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## CAP Ling hosts successful conferences

The Fifth International Conference on Austroasiatic Linguistics (ICAAL5) and the 19th Himalayan Languages Symposium (HLS19) were hosted by the Department of Linguistics, in September, running sequentially on the 4-5th and 6-7th. There were more than 70 participants overall, with significant overlap in participation between the two events. The meetings were a marvelous success, bringing participation and attention from many countries in South and Southeast Asian, Europe and North America. A PDF of the combined abstracts book can be downloaded [online](#).

The meetings were organized by **Paul Sidwell** and **Gwen Hyslop**, with admin assistance in the lead up from Daniel Frost and Sarah Youngblutt, and during the meetings a wonderful team of student volunteer helpers. A special thank you to **Amos Teo** for MC'ing through the HLS meeting.

Highlights for the ICAAL included the keynote talks by K.S. Nagaraja (CIIL, India) and Felix

Rau (Köln, Germany) both focusing on Munda languages; generally the meeting marked a significant point of renewal for Munda linguistics and participants are determined to see this trend continue.

One highlight of the HLS included a workshop on Person-sensitive TAME marking, organized by Lauren Gawne (Melbourne) and Mark Post (New England). Many of the topics from the symposium will be included in the next issue of the young Himalayan Linguistics journal.

Of special significance, Profs. George van Driem (Berne, Switzerland) and Scott Delancey (Oregon, USA) not only came out for both ICAAL and HLS meetings, but also stayed to deliver master classes and public lectures, which were greatly appreciated by all.

Offers for subsequent ICAAL meetings were received from Phnom

Penh (Cambodia) and Dhakka (Bangladesh) and it looks like ICAAL may become a regular meeting, at least biennial, rather than occasional (only 5 meetings since 1973!).

The 20th Himalayan Languages Symposium will be held next year at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

Thanks due to the Department of Linguistics, CHL, RSAP, Tibetan Cultural Network and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the German Ministry of Science and Education through their Anneliese Maier Research Award to Nick Evans' for financial assistance, especially to enable travel and accommodation of keynote speakers.



Participants to the 19th Himalayan Languages Symposium

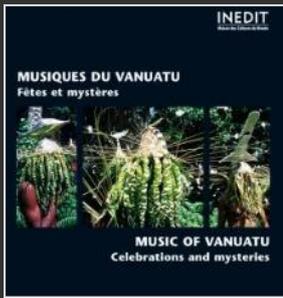
## Graduates find great jobs

**Maia Ponsonnet** started as a post-doc at CNRS's Dynamique du Langage in Lyon on 1st October, working on emotions in Barunga Kriol and a few other Australian languages. She should be able to visit Canberra for a couple of days before fieldwork towards the end of Febru-

ary - early March 2014, an opportunity to celebrate her thesis results received in early November.

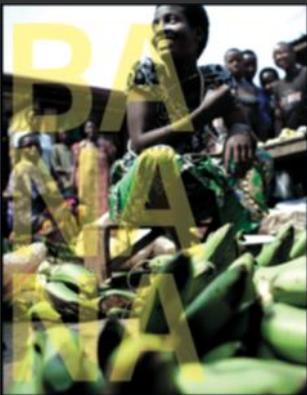
**Meladel Mistica** has been offered a position at Intel to work as a Computational Linguist. She was told that the candidates

who did not have a strong Linguistics background did not make it far into the selection process, not just for her particular role, but for other Engineering roles within the team. Also, the work she did for the Indonesian Project at ANU was of particular interest to the interviewers.



CD album:  
*Music of Vanuatu*

“this project will provide new and crucial insights into the prehistory of Asia.”



Mark Donohue's article on the origins, spread, and cultural importance of bananas.

## Music of Vanuatu CD released

**Alex François** has just released a discographic publication: *Music of Vanuatu: Celebrations and Mysteries*. Created with ethnomusicologist Monika Stern, this CD album brings together a selection of 41 recordings of customary music of various genres and styles, recorded in nine islands of northern Vanuatu, from Hiw to Pentecost. The selection highlights the diversity of instruments, genres and

styles found across Vanuatu musical arts; it focuses on live performances, when music is embedded in social practices – such as grade-taking ceremonies, weddings and other celebrations, but also lullabies, children's rhymes or games in the forest.

Along with the disc itself, comes a 128-page [bilingual book](#) published in open access. This book includes an

overview of musical arts in Vanuatu, a survey of traditional instruments and genres, a presentation of the stylistics of oral poetry, the translation of poems, photographs, and more.

Rooted in many years of fieldwork and research, the CD and the book both aim to pay tribute to the beauty of musical and verbal arts in Vanuatu.

## ARC Discovery project awarded

**Gwen Hyslop**, along with collaborator Toni Huber of Humboldt University, Berlin, recently won a ARC Discovery Project for 2014-2016 for a project that will combine linguistic and ethnographic fieldwork to produce documentations of Bhutan's East-Bodish (Tibeto-Burman) speaking peoples, with an ultimate aim of reconstructing the social history of this group.

The linguistic fieldwork will focus on different semantic domains, including religion, agriculture, and ethnobotany and grammatical features as different lenses into the past.

The anthropological research will bring new ethnographic light in to supplement the linguistic picture of the past, including religious practices and social organisation. Situ-

ated squarely within the eastern Himalayas, this project will provide new and crucial insights into the prehistory of Asia. Congratulations Gwen!

## Publication news

**Mark Donohue's** interdisciplinary research was the focus of an article in *New Scientist* (*Go, Bananas*), discussing the origins, spread, and cultural importance of bananas. The piece traces the genetic, archaeological and linguistic signature that bananas have left along the way from New Guinea to Africa, and draws on three papers that Mark has co-authored with ANU archaeologist Tim Denham in the last

few years in *Archaeology in Oceania*, *Ethnobotany Research and Applications*, and *Proceedings of the National Academy of the Sciences*.

**Tim Hassall** had an article published in the journal *Applied Linguistics* (Vol 34) in September 2013. It is in the field of L2 pragmatics, and is titled *Beyond strategy choice: a reply to Al-Gahtani and Roever*.

**Carol Priestley's** article *Social categories, shared experience, reciprocity, and endangered meanings: examples from Koromu (PNG)* will be published in the special issue of the *Australian Journal of Linguistics* entitled 'Semantics and/in Social Cognition'.

# Southern New Guinea project update

Various members of the ARC and DoBeS projects have recently returned from a set of highly successful field trips: **Nick Evans, Christian Döhler, Julia Colleen Miller, Chris Healey and Volker Gast** (University of Jena) who got his first taste of PNG field trip, turning up to the village of Sibidiri to find a newly constructed house for him to use as his base while working on the Idi language.

**Nick Evans and Chris Healey** travelled in, leaving the provincial capital of Daru by boat and travelling from there to Sibidiri and on to the coastal village of Tais to make an initial study of the virtually unstudied language there, Nā, and in the process discovered a new (though closely related) language, Lā (also known as Len). This language has not previously mentioned in existing classifications (such as Ethnologue of the Wurm & Hattori language Atlas), and on the indications of the material gathered, PNG is now on the way to adding another language to its world-beating tally, though definitive confirmation of its language vs. divergent dialect status will have to wait on more work than we could carry out in our three days in Tais.

Lā is endangered, being now spoken by just seven people of middle age or above, who moved from their original village on the south western side of Strachan

Island some decades ago. Lā has undergone a number of interesting phonetic changes, such as changing [n] to [l] and [ð] to [t], giving pairs like [Nā ðengan] vs. [Lā dengal] for 'skin'. The addition of these two languages to the coverage of the project now means that the team has basic lists for all languages in the Nambu branch of the Morehead-Maró family.



*Nick working with Lā speakers in Tais: Karmi Yaki, Nabaya Yáwane, Tom Māni, Garmae Gāl, Saroka Jakayo and Muavu Werae.*

Nick and Chris travelled back to Bimadbn where Nick continued his long-term documentation work on the Nen language. Transcription of Nen material is starting to speed up, and among the highlights of that were transcriptions of the earliest recorded Nen material, made by U. Chicago anthropologist Mary Ayres more than three decades ago.



*Nen research team at Bimadbn airstrip: (from left to right) Chris Healey, Jimmy Nébni, Nick Evans, Julia Miller, MAF Pilot.*

## Awards

**Simon Greenhill** was awarded a small RSAP grant with Lindell Bromham to study how rates of language evolution are affected by population size.

**Bhojraj Gautam**, who is working with Mark Donohue on the Kusunda and Himalayan project, was awarded a "Nepal Vidhyabhusan" (Nepalese Academic achievement award) on National Education Day by the country's president,

acknowledging his valuable work. Mark and Bhojraj are continuing to collaborate with work on Kuke, from northern Nepal, and Kusunda; some of their work can be found at the [Kusunda website](#).



*Bhojraj Gautam receiving the Nepal Vidhyabhusan*

## Recent and forthcoming fieldwork

**Rachel Hendery** carried out a month of fieldwork in the Cook Islands, working with Palmerston Islanders currently visiting or living there. Among other materials, she collected poetry "in Palmerston" by Mariana Powell. An excerpt from Powell's poem *Sonde* ("Sunday"): "Un is like is e verard sing for er to get on dat bike / She'l ketch dut undle so tight / Un tromp her hun joos like er hun is fawl on it". The translation is left as an exercise for the reader!

During October - November 2013, **Tim Hassall** has been collecting data for a research project titled L2 Pragmatics as Interaction, funded by a grant from ANU Research School of Asia and the Pacific (RSAP). He is making audio-

recordings of role plays between learners and native speakers of Indonesian, and between native speakers.

**Wayan Arka** is travelling in Indonesia, giving a plenary talk at a conference on the Austronesian/non Austronesian languages of Indonesia (4-7 November) in Bali. He will visit Pusat Bahasa (National Language Centre) and University of Indonesia, Jakarta, and Universitas Negeri Malang East Java. He will then continue his trip to eastern Indonesia (Flores and West Papua) to do fieldwork.

In November, **Mark Donohue** is heading off for the Linguistic Society of Nepal conference in Kathmandu, and to continue work on Kuke and Kusunda,

languages of Nepal.

In mid-December, **Chris Weedall** will head to Arunachal Pradesh, NE India, to begin a 3 and half month research field trip working on Sajolang (Miji).

In the same time, **Lisa Ginsburg** will be leaving for Minnesota, USA, to undertake six months of fieldwork with the large Hmong population there. There are also several universities in the area boasting Hmong Studies programs with which Lisa hopes to forge formal ties. Conveniently, there will be a Hmong Studies Conference which Lisa plans to participate in being held at Concordia University in St. Paul while she will be in the city.



Rachel was hard at work in Rarotonga.

## Conferences in Europe

**Simon Greenhill** presented a talk on *Quantifying the patterns of language diversification* at a 'Conference on Computational Issues in Studying Language Diversity: Storage, Analysis and Inference', in Groningen, The Netherlands.

With **Nick Evans**, Simon

also presented a talk on *Paradigms, diachronic typology, & language classification* at the 'Association for Linguistic Typology Conference' in Leipzig, Germany.

**Maïa Ponsonnet** will attend the 4th Language Documentation and Linguistic Typology Conference in SOAS, London,

on 7-8 December 2013, presenting on the documentation of emotions. This will hopefully be an opportunity to catch up with fellow linguists from Australia and all over the world.

## Nick Evans to feature in major doco

**Nick Evans** has been in his beloved old stomping ground of Western Arnhem Land, working with New York-based award-winning documentary-maker David Grubin and poet Bob Holman on a film called *Language Matters*, about languages teetering on the brink of being lost, why they matter, and how to can support their maintenance, with a special emphasis on music and verbal arts.

Highlights of this trip, centred on the community of Waruwi (Goulburn Island) as well as nearby Mt Borrodaile, were the discovery of some vocabulary fragments of a language called Urirrk (previously known by name, but without recorded materials), indications that there may be a surviving speaker of a previously unrecorded (and virtually unreported) language called Kundjirrbarra in the Maningrida area,

working with songman Johnnie Namayiwa and U. Syd. musicology student Reuben Brown to transcribe the Milyarryarr song set and discovering that it includes substantial verses in the now virtually extinct Marrku language from Croker Island to the west, plus a series of magnificent evening corroborees and pre-dawn song-recordings. The film should come out in 2014.



Corroboree time at Waruwi: relaxing after a performance of the Inyjalarrku Cycle.

## More publications

**Simon Greenhill** published a paper on *Population structure and cultural geography of a folktale in Europe* in 'Proceedings of the Royal Society B.' with Quentin Atkinson (Auckland) and Robert Ross (Macquarie).

**Gwen Hyslop** published a paper on *the Non-Tibetan Nature of the East Bodish Languages* in 'Proceedings from the Third Inter-

national Conference on Tibetan, Volume 1'. With Timothy Thornes, Erik Andvik and Joana Jansen, Gwen co-edited a volume entitled *Functional-Historical Approaches to Explanation: In honor of Scott DeLancey*.

**Nick Evans** wrote a chapter on *The diversity of languages as a resource for studying cultural evolution* in 'Cultural Evolution: Socie-

ty, Technology, Language, and Religion', edited by Peter Richerson and Morten Christiansen. With collaborators, he contributed to two other chapters: *The Cultural Evolution of Religion* and *The Cultural Evolution of Language*. Nick also published an article *On projecting grammatical persons into social cognition: a view from linguistics* in the journal 'Behavioral and Brain Sciences'.

## Malcolm Ross back from Europe

**Malcolm Ross** spent July - September in Bernard Comrie's department at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig and October at the Laboratoire 'Langues et civilisations à tradition orale' (LACITO) of the Centre national de la recherche scientifique at Villejuif near

Paris. Both sojourns were very productive. In Leipzig he was able to get together with old friends Lea Brown and Matthew Dryer among others and in Paris he spent time with Alex François, well known to Coombs dwellers, and worked with Isabelle Bril on the Formosan language Amis. But, be warned, Mal-

colm's French has barely improved. En route from Leipzig to Paris he made a quick dash to Leiden, where he was a plenary speaker at the 'First Workshop on Intentional Language Change'. He also gave talks by invitation in Paris, one at Villejuif, the other at the Sorbonne Nouvelle.

## Southern New Guinea project update

In Rouku, **Christian Döhler** tied up a number of loose ends and settle some unanswered questions in the grammar of Kómno as well as the historical relationships within the Tonda languages. In addition to that, he focused on corpus building for the DoBeS project. Over the last 3 months, the size of the Kómno corpus has doubled and now includes almost 10hrs of transcribed and translated text. On top of that, the Kómno dictionary has grown to about 1800 lemmata.

Once again, Christian spent most of the dry season in Rouku, which is the time when the yams are harvested, new gardens are cleared and the planting season slowly begins. Christian witnessed a number of events which attest the cultural importance of those bland tubers. The most impressive one was the construction of a com-

munal yam house in the neighboring village Yokwa. The house was low and narrow, but it measured more than 60m in length. Only the biggest yams are stored inside for the height of the wet season when each family's individual yam supply is almost depleted. Christian was invited for the feast which celebrated the completion of this storage house. The people of Yokwa proudly presented to him a coconut frond which is used as a counting tally to keep track of the content of the house. After some discussion it was agreed that 5 ntamno and 1 tarumba of yams were in the house: that is 5400 yams!

**Julia Colleen Miller** spent the first five weeks of her field trip in Rouku with Christian. There, she spent time exploring multilingualism, marriage exchange practices and communities of practice among the

women living in the village. She then popped over to Bimadbn where she met up with Nick and Chris Healey and continued contributing to the collection of recordings of bird songs and ethno-ornithological materials. She also carried out an exhaustive household interview of all 102 houses in Bimadbn, collecting data on family, marriage, exchange, clan/section and language.



*Yam house in Rouku.*



The World Phonotactic Database displaying coronal contrasts in stops in Indonesia, Melanesia and Australia.

## Launch of the World Phonotactics Database

To the accompaniment of champagne and wine, the [World Phonotactics Database](#) was launched at the 2013 Australian Linguistic Society on Wednesday 3 October in Melbourne.

The World Phonotactics Database is an online searchable relational database containing information about phonotactic restrictions from around the world. Users can compare and contrast phonotactic patterns in different languages, group languages by features, investigate the frequencies of different settings for different features, view the areal distribution of such patterns through

the use of the interactive map, and check correlations with other phonological features.

The World Phonotactics Database includes phonotactic information on over 2300 languages, with segmental data for an additional 1400. At their most basic level, each language entry includes information on phonemic inventories, restrictions on consonant and vowel placement, and phonotactic restrictions concerning specific sounds in coda and onset position.

The database, which was developed by **Mark Donohue**, **Rebecca Hetherington** and

**Virginia Dawson** and implemented by **James McElvenny**, contains extensive coverage, and is continuously updated as more data becomes available.

For any feedback or corrections as well as any suggestions or comments, send an email to [phonotactics@anu.edu.au](mailto:phonotactics@anu.edu.au).

## Conference presentations

**Carol Priestley** recently presented a talk on *Folk categorization and grass roots documentation: Plants, animals and environment: indigenous perspectives embedded in word meanings* in a session shared with Myf Turpin and Aung Si at the Endangered Languages, Endangered Meanings Symposium, SLS, ANU (8 November).

With Carsten Levisen, Carol wrote a paper on *Culture, cognition and creolization: a study in kastom and related Melanesian sociality concepts* for the 13th International Pragmatics Conference, New Delhi, in September.

Earlier this year, at the 3rd International Conference on Language Documentation and Conservation, University of Hawai'i, Manoa (February 28-March 3), Carol presented a paper on *Documenting grammar through the lens of endangered languages: Examples from Koromu (Kesawai) a Papuan language* and attended the Hilo field study on Hawaiian language revitalization.

In July (25-27), she gave a talk at Australex 2013: Endangered Words, and Signs of Revival at the University of Adelaide, where she presented on *Words and traditional environmental knowledge:*

*research and conservation strategies.*

At the ALS2013 conference in Melbourne, **Wayan Arka** presented a paper co-authored with Nurenzia Yannuar. The paper discusses the syntax and pragmatics of -in in Colloquial Jakartan Indonesian.

**Gwen Hyslop** gave a talk at Colloquium at University of California Santa Barbara: *Toward a typology of tonogenesis.*

## Providing linguistic training on fieldwork: Owen in West Timor

**Owen Edwards** returned from his first trip to the field at the beginning of October. He spent six weeks in West Timor (Indonesia) in the village of Nekmese' where he's carrying out research on Amarasi.

This first trip was very successful, thanks mainly to the indomitable Heronimus Bani (a.k.a Pak Roni) and the irreplaceable Yedida Ora (a.k.a Oma), the two speakers of Amarasi with whom Owen was primarily working.

Luckily, Owen brought a 'spare' recorder with him, which allowed Pak Roni to go

about his business of collecting a large amount and variety of natural language data. Pak Roni would then transcribe and translate these texts before passing them onto Owen who would gloss them and enter the words into his FLEx database. What Pak Roni himself didn't transcribe was sent down to Kupang for Oma, a university student, to transcribe and translate.

All in all Owen managed to come away from the field with thirteen hours worth of recordings (of which three hours has been transcribed) and a strong sense that the only way to run

linguistic research is to have trained, competent and enthusiastic native speakers to do it themselves.



*Owen working intensively with Pak Roni.*

## In brief

Jamyang Tshering was born on 24 August 3913. All the best wishes to **Gwendolyn Hyslop** and **Karma Tshering!**

**Greg Dickson's** time in Canberra is sadly coming to a close. In January his scholarship runs out and he'll be returning to the Northern Territory with hopefully something approaching a full-draft of a PhD thesis in his hot little hands. The plan is to return in March to give a final oral presentation and then submit mid-2014. Greg says that life at ANU and as a Coombs-ite has been very good to him and hopes that this won't be last you'll see of him

On 18 December (exact time to be advised), the Linguistics Department, plus **Margaret Jolly's** Laureate Project, will host a launch of Murray Garde's book *Culture, Interaction and Person Reference in an Australian Language: An ethnography of Bininj Gunwok communication*, which has just appeared with John Benjamins. Murray, who has been working as a research fellow on Margaret Jolly's Laureate project, will be joining our Department as a fractional research fellow employed on **Nick Evans's** Laureate Fellowship from June 30 next year.



*Jamyang was born on 24 August.*

## Linguistics

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For past newsletters, go to: <http://chl.anu.edu.au/disciplines/linguistics/news.php>

The Asia-Pacific is the most complex and varied linguistic landscape in the world, with three thousand of the world's 7,000 languages. Many are endangered and in coming decades the region is confronting an epochal narrowing of the human knowledge base through language loss.

Linguistics in the College of Asia and the Pacific promotes the study of this linguistic diversity in its fullest sense, including documentation and description - producing grammars, dictionaries and collections of textual materials, usually from on-site fieldwork - work that is equally important for small speech communities themselves.

Minority languages researched in the department cover sites ranging from Vanuatu, New Caledonia, PNG, Australia, Indonesia, Timor Leste, the Philippines, Taiwan, India and Japan. Other research focuses on national languages of the region, such as Japanese and Indonesian.

Our postgraduate training aims to produce descriptive linguists of the highest quality. We teach into all levels, including undergraduate courses in Japanese, Indonesian, Linguistics and Pacific Studies, Master's Courses in Linguistics and Applied Japanese Linguistics, and advanced doctoral training. We co-host [Paradisec](#), a digital archive dedicated to recordings of languages and cultures of the Pacific. We also publish the monograph series [Pacific Linguistics](#), which has produced over 600 publications.

## Coming up...

**Seminar:** *Word classes in Kómnzo*  
Christian Döhler ([link](#))

November 18  
11:00am - 12:30pm  
Seminar Room B (Arndt Room)  
HC Coombs Building

**Seminar:** *title tba* - Ruth Singer  
(University of Melbourne) ([link](#))

November 29  
3:30pm - 5:00pm  
Seminar Room A  
HC Coombs Building

**Seminar:** *title tba* - Gary Holton  
([link](#))

December 6  
11:00am - 12:30pm  
Seminar Room A  
HC Coombs Building

**Japanese Linguistics Seminar:** *The Study of the Second Person Pronoun Anata 'You' in Spoken Japanese Discourse* - Yoko Yonezawa ([link](#))

November 22  
11:00am - 12:30pm  
Seminar Room A  
HC Coombs Building

**CRLC Seminar:** *The role of preadolescents and adolescents in contact-induced change: intentionality and effect* - Malcolm Ross

November 27  
2:00pm - 4:00pm  
Room 1.21  
Baldessin Precinct Building



Julia recording Wayembü and Lucy as they prepare to paint grass skirts for the Independence Day celebrations, in Rouku, PNG.