



apmeraltye ingkerreke

Alice Springs 2008

People of one land, all together

art at the heart Regional Arts Australia, National Conference

CONTRIBUTING AUTHOR AND PHOTOGRAPHER INFORMATION

Alicia Boyle	Research Author	DKCRC and CDU	Amunda Gorey	Photographer	Cultural Liaison
Judy Lovell	Research Author	Event Producer	Judy Lovell	Photographer	Event Producer
Marie-Elena Ellis	Poetry	Event MC	Kerrie Bedson	Photographer	Volunteer
Pascal Tremblay	Research Consultant	CDU	Tony McGarn	Photographer	Volunteer

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Apmeraltye Ingkerreke directors, participants, crew and report authors gratefully acknowledge the support of the **Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre** for their significant contributions to this event and to this follow up research report.

The Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre is an unincorporated joint venture with 28 partners whose mission is to develop and disseminate an understanding of sustainable living in remote desert environments, deliver enduring regional economies and livelihoods based on Desert Knowledge, and create the networks to market this knowledge in other desert lands. The Desert Knowledge CRC receives funding through the Australian Government Cooperative Research Centres Program. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of Desert Knowledge CRC or its Participants.

We also acknowledge superb logistical management by the conference coordinator **Kieren Sanderson** and administration officer **Nicki Schonkala** towards our participation in **art at the heart**, 2008 biennial Regional Arts Australia Conference, held in partnership with **NT Arts**. Next to these two stands our amazing crew of volunteers **Kerrie Bedson**, **Tony McGarn** and **Wendy McGarn** and outstanding site production manager **Scott DeLarge**.

We would like to acknowledge **ArtsNT** and **Regional Arts Australia** for supporting Apmeraltye Ingkerreke's participation at this conference.

The preparation and access to the Apmeraltye Ingkerreke site at the **Desert Peoples Centre** was made possible through the commitment of **Desert Knowledge Australia** and **Arrernte Workforce Solutions**.

Keringke Arts provided the auspice for financial and project management of Apmeraltye Ingkerreke, and **Akeyulerre Centre** cultural support staff provided hands on and practical assistance for Arrernte participants.

ENQUIRIES SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:

Alicia Boyle
Education Coordinator Desert Knowledge CRC
Phone: 08 8946 7267 Mobile: 0408 175 832 Email: alicia.boyle@cdu.edu.au

Judy Lovell
Arts and Education Project Consultant
Phone: 08 8953 3548 Mobile: 0429 637 185 Email: thruarts@tpg.com.au

CITATION

Desert Knowledge CRC. 2009. *Apmeraltye Ingkerreke: People of one land, all together*. Record of conference sessions from Regional Arts Australia art at the heart, 2nd October to 4th October, 2008, Alice Springs. DKCRC, Alice Springs.

ISBN: 1 74158 148 6 (print copy)

ISBN: 1 74158 149 4 (web copy)

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Desert Knowledge CRC
Publications Officer
PO Box 3971 Alice Springs NT 0871 Australia
Phone: +61 8 8959 6000 Fax: +61 8 8959 6048 www.desertknowledgecrc.com.au

This document can be downloaded from the Desert Knowledge CRC website: <http://www.desertknowledgecrc.com.au>



Introduction to this research report

Apmeraltye Ingkerreke, People of one land, all together, was inspired by a shared interest in creating a participatory exchange to showcase the living, connected cultural arts and healing activities as an integrated and experiential group of five thematic sessions for conference participants. The event was planned as a unified series of exchanges where Eastern Arrernte people made themselves available and demonstrated their cultural knowledge and practices. The conference participants were offered an experiential event where it was expected that they would join into small group or one-to-one activities with their hosts.

In planning this event, the opportunities for the Eastern Arrernte hosts were perceived to be:

- showcasing their living culture
- providing people from outside their life world with insight about the richness and connectedness of Eastern Arrernte cultural life
- having an opportunity to gauge what it might be that others might want to learn or experience from them
- making the opportunity for younger people and children to learn from their elders
- engaging in exchanges involving cultural knowledge and products that could provide economic benefits
- utilising and further developing their intercultural working relationships
- practising cross-cultural communication skills in a live environment
- providing an opportunity for a large number of Eastern Arrernte people to be together in a positive situation.

In planning this event the opportunities for the conference participants were perceived to be:

- a unique opportunity to interact with Eastern Arrernte people
- undertake a 'hands on' learning approach, with guidance and direction of elders
- find ways to have conversations and ask questions
- watch and listen and learn about dance, art, song, medicine, plants, the relationship system and how they interconnect
- purchase products made by Eastern Arrernte participants
- gain insight into cross-cultural communication
- gain insight into contemporary Eastern Arrernte cultural practice and its relationship with its ancient past.

The concept itself was a response to the opportunity provided when a national art conference took place in Alice Springs. The concept builds directly on work undertaken by some of the families through the Keringke Arts Centre at Ltyentye Apurte. It was particularly informed by the work Kathleen Wallace, Veronica Dobson, Aggie Abbott, MK Turner and Judy Lovell had previously been doing. This work was congruent with the philosophies and practices of other individuals and organisations and so it 'touched a chord' among the Arrernte community and cross-cultural workers associated with them. The response from the community was very positive.

Why we did this research this way

1.

This report uses the information (data) collected through asking all the visitors who attended each session to answer the same questions (a survey). This means that we can look at all the answers and understand how the visitors responded to each session.

The research provides a lot of information, some of it in numbers (quantitative) and some as written descriptions (qualitative). We have selected as many of the written descriptions as we can fit in, but we tried not to write down the same thing over and over again for any one session. For example, many people wrote **Thank You!** - but we only put that in the feedback once for each session, to save room.

Some people gave answers that clearly reflected most peoples' experiences - for example, that the weather was extremely hot, and we were working outside.

Some people greatly enjoyed some things, but other people found those same things irritating - for example, not being told to move from one activity to another, but being expected to find your own way.

The numbers tell a story about what people felt about the sessions - for example, how long they were, how they were run, whether visitors learnt anything new.

The majority of people in all sessions clearly found their experiences at Apmeraltye Ingkerreke very rewarding and very worthwhile.

There are things to learn from this report too. Some people expected more than they got, wanted to have clearer rules, wanted more sharing, or less sharing, more dancing or more story telling.

What we learnt is that some things were done very well, and some other things need more thinking about. The things we can learn from this report and the data in it are going to be useful to anyone holding cross-cultural events. We hope you enjoy reading and looking at the report.

The event directors and hosts:

MK Turner	director / elder / artist
Kathleen Wallace	director / elder / painter
Aggie Abbott	director / elder / singer
Veronica Dobson	director / elder / plants
Marie-Elena Ellis	director / dancer / painter
Rosanne Ellis	painter / medicine plants
Jessie-Mae Cloede	dancer
Terazita Turner	dancer
Nalina Turner	dancer
Theresa Davis	dancer
Janette Turner	dancer / plant medicine
Kintaris Turner	dancer / child
Rishane Abbott	dancer / child
Chris Wallace	men's coordinator
Francis Oliver	dancer
Francis Hayes	body painter
Kwementyeye Williams	elder / singer
Max Turner	elder / singer / musician
Clint Williams	dancer
Julius Oliver	dancer
Tyrone Hayes	dancer
Ethan Gory	dancer
Max Stuart	singer / elder / narrator
Helen Kantawara	dancer / beads
Rachel Kantawara	beads / painter
Ingrid Williams	body painter
Patricia Webb	dancer / healer
Jean Alice	singer
Glenis Drover	dancer
Lucy Williams	singer
Enid Young	singer
Lena Cavanagh	singer
Sally Kentaltja	plant medicine / singer
Cheryl MacMillan	dancer
Purina Anderson	dancer
Reena Davis	singer / beads / plant medicine
Amunda Gorey	cultural support worker / photographer
Robyn Nardoo	filmmaker
David Tranter	filmmaker
Mary Flynn	oral history / story telling

Organisations and individuals who supported this event:

Judy Lovell, Event Producer, Coordinator
Scott DeLarge, Technical Production

Regional Arts Australia
Arts NT, NRETAS
Desert Knowledge CRC
Desert Knowledge Australia
Desert Peoples Centre
Arrernte Workforce Solutions
Centre Corp
Waltja Tjuṯangu Palyapayi
Ltyentye Apurte Women's Centre
Through Arts Consulting
Alice Springs Desert Park

Olive Pink Botanical Gardens
Keringke Arts
Irrkerlantye Arts
Akeyulerre Inc
IAD Press
Desart Inc.
Yirara School
Strehlow Research Centre
Tangentyere Yeye Project
ArtBack NT
art at the heart organisers

Volunteers who generously worked at this event:

Kerrie Bedson
Tony McGarn
Wendy McGarn
Victor Dobson

Kelly Nugent
Alicia Boyle
Lisa Stefanoff



Session 1:

Thursday, October 2nd 2008 1.00 - 4.00 pm

Welcome, arts, crafts, language.

3.

Temperature hits 40 degrees. The session is booked out weeks before opening, but on the day the bus is not full as visitors lose confidence in being outdoors in the heat. No media attends the session.

This session opens the Apmeraltye Ingkerreke site. This session introduces the women at Apmeraltye Ingkerreke who are all from Eastern and North Eastern Arrernte families. During the conference, they will share language, cross-cultural working protocols, and details about their arts and cultural practices as well as facilitate hands-on interaction with their arts practices.

What did conference delegates expect from this session?

Didn't know it was 'hands on' but loved it.

The opportunity to meet with Arrernte people open to sharing their culture and way of life.

To learn stories, to see the women and hear them speak, to soak up the energy and preserve knowledge.

Experience in which I could start to break down my fear/insecurity of interacting with Aboriginal people without getting something wrong.

Hands-on interaction with local people learning about their culture - (touch and feel) and it was very hot - may be too hot to be very busy.

To hear of the Arrernte's own sense of self, sense of place.

I didn't expect people to be as organised and confident in speaking about things. I felt the women were very confident and gave a lot of information.

No expectations. Fantastic opportunity. This is what this community needs more of!

If your expectations were not met, why not?

I thought the session was going to include an intro to protocol when working with Arrernte communities but I was still more than satisfied overall.

I expected to be more engaged - I understand that many of the women are shy - and this is the first tour.

I think close to extreme heat.

Not well organised, small groups should have been moved through sessions so everyone had a chance to participate.

What were the session highlights for you?

A chance for a one-on-one conversation with Kathleen Wallace about her storytelling and painting.

Spending time with the women talking and learning in a relaxed way. Making seed beads.

Watching the grinding of the ochre, Veronica's wonderful information and stories. Participating in the art workshop - loved connecting in my spirit and my family history which is Maori.

The generosity and humour of the women. Just being with people, having opportunity to contribute - I burnt holes in beans for necklaces, I got so much from watching, practising and experiencing. I really appreciate those necklaces.

All the presentations were outstanding.

How gracious these people were, how much knowledge they have, I was in awe of them.

All of it!



Is there any other feedback you would like to give?

Thank you, I'll be looking on web to see how it goes. Poet writer for studying and all else.

The Arrernte hosts were so welcoming and generous with their knowledge. Thanks!

Thank you, learnt so much from your deep knowledge and wisdom and experience. Very generous and beautiful.

It was a great privilege and an experience I will treasure. I hope more people get the chance!

Should develop into a well prepared cultural experience over time - thanks for today.

Maybe the length of time spent there was a little too long but as they develop more presentation skills that will not be a problem.

Start on time, better organisation, pride in your work was evident but if you want work etc. through it, you need to be better organised.

Keep working on engaging all into culture.

Perhaps more provision for shade when in middle of day and Thank you.

We were all shy and it took a long time to break down the barrier, to know what to expect, what was expected, what we could ask. We are impatient and sometimes get lost when things are slow to boil. Thank you.

It's hard not to be too bossy but offer places, schedule activities i.e. walk in the bush, tucker, tools, art (painting/fibre), story telling.

Thank you for your time and generosity of spirit and hospitality.

Just loved it! Thank you.

Wonderful experience, don't change anything.

Keep developing and offering these exchanges.

Shelters need to be longer, hold early morning or late afternoon, it is a hard task to ask some people to talk or entertain guests for 3 hours if they are naturally quiet.

We received 28 surveys for session 1.

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very low and 5 is very high, what was your:

Satisfaction with your level of participation

1 = low, very low
6 = average
21 = high, very high

Satisfaction with the content of the session

0 = low, very low
6 = average
22 = high, very high

Satisfaction with the venue

2 = low, very low
4 = average
21 = high, very high

Satisfaction with length of time for the session

3 = low, very low
4 = average
21 = high, very high

Satisfaction with time of day for the session

12 = low, very low
8 = average
7 = high, very high

Prior knowledge of Aboriginal culture

15 = low, very low
9 = average
4 = high, very high

Satisfaction with the amenities at this session

2 = low, very low
3 = average
23 = high, very high

Level of meeting prior expectations

3 = low, very low
3 = average
21 = high, very high

Apmeraltye Ingkerreke experiences were new

yes = 21
no = 6

Level of quality of the session

1 = low, very low
5 = average
21 = high, very high



Session 2:

Friday, October 3rd 2008 1.40 - 5.00 pm

Healing, plants, medicines and cultural practices.

5.

Temperature hits 39 degrees. The session is booked out weeks before opening, but on the day the bus is not full as visitors lose confidence in being outdoors in the heat. No media attends the session.

The session includes presentations and interactions focused on healing plants, language and healing practices in Arrernte culture. There will be opportunities for participants to engage with Arrernte people and their healing, language and arts through hands on interactions in a local bush setting.

What did conference delegates expect from this session?

Connection with the spirit of the land.

Knowledge of healing plants.

Better knowledge of ancient wisdom regarding health and healing.

Being of Aboriginal heritage I love and have great respect for the people and their culture.

For the time spent, I would have liked more information on other aspects of the Arrernte other than medicine.

Learn something about how healing is practised in culture.

A connection and introduction to the culture of the area. An experience to open my eyes more to the bush and to the culture of the people of Alice Springs.

One-to-one interaction and understanding by talking to the women.

The opportunity to meet Arrernte people and find out about their culture.

More information about Nunheri's (Ngangkere), maybe example of using healing on someone.

More understanding about Arrernte culture and plant use.

Closer contact with the people who live here - an opportunity to meet people and talk about plants.

Knowledge of traditional culture and medicine, a better understanding of cultural differences.

Learning from traditional owners in the desert.

Cross-cultural understanding.

An opportunity for informal hanging out with the locals. Insight into Apmeralyte Ingkerreke culture, healing, native plants.

Ladies were wonderful, just too long in the heat.

Authentic engagement with local people.

Learn first-hand knowledge of traditional Aboriginal culture and mix with traditional people.

Knowledge of herbal medicines. What plants are good for.

To see Aboriginal healing technique and learn about their different plants and uses. Watch how they do it, in their environment.

Expected to talk with medicine healers and loved certain plant medicine experienced. Didn't expect to help participate in making of medicine and really enjoyed the exchanges between people. Really loved listening to pearls of wisdom, loved just being there in that very accepting environment.

Knowledge of healing plants and techniques. Opportunity to connect with the culture and listen and learn information about plants and medicines, stories, some insight into culture.



We received 41 surveys for session 2.

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very low and 5 is very high, what was your:

Prior knowledge of Aboriginal culture

20 = low, very low

14 = average

7 = high, very high

Satisfaction with the amenities at this session

0 = low, very low

11 = average

30 = high, very high



What were the session highlights for you?

Listening and speaking with the women.
Hearing the up close and personal experience.

The feel of family, the laughter and smiles.

Getting a bit involved. It was interesting.

Smoking made me very self aware.

The sitting down, listening and watching.

Meeting the people in their space as such.

Taking the time to soak the workshop in.
Participating was great. Watching the creating happen by the facilitators and the group. Fresh is best. Modern time people are using oils to work with the plants. How to get rid of a wart with the right plant. Importance of the knowledge and the power of the people who hold it and use it. Smoking ceremony for birth, babies welcomed.

Talking to the Arrernte women. The music of languages.

Chatting in a more intimate environment with only a few people present.

Being on country with Arrernte people.

Lena Cavanagh telling us her story and the name for wind and rain in Pitinjarac (Arrernte).

The women shared their knowledge with great generosity.

The women - all of the presenters - warm, giving, knowledgeable and their generosity of spirit.

The opportunity to ask questions.

Hearing the yarns.

We had a terrific connection with two children in the group - they were trusting and funny and the women allowed them to spend time with us.

The children.

Experiencing the making of bush medicine.

Seeing the medicines/ointments made from scratch.

Speaking to MK and Veronica on a one-to-one.

Plants and healing qualities.

Being healed by a traditional healer and the affection of the children and participating in the making of the medicines.

The knowledge shared by the ladies.

Sitting amongst the women.

Speaking to women, Mrs. Drover helping my friend.

Seeing women's oneness(?)

I felt like I do when I cook with family and friends.

Satisfaction with your level of participation

2 = low, very low

11 = average

28 = high, very high

Satisfaction with the content of the session

0 = low, very low

6 = average

35 = high, very high

Satisfaction with the venue

1 = low, very low

3 = average

37 = high, very high

Satisfaction with length of time for the session

7 = low, very low

8 = average

26 = high, very high

Satisfaction with time of day for the session

7 = low, very low

10 = average

23 = high, very high



Is there any other feedback you would like to give?

We were told the session ended at 5. This made the session too long but perhaps we were given wrong information about the finish time. It was extremely hot in the middle of the day. I felt overwhelmed by heat and couldn't participate as much as I would have liked.

Just a big thank you and good luck. Don't ever lose your ways. Your knowledge of Australian life is invaluable and largely unknown to other Australians.

Loved it. Sometimes I feel like a stupid white fella. So spiritual I wanted to cry. Love the passing on of knowledge from one generation to another. The beauty of the women. Calmness. Connection with the earth.

Beautiful people! Thank you for opening the knowledge to us in this fashion.

Weather did affect my experiences, being a southerner. Great overall experience.

Thank you, thank you for sharing this with us. It is an honour and a privilege.

I'll remember this day forever, thank you so much, I now feel as though I know more about my own background. Wish I could have come to the dance and singing. Love you heaps guys. Thanks.

Even though it was so hot I really enjoyed the experience and thank you for sharing part of your culture with me.

Would appreciate handout on plants, i.e. their uses of ones demonstrated.

They did an excellent job for teaching us about their culture and medicines and I thank them for teaching me more.

Please convey my sincerest thanks to all the women who participated as hosts. It is great just to be able to be with them, relaxing and observing their interactions and knowledge. It does not need to be forced or formal - it was fantastic just to relax and be informed in such a gentle and open-spirited manner.

The words privilege and honour do not express the gratitude and love for the women who made this experience possible!

The session was a little too long - could have been 1/4 to 1/2 hour shorter. In the end the bus did come a bit early to take us back which was good.

Please keep doing this. And thank you so much.

More shade this time was great. Thank you.

Shorter sessions.

Was a lovely chilled-out time with people able to dictate their own level of interaction and participation with the activity. I enjoyed my time although was a little too long. Thank you for sharing!

It was excellent but probably could have been a bit shorter.

Perhaps slightly shorter sessions and/or information on contemporary medicine and health issues, i.e. mental health, alcoholism.

Thank you for the experience. I hope you can continue with this work of cultural use.

Very well done. Enjoyed the pace and having time with the women. Thank you. **7.**

Bit more structural direction re: what we do with whom. Name tags on presenters. Was a bit long, though networking good.

Maybe do the session in the morning to avoid extreme temperatures. Consider shortening the session by 1/2 hour - 15 minutes. Maybe have a tea and coffee, afternoon tea for everyone to gather around.

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very low and 5 is very high, what was your:

Level of meeting prior expectations

0 = low, very low

10 = average

29 = high, very high

Apmeraltye Ingkerreke experiences were new

yes = 35

no = 5

Level of quality of the session

0 = low, very low

3 = average

35 = high, very high



Session 3:

Friday, October 3rd 2008 6.30 - 9.30 pm Antulye Dancers, Simpson Desert Dancers and Yeperenye Dancers

Temperature hits 39 degrees, but there is a fierce brief thunderstorm with rain, right before the audience arrives. The session is fully booked and attended. No media attends the session.

Abstract Description: This dance and song presentation will occur at the Apmeraltye Ingkerreke site. The session is hosted by the Simpson Desert Dancers, the Amoonguna Dancers and their families. It includes preparations like painting up dancers and setting up dance site. After the performances, people share their experiences and reflect on the event.

What did conference delegates expect from this session ?

I had no idea - outside, cultural experience. It was great!

To gain some insight into the current people's cultural, communal and families' forms of expression. How they feel about the place they live in, celebrate, negotiate and care for their land.

Better understanding of protocols when engaging with the people. Some humility about being happy to take in what is offered and losing some shyness/awkwardness.

To connect with and learn about Arrernte culture and people, share stories, spiritually connect with the land.

To watch and learn, song and dance.

To experience Indigenous dance and culture.

No preconceived expectations.

Deeper understanding of Aboriginal culture.

Link to people through understanding of current cultural practices.

Learning of dance and song. My expectations were exceeded!

To see and experience the culture of the Arrernte people, their inspiration, knowledge.

To experience genuine cultural activity and exchange in the typical authentic type setting.

More knowledge about story behind dances and songs - painting of the bodies (ochre sets).

Deeper knowledge of Indigenous culture.

Wider variety of dancers and more polished performance.

Better than expected.

No preconceptions.

To learn.

Got more than I expected.

Something new.

Insight into meaning of dance and painting.

I thought there would be time to be involved in preparing for dances, e.g. helping with painting.

More knowledge of painting rituals and philosophy, and exposure to a different region's Indigenous dance.

We received 45 surveys for session 3. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very low and 5 is very high, what was your:

Prior knowledge of Aboriginal culture

25 = low, very low

17 = average

3 = high, very high

Satisfaction with the amenities at this session

8 = low, very low

12 = average

21 = high, very high

Satisfaction with your level of participation

15 = low, very low

6 = average

21 = high, very high

Satisfaction with the content of the session

7 = low, very low

10 = average

24 = high, very high

Satisfaction with the venue

2 = low, very low

6 = average

35 = high, very high

Satisfaction with length of time for the session

12 = low, very low

6 = average

21 = high, very high

Satisfaction with time of day for the session

2 = low, very low

6 = average

35 = high, very high



If your expectations were not met, why not?

Thought it would be a little more entertaining without big gaps.

Not really a gripe - I loved this - just could have had more information about stories behind songs and dances.

Far too long and about art, not dance.

Thought there would be more singing.

I think this was the first time that this has been tried - and I think the Arrernte felt too shy/self conscious to give as much as I'd hoped.

I went along expecting a performance and after a while I found out that I was really witnessing a rehearsal/teaching session about a rehearsal with full costume and high production values.

I thought there would be more dancing, of greater variety and more professional. Didn't know it was a teaching exercise.

If I had other expectations this was not the form to exchange or learn from - a more one-on-one dialogue with people. But I didn't expect this from this session.

Didn't dance.

I thought there might be more dances.

Time keeping poor, poor explanation of dances and songs.

The genuineness of the women/men.

I was lucky that Veronica was generous with her answers to my questions. It would have been good for everyone to have her translation, and to know about the preparation.

I had different expectations of the session. I think I expected a more rehearsed performance and interpretation of performance.

What were the session highlights for you?

Hearing the women singing. Appreciating the sound.

Talking with the people.

A slow quiet talk with Veronica, the prospect of rain, women's powerful singing! The warm evening air.

Felt welcome by the people. Enjoyed them having a good time.

When the dancers appeared the mix of ages in the group was lovely. It felt like the people danced for themselves (not a choreographed show) and that was special. To hear the kids being guided, the jokes, etc. was nice.

Songs from the old man.

Dancing, experiencing culture, language, songs and stories.

The young boys and men dressed for their dance, costumes, body painting.

The outside experience - bush, lighting. The relaxed enjoyable feel, the connectedness.

Laughing and real interaction with the elders and family. Being involved in this special experience. Thank you.

Participating in the dance and witnessing the learning of the younger ones. It is a real privilege.

Seeing family interact, prepare, perform (behind the scene).

Men's dance, especially head gear, and the women's branched sticks in their first dance. Participation by the kids. Humour of the Aboriginal participants.

Listening and singing - smell of the rain on desert sand, seeing young people talk about and practice their culture - watching in action. The elders sharing their knowledge - feeling that the event wasn't just for outsiders but for the dancers' families too.

Getting over stage fright and dancing with women black and white. **9.**

Seeing the women again who we had been with for an earlier session.

Women dances, very special.

The willingness of community to share. The honesty of their sharing.

The gentle and profound genuineness in the sharing by the Apmeraltye Ingkerreke people.

Max's comments and the sense of community.

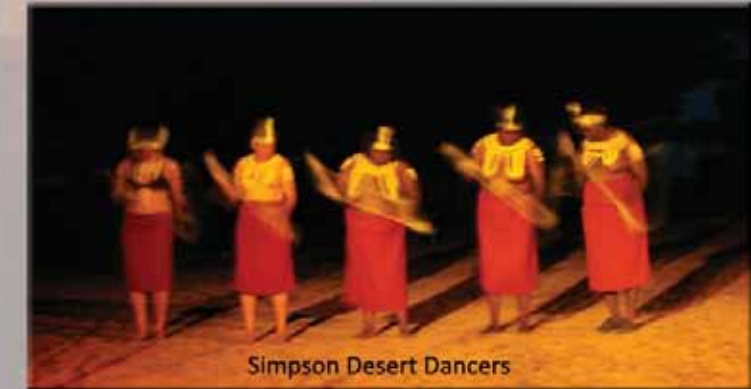
The ethnicity, the site.

The talking and interchange between family members.

The sense of welcome and hospitality.



Singers (L to R) Reena Davies, Agnes Abbott, Enid Young, Jean Alice



Simpson Desert Dancers

Is there any other feedback you would like to give?

More clarity. I actually didn't mind the slowness of things once I realised how things were, but the formalised seating (and the number of us there) along with the lights, music, etc. set up expectations of a performance. It would have been fantastic to have some explanation of what was happening, e.g. markings, movement, dance sticks, costumes, words of the fantastic songs. As it was, I felt like an early explorer who had been invited into the family circle with little or no capacity to make sense of what I was seeing, hearing. Unfortunately it was at the end of a long day for me and I guess I was hoping to be a little more 'spoon fed' rather than figuring it out for myself.

A wonderful experience. Thank you.

Better seating - dances explained - could be shorter; timekeeping most important if you are going to cater for tourists/tours.

Many thanks for allowing us to participate. It was a wonderful experience.

A wonderful very special experience. I feel privileged to be a part of this sharing.

What preparation the women have undergone to get to this point. What the words of the songs mean.

Absolutely beautiful.

Wonderful, heartfelt, authentic, generous, unaffected. Thank you.

Thank you for your generosity. Much respect and power to you all.

Appreciated this on level of being taught, but feel distanced from the experience because participants seemed to lack passion - which could just be my cultural misinterpretation and standards?

Thank you!

Advised that dinner would be available and that we would need \$10.

I think it should be just a woman's performance, so they could increase the amount of dancing and singing they can present. A very good start. I hope they get the opportunity to work on their dancing and gain confidence to present them to audience.

Keep doing this as/when appropriate! In time, shyness will decrease - and it's such a valuable way of helping non-Indigenous people see how rich and delicate and complex a culture they have living here - and which they should nurture and learn to understand better!

It's highlighted to me the need we all have to hold on to culture. I commend these people and their work in engaging, in such an open, friendly way, all cultures into sharing, learning and understanding the Arrernte culture. Thanks for all the fun and stay happy and strong.

I was a little disappointed but enjoyed it anyway for its genuine expression.

I so want to give my children a better understanding of the culture of Australia which I believe is most importantly located with its first peoples. White history is a limited and inadequate history of this place and that is made clearer to me every time I meet an Aboriginal person (no matter what part they are from).

I want to be able to bring this understanding and knowledge of this country (Australia) to my children.

Thank you and please keep trying to help us to understand.

Thank you and I hope you can keep sharing your culture, dance, stories.

This was one of the best things I have done in my life.

More opportunity to participate, more dance styles displayed and more stories/information told.

Thank you for being open to sharing some of your culture with us mob.

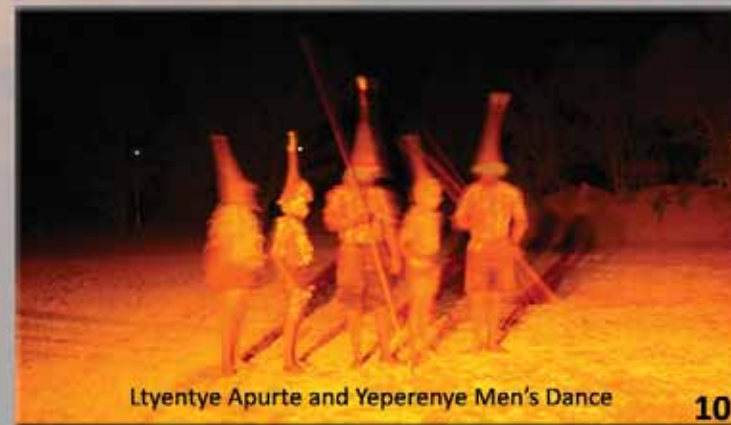
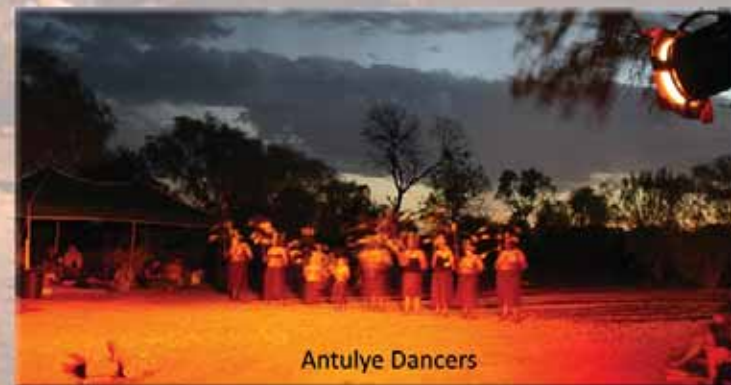
On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very low and 5 is very high, what was your:

Level of meeting prior expectations
10 = low, very low
10 = average
23 = high, very high

Apmeraltye Ingkerreke experiences were new
yes = 38
no = 6

Level of quality of the session
8 = low, very low
9 = average
26 = high, very high

Satisfaction with time of day for the session
2 = low, very low
6 = average
35 = high, very high



Session 4:

Saturday, October 4th, 2008 11.15 - 12.45 pm

Nganampa Anwernekenhe Video - Hard Worker

11.

The only indoor session. No media attends the session.

Abstract Description: This presentation offers insight into Aboriginal people who choose to tell their stories with the language, respect and complexity through their partnerships with Robyn Nardoo. Robyn's work as a filmmaker includes videos made with elders who are directing Apmeralyte Ingerreke. Robyn will lead a screening and discussion about her work with these women.

What did conference delegates expect from this session ?

To be informed.

To get a better understanding of the culture.

I expected knowledge and understanding of a culture and aspect of Australia and Australians I have had little exposure to. And I love film and the process of storytelling.

Knowledge, understanding, acceptance, chance to engage in meaningful and respectful way with Aboriginal culture and learn something.

Information about community film projects.

To learn more about Indigenous culture and storytelling and how new technologies fit in the picture.

Understand more of the culture.

More input, opportunity to contribute/participate in video.

The complexities of filming a private culture.

Understanding a knowledge.

I guess I wanted further learning and listening really to what is essentially a very popular way/method of exchange at present. That is Indigenous film here seems to be a great thing.

More information with film interviewees.

I thought that the women elders would interact more and we would learn more about what they really want and need.

if your expectations were not met, why not?

It was everything I hoped for and a lot more.

Maybe smaller sessions would allow easier interaction with all people involved in project, including Agnes.

Just needed more.

The culture is so complex that we need more guidance and explanation about how we can learn and understand.

What were the session highlights for you?

It felt like we were getting a genuine story - from the heart - I felt really honoured.

Agnes and Robyn.

The film and questions.

Understanding culture.

The DVD itself and the willingness of the maker to share her experiences of the making.

Agnes' story and the speakers and visiting DK for first time.

The genuine passion, an openness of the presenters, in particular Robyn's communication.

Learning history.

Is there any other feedback you would like to give?

They should get more funding to do more of this work!

The questions people asked were not really answered well, they tended to go off on irrelevant tangents of what was already spoken about.

Spread it as wide as you can, extremely important work!

Very informative, great project. Need this in WA.

Keep up the good work. I wasn't planning on going to this session but thoroughly enjoyed it. Thank you.

Would like to have found out more about what the Desert Knowledge Centre is.

Thank you, well done (may be some others in future?).

Introduce all people in the room, other than the audiences.





**We received 20 surveys for session 4.
On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very low
and 5 is very high, what was your:**

Prior knowledge of Aboriginal culture
9 = low, very low
8 = average
2 = high, very high

Satisfaction with the amenities at this session
1 = low, very low
1 = average
18 = high, very high

Satisfaction with your level of participation
2 = low, very low
3 = average
15 = high, very high

Satisfaction with the content of the session
1 = low, very low
2 = average
17 = high, very high

Satisfaction with the venue
1 = low, very low
0 = average
19 = high, very high

Satisfaction with length of time for the session
1 = low, very low
2 = average
16 = high, very high

Satisfaction with time of day for the session
2 = low, very low
0 = average
18 = high, very high



**CAAMA
Productions
2006**

**AGNES ABBOTT
HARD WORKER**

Agnes Abbott was born at Loves Creek Station in the 1930s. She lived in the bush with her Eastern Arrernte family, travelling across the parts of her homeland which are still accessible to the old people.

From her early years born and raised in the bush, learning the survival tools and the ways of her culture, Agnes' life underwent many and expansive changes. More of her homelands became inaccessible to families for hunting, and finding new ways to live on or near the stations and the missions became imperative. Eventually, Agnes remained as a station worker.

**Director: Robyn Nardoo
24 minute documentary
Nganampa Anwernekenhe Series 19**

This film takes us back to Agnes' country. Where, using her stories, arts and culture Agnes endeavours to teach us about parts of her extraordinary homeland and the complex connections that sustained her through the challenges of recent European colonisation, and her choices for survival.

Agnes made this film as a way of sharing her knowledge with younger generations and people from outside her culture. The preservation and maintenance of Eastern Arrernte culture is undergoing changes too, and with the contemporary option of using multimedia, film, painting, audio and photography Agnes is always transforming her ancient knowledge into contemporary formats so that it will not all be lost.

Level of meeting prior expectations
1 = low, very low
5 = average
12 = high, very high

Apmeraltye Ingkerreke experiences were new
yes = 16
no = 2

Level of quality of the session
1 = low, very low
2 = average
16 = high, very high



Session 5:

Saturday, October 4th, 2008 3.00 - 5.00 pm.

Storytelling and life stories.

13.

Temperature hits 39 degrees. The session is booked out. No media attends the session.

Abstract Description: Storytelling has ancient roots for Arrernte people. Its strength as a traditional method of knowledge exchange is still evident today. Another contemporary use of storytelling is the recording of life stories which interweave with cultural stories to provide a rich and tangible evidence of recent history.

What did conference delegates expect from this session?

Learn a little bit of the area's history and what it means to be part of the Arrernte culture and traditions.

To hear stories local to the Arrernte people both new and old.

To connect locally.

More stories of the people and their way of life.

Awareness, professional development, connecting, value, respect, introduction to their culture, knowledge.

I thought I would participate in communal storytelling. Instead learnt about storytelling through painting.

Hands on experience/learning opportunities, better understanding and awareness of the culture, listening to the stories.

Storytelling - stories by local Arrernte people from their culture.

I didn't have any prior expectation.

Lots of interaction and learning.

Very good/very knowledgeable speaker. But perhaps a slightly more planned talk? Change over time between painting and history.

Life and folklore stories, exposure to Arrernte storytelling styles and techniques.

If your expectations were not met, why not?

I didn't go in with any expectations.

Stories were more about when white settlers arrived.

Non-Indigenous main presenter difficult to hear (see prior). Different outcome but wonderful.

Very soft leader and speaker!

Presenter seemed a bit reticent to speak up - longer session would be great.

Stories from a white woman who wasn't a good speaker.

No Arrernte storytellers performing.

Could not hear.

No elder telling story.

Would have liked a little more direction re: being let known to be able to go and participate in both breakaway session storytelling and painting.

Maybe have storytelling and art further apart so storytelling can be heard.

What were the session highlights for you?

The opportunity to sit and relax and be welcomed warmly.

The storytelling outdoor, informal experience, the openness of everyone.

Impetus to find out more.

Sitting, talking with the Arrernte women informally, meeting Kathleen and talking with Marie.

Listening to the story about a painting while looking at it.

Painting - hearing stories of paintings - getting out of town and 'off site' - away from the crowds and the concrete - the informality and friendliness of the exchange - the humour.

The pace of the session was beautiful and the way the ladies seemed to work together. Also to see Mary sharing her knowledge despite her shyness.

Real stories.



Is there any other feedback you would like to give?

Would like to hear more about process of gathering the stories with specific stories about interesting Aboriginal people. Would have liked session to be split into half story section and half painting - didn't get to paint and this wasn't explained properly.

Thank you, thank you. It was beautiful.

Please have the presentations done by Arrernte women. Please share your stories and talk with us.

Tell us to leave earlier for the bus.

Thank you for sharing your culture. Very authentic and a bridge to building better understanding towards reconciliation.

These sessions have been my confidence highlight.

Keep doing it! Fantastic.

Can't wait to see the cultural centre. Fantastic to sit on the ground and be real after the air-conditioning. I think I would have liked to be more in natural shade than manmade shade but understand that there's not a lot of that around.

Perhaps there could have been a little more structure to the session, more information, Q&A session at the end. I say this only because I would have liked to have gone deeper into the stories and learned more about the connections between the stories. I wanted to learn more!



We received 30 surveys for session 5. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very low and 5 is very high, what was your:

Prior knowledge of Aboriginal culture
23 = low, very low
5 = average
2 = high, very high

Satisfaction with the amenities at this session
4 = low, very low
11 = average
15 = high, very high

Satisfaction with your level of participation
3 = low, very low
8 = average
19 = high, very high

Satisfaction with the content of the session
4 = low, very low
6 = average
20 = high, very high

Satisfaction with the venue
2 = low, very low
3 = average
25 = high, very high

Satisfaction with length of time for the session
4 = low, very low
5 = average
21 = high, very high

Satisfaction with time of day for the session
6 = low, very low
7 = average
16 = high, very high



Level of meeting prior expectations
6 = low, very low
8 = average
15 = high, very high

Apmeraltye Ingkerreke experiences were new
yes = 28
no = 1

Level of quality of the session
4 = low, very low
8 = average
17 = high, very high

What some of the data collection can tell us.

Researchers went with delegates on the buses to and from each session. A head count provided a reliable estimate of the number of delegates attending. In total, researchers estimate that 278 delegates attended at least one Apmeraltye Ingkerreke session during the conference.

On the bus, each delegate was invited to participate in a survey which they could fill out during the return journey back from the site after each session. The maximum number of participants was restricted for each session to one 50-seat bus, other than Session 3, which used two 50-seat buses, transporting 100 delegates to the site.

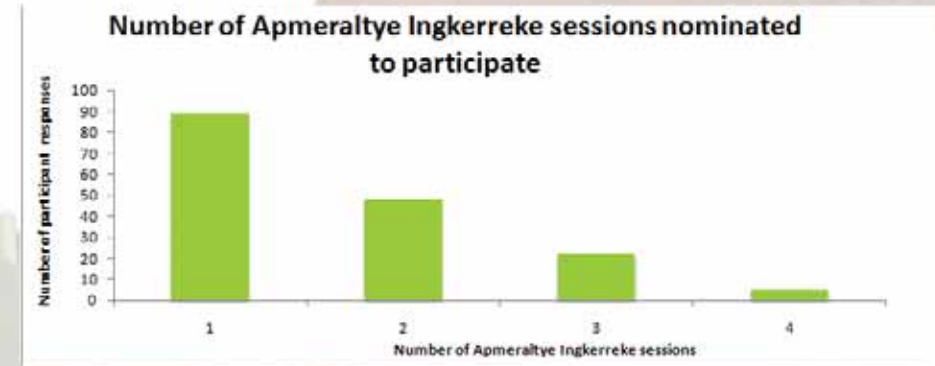
There were no Alice Springs residents participating as delegates in Sessions 1, 2 or 3. In Session 4 there were two resident delegates and in Session 5 there was one resident delegate.

Approximately 50% of delegates in Sessions 1, 2 and 3 had visited Alice Springs previously, while in Sessions 4 and 5 the figure was approximately 30%. Across these delegates, the majority of visits had taken place more than five years before their attendance at the conference.

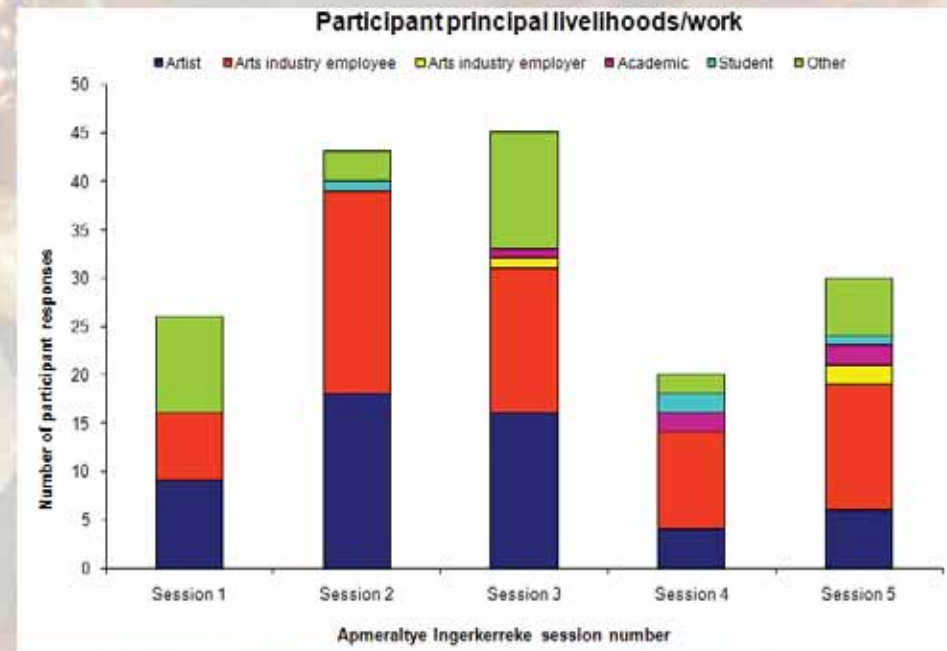


The graph above shows an estimated number of conference delegates who attended each session. Researchers estimate that there were 28 delegates participating in Session 1, 40 in Session 2, 120 in Session 3, 50 in Session 4 and 40 delegates participating in Session 5, a total of 278 delegates.

The graph below shows how many Apmeraltye Ingkerreke sessions each survey respondent intended to participate in. 15.

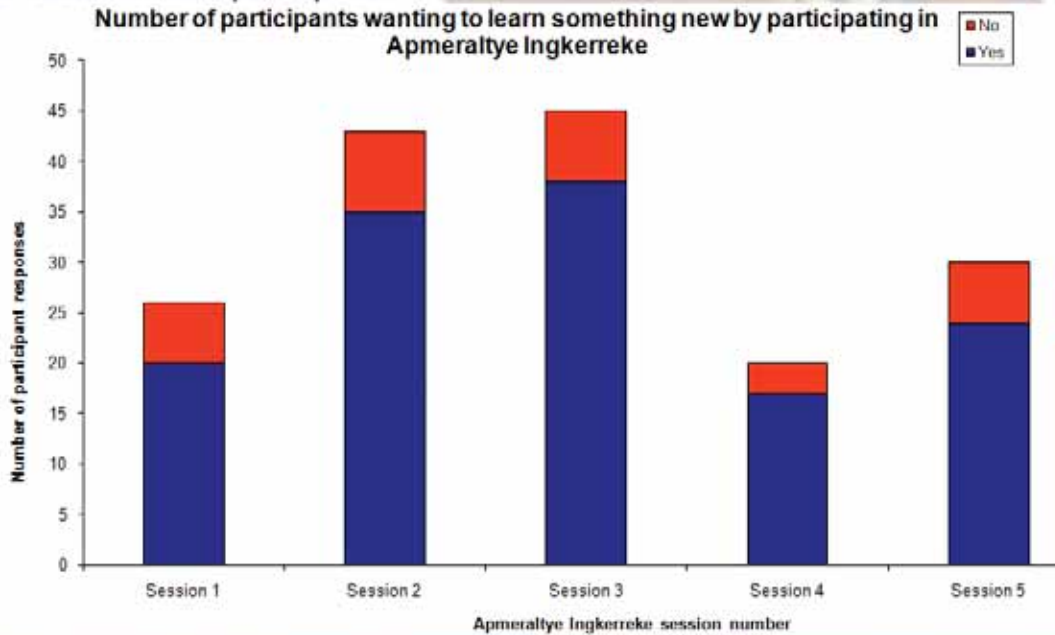


From the 164 survey respondents, 89 (54%) said that they were only participating in one session, 48 (29.3%) intended to participate in two sessions, 22 (13.4%) intended to participate in three sessions and 5 (3%) intended to participate in four sessions. No delegates intended to participate in five sessions.

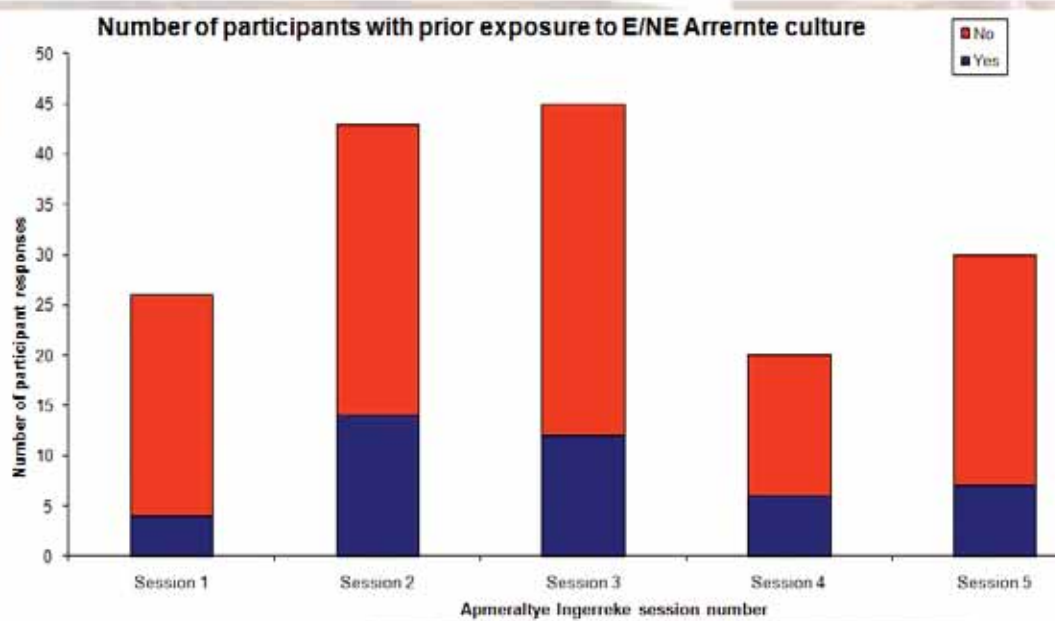
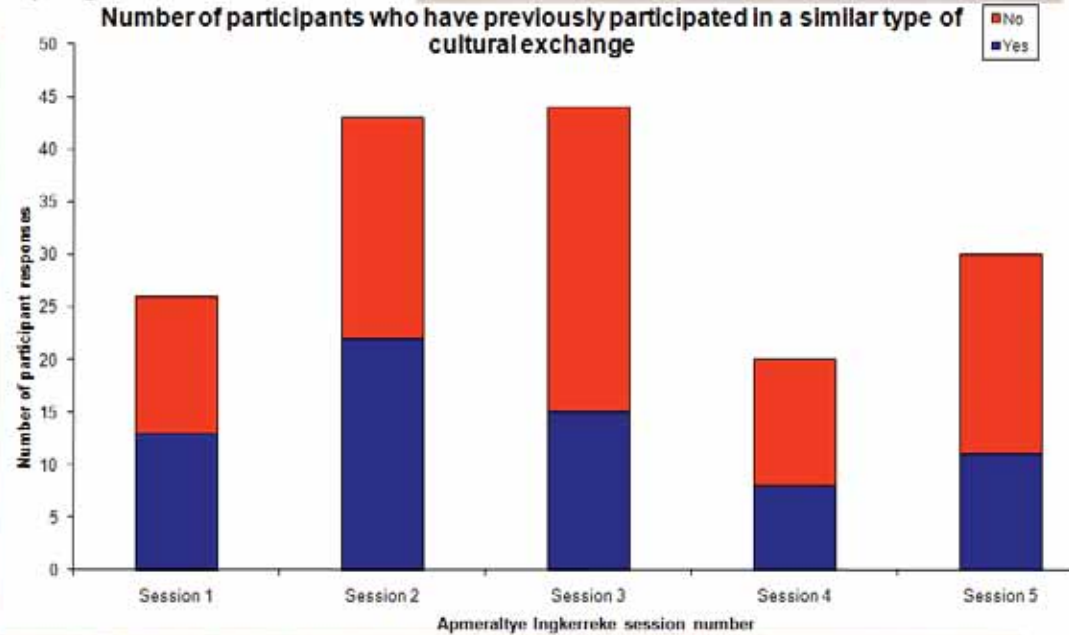


The graph above shows that all sessions were dominated by participants who identified their principal livelihoods/work as artists, or arts industry employees. These participants were distributed relatively evenly across all sessions. On average, 32% of delegates were artists, and 40% were arts industry employees.

Apmeraltye Ingkerreke delegates identified that 'learning something new' was the most important factor in their decision to participate. The graph below shows that across all the sessions, 75-85% of all respondents wanted to learn something new as a result of their participation.



The graph below shows that between 35 and 52% of the respondents had previously participated in a similar type of cultural exchange, although it is apparent from the results that for the majority, this had not taken place in Alice Springs.



The fact that only low numbers of delegates had prior exposure to Eastern/North Eastern Arrernte culture (as shown in the graph above) supports the high number of delegates with a desire to 'learn something new'.



What did we learn from this research?

The key conceptual aim for Apmeraltye Ingkerreke included significant outcomes for both the Arrernte host/participants and conference delegates through five thematic sessions facilitating cross-cultural exchange. This was achieved through Arrernte host/participants inviting delegates to attend a series of culturally rich experiential sessions, demonstrating the relationship between elements of Arrernte culture in ways that expressed the living content of their culture. With this in mind, each of the five session abstract descriptions aimed to inform delegates of the experiential nature of the session.

This method endeavoured to dilute the audience/performer boundary in order to reveal more of the everyday nature of cultural exchange, inclusion and knowledge transmission in the Arrernte world. This placed some onus on delegates to find ways to interact with their hosts, rather than to be entertained. The surveys indicate a tension between the expectations for structured, organised, rehearsed or performed cross-cultural displays, and experiential, hands-on, interactive, participatory, cross-cultural exchanges. According to the data captured in the delegate surveys, over three-quarters of respondents felt their experiences, the venue, their ability to participate and the content of the sessions they attended was high or very high.

The on-site daily temperatures ranged from 38 to 41 degrees Celsius, and all sessions except one, were outdoors. Despite the provision of shade and cool water, almost half the participants found the weather challenged their enjoyment, participation and experience. Many of the hosts had been working outside for four days preparing the site and collecting the natural materials they needed in the lead-up to the three-day event. They were all tired by the end.

The five sessions were fully pre-booked, but the extreme heat (40 degrees Celsius during the first session), was a noticeable deterrent to actual attendance. Only 28 delegates of the 50 who were pre-booked attended Session 1. Ultimately, many who did attend were people from the waiting list, who took the opportunity to attend as others dropped out. The only two sessions that achieved their pre-booked numbers were Session 3, held in the evening and Session 4, held indoors.

Information collected in the survey has provided very constructive criticism and indication of what clearly worked and where expectations may have been let down. The survey has also shown overwhelmingly positive outcomes from the showcasing of Arrernte cultural life in this way. Practical issues in event management were minimal, but the site design considerably influenced delegate experiences.

Questions raised by the research:

17.

The extent of difference in delegate reactions to their expectations and experiences may be significantly influenced by their professional orientation; for example, the majority of delegates identified a professional role in the arts, tourism or health. More planning linked to the delegate demographic could influence how the session hosts introduce and facilitate their exchanges.

Another significant factor influencing the expectations of the delegates was the site set-up. This was particularly apparent for the evening dance session, where a floodlit dance area, separation of dancers from audience, and microphones for the singers contributed to the expectation of a fully rehearsed performance.

None of the media who had arranged to attend were present for the sessions, and the post-event media release was not picked up. The complete lack of media attention contrasts with the survey findings where some delegates reflected profound new insight through their experience of Apmeraltye Ingkerreke. Although media brokering was not the responsibility of the directors of Apmeraltye Ingkerreke, important messages could have been significantly amplified through media attention, thus creating a good news break for the wider community.

Final comments:

The very hot weather was an unforeseen challenge that the conference booking system may not have been prepared to cope with. Delegates expressed frustration at being turned away from sessions that were fully booked, when ultimately places became available through no-show and late cancellation.

The participatory nature of this event did surprise some delegates. Introduction, facilitation and preparation by the hosts can play a part in alleviating the potential for a mismatch in expectations to some degree; but when an event is identified as participatory and experiential it should not be confused with tourism, performance or marketing showcases. While the categories are closely related, and desirable outcomes to some extent shared, the differences need to be made clear and remain consistent.

The effort of all those involved in this kind of event and the cooperation necessary should not be underestimated. Recognition and remuneration should be set at adequate levels to ensure justifiable reward. Typically, funding will entail multiple small grants, many payments and sizable administration and acquittal procedures. Including evaluation and research with such events necessitates a further workload, but it also value-adds and strengthens future planning.



Tonight - we celebrate our culture as strong Arrernte men and women of this great desert ancient land.

Tonight - we celebrate our ancestors and totems in our spiritual world.

Tonight - we celebrate our life and spiritual journey through our songs and dances.

Tonight - we celebrate our heart beating with pride and power as one family of the desert.

Tonight - we celebrate and awaken our ancestors with our singing and stomping on our sacred ground.

Tonight - we celebrate our continuous journey towards our spiritual life.

Tonight - we celebrate with you, our special guests from near and far.

Tonight - we celebrate, we sing, we dance, we will remember who we truly are.

Marie-Elena Ellis, 2008

