



# SHARINGSTORIES FOUNDATION ANNUAL REVIEW 2015

## Annual Review 2015

2015 has been an amazing year! Our 'Digital Dillybag' of innovative digital technology has been at the core of programs that support Indigenous communities in the documenting, holding and sharing of language and culture.

The year began with a number of special events:

### ArtSpot.

SharingStories was featured as the charity of choice by artists from Sydney's Northern Beaches, at a special show held at the Avalon Community Centre in early January. The show was a brilliant success, and drew close to five thousand visitors over ten days. Material about SharingStories was featured at the event, including the *Sharing Our Stories* storybook series. A silent auction of artists' 'art spots' (painting on round ceramics) raised funds for extending SharingStories' digital storytelling workshops with communities.

### 'A Song for Country' Exhibition at the Nishi Gallery



Liya-dhālinymirr Djambarrpuyŋu cultural custodian and SharingStories Board member Nākarrma Mark Guyula and SharingStories CEO Liz Thompson opened on February 6, 'A Song for Country', as part of Canberra's Multicultural Fringe Festival. The show featured photographs taken by Liz during a ten day funeral ceremony for a Wāgilak clan member in northeast Arnhem Land, where songs were sung by clans to heal rifts in the community and to sing the spirit of the deceased to their resting place at Wukidi (Blue Mud Bay). Also included in the two-week show were photographs taken with other communities during a decade of collaborative work. A stunning catalogue with cultural information generously provided by custodian Nākarrma Mark Guyula, offered audiences a deeper understanding of Indigenous culture. Nākarrma and Liz were extended a warm welcome by Aunty Agnes Shea, Ngunnawal custodian, with radio interviews conducted by ABC and others.

## **‘In conversation’ with SharingStories**

Guests were invited in early February to the offices of Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation (LMCF) in Melbourne, and the Sydney home of ABC Radio Presenter Rachel Kohn, to participate in a stimulating conversation with Nākarrma and Liz about the critical need to support the holding and sharing of unique, and often fragile, cultural heritage.

## **Digital multi-touch book project supported by Gandel Philanthropy**

With the support of Gandel Philanthropy, SharingStories developed a digital multi-touch book template, and worked alongside the Jaara community in the Upper Loddon region of Victoria to transform the creation story ‘Bunjil the Eagle’ into an exciting interactive cultural resource for the community. The digital multi-touch book was based on the *Sharing Our Stories* story-book ‘Bunjil the Eagle’ written several years ago with Senior Cultural Custodian, Uncle Brien Nelson and community members and illustrated by the students at St Peters Primary. During the 2015 program Koorie students and community worked with Uncle Brien’s son Uncle Rick Nelson who led everyone on a cultural excursion to sites relevant to the story. Students learnt about animation, sound design, shadow puppetry, projection, photography, captioning, uploading and other digital media techniques in order to create this stunning resource.



St.Peter’s Primary students experimenting with cut-outs of Bunjil for shadow puppetry.



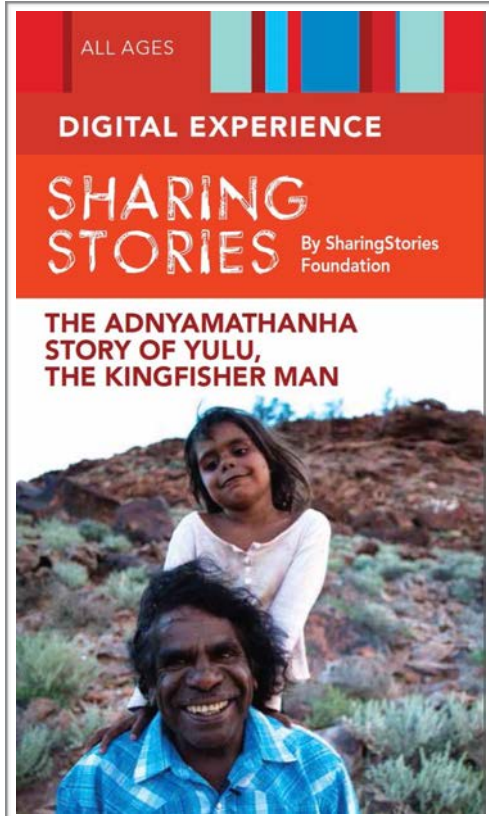
SSF facilitator, Jane, sitting with Elder, Rick Nelson, and St. Peter’s Primary students preparing to capture the sounds of whistling winds to accompany an animation of Bunjil The Eagle

Inspired by the digital multi-touch book animations, The Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum applied for funding from the Telematics Trust to rebuild its existing Indigenous exhibition around the ‘Bunjil’ multi-touch book outcome, using interactive display tables created by Lightwell who created the wonderful display panels for the Canning Stock Route and Bunjilaka Exhibits.

## SharingStories' Digital Dillybag in 3 remote communities

Between April and August, SharingStories engaged in work with the Adnyamathanha, and Nyikina Mangala communities under a grant from the Australia Council for the Arts to produce community digital multi-touch book versions of 'Yulu's Coal' and 'Woonyoomboo'. Support also came from the Genographic Fund (National Geographic USA) for the recording of the Song Cycle 'Woonyoomboo' with Elders and community and the Adelaide Children's Come Out Festival for production of a short animated movie. The team will be working with the Paakantji community to produce a multi-touch version of 'The Moon and the Gecko' in early 2016.

The April program with the Adnyamathanha Community in Leigh Creek was a profoundly collaborative process between SharingStories, Leigh Creek Area School and the many community members who participated in each days activities. In Leigh Creek we welcomed to the SharingStories team, Nathan May, an excelling student from Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM). Nathan was being mentored by SSF as a community arts facilitator and shone as an inspiring role model for the young Adnyamathanha people he worked with during the program. After two weeks of trips to Country with young people and senior custodians, sharing of creative ideas, and fantastic community engagement in learning new digital media skills, each art work in the original book was beautifully animated and the digital multi-touch interpretation of Yulu's Coal was complete. Animations were then collated and presented as a short film for the Adelaide Children's Come Out Festival in May where key Adnyamathanha community members and program participants travelled to launch the film's premiere at the Adelaide Festival Centre.



Clockwise from left: Promo for Come Out Children's Festival; Senior Adnyamathanha cultural custodian Cliff Coulthard telling story on country; Senior Adnyamathanha custodians and workshop participants direct and record a scene at Ilkura (the Gathering place) for the 'Yulu' multi touch book.

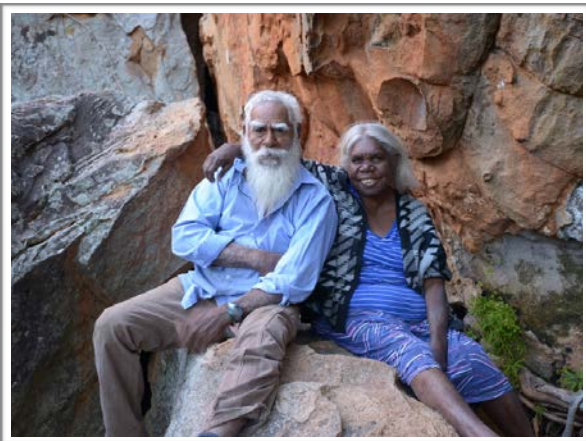
The two weeks at Jarlmadangah Burru were spent working with the Nyikina Mangala community to document the ‘Woonyoomboo’ song line and create a community digital multi-touch book based on the story of Woonyoomboo. This program was led by Nyikina-Mangala Senior Cultural Custodians Annie Nayina Milgina and Darraga Watson. Again the highlight of this program was the amazing collaboration between SSF facilitators and community, Nyikina-Mangala Community School teachers and students all worked together to produce a stunning collection of animations each with its own sound design and traditional songs embedded where relevant. Special thanks to Darraga and Annie who worked tirelessly to record, sing and collate the entire Songline and journey of creation ancestor Woonyoomboo, which will become an incredibly valuable community resource for present and future generations.



Annie Nayina Milgin and SSF's Taz Miller work with young Nyikina children and the Language Lightbox.



Learning to use Photoshop and a drawing tablet for Woonyoomboo animation.



Darraga Watson and Annie Nayina Milgin. Kalcapin (Honeymoon Springs)



Darraga Watson leading students in the Walangari dance

## **SharingStories' Language Lightbox supported by Indigenous Language and Arts/ McLean Foundation introduced to communities**

The idea of the Language Tool Application was initially developed with the Paakantji community in Wilcannia 3 years ago at the prompting of language custodian Murray Butcher. It was very exciting to return to Wilcannia in March this year, to implement the result with the Paakantji community and the Wilcannia Language and Culture Nest. Language camps and additional support to implement the program have been provided by ILA and the McLean Foundation. Sandra Bradley, Principal of Wilcannia Central School was so inspired by the program that she has organised with SharingStories a week of professional development in October for 13 teachers to learn how to use the tool and other platforms from the 'Digital Dillybag'.

During the programs with the Adnyamathanha and Nyikina Mangala communities SSF also introduced the newly built Language Lightbox.

## **The Victorian Digital Storytelling Program supported by Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation (LMCF) underway**

The Victorian Digital Storytelling Program was inaugurated in Mildura and Swan Hill Primary Schools, chosen in consultation with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc (VAEAI) as both are working to establish Language and Culture Nests which will have capacity to support satellite communities with cultural and linguistic maintenance and resources. One week was spent in each school working with enthusiastic Grade 5 students learning a local creation story on Country and in the classroom interpreting it through multiple art forms including song writing, physical theatre, illustration, animation, claymation, sound design and movie making. SharingStories will be returning in 2016 for further workshops at each school which will begin the population of a community multi-touch book relating to each creation story.

SharingStories is also working with Heywood, St Georges (Shepparton) and Thornbury Primary Schools, also chosen through consultation with VAEAI, during the two year roll out of a state-wide Digital Storytelling Program commencing in late November.



Swan Hill Primary students working to produce sound effects for the Pondi creation story with sound design facilitator, Jane Hole.



Swan Hill Primary students creating an animation of Pondi making the Murray River.

**Recording the story, songs and dances related to the Ancestral Dreaming Track of Gändjalala – The Sugar Bag Hunter’ with the Wägilak Clan, supported by the Eldon and Anne Foote Trust (administered by LMCF)**

Following an intention set more than 6 years ago, the SharingStories team recorded on Country the Song Cycle for ‘Gändjalala, The Sugar Bag Hunter’ with Senior Cultural Custodian Roy Wunupingu, translator Näkarrma Mark Guyula and an additional 30 members of the community including dancers and Song Men participating in the program.

This was an exciting endeavour that has been on SharingStories’ radar for many years. Given the declining health of Custodian, Roy Wunupingu, documenting this Song Cycle was critically important as it holds not only knowledge about land, lore, and culture but it sings the spirits of the deceased Wägilak clan members back home.

Important sites were GPS tagged to allow for future interactive mapping applications to be used in the future for teaching and learning in the context of Wägilak culture.

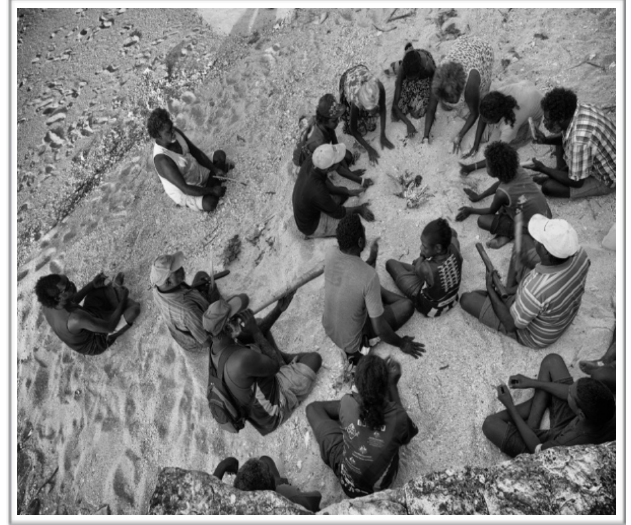


Roy Wunupingu with his grandson James painted with the sacred Gunduy, totemic stringy bark tree and sacred Yarpin, honey.

## Recording 'The Mukarr (Giant Green Turtle) Hunters' with support from The Funding Network, the Wales Family Trust, StartSomeGood crowd-sourcing and Mapuru School



Kevin Mitjmitjtjun at Duwalkitj teaching the story of the Mukarr (Giant Green Sea Turtle) Hunters.



Senior Liya-dhālinymirr Djambarrpuyṇu custodians participating in Manikay and Bungel on Country as part of the Mukarr (Giant Green Sea Turtle).

SharingStories was selected to 'pitch' a project at The Funding Network's 'Vivid' event on June 3. The event was held at Google Headquarters and with an audience of over 200 SSF raised \$25,000 to assist in completing important cultural recordings relating to 'The Mukarr (Giant Green Turtle) Hunters' on Country with the Liya-dhālinymirr clan. An additional \$5,000 has also been raised through SharingStories' first crowd-sourcing campaign, Start Some Good. Through the generous support of TFN, The Wales Family Trust and Mapuru School in north-east Arnhem Land, documenting this story will be completed in 2016 and creative media produced with community to populate a digital multi-touch book relating to the story. Additional funds are being sought to support the development of short films documenting the story for teaching and learning purposes, and sharing with the broader community.

### Peninsula Schools Program for NAIDOC Week



CEO Liz Thompson preparing students for their days work on 'The White-Headed Dolphin' story.

At the request of the Peninsula Schools, SharingStories ran on June 25 a storytelling workshop with sixty students, aged seven to fourteen, from fourteen schools on Sydney's Northern Beaches. Cultural Custodian Dennis Foley gifted the story 'The White-Headed Dolphin' which was told and illustrated brilliantly by children using art materials supported by Mercurius Australia, making three different book versions to be presented to the school communities and custodian Dennis Foley.



## **Puliima National Indigenous Language & Technology Forum 2015**

SharingStories presented at Puliima's opening plenary session on October 14, introducing the Language Lightbox and digital multi-touch books which support maintenance and revival of languages in communities. Puliima was a wonderful opportunity to meet with other organisations dedicated to language maintenance and to showcase this work. The session drew much interest in our work from communities and potential partners.



The SharingStories team at Puliima 2015

## **Professional Development for teachers at Wilcannia Central School**

In the first of its kind for the Foundation, SharingStories ran a professional development week for twelve teachers and teachers aids at Wilcannia Central School in Paakantji Country western New South Wales. The course focussed on transferal of valuable ICT skills and inspiring the integration of digital storytelling into all classrooms.

## **Mentoring**

This year SharingStories mentored musician Nathan May of the Arabunna Clan (South Australia) and emerging Aboriginal Resource & Development Service (ARDS) camera operator Christine Motatj Garawirrtja of the Gupapuyŋu clan on (Elcho Island, Arnhem Land) as part of its program to train young Indigenous artists in digital storytelling techniques. The experience was an enriching experience for everyone. In Nathan's words: 'I've met a lot of amazing people and I've been reconnecting with a lot of family through this work...I've never worked with organic sounds and played around with them like I have during the SharingStories programs...it's a new skill that I need... and will add to what I can do in my own music and career. I'd love to do more facilitating in community.'

And from Christine: 'I learnt a lot about history, how the Wägilak connect to one another and how they are connected to me. I learnt about a different techniques...and different ways of making films which was interesting. I'd really like to come and join with SharingStories again, it's *meinmak*, it's good, to get away and learn new things about different culture and different ways of approaching filmmaking. It's good for me to build my skills for the future.'

Our mentoring program with partners provides benefits for participants, the organisations and community members. As stated by Gaia Osborne, Manager of Multimedia Productions at ARDS, 'ARDS recognises that particularly within the current context of limited resources and funding available for important cultural maintenance and preservation as well as community media initiatives, partnerships such as this emerging one between ARDS and SSF are vital to ensuring the best outcomes for the Indigenous communities involved.'



Nathan recording sounds with a student from the Nyikina-Mangala Community School.

### **New Board members**

At SharingStories' Annual General Meeting on October 16, two new board members, Amanda Milledge and Tim Goodwin, were elected. Amanda has served until recently on the Board of LMCF, and is on the Board of the Collier Foundation; she has provided wonderful support to SharingStories throughout the year, introducing SharingStories' work to potential funders, partners and friends. A Yuin man, Tim is a barrister, Trustee of the Reichstein Foundation and Foundation Board member of The Roberta Sykes Indigenous Education Foundation; in 2012, Tim was named Young Australian of the Year. Amanda was elected Chair of the Board, replacing Liz Thompson who has been acting in the role since Kristi Mansfield, Founding Chair of Sharing Stories, stepped down at end of last year.

## **Moving towards 2016**

SharingStories is looking forward to continuing our work with the eleven communities with whom we have been working in 2015, in Victoria, north-east Arnhem Land, and with the Adnyamathanha (Flinders Ranges), Nyikina Mangala (West Kimberley) and Paakantji communities (Wilcannia, NSW). We will also be running workshops and programs in Varanasi, India in early 2016 with the support of the Australia-India Council and opening our first exhibition in India. SharingStories will be seeking to deepen partnerships with both community and funding bodies, to support the scaling of this work.

Special thanks to the wonderful communities with whom we work, our volunteers, Board members, artist facilitators and staff, for an inspiring, highly productive 2015! The SharingStories team is deeply honoured to be doing the work that it does, with such incredible people and active communities that drive all of the programs.

**A multitude of thanks to all our wonderful funding partners who have made this work possible.**

To a fabulous year ahead!

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Liz Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Liz Thompson, CEO

As SharingStories' newly-appointed Chair, I am honoured, challenged and excited by what lies ahead for SharingStories with the ever-increasing demand for its work with Indigenous communities across Australia. I am inspired by the respectful collaboration among Custodians, educators, young adults and artists, and by what their collaboration, using the latest digital technology, can produce to support the holding and sharing of Indigenous cultural heritage.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda Millage". The signature is cursive and elegant, with a prominent initial 'A'.

Amanda Millage, Chair