

## Aboriginal Language of the Lake Darlot Area in 1895: Mason word list June 2015

### Background

A 'Native Vocabulary' written in 1895 by Arthur Mason in the Lake Darlot locality lists 104 words and phrases. This list of words appears to be the earliest written recording of Aboriginal language of the region.

The list is very consistent in spelling and the words are easily recognizable.

The list was compared to the words and phrases spoken by current day Kuwarra speakers, who have affiliation with the Lake Darlot region, in order to attempt to identify the language group that Mason had consulted.

### Results

Of the 104 items on the list:

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1. 67 items correspond directly with present day Kuwarra words and phrases  | 64% |
| 2. 24 items were recognised by Kuwarra speakers and used interchangeably with items considered to be current Kuwarra or were glossed incorrectly but recognisable | 23% |
| 3. 6 items on the list are unreadable   | 6%  |
| 4. 7 items are not recognized by current day Kuwarra speakers   | 7%  |

Of the 24 words used interchangeably by Kuwarra speakers, 5 had a single phonemic difference with Kuwarra words. This may indicate that the words was transcribed incorrectly, that the word had undergone phonemic change since 1895 or was, indeed, from another language but of the same language family.

Of the 24 words used interchangeably, 3 words appeared to be incorrectly glossed such as 'gnarlgoo' which was glossed as 'food' but is more likely to be *ngalku* 'eating'.

### Conclusion

Of the 104 items on the list, present day Kuwarra speakers identify 64% as being present in the Kuwarra language and 23% as being used interchangeably with Kuwarra words. Therefore a total of 87% of the items are identified as being in the modern Kuwarra lexicon.

It must be noted that a large number of the items are used by the Wati family of languages, which included Kuwarra, and are considered generic to Western Desert Languages (WDL).

The high level of correspondence with current day Kuwarra suggests that the speakers Mason recorded the list with were most probably Kuwarra or linguistically very closely linked to the Kuwarra speakers.

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NATIVE VOCABULARY.

LAKE DANIEL LOCALITY.  
(By Arthur Mason, 1895.)

Sealla	Forehead	Wangoo	Diago.
Karta	Hair	Mortano	Dog.
Iurat	Ear	Tarbella	Tommyhawk.
Woola	Nose	Bundi	Good.
Era	Mouth	Woody	Too savage; no good.
Yaurak	Teeth	Coelga Thunda	I don't understand.
Wooling	Tongue	Waldy	No good.
Kerrey	Lips	Woorlardoo	Old man.
Seoorgoo	Face	Boordil	Death.
Murrah	Hands	Pilgara	Boy.
Scorpe	Arm.	Gooa	Yes.
Judah	Leg.	Wair	No.
Largo	Foot	Dooga	Understand?
Seerah	Shin	Grand-il-do	I understand.
Boordee	Knee	Coda	Bye & bye, or wait a while.
Taagool	Ankle	Gra-Gra	Flies.
Woolba	Toe nail	Bestab or Miodle	Sick.
Cardah	Hair Or head	Goulla-bulla	Listed to me.
Woo Moo	Woman's breasts	Yalgoo	Baby
Jlisa	Track	Yalgoo Cootbara	Two babies.
Jlisa-buoka	Boot track	Gouli Wangooa	Fetch the bucket.
Seaviloo	Food	Wagooah	Did you see.
Seaviloo'	Woman	Oce Taggerah Wagooah	Which way did you see.
Tealgaitch	Young woman	Babbings	Friends.
Loope	Bardies	Yanagee	Man.
Tharda	Shirt	Wardoo	Husband.
Wairil	Bucket	Wardithi Giara	Granite.
Wairil	Brook	Giara Tarbiddy	Granite waterhole.
Warrgab	Tree	Murditha	Hill or hills.
Washberoo	Lake	Yilgab	Quartz.
Yaldah	Cold	Woomurrah	Waterhole.
Warrac oo-Goboon	Fire	Yista	Fleety.
Wauyo	Strokes	Wair Yiba	Not much.
Gai Isay	What name	Yidilberry	Very small.
Milbah	Sun	Womba	20 miles or more.
Coelga	Moon	Yiba	20 " " "
Se-ai	Stars	Coala	5 " " "
Pidcedah	Figree	Wier	Wood
Wooral	Figweed	Toodilga	Man.
Widgee Widgee	Hungry	Waploo-	
Warrana	Kind of rabbit	Worogurigaough	Go slow.
Woommah	Ashes	Woomoola	East
Wooril Gearoo	Sleep	Yabaroo	North.
Waha	Creek	Yeladgie	North East.
Wagooah Wangoo		Waoie	South West.
or Wangooah	Go and fetch	Woola	East.
Wahooah		Woolberry	South.
Wubba	Water Spring	Wardal	N. E.
Carey	Knife	Oce Milla	South East.