

Dear Michael Quinn and Cassy Nancarrow,

**RE: Request for apology from Kuranda linguists**

Please see ATTACHMENT 1.

**This two page document shows page 'A':**

*This page (A) shows the map, top left, of 3 groups in the Cairns area as documented by the pictured academics over the last 115 years.*

*The table left are the different spellings used in their documents to describe the groups (tribes).*

**And page B:**

*This page (B) shows the map with "Djabugay Nation" over the entire area. "Djabugay Nation" is deliberately inside quote marks because it is misinformation (an invented term).*

*PATZ proposed in 1980 that these neighbouring tribes were dialects of Djabugay. PATZ 2002 publication she quotes DIXON to explain (see RED text below) "It is necessary...". That is, PATZ arbitrarily chose 'Djabugay' however, she could have equally chosen 'Buluwai' or 'Yirrgay' to coin the term to describe language similarities between these neighbouring tribes.*

*PATZ also describes that pre-colonisation these tribes saw themselves with their own languages and did not group themselves according to linguistic dialect theory.*

*The idea of a 'language nation' is invented.*

**And poses the question:**

*Q. Is it fair, just or reasonable to extinguish 2 Traditional Aboriginal tribes from the record (Buluwai and Yirrgay) based on a provably flawed naming convention used by linguists ie. arbitrarily coined?*

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Michael, in answer to your statement in Anzac Park, Kuranda on 4 August 2024:

No, just because the neighbouring languages are similar - it does not make them "exactly the same language" as you claimed. See 1938 Tindale Buluwai and Djabugay Parallel Vocabularies provided for your convenience.

Let's call it a 'misunderstanding' on your parts. ***That is, failing to read the fine print provided by your fellow preceding linguists PATZ and DIXON has caused you both to misinterpret their information and to promote your own version of the so-called "facts".***

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## How to write an apology (Google results)

1. To write an effective apology, start by clearly acknowledging what you did wrong and expressing genuine remorse for your actions. Keep it simple, avoid making excuses, and offer to make amends to show your commitment to repairing the relationship.
2. To write an apology letter, you'll need to address your error early in the letter, acknowledge the other party's hurt feelings, and accept full responsibility for your part in the matter. In many cases, you'll also need to offer a solution that will fix any underlying issues related to the original problem. If you want to make sure that your apology is effective and doesn't cause even more hurt, aim for both clarity and sincerity while you write.
3. Writing an apology letter is a powerful way to express remorse, repair relationships, and rebuild trust. A well-crafted apology includes four essential elements:
  1. A clear statement of apology — Begin with a sincere "I'm sorry" or "I apologize."
  2. Acknowledgement of the mistake — Show understanding of the impact your actions had.
  3. Expression of regret — Convey genuine remorse and empathy.
  4. Commitment to change — Offer a resolution and a promise to improve.

### Example apology for Michael Quinn / Cassy Nancarrow to consider

Dear Kuranda Community Members,

I apologise to the Kuranda community for getting some very crucial things wrong in my work over the last 35 years or so. Back then, we were so excited about saving the Indigenous language that I failed to read the fine print provided by my predecessors DIXON and PATZ that explained the linguist naming convention underlying 'Djabugay'. I am only human and my misunderstanding was my own fault.

Therefore,

a. I apologise unreservedly for the misdirection "Djabugay Nation" and "Djabugay Language Nation" has caused. The framing is an invention that myself and other linguists used to classify similarities in neighbouring tribal languages. The term is fabricated and has no basis in Aboriginal Traditional Law and Custom (TLC). I apologise for misleading my community (and the world) for the past nearly four decades. I sincerely apologise to the affected Traditional Owners from the Buluwanydji, Djabuganydji and Yirrganydji tribes for my mistake.

b. I apologise for spreading misinformation about William (Willie) Cecil Brim's family. I have been saying they are not from the Kuranda area and instead from "Up north". I can understand now the heartache, hardship and health consequences I have caused him personally, his family, his extended family in Kuranda, and further afield at Cairns, Mareeba, Hopevale, Woorabinda, Pormpuraaw and places in the Northern Territory where Buluwanydji people reside today. I regret that my work has caused him and his family to be persecuted - his children suffering the injustices of bullying, harassment and intimidation because he would not accept the linguist's idea of a so-called Djabugay umbrella 'Language Nation' group - because he understood all along it was a made-up term.

c. The terminology that people and families who formed the Mona Mona Descendants group who left Mona Mona by 1962 were 'mainly Djabugay' was copied and pasted from PATZ 1980 and is a continuing dis-service to the other 20 tribes that were also present at Mona Mona Mission. Failing to identify that 21 tribes were recorded at Mona Mona Mission means that descendants are not looking at that data (SA Museum) for their family tree.

d. I apologise for continually referring to my informants Warren Brim, Gilpin Banning and Roy Banning without crediting them as men from the Buluwai tribe.

I am genuinely sorry for the damage to Buluwai Cultural Heritage caused by my misunderstandings and actions. I promise to be a part of the solution going forward by:

a. Sincerely apologising for my misinformation and the harm it has caused.

b. Providing corrected alternative text to be used by my publisher for any future reprints of any of my work, including work copyrighted by other parties.

c. Participating in the *Correcting the Records Project 2020 – 2030* to approve content corrections on website listings. For example, see ATTACHMENT 2.

kuranda.org – done

djabugay.org.au

CIAF.com.au

nativetitle.org.au

wikipedia.org

tropicalnorthqueensland.org.au

cairnshistory.com.au

queenslandrailtravel.com.au

etc

d. Be a signatory on an advice sent to government departments, schools, community groups and other public entities explaining the error and providing corrected information.

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Who are you both answerable to? The universities you attended where you did your linguist degrees? What about linguists Bob Dixon or Elisabeth Patz – should we contact them and ask them for their opinion / clarification? If you feel we need a mediator to resolve this matter then please nominate your preference and I will proceed to organise.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Kind regards,

Jo Martin

for Correcting the Records Project 2020 – 2030

history@kurandaregion.org