History

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Trevor Jamieson, Spinifex man and professional actor, is the key performer in Ngapartji Ngapartji. He is also an arts mentor to the young people and other artists working on the project. It is Trevor's family story that is at the heart of the theatre production, which was created with Big hART's Artistic Director Scott Rankin.

Eight years ago, Trevor and Scott had their first conversation about creating a piece of theatre that captured the complexities of Trevor’s family - the Spinifex people – and their journey through the 20th Century. Since 1999 they have worked together to research and write this story. This process has resulted in a number of different expressions of the material that have encompassed performance, film and television. These earlier expressions have led to Ngapartji Ngapartji today.

Meanwhile Alex Kelly became involved in Big hART in 2003 and soon after moved to Coober Pedy to work with the Senior Aboriginal Women of Coober Pedy, the Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta, on their campaign Irati Wanti (The Poison - Leave It). She was keen to continue working with Big hART, having been inspired by their model after working on Knot@Home. Before moving to Coober Pedy she undertook a Pitjantjatjara summer school in Adelaide which deeply inspired her to continue working with language.

In 2004 Trevor, Scott and Alex started talking about the idea of Trevor telling his story in Pitjantjatjara and encouraging the audience to give time to learning the language in order to be given a deeper experience of the work in exchange - Ngapartji Ngapartji.

From these beginnings the project established a base for itself in Alice Springs in early 2005. Ngapartji Ngapartji has since expanded to involve over 250 people: young people, elders, artists and community participants. Further afield, over 220 people enrolled in the Ninti online language and culture site and over 7000 people have seen the touring theatre shows in Sydney, Perth, Melaney, Alice Springs, Adelaide and Melbourne.

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