



INDIGI LAB in partnership with **UNESCO** will host a 2-day hackathon (www.indigihack.com.au) targeting Indigenous youth aged 8-18. Youth compete to develop new app-based technology that aims to revitalise and retain Indigenous languages. INDIGI HACK will be held at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence in Sydney August 8-9, 2019. The winner hacker will go into an incubator to further develop and refine the product.

ABOUT INDIGI LAB

INDIGI LAB is about innovating and creating out of necessity.

INDIGI LABs goal is to create a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are leading in science, technology and digital innovation. They do this by providing education, training, and opportunities for Indigenous communities in science, technology and innovation space that draws on over 80,000 years of Indigenous science and innovation.

INDIGI LAB have worked on a range of educational and employment programs that support a more inclusive STEM sectors; and manage the STREAMS network which bring together Indigenous and non-Indigenous scientist, environmentalist and policy makers to develop thought leadership sustainable sciences.



THE KEY ISSUES:

Australia is home to some of the oldest languages in the world and we are at risk of losing them all if we don't act fast.

As many as half of the world's 7,000 languages are expected to be extinct by the end of this century; it is estimated that one language dies out every 14 days. According to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), there are more than 250 cultural groups which make up Indigenous Australia, yet only 120 languages are still used. About 100 have been identified as endangered. In 1788 there were between 300 and 700 Indigenous languages spoken across Australia by millions of people, as shown in anthropologist Norman Tindale's 1974 map. Since the British arrived in 1788 the treatment of Indigenous people has been brutal and has led to the loss of language and culture across the country. Also, past racist government policies like the White Australia Policy in 1901 has added an ongoing displacement and ill treatment of Indigenous Australians.

Key finding from the 2014 Reconciliation Australia Barometer reveals Australia's current relationship with its Indigenous peoples. Detailed below is a snapshot of Barometer key finding for the audiences' engagement with First Nations art and culture:

- 45% of general respondents believe prejudice is high compared to 62% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.
- 57% of general Australians feel proud of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures compared to 85% of Indigenous Australians.
- 42% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have witnessed verbal abuse in the last 6 months compared to 22% of the general population.
- 42% of Australians say that they have an interest in First Nations Australian Art, and only 25% show strong interest.

The above insight indicates that there is still prejudice against Indigenous Australians and that Australia's still has a way to go to reconcile and accept the past.

Indigenous youth make up 53% of the Indigenous population and even though Indigenous Australia is a younger demographic the life expectancy is 10 years earlier than non-Indigenous Australians; this and many other social, economic and health and well-being factors adds to the loss of the cultural continuum.

On a positive note though; recent research indicates high uptake of some digital technologies including mobile phones and social media by Indigenous youth. Indigenous Australians are some of the oldest scientist and inventors in the world and for people who lived through the ice age they should be thriving.

Technology is an incredibly powerful tool that has revolutionised the way millions communicate, create and express themselves. It has catapulted much of the world into the digital economy and has inspired marked changes to education, employment and entrepreneurship. However, such advances have provided little to no recourse for First Nation communities and could risk prolonging challenges around inequality well into the technology age. This concern is only heightened given that only a handful of First Nations youth pursue studies in information and computer technology. In this climate, civil society groups, technology companies, researchers and youth advocates have a collective responsibility to identify solutions that can reverse this pervasive trend and to champion a diverse future of our world.

THE SOLUTION:

Youth are a vital part to the continuation Indigenous language, so we need to involve youth in projects that aim to empower them to become culture leaders and language speakers.

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PROPOSED OUTCOMES:

- An app and/or game that supports the revitalisation on Indigenous language and culture.
- Incubation and implementation of the most promising prototypes.
- Delivery of a formal report that elaborates on key issues explored during INDIGI HACK.
- Creation of a global hub to mobilise and connect Indigenous youth to share and connect.
- This project will increase the pride and participation of Indigenous languages.
- It is this pipeline of opportunity that will enable Indigenous youth to merge culture and language with technology and science.

The UN declaration of IY2019 aims to raise awareness and promote indigenous languages in these five key areas:

1. Increasing understanding, reconciliation and international cooperation.
2. Creation of favourable conditions for knowledge-sharing and dissemination of good practices with regards to Indigenous languages.
3. Integration of Indigenous languages into standard setting.
4. Empowerment through capacity building.
5. Growth and development through elaboration of new knowledge.

INDIGI LAB is committed to provide innovative solutions that aims to protect Indigenous languages and culture here and across the globe.

