



## Coordinate and Partners meet in Humpty Doo

By Louise Macdonald



Coordinate's mission is to support Indigenous people to access Scripture so that joy is brought to their hearts. We achieve this through supporting Bible translation and Scripture in Use work in the heart languages of the people in our regions and congregations of the Uniting Church in the Northern Synod. These are complex projects that take considerable time, expertise and resource. We also know that the most effective ways of working are to tap into the passions of our translators and Scripture in Use workers, to be guided by the movement of the Holy Spirit in our lives and to learn to adopt ways of working that reflect the cultures of our Indigenous colleagues. None of this is possible without the support, expertise and enthusiasm that our partner organisations bring to these projects. So in late November Coordinate held a two day meeting in Humpty Doo at the Living Water UCA meeting space, inviting partners to join us in exploring how best to achieve our joint mission.

The abundance of experience and expertise that gathered was truly heart warming and an indication of the commitment of so many who support our projects. We had members from The Australian Society for Indigenous Languages (AuSIL), Society for Indigenous Languages Pacific Region (SIL), Bible Society Australia (BSA), Nungalinga Theological College, Wycliffe Australia, Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) and of course Coordinate.



A PROJECT OF THE NORTHERN REGIONAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITING ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER CHRISTIAN CONGRESS AND THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA NORTHERN SYNOD

# Coordinate and Partners meet in Humpty Doo cont.



Planning for the meeting began earlier in the month when Alan Rogers the Director for AuSIL and I travelled to Galiwin'ku Elcho Island in Eastern Arnhemland. Alan arrived five days beforehand and participated in Yolŋu processes of decision making in order to untangle the difficult question of

dialects in the Warrimiri draft of the Gospel of Mark. The process required a number of meetings with different people to determine who should be involved in the decision-making and the scope of the decision. On the final day in about thirty minutes the actual decision was made and AuSIL now has a clear plan on how to proceed with completing the Warrimiri Gospel of Mark. Alan's email to me describing this journey became one of the starting points for our partners' meeting. Once I arrived at Galiwin'ku after catching up with old friends we spent two afternoons running the agenda which was planned for the Darwin meeting. This ensured that we could bring a strong Yolŋu voice into our gathering.

Planes were booked, accommodation organised and buffalo stew was cooked – the three essentials for Top End meetings. We had planned a zoom video link with the Pitjatjantjarra translation team in Pukatja but a freak storm on day one and a frozen computer on day two thwarted these plans. Thankfully we were able to bring in two Yolŋu translators from East Arnhem and two Bininj translators from Waruwu in Western Arnhemland and they were able to stay at Nungalinya and spent time with the Nungalinya Principle Jude Long – a long time friend and supporter of our projects who sadly is leaving the north for cooler climes down south!

Our two day program was split between 'Process or how should we work' on day one and 'Action or what to achieve' on day two. On day one we worked on four topics, which built on each other. Starting with Communication we explored how our personal and organisational agendas, or missions influenced how we listened, consulted, negotiated, persuaded or sadly sometimes manipulated each other. The second topic was Cross Cultural Competancy where we concentrated on ideas around culture shock and cultural privilege. After lunch Decision -Making was on the agenda with fascinating details explained about the culturally appropriate processes used in Yolŋu and Bininj culture. We looked at lines of authority in decision-making and explored how expert advice and decision-making authority might relate. The necessity to listen closely to the language, and cultural expertise of our mother tongue translators was highlighted. The final topic was 'Ways of Working' and it was made clear that we need to put our resources into ensuring priority is given to working collaboratively in groups, teams or workshops.



Day two after devotions from West Arnhem began with a lengthy session on Human Resources – what jobs do we need to fill and how can we best train, orientate and support our workers? This issue is a



challenge for almost every organisation in the Northern Territory – how do we attract staff and more importantly how do we keep them in a context that although rewarding can also be culturally and geographically very challenging. We then moved into a discussion of the new Diploma in Translating which will begin next year, and considered how this will support our projects. It was great to have Lizz Martin the newly appointed teacher and coordinator for this course, present through the two days. After lunch we drew attention to the many needs for translation and Scripture in Use in West Arnhem Land. We then explored the Scripture in Use needs in our various regions. We were very grateful for Barry Borneman’s input, with structural ways of pooling resources to enable more effective production, and networking. Our final session attempted to prioritise work and create work plans.

I returned home to Jabiru and a week later was still percolating all the ideas and



happenings of the meeting. For me, the need to create workshop style gatherings in our regions is a priority. We need to encourage the creation of a Scripture in Use unit. We need to work on a training, orientation and support focus group to address the cross cultural challenges of working in the North. The need to continue growing our capacity to partner well will be our future strength. May we continue to hear the call of God in our journey and feel the movement of the Holy Spirit in our work.



# Nami's tears of joy as Bible app brings good news

By Anne Lim from Eternity



Nami works on the Pitjantjatjara Old Testament Translation Project in a Cafe in Adelaide.



Dave Barnett and Inawinyjti Stanley

Nami was moved to tears when she heard her own voice narrating the Gospel of Mark in the new Pitjantjatjara New Testament Audio.

When Bible Society's Louise Sherman played the audio to Nami on her phone, she sat quietly while Louise drove.

*"I am crying because I am so happy."* – Nami

"The occasional 'wiru' (wonderful) and 'palya' (good) escaped her lips. It was only when I pulled up that I realised Nami was in tears," recalls Louise, who is Bible Society Australia's Remote and Indigenous Ministry Production Coordinator.

"She smiled and said 'I am crying because I am so happy. Even once I am long gone, my children and grandchildren will still be able to hear me sharing the gospel with them.'

"She wiped her tears, smiled and said, 'This is rikina!' (This is superb!)

"Many of the Pitjantjatjara (Anangu) people we met were overwhelmed when they heard the voices of their relatives on the recording," adds Louise, who recently joined a roadshow taking the new Bible app to Aboriginal communities in the APY (Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara) Lands in South Australia.

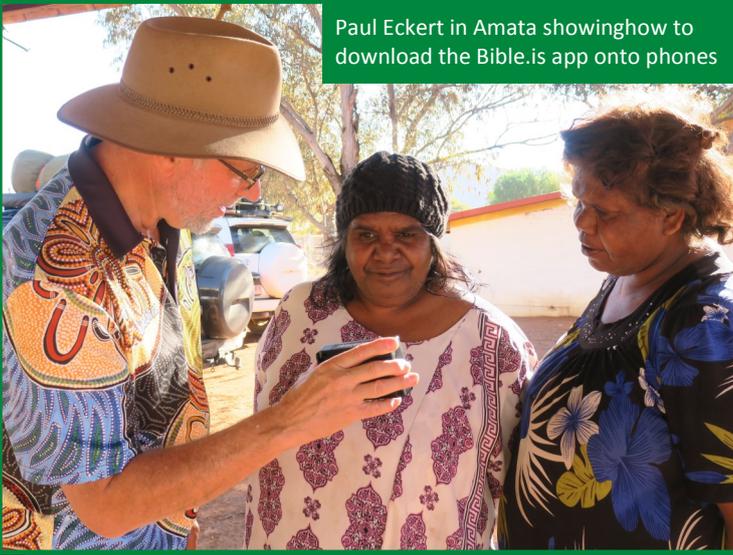
Bible Society's Translator and Bible Engagement Coordinator, David Barnett, had some very encouraging experiences while visiting eight Aboriginal communities east of his base in Ernabella. (A second team visited 11 communities west of Ernabella.)

"We were just helping people to install the Bible app on their phones and also hand out to church leaders and schools these 'proclaimers' – which are little black boxes with speakers that



can run off solar, which include the recently recorded New Testament," he says.

*"It was fantastic to see how much encouragement it actually brought them."* – David Barnett



Paul Eckert in Amata showing how to download the Bible.is app onto phones



The roadshow team in Pukatja(Ernabella)

“We arrived at Titjikala and there was a sorry camp on, which was basically a time when people mourn someone who has passed away recently.

“The pastor there had lost his wife and we gave him one of these proclaimers and he was thrilled to have the Scriptures to encourage him at that time when he was grieving the loss of his wife.

“All his family were sitting around and they put it on and listened to the Gospel of Matthew and it was fantastic to see how much encouragement it actually brought them.”

David said he was reminded during the recent launch of the Bible app in Adelaide how powerful it can be to hear, as opposed to read, the word of God.

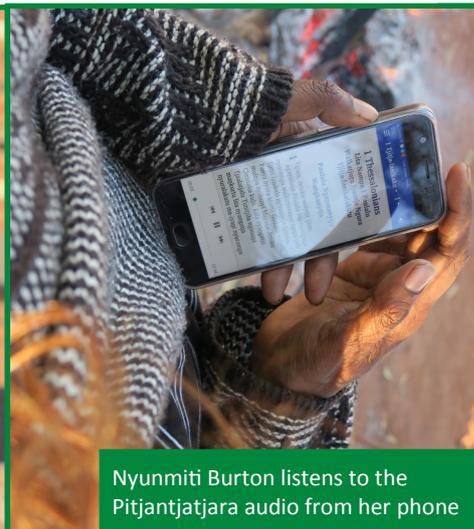
“It was the first time a lot of them had heard the Scriptures in their language and it dawned on them how important this was, how significant it was for their families,” he says.

“I think often in the West we forget that, for most of the history of the church, people actually haven’t had access to printed Scriptures. So, for a long time, faith has come by hearing and not necessarily by reading the Scriptures. There’s something powerful about having the word proclaimed orally.

I don’t think we should underestimate the impact this new recording might have.” David has noticed how the Audio Bible has further intensified the enthusiasm of the 30 or 40 translators who are involved in translating the Pitjantjatjara Old Testament.

“Part of my role in the project is to produce front translations for them to work from – these are English translations that can be easily adapted into Pitjantjatjara – and there’s such a great demand at the moment for people to have the Bible.

“A lot of people are wanting to get involved and I’m struggling to keep up with the translations – a good problem to have!”



Nyunmiti Burton listens to the Pitjantjatjara audio from her phone

Faith Comes By Hearing Proclaimer

# Vale Mrs Wunungmurra



Mrs Wunungmurra's colleagues speaking at her memorial service in Yirrkala

In our last Coordinate issue we celebrated the completion of the Dhuwaya Gospel of Mark but a few months later we must mourn the passing of another beloved translator. At her funeral in Yirrkala her colleagues delivered a eulogy— the story of her working life which she had dictated to them earlier:

“In 1967 I went straight to work at the same school at Yirrkala I had just finished as a student. I was an Assistant teacher when Yirrkala School was still under the Mission and I

saw the Government take over the Education in Yirrkala.

Discussions were held re. bilingual education at Yirrkala School under the Baḡawili tree with Dhuwa and Yirritja mixed groups. We had many varieties of Yolŋu Matha to consider; Gumatj, Wangurri, Djambarrpuyŋu, Djapu, Gälpu etc. Yolŋu Matha was introduced into the school's program, first of all using Gumatj.

I took 'Night Classes' to learn how to read and write in Yolŋu Matha, with Miss Ross and Miss Field. That's how I become knowledgeable about Yolŋu Matha literacy. I learned my literacy skills through Gumatj and Dhuwaya.

In 1969 I went to Kormilda to attend an Assistant Teacher's course 1972 when I returned from Kormilda I saw a new town built in my backyard, ie. Nhulunbuy.

I studied at Bachelor College too alongside Port Keats students as well as others from Wadeye and the Tiwi Islands. I was the only woman studying at that time.

I returned from Bachelor College to work with Beth Graham when the community agreed for Bilingual Education to be introduced into the Yirrkala School program.

In the mid-1980's, after Dr Marika had researched the viability of using Dhuwaya for Yirrkala's bilingual school program, I joined in by teaching Dhuwaya in the classroom and then later I moved across to the Literature Production Centre to create literature for the school in Dhuwaya. I made many, many books for the children to read in Dhuwaya. 32 years later, in 1999, I stopped working full-time in the school.

But then after the children and grandchildren had grown up, I returned for a further 8 years to teach from 2001 until 2009. After all those years in the school, I jumped straight into this work, ie. on the scriptures with Coordinate.

I have been getting old now, but I continue working on Dhuwaya. The children here still use Dhuwaya at Yirrkala. This includes children who belong to other Yolŋu clan languages, although there are Gälpu children

## Something New! ... a visit by Bruce and Glenys Waters

Bruce and Glenys are not newcomers to Arnhem Land. They lived and worked on Bible Translation in the Djinaŋ language around Ramingining in the 70's and 80's. They have Yolŋu skin names ie *mälk* ; Burrelaŋ for Bruce and Ŋarritjan for Glenys. *Mälk* immediately links them into any Yolŋu families in North East Arnhem Land.

They have been burdened to pray for our translation work and life in Arnhem Land and even more so recently, and it was God's hand and timing that brought together a visit to Arnhem Land from Melbourne in September 2018. There was so much to catch up on, not just with each other and what God had been doing in our lives, but also in the Bible Translation Work.



# Something New! ... a visit by Bruce and Glenys Waters

By Margaret Miller



Yurranydjil and Nalambirra on adapted

To reconnect with Arnhem Land was truly a miracle for Bruce and Glenys in itself, and they were deeply encouraged to see the enthusiasm for Scripture Translation work that they hadn't experienced in such a way before.

In 1986, the Waters' family moved from Arnhem Land to PNG to translate the New Testament on Karkar Island. Bruce testifies to a moment when only weeks after the completion of that New Testament that he had an epiphany when God revealed a 'computer programming' idea, that would be foundational to a new computer software

that could assist Indigenous translators in the future. Over the following years Bruce refined the program, known as 'AdaptIt', and it has already served many Indigenous Bible Translators around the world. Would 'AdaptIt' be of help to Yolŋu translators in their work also? Bruce was invited to train AuSIL staff to use the program at a workshop in Darwin late last year. But now he had an opportunity to share the software with Yolŋu translators in East Arnhem.

With only a couple of days together, it was important to use our time wisely. Yolŋu translators gathered together from two communities, Ramingining and Galiwin'ku. Friendship is an important first call and so a day together on the Island's homelands was arranged for Wednesday. Two cars were arranged for the group, but one car refused to start on the day. With tow ropes and a trip to the workshop our departure for our day around the island was delayed.

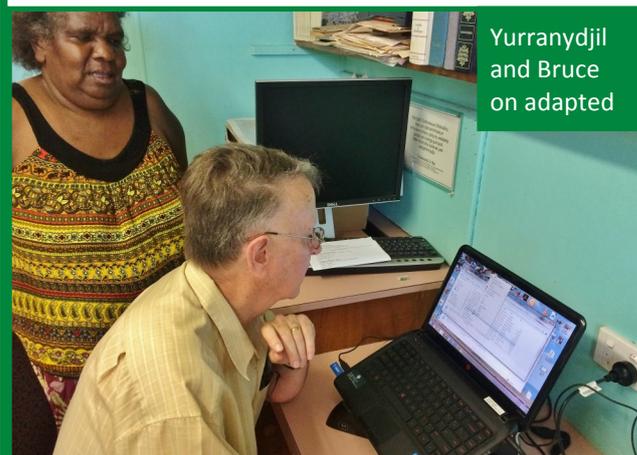
As the translators milled around the Translation Centre, it became the perfect moment for Bruce to share the 'AdaptIt' program with Nalambirra. As an experiment for Nalambirra to see how this software worked, Bruce set up AdaptIt with Luke's Gospel in Djambarrpuyŋu on her computer... and within minutes she was taking 'the helm' translating the first verses of Luke into Gupapuyŋu with only a little instruction from Bruce.

Yurranydjil joined the visitors and saw what Nalambirra was up to. She sat by and watched Nalambirra on her second verse, and before long she was instructing Nalambirra; "Here, touch this box with your mouse, then start typing here!"

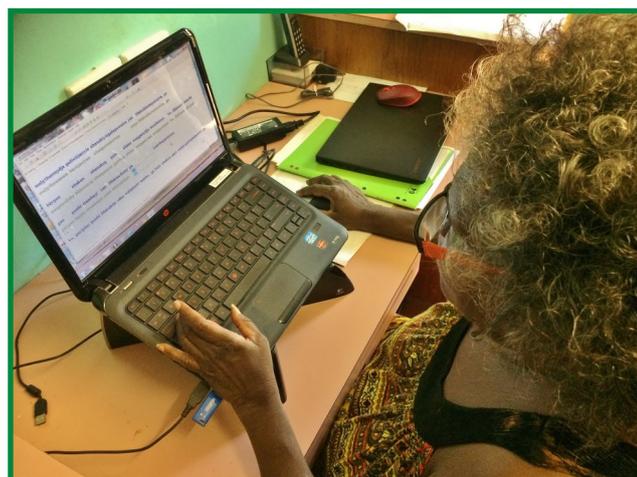
Nalambirra asked her; "Do you know what to do with this?" "No. I'm just guessing!" replied Yurranydjil.

Ahh... these were such sweet words to Bruce's ears!

Yurranydjil had just expressed the intuitiveness of the program 'AdaptIt' that Bruce was hoping for!



Yurranydjil and Bruce on adapted



# Something New cont.



Nändama, Glenys,  
Yurranydjil and Nalambirra

As they drafted more verses of Luke into Gupapuyŋu, Nalambirra and Yurranydjil were encouraged how quickly AdaptIt started to recognise the Gupapuyŋu words that Nalambirra had entered. The program started to prompt Nalambirra with her Gupapuyŋu words! A few more tips from Bruce and off Nalambirra went again... verse four, ...verse five.

By this stage Nalambirra was getting the hang of it, and Yurranydjil was getting keen to see how it could work in Wangurri. She turned to Bruce and asked, 'Can you put this program on my computer so I can have a go?'

With no time to waste, Bruce and Yurranydjil left Nalambirra with her Gupapuyŋu translation of Luke to set up Yurranydjil's computer with AdaptIt and the source text as Djambarrpuyŋu.

This time Bruce set up her program with the Gospel of John, ready to translate into Wangurri. In no time Yurranydjil was translating independently.

The race was on with Nalambirra and Yurranydjil! Who was going to have the most verses translated before the car was repaired?

It seemed as if a days' work had been achieved in such an early part of the day...

With the car back from the workshop, and a morning cuppa over, we were ready to explore our island together.

There is so much to consider together how the AdaptIt program could assist us in our future translation work.

**YES...**

## I want to Support Indigenous Scriptures through Coordinate

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

- For \$20, I would like to become a Coordinate Partner, (1 year)
- Please register my small group or church as a Coordinate Partner (1 year)
  - \$50 Small Group
  - \$150 Church
- I would like to make a gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### I would like my offering to support:

- Coordinate General
- Central Australia (Pitjantjatjara)
- East Arnhem translation
- East Arnhem Scripture in Use
- West Arnhem General
- West Arnhem (Maung)
- West Kimberley

### METHOD OF PAYMENT

- Cheque or money order attached.
- Direct deposit:
  - UCANS-CSIS
  - BSB 634 634
  - ACC 100039620

Please label your deposit with your name, and return this slip to Coordinate.

Post to: Coordinate, PO BOX 38221,  
Winnellie, NT, 0821

Scan and email to  
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