the NT policies mentioned above, as well as the current federal Intervention policy, challenge the value of Indigenous culture. In such a climate, a situation where non-Indigenous people can access formalised learning of Indigenous traditions but Indigenous people cannot, would not be conducive to passing on traditions. Any initiatives to teach songs should involve pathways for younger Aboriginal owners to access learning their traditions.

In 1992 Catherine Ellis stated:

One of the most important things we can do ... is to advise funding authorities of the importance of appointing traditional performers as the teachers of their own tradition to outsiders. In Australia in particular, there is enough money and person-power to appoint traditional performers [to teach] to every region of Australia, knowing that in doing so we are encouraging a strong sense of identity in the traditional performance (of whatever type) and are thereby encouraging the preservation of a living contemporary tradition. (Ellis, 1992a, p. 162)

In 2013 Ellis's dream is very far from being realised, and despite Australia's economic boom since 1992, it is very difficult to conceive of the current Australian government or Universities agreeing with her assessment of the availability of funding, nor have recent years seen significant increase in the pool of qualified indigenous people interested to participate in such teaching to outsiders. Sustained and coordinated efforts will be required to support education and training of upcoming generations of Aboriginal people in learning and practice of their own traditions before they can be expected to interpret them to outsiders.

7.3.8 Tourism

Despite the popularity of Alice Springs with tourists, the Arrernte have not embraced tourism as a context for performance [Rachel Perkins Kemarre, T100625a_02]. There

have been various opportunities for Arrernte people to perform regularly for tourists, however this has not been taken up. It is not clear why Arrernte people do not value such performances. Perhaps they think the economic benefits are too small, or that the logistics of getting a performance group together are too great. Similarly, at the Nyinkka Nyunyu culture centre in Tennant Creek, while some Warumungu people support the idea of performing for tourists, they do not find the enterprise worthwhile because of the logistics involved and the money earned.

7.3.9 Cultural Centres

Cultural centers are ... sites of local and national desires for material and cultural success and historical redress. (Christen, 2007, p. 118)

Regional as well as national culture centres can offer opportunities for showcasing songs, instilling cultural pride and providing economic opportunities. There is no culture centre in Alice Springs; and although there have been discussions amongst Indigenous people about establishing one, for a variety of economic and political reasons nothing as yet has got off the ground. One Arrernte person we consulted stated, in relation to a culture centre: 'if you do something exciting enough, then people will get behind it. I think you need good governance models, and for it to be depoliticised' [Rachel Perkins Kemarre, T100625a_02]. Success in getting such an initiative off the ground also requires particular skills. A discussion of the issues involved in developing the Nyinkka Nyunyu Tennant Creek culture centre in central Australia, which opened in 2002, are discussed in detail by Christen (Christen, 2007).

7.4 Future or suggested initiatives

Several ideas for future directions in sustaining traditional songs including *yawulyu/awelye* were discussed in an interview with Rachel Perkins.

7.4.1 A digital recording and archiving program for Indigenous songs

Rachel Perkins suggested that one possibility to support traditional music cultures would be a program to provide access to digital recording equipment and remuneration for Indigenous people to record their relatives' songs, with the digital records created being housed in the National Library of Australia's digital collections. This could be similar to the 'Bringing them Home Oral History Project' that ran from the NLA from 1999–2002 (see <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/133365/20120410-1246/www.nla.gov.au/oh/bth/index.html>). Similar ideas have been developed by the National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance, which advocates a grant program with grants to be made to nominated indigenous organisations that are best placed to identify the areas of greatest need (The National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia, 2011).

Tying Indigenous traineeships to similar projects has proved successful in the past. In the 1980s, the Aboriginal Employment Development policy gave traineeships to Indigenous people across public and private sector, and in the media sector, this led to the creation of the Indigenous Unit at SBS and ABC, as well as to Aboriginal people being employed in remote Indigenous Media who filmed many traditional songs [Rachel Perkins, T100625a_01].

7.4.2 Documenting the songs in existing archives and collections

Another suggestion by Rachel Perkins was to document video and audio recordings of songs in the collections of numerous bodies (such as Land Councils and Indigenous Media Associations) that hold such recordings but do not have the capacity to document them or to keep them in perpetuity, as well as inform the public of the existence of the recordings. As previously mentioned, many ceremonies were filmed by such organisations, but whether younger people can still access these, and whether the content and performers are well documented is another matter. A program that enabled these institutions to archive the material they hold would be invaluable for future generations [Rachel Perkins Kemarre, T100625a_01].

[Land Councils] strike me as amazing resources; as I understand it they have an incredible archive because of the native title material there. Of course, there is sensitive material, which would have to be managed. But maybe there is an extension of their role here. It seems to me that they are a great starting point for a cultural vault; one that could be added to and accessed by Indigenous people. [Rachel Perkins Kemarre, T100625a_02]

As an Indigenous person with experience in areas where there has been much cultural loss, Rachel Perkins stated: ‘if they had one song, how amazing that would be just to have one song translated and understand it. How incredibly precious that would be to those people’ [Rachel Perkins Kemarre, T100625a_01]. In some cases Aboriginal people have revived ceremonies from early records, but for many there is simply no records. Rachel Perkins recognises the urgency to working with singers now:

We've got to engage with these precious living things [songs] now somehow, otherwise they will be gone in 100 years like they are in NSW, Victoria and Tasmania. [Rachel Perkins Kemarre, T100625a_01].

7.4.3 Regular festivals

Regular performance-based annual event, such as the traditional ceremonies that occurred at the Yeperenye festival held in Alice Springs in 2001, show Aboriginal people that traditional music is culturally acceptable, instill pride in their culture, and are evidence that other people are actually interested in their culture. Rachel Perkins believes that Indigenous traditional performance needs to be at the centre of a festival, not just an added element to festivals, as it often is at folk festivals

I think you have to put Indigenous stuff at the centre and build all your processes and protocols and outcomes around that. At Yeperenye it was at the centre of things. We had the right groups represented and consulted with them properly. [Rachel Perkins Kemarre, T100625a_02]

7.4.4 Books and films to educate various audiences about the significance of Australian Indigenous music

There is a need to educate both Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous people of the importance of traditional music. These are two different audiences that would best be served by different resources.

Many younger Indigenous people are not aware of the fragility of their traditions. They are also not aware of the role these ceremonies play in Aboriginal people's legal claims to land, land-related negotiations and other negotiations with

government and private sectors who require evidence of Aboriginal authority and or ownership. For example a young person may be unaware that their own grandparent was able to secure their land in part by singing their traditional songs, with all the knowledge that entails. More broadly, there is a lack of knowledge of how traditional knowledge and practices have assisted Aboriginal people in negotiations relating to their land and culture. A documentary film or book that showcases the Aboriginal people and the songs they sang in various legal, political and intercultural settings and the beneficial outcomes they brought would be a resource to educate younger Indigenous people about the potential uses of songs in modern life.

Many non-Indigenous people are also ignorant about the diversity and role of traditional music in Aboriginal societies, and don't know how to appreciate the music and meanings of the songs. A film or book aimed at a general audience would be a useful resource for this.

7.5 Section summary

While sustaining *yawulyu/awelye* has met significant challenges, it is not an impossible enterprise. The central issue is enabling support for intergenerational transmission of the ceremonies, with the right people being trained to take charge of the future of their own traditions. Past and current initiatives that have met with success include research projects, inclusion of song in language documentation and revitalization programs, commissioning of performances for festivals, support for private performance events such as women's law and culture meetings, trips to country facilitated by arts and health organisations, incorporating teaching of *yawulyu/awelye* into state education projects, and employing performers to teach in University programs. Cultural centres can also be a focus for teaching and learning activities, but for various reasons tourism has not provided an appropriate context. Future or suggested initiatives supported by some of our interviewees include a government-supported digital recording and archiving program for Indigenous songs, research projects to document the songs in existing archives and collections and make them available to learners, regular festivals, and the creation of books and films to educate various audiences about the significance of *yawulyu/awelye*.

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Glossary of Terms

Key: Terms in particular language varieties are denoted by the following abbreviations:

- (Aly) Alyawarr
- (An) Anmatyerr
- (Ar) Arandic language subgroup
- (K) Kaytetye
- (P) Pitjantjatjara
- (W) Warlpiri
- (Wm) Warumungu
- (Wt) Wati languages subgroup

Akeyularre altyerre (Ar)	Arrente healing centre in Alice Springs <i>see</i> Dreaming Law
Alyawarr	one of the Arandic subgroup of languages of Central Australia (ISO639-3 aly)
angkwerre (K)	public genre of Kaytetye ceremonial dance songs.
Anmatyerr	one of the Arandic subgroup of languages of Central Australia (ISO639-3 amx)
apmerew- artweye (K)	owner or ‘boss’ of country and ceremony. <i>See</i> kirda (W). <i>See also</i> kurdungulu (W)
Arandic	A group of closely related languages from Central Australia (Multi-tree subgroup code aran multitree.org/codes/aran) including Eastern Arrente, Anmatyerr, Alyawarr, and Kaytetye
arit-arenke (K)	verb in Kaytetye meaning ‘to pay attention to something in order to learn how to do it’
CASM	Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music, established at the University of Adelaide in 1972
clan	group of people related by kinship through their father’s line. <i>See also</i> patricouple
couplet	two paired lines of verse, the predominant metrical structure in Central Australian song
DanceSite	a festival held at Tennant Creek
Dreaming	creation era in which the world was formed. The term also extends to beings, law and landscape established at this time. <i>See</i> totem, jukurpa/altyerre, estate, skin
Eastern Arrente	one of the Arandic subgroup of languages of Central Australia (ISO639-3 aer)

estate	tract of land (usually referred to as ‘country’ in Aboriginal English) owned by a patrilineally related clan (<i>see also</i> clan, totem, jukurrpa/altyerre)
ilpentye (Ar)	<i>see</i> yilpinji/ilpentye
inma (Wt)	term covering all aspects of ceremony, including songs, dances, designs, in Wati subgroup languages of the Western Desert area, including Pitjantjatjara
ISO639-3	International Standards Organization coding system for language names. For more information see www.ethnologue.com
isorhythm	feature of Central Australian musical style, in which song-texts are set to a fixed rhythm cycling independently of the fixed melodic contour used throughout the song series
jarrarta (W)	genre of love songs. <i>See also</i> yilpinji/ilpintye
jukurrpa (W)	<i>see</i> jukurrpa/altyerre
jukurrpa/altyerre	system of traditional Dreaming Law laid down by ancestral beings to establish precedents for law and judgement in all aspects of human society, including land ownership, language, ceremony and correct relationships with kin and outsiders
Kaytetye	one of the languages in the Arandic language subgroup (ISO639-3 gbb)
kirda (W)	owner or ‘boss’ of country and ceremony. This status is inherited patrilineally (through the father’s line). <i>See</i> apmerew-artweye (K). <i>See also</i> kurdungulu
kurdungurlu (W)	manager or ‘policeman’ of country and ceremony. This status is inherited via one’s mother. <i>See also</i> kirda
kuturu (W)	digging stick, commonly decorated and used in women’s ceremonies to mark the ceremonial ground
kwertengerle (Ar)	<i>see</i> kurdungulu
ltharte (Ar)	public genre of men’s ceremonial dance-songs (Arandic languages). <i>See also</i> pujjarli (Wm), purlapa (W)
Mbantua	Arts festival held in Alice Springs in October 2013
Mulka Centre	Knowledge centre established at Yirrkala, north-east Arnhem Land, as a local repository for records of local Indigenous knowledge (Yolngu languages)
ngijinkirri (Wm)	payment for ceremonies (usually in the form of food or goods). <i>See also</i> tyenkerre (K)
ngumpin-yapa (W)	<i>see</i> yapa (W)
Nyinkka Nyunyu	cultural centre established at Tennant Creek as a local repository for Indigenous knowledge, especially relating to Warumungu people
patricouple	term for pair of subsection or ‘skin’ names related patrilineally who thereby inherit associated knowledge, Dreamings and estate. For example, in Warlpiri, male skin names cycle over two generations, so that for a man of the Jangala subsection, his father’s father and son’s son would have the same skin; while his father and son would have the other skin name in the patricouple (Jampijinpa). Nangala and Nampijinpa women (related as paternal aunts/brother’s daughters) have interests in the same Dreamings

	and estate as the men, though women's knowledge is different from men's. <i>See also</i> clan, patrimoiety, skin
patriline	the line of patrilineal inheritance
patrimoiety	group of four subsection or 'skin' names. <i>See</i> skin, patricouple
Pintupi	one of the Wati subgroup of languages, spoken in the western part of Central Australia. Also known as Pintupi-Luritja (ISO639-3 piu)
Pitjantjatjara	one of the Wati subgroup of languages, spoken in north-western South Australia and contiguous areas of Western Australia and the Northern Territory (ISO639-3 pjt)
pujarli (Wm)	genre of Warumungu public ceremonies, led by men. <i>See also</i> angkwerre (K), ltharte (Ar), purlapa (W)
purlapa (W)	genre of Warlpiri public ceremonies. <i>See also</i> angkwerre (K), ltharte (Ar), pujjarli (Wm)
skin	system of classificatory kinship (also known as 'subsection system') widespread throughout Central Australia, whereby society is divided into eight groups (or skins) determined by actual or classificatory kinship. There are male and female versions of each skin name. In Warlpiri the eight female skin names are Napurrurla, Napangardi, Nangala, Napaltjarri, Napanangka, Nakamarra, Nampijinpa, Nungarrayi. <i>See also</i> clan, patricouple, patrimoiety
subsection	<i>see</i> skin
totem	animal, plant or other natural phenomenon (usually known as 'Dreaming' in Aboriginal English) associated with a particular clan and its estate and celebrated as an ancestral being in ceremony and stories
tyenkarre (K)	payment for ceremony, often in the form of food or goods. <i>See also</i> ngijinkirri (Wm)
Warlpiri	language of north-western Central Australia (ISO639-3 wbp)
Warumungu	language of northern Central Australia, in the vicinity of Tennant Creek (ISO639-3 wrm)
Wati	language subgroup name covering a number of related languages in northern South Australia and desert regions of Western Australia and the Northern Territory. <i>Wati</i> is the word for 'man' in most of these languages
Willowra	<i>See</i> Wirliyajarrayi
Wirliyajarrayi	Indigenous community in Central Australia, formerly known as Willowra
yapa (W)	'people' in Warlpiri. 'Ngumpin-yapa' is the specific word used to identify Warlpiri people as opposed to other Indigenous people
yawulyu/awelye	genre of Central Australian women's land-based ceremonies, known variously by the cognate terms yawulyu (W, Wm), awelye (K), awely (Aly, An)
Yeperenye	Indigenous song and dance festival held in Alice Springs in 2001
yilpinji (W)	<i>see</i> yilpinji/ilpentye
yilpinji/ilpentye	genre of love-songs. <i>See also</i> jarrarta (W)

Appendix 1. Five key domains of music sustainability

Systems of learning music	Systems of learning are central to the sustainability of most music cultures. This domain assesses balances between informal and formal training, notation-based and aural learning, holistic and analytical approaches, and emphasis on tangible and less tangible aspects of musicking. It explores contemporary developments in learning and teaching (from master-disciple relationships to systems based on technology/the world wide web), and how non-musical activities, philosophies and approaches intersect with learning and teaching. These issues play a key role from the level of community initiatives to the highest level of institutionalised professional training.
Musicians & communities	This domain examines the role and position of musicians and the basis of the tradition within the community. It looks at the everyday realities in the existence of creative musicians, including the role of technology, media, and travel, and issues of remuneration through performances, teaching, portfolio careers, community support, tenured employment, freelancing, and non-musical activities. Cross-cultural influences and the role of the diaspora are also examined, as well as the interaction between musicians within the community.
Contexts & constructs	This domain assesses the social and cultural contexts of musical traditions. It examines the realities of and the attitudes to recontextualisation, cross-cultural influences, authenticity and context, and explicit and implicit approaches to cultural diversity resulting from travel, migration or media, as well as obstacles such as poverty, prejudice, racism, stigma, restrictive religious attitudes, and issues of appropriation. It also looks at the underlying values and attitudes (constructs) steering musical directions. These include musical tastes, aesthetics, cosmologies, socially and individually constructed identities, gender issues, as well as (perceived) prestige, which is often underestimated as a factor in musical survival.
Infrastructure & regulations	This domain primarily relates to the ‘hardware’ of music: places to perform, compose, practise and learn, all of which are essential for music to survive, as well virtual spaces for creation, collaboration, learning, and dissemination. Other aspects included in this domain are the availability and/or manufacturing of instruments and other tangible resources. It also examines the extent to which regulations are conducive or obstructive to a blossoming musical heritage, including artists’ rights, copyright laws, sound restrictions, laws limiting artistic expression, and challenging circumstances such as obstacles that can arise from totalitarian regimes, persecution, civil unrest, war or the displacement of music or people.
Media & the music industry	This domain addresses large-scale dissemination and commercial aspects of music. Most musicians and musical styles depend in one way or another on the music industry for their survival. Over the past 100 years, the distribution of music has increasingly involved recordings, radio, television and internet (e.g. Podcasts, YouTube, MySpace). At the same time, many acoustic and live forms of delivery have changed under the influence of internal and external factors, leading to a wealth of new performance formats. This domain examines the ever-changing modes of distributing, publicising, and supporting music, including the role of audiences (including consumers of recorded product), patrons, sponsors, funding bodies and governments who ‘buy’ or ‘buy into’ artistic product.

Appendix 2. Research approach

In July 2010 the authors together with research team member Mary Laughren interviewed some of our long-time friends and research collaborators in central Australia about how they see the future of their ceremonies. We asked both older people (60+) and younger people (30+) about how they learnt *yawulyu/awelye*, what if any hurdles they see to sustaining the genre, and what they see as the way forward. We used a semi-structured interview technique, whereby we aimed to garner responses to these key questions, but allowed the participants to direct the topic and course of the interviews. By using this technique, we learned many unexpected details that have informed our own opinions and practices. The interviews were conducted in the women's preferred language and in a setting where they felt comfortable. Selected portions of the interviews were later selected for transcription and if needed translation into English. Some of the matters discussed here have also been presented in a different framework in a published article (Barwick, Laughren, & Turpin, in press).

The women we consulted are affiliated with *yawulyu/awelye* repertoires in several different languages: Warlpiri, Warumungu, Kaytetye, Anmatyerr and Arrernte. Some of them are senior 'law women' (women with responsibility to uphold and teach traditional culture, codified as 'law') (Glowczewski, 1991, 1999) now in their seventies and eighties, while others are younger women in their thirties and forties, who are keen to learn *yawulyu/awelye* in order to assume the cultural responsibility of passing Law on to the succeeding generations. We discussed eight different repertoires in the course of our trip.

Appendix 3. Interviews carried out by the research team

<i>Sus Fut reference code</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>
T090621a	Alison Ross	Kaytetye language consultant, owner of Awelye Akwelye ceremony	21 June 2009	Arnerre, Northern Territory
T100316a	Agnes Abbott Pwerrerle	Eastern Arrernte language consultant, owner of Therrirerte ceremony	16 March 2010	Alice Springs, Northern Territory
T100625a	Rachel Perkins Kemarre	Director, Blackfella Films, Arrernte woman	25 June 2010	Sydney, New South Wales
T100704a	various, Alekarenge Festival	performers of Yawulyu Ngurlu, Awely Jarra-jarra	4 July 2010	Alekarenge, Northern Territory
T100713a	Kathy Sampson Nangala and Lucy Martin Nampijinpa	Warlpiri language consultants, performers of Yawulyu Ngapa	13 July 2010	Wirliyajarrayi, Northern Territory
T100715a	Kathleen Fitz Nappanangka, Bunny Naburula and Carol Fitz-Slade Nakkamarra	Performers of Yawulyu mungamunga	15 July 2010	Tennant Creek, Northern Territory
T100716a	Rosemary Plummer Narrurlu	Warumungu language consultant	16 July 2010	Tennant Creek, Northern Territory
T100717a	Dianne Stokes Nampin	Warumungu language consultant, performer of Yawulyu	17 July 2010	Tennant Creek, Northern Territory
T100718a	Fanny Walker Napurrurla	Warlpiri language consultant, performer of Yawulyu Ngurlu	18 July 2010	Alekarenge, Northern Territory
T100718b	Mona Hayward Nungarrayi and Maureen O'Keeffe Nampijinpa	performers of Awely Jarra-jarra, Awely Akwerlp	18 July 2010	Alekarenge, Northern Territory
T100718c	Mona Hayward and Maureen O'Keeffe	performers of Awely Jarra-jarra, Awely Akwerlp	18 July 2010	Atyewanteyey near Alekarenge, Northern Territory

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T100719a	Fanny Walker Napurrurla	Warlpiri language consultant, performer of Yawulyu Ngurlu	19 July 2010	Territory Alekenge, Northern Territory
T100720a	April Campbell Pengart and Eileen Pwerle	Anmatjerr language consultants, performers of Awely Irlkawatn- areny	20 July 2010	Ti Tree, Northern Territory
T100721a	Eileen Pwerle	Anmatjerr language consultant, performer of Awely Irlkawatn- areny	21 July 2010	Ti Tree, Northern Territory
T100901a	Alison Ross Ngamperle	Kaytetye language consultant, owner of Awelye Akwelye ceremony	1 September 2010	Limestone Bore, Northern Territory
T100904a	various, Dancesite 10 Festival	performers of Awely Jarra- jarra, Yawulyu Mungamunga, Yawulyu Milwayi, Therrirerte, Yawulyu Mulyamulya	4 September 2010	Tennant Creek, Northern Territory
T100905a	Rose Graham Nungarrayi	Warumungu cultural consultant	5 September 2010	Tennant Creek, Northern Territory

Appendix 4: Authors, Research Team and Advisory Committee

Linda Barwick	Author, Professor and Associate Dean (Research), Sydney Conservatorium of Music, the University of Sydney
Myfany Turpin	Author and postdoctoral research fellow, University of Queensland.
Kathy Sampson Nangala	Law woman, Warlpiri speaker and senior owner of <i>yawulyu ngapa</i> (rain), Willowra community
Lucy Martin	Law woman, Warlpiri speaker and senior owner of <i>yawulyu ngapa</i> (rain), Willowra community
Nampijinpa Kathleen Fitz	Law woman, Warumungu speaker and senior owner of <i>yawulyu mungamunga</i> , Tennant Creek community
Nappanangka Bunny Naburula	Law woman, Warlpiri and Warlmanpa speaker and performer of <i>yawulyu mungamunga</i> and <i>yawulyu milwayi</i> , Tennant Creek
Carol Fitz-Slade Nakkamarra	Cultural consultant, Tennant Creek
Rosemary Plummer Narrurlu	Cultural consultant, Tennant Creek
Dianne Stokes Nampin	Law woman, Warumungu and Warlmanpa speaker, and performer of <i>yawulyu mungamunga</i> and <i>yawulyu milwayi</i> , Tennant Creek
Rose Graham Nungarrayi	Cultural consultant, Tennant Creek
Fanny Walker Napurrurla	Law woman, Warlpiri speaker and senior owner of <i>yawulyu ngurlu</i> (seed), Alekarenge community
Mona Hayward Nungarrayi	Law woman, Kaytetye speaker and teacher of <i>awely jarra-jarra</i> and <i>awely akwelp</i> , Alekarenge community
Maureen O’Keeffe Nampijinpa	Teacher, Kaytetye speaker and learner of <i>awely jarra-jarra</i> and <i>awely akwelp</i> , Alekarenge community
April Campbell Pengart	Teacher, Anmatyerr speaker and learner of <i>awely irlkawatn-areny</i> , Ti-Tree community
Eileen Pwerle	Law woman, Anmatyerr speaker and teacher of <i>awely irlkawatn-areny</i> , Ti-Tree community
Alison Ross Ngamperle	Kaytetye speaker, learner of <i>awelye akwelye</i> , Arnerre community
Agnes Abbott Pwerrerle	Law woman, Eastern Arrernte speaker and senior owner of Therrirerte ceremony, Alice Springs
Rachel Perkins Kemarre	Research team member, Director, Blackfella Films, and board member, Screen Australia. Perkins is an Arrernte woman (now Sydney-based) who has extensive experience as a film and television director, producer and screenwriter.
Mary Laughren	Research team member, linguist and honorary fellow, University of Queensland
Payi Linda Ford	Co-Director, National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia, an advocate for Indigenous knowledge systems and Senior Research Fellow, The Northern Institute, Charles Darwin University.

Aaron Corn	Co-Director, National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia, and ARC Future Fellow and Associate Professor of Music, College of Arts and Social Sciences, Australian National University.
David Manmurulu	Co-Chair, Steering Committee of the National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia, and senior songman for Inyalarrku ceremony, Warruwi Community.
Allan Marett	Co-Chair, Steering Committee of the National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia, and Emeritus Professor, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney.
Marcia Langton	Committee member, National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia, and Chair of Australian Indigenous Studies, Centre for Health and Society, University of Melbourne.
Joseph Neparnga Gumbula	Committee member, National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia, senior leader, Galiwin'ku community, and research associate, Koori Centre, The University of Sydney and College of Arts & Social Sciences, Australian National University
Wanta Jampijinpa Patrick	Committee member, National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia, director of Milpa Festival, Lajamanu community (Northern Territory), and Indigenous Research Fellow, ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences, Australian National University
Wukun Wanambi	Committee member, National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia, a well-known artist, and Director of the Mulka Project, Buku-Larrnggay Centre, Yirrkala (Northern Territory)
Cathy Hilder	Committee member, National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia, and Manager, Public Library Services and the Public Libraries and Knowledge Centres Program, Northern Territory Library
Grace Koch	Committee member, National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia, an expert in Kaytetye and other Australian music, and Native Title Research and Access Officer, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
Sally Treloyn	Committee member and secretary of the Steering Committee, National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia, a researcher on sustainability of music from the Kimberley region of Western Australia, and Research Fellow in the Melbourne Conservatorium, University of Melbourne
Kevin Bradley	Committee member, National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia, Past President of the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives, and Curator of Oral History and Director of Sound Preservation, National Library of Australia
Stephen Wild	Committee member, National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia, Honorary Associate, University of

Sydney, and Senior Fellow, Australian National University.