KAYA WANDJOO NGALA NOONGARPEDIA – WELCOME TO OUR NOONGARPEDIA

Report on a research project.[1]

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Chapter 6: Gnullak koorliny University katitjin – Noongarpedia and work with tertiary students

Introduction

Another strategy adopted by the Noongapedia team was to experiment with combining Noongarpedia-posting with the learning activities in three university environments. The first of the groups involved in the Noongarpedia work was one that came to be called the 'Noongarpedia hotshots'. These students were all Indigenous young people enrolled in a range of degree programs, based in the School of Indigenous Studies at the University of Western Australia. The second group were undergraduate students in a first-year course (Introduction to Community Development) designed for those keen on working with an approach noted for its commitment to 'bottom-up' and community driven involvement in social programs and solutions. These students were non-Indigenous young people. The third group were postgraduate students in the Masters of Heritage Studies undertaking a course on Debates in Contemporary Heritage Studies. These students included both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

What follows is a description of the process taken with each of these projects with tertiary students, showing how each attempted to combine the use of Noongarpedia as a platform for learning and a means of knowledge production, and the challenges and lessons learnt from each.

Noongarmedians in Residence

Early in the process we recognised the sheer amount of data that could be utilised to create a large number of entries on our hybrid site, and to make or edit entries in Wikipedia itself. This is when the team decided to recruit young Noongar people to be trained in the creation and editing of Wiki entries, in the hope that they would run training sessions, or later host 'Wikibomb' events to make new entries and increase Noongar participation on the site. We also created folders with cheat sheets, information sheets, language resources and other helpful links to encourage ongoing participation with the 'pedia.

We called these young recruits 'Noongarmedians in Residence'. The idea was to draw on the skill, energy, connections, and commitment of a small core group, who might be keen on building their knowledge of Noongar, learning the technical skills that would allow them to post on the Noongarpedia and then in turn to recruit other Noongar to the cause. In the initial year of the work the following Noongarmedians in Residence (NiR) agreed to join the project:

Casey Kickett (UWA student)
Sebastian Scott (UWA student)
Kamsani Bin Saleh (UWA student)
Callum Morich (UWA student)
Kobi Morrison (UWA student)
Dylan Collard (UWA Law student)
Kelsi Forrest (UWA Law student)

We invited participation of these individuals via letter to inform and encourage the aspirations and desired outcomes of their particular involvement. These were:

- Training in Wikipedia use
- Training in Noongar language
- Training in workshop facilitation
- To encourage wider community to create and contribute Noongar knowledge
- Language development
- Interaction with Noongar Knowledge and networks
- Interaction with key Noongar academics
- Payment for their time

The initial training of NiRs was over 3 days. We advised the potential NiRs that if they attended a paid 2-day training session, we would ask them to assist in the running of a training session for Noongar Language teachers with the help of Gideon Digby, President of Wikimedia Australia, other Wikimedians and the Noongarpedia Research Team. This training tool place July 16 and 17, 2015. Only three of the originally

recruited NiRs completed the training, owing to the study, personal, and work commitments of the others. Kamsani Bin Saleh, Kobi Morrison and Callum Morich (UWA students) were recruited later, and completed several training sessions with Casey Kickett and Sebastian Scott, who became the most committed NiRs.

During these sessions, we were lucky enough to have project member Dr Clint Bracknell (Noongar scholar at the University of Sydney), community members and language and culture teachers Kylie Farmer (Noongar actor) and Roma Winmar (Noongar artist) to assist with the creation of a Noongar-language version of Wikipedia. This is known as the 'nys' – nys being the acronym for Noongar in Ethnologue and elsewhere.[2] If/when a Noongar-language version of Wikipedia is launched, it will be coded as nys.wikipedia, in contrast to the more familiar en.wikipedia (in English).

Noongarpedia Training Session with Noongarpedians in Residence and Gideon Digby. Photo by Jennie Buchanan

Unfortunately, the retention and participation of the Noongarpedians in Residence was not great after the initial period of training. Many of these young people were among the most committed Noongar, as well as studying full-time and being involved in other community-based and leadership work. It was hard to fit in yet another commitment. But also, the retention problem arose partly because at this early stage of the project there was a strong aspiration to build a site (like the Māori Wikipedia) where Noongar language was featured highly – preferably exclusively. Some felt intimidated by the fact their language skills were not advanced enough to edit and write articles in Noongar. Meanwhile, others felt concerned about the politics of public access to Noongar language, taking the view that the 'information would be too public'. They were concerned that 'Noongars would lose control of their knowledge

[2] See: https://www.ethnologue.com/language/nys.

and language'. Although articulated in the early stages of the project, these concerns are partly captured within excerpts of a conference abstract prepared by one of the young Wikimedians, Casey Kickett, who chose to step out of the project:

> *Noongarpedia: The epitome of cultural clashes between Wikipedia and Aboriginal Australian worldviews.*
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> *The topic I would like to present on is the issue of cultural clashes on Wikipedia between Indigenous and Western worldviews that have surfaced since beginning the 'Noongarpedia' project. 'Noongarpedia' aims to establish a Wikipedia entirely in the Noongar language (a borderline extinct Aboriginal language of south-west Western Australia). The content of Noongarpedia relates to the area where the Noongar people are from, including certain Noongar cultural knowledge. The purpose of Noongarpedia is to help revive an almost extinct language by acting as a medium where Noongar people and non-Indigenous people are able to learn to write, read and speak in Noongar and to pass on the knowledge. However, we are slowly finding that sometimes it is like trying to fit a square into a circle.*
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> *The language is almost extinct due to being a minority language in an English dominated country and the effects of colonisation, specifically the Stolen Generations (an event that lasted over many decades which saw Aboriginal babies and children taken from their parents and taught to live 'white').*[3]

Although colonisation has had a negative impact on the knowledge and transmission of the Noongar language, cultural protocols and sensitivities which have arisen from colonisation and the traumatic experiences of it remain intact among Noongar people – and as we have found with the Noongarpedia project, often clash with the policies of Wikipedia. The major policy clashes occur in relation to what are accepted as reliable sources of information, owing to differences from a Western and a Noongar viewpoint as to what counts as evidence. In the Noongar worldview, evidence can consist of verbal stories from elders, or be found in the earth itself. Everybody knows or is related to everyone in the Noongar community, so the convention of not uploading content of a person you know makes little sense. And finally, Wikipedia's commitment to 'no censorship' is an issue when there are sensitivities around certain events and cultural content, and with who owns what knowledge in a cultural context.

Another strong concern among the local Noongar community is that, if uploaded to Noongarpedia, Noongar cultural knowledge may be stolen for commercial benefit. The question of who 'owns' a language is not merely a legal matter (copyright) or an economic matter (commercial exploitation). There are cultural sensitivities about

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[3] Casey Kickett wrote interesting reflections on her perceptions of being a Wikimedian in the project: https://wikimania2016.wikimedia.org/wiki/Critical_issues_presentations/Noongarpedia:_The_epitome_of_cultural_clashes_between_Wikipedia_and_Aboriginal_Australian_worldviews.

where to draw the line with content, for example about massacres that have happened to Noongar people. There are lessons to be learnt on all sides here. While Noongar caution is natural, it may be tempered by discovering that Wikipedia is just as open to their knowledge as to the settler version. Discussing these issues with Gideon Digby of Wikimedia Australia provoked a very practical response: If it is wrong to call a notorious event of 1834 the 'Battle of Pinjarra' (as it is known in settler histories), then change the Wikipedia entry to reflect the Noongar perspective: the 'Pinjarra massacre'. Wikipedia was promptly edited to that effect.[4]

Although the strategy of recruiting young Noongar leaders from one University did not prove successful it did result in several positive outcomes. Some of those involved have returned to the project during periods when their work and other commitments allow. For example, Callum Morich has assisted with a number of Wikibombs and workshops with Murdoch University students, hosting public presentations of the Noongarpedia and producing some online resources that act as 'cheat sheets' for primary school students. He has indicated that he would be keen to work on creating multimedia support materials for future users. Further, the training of NiRs acted as a trial run for later training and induction sessions of tertiary students (e.g. work with community development and heritage studies students). In the same way, the early sessions with Noongar language teachers hosted by NiRs were instrumental in shaping how later Noongar participants and assistants were inducted into the project. This was particularly important in helping the project prepare for its work with primary school students.

Community work students and Noongarpedia

In early 2016, undergraduate students in Murdoch University's Community Development Programme were invited to choose an alternative assessment piece, including the chance to participate in two Noongarpedia workshops, to produce at least six substantive posts, and to write a short reflective essay. Instead of taking an exam worth 30 percent of their marks for the course, students were invited to begin the process of becoming Noongarpedians. The objective was to encourage non-Aboriginal community work students to think about how this could give them a way to encourage Noongar community involvement in language and cultural work.

Students were asked to attend two workshops hosted by members of the Noongarpedia team, a representative from Wikimedia Australia and the lecturer of the Murdoch unit. The workshops set out:
1) To prepare students to use the Noongarpedia platform,
2) To learn a little about Noongar language, culture and knowledge,
3) To start students working on entries that feature Noongar community work and Noongar community workers, and

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[4] See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinjarra_massacre.

4) To start students thinking about how they could recruit Noongar agents into work on Noongarpedia.

The assessment component associated with the workshops included two elements. In one, students were asked to produce six entries on the Noongarpedia site, each between 500-700 words. They were encouraged to use Noongar, English and what host Len Collard described as 'Southwest Australian' (the language used by contemporary Australians living in the southwest of WA). As well as being posted on the Noongarpedia site, this was submitted as the first part of the students' assignment. In element two, students were asked to write a short essay of approximately 1000 words, reflecting on the process undertaken. They were asked to turn their attention to the questions:

1) What have you been able to learn about Noongar language and culture?
2) Using the literature and ideas explored in the unit, how could the Noongarpedia Project be described as 'Community Development'?
3) What suggestions do you have that might help the project in its attempts to increase Noongar participation in the work?

This project was particularly formative as it helped to test out a workshop process further, to assist in the induction of people into work on the Noongarpedia site. The following description from the unit coordinator sets out how these two sessions ran:

The first workshop started elegantly. Fifteen students rolled up to the session, having been invited to take on work in the Noongarpedia project. I had introduced the work in one of the lectures. This particular lecture featured a community-based Noongar language and culture project that had taken place in the late 1990s, so students were warmed up to the value of such work as an exercise in 'community development'. This first year undergraduate unit had about 150 students enrolled. All but five or so students are non-Indigenous. People were invited to participate in Noongarpedia as an 'alternative assignment'. They were to attend two workshops to learn about how to use the site and then carry out a two-part assessment that included posting on the site and writing about what they had learned.

Prior to the workshops I sent out a small electronic package of material designed by the Noongarpedia team. This included some basic information about the project, what we would cover in the workshops (a PowerPoint), some background reading and a number of 'cheat-sheets' that helped explain how to post on the site. This was crucial because it meant that people came to the workshops having prepared. The Noongarpedia team were exceptionally generous with their time. Lennie, Ingrid, Jennie, Gideon and Callum all attended and they brought lots of resources.

The session started beautifully with the loveliest 'welcome to country' and introductions from Len and Ingrid. All in attendance were asked to introduce

themselves, talk about their previous relationships with Noongar and Noongar knowledge, and asked to read out bits of Noongar from the Noongarpedia welcome page. The theme of the workshops was also introduced. We had decided to concentrate our attention on the themes of: Noongar boordier, kwoppa moort, kwoppa bulla Noongar, or Noongar community work and community workers. Partly this was because it fitted into the themes students were studying in the unit and partly because we wanted students to extend their knowledge of the contribution to Noongar in their professional area. So right from the start people were invited to come into a relationship with Noongar and Noongar language and knowledge. This was done with respect and playfully so that people's nervousness and uncertainty was put at ease.

The next step was to get people logged on to the system as Wikimedians. Initially, given previous experience of running Wikibombs, we thought that this might take considerable time. However, because all students had 'grown up digital' this happened with speed and ease. Ingrid and Jennie then gave a short presentation about the project, giving students a bit of background on Noongar, language and knowledge.

A number of students then articulated some of their fears as non-Aboriginal people. As one said, some were concerned that they came to the task with little knowledge of language and life. Another expressed her concern that she felt she was imposing on Noongar by stepping into this space:

- *'How can we put accurate posts up if we have never spoken or rarely hear any Noongar before?' (student with African heritage)*

- *'Given the history of Noongars being dispossessed should white people be involved in this work?' (student with European heritage)*

Len Collard provided considerable assurance and support with his response:

> *What most people here don't realise is that if you grew up in the south west of WA you already know more than you think. Who here knows the Noongar word for karri, jarrah and marri? Did anyone grow up or regularly travel to Mandurah, Katanning, Narrogin or Corrigin? Who among you does know the name of the things that we use to spear fish (gidgi)?*

> *It is the case that Noongar have had lots taken from them by Wedjela. Most Noongar know very little Noongar knowledge. But that is why we are doing this and, as far as I'm concerned, we need as many people as possible to get involved in the Noongarpedia. The more that are*

involved the more we are going to make sure that my grandies will have Noongar knowledge in their lives.

If you are worried about having to write in Noongar then don't be. I say two things. One: If you have a go then we will be right behind you to edit and help you get it right. Two: I want people to write in three languages on this site, Noongar (as much as you can), English (and I know you can) and what I call 'South West Australian'. This is the language of this area. I speak it every time I talk about the trees from this area, every time I travel through towns and every time I refer to what goes on in this part of the world. If you grew up here I know you speak this language. (Len Collard)

The next step in the workshop was to get students thinking about language and having a new experience of Noongar. Ingrid and Jennie led this process by providing a set of Noongar word lists, dictionaries and other published materials and inviting students to use them in groups of three to identify and make a list of Noongar words that may be useful in describing activities associated with community work. This prompted some excellent work with students listing words like:

- *kanyarn (speaking the truth),*
- *moort (family and community),*
- *quop katatjin (good knowledge),*
- *weirn (spirit),*
- *darbakarn (going steady),*
- *kaat wara (mental illness),*
- *ni (listening),*
- *dookatj (clever person),*
- *boordier (leader).*

Ingrid then asked each person to read out the list of the person on his or her left. This was an excellent exercise not just because it had students speaking and listening to the sounds of Noongar words but also because it extended people's vocabulary.

Next people were asked to visit the Noongarpedia site and read entries that had already been posted to see what is relevant to Noongar community work and community workers. Prior to the workshop Ingrid had set up a new structure on the site called 'Noongar Warbirliny: Community Development'. Within this site she had made a small number of headings that included Noongar projects, organisations, notes, people, places and history. Students we asked to consider what they might add or edit in relation to these entries and headings and invited to start experimenting with posting. This was terrific because it quickly meant that students moved from passive consumers of the

site to Wikipedians, testing out how to post and edit, and beginning work on their assignment.

Finally, in the workshop sessions students were asked to choose a Noongar person, organisation or project on which they would like to produce a short entry. They were then invited to carry out web-based research on this topic and start to create between one and three sentences ready for posting. Before they posted it, they were asked to use the available language resources and spend time trying to frame how they might use Noongar, English and 'South West WA' words and phrases to articulate their findings.

As the remarks from the following community work student indicate, those involved in this process were taken by the openness and generosity towards non-Aboriginal people in both the platform and the process they were taken through by their Noongarpedia hosts.

I was instantly intrigued. The idea of Noongarpedia that was introduced to us sparked my interest immediately and I recall wondering why something like this didn't already exist. Although I am not Noongar myself, I have close Noongar family and I have also taught many Indigenous primary school students as a teacher's assistant, so I felt a connection to the idea of finding a way to preserve the language and traditions of this culture and also to further acknowledge and celebrate it. From our first Wiki-bomb workshop I couldn't help but notice how open and welcoming the organisers leading this project were to us, a bunch of new students. I have always been aware of the Indigenous way of sharing and coming together to do things, but this was the first time that I was able to connect this. (non-Indigenous female student in her early 20s)

A consequence of students' involvement with Noongarpedia was exposure to the poetics of a new knowledge system. A number of them remarked on the beauty of listening to and appreciating the sounds and shape of the language of their home.

Noongar language has such a strong spiritual essence and seems to be spoken directly from the heart, without the need for the niceties or formalities of traditional English. Words such as 'madarang', translating to 'the mourning of a child by its father', have the ability to encapsulate such an important feeling or an image of an entire scene with just one word, that it makes the English language seem extraordinarily boring. (non-Indigenous female student in her 20s)

Another strength of the work was its ability to offer a reframe for those who had little prior experience of Noongar and were reliant upon conventional representations laden with problem-centric ideas about Indigenous Australians. Given the task of

researching leading Noongar community workers and then posting content, non-Indigenous students quickly discovered that Noongar have considerable agency and have contributed much to public life. This stood in stark contrast to many of their taken for granted ideas about Noongar as culturally impoverished and Noongar knowledge as long ago lost.

> *Despite initially thinking, naively, that I was going to find it difficult to find many Noongar organisations or success stories, I have discovered that there are in fact plenty. I felt such a sense of joy and pride reading about the successes of individuals such as Darryl Kickett and Alton Walley and about projects such as Maditjil Moorna. It was inspiring to find out more about those who are passionate about their heritage and culture and who work tirelessly at ensuring that it will be protected and preserved for years to come.* (non-Indigenous female student in her 30s)

Of course, this process offered students a way to engage with the content of their community development course too. As a novel exercise for these students it excited them and stimulated their will to learn. As an exercise in cross-cultural learning it spoke directly to the learning objectives of the course and offered them another chance to meet and work in conjunction with Noongar and Noongar knowledge. As an exercise that had them learning to use digital platforms it broadened their literacies and offered critical skills for a future that will be highly dependent on knowledge of ITCs.

> *Working as part of the Noongarpedia project was a helpful introduction into the world of community development. I was taught skills that not only helped me technically, but that broadened my knowledge culturally and linguistically, and allowed me to feel as though I was contributing my time in a useful way. I could see that Noongarpedia is a form of community development as it is a grassroots bottom-up project, which relies heavily on aspects including participation, knowledge-sharing, and, perhaps most importantly, dialogue. I feel as though through minor adjustments, participation and entry quality could be improved even further.* (non-Indigenous female student in her 20s)

Others saw the exercise as offering more general skills as well as a practical way of starting to meet Noongar and understand more about the lives of Noongar. For the following student, this provided the first in what she hopes are many more chances to move from ignorance of Noongar knowledge to a lively interaction with the contributions Noongar knowledge may offer:

> *During my short time contributing to the Noongarpedia project, I learned many useful things, not only for my tertiary education, but skills which are valuable in day-to-day life. I learned technical skills for my Wiki-entries, including basic coding, inserting public domain images, and what constitutes*

reliable information worth including on the site (an aspect of critical thinking, a vital part of University-learning). More important than this, I personally felt, was learning about all things Noongar. As a result of being raised in outer-northern suburban Perth, I have had no real exposure to cultures greatly different from the ones in my immediate surroundings. It was eye-opening to learn so much new information. What I found to be most interesting was learning basic Noongar language. The amount of Noongar words I had heard in English-based conversation, without realising, surprised me.

Some of the other things which I learned as a contributor to the Noongarpedia, clearly, were about the people and things which I chose to write about on the site. I learned about various community development programs run for the Noongar community, including the Aboriginal Legal Service, Nowanup cultural knowledge camp and Noongaroke, as well as the notable, influential Noongar people behind them, such as Eugene Eades and Jim Morrison (non-Indigenous female student in her 20s).

Another student reflected on how learning in this way more powerfully allowed her to experience and 'come to know' Noongar by starting from her own local interest. Using the work of Paulo Freire (1986), she contrasted what she described as the conventional 'banking approach that schools and Universities often use' with the Noongarpedia workshops:

The Noongarpedia project was an interesting experience for me as I learned about Noongar language and culture through the process of researching, far more than I anticipated. I chose to focus initially on a Bindjareb yarn and elder Yaburgurt Winjan from my local area of Mandjoogoordap. As I was learning in the context of something that interested me and linked with my own daily life, this gave greater depth to my learning experience in a similar way to Freire's concept of education where learning is linked to one's lived experience. The realisation was that this project can end up being a resource for educators to use in a similar way for children and adults to learn about Noongar culture, whether they be Noongar or not. Noongarpedia has the potential to compile a wider scope of information on Noongar people, boodja and yarn than ever seen before.

Through this process I learnt, as expected, some new Noongar words, but I also learnt the names and history of some significant Noongar people and places within my local area and some extra tribe-specific customs and lore. As mentioned, reading and using Noongar words in the context of these stories was invaluable and really made them stick. (non-Indigenous female student in her 30s)

Screenshot:
https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Noongar_Warbirliny:_Community_Development

Working with Heritage Masters Students

In late 2016 the project began to work with a small postgraduate group of students from the unit 'Debates in Contemporary Heritage Management' at UWA. Here students were asked to use Noongarpedia as a case study to help them explore some of the possibilities and complexities afforded by this digital platform to those working in the field of heritage management.

Along with Benjamin Smith, Professor of World Rock Art, the team set about creating a six-week intensive course that trained the students in editing and contributing content to the Noongarpedia. Alongside Ben and Len Collard's six-week lecture series on topics related to Contemporary Heritage Management, we held workshops on the following topics:

- Wikipedia GLAMs [the Gallery, Library, Archive, Museum sector] and a case study of Toodyaypedia.
- Setting up Wikipedia accounts, preferences and protocols.
- Induction to Noongarpedia: a digital co-created space for Indigenous Knowledge.
- Noongarpedia and good article protocols: skills in preparing and writing articles. Practical editing and content support sessions.
- Noongarpedia: building a collaborative site of heritage and knowledge.
- Development of Noongarpedia student articles with team members in support roles.

- Student presentations of topics for Noongarpedia and mentoring sessions.
- Reflections on a 'third space' for working with Indigenous Heritage.

The unit was designed for students to be able practically to apply research skills and to learn to use the Noongarpedia site. A percentage of the unit assessment was allocated to a conference-style 20-minute verbal presentation. This was to be an opportunity for students to get constructive feedback on their preliminary research for each person's entries on Noongarpedia.

A major part of the assessment was for students to produce three scholarly entries (500 words each) on the site. Students were asked that each entry use Noongar, English, and Southwest Australian language; and include links to Noongar sources and examples, and at least one form of media, such as photographs or audio recordings. They were also asked to identify an example of Noongar 'intangible' cultural heritage in their projects and to post completed entries on the Noongarpedia site. We built space in to the workshop series for students to work on their entries in a developmental and collegial manner.

The second part of the major assessment was for students to write a short essay (1000 words) reflecting on the process undertaken in creating their Noongarpedia entries. We asked them to focus on the following questions:
1) What have you been able to learn about contemporary Noongar heritage, language and culture?
2) What have you learnt about the value of using Noongarpedia to support work with 'intangible heritage'?[5]
3) Drawing upon literature concerned with contemporary heritage work, what you have learnt about the tensions confronting people working with intangible heritage.

The workshop sessions followed the success of the work with Murdoch students with an Acknowledgement to Country and people being invited start the process of introducing themselves as Noongar may do when meeting new people. This included people introducing their background and their interests in Noongar heritage. As in the earlier work with tertiary students and at Wikibombs, the project team provided a range of texts for students to use in the sessions. These ranged from Noongar Language dictionaries to children's storybooks, community based project reports and other academic articles. The team kept a list of bookmarked online sites to show students where resources could be found. They also asked students to share what they

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[5] 'Intangible heritage' is defined as traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts. See: *What is Intangible Culture?* UNESCO: http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/what-is-intangible-heritage-00003.

had been finding in their research. The intention was to build an atmosphere of learning, sharing and collaboration.

The initial plan was to spend six weeks combining instruction with the use of Noongarpedia with posting. It was initially assumed that this time would be sufficient, yet the deeper students got involved the more they grew enthused in philosophical and political discussions about using digital platforms to strengthen knowledge about Noongar heritage, and who should be writing and contributing to these matters. The group used Noongarpedia as a practical site to work through different frameworks for thinking about knowledge, to examine the idea of knowledge authenticity, to test out the challenge of building trust between heritage professionals and Noongar, and to explore the history of knowledge appropriation. At the same time the group trialled the act of posting on the Noongarpedia site, examining how a digital platform such as this could also encourage rigorous discussion without people becoming immobilised or unwilling to act.

The heritage class was small and intimate but full of interesting and enthusiastic people who were all keen to find ways to support Noongar in preserving and transmitting intangible heritage. Of course the students struggled with these tasks and how to move forward as heritage professionals. This was part of the learning design of the unit. However, as they began to work with the site they also began to flesh out some of the challenges that were pertinent to the business of heritage management with Noongar.

Some discovered that they had some discomfort because they were not Noongar and this somehow created considerable unease, at times a 'roadblock' to contributing to the 'pedia. A Noongar student articulated different challenges. Her fears or concerns were about having permission to share family matters on global platform without the expressed involvement of family.

Some students began to understand the challenge associated with being obliged to provide credible citations. They also discovered that if, for any reason, a person feels uncomfortable or concerned about the validity of a source, content or editor in the Noongarpedia/Wikipedia environment, then they too have the power to challenge and dispute information. However, a common concern expressed by students was the fear of being associated with a 'misrepresentation' of Noongar knowledge and culture and doing so with an unfamiliar software like Wikipedia. Others saw that to fail to use platforms such as this may also be a risk to the sustainability of active Noongar involvement in Noongar knowledge management.

As well as testing out the tensions involvement in heritage management with Noongar, students created some very interesting and high quality posts. These included respectful acknowledgement and sourcing, with the voices of community

and the use of a combination of modes of media. The following represents one entry of note on Munday Pinjar (talking about Perth Airport).[6]
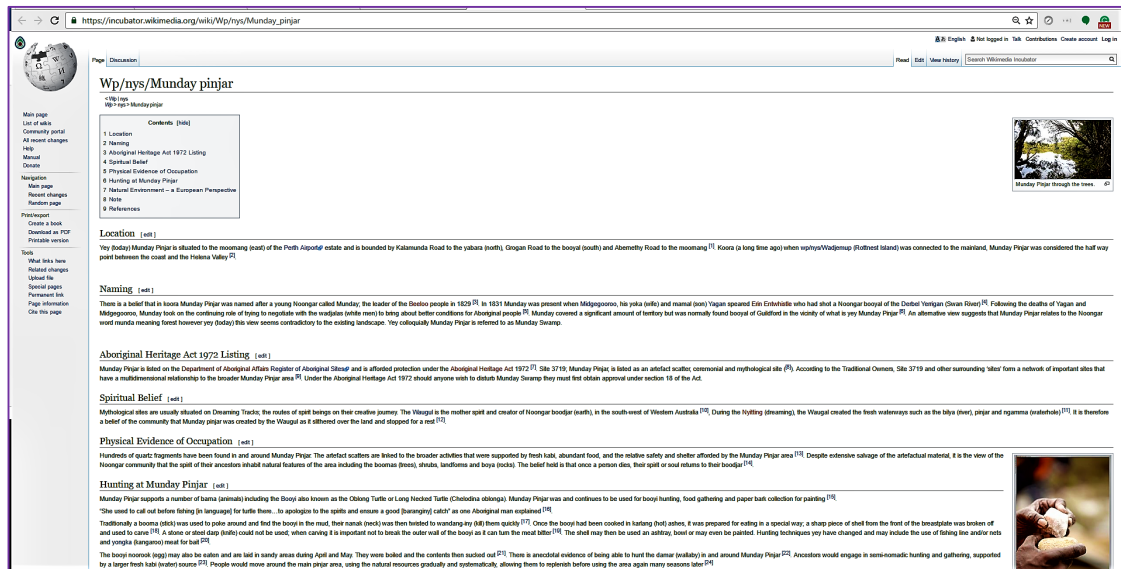
Screenshot: https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Munday_pinjar.

We have been given permission by some of the students to include their reflections, and believe that these demonstrate the rich and complex learning that the group undertook. The first student discussed how use of Noongarpedia helped him explore ways of opening what Martin (2004) describes as a 'recognition space' (see also Yap and Yu, 2016).

> *By implementing this community focused ideology and co-management methodology for Noongarpedia the project is engaging groups of previously marginalised stakeholders of intangible cultural heritage. One specific example of this can be found in the involvement of schoolchildren all over Noongar boodjar; a demographic which is not often given authority or even meaningful opportunities to represent and interpret their own heritage. Noongarpedia is an excellent example of contemporary heritage work that acknowledges the dynamic nature of intangible heritage kura, yeye and boorda. The inclusive, interactive and inherently fluid nature of this information platform allows for the preservation and safeguarding of intangible heritage outside the historic paradigm of cultural stasis through archival and museological practices. As a contributor to Noongarpedia, rather than extracting Noongar katitjin then formatting it within a rigid watjella paradigm, I have endeavoured to approach this project as a mediator of heritage discourse between individuals and communities …*

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[6] Munday Pinjar post: https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Munday_pinjar.

While talking about the key things she had learned the next student discussed the value of using Noongarpedia to support work with what the heritage field calls 'intangible heritage' and the tensions that confront people working with this form of heritage.

> *Whilst ostensibly all of the areas I chose to study are tangible places, it was the meaning and emotion derived from and the stories attached to each place that are critical … The use of an online platform like Wikipedia and/or Noongarpedia is one effective means of engaging with this. It allows information transmission systems commonly utilised by a young demographic; and in this way is important when seeking to perpetuate living cultural heritage for future generations … Noongarpedia presents a significant opportunity in terms of communicating across geographic and demographic boundaries. My involvement as a contributor was exciting and, in terms of developing my own Noongar language skills, enlightening.*

Conclusion

The strategy of testing out Noongarpedia with tertiary students had been an early one for the project. The intention was to find talented Noongar students in the hope that they could use their comfort and skill with new digital platforms, their literacy and their contacts with Noongar family, to support old Noongar knowledge carers. The idea was that the project could draw upon the strengths of two generations of Noongar, the young with their knowledge and skills as those 'grown up digital' and the older ones with their knowledge and skills as those 'grown up Noongar'. As has been outlined this initial strategy faced some immediate obstacles as the project was still attempting to use a Noongar-only language platform at the time. Also, as it was early in the project not much content was available on the Noongapedia. As a consequence, students did not feel confident with their knowledge of Noongar and had limited continued involvement.

This was followed by a strategy of testing out whether it is possible to work in conjunction with tertiary students within the context of one of their units or courses. At this point of development, the project had settled on using a hybrid language platform so that participants would not need to have deep knowledge of Noongar and could use the accumulating posts to build their knowledge. Another advantage of tying people's involvement with an existing unit or course was that they had the additional support of the academics teaching. Additionally, attaching student involvement with the content and assessment of these course offered a major incentive for young people to buy into the invitation to become 'Noongarpedians'.

Consequently, three important things began to happen. First, a good number of young people have had a taste of Noongarpedia. Some of these are Noongar and some are not. Second, a solid body of content has been created and posted on the site. This has

been moderated by the Noongapedia team and the academics involved in assessing the work. Finally, and perhaps most important – for the project team at least – important lessons have been learned about the potential use of Noongarpedia by young people.

Gnullak wangkiny: nidjar koorlangka koorangkorl katatjin! – We say: 'These young people are becoming learned!'

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