

# LAKE MACQUARIE News



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## Living languages

THE technical tools of today are being put to use to keep alive the noble Awabakal language, once spoken by the indigenous communities around Lake Macquarie.

The locally based Arwarbukarl Cultural Resource Association has developed an amazing software program called Miromaa, designed to document and preserve this linguistic slice of the lake's history.

And now Microsoft has come on board to help the association share the technology with the world as they work in partnership to formulate a web page where other indigenous communities can access the tools to keep their own languages alive.

"Language connects us to country and country is very important to us," said association manager Daryn McKenny.

"As our visual identity changes through intermarriage with other peoples, it is vital to retain that language which is a link to our culture.

"There are very few traditional speakers left and we are having to rely increasingly on research and old records for evidence of the language.

"This program has audio and visual components and is easily accessible to all."

Microsoft Australia community affairs manager Paul Clark said he felt very privileged to have worked on the project.

"A lot of our staff volunteered their time to work on it - they were very passionate to get involved and embraced the project," Mr Clark said.

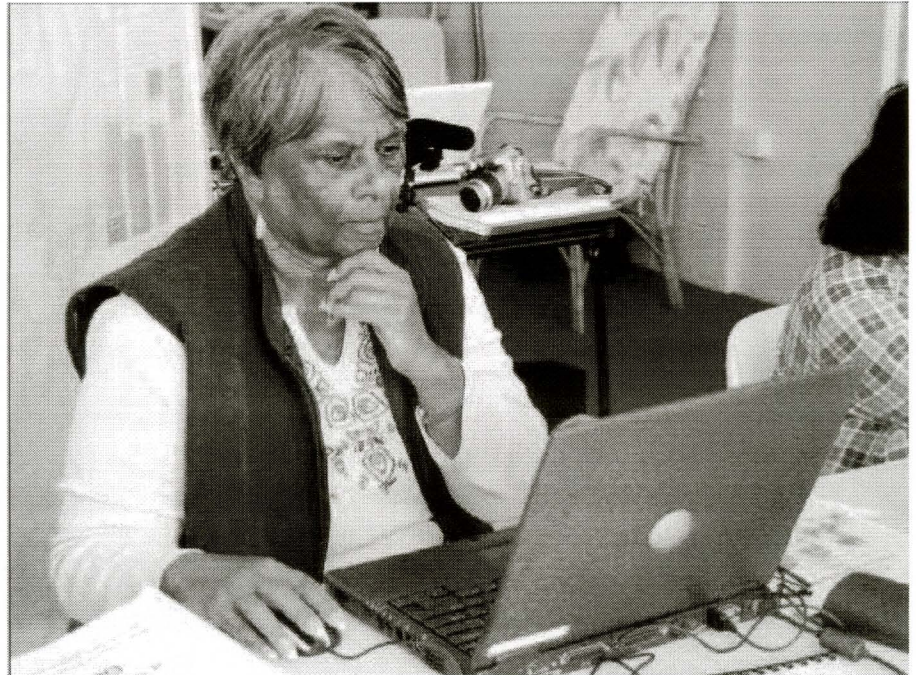
"This is the first such program that has been devised at a grassroots level. Previous programs have been attempted at an academic level, but this will be accessible to the internet user in the most remote indigenous community."

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Daryn McKenny, ACRA

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Valerie Alberts checks out the new program.