

Bayala - Let's Speak Sydney Language



Photo: Lille Madden Prudence Upton

"Sydney is a place with over 60,000 years of history. This beautiful city that sits among the rivers, harbour and ocean, shares an Aboriginal lineage that goes back before time and now stretches to the skies."

Wesley Enoch

Bayala means **'Speak'** in the local Aboriginal Sydney language.

Sydney is the site of some of the first conversations between Indigenous people and Europeans. This specially curated program of events is a platform to share and celebrate the Indigenous heritage of Sydney and the growing movement to reawaken local language.

Sydney-siders of all backgrounds are invited to share these languages through a series of classes and talks with local Eora and Darug community leaders and language experts, a sonic installation at Tar-ra (Dawes Point), and a mass choral performance at Barangaroo on January 26 that will celebrate the local language of the Sydney area.

Bayala is driven by important socio-environmental motives. Festival Director, **Wesley Enoch** describes the importance of preserving language: *"Indigenous languages are deeply connected to Land through the use of complex metaphors. The destruction of the natural world severely limits your ability to speak to each other. In a similar way the loss of language breaks a connection and respect for landscape."*

In a bid to reawaken the Aboriginal language of Sydney, Sydney Festival is offering free language classes at the State Library of NSW and at Studio 404 in Parramatta. Darug woman and member of the World Heritage Indigenous Network, **Aunty Jacinta Tobin**, with Gadigal man **Joel Davison** will lead a range of language classes developed to provide a foundational understanding of local language, with consultation from **Professor Jakelin Troy**. Participants will learn greetings and introductions, landscape and place names, body parts, simple grammar, sentences and a song.

Patyegarang's Books is a site-specific sonic installation by Gadigal Elder **Uncle Charles 'Chicka' Madden** (Director of the Aboriginal Medical Service, Secretary of the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, Director of the Aboriginal Hostels NSW and life member of the Redfern All Blacks), his granddaughter **Lille Madden** and Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi artist **Jonathan Jones**, whose recent work *Barrangal Dyara- (Skin and Bones)* installed in the Royal Botanic Gardens attracted thousands of visitors.

In 1790–91, **Patyegarang**, a young Aboriginal woman, taught **William Dawes** the local language during frequent visits to his hut. Dawes, an English astronomer who sailed to Sydney on the 'First Fleet', was assigned to make astronomical observations during the voyage. Upon arrival he set up an observatory in a hut on Tar-ra, what is now known as Dawes' Point under the southern pylon of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. At this site, you can hear Lille Madden, a young Gadigal woman, reading the

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wordlists and sentences in language, as spoken by Patyegarang. The installation will be open daily from 6am-11pm throughout the festival.

Lille Madden says: *“For me, to be able to listen to and speak the words of my grandfather’s people for the first time was an emotional and grounding experience. It truly fills me with joy that others can now listen and learn too.”*

The State Library of NSW will present two special *Out of the Vaults* sessions offering a unique experience for people to get up close and personal with a number of significant collection items relating to the history of Sydney language rarely seen by the public. Presenting an extraordinary insight, this one of a kind experience will examine the original sources and their informants.

Baraya – Sing Up Country encourages people to come together to learn a song in local language to be performed at the morning WugulOra Ceremony on the Walumil Lawns at Barangaroo Reserve on 26 January. The songlines of Sydney will be reawakened and reformed in a performance for country, ancestors and healing, offering a new way to start the day.

The song, entitled *Budyari Gunyalungulung Baraya–la*, which translates as *Let’s Sing up Good Dreaming*, has been composed by **Jacinta Tobin** and **Nardi Simpson**. A participatory project, anyone who wants to learn the song and sing in the choir is encouraged to take part.

Bayala has been created in close consultation from Aboriginal elders and local academics. The Language Project Advisor Group includes: **Uncle Charles ‘Chicka’ Madden** (Gadiga Elder), **Uncle Allen Madden** (Gadiga Elder), **Aunty Jacinta Tobin** (Darug Elder), **Professor Jakelin Troy** and **Professor Larissa Behrendt**.

Where Meriton Festival Village, Hyde Park North
When 7–29 January
Tickets FREE
Bookings sydneyfestival.org.au

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