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Bringing the Language home:
the Ngarrindjeri dictionary project

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Abstract

This paper reflects on the long, collaborative process of compiling a contemporary Ngarrindjeri dictionary of the language belonging to the people of the Lower Murray, Lakes and Coorong region of South Australia. The project began in 2003 with a small wordlist of a couple of hundred words still remembered by a few Ngarrindjeri Elders, but it soon grew into a much bigger project involving many more community members, and countless hours spent poring over old books and numerous card files held in museum archives. The latest edition includes nearly 3700 entries, including both written and oral sources, which have all been inserted into an electronic database transportable into Toolbox (a versatile software program for dictionary-making). The aim has been to compile a dictionary that makes some logical sense of the many words that have been recorded and spelt in a multiple of ways by a variety of recorders over a period of nearly 170 years. This variety is not just because of the different spelling systems employed, but also due to the many dialects that make up the diverse Ngarrindjeri language bloc (Rev George Taplin recorded 18 clans or *laklinyerar*, while the anthropologists Ronald and Catherine Berndt listed 74 clan dialects). In compiling this dictionary priority has been given to the words remembered by the Elders, using their present day pronunciation, knowing that Ngarrindjeri is a language that never 'went to sleep'. Over a period of six years the making of the dictionary has given the community a renewed sense of hope about what is possible for the Ngarrindjeri language, and a growing sense of pride in a collective cultural identity.

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There are many long-felt consequences that exist for Aboriginal people caused by the colonisation of their land and their subsequent dispossession. Perhaps the most devastating of these consequences has been the widespread denial of their primary medium of communication – their mother tongue or traditional languages. For the Ngarrindjeri people of the Lower Murray, Lakes and Coorong region of South Australia the burden of not allowing our heritage to perish is carried by the people and researchers alike, as we embark upon a revival of languages and cultural practices that place the original people of this country in their rightful place in education and the public environment of Australia. This chapter discusses an important dictionary project for the Ngarrindjeri people that will impact on future generations, and is a labour of love for the writers.

Our research on this project has become a way for young and old to work together on the revival of our linguistic and cultural heritage. The impacts of this work are both personal and uplifting for the authors: Syd Sparrow is a Ngarrindjeri person and lecturer at the University of South Australia (UniSA), and Mary-Anne Gale is an adjunct research fellow at the University of South Australia and a member of the Mobile Language Team at the University of Adelaide. She is a linguist and teacher who grew up on the colonised lands of the Ngarrindjeri people. For both of them there is a very strong personal motivation for the development of the dictionary and deep satisfaction in the way that so many Ngarrindjeri people have become involved in the research.

The Ngarrindjeri Dictionary Project evolved out of a need among teachers and Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) teaching the language in schools for a reliable contemporary dictionary. Although language teachers had access to a number of wordlists, which had been compiled by people working in the school sector, these lists adopted a variety of spelling systems and didn't name the sources of their Ngarrindjeri words.[2] Teachers were confused about which spellings of words they should be using and whether these alternative spellings represented the pronunciation used by Ngarrindjeri Elders today.

Hence, in 2003 the Ngarrindjeri Dictionary Project was born. It strives to record a comprehensive listing of words in the Ngarrindjeri language still known and used by Elders, plus additional words recorded by missionaries, linguists, ethnologists and anthropologists in the past. The thing that makes this project different to past attempts is that it draws together all the written and oral recordings of each Ngarrindjeri word under one entry, so that every representation of that word can be easily compared. This means that alternative spellings and pronunciations are not listed as separate entries and therefore do not confuse. The aim is to make searches for words in the Ngarrindjeri language and their English meanings a relatively painless

2 A couple of dedicated teachers such as Greg Albrecht, working with Paul Kropinyeri, Agnes Rigney, Bessie Rigney, Ashley Couzens and Oscar Abdulla at Glossop, and Dave Roe-Simons working with Connie Love at Murray Bridge High, produced Ngarrindjeri wordlists that greatly assisted students in their high school programs in the 1990s.

and straightforward exercise and, in the process, demystify the Ngarrindjeri spelling system and the way individual Ngarrindjeri words are pronounced.

Early beginnings in schools

In 2002 Mary-Anne was approached by the principal of a primary school in Murray Bridge to write a Ngarrindjeri language curriculum for use in a cluster of local public schools. It soon became apparent, however, that these schools needed much more than a curriculum. There was a very real shortage of quality language teaching and learning resources. Teachers could only look on enviously at other Languages Other Than English programs, which had several choices of quality dictionaries with consistent standardised spelling. So Mary-Anne embarked on producing a comprehensive listing of Ngarrindjeri words to accompany the curriculum.

Initially she began by making tables of words drawing from old missionary sources, and crosschecking them with Elders to see if they used or remembered the words. She utilised the standard Microsoft Word program listing the words alphabetically under categories. These categories were largely based on the topics the schools had decided to cover in the language curriculum, for example birds, animals, body parts, kinship terms, action words, and emotion words. However, as the tables grew and the list reached hundreds of words, it became apparent that by continuing with Word there were limits on what could be done with the wordlist. Word does not allow one to sort items alphabetically, nor does it allow one to sort words by topic. It was soon realised that it was time to transfer the wordlist to a program that is designed to manage large databases.

The University of South Australia's involvement

Up until the end of 2003 the project had been directed at schools, but it would be wrong to say that there was little Ngarrindjeri community involvement. What was striking about the Murray Bridge cluster schools was the determined manner in which they involved the Elders in their Indigenous language and cultural programs.

Being an adjunct staff member of the UniSA Mary-Anne was aware that there were five Ngarrindjeri people on the staff, so she showed several of them the early stages of the draft dictionary. Syd Sparrow took an immediate interest in the project and together we decided to apply for an internal university grant to take the project further. We knew we had to do more community consultations beyond Murray Bridge and Adelaide, and we also knew there was a lot more work to be done on the dictionary if it was to be a comprehensive listing of all the major sources. With more time and funding we felt we could make this dictionary a resource that would benefit the survival and revival of the language within the broader Ngarrindjeri community.

We were successful in gaining a small UniSA grant in November 2003. So under Syd's leadership we embarked on a process of community consultation whereby various focus group meetings were held for those Ngarrindjeri people interested in

the production of a community-owned dictionary. The UniSA funding allowed this consultation process to proceed. In 2004 the members of the UniSA team included Sydney Sparrow (team leader), Howard Sumner, Bevin Wilson, Sharon Gollan, Kizze Rankine and the late Maria Lane. We held focus group meetings in the city (at the UniSA and the Nunkuwarrin Yunti community centre), at Raukkan (formerly Point MacLeay mission), Camp Coorong (near Meningie), at the Lower Murray Nungas Club in Murray Bridge and at Port Ellliot. In 2005 we were successful in gaining another internal university grant to allow the project to expand and the consultation process to continue.

Choosing Filemaker Pro for the dictionary

With funding from the UniSA we were also able to spend time transferring the dictionary to a more suitable database program, which opened up the opportunity to expand the file. Easy-to-use options were limited in 2003. Mary-Anne had heard of the dictionary-making software Shoebox (developed by the Summer Institute of Linguistics and now known as Toolbox),[3] and knew it had been used for dictionaries for Australian languages such as Yolngu Matha in Arnhem Land, but was wary of the possibly unjustified reputation it had developed for not being user-friendly. Contemporary dictionary-making software, such as Miromaa[4] was just not available at that time. Mary-Anne was already familiar with FileMaker Pro and was impressed with its possibilities when she saw what had been done in the neighbouring Narungga language. Because FileMaker Pro seemed to be more user-friendly than Shoebox, we embarked on transferring the Ngarrindjeri wordlist from Word to FileMaker Pro, despite the understanding that schools and the Ngarrindjeri community would have to purchase FileMaker Pro software if they wished to access the electronic version of the dictionary. It was however reasonably inexpensive to buy two sets of licences for the school cluster and for computers at the University for keen team members.

Establishing a template and layout for the dictionary

With the assistance of others more familiar with the potential of FileMaker Pro, Mary-Anne established a template for the dictionary. Each entry was given a full page with the Ngarrindjeri headword being spelt in a standardised form. The orthography and spelling system adopted was that already being used in most Department of Education Aboriginal Studies materials, originally developed by Brian Kirke in collaboration

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3 See www.sil.org/computing/toolbox/. Since the writing of this paper, a core group of Ngarrindjeri people have undertaken training through the TAFE sector, and started working with the Ngarrindjeri dictionary in Toolbox. The software is free off the web, and with their own laptops they now do searches via the Filter function, and have been analysing long Dreaming texts using the Interlinearizing function. In October 2010 we had 3860 Ngarrindjeri lexemes.

4 This was developed as a language database system by the Arwarbukarl Cultural Resource Association specifically for Aboriginal languages.

with the Ngarrindjeri community for a language kit produced in the mid-1980s. It is similar to that used by Steve Johnson with Ngarrindjeri students at Batchelor College around the same time.

The information for each entry included: the head word in Ngarrindjeri, the English meaning or meanings, any dialect variations for that same word (again spelt with the standardised spelling), the written sources of the word (with the exact spellings used by those sources), any oral source (using a code derived from their initials, for example VB = Veronica Brodie), notes on the use of that word or any culturally interesting associations, any synonyms, the date the word entry was made, the origin or etymology of the word, the word class (noun, verb, pronoun, and so forth), plus the search categories for each word by topic (animal, bird, emotion, kin term, and so forth). There have been a couple of versions of the template over the years, particularly to make it compatible with Toolbox for future transfer and printing purposes. Figure 1 shows the latest version of the screen in FileMaker Pro with the single page template used for each word entry:

Figure 1. A single page word entry *nakun* from the Ngarrindjeri dictionary in FileMaker Pro.

Over the years we have changed and improved some aspects of the FileMaker Pro template with the generous help of linguist Nick Thieberger. In the early stages of the dictionary project, schools requested that a field be added to the template which

indicated whether or not the Ngarrindjeri word is known by the Elders. If it was known, an asterisk was added so that it was possible to do a search for them all. In March 2005 there were 2818 Ngarrindjeri word entries in the database, with at least 300 words known by the Elders. Teachers in the schools preferred to use these words in their lessons knowing that they could ask an Elder to assist them with the pronunciation. They also asked for an asterisk to be added to the known words listed in the Ngarrindjeri language curriculum document. In fact initially some of the Ngarrindjeri teachers were very reticent to use any words in their classrooms that were not marked with an asterisk, but, as their confidence grew and the needs of their students expanded (particularly in Years 10 to 12), they realised they were limiting their programs by restricting themselves to only the known words. By 2006 we had compiled a separate booklet, *Ngarrindjeri Picture Dictionary for Older Students*, containing 470 Ngarrindjeri words known by the Elders. All these words have been added to the database.

The electronic dictionary has been set up with several different layouts. In the Full Data layout there is a whole page per entry (Figure 1, above). A second layout is designed for listing multiple entries on the one page (Figure 2, below). This layout offers the opportunity of viewing multiple finds after doing a search and is often used when translating texts or songs in workshops and we are trying to choose which Ngarrindjeri word to use from several alternatives.

Figure 2. A sample search result for English 'see'.

University of Adelaide involvement

Since 2004 the University of Adelaide, which offers courses in linguistics, has been successful in gaining Commonwealth grants to conduct research on various Indigenous languages of South Australia, originally through DCITA (Department of Communications, Technology and the Arts) and later through DEWHA (Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts). Meanwhile 2004 draft editions of the Ngarrindjeri dictionary were being distributed in the community and schools by Syd Sparrow's team from UniSA. Feedback from focus group meetings in the community however was that, although the dictionary project was a much appreciated endeavour, some were finding the printed document indecipherable. This was a response in particular from young men who were not involved in the school language programs, so did not participate in the regular discussions we had on spelling during professional development workshops held in schools. They simply did not know how to read the words unless they were words they already knew, and even then they disagreed with the standardised spelling. Indeed even Syd himself once preferred an English system for spelling Ngarrindjeri words and said to Mary-Anne in the early days of the project, 'I've been spelling *nakan* as 'nukkin' all my life, and I'm not about to change now!' It only took an hour of explaining the inconsistencies of using English spelling for Syd to become a born-again speller!

Such responses triggered Mary-Anne and another Ngarrindjeri colleague Dorothy French (who worked as an AEW in the schools) to apply in 2005 through the University of Adelaide for a grant from DCITA, to produce an alphabet book and picture dictionary containing known words that clearly explained the sound and contemporary spelling system chosen and ratified by the community in 1989. These small booklets are accompanied by a compact disk with recordings of the familiar words. To make the CDs Dorothy and Mary-Anne spent two years consulting and recording Elders, such as Julia Yandell, Totty Rankine and the late Veronica Brodie and Neville Gollan, using Audacity sound editing software.[5] They also had to learn a great deal about PowerPoint, inserting sound files, photography, layout and design, and making books using Publisher. In the meantime the dictionary project continued through the UniSA under Syd Sparrow's leadership as feedback was sought on the draft version circulating in the community. Down the track we knew that each entry needed to be checked, more words had to be added, and the format demanded a rework so that the printed version looked more like a 'proper dictionary'.

The dictionary project enters stage two

Because there was a group of supportive Ngarrindjeri staff working at the David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research within UniSA, and no Aboriginal staff in linguistics at the University of Adelaide, it was decided that any further applications for funding from DCITA to develop further Ngarrindjeri language

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5 See audacity.sourceforge.net/

materials should be made through UniSA. With Syd Sparrow as the project manager we were successful in 2006–07 in gaining another grant to employ Mary-Anne and Dorothy French to write the *Ngarrindjeri Learners' Guide* (2007b). So their efforts in developing the dictionary further were put on hold for 12 months as they wrote an accessible guide to the grammar of the Ngarrindjeri language, drawn in particular from the old grammars written by the missionaries Meyer and Taplin.[6]

In 2007–08 we were successful at the UniSA in receiving further funds, this time from DEWHA, to work on stage two of the dictionary project. Supplemented with the second internal grant received from the UniSA, Syd once again headed up a team to produce the next edition of the dictionary. This project also aimed to produce revised editions of the alphabet book (Gale & French 2009a), picture dictionary (Gale & French 2009b) and accompanying CDs, plus an update on the picture dictionary for older students (Gale & French 2007a) that listed all the Ngarrindjeri words still known by the Elders. We quickly produced the latter booklet and gave copies out at the launch of the learners' guide, so community members could start checking if there were more words they remembered which could be added to the next edition of the bigger dictionary.

The main aim of stage two of the project was to produce a printed edition of the dictionary that looked more professional in its layout and contained a lot more entries from sources we had not had time to include in the earlier draft. We also wanted to improve the template and layout of the electronic version of the dictionary. Unfortunately we underestimated how much more work would be involved in accessing some of the remaining written sources. Toward the end the project became a real labour of love especially for Mary-Anne and one of the Elders, Auntie Eileen McHughes. This was particularly so when incorporating the Ronald and Catherine Berndt materials and the Norman Tindale card files, discussed below. With the improved print layout the entry for the word *nakun* (to see) now appears in the print version of the dictionary as:

> **nakun** *Verb (trans).* **seeing; looking at.** *Variant*: nhakun; nakin. *Written source*: K= nakun; T= nakkin; YA in S= nhakun; M= nakkin; Y= nakun 'is looking, seeing' *Etym*: From nak- 'see' + -un 'present tense suffix'. [*Note*: This is a well known word. The present tense form of the verb 'seeing' can be pronounced and spelt as 'nakun, nhakun or nakin'. The future tense form is spelt 'nakan' and means 'see you later', see separate entry] [*Oral source*: VB= nakun 'seeing' EM= nakun 'seeing' JY= nakun 'seeing' NG= nakun 'seeing' TR= nakun 'seeing' MS= nakun 'looking for' (eg. swan eggs)].

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6 This guide was launched amongst much community celebration at Raukkan in May 2008. Members of the community commented on how good it felt to be returning to that lovely little old church to commemorate the coming-back-to-life of the Ngarrindjeri language, rather than coming back to mourn the death of yet another community member.

The sources

As mentioned already a key source of words for the contemporary Ngarrindjeri dictionary was the Elders, as Ngarrindjeri was a language that never went to sleep, unlike the neighbouring Kaurna language of the Adelaide Plains. Even though the grammar of the language has been lost from everyday speech, at least 470 words still remain which we have managed to record from the Elders over a period of years. But the main source of words for the dictionary, numerically, has undeniably been the old written sources that were recorded by various researchers over a period of 170 years. In the database these words are listed in the written sources field using the exact spelling of the original, particularly if it contrasts with the contemporary standardised spelling used for the headword. This makes it clear in the dictionary that the many alternative spellings listed from the different recorders are not different words, but are just spelling variations or alternate dialect pronunciations.

The first list of Ngarrindjeri words to be systematically entered into the database was in fact the first comprehensive list of Ngarrindjeri words ever recorded. These were collected in the early 1840s by Heinrich A. E. Meyer, a German missionary to the Aboriginal people of the Encounter Bay region. Meyer worked with people such as Encounter Bay Bob who spoke the Ramindjeri (or Raminyeri) dialect of the Ngarrindjeri language. Meyer published his wordlist of about 1750 words (from Raminyeri to English) in 1843. His words are listed with the code M in the database. Meyer also provided many sample sentences demonstrating the contextualised use of words, plus a remarkably insightful grammar which was invaluable in writing the learners' guide 165 years later.

In 1859, 16 years after Meyer's publication, George Taplin established the Point McLeay mission on Lake Alexandrina[7] and one of the first tasks he undertook was to reverse Meyer's wordlist from English to Ramindjeri. Twenty years later, having worked with people who spoke different dialects of Ngarrindjeri, including Yaraldi and Portawalun, such as James Unaipon (the father of David Unaipon), Taplin published this list with additional words from Point McLeay, resulting in 1668 English entries (Taplin 1879). Taplin's wordlist, listed with the code T, was the next to be included in the electronic dictionary.

Following Taplin's list, more recent written sources were added including the words provided by the Elder, the late Rhonda Agius (n.d.) who had built up a collection of worksheets and booklets through her teaching of the Ngarrindjeri language at Mansfield Park Primary school in Adelaide over a period of ten years. Again Rhonda's spelling was retained and listed with the code RA.

Another important and more contemporary wordlist entered into the dictionary was that compiled by the late Steve Johnson, mentioned earlier, who taught linguistics at the School of Australian Linguistics at Batchelor College in the 1980s. He compiled

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7 This community is now known as Raukkan and is considered the homeland of the Ngarrindjeri people.

two wordlists of Ngarrindjeri, the first being a printed list produced with the assistance of three different groups of adult Ngarrindjeri students who studied with him from 1985 to 1986, including people who are now key Elders working on the contemporary dictionary, such as Auntie Eileen McHughes. Steve later compiled an electronic wordlist, which is now available from the Aboriginal Studies Electronic Data Archive (ASEDA) held at the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Canberra. Unlike the first, this second wordlist included a number of written sources along with a code that identified each of Steve's various sources.

Unravelling Steve's code has been a challenging exercise for all those working on the dictionary for the past five years, but we think we have now finally cracked it. Steve used the initials of the people he taught at Batchelor for his oral sources including Kevin Kropinyeri (KK), Lorraine Kartinyeri (LK), Eileen McHughes (EM) and Totty (Harriet) Rankine (TR),[8] but the codes used for his written sources are less straightforward. Two major sources, YA and SA were a complete mystery for quite some time. Eventually we established that YA stands for Yaraldi, the dialect spoken by James Brooksie Kartinyeri and other sources whose recordings were transcribed by Maryalyce McDonald during her mid-1970s research on Ngarrindjeri phonetics, and accessed by Steve (see McDonald 2001).[9] We then noticed that the many SA entries were fairly commonly known words, so assume it stands for the words that were collectively known by the group from South Australia who worked with him. Other codes were less common, but were equally hard to crack.

We eventually noticed that YH, YM, NH and EW only provided bird names so, when a colleague alerted us to a couple of issues of the *South Australian Ornithologist* which listed different bird names from Aboriginal languages, Mary-Anne did an immediate cross-check to excitedly find that the ornithologist H. T. Condon (1955) was Steve Johnson's source. Hence YH stands for Yaraldi bird words from A. Harvey (1943), YM stands for Yaraldi words collected by the Protector M. Moorhouse (1846), NH stands for Narrinyeri words collected by A. W. Howitt (1904), and EW stands for W. Wyatt who collected words from Encounter Bay (1879). All entries from Steve Johnson's wordlist are included in the dictionary under written sources with the coded initials he used, for example KK in S means Kevin Kropinyeri in Steve Johnson.

Yet another important source for our dictionary was the 1975 publication by the linguist Colin Yallop who, like McDonald, drew from the recordings made in the 1960s

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8 Others to attend courses at Batchelor in either 1985 or 1986 included Mary Ellul (née Smith), Sylvia (Nordy) Rigney, Stella Campbell, Vicki Kropinyeri (Hartman), Bernice Karpany, Heather Aspel (née Smith), Dennis Aspel (Jnr), Patty Kropinyeri, Richard Kropinyeri, Sharon Gollan, Myo Doug Milera, Flossy Rigney, George (Muddy) McHughes, Les Talbot, Sharon Gollan (née Webster), Greg (Rauli) Rankine, Shirley Gollan, Aileen Talbot, Gail Multa, Glenys Multa, Ellen Williams, Janice Rigney, Wayne Rigney, Richard Goldsmith, Phyllis Williams, Doris Synett, Jean Smith and Lawrence Ellul.

9 We assume Steve Johnson worked from McDonald's 1977 thesis rather than from the original tapes recorded by Luise Hercus, Catherine Ellis and Elaine Treagus in the mid-1960s.

of James Brooksie Kartinyeri. Yallop's work compares the grammatical structures used by Taplin in his translation of the New Testament with the Kartinyeri phrases recorded by Catherine Ellis and Luise Hercus. Yallop provides a list of Kartinyeri's words in the back of his study, and it is these words that have been included in the contemporary dictionary under the code Y.

Some entries have also been entered directly from the body of Maryalyce McDonald's 1977 thesis but to list all entries in her appendix would be duplicating Steve Johnson's or Yallop's lists. In addition to James Kartinyeri's words McDonald includes words recorded by Elaine Treagus in Adelaide in 1964–65 from people such as Mike Gollan, David Unaipon, Rebecca Wilson (the late Veronica Brodie's mother), Walter McHughes, Alison Lovegrove, Mrs S. Harrison, M. Karpany and Mrs Anne Rankin (sic) (McDonald 2001, pp. 24–25).

In the 1980s the linguist Brian Kirke from the South Australian College of Advanced Education worked with the Ngarrindjeri people Marj Koolmatrie, Mark Koolmatrie, Marlene Stewart and Jillian Sumner to produce a language kit, mentioned earlier, called *Ngarrindjeri Yanun* (Speaking Ngarrindjeri). This kit included resources such as word cards and a booklet of comic strips and narrative texts. All the words in the kit are included in our dictionary under the code K.

In 1993 the long-awaited book by Ronald and Catherine Berndt was published, entitled *A World That Was: The Yaraldi of the Murray River and the Lakes, South Australia.* It includes prolific texts in Ngarrindjeri of Dreaming narratives and ethnographic accounts collected by the Berndts in Murray Bridge between 1939 and 1942. They worked with Yaraldi speakers, particularly Albert Karloan, Pinkie Mack and Mark Wilson. This book contains a huge amount of remembered information about traditional cultural and social practices, the various plants, birds, fish and animal totems, placenames and clan names. Attempts have been made to include many of the words and associated information from this major resource in the dictionary, at the insistence of Auntie Eileen McHughes. Anyone who has been involved in compiling a dictionary will know that it is an enormous and very tedious job, and can be very exhausting when time and money is limited. But with Auntie Eileen's encouragement and tireless help Mary-Anne completed the task of including a very large portion of the words from the main body of Berndt and Berndt (1993). It must be said that there is quite a bit of information in this book of a sexual nature which Auntie Eileen decided to censor, as the final dictionary is to be used as a resource in schools. Such decisions could only be made by an Elder. We still haven't included material from the huge appendices as this is largely text-based material and needs much further analysis.[10]

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10 Linguist, Barry Alpher (2001) produced an electronic wordlist on Word that includes much of the Berndt material, including the appendices. He also includes the Maryalyce McDonald wordlist plus Meyer's and Johnson's wordlists. However Alpher's list does not conflate the multiple entries of the same words under the one head word, nor are the compound and

One major set of entries added during stage two of the dictionary project was words from the card files compiled by Norman Tindale, now held in the archives of the South Australian Museum. The Tindale collection (SA Museum reference AA338/7/1) has an enormous number of card files with four sets relating to Ngarrindjeri, filed under four different dialect names: Jaraldekald,[11] Ramindjeri, Potaruwutj and Tangane. This project has only attempted to include the words from the Tangane (or Tangani, AA338/7/1/23) collection, mainly because no other Ngarrindjeri wordlists have included this southernmost dialect of the Ngarrindjeri language. These words were given to Tindale by Clarence Long (also known as Milerum) who worked closely with Tindale over a long period of time until Milerum's death in 1941. Milerum's knowledge added 530 new words to our database which were not known by any other sources, including words for some extinct mammals such as *maikari* (eastern hare wallaby, *Lagorchestes leporides*), *rtulatji* (toolache wallaby, *Macropus greyi*) and *wi:kwai* (pig-footed bandicoot, *Chaeropus ecaudatus*). Again any information in these card files that looked remotely unsuitable for the dictionary was censored. All Milerum's words are listed with the code Tn in the dictionary.[12]

If time and money permitted it would have been insightful to go through Tindale's other Ngarrindjeri dialect card files. However the Jaraldekald cards were based on Taplin's (1879) wordlist and crosschecked with the Yaraldi man Albert Karloan (the Berndt's main informant). The Ramindjeri files were repeats of Meyer's wordlist, but with Tindale's spelling. The Potaruwutj cards were largely compiled with Milerum 'as from his mother', but Tindale has a note on one card saying he will later incorporate these cards into his Jaraldekald file. It should be noted that Tindale was a fluent speaker of Japanese, which seems to have influenced the way he heard Ngarrindjeri words pronounced by his informants. Ngarrindjeri has some very unusual consonant clusters compared to other Aboriginal languages, with words like *tloperi* (ibis), *throkeri* (seagull) and *pargi* (wallaby). But Tindale tended to insert vowels where they didn't belong, hence lists these same words as *tolopori, torokori* and *paragi* respectively. He also missed most interdental sounds, represented by th, dh, nh and lh, which is particularly problematic for Ngarrindjeri, as they are used prolifically (note Tindale's use of the regular /t/ sound in *torokori*).

One final written source to be added to the dictionary was the list recorded by the medical doctor and Aborigines Protector, William Wyatt, provided by Encounter Bay Bob between 1837 and 1839 but not published until 1879. Wyatt actually collected these words prior to missionary Meyer's arrival, but most are Kaurna words. Effort

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inflected words from the Berndt appendix analysed into their component parts. Alpher himself used the two electronic wordlists from ASEDA.

11 Today this clan name is spelt Yaraldi, as Tindale used the letter j for the /y/ sound. Note {-*kald*} means 'tongue language'.

12 There are well over a thousand words listed from the Tindale source in the dictionary, with half likely cognate with those from other sources.

was made to distinguish the two with the help of linguist Rob Amery, so that just the Ramindjeri words were included in our dictionary. The code used for Wyatt's collection is W, and we have retained Wyatt's very anglicised spelling.

At the eleventh hour a further list of 70 words came to light that were collected from Billy Koo.e.cum.mung in 1845 by the government protector in Victoria, George Robinson. Billy was apprehended by police in Victoria but heralded from Lake Alexandrina in SA. His words appear as K in R in the dictionary.

Conclusion

When Mary-Anne first sat down with the late Doug Wilson and his sister Veronica Brodie back in May 2003 compiling that first list of Ngarrindjeri words for schools, she had no idea it would lead to a contemporary dictionary of nearly 3700 entries six years later. With Mary-Anne and Syd teaming up at UniSA the dictionary project became real community research in action. The way the Ngarrindjeri community of all ages have actively involved themselves has been an inspiration the likes of which has seldom been felt by the authors of this chapter. We have been privileged in this project because we have witnessed the best of both worlds, the best of how universities can engage Aboriginal people, and Aboriginal people displaying their pride at the best our culture provides.

The great thing about our dictionary is the way young Ngarrindjeri have received it and how they have participated in its development. This is absolutely vital for the future, as they will be handed the legacy of keeping the language going in much the same way that Syd was given this responsibility by his Elders. There is cause for great optimism that our young people will take the Ngarrindjeri language to places it has never been before. The long-term goal must now be for the language, in some form, to be spoken fluently and this will come from the continued use of language and the entrenchment of linguistic study within the education system. Some of this is happening already in schools and now in the Technical and Further Education sector (Gale with Mickan 2008). More needs to be done at other levels of education and this is another of our long-term goals.

Just as the Ngarrindjeri word *molotulun* explains how the waves of Lake Alexandrina ebb and flow, so has the Ngarrindjeri language ebbed and flowed. We trust the fresh waters of the threatened lake will never dry out and hopefully the Ngarrindjeri language will never cease to be spoken. The *Ngarrindjeri Dictionary* was launched to great celebration in the newly renovated church at Raukkan in October 2009, 150 years after the establishment of the mission on the lake's shores. This dictionary will help ensure that more people will continue to speak some form of the language in the future. The Ngarrindjeri language has come home and we are honoured to have been a part of bringing it back!

Figure 3. The Ngarrindjeri Language Choir singing hymns in Ngarrindjeri at the launch.

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