Murrayarra: Evaluation toolkit
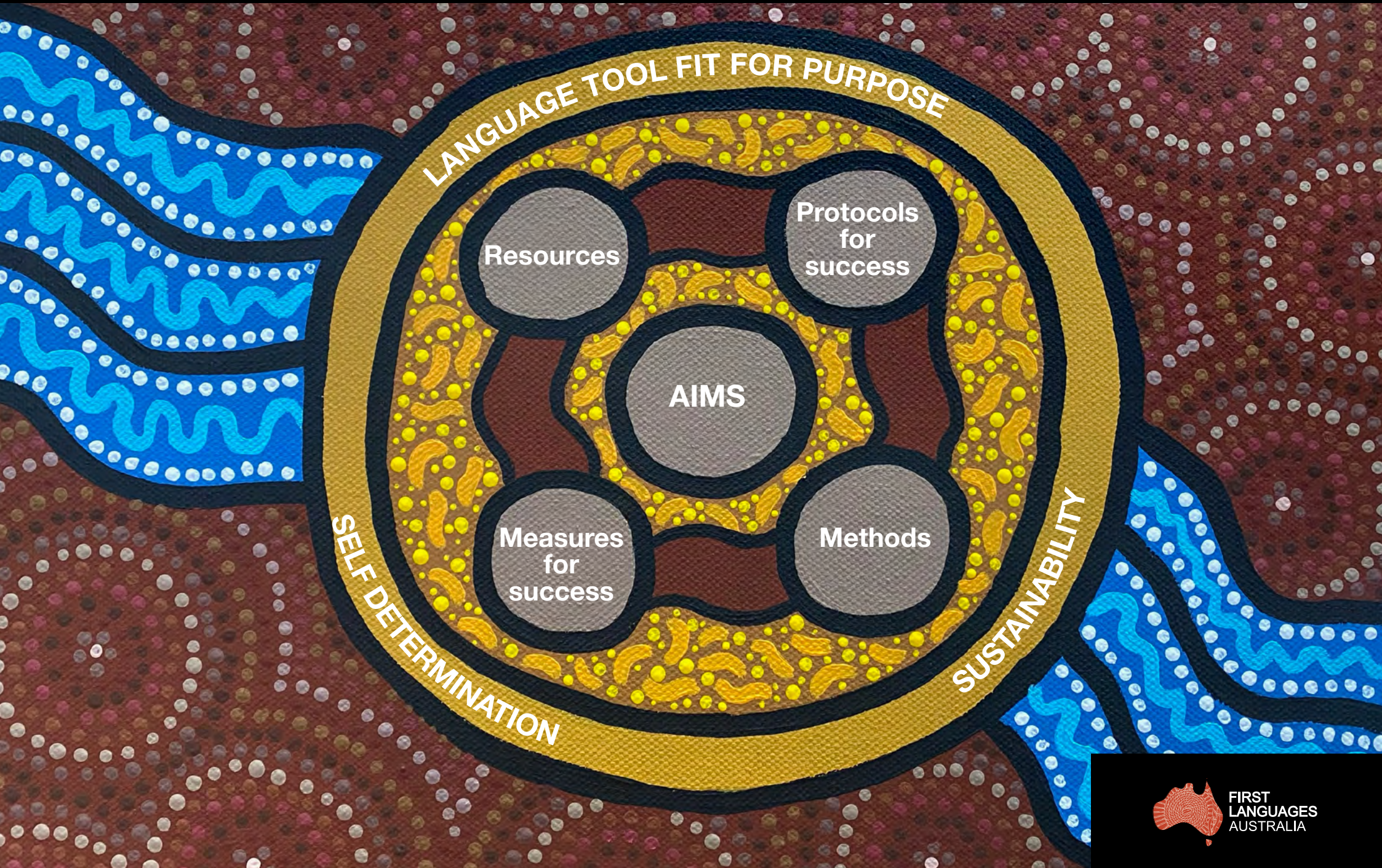
Supporting the Evaluation of Digital Tools for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages

LANGUAGE TOOL FIT FOR PURPOSE

SELF DETERMINATION

SUSTAINABILITY

Resources

Protocols for success

AIMS

Measures for success

Methods

FIRST LANGUAGES AUSTRALIA

Foundations for successful evaluation

- Establish clear communication processes within community and establish or utilise a language reference group.
- Ensure the community has ownership of how and when language materials are developed and used.
- Train community to support language tools to ensure longevity.
- Develop an understanding of different stages of success within your own context.

Methods of collecting evaluation data

- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Observations
- Questionnaires / Surveys
- Online feedback
- Yarning with users
- Number of downloads
- Time spent using the language tool
- Speed of language learning
- Accuracy of language learning
- Amount of language use within families and the community

Artwork by Emily Lloyd

Murrayarra means 'speak out' in Wiradjuri, the language of project researcher Linda Blake.

Reflective questions to support communities in evaluating the tools they create

Language learning and use

- Are individual learners' language skills improving as a result of using the tool?
- How well does the tool support language learners with differing skills and experiences?
- Are language speakers feeling more confident in learning and speaking the language by using the tool?
- Is language use by individuals, within families, and within the community increasing as a result of this tool?
- Is the tool supporting language learning in the way intended?
- Is the tool encouraging language use in ways that were not intended, but are equally important as the intended outcomes?

Use of the tool

- Who is using your tool?
- How many people are using your tool?
- Are the intended people able to access the intended information? (e.g., is it child friendly?)
- How often are people using your tool? How long are they spending when they use your tool? Do they use it more than once? Is the use of your tool increasing over time?
- Are there barriers preventing people from using the tool?
- How might users describe using the tool? (e.g., is it fun, annoying, clunky, easy?)
- What do users like or dislike about the design?
- Has the level of use of the tool made the effort/cost in its development worthwhile?
- Are users able to interact with the tool in ways that help them to learn?

Fitness for purpose and with existing infrastructure

- Does the tool fit with the environments, contexts, and infrastructures in which it is intended to be used?

Increasing visibility and promotion of languages

- Does the tool make the language more visible?
- Does the tool assist with promoting or raising awareness of the language?
- Have you used available channels to promote your tool?

Longevity and sustainability of digital tools

- Has making the tool taken as long as expected?
- Is it still working?
- Can the language content be used again once the tool stops working?
- Does maintenance of the tool:
  – Require the same collaborators to continue working together? If not, how will information about the project be handed over to others?
  – Require specialist technical assistance (programming skills). If so, are there opportunities to train community members to develop the skills to maintain or evolve the tool?
  – Is there a plan for how maintenance and support will be paid for over the life of the tool?
- Can the language content to be exported once the tool is no longer working?
- Thinking about how long the tool might last, has the investment been worthwhile?

Overall

- What was achieved by developing the digital tool? Was producing this tool the best outcome for the community?
- Are there components of the tool (software, hardware, content) that can be reused by other communities or projects?
- How might the learnings from this activity inform what tools are developed next?
- When could you evaluate your tool again?

One issue clearly voiced during the interviews was the need for communities to be able to share their experiences in digital tool development to reduce time on expensive and unsustainable projects and instead support all language groups to develop quality language learning tools. To support this need, First Languages Australian has developed **Yaale: Tools for language work (yaale.com.au)** as a place to share and review digital tools. Get in touch if you have tools you would like to add to or review on yaale. First Languages Australia welcomes feedback around how to make the site more useful.