

OCTOBER 2014

Ngalia Foundation

## Wangka: Goldfields Aboriginal Languages



Tjupan speaker Edna Schegi flanked by Lorna and Edie Yulich work on the Tjupan language recordings. Oct 2014

### Work on the language recordings 2013-14

Hello to everyone involved in and supporting the Aboriginal language preservation work of the Goldfields, WA region. The language project has run very successfully for three years now. 2014-15 sees us in the second year of a three year funding grant.

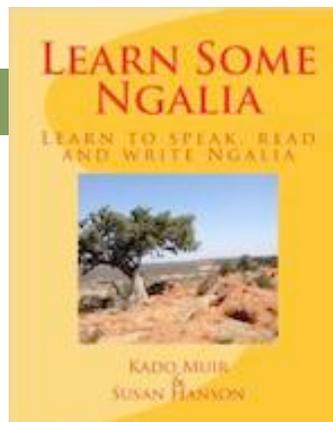
The work has gone very well with a draft dictionary now in production for each of the 6 languages. This year we are focusing on expanding each dictionary and writing sketch grammars for two of the languages.

#### Book Production!!

##### Learn Some Ngalia Book

The first book produced for sale by the project is 'Learn Some Ngalia' which is available via Amazon.

<http://www.amazon.com/Learn-Some-Ngalia-learn-speak/dp/1497471311>



### Welcome to our second newsletter

The Goldfields language project commenced in 2011 on the recording, transcription, analysis, databasing and documentation of the critically endangered languages of the Goldfields region of WA. The languages studied so far are Tjupan, Ngalia, Ngadju, Kuwarra, Kaalamaya and Cundeleele Wangka.

The work has been undertaken through the Ngalia Foundation under the auspices of the National Trust of Australia (WA). Many thanks are due to the National Trust for their continued support of this important work.

Funding for this work is received from the Commonwealth Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport under the Indigenous Languages Support program.

Kado Muir at the Ngaju planning workshop July 2014





## Recent Activities

### Ngaju Language Planning Workshop

On Thursday 31st July 2014 a meeting was held between Ngaju people and the Goldfields Language Project in order to develop the first Ngaju language preservation action Plan. This plan has been called Ngaju Ngarri Junu 'All the Ngaju Talk'.

The Ngaju Ngarri Junu aims to record 200 hours of natural speech within 2 years and develop a dictionary and sketch grammar.

Kado Muir and linguist Sue Hanson are very excited by this plan and the upcoming Ngaju language preservation work.



### Yale Linguistic Student works with Tjupan People

The work on the recording, preservation and use of the Goldfields languages has attracted international attention. In July 2014, linguistic student, Andy Zhang from Yale University in the USA came to learn about linguistic field work from linguist Sue Hanson. Andy spent a month in Kalgoorlie working on the Tjupan language and learning how to do field work in Australia.

The visit was very successful and was a wonderful cultural exchange between Andy and the Tjupan folk. Much work was done on the Tjupan language and this will be used to make improvements to the Tjupan sketch grammar document.



### Ngalia Language Learning Resources

A great deal of work was undertaken into the development of a tool kit for schools and other groups who wish to learn the Ngalia language.

Work has almost been completed on the kit which will be available for purchase. The kit includes 20 stories told by speakers along with all the teaching resources needed to achieve basic proficiency in the language. Watch the Wangka website for the kits release!

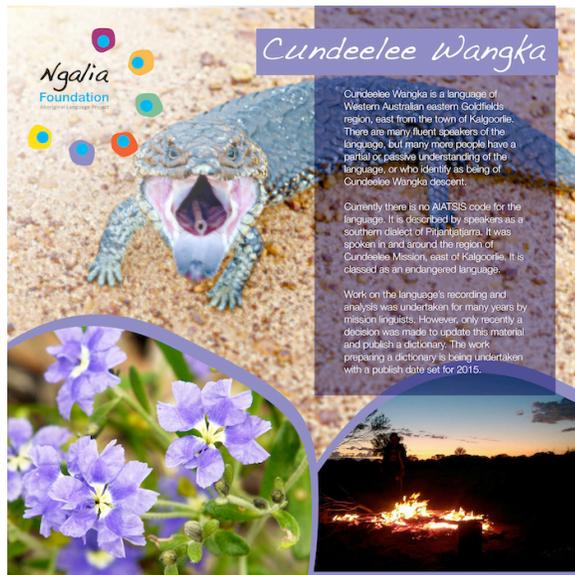


### Recording Kaalamaya Pipeline Stories

Kaalamaya speaking Elder, Brian Champion, spent some time recording stories about the Mundaring to Kalgoorlie water pipeline and his own and family's experiences with it. The material has been recorded as part of a study about the Kaprun people's experiences of the pipeline's installation around 100 years ago. Sue Hanson will soon complete a report about the pipeline and the Aboriginal story. This report and the stories will be used to find funds for an archeological and anthropological study of the Aboriginal experience with the pipeline which was often unpleasant, at the least, and deadly in the worst cases.



# The Goldfields Languages under Study



**Cundeelee Wangka**

Cundeelee Wangka is a language of Western Australian eastern Goldfields region, east from the town of Kalgoorlie. There are many fluent speakers of the language, but many more people have a partial or passive understanding of the language, or who identify as being of Cundeelee Wangka descent.

Currently there is no AIATSIS code for the language. It is described by speakers as a southern dialect of Pitjantjatjara. It was spoken in and around the region of Cundeelee Mission, east of Kalgoorlie. It is classed as an endangered language.

Work on the language's recording and analysis was undertaken for many years by mission linguists. However, only recently a decision was made to update this material and publish a dictionary. The work preparing a dictionary is being undertaken with a publish date set for 2015.

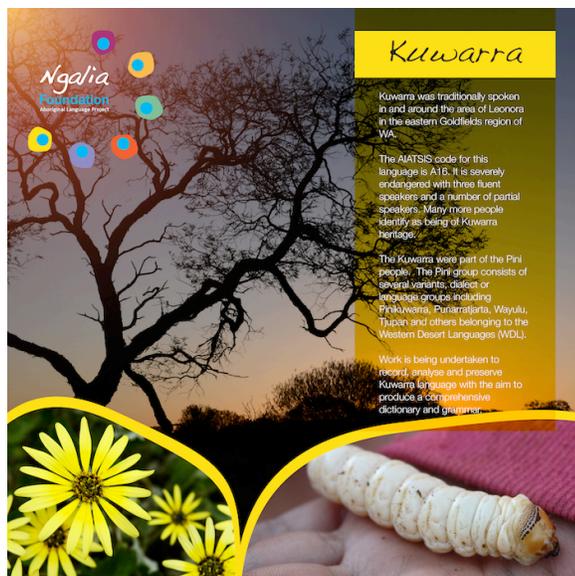


**Kaalamaya**

Kaalamaya language is spoken by the Kalpurn people and traditionally was located roughly between the towns of Southern Cross and Coolgardie in the western Goldfields region of WA.

The AIATSIS code for this language is AA. It is severely endangered. Efforts are being made to record as much of the language as possible and identify written historical documents recording the language.

Currently, there is one fluent Kaalamaya speaker and a number of partial speakers. Many more people identify as being of Kalpurn heritage.



**Kuwarra**

Kuwarra was traditionally spoken in and around the area of Leonora in the eastern Goldfields region of WA.

The AIATSIS code for this language is A1B. It is severely endangered with three fluent speakers and a number of partial speakers. Many more people identify as being of Kuwarra heritage.

The Kuwarra were part of the Pini people. The Pini group consists of several vernacular dialects or language groups including Pini/Kuwarra, Pinaratjarta, Wayutu, Tjupen and others belonging to the Western Desert Languages (WDL).

Work is being undertaken to record, analyse and preserve Kuwarra language with the aim to produce a comprehensive dictionary and grammar.



**Ngalia**

Ngalia language was traditionally spoken in the northern Goldfields region roughly between Cosmo Newberry, Leonora and towards Wiluna. Ngalia people are referred to as Pirrangkata people; people of the gravelly plains.

The AIATSIS code for this language is C2. It is severely endangered with two to three fluent speakers and a number of partial speakers. A greater number of people identify as being of Ngalia heritage.

Work is being undertaken to preserve the language through data basing of the lexicon, development of grammar documents and teaching resources.

## School Language Programs

The Goldfields Language Project supports the development of school Aboriginal language programs.

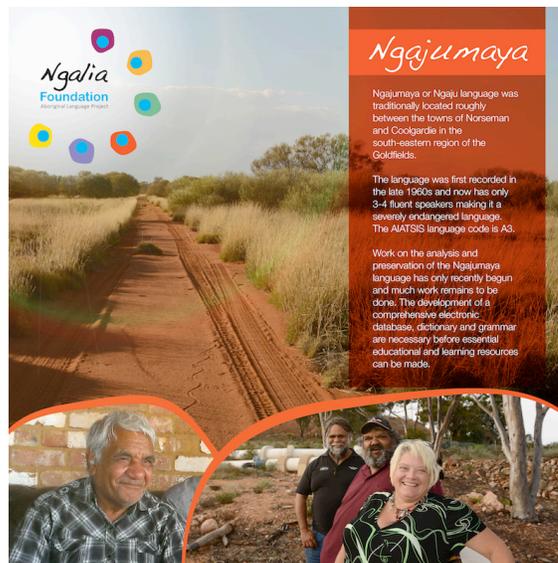
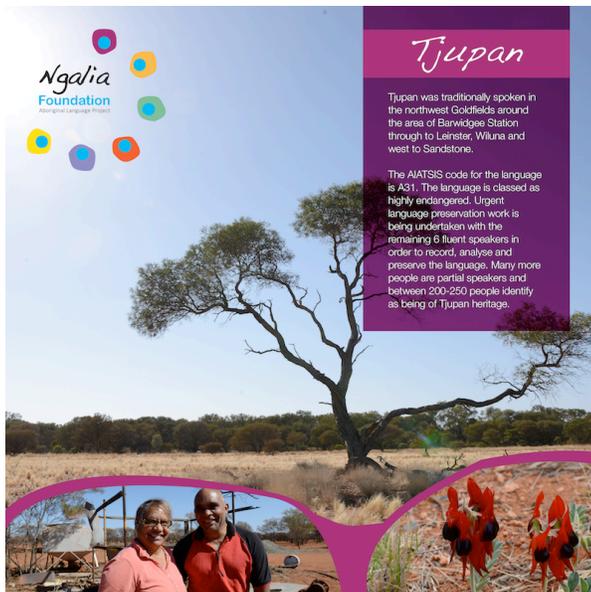
The language project has commenced language lessons in Leonora District High School. Each class receives one hour a week's lesson with speaker, Sandra Evans.

Well done, Sandra and great to hear kids talking language around town!

Commonwealth Funding for the 2013-16 period has enabled Ngalia Foundation to make a long-term commitment to the school's LOTE program.

Work on this exciting development is also supported financially by the National Trust (WA).

Watch this newsletter for updates on the program's development!



## Photojournalist Kris Dreessen

The Goldfields Languages Project was very fortunate to have a US photojournalist visit for 7 weeks over Aug, Sept and Oct 2014. Kris Dreessen volunteered to assist in recording and photographing the project to spread the word about the critical language preservation work.

Kris went on a field trip with the Tjupan and Ngalia people and linguist Sue Hanson to create a database of photos and stories to be used to inform people about the project and promote use of the Aboriginal languages.

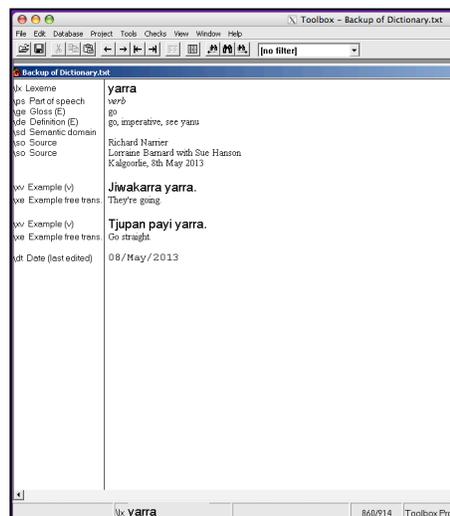


Kado Muir, Les Schultz and Kris at the Mt Charlotte end of the pipeline Aug 2014, Kalgoorlie

## Language Electronic Databases

Specialist linguistic databases have been set up for Ngalia, Tjupan, Kuwarra and Cundeelee Wangka to date. These databases allow linguists to work with all the words in the language and record analysis material.

Databases for Kaalamaya and Ngaju will be developed during 2014-15



Example of Tjupan Toolbox database entry

## Background to the Language Project

Preliminary linguistic analysis work in the Goldfields was undertaken in 2008 with speakers of several of the varieties of the Western Desert Languages (WDL) from this area, as well as with speakers of Ngadju (spoken in the southeast Goldfields). This preliminary investigation indicated that a great deal of work needed to be carried out immediately in order to record, analyse and preserve the highly endangered Aboriginal languages of the Goldfield's area.

The WDL language varieties, and the Goldfields in particular, have seen very little documentation despite the upsurge in such work across Australia over the last two decades. The language work in the Goldfields included a thorough search for existing language material to enable recovery to be undertaken.

The linguistic work will develop an understanding of the variety of Western Desert Languages (WDL) of the region. This will be undertaken through the collection and analysis of data on these languages and will develop a better understanding of the status of these languages and the need for further documentation and revival work.

The work is being done in response to requests by language speakers for critical recording work to be undertaken on their languages.

The last two years of work has seen databases for each of the six languages developed and the production of draft dictionaries for three languages.

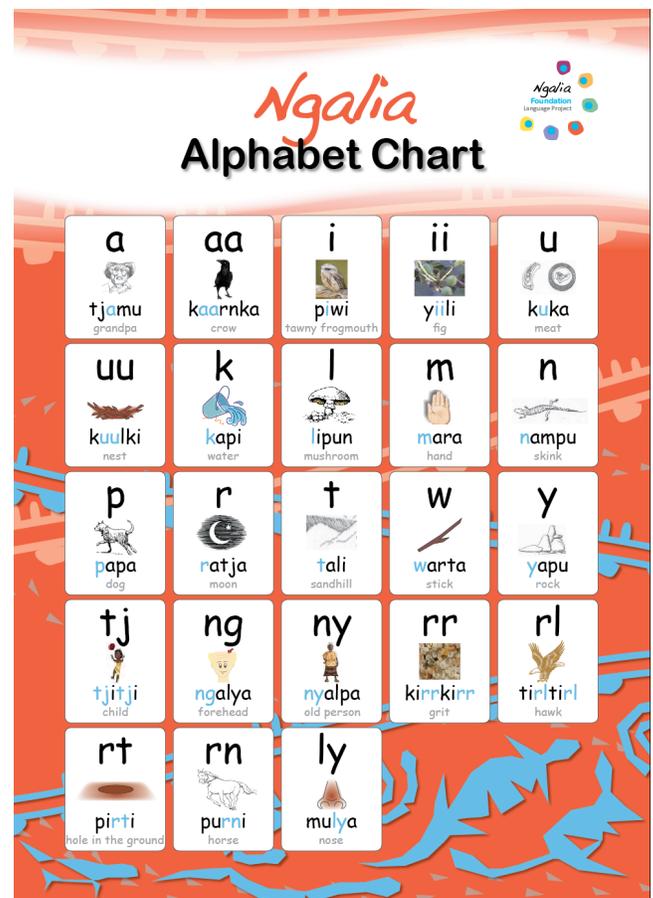
The Commonwealth funding body has been very pleased with the outcomes achieved to date and consequently awarded a further 3 years funding to the project.

Kado Muir Chairperson of the Ngalia Foundation says, 'We are very excited to have the third round of investment from the Federal government. We worked hard over the 2011-13 period and the outcomes have proven the immediate need for further linguistic work in this region. Over the course of this year, we will be approaching universities and other funding agencies to attract more resources into this much neglected language community.'

Part of the strategy for the project is to create academic interest in the languages of the region in order to attract linguists interested in writing comprehensive grammars for each of the languages.

To properly record, transcribe, analyse and database a language takes many years work. The development of language documentation such as dictionaries and grammars takes several more years of work. Attracting linguistic PhD students to the project will fast-track the work on the preservation of the languages and the production of these documents.

The Ngalia Foundation, auspiced under the National Trust of Australia (WA), was concerned about the lack of this linguistic work being done in the Goldfields and applied for Commonwealth funds to ensure the work would get done.



# Language Project in the News...

**Kalgoorlie Miner**  
Established 1895

1110 • 1071 • Wednesday, July 23, 2014 • A West Australian Newspapers publication

**Tom apart**  
Generosity shines after family home burns to ground  
PAGES 7-13

**Business**  
Your midweek Goldfields guide  
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**Torque**  
Impressive machines road tested  
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**Yale gives language lifeline**

University linguistics undergraduate Andy Zhang with Keith Scogh, Loraine Barnard, Nicola Ulrich, and Edna Scogh. Picture: Mary Mills

**Dulany**  
University linguistics undergraduate Andy Zhang has flown to the Goldfields region to help save the Aboriginal language of Tjuppan. Zhang will work with five students in the department to record the language, which has only six speakers left in the world.

Mr Zhang's month-long visit to the region, fully funded by the university, will be an opportunity to fill in the "holes" in this sketch through workshops and conversations with Tjuppan speakers.

Ms Hanson hopes this work will also lead to the completion of a full descriptive grammar, a five-year process which is one of the final steps in the preservation of a language.

This would document not only Tjuppan's grammar, but sociolinguistic variation like body language and facial expressions. It would be the first such document for any Goldfields language.

"As you can imagine, that takes a lot of work," Ms Hanson said. "Basically one person has to devote themselves to it."

Before this occurs, Mr Zhang will have to undertake his work in the field, which begins this week.

"For us students it is a really great opportunity to exercise the skills we've learnt in our mixed-level linguistics classes in a real, living language that is also highly endangered," he said.

Ngala, Foundation chairman Kate Muir said the organisation, which supports the Goldfields Language Program wants to record the language before it is lost.

"The primary motivation is to make sure the language is recorded and protected and maintained," he said.

"What's really good here is all the older speakers, by actually sitting down and having the opportunity to think, are starting to remember certain words."

Many of Australia's remaining Aboriginal languages are endangered or in decline.

Ms Hanson is working to preserve six Goldfields languages on an annual budget of \$30,000.

She said the interest in Australia from a prestigious American university highlighted the lack of domestic support for Aboriginal language preservation projects.

"It's a crazy situation. In America they recognise how endangered the language is and send someone over, and yet the Australian Government isn't offering funding for any of our students to do so," she said.

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/wa/Ngalia>

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22 July, 2014 1:18PM AWST

**Yale Linguistics Department helping to save a Northern Goldfields language**

By Rebecca Brewin (Multiplatform Reporter)

**Tjuppan is a language of which there are only six native speakers left in the world. A Perth linguist has enlisted the help of a Yale University student to help preserve it.**

Yale linguistics student Andy Zhang and linguist Sue Hanson have arrived in the Goldfields to help save the Aboriginal language of Tjuppan, which has its origins in the far northern Goldfields near Wiluna.

**Related Photos**

Earlier this year a group of students in the Yale Linguistics Department partnered up with Susan Hanson here in Australia to work on preserving an endangered language called Tjuppan." Andy said.

"So after working throughout the year on a Sketch Grammar, which is a very general overview of a language, I decided to come here to work on some questions that have arisen from the Sketch Grammar.

"In the next month I'll be working with speakers every day with elicitation sessions in the morning, which are session

Linguist Sue Hanson, community leader and anthropologist Kado Muir and Yale Linguistics Student Andy Zhang (Rebecca Brewin - ABC Goldfields)

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## Linguists record endangered Indigenous Goldfields language Tjuppan in bid to save it

By Rebecca Curtin  
Updated yesterday at 4:16pm

**A linguist from Yale University is recording an endangered Indigenous language in Western Australia's Goldfields region in attempt to stop it from dying out.**

There are only six fluent speakers of Tjuppan, a complex language which originated in the northern Goldfields near Wiluna.

Yale linguistics student Andy Zhang has been making recordings of the language during the past month to take back to the United States, where students will develop resources such as a dictionary, grammar sketch and pronunciation guide.

"These are the true Australian languages - English is an imported language," he said.

"That's why it's so important to step in and help the speakers record their language, perhaps create educational materials, whatever the community wants out of the language."

Mr Zhang said the number of Indigenous Australian languages spoken has dwindled to 20, down from an estimated 600 a few centuries.

Edie Ulrich, a Tjuppan woman, says the language holds a lot of cultural significance for her and the Tjuppan people.

"I know that our language is one of the few that's spoken by us, just a few people and it's been really exciting having Andy come and work with us," she said.

"We lose it if we don't try and preserve it.

"It's good for our kids and that to learn to speak it as well."

Ms Ulrich said some of her fondest memories were of her mum, Edna Scogh, telling her traditional stories in Tjuppan.

"Mum would sit there and tell us stories, she's done this all through our lives, like she's spoken in Tjuppan and telling us all the stories," she said.

"Just learning those words and just picturing everything that's happening as she's telling us the stories, it brings everything alive."

Mr Zhang has spent four weeks working with the speakers each day, trying to record as much material as possible.

"A lot of people, because they haven't delved deep enough into these languages, they think they're very simple," he said.

"But Tjuppan has much more complex verbs and kind of special language - so language describing direction and location - than we do in English."

Ms Ulrich said the linguistic work had been intellectually challenging.

"At first it was nice and easy, you know think of words and stuff," she said.



PHOTO: Edna Scogh is one of only six speakers of Tjuppan. (ABC News)  
MAP: Kalgoorlie 6430

Tjuppan has much more complex verbs and kind of special language - so language describing direction and location - than we do in English.

Yale University linguistics student Andy Zhang

## Work begins to document languages

**Michael Phillips**

A group of linguists and community members are working together to document the Tjuppan language. The group includes linguist Sue Hanson, community leader and anthropologist Kado Muir, and Yale linguistics student Andy Zhang.

The work involves recording the language and creating educational materials. The group is currently working on a sketch grammar, which is a general overview of the language.

The linguists are also working on a dictionary and a pronunciation guide. The work is being done in the Goldfields region, near Wiluna.

The linguists are working with the community to record the language. They are also working on creating educational materials for the community.

The work is being done in the Goldfields region, near Wiluna. The linguists are working with the community to record the language and create educational materials.

Kado Muir and Les Scogh accompany photographer Kade Eisen along the Goldfields pipeline. PHOTO: Sue Hanson

She said the work is not just about recording the language, but also about creating educational materials for the community. The linguists are working with the community to record the language and create educational materials.

The linguists are working with the community to record the language and create educational materials. The work is being done in the Goldfields region, near Wiluna.

# Goldfields Languages Family Tree

Aboriginal languages of Australia are of two types, Pama Nyungan (PN) and non-Pama Nyungan (NPN). The NPN type languages are spread across the top of the Kimberley and Northern Territory and the PM languages are spread across the rest of Australia. These types of languages are quite different from each other.

The languages of the Goldfields are of the PN type. We have been studying these languages to determine which family of languages they belong to in order to make a language family tree.

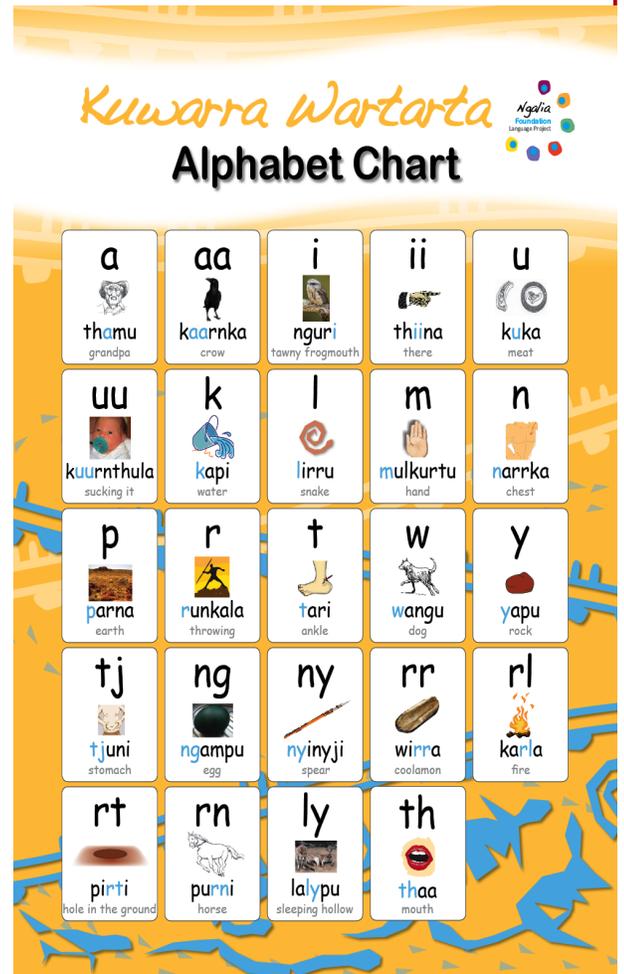
Below is a diagram of the language family tree for the region, as of June 2014. This language family tree may change as further work is done on the analysis of the languages.

The **Wati** group of languages are all varieties of the Western Desert Language (WDL) and they may be distinct languages or dialects of each other. This has yet to be proved or disproved.

Cundeelee Wangka is the name given to the variety of language that developed at Cundeelee Mission and which may be an Indigenous creole developed from four dialects of the Western Desert Language.

## Goldfields Languages Family Tree 2013

<b>Wati</b>	Western Desert Languages (WDL) Kuwarra Mankulatjarra Tjalkatjarra Tjupan Wangkatja Cundeelee Wangka Ngalia
<b>Ngaju-Mirning</b>	Ngaju/Ngajumaya Mirning Kalaaku Kalamaya
<b>Nyungar/Noongar</b>	Nyakinyaki Wudjaarri



# Using Your Language

Everyone can help to pass on languages to the next generation. Use them at home, even if just a few words here and there. Support school language programmes or encourage your school to start a language programme. Listen to Elders telling stories in language and learn the story. Encourage traditional names to be used on signs and public notices. Support the Goldfields language project's work and buy a copy of the dictionaries when they become available, for use at home.



Australian Government  
Indigenous Languages Support

## Contact

[www.wangka.org.au](http://www.wangka.org.au)

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<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Wangka/>

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Linguist Sue Hanson with Kado Muir and Les Schultz



Gino preparing the camp fire during a linguistic field trip September 2014



*Wangka kanyira ngalipirniku*  
PRESERVING OUR LANGUAGES FOR ALL OF US