

ADDENDUM

to letter 'Apology requested from Kuranda linguists', 22 July 2025

Date: 7 October 2025

Attention: Mr Michael Quinn and Ms Cassandra Nancarrow

Topic: Neighbouring Buluwai and Yirrganydji NOT dialects, clans or subgroups of Djabugay

Supporting Evidence 1:

SOURCE: R.M.W. Dixon, Words of Our Country, St. Lucia, UQP, 1991, pp.6-7.

To summarize, names like Yirrganydji, Buluwanyji, and Gunganji break down into three components: stem yirr-/bulu-/gung-, then suffix GAY 'language,' then nyji 'having,' and their **literal meaning is people having the Yirrgay, Buluway, and Gunggay, languages respectively**. In Wood's opinion, the linguistically unanalyzable stems and archaic nature of the GAY suffix imply that these are very old names, and form an old and longstable nomenclature.

Supporting Evidence 2:

SOURCE: A grammar of the Kuku Yalanji language of North Queensland By Elisabeth Patz 2002, sourcing R.M.W. Dixon

1.1.2 Kuku Yalanji and its dialects

The concept of "own language" as distinct from "other languages" is an important aspect of tribal identity in Australia (as indeed it is for any nation in the world). Thus Aborigines distinguish their own language from that of another tribal group, even if the differences are only slight, sometimes represented by just a few different lexical items. Accordingly, **a tribal name is often derived from the language name in Australia**, whereas the reverse is seldom encountered (cf. Dixon 1980:33-43).

Where the self-termed "languages" of several tribes are mutually understandable, the linguist may recognise these as dialects of one superordinate language. But **"there was not usually any name for a group of tribes whose speech was mutually intelligible**, nor for the language^ [the superordinate language] that we can - on linguistic criteria - assign to them. It is necessary to **choose some label for each language^**, and this usually has to be done fairly **arbitrarily by the linguist**" (Dixon 1980:43).

I have sent a letter to Professor Dixon requesting his expert assistance in this matter.

Kind regards,

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