

IDIL REVIVE Submission – Nyul Nyul Language Working Group

1. Challenges and Opportunities in the Cultural Sector

For Nyul Nyul people, the biggest challenge is that our language resources are scattered across institutions, archives, and private collections. We need coordinated repatriation, proper storage, and a central digital hub so our people can access our own knowledge. Another challenge is that all our language revival work is currently voluntary. Without stable funding, we rely on goodwill, unpaid labour, and limited tools, which slows progress and places pressure on community members.

There are also digital barriers — we need support to build a website or Miroma platform, develop a phone app, and organise our recordings and materials. Geographic distance between Broome, Beagle Bay, Derby and Perth also affects participation and access.

At the same time, there are major opportunities. Community enthusiasm is strong, and our workshops show people want to speak, learn, and use Nyul Nyul every day. We have clear project priorities, partnerships, and a multi-year plan aligned with the Junyirri framework. With proper investment, Nyul Nyul language can grow quickly and visibly across Country, schools, workplaces, and homes.

2. What Matters to Us and Our Practice

What matters most is cultural authority, community leadership, and intergenerational transmission. Our revival work is grounded in our 14 apical ancestor families, and every workshop begins with speaking Nyul Nyul, acknowledging Country, and ensuring everyone has a voice. Our practice is about strengthening identity, belonging, and pride and increasing the number of Nyul Nyul speakers.

We prioritise practical, community-driven projects: language classes, Dreamtime story videos, Welcome to Country recordings, Flora & Fauna charts, seasonal calendars, kinship charts, and everyday tools like fridge magnets and workplace survival words. These are the resources our families, Elders, youth, and Rangers want and will use.

We also value partnerships — with linguists, Sacred Heart School, Nyul Nyul Rangers, Kimberley Language Resource Centre, Yawuru Language Centre, First Languages Australia, and PAKAM — because collaboration strengthens our practice and ensures cultural and technical accuracy. Above all, we want our language to be spoken again in homes, on Country, at events, and in community life.

3. What We Want Reflected in the New National Cultural Policy

We want a policy that **recognises that language revival is cultural work, identity work, and healing work — not just “projects.”**

We want long-term, stable funding for community-led language groups, not short-term grants that require constant re-application. We want support for repatriation of language materials, digital infrastructure, strong partnerships, and community-designed resources.

We want the policy to reflect that First Languages are living cultural systems connected to land, kinship, ceremony, and knowledge. For Nyul Nyul, this means supporting our Welcome to Country, Visiting Country calling, songs, stories, and seasonal knowledge.

1469342

PUBLIC
Djai Jinijirr Ngang

We also want the policy to recognise the importance of grassroots leadership. Our revival work is happening because community members — often unpaid — are driving it. National policy should honour and resource this leadership, ensuring communities have control, authority, and the tools needed to bring their languages home.