



KIMBERLEY
LANGUAGE
RESOURCE
CENTRE

Keeping language strong
for more than 35 years

Strategic Plan, 2023-2026

May 2023

KLRC Strategic Plan, 2023-2026

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Requests and inquiries concerning any aspects of this plan or reproduction of any content should be addressed to: Kimberley Language Resource Centre

ABN: 43 634 659 269 ICN: 422
Administration – Halls Creek
12 Terone Street
PMB 11 HALLS CREEK WA 6770
Phone: (08) 9168 6005

Acknowledgements:

The process utilised to prepare the foundations of this plan was facilitated by Petrine McCrohan of Bridging Landscapes. The plan was reviewed in May 2023 under the direction and guidance of the KLRC Directors with input from staff and from Sharon Winks from Galent Management Consulting.



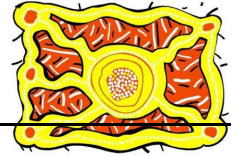
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1 Executive summary



The Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC) is the regional languages organisation in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Established in 1985 as an independent, community-based Aboriginal organisation, the KLRC supports Kimberley Aboriginal people to continue using their languages. The KLRC provides skills workshops and project advice for language groups across the region. It has community support from many language groups and engages with a significant number of stakeholders locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

In May 2023 KLRC Directors reviewed the Strategic Plan. This review responded to the strategic aims of the organisation which continues to move from a focus on documentation projects to activities that reflect the diversity of the language groups across the Kimberley, requests from community for support and the status of language continuation in that language community.

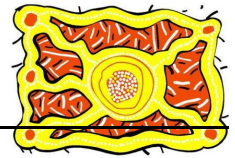
The plan sets out the vision, operating environment and future direction for the KLRC to help us achieve greater security and in turn deliver vital services to prevent language extinction and support those still spoken. The benefits of strong languages flow over into personal and community well-being.

This strategic plan focusses on four development priorities for KLRC.



These will be pursued by KLRC through strong governance approach and dynamic planning system to better deliver its services and products. Exciting and contemporary approaches to language protection and focused collaborations will enable us to 'Keep language strong' in the Kimberley.

2 The Kimberley Language Resource Centre



The Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC) is the Kimberley's regional language organisation. It was the first regional Aboriginal languages centre in Australia, established in 1984 in Broome and incorporated in September 1985 in Halls Creek. Its establishment was an outcome of the Kimberley Language Support Program Report *Keeping Language Strong*. This captured concerns about the effects of colonisation and impact of Western society on spoken languages and cultural knowledge. These concerns continue 35 years later.

The KLRC is governed by a Board of up to 12 Directors, accountable to a membership from across the Kimberley region. The office is based in Halls Creek. A Manager, appointed by the Board of Directors, has responsibility for operational matters.

Since its incorporation, the organisation has effectively delivered programs and services and worked with language groups in regional and remote communities in the Kimberley region to revive and maintain Aboriginal languages and to advocate for these languages.

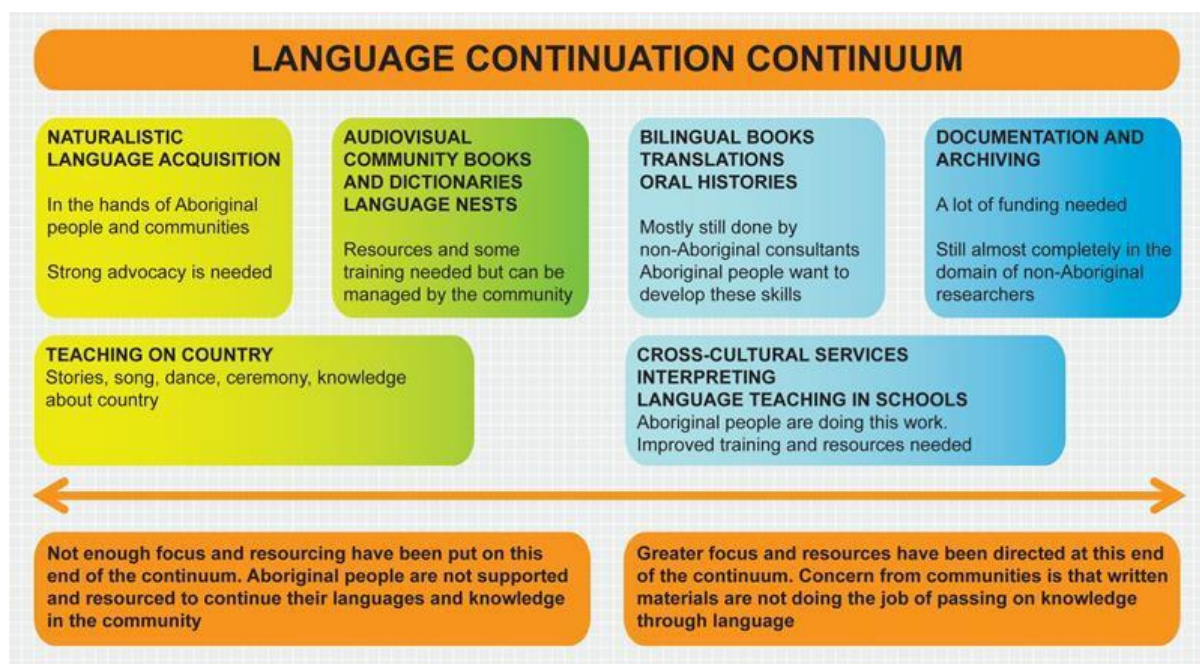
The purpose of the organisation is to support Kimberley Aboriginal people to continue using their unique oral languages. It has maintained flexibility in its operations by responding to the changing needs of language groups and of society. Over the decades the strategic aims of the organisation have moved from a focus on individual documentation projects to a variety of activities reflecting the diversity of Kimberley language groups. KLRC responds individually to the status of language in a community. In recent years it has responded to growing calls to revive and maintain language on country as well as to skill language groups to design and manage their own projects.

The Kimberley was, and still is, the most linguistically diverse area in Australia with at least 42 language groups prior to colonisation (see map) plus additional dialects. The KLRC Directors advocate for around 30 still spoken or spoken in living memory. The organisation acknowledges that a few language groups have set up their own organisations and self-determine the work on their languages. The KLRC has a Kimberley wide mandate and will continue to advocate for the survival of all Kimberley languages.

3 Kimberley Language Resource Centre Objectives

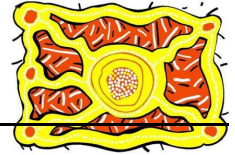
The objectives of the KLRC as in our *Rule Book* are:

1. To provide a forum through which Aboriginal people in the Kimberley can make decisions about language policy;
2. To make books, and tapes (audio & video) about Kimberley Aboriginal language and culture and maintain copies of these as resource for Aborigines and those working among Aborigines;
3. To help Aboriginal people to work on their own language and provide formal training in language work;
4. To give advice and assistance to those desiring to teach Aboriginal languages;
5. To co-ordinate research work relating to Aboriginal language and culture in the Kimberley;
6. To facilitate services such as interpreter/translator services which relate to the needs and aspirations of Kimberley Aboriginal people;
7. To provide and maintain office, library, and other facilities and equipment for the purpose of setting up and carrying on the programs of the Centre;
8. To receive, hold and spend grants of money from the Government of the State and/or Commonwealth; and
9. To provide relief from poverty, sickness suffering, destitution, misfortune, distress and helplessness to all Aborigines in the Kimberley district of Western Australia, but without limiting the generality of the above.



© KLRC

4 Introduction to this plan



"When we were kids, about 11 years of age, us young fellas would sneak out from the mission at Oombulgarrri in the dead of night there at Forrest River and run for a couple of miles to where our old people were having corroboree and telling stories in language. We did that every night until the brothers (at the mission) found out and they punished us and told us never to do that again...we lost our language and our connection to those old people...that was a sad time for us.... I would have my language today."

Tom Birch, Member, KLRC

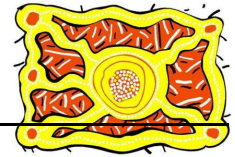
Aboriginal people see a connection between language, lost identity and the disadvantage they experience in living conditions, health, education and employment. The KLRC believes that language is a vital part of community wellbeing. Hence it needs to be integrated into whole of government approaches to create improved social conditions and outcomes for Aboriginal people in the Kimberley.

Support for communities to strengthen intergenerational transmission of heritage knowledge and language needs to occur through coordinated regional activities. Localised documentation and language projects, while important, suffer from lack of continuity. Aboriginal groups want to pass on their own knowledge as a way of life, not just through short-term funded projects. They call for support to teach their younger generations in language about country, culture, family, health and identity as an ongoing practice.

There is great benefit in having a regional organisation like KLRC to facilitate and coordinate resourcing, advocacy and awareness raising. The KLRC has been proudly doing this for over 30 years and seeks to support Kimberley Aboriginal people for many more years to come. This strategic plan identifies the KLRC activities for the next stage of its evolution.

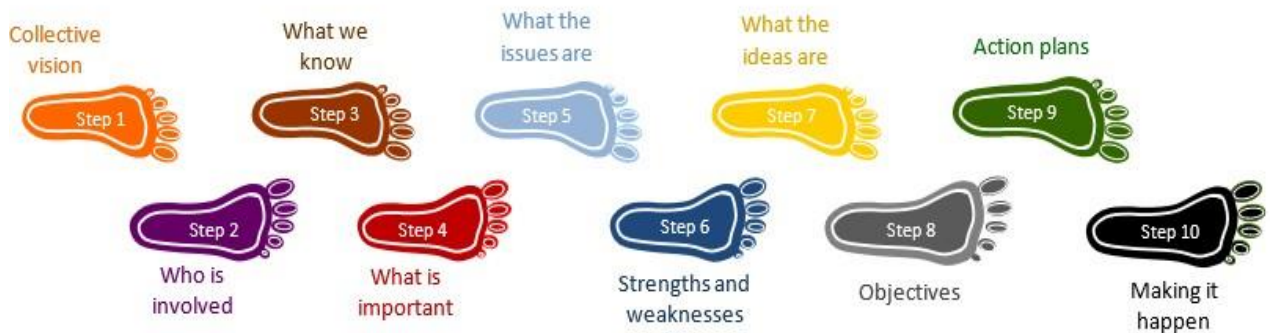
An important part of the plan is opportunities for opportunities to that can generate income. As opportunities for products and services are identified, feasibility studies and then business plans will be developed to ensure that such opportunities move forward under the best conditions of culture, capability, commitment and connections.

5 How this plan was made



This plan was prepared using a participatory planning process called Stepping Stones. Stepping Stones is a facilitated process that has been developed in response to the needs of Aboriginal organisations working in land management, heritage and cultural development, tourism and enterprise. There are different versions of Stepping Stones depending on the context of use.

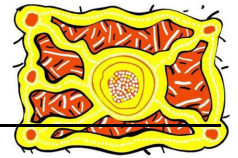
Stepping Stones has been developed by Stepwise Heritage and Tourism since 2004 with contributing assistance from Tourism NT, the Sustainable Tourism CRC, Indigenous Business Australia and the Australian Government Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. Stepping Stones uses the culturally-universal metaphor of feet and a path of footsteps to guide people on the pathway of planning. The process has a strong base with Indigenous communities locally, nationally and internationally and has been translated into at least six different languages.



In this case Stepping Stones for Enterprise Development was used as a key tool to structure information gathering, workshops and the plan format itself. The process defines a vision for the future, considers the knowledge available, determines issues and defines a framework for future business development that includes objectives and actions to achieve the objectives.

Most importantly, this plan considers what the cultural values are that the KLRC want to maintain and communicate in participating in progressing their language objectives and enterprise activity. The plan then embeds these values firmly in their approach to organisational structure and to ensure business development is consistent with their values, goals and aspirations. The process considered how KLRC can develop their organisational processes, cultural language activities and fledging enterprise initiatives into sustainable revenue-based models.

6 Our vision



The vision of the KLRC is to keep Kimberley languages strong. The mission of the KLRC is to revive and maintain Aboriginal languages in the Kimberley region for the benefit of Aboriginal people's culture, identity, land and status.

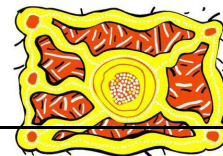
The desire of Directors is to bring a strong model of cultural governance to the organisation which encompasses and engages with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal governance values and practices.

“Our vision is for our children to be proud language speakers, making them strong as Aboriginal people, living in two worlds. Our children need to have a language foundation to stand tall on culture and country so they know who they are.

Kimberley languages are struggling to survive. Over 20 are severely or critically endangered. Our vision is to waikumup by teaching on country and in the schools, so people don't lose their language. We can't afford a lost generation, disconnected from their language, it causes so many social problems.”

KLRC Directors 2018

7 Our stakeholders



The KLRC depends on a wide range of key partners to enable it to deliver its services. The following outlines our key stakeholders.

Core partner

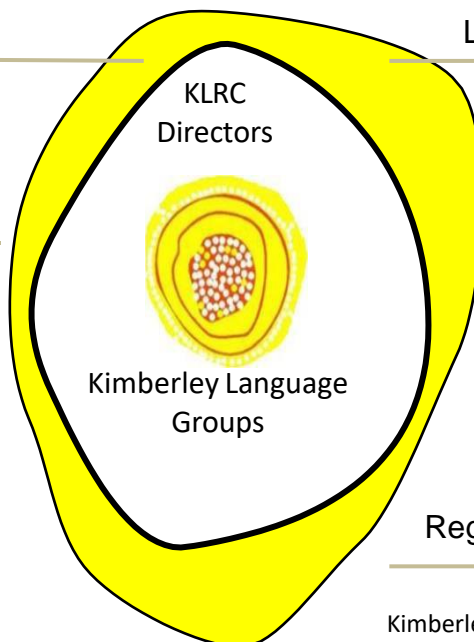
Australian Government
Indigenous Language and Arts
Program

Government partners

Kimberley Development
Commission
Lotterywest
Department of Local
Government, Sport and
Cultural Industries
National Indigenous
Australians Agency
Kimberley Local
Governments

Supporting partners

AIATSIS
APR Geotech & Data
First Languages Australia
Indigenous Language
Foundation
Living Languages
Miromaa Aboriginal Language
and Technology
Centre
WA Museum
Digitisation Centre of WA
University of
Melbourne
WA Network of
Language Centres



Local partners

Aboriginal Radio Stations
Primary schools
District High Schools
Early Learning Centers
Aboriginal Medical Services
Youth Services

Regional partners

Kimberley Land Council
Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre
Goolarri Media
Jawun – Corporate Secondee Program
Native Title Organisations (PBCs)
Marra Worra Worra
Wunan
Binarri-binyja yarrowoo
West Kimberley Futures Empowered Communities
Aarnja

8 Our knowledge base and experience



What we know and what we need to find out

- a. We know our languages are critically at risk. Unless there is a swift call to action with a strong partnership base, innovative revenue-based activities, Teaching on Country and school-based learning, and a critical mass of external stakeholders supporting Kimberley Aboriginal Languages, we know our children will not be language speakers. The loss of language has already contributed to increased mental health problems and other related issues facing our people.
- b. We know under the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, to which Australia was a signatory in 2009, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the right to maintain their cultures and languages. In particular, Article 13 states:
 - i. *Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.*
 - ii. *States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected and also to ensure that indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in political, legal and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.*
- c. We know that the United Nations General Assembly has declared the period between 2022 and 2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages to draw attention to the critical status of many Indigenous languages across the world and encourage action for their preservation, revitalization and promotion.
- d. We know that the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Outcome 16 is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing. Target 16 is that by 2031, there is a sustained increase in the number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken. We need strong partnerships and increased and sustained State and Federal investment into Kimberley language work to deliver this target.
- e. We know we have skilled language speakers that hold the key to language survival in Kimberley. They need support to pass their knowledge on.
- f. We know that Language Nests work, especially for kids under 6. Children who benefitted from short-term Language Nest projects in the past have more language now than their peers.
- g. We need to work in partnership with other Kimberley organisations which are supporting languages and ensure we have strong relationship with them.

1. Our history

We need to learn from the past - bring back what was working and leave behind what is not helping us move forward. The timeline shows that we have been through many phases already.

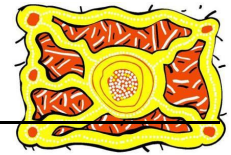
<i>Year/Key funder</i>	<i>Activities</i>
1984-1990 Commonwealth Department of Indigenous Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funds to set up KLRC and some ongoing operational and project money. ▪ Other grants, including state funding, boosted projects. ▪ Small staff based in Halls Creek in an office with few resources. ▪ Reliance on linguists to help design and manage projects
1990-2005 ATSIC - Aboriginal control of funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funded operations – Halls Creek office and Fitzroy Crossing Annexe ▪ Additional project funds – contract linguists still design and manage projects ▪ Did not have to argue the importance of language with ATSIC
2005-2006 Transition to Commonwealth control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fitzroy Crossing Annexe closed ▪ Less additional project money available ▪ More justification needed for operational funds to run a regional language centre
2006 onwards DCITA, DEWHA, FaHCSIA, Ministry of Arts, Department of Communication and the Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduced operational money – no recognition of administrative costs of running regional organisation. ▪ Unwillingness to resource anything other than 'products' ▪ Project funds linked to operation costs – less projects, less operational funds Ignores the other work the organisation does such as providing advice and information.
2017-2019 Department of Communication and the Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Difficult period for the organization. Non-compliance notices. ▪ Increase in project funding, but less capacity to deliver. ▪ Operational funding cut from 1st July 2019.
2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ILA Operational Funding secured ▪ Funding from DLGSC to undertake a scoping and mapping study of Kimberley Languages

2. Key documents

KLRC has a number of plans and strategies that guide our direction and operations. We reference key State and National policies that impact on our work.

Key plans and strategies	<i>Details and implications for KLRC</i>
<i>KLRC Corporate Governance Handbook 2023</i>	This sets out governance protocols for the KLRC.
<i>Strategic Plan May 2023-2026</i>	This Strategic Plan sets the direction for the KLRC.
<i>Priority Action Plan May 2023-2026</i>	The KLRC Priority Action Plan implements the strategies in the Strategic Plan
<i>KLRC Digital Strategy 2023</i>	This Strategy sets the framework for our digitization activities
<i>KLRC Stakeholder Engagement Plan</i>	This plan outlines our key stakeholders and how we engage with them
<i>Archive Development Plan 2008</i>	This document, developed by Jen Ford, has been guiding work on the archive for over a decade. The most recent updates and reports are from 2018.
<i>National Agreement on Closing the Gap, 2020</i>	Outcome 16, is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing. Target 16 is that by 2031, there is a sustained increase in the number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken. There are national and state implementation plans to deliver this target, which must be done in partnership with community and language centres.
<i>National Indigenous Language Policy 2009</i>	The policy proposes coordinated action between government, ATSI languages organisations, educational and research institutions in order to support the maintenance and revival of ATSI languages.
The National Indigenous Languages Survey (NILS) Report 2019,	The most recent report on ATSI languages in Australia, found that the situation of Australia's first languages is grave and requires urgent action. In the Kimberley, only one language – Kukatja – is still being passed on to the youngest generation.
<i>WA Aboriginal Languages Policy Discussion Paper Department of Indigenous Affairs, May 2008</i>	This document is valuable as it provides an overview of the issues and history of Aboriginal languages in Western Australia and policy development in this area. It addresses maintenance and revival of traditional aboriginal languages, provision of translation and interpreting services and English language development for children and adults

9 Our values



We have formed a set of guiding principles for our strategic plan to be reflected in all our activities and to inform those that work with us.

VALUE 1: We follow culture

Respect, responsibility, cultural values, kinship, building wellbeing through staying close to language and culture. Our work is based on traditional teaching within families and learning knowledge from the elders.

VALUE 2: We empower language speakers

Our goal is the transmission of language through the generations and we support language speakers to teach on country and in schools. To keep our languages strong, we will build capacity in people to own and control their own language projects and language outcomes.

VALUE 3: We share and learn across language groups

Our ancestors shared language, many people knew how to speak the language of neighboring groups. We want to keep the benefits of sharing and learning across language groups strong for our young people.

VALUE 4: We build beneficial and trusting relationships

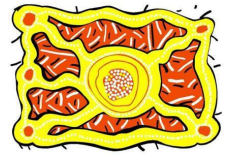
We value partnerships and trusting relationships, built over time with mutually beneficial relationships based on 'wurnan' - our culturally based way of giving and receiving, sharing and collaborating to bring about greater intercultural understanding.

VALUE 5: We look for new ways to service our community

We want to establish innovative social enterprise and fee-for-service activities, that benefit the community and provide a financial future for our younger generations based on our language and culture.

"Our Languages were shared, we all learnt each other's language....it is important for this to continue, to value sharing and caring. Today communication is a big problem. Teach our kids how our old people taught us – to connect them with each other, no more divisions, staying separate is not our culture, people are too isolated from each other ...it causes big mental problems these days. Language brings us back together

" Annie Milgin, Nyikina Elder

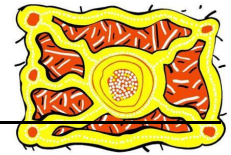


10 Language teaching and learning

The primary focus on school teaching and western methods does not support intergenerational learning. KLRC needs to focus strongly on home, community and on country teaching and learning. This building block will support all other types of teaching and learning.

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Nature of issue for</i>
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We need teaching on country at schools ▪ We need the state, independent and Catholic school systems to engage with an alternative approach to language education which includes accessing with archival materials and experimenting with language immersion approaches. .
English and Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kids get confused with English at school and Language at home, they start to feel ashamed to use Aboriginal languages ▪ KLRC needs to find more effective ways to ramp up 'home and community' language use to lay a stronger foundation for Teaching on Country
Linguists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some linguists have not embraced a new way of working where they are contributing to Aboriginal people's language teaching and learning needs and goals ▪ There is still distrust that linguists and other researchers appear to be taking knowledge without beneficial returns
Measurement Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do we measure if on-country teaching is working? Need to evaluate for investors and funding bodies. ▪ Revisit the Teaching on Country Curriculum Framework (2010) which highlights the need to develop an appropriate measurement framework
Government support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of government support generally for language development ▪ Australia does not actively encourage the use of heritage languages ▪ Language support can be tokenistic.
Language as Cultural Healing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Find a way for KLRC to effectively promote Language as a cultural healing tool when applying for funds and inviting private investors.
Aboriginal Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language teachers are not all given the same pay and conditions as other teachers, so the message is that our languages are not important
Intellectual Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revisit the Indigenous Knowledge Intellectual Property policies and documents and integrate them into the standard policies and procedures of the organisation ▪ Develop easy to use proforma and information sheets for external stakeholders

11 Development priorities



There is increasing competition for scarce resources amongst organisations working in language security. Coordination and collaboration at the regional level is vital.

"We all one mob, funding bodies separate us, make us weak, all these organisations separated under white man law. We are strong as one...." Mr. Watson, Nykina elder]

The challenging funding environment will require some innovative thinking to ensure the KLRC can continue to deliver language outcomes across the Kimberley.

There are four priorities for the KLRC over the next three years of this strategic plan.



1. Strengthen advocacy and collaboration

Strategies:

- a) Develop and nurture a strong alliance with the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre, sharing resources, events and preparing joint funding applications.
- b) Enhance our advocacy role by concentrating on community councils, local politicians and regional events. Engage champions and advocates.
- c) Develop functionality on the KLRC website to include upcoming events and news to ensure a more proactive advocacy capacity.
- d) Undertake targeted media activities to raise awareness in the broader community about language issues.
- e) Attend state, national and international language forums and conferences.
- f) Produce short video clips of language issues for raising public awareness and which can be used by media to promote language issues consistent with KLRC interests.
- g) Forge new alliances and collaborative partnerships, particularly between culturally aligned organisations such as Native Title PBCs and Aboriginal Ranger groups.
- h) Start a dialogue with language groups with their own language programs to understand what is working and where they face challenges. Seek opportunities for mutual support.

1. Offer more targeted services

Strategies:

- a. Focus on developing three to four services based on a realistic appraisal of target markets and delivery capabilities.
- b. Undertake further dialogue with Native Title PBCs and Aboriginal ranger groups/Indigenous Protected Areas to clarify areas where there may be a need for language services and projects.
- c. Refine the KLRC's offer for government departments and regional service providers around language aspects of service delivery in health, education, childcare, child protection and legal services.
- d. Present a contemporary and professional market image for KLRC and improve the public face through an updated website that includes an ability to easily load updated material and information about events and news to promote services.
- e. Develop a strong digital and social media presence for the organization.
- f. Embrace new technologies as a way to engage communities in language.
- g. Create a suite of promotional tools for KLRC products and services matched to target audiences.

2. Improve efficiency of the organisation

Strategies:

- a. The KLRC Directors continually focus on governance to ensure that we maintain strong cultural leadership.
- b. Ensure that the KLRC Manager has adequate professional support and mentoring.
- c. Appoint a Project Manager to better coordinate and support language projects.
- d. Increase youth relevant language activities and improve the relevance of KLRC for the interests of youth.
- e. Develop an effective archive as a core business tool and asset of the organisation to ensure KLRC operates in an efficient and professional way. The archive underpins its history, its knowledge and its future.
- f. Seek help from others, such as research partners and volunteers to improve the archive
- h. Improve staffing retention by targeting the unique circumstances of Kimberley people, their history and subsequent intergenerational legacy of unresolved trauma.
- i. Seek support to ensure excellent human resources management, employee satisfaction and creating and empowered and enlivened organizational culture.

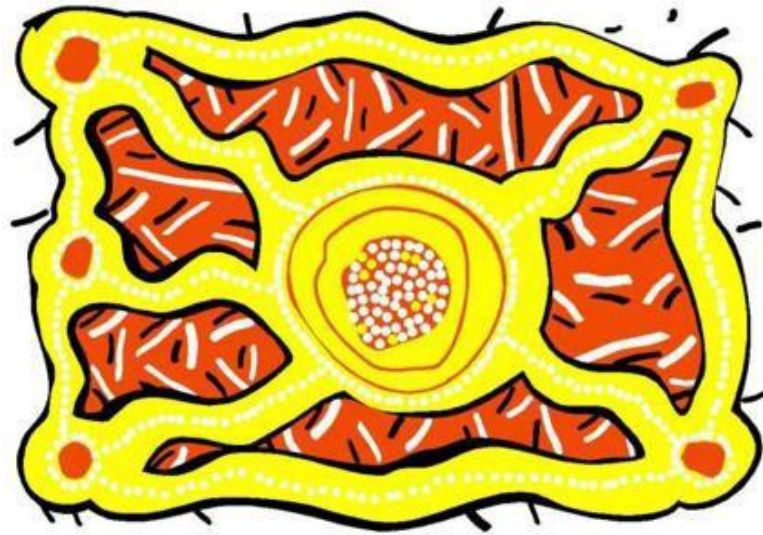
3. Expand resource base

Strategies:

- a. Develop a business plan and a marketing plan as a roadmap to diversify our income. This could include:
- b. Expanding the revenue base by including fee-for-service activities to augment core funding.
- c. Developing cross-cultural workshops with a language focus as a saleable product.
- d. Hiring out our conference room and center facilities.
- e. Improving marketing of KLRC consultancy services for language services and project involvement.
- f. Promoting opportunities for unincorporated groups and projects requiring a legal entity for funds management. Use a 20% commission for each auspicing arrangement.
- g. Increasing online sales capacity on the KLRC website.
- h. Exploring new avenues to attract additional investment of time and money from private resources, internships, project contributions, volunteer time.
- i. Trialing crowd funding for specific KLRC projects.
- j. Developing a prospectus of investment opportunities with KLRC.

“Language holds our culture,
country holds language....
without language we lose ourselves”

Ngalu Patsy Bedford,
Chairperson, KLRC
Bunuba Elder



Kimberley Language Resource Centre
12 Terone Street
Halls Creek WA 6770

Ph 08 91 686 005

E info@klrc.org.au

W <https://klrc.org.au>.