

5 November 2025

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CC: ceo@aiatsis.gov.au

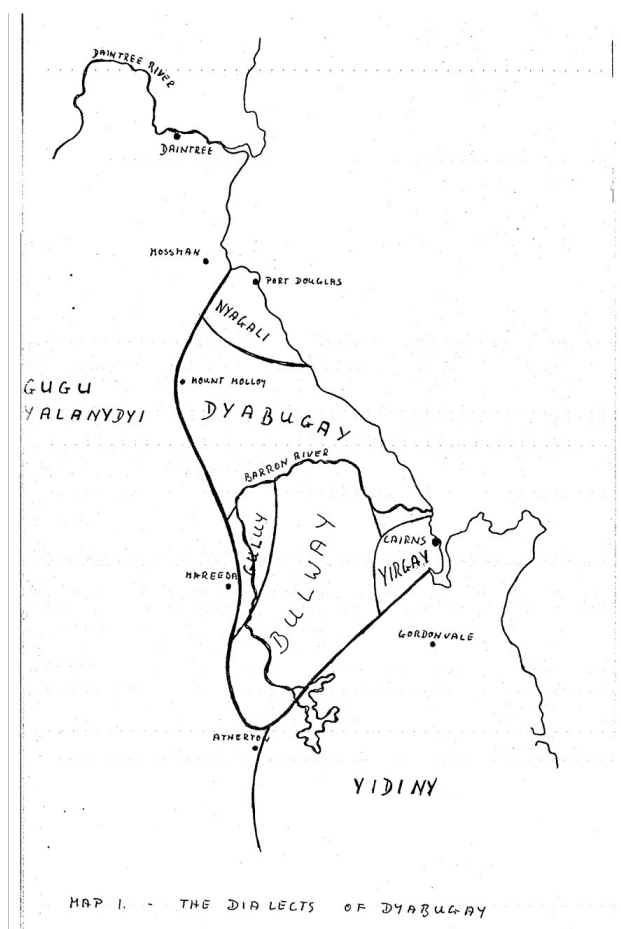
Dear Team North Queensland Land Council (NQLC),

RE: Discrediting Mr Michael Quinn's Position, ie. Not legitimate cultural information

RE: Correcting the Records Project 2020-2030

I write to you to report the results of my research over the last 9 years, since 2016. I write to you in good faith, as an Admin researcher and document manager for the Buluwai tribe, work I have undertaken in a community volunteer role for my client Mr William Cecil Brim.

Back in the 1980s / 1990s Mr Michael Quinn began work to collect the Aboriginal language in Kuranda. Mr Brim directed Mr Quinn to the remaining language speakers from his family and encouraged his work. At the time there was only Djabugay corporation which was used to auspice government grants for Mr Quinn to collect and document the language from the remaining speakers (Elders). Mr Quinn was influenced by linguist PATZ1980 who provided this map:



While the title of this map is 'Map 1 – The **Dialects** of Dyabugay' the fine-print provided by linguistics Professor R.M.W. Dixon illuminates the use of the terminology thus:

*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).*

SOURCE: <https://digitalcollections.anu.edu.au/items/15b4e08e-2fc5-428a-8b9f-1d764bfb1787/full>

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

Later, map and encyclopedia maker HORTON1996 sourced PATZ1980 to inform his AIATSIS mapping of the Cairns area instead of using the detailed work left by primary sources ROTH1910, MCCONELL1938, TINDALE1938-39, then DIXON1970, TINDALE1974, BOTTOMS1989.

The AIATSIS map is hanging in the foyer at the NQLC offices. I have cc'ed the CEO at AIATSIS because Mr William Cecil Brim has previously asked AIATSIS (<https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/LETTER-Buluwai-Willie-Brim-HORTON-AIATSIS-16-Jan-2023.pdf>) to inform the NQLC and Applicant that the map disclaimer clearly says it can't be used for native title or other land claims:

*This map attempts to represent the language, social or nation groups of Aboriginal Australia. It shows only the general locations of larger groupings of people which may include clans, dialects or individual languages in a group. It used published resources from the eighteenth century-1994 and is not intended to be exact, nor the boundaries fixed. **It is not suitable for native title or other land claims.***

SOURCE: <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia>

** Note: Surely the AIATSIS map in the NQLC foyer must be removed from the wall because it can't be used for land claims or native title, and is therefore misleading for Aboriginal parties?*

The fabricated "Djabugay [Language] Nation" is not traditional law and custom per the Native Title Act:

Section 223(1)(a): Traditional laws and customs

*"that the reference to '**traditional' law and custom** in the definition of native title must be understood in light of the proposition that*

*the native title rights and interests to which the Native Title Act refers are rights and interests finding their **origin in pre-sovereignty law and custom**, not rights or interests which are a creature of that Act."*

SOURCE: https://alrc.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/dp82_chapter_4_defining_native_title.pdf

If Mr Quinn's work (QUINN1995,2012) was sourced for the original native title application, which I suspect it was, or his phoney language framing was used in the connection report (MCCAUL2015), then I'm afraid these documents have been misled and are grossly incorrect - having used information that is not primary source nor traditional law and custom. Perhaps using fictitious cultural information "disconnects" the Aboriginal parties from the Cairns Regional / Djabugay Nation claim because they are agreeing to criteria that is provably false and not according to the Native Title Act?

I am currently in-progress to acquire three (3) 'expert' opinions to provide corrected content to the local traditional owner groups so they can assess, measure and fix the impacts of the misinterpretation of PATZ1980 (by DUFFIN1993, QUINN1995,2012) resulting in the false informing of the local Aboriginal history story, and traditional law and custom, regarding tribes and languages of the Cairns area.

Correcting the Records Project 2020 – 2030

This project started in 2016 to research, to amass, and to record information about the Aboriginal tribes of the greater Cairns area, including Kuranda. By 2020 it was clear there had been misinformation over the last 30 years in Mr Quinn's work. This project aims to correct the records to avoid future publishing of incorrect information in printed materials and on websites.

For brevity, the language work undertaken by Mr Michael Quinn in Kuranda decades ago has misinterpreted the naming convention used by linguists, ie. Djabugay [Language] Nation, which in turn has confused all the Aboriginal people in Kuranda about which tribe they are from and how they connect.

I have asked Mr Michael Quinn to assist me to dismantle the incorrect aspects of his work, so far he has declined, furthering the detriment to our community relations.

Unfortunately, I have no choice other than to notify everyone of Mr Quinn's misunderstanding in sourcing PATZ1980.

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards,

Jo Martin

for Correcting the Records Project 2020 - 2030

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www.kurandaregion.org/correcting-the-records