

Artwork by Aida Hanson

Goldfields

Aboriginal Language Centre



Wangka kanyira ngalipirniku

PRESERVING OUR LANGUAGES FOR ALL OF US

Language Revival and Aboriginal Wellbeing

CRICOS PROVIDER 00123M

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Kalgoorlie, 24-26 October 2023

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Ngadlu tampendi Kurna meyunna yerta mattanya Womma Tarndanyako

[ngadlu thampinhi garna miyurna yarta mathanya wama tharndanyaku]

We know (that) Kurna people (are the) land-owners of (the) Plains of Adelaide.

Tarnta(ka)nya = Adelaide (in the Kurna Aboriginal language) = portmanteau blending of *tarnta* ‘red kangaroo’ + *kanya* ‘rock’ (cf. Adnyamathanha ‘rock people’), i.e. ‘rock of the red kangaroo’.



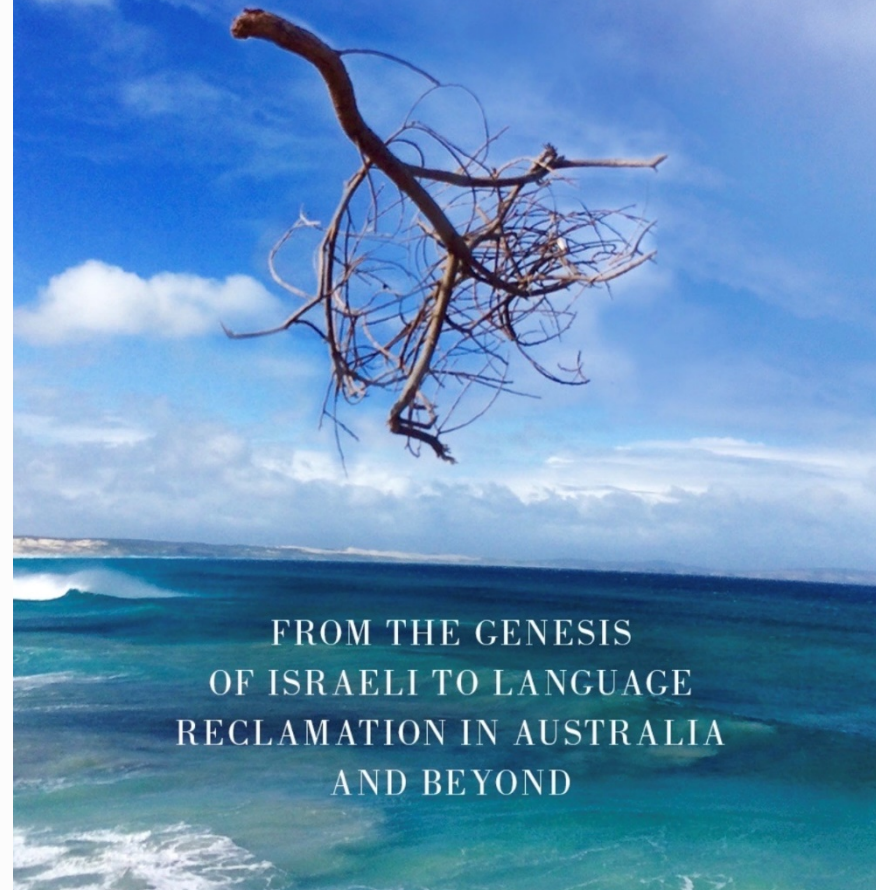
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GHIL'AD ZUCKERMANN

Revivalistics



FROM THE GENESIS
OF ISRAELI TO LANGUAGE
RECLAMATION IN AUSTRALIA
AND BEYOND

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"To linguists, Ghil'ad Zuckermann is already something of a hero. This book shows why. Professor Zuckermann's account of his work with language reclamation and salvation is as fascinating, enthralling, and gripping as any great fictional adventure story, but with a purpose and meaning greater and more noble than any Allan Quatermain or Indiana Jones."

—STEPHEN FRY

"In *Revivalistics*, technically rigorous in content yet approachable in presentation, Ghil'ad Zuckermann mounts a persuasive argument that the language spoken by ordinary Israelis is best thought of as a hybrid. He uses the story of the successful revival of Hebrew to propose how near-extinct Aboriginal languages of Australia can be brought back to life with immeasurable benefit to their traditional owners. With a multitude of the world's languages staring oblivion in the face, this will be a key text for the new discipline that Zuckermann calls revivalistics."

—J. M. COETZEE, Nobel Laureate, 2003

"Zuckermann is a polymath as well as a polyglot, and *Revivalistics* is a brilliant study, challenging the conventional wisdom in its field, making good use of comparative material, sparkling with perceptive one-liners, and making an eloquent argument for the revival of endangered languages."

—PETER BURKE, University of Cambridge

"Zuckermann gives a linguist's insider view of his native tongue, Hebrew as they now speak it in Israel, including its rollicking humour. He shows how a language could literally 'arise from the dead' but also how different is the task of reviving other languages today."

—NICHOLAS OSTLER, Chair of the Foundation for Endangered Languages

GHIL'AD ZUCKERMANN, D.Phil. (Oxon.), is Chair of Linguistics and Endangered Languages at the University of Adelaide, Australia, elected fellow of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, and President of the Australian Association for Jewish Studies.

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Revivalistics

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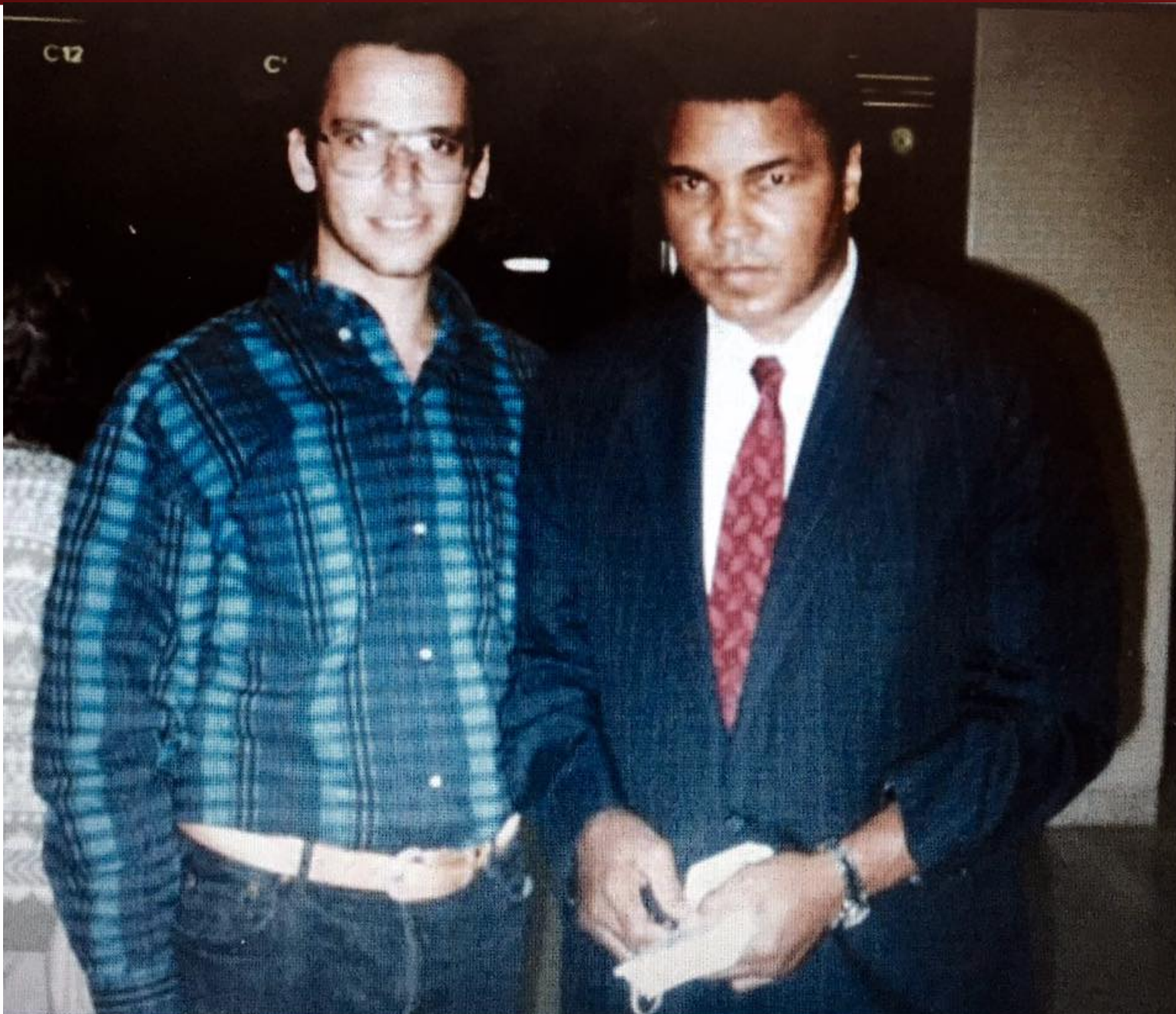
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Ghil'ad Zuckermann,
University of Oxford,
c. 1999



Resilience

Detroit, Michigan,
USA

September/October
1993

L-R:
Ghil'ad Zuckermann,
Muhammad Ali



Barngarla Lisa Taylor's son Liam, March 2018, Port Augusta

Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann

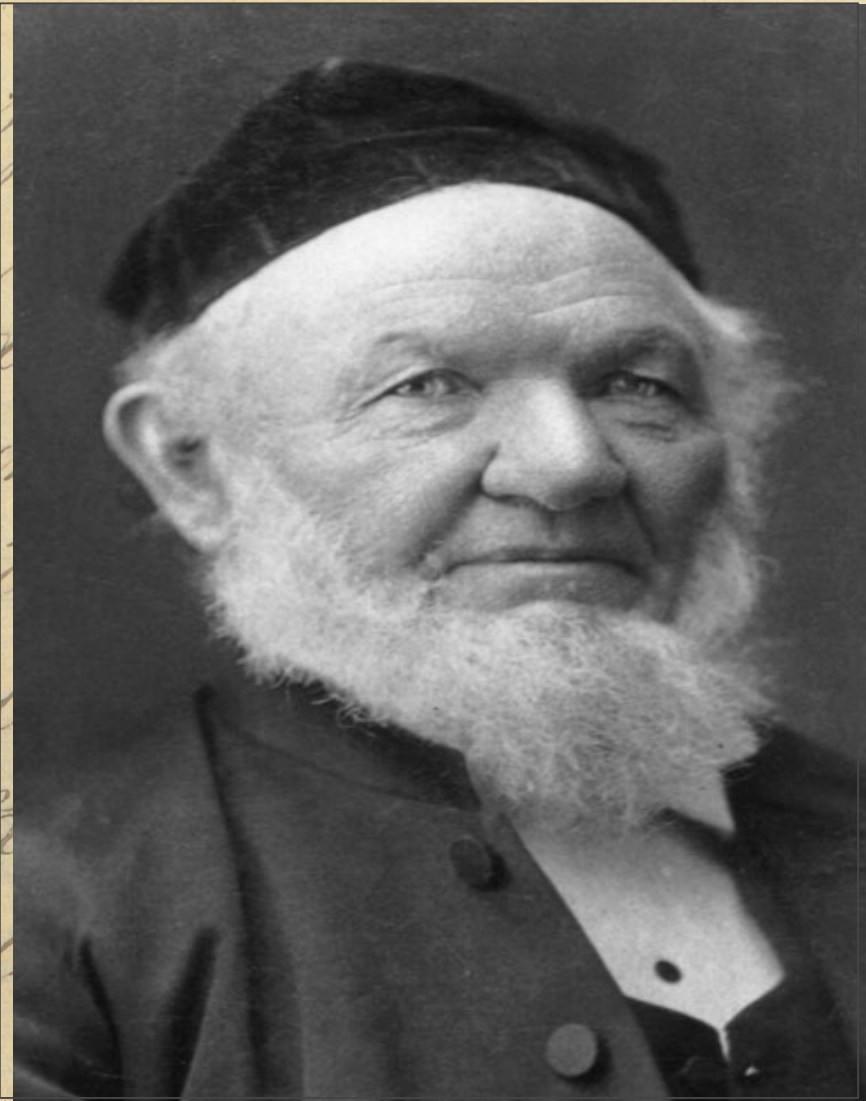
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With Tony Rathjen RIP (Yitpi Foundation) (far right), Revd Volker DALLY (then director of the Leipzig Lutheran Mission (second from left), and BARNGARLA people,

Umeewarra Mission, Goordnada (=Port Augusta),
2013





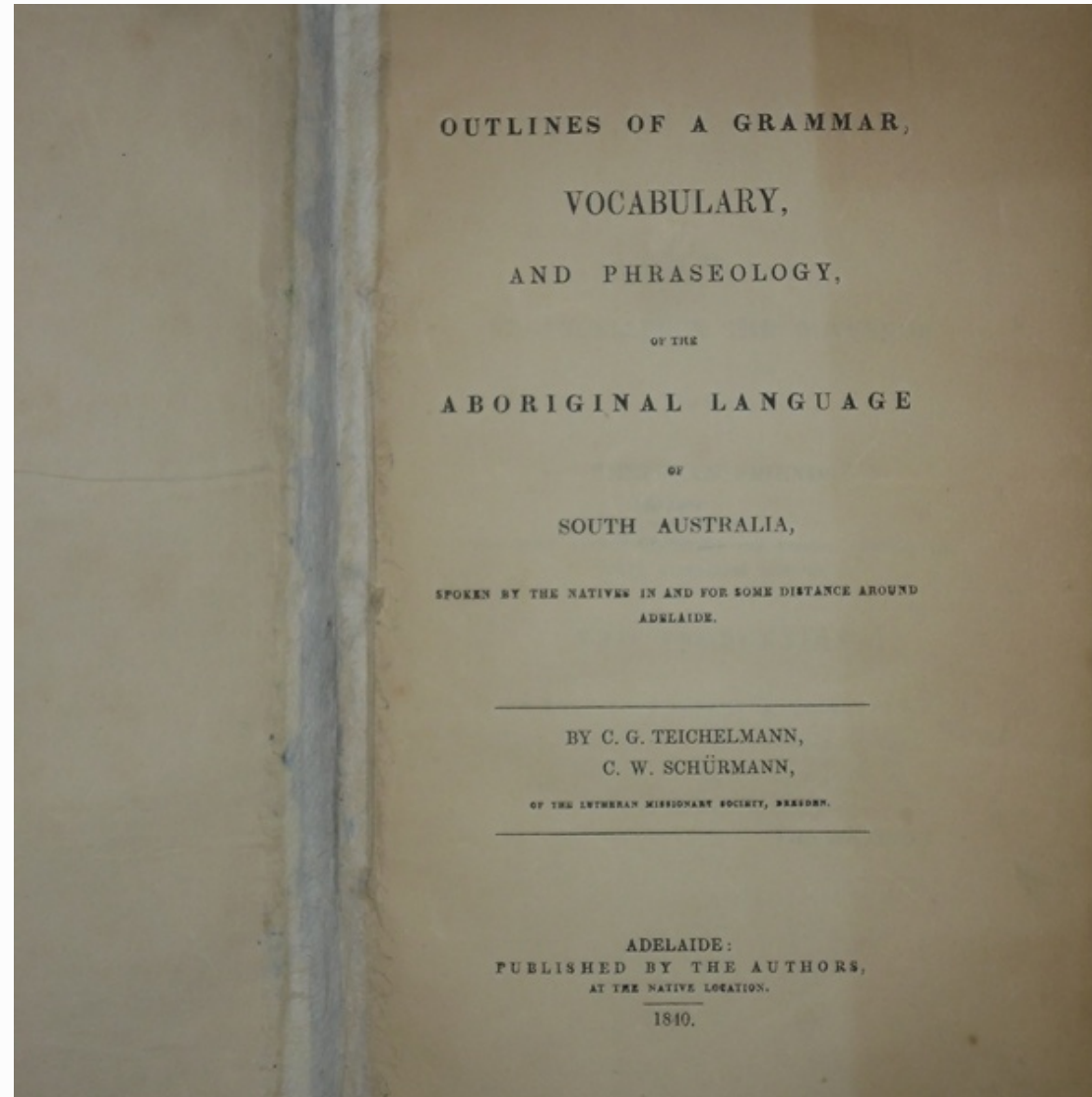
Clamor Wilhelm Schürmann

Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann

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- E.g. *Outlines of a grammar, vocabulary and phraseology of the Aboriginal language of South Australia.*





Barngarla elder Harry **DARE**,
Port Augusta, featuring in the
Barngarla app.

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Gabmididi
Barngarlidi Manoo
'Learning and
Speaking Barngarla
Together'

Galinyala (=Port
Lincoln), South
Australia, Professor
Ghil'ad
Zuckermann with
participants in the
first Barngarla
reclamation
workshop,
**18-20 April
2012**

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Gabmididhi Barngarlidhi Manoo 'Learning and Speaking
Barngarla Together', Galinyala (=Port Lincoln), **12 July 2018**



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The Main Question of Today's Lecture

WHY on earth should we invest time and money in reviving 'dead' languages?

(1) Ethical (what is right)

(2) Aesthetic (what is beautiful)

(3) Utilitarian (e.g. health, wellbeing) (what is useful)

reasons

Outline of Today's Lecture

Related Questions:

- Should we financially compensate Indigenous people for the loss of their native tongues?
- Should Indigenous languages be defined as official languages, e.g. of Australia?
- Should we erect multilingual signs (changing the landscape)?
- Does language dictate the way we think?
- Is it possible *at all* to reclaim a **Sleeping/Dreaming Beauty** (a.k.a. 'dead') language?



Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann



Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann

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Barngarla language and customs

The Barngarla have their own distinct language and customs. The German missionary, Pastor Schürmann made detailed notes, and published a dictionary of Barngarla words in 1844 and a book about Barngarla customs in 1846.

Pastor Schürmann arrived in Port Lincoln in 1840, one year after the town was established. He believed he needed to understand the customs of the local people and speak their language if he were to teach them Christianity. He established a school for Barngarla people and recorded their language. He later taught their language to the Barngarla to ensure its survival.

His books are an important record of language and culture. Later missionaries taught Aboriginal people in English and prevented them using their

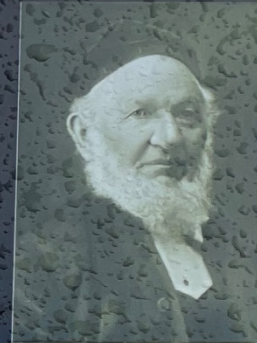
language. Then for several decades, government agencies removed Aboriginal children from their families – the Stolen Generations – so they couldn't learn their language or culture.

Reclaiming the language

The last person who spoke the Barngarla language fluently died in 1964. But the language is now being reclaimed by the Barngarla people working with Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann from the University of Adelaide, using the dictionary that Schürmann compiled. Together, they are creating educational resources so that future generations of Barngarla will be fluent speakers.

Why is language important?

Reclaiming language is more than just learning words. It helps people reconnect to country and ancestors. It can help develop a sense of pride and a strong identity. Indigenous people were cut off from their culture and punished for speaking their language in the 1800s and 1900s. Losing a language means people lose their cultural identity and wellbeing. Reclaiming the Barngarla language is helping to reverse the process, and bring Aboriginal people together.



Pastor Clamor Wilhelm Schürmann (1815-1893) lived in Port Lincoln and recorded the Barngarla language and customs. Photo: Lutheran Archives P08318 16255



Peninsula, and they have three subgroups. The *Wambiyurani* are the coastal people. The *Balbarra* *jarani* are the gum tree people, who live inland where gum trees are plentiful. The *Maar* people live in the south-west part of Eyre Peninsula.

Singing to the sharks.
The *Bangarla* were known for 'singing to the sharks.' In bays across Eyre Peninsula, the men sang from the cliffs whilst the women danced on the beach, luring sharks and dolphins towards the shore, and driving fish into fish traps (*goyara* or *wiriba*) in the shallows. Remnants of these traps can be found around Lower Eyre Peninsula, although many have been destroyed by modern development.

The local Richards family continues to preserve this region's culture, language, and stories of *Kalbarra* (Port Lincoln) and the surrounding country. The family regularly visits fish traps in the region to educate the next generation.



George Petherick's 1852-1853 sketch of a Bangarla man and woman after breakfast in Port Lincoln and published quarterly in his *Illustrated Australian* magazine. This portrait shows William, a member of the Goolburri group, surrounded by his family in Port Lincoln, 1852-1853. Photo: State Library of South Australia.

Bangarla language and customs

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His books are an important record of language and culture. Later missionaries taught Aboriginal people in English and prevented them using their



Pastor Charles William Schürmann (1815-1872) lived in Port Lincoln and recorded the Bangarla language and customs. Photo: Lutheran Bookstore 12810 12123

Why is language important?
Reclaiming language is more than just learning words. It helps people reconnect to identity and ancestors. It can help develop a sense of pride and a strong identity. Indigenous people were not all from their culture and practiced language from their language in 1900 and 1900. Losing a language means people lose their cultural identity and heritage. Reclaiming the Bangarla language is helping to reverse the process, and bring their great people together.

Boston Island

Across the bay you can see Boston Island. It was connected to the mainland until sea levels rose 7,000 years ago. The island was once covered in woodlands of drooping sheoaks, open scrub with tea-trees and mallee, and coastal vegetation with daisy-bush.

Boston Island straddles the mouth of Boston Bay, protecting the harbour from wind and waves. In the sheltered waters, you may be lucky to see whales (wada). In 1839 as many as 31 wada were counted in Boston Bay. Wada are sacred to the *Bangarla* people, just as the land and waters are sacred.

The original name of Boston Island is *Goyarla* in Bangarla. When the English explorer Matthew Flinders discovered the island in 1802, he renamed it Boston Island after a town in his home county of Lincolnshire. The French explorer Nicolas Baudin also found the island in 1802 and named it *La Grange*, but Flinders' name persisted. Thousands of years ago, the *Bangarla* lived on the island. In the 1840s, Europeans tried to establish an Aboriginal mission on the island. However there was not enough water, and the mission was moved north of Port Lincoln to Paarinindia in 1850.

There were plans to establish a town on Boston Island, but this idea failed. Instead, Joseph Kemp Bishop and James Wolverston established a sheep property in 1845. Since that time, the island has been privately owned. After more than a century, the Bishop family sold the island to the Davis family in 1954. Today the island is still privately owned and a sheep property, but also operates as a tourist destination.



Looking along in preparation to be whistled from Boston Island around 1910. The boat in the background, in the photo to the left, is the *Jack Williams*. Photo: State Library of South Australia. Photo: State Library of South Australia. Photo: State Library of South Australia.



The homestead on Boston Island around 1910. Photo: State Library of South Australia. Photo: State Library of South Australia.



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INTRODUCTION

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Before I speak, I would like to say a few words. 😊



Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann

**With Khwe
(Khoe)
and !Xun
(!Kung)
speakers,
Platfontein
, near
Kimberley,
Northern
Cape,
South
Africa, 26
April 2017**



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**With Ju/'hoansi
speakers,
Omaheke
Region,
Namibia,
20 April 2017**

With learners of the endangered Urak Lawoi (Austronesian) language, Sang ka au (village of Urak Lawoi “people [of the] sea”), Koh Lanta Yai, Krabi, Thailand, 6 November 2018



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I am a native speaker of Reclaimed Hebrew (Israeli).

In reality, the fin-de-siècle Hebrew revivalists were a small, unsupported group!

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.

Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Controversially attributed to Margaret Mead
(controversial American cultural anthropologist, 1901-1978)

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the main Hebrew revivalist



Eliezer Ben-Yehuda the grandson



Whyalla 2013



Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann



**Gabmididi
Barngarlidi Manoo
'Learning and
Speaking Barngarla
Together',
Galinyala =
Port Lincoln, South
Australia, Professor
Ghil'ad Zuckermann
with several
participants in the
first Barngarla
reclamation
workshop, 18-20
April 2012**



Whyalla, South Australia, Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann with several participants in one of the Barnjarla Aboriginal language reclamation workshops

Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann

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The first Barngarla delegation to AIATSIS, Canberra (2013), with Dr Luise Hercus and Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann (13 February 2013): Vera Richards (Port Lincoln), Elizabeth Saunders (Port Lincoln), Sheldon Richards (Port Lincoln), Jayden Richards (Port Lincoln), Dawn Taylor (Whyalla), Dawneen Saunders (Whyalla), Jeanita Taylor (Whyalla), Malika Carter (Whyalla), Linda Dare (Port Augusta), Steve Atkinson (Port Augusta), Robert Wilton (Port Augusta).

I must study Politicks and War that my sons may have liberty to study Mathematicks and Philosophy.

My sons ought to study Mathematicks and Philosophy, Geography, natural History, Naval Architecture, navigation, Commerce and Agriculture,

in order to give their Children a right to study Painting, Poetry, Musick, Architecture, Statuary, Tapestry and Porcelaine.

John Adams (second President of the United States in 1797–1801)

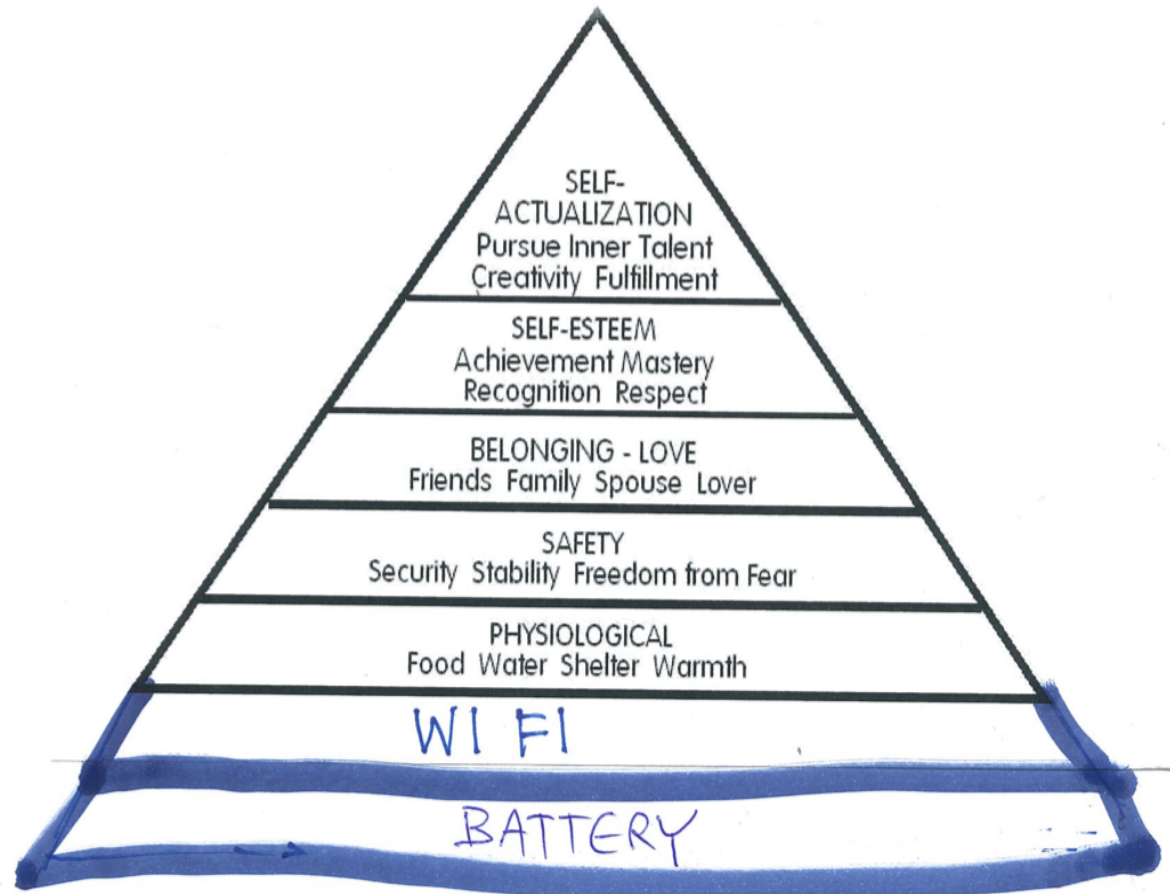
to Abigail Adams

[post 12 May 1780]

Adams Family Correspondence, 3:342

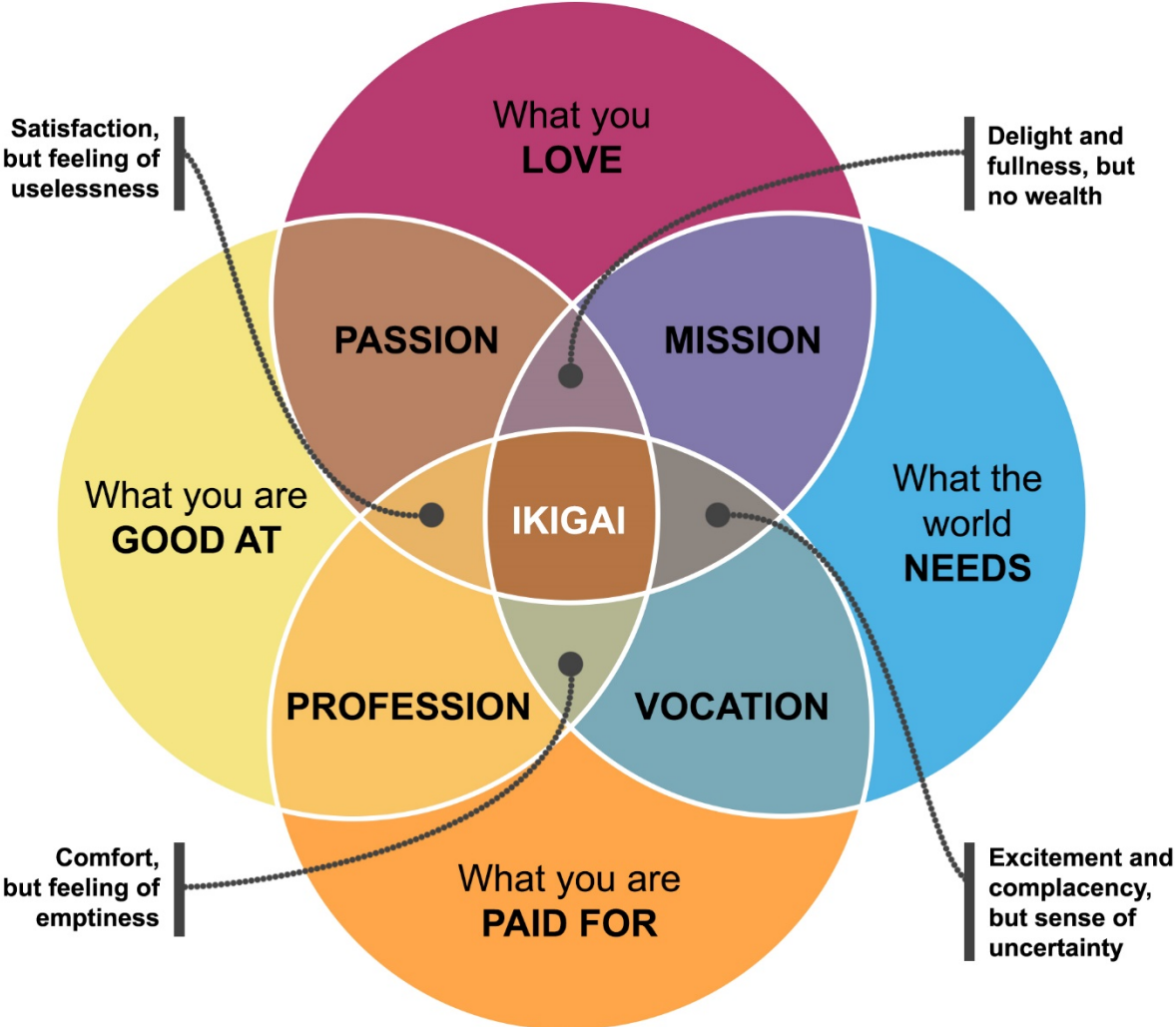
Basic Human Needs

Based on Abraham Maslow's 1943 hierarchy of needs in his seminal article
'A Theory of Human Motivation' (Psychological Review 50.4: 370–96)



IKIGAI

A Japanese concept meaning "raison d'être"



"You ought to find your ikigai, rather than an icky guy."
- Ghil'ad Zuckermann

Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann

Revolutions

(1) The INDUSTRIAL Revolution

(1760→~1840):

Turned people from seeking FOOD to seeking THINGS.

(2) The TALKNOLOGICAL Revolution

(C20-present):

Will turn people from seeking THINGS to seeking IDEAS.

Four Linguistic Revolutions

- 1. Speaking**: more than 70,000 years ago. (allowing Homo sapiens sapiens to *lie* about the past/future, as well as to offend without any physical violence)
- 2. Writing**: approx. 5200 years ago. (allowing Homo sapiens sapiens to protect himself from *thieves*)
- 3. Type-Printing**: c. 1450: Johannes Gutenberg develops the first European moveable type printing press, enabling mass production of books. (see parallel CHINESE developments) (allowing Homo sapiens sapiens to conduct mass religious *indoctrination*)
- 4. Talknology** (talk+technology): twentieth century-present: digital mass media, CNN, Facebook, Twitter...
(→‘big data’)

Pre-History

The **universe** is at the very least **13.82 billion** years old.

DNA is approximately **3.5 billion** years old.

Homo sapiens has existed in Africa for at least **315,000** years.



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LANGUAGE REVIVAL

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WHY on earth should we invest time/ money in reclaiming/revitalizing/ reinvigorating languages?

E.g. Why should we reclaim dead / extinct / hibernating /
sleeping beauties / no-longer-spoken languages?

- A. Ethical, deontological reasons**
- B. Aesthetic motivations**
- C. Utilitarian and economic benefits**

Why should we invest time/money in reclaiming/
revitalizing/reinvigorating languages?

Ethical Reasons

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Historical, humanistic and social justice

If you talk to a man in a language he understands,

that goes to his head.

If you talk to him in his language,

that goes to his heart. (Nelson Mandela)

Native Tongue Title:

Deontological compensation for language loss:

- **The loss of language is more severe than the loss of land**
- **Language death = loss of cultural autonomy**
- **Language death = loss of intellectual sovereignty**
- **Language death = loss of spirituality**
- **Language death = loss of wellbeing, mental health**
- **Language death = loss of the 'soul'**
- **Language is a repository of ideas, values and experience**



With Gail Mabo, Eddie Mabo's daughter, Alice Springs, 4 June 2013

Eddie Mabo (1936-92) was a Torres Strait Islander who campaigned for Indigenous land rights, achieving the landmark decision of the High Court of Australia that overturned the legal doctrine of *terra nullius* ('land belonging to nobody').

‘The natives would be sooner civilized if their language was extinct.’

Antony Forster in a report on a public meeting of the South Australian Missionary Society in aid of the German Mission to the Aborigines,

Southern Australian

8 September 1843

p. 2



Anthony Forster (1813-1897)
colonist, financier and politician

‘Mr Forster afterwards adverted to the present mode of teaching the children in their own language. He, with all respect to the Missionaries, would say, on several grounds, that this was wrong.

The natives would be sooner civilized if their language was extinct.

The children taught would afterwards mix only with whites, where their own language would be of no use – the use of their language would preserve their prejudices and debasement, and their language was not sufficient to express the ideas of civilized life. He gave the Missionaries full credit for their talents and zeal, but he thought it would be better to teach the children in English.’

(Report on a public meeting of the South Australian Missionary Society in aid of the German Mission to the Aborigines, *Southern Australian*, 8 September 1843, p. 2, cf. Scrimgeour 2007: 116)

‘The merchant in London who lays on a vessel for a certain port, regards the affair as a mere mercantile speculation, but could he trace out the results he effects in their remotest ramifications, he would stand astonished at the changes he produces. With the wizard wand of commerce, he touches a lone and trackless forest, and at his bidding, cities arise, and the hum and dust of trade collect – away are swept ancient races; antique laws and customs moulder into oblivion. The strong-holds of murder and superstition are cleansed, and the Gospel is preached amongst ignorant and savage men. **The ruder languages disappear successively, and the tongue of England alone is heard around.**’

George Grey 1841, *Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery, Vol. 2, pp. 200-201*



Sir George Grey

South Australian Governor George Grey

Ethical reasons

(Native Tongue Title:

Deontological compensation for language loss:)

- In case of **linguicide** (language killing) or **glottophagy** (language eating):

It is much harder to prove continuity in Native Title cases

Protection of Intellectual Property (IP): Traditional Indigenous knowledge: language, stories, music, dance, symbols, art, crafts, cosmology, medicinal and environmental knowledge etc.

See *Mātauranga Māori* in New Zealand

Cf. *Conversations on Mātauranga Māori*, edited by Professor Tai(arahia) Black



Ethical reasons

(Native Tongue Title:

Deontological compensation for language loss:)

Australia ought to learn from New Zealand.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander vernaculars should be defined as *official languages* of their state/territory/land.
- Signs (LanGscape, Linguistic Landscape) should be both in English and in the local Indigenous language.

Australia ought to learn from New Zealand

Māori Native Tongue Title: WAI 11 & WAI 262

There are two particularly important claims by Māori relating to te reo Māori (the Māori Language). These are **WAI 11** and **WAI 262** claims to the Waitangi Tribunal (set up in 1975 to hear claims relating to Crown violations of the Treaty of Waitangi).

WAI 11 (Year: 1985)

Claimants: Huirangi Waikerepuru and Nga Kaiwhakapumau i te Reo.

Claim: that the Crown had failed to protect the language (a *taonga* treasure) as required by article 2 of the Treaty of Waitangi. (Article 2 guarantees to Māori the right to keep their lands, forests, fisheries and all their treasures (*taonga*). It was noted that: *Ka ngaro te reo, ka ngaro tāua, pērā i te ngaro o te moa* (If the language be lost, man will be lost, as dead as the moa.)

WAI 11 (1985)

WAI 11 (1985) (cont.)

The tribunal found in favour of the claimants: *When the question for decision is whether te reo Māori is a 'taonga' which the Crown is obliged to recognise we conclude that there can be only one answer. It is plain that the language is an essential part of the culture and must be regarded as 'a valued possession'.*

Recommendations in summary: legislation enabling use of te reo Māori in the courts by anyone who wishes to do so; establishment of a body to supervise and foster the use of te reo Māori; ensure all children who wish to learn Māori can do so with financial support from the State; develop broadcasting policy that acts on the Crown's obligation to recognize and protect the language; bilingualism as a prerequisite for any positions of employment with the State services Commission.

WAI 262 (1991)

WAI 262 (Year: 1991)

Claimants: Haana Murray (Ngāti Kurī), Hema Nui a Tawhaki Witana (Te Rarawa), Te Witi McMath (Ngāti Wai), Tama Poata (Ngāti Porou), Kataraina Rimene (Ngāti Kahungunu), and John Hippolite (Ngāti Koata) – on behalf of themselves and their iwi

Claim: relates to the place of Māori culture, identity and traditional knowledge in New Zealand's laws, and in government policies and practices.

Tribunal findings include: establishment of new partnership bodies in education, conservation, and culture and heritage; a new commission to protect Māori cultural works against derogatory or offensive uses and unauthorised commercial uses; a new funding agent for mātauranga Māori in science; expanded roles for some existing bodies including Te Taura Whiri (the Māori Language Commission), the newly established national rongoa body Te Paepae Matua mō te Rongoa, and Māori advisory bodies relating to patents and environmental protection.

WAI 262 (1991)

WAI 262 (1991) (cont.)

Findings relating to the language: The Crown's support for revival of the language should include (1) effective policies, appropriate resourcing, and steps towards the provision of public services in te reo as well as English; (2) the provision of programmes – including Māori-medium education – that are highly focused and effective, and appropriately resourced; (3) an expanded role and powers for Te Taura Whiri (Māori Language Commission), including powers to require public sector agencies to produce Māori language plans (in consultation with iwi), and to approve those plans, and powers to set targets for training of te reo teachers, approve education curricula for te reo, and otherwise hold public sector agencies accountable for their responsibilities towards the language.



The Australian Aboriginal flag, designed by Harold Thomas;
first flown on 12 July 1971 at Victoria Square, Adelaide. (German influence?)

Lads/Lasses

Langu

Land

**My proposed flag for a Language Day
reflecting the People-Land-Language trinity**

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LINGUICIDE VS WELLBEING:

Lads/Lasses

The Revival of the Barngarla Aboriginal Language of Eyre Peninsula, South Australia:

Andy Park interviews the Barngarla community of Port Augusta.

Land

(SBS, 5 minutes)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZPjdNaLCho>

**Goordnada =
Port Augusta
2013**



Why should we invest time/money in reclaiming/
revitalizing/reinvigorating languages?

Aesthetic Motivations

Aesthetic Motivations

When you lose a language, you lose a culture, intellectual wealth, a work of art.

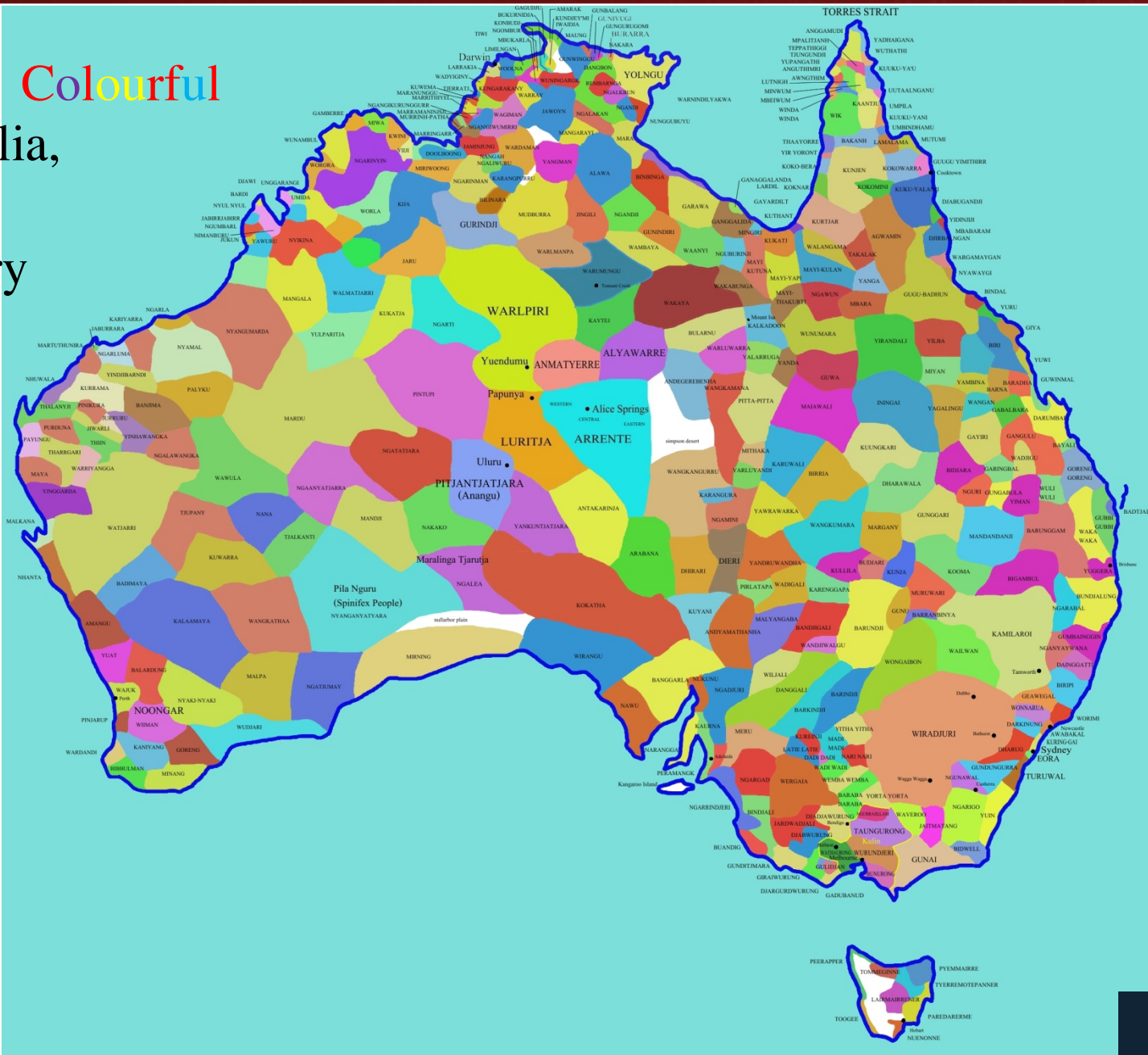
It's like dropping a bomb on a museum, the Louvre.

(Ken Hale, *The Economist*, 3 November 2001)

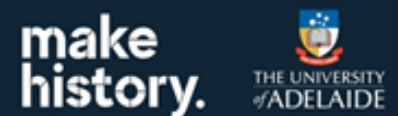
Diversity



Rich,
Australia,
Lucky
Country

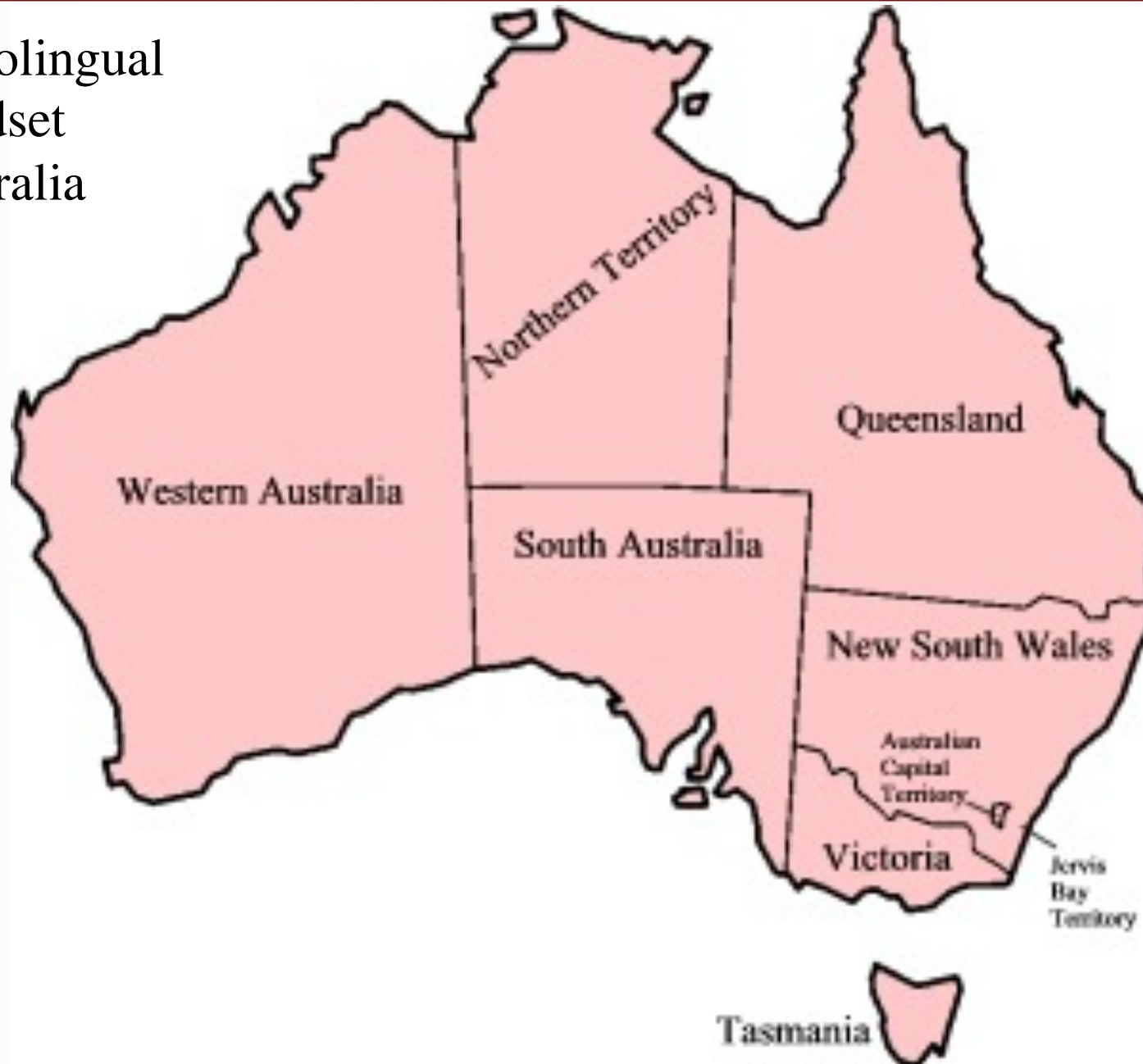


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Monolingual
Mindset
Australia



Beauty

The political map of Australia is ugly (in my view)
e.g. because of

(1) the one grey colour.

(2) the arbitrary straight lines -- as opposed to the beautiful divisions of 330 languages, represented by different colours and shades of colours.

But the political straight lines are not *THAT* arbitrary after all – cf.

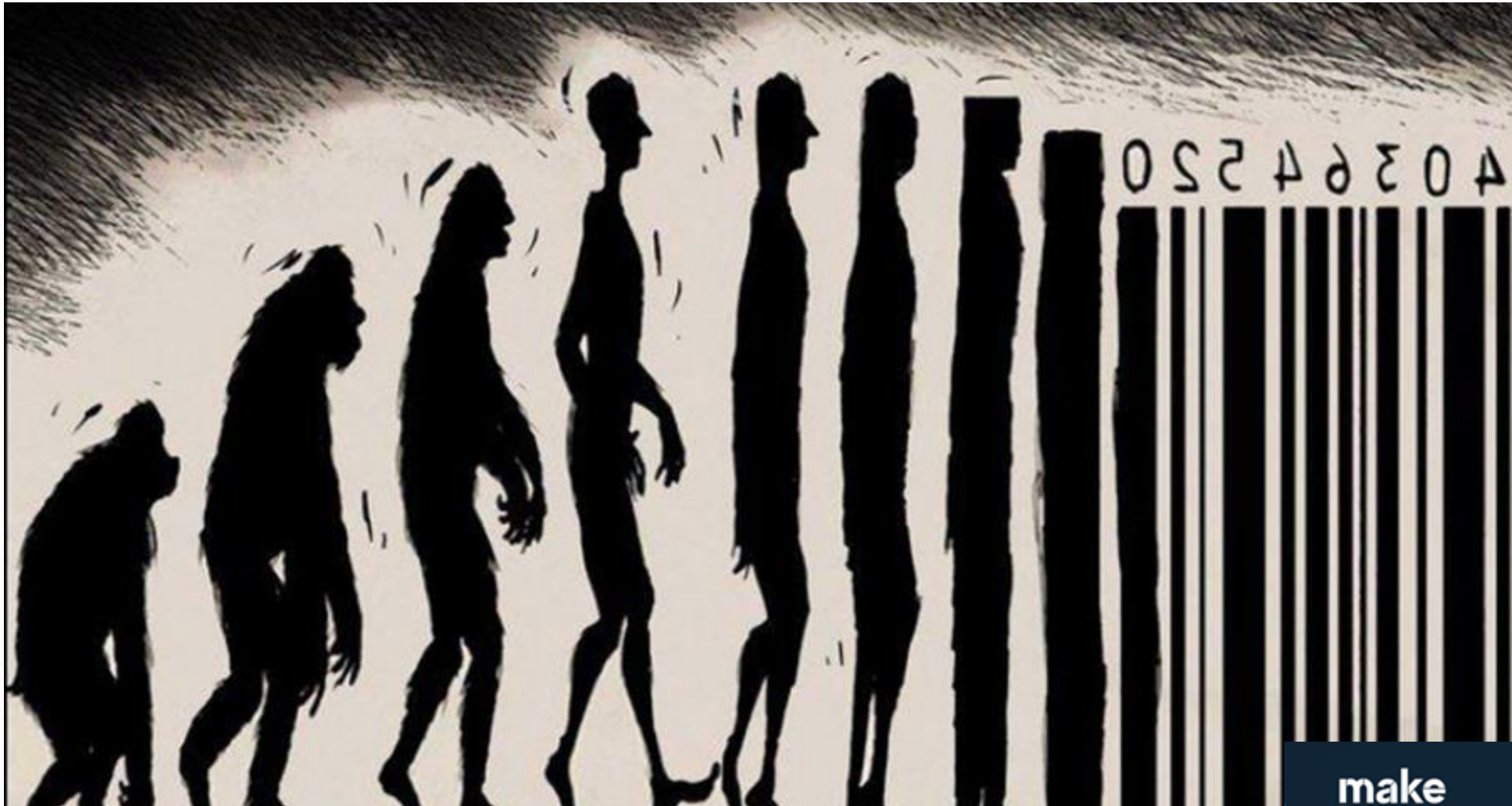
Gammage, Bill 1981. 'Early Boundaries of NSW',
Historical Studies 19, No 77: 524-531.



Rundle St,
Adelaide,
September
2016

This is what we do not want:

Homo sapiens sapiens (the human who knows s/he knows)





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A man with glasses and a red shirt stands next to a large red sign. The sign features a large, complex Chinese character '𪚩' (biáng) and a poem in Chinese characters. The background is a grey brick wall with a bunch of corn cobs hanging from the top. A door with a red character is visible to the right.

𪚩

一点飞上天，黄海两道弯，
八字大张口，言字朝里走。
左一扭，右一扭，你也长，我也长，
中间夹个马大王，心字底，月字旁，
弯个勾勾挂麻糖，坐上车车逛咸阳。

The most complex Chinese character I have ever encountered, pronounced *biáng*, referring to a specific kind of noodles; Xi'an, China

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Adelaide, April 2019

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Diversity

Kuuk Thaayorre

Boroditsky and Gaby (2010)



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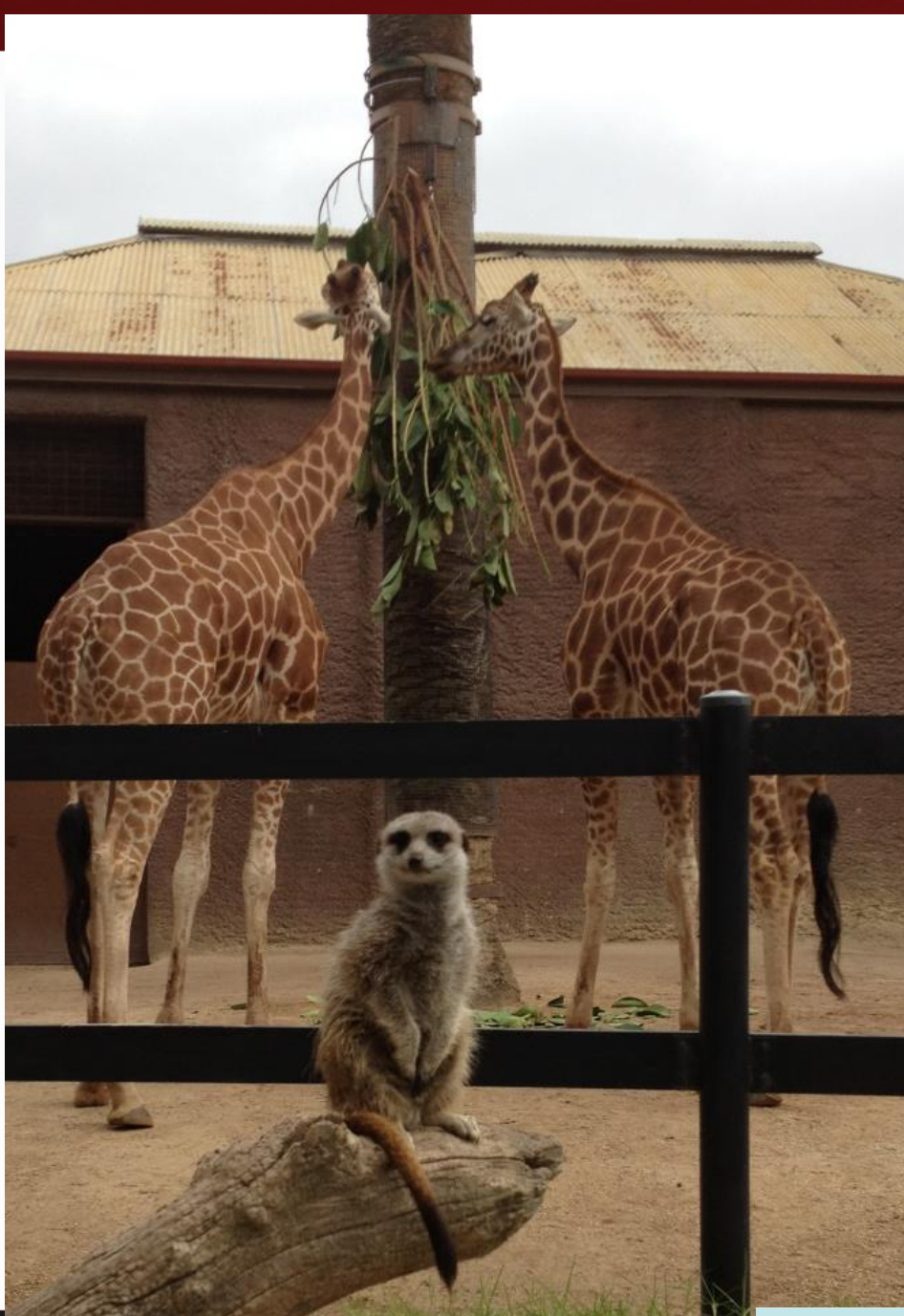
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Adelaide Zoo

**The survival of the Tasmanian
Devil is important!**



**What about the survival of the
Palawa languages of Tasmania?**

Cleland



And we exist to save languages and cultures from extinction

Annual Member

Ghil'ad Zuckermann
Family - Adult
0010921

ZOOS
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



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With orphan
joeys,
Little-
-hampton,
South
Australia



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(WHY should we invest time and money in reviving languages?)

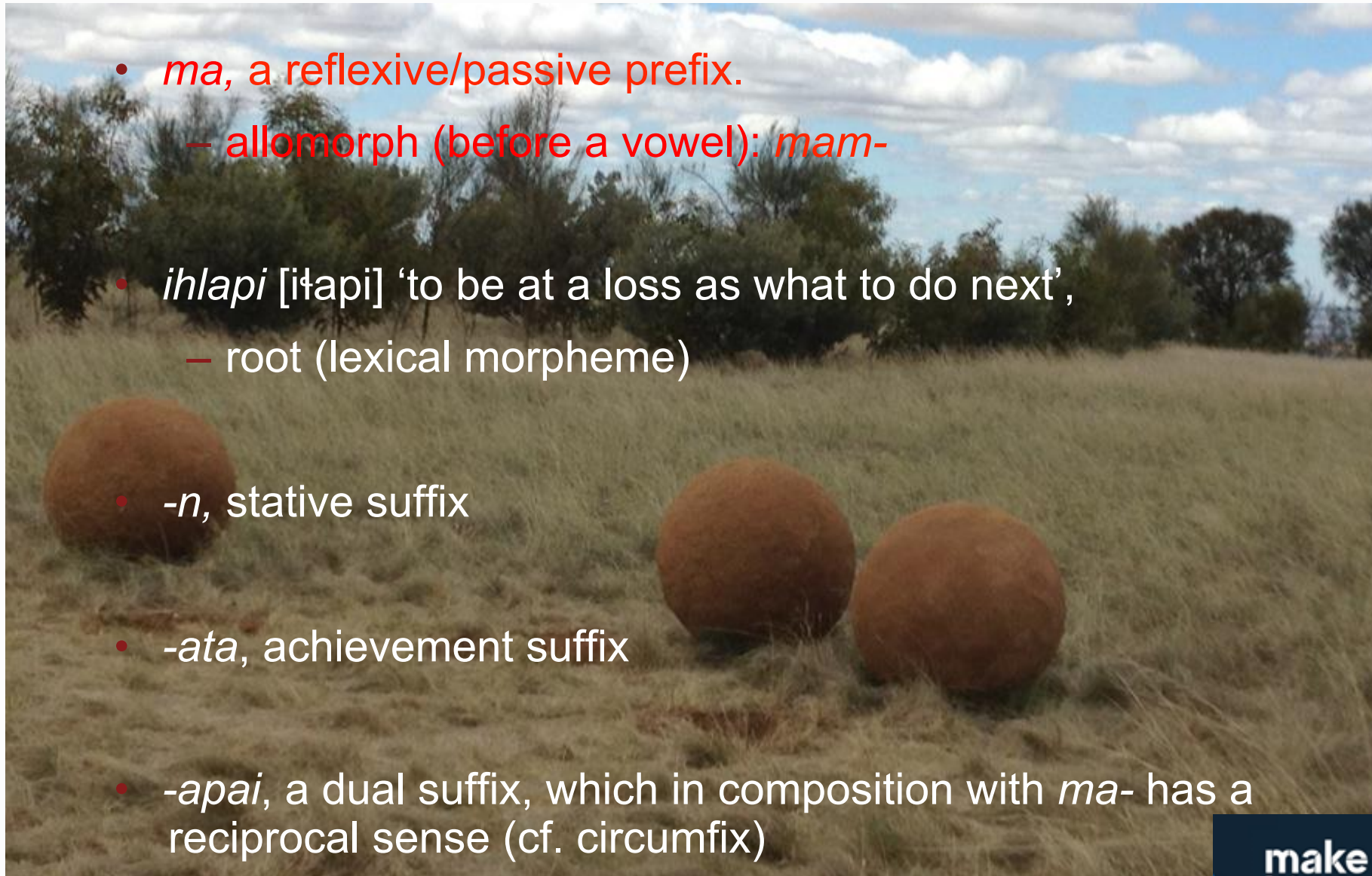
Diversity: Endangered grammatical ways to express familiar concepts

Mamihlapinatapai

Language: Yaghan (Tierra del Fuego, Chile & Argentina)

Meaning: A look shared by two people, each wishing that the other will offer something that they both desire but have been unwilling to suggest or offer themselves.

Morphemic Analysis



- *ma*, a reflexive/passive prefix.
 - allomorph (before a vowel): *mam-*
- *ihlapi* [iɬapi] ‘to be at a loss as what to do next’,
 - root (lexical morpheme)
- *-n*, stative suffix
- *-ata*, achievement suffix
- *-apai*, a dual suffix, which in composition with *ma-* has a reciprocal sense (cf. circumfix)

Coffee

[http://
www.youtube.com/
watch?
v=mRAGb-6wAvk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRAGb-6wAvk)

Diversity: Endangered concepts

Nakhur

Language: Persian.

Meaning: A camel that will not give milk until her nostrils have been tickled.

The limits of human imagination:

Despite 3.5 billion years of DNA evolution, aliens look like ugly humans.



Diversity: Endangered concepts

Tingo

Language: Rapa Nui (Pasquan), Eastern Polynesian language spoken on Rapa Nui (Easter Island).

Meaning: To take all the objects one desires from the house of a friend, one at a time, by asking to borrow them, until there is nothing left.

(de Boinod 2005)

Why should we invest time/money in reclaiming/
revitalizing/reinvigorating languages?

Utilitarian Benefits: Health, Wellbeing...

Utilitarian Benefits

Personal, mental, spiritual and physical well-being

sense of pride and self-esteem

antidote for self-loathing

– Email from **Jenna**, 3 May 2012, 16:22:

Personally, I found the experience of learning our language **liberating** and went home feeling very overwhelmed because we were finally going to learn our "own" language, **it gave me a sense of identity** and I think if the whole family learnt our language then we would all feel totally different about ourselves and each other cause it's almost like **it gives you a purpose in life.**



**Wayala =
Whyalla**

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Utilitarian benefits

Facebook comment from **Evelyn**, 21 April 2012, 14:16:

A big thank you on behalf of our family here in Port Lincoln, **our ancestors are happy** 😊

‘Language is power; let us
have ours!’

Aboriginal politician Aden Ridgeway

26 November 2009, Sydney Morning Herald

Port Lincoln, 2013

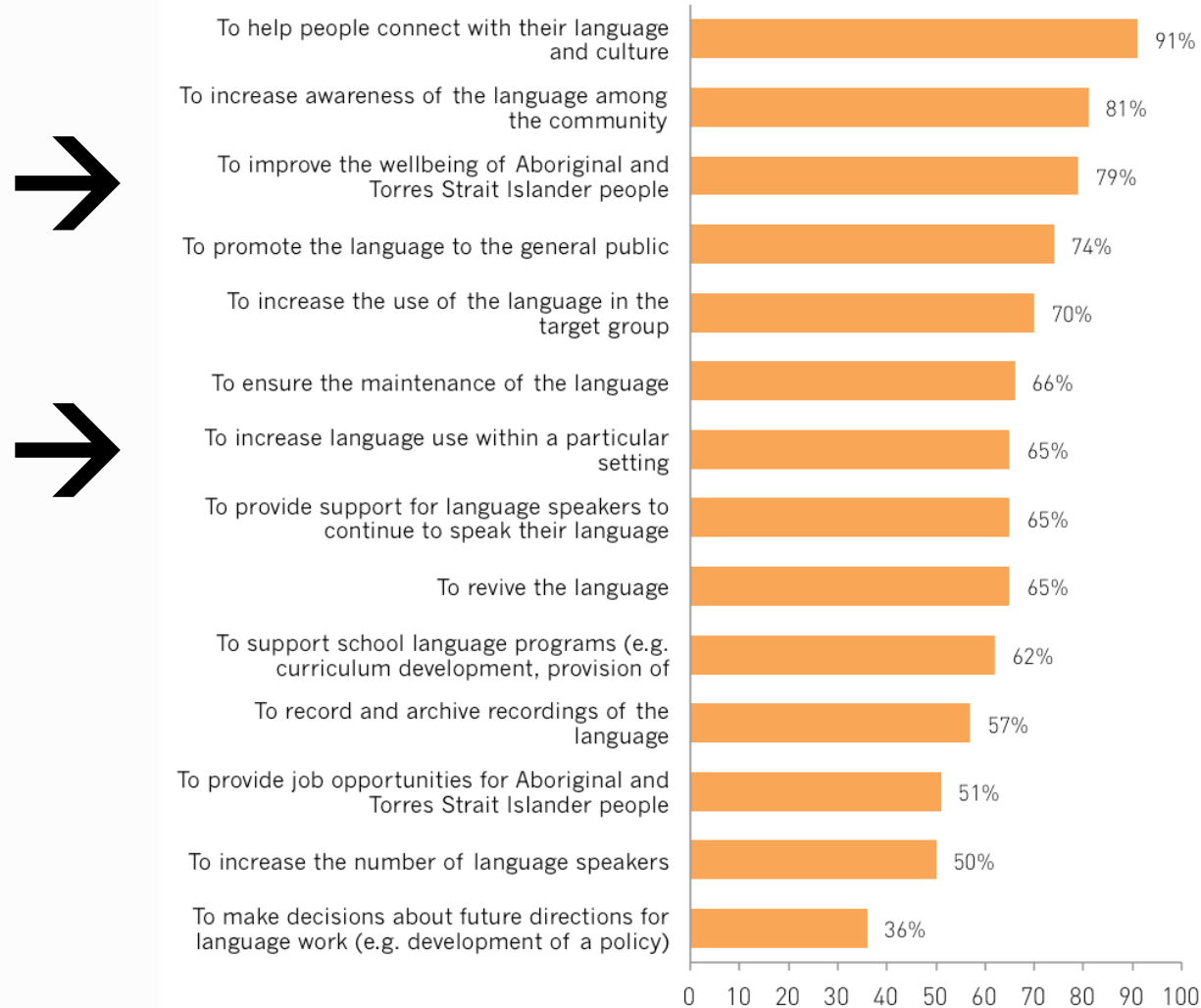


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NILS 2 (2014): Goals of language activities



Data drawn from the Second National Indigenous Languages Survey (NILS 2) Report, analysed by Marmion, Kazuko, & Troy (2014)

Utilitarian benefits

–(for bean-counters):

Saving governmental money associated with ill health and social dysfunction

ILS support: **\$50,000 per language per annum**
(2010-11) (\$9,400,000 given to 78 projects involving 200 languages)

Incarceration: **\$100,000 per person per annum** (2009)

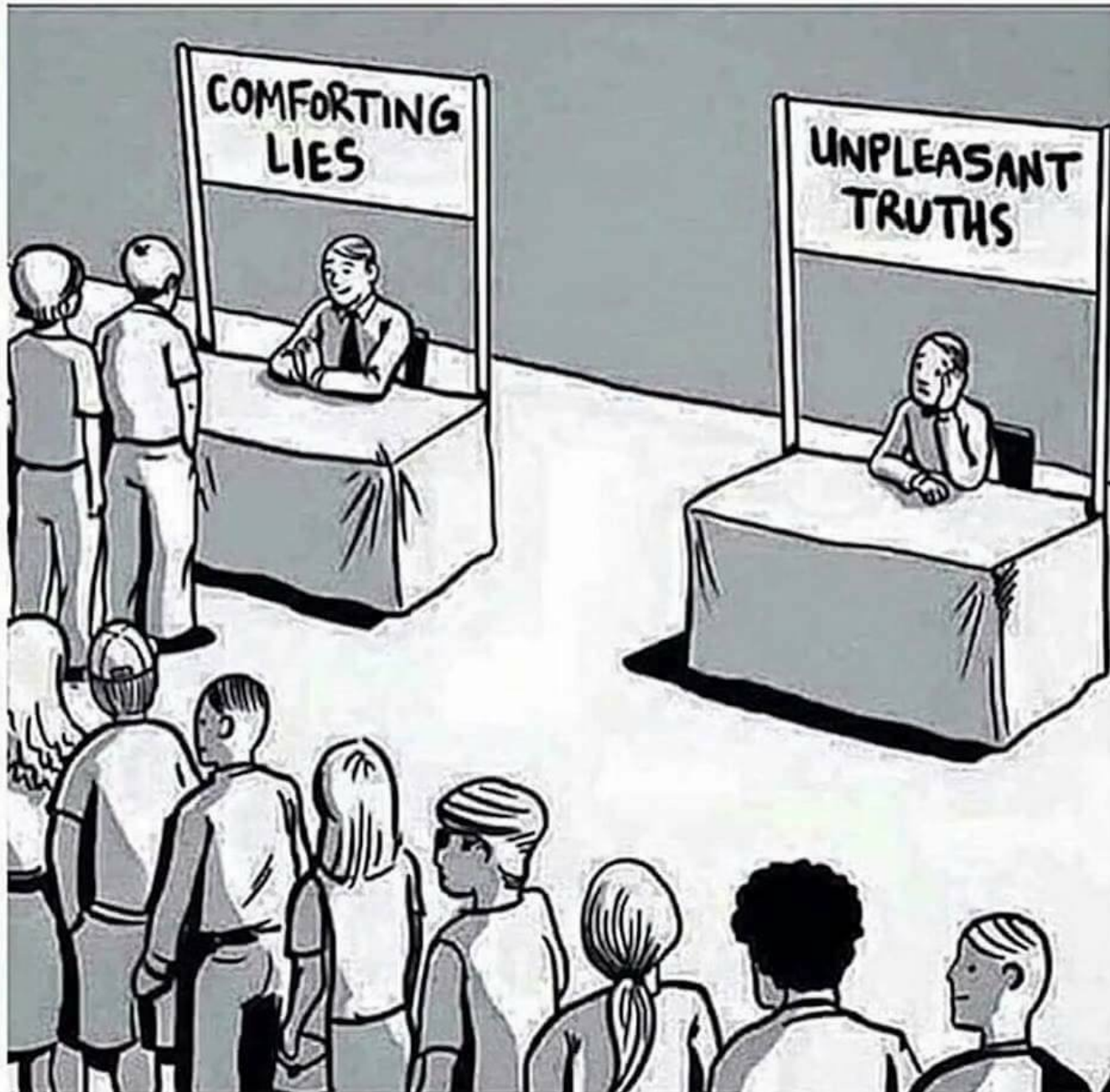
Mental health (adolescent): \$1,395 per patient per diem

Utilitarian benefits

Improving mental health

- National Survey of Mental Wellbeing (Australia):
20% of Australians suffer from a chronic mental illness and experienced any mental disorder in the last 12 months (depression, anxiety disorders etc.)
40% of Australians suffer from any mental disorder in their life.
- 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Social Survey (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Publication 4704.0): **31%** of ATSI aged 15+ experience high or very high levels of psychological distress in the **4 weeks** prior to interview!

This is **2.5** times the rate for non-Indigenous Australians!



PCGM

Utilitarian benefits

Improving mental health:

1. LINGUICIDE → SUICIDE

Darcy Hallett, Michael J. Chandler and Christopher E. Lalonde (2007).
'Aboriginal language knowledge and youth suicide', *Cognitive Development* 22: 392-399:

In British Columbia, Canada, there is a clear correlation between youth suicide and lack of conversational knowledge in the native language.

Utilitarian benefits

2. LANGUAGE REVIVAL → IMPROVED WELLBEING

Just as language loss increases suicidal ideation and depression, language gain reduces ill mental health and empowers the wellbeing of the people involved in the revival, as well as their associates.



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AIM

Systematically assess mental health impacts of reclaiming Indigenous language (Barngarla) in South Australia.

HYPOTHESIS

Improvements in mental health and social and emotional wellbeing during and following the language reclamation process.

OBJECTIVES

1. Continue delivering language reclamation activities with Barngarla
2. Explore the impacts of pilot language activities
3. Develop methods for measuring the impacts of language reclamation
4. Assess language use and social and emotional wellbeing

Sivak, Zuckermann, Walsh et al. (2019) demonstrate that the **Barngarla** (Eyre Peninsula, South **AUSTRALIA**) language is a key element of the Barngarla Indigenous people's identity, cultural expression, autonomy, spiritual and intellectual sovereignty, and wellbeing.

They present findings from 16 interviews conducted with Barngarla community members describing their own experienced or observed mental health and wellbeing impacts of language reclamation activities.

Aligning with a social and emotional wellbeing framework from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective, key themes included connection to spirituality and ancestors; connection to Country; connection to culture; connection to community; connection to family and kinship; connection to mind and emotions; and impacts upon identity and cultural pride at an individual level.

Sivak, Zuckermann, Walsh et al.
(2023) developed the systematic
**Indigenous Language and
Wellbeing Survey.**

Watch this space. More to
come.



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Skrodzka, Hansen, Olko & Bilewicz, M. (2020) found that although the **Lemko** (severely victimized ethnic minority in **POLAND**) language use is positively related to cognitive availability of trauma, it also **limits the effects of such availability on trauma-related symptoms.**

Based on this finding, they discuss the potential of minority language use to act as a social cure protecting from the negative psychological consequences of historical trauma.

Olko et al. (2022) confirms that the use of **Nahua** heritage language in **MEXICO** is beneficial for the community. The effect is significant in communities strongly affected by language loss and assimilation.

They examined the relationship between Indigenous language use and community-based wellbeing among four **Nahua** ethnic groups in **MEXICO**, taking into account the role of positive emotions related to speaking the heritage language as a mediator of the influence of its use in the family domain on community-based wellbeing.

They employed an emic community-based wellbeing scale, a second scale measuring the use of Nahuatl and Spanish across different domains of social life, and a third scale measuring positive emotions related to the use of Nahuatl in order to examine the relationship between Nahuatl use and community-based wellbeing.

The sample ($N = 552$) was of Indigenous Nahua participants coming from four different regions of Mexico.

The results from the mediation analysis revealed that the relation between the frequency of Nahuatl use and community-based wellbeing in the total sample is partially mediated by experiencing positive emotions related with Nahuatl use.

Other Utilitarian Benefits

Cognitive advantages of bilingualism:

–Kovacs and Mehler (2009)

– ‘The bilingual’s enhanced experience with sound results in an auditory system that is highly efficient, flexible and focused in its automatic sound processing, especially in challenging or novel listening conditions’ (Nina Kraus, 2012)

–Medical advantages: anti-dementia

Evidence also shows that being natively bilingual slows dementia by approximately **four and a half years**, improving quality of life for many and reducing money spent on medical care.

Other Utilitarian Benefits

Cognitive advantages of non-native bilingualism:

Using a foreign language reduces decision-making biases!

Four experiments show that the 'framing effect' disappears when choices are presented in a foreign tongue. Whereas people were risk averse for gains and risk seeking for losses when choices were presented in their native tongue, they were not influenced by this framing manipulation in a foreign language.

Two additional experiments show that using a foreign language reduces loss aversion, increasing the acceptance of both hypothetical and real bets with positive expected value. We propose that these effects arise because a foreign language provides greater cognitive and emotional distance than a native tongue does.

**(Boaz Keysar, Sayuri L. Hayakawa and Sun Gyu An, 2012,
Psychological Science)**



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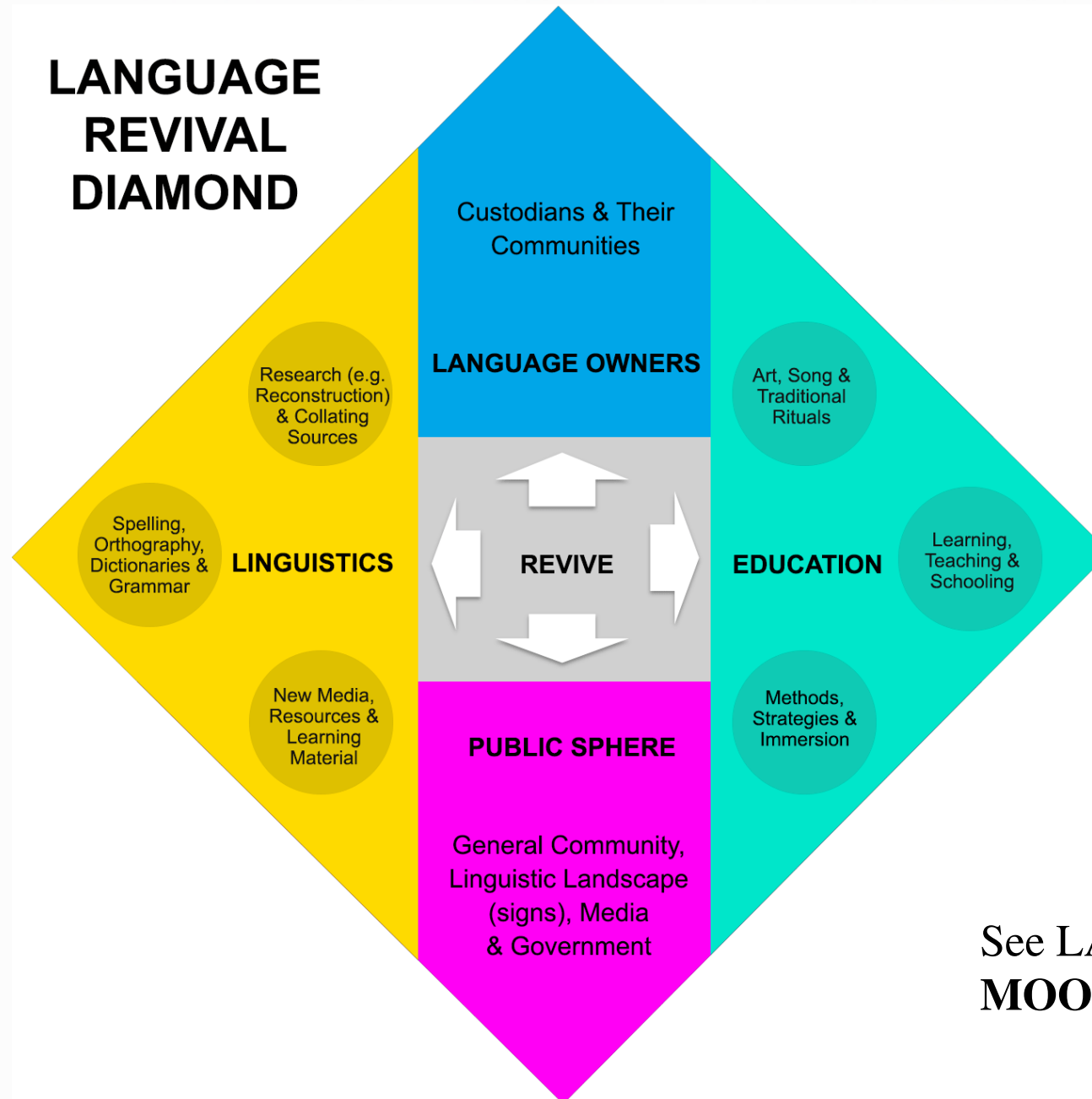
CONCLUDING REMARKS

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LANGUAGE REVIVAL DIAMOND



See LARD in the Language Revival
MOOC (Zuckermann & Amery), 2015



Immersion

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Immersion



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Immersion

MOOC
(Massive Open Online Course)
on Language Revival
AVAILABLE NOW

<https://www.facebook.com/Revivalistics>

<https://www.facebook.com/ProfessorZuckermann>



As I am watching Bagan's hundreds of temples and pagodas from the very top of ShweSanDaw Pagoda, an American stranger approaches me and says: 'Professor Zuckermann!'

'Yes?' I say. (Who is this person?, I am asking myself.)

'I was your student', he says.

('But that's impossible', I say to myself, 'I remember all my past and present students. And I have never met this person.')

'I took your MOOC on language revival!', says the American.

**Bagan, Myanmar,
February 2016**

ZOOPERMAN Extinction Fighter.

zoo.org.au



ON SPELLING

William Shakespeare spelled his surname in *FIVE* different ways.

NONE of them was
S H A K E S P E A R E .

But spelling might be extremely important:

[https://
www.youtube.com/
watch?v=0VM0Eroc2Zo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0VM0Eroc2Zo)



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ON SPELLING

**In the Australian 1976 Population Census,
Presbyterian Australians used**

383 different spellings to describe their own denomination.

For example:

**presbeterian, prespertarian, prespreterian, presbiterian, presbyrterian,
presbytarians, presybyterian, presybeterian, presyterian, presbytrian,
prespeterian, prebyterian, presbytarian, presbyterian, presbertarian,
presbetraian, presybartian, presyberian, prysbyterian, presbyterian,
presbetarian, presbaterian, prebytarian, prebysterian, presbertain,
preysbyterian, presbitarin, prsbyterian.**

Strine Signs



Strine Signs





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Summary

(1) If your language is endangered

→ Do not allow it to fall asleep!

(2) If your language falls asleep → →



**STOP
REVIVE
SURVIVE**

(3) If you revive a language →

→ Embrace the hybridity of the children's emerging tongue!

(4) If your language is healthy →

→ Consider helping others in linguistic need!

Lads/Lasses

Summary

Why Revive A Dead Language?
Spontaneous Interview with Ghil'ad Zuckermann
by Babel

Land

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izVGZRqciTY>

Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann 诸葛漫

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Selected Trans-Disciplinary Revivalistics Sources

MAIN SOURCE:

Zuckermann, Ghil'ad 2020.
***Revivalistics: From the
Genesis of Israeli to
Language Reclamation in
Australia and Beyond.*** New
York: Oxford University Press.

"To linguists, Ghil'ad Zuckermann is already something of a hero. This book shows why. Professor Zuckermann's account of his work with language reclamation and salvation is as fascinating, enthralling, and gripping as any great fictional adventure story, but with a purpose and meaning greater and more noble than any Allan Quatermain or Indiana Jones."

—STEPHEN FRY

"In *Revivalistics*, technically rigorous in content yet approachable in presentation, Ghil'ad Zuckermann mounts a persuasive argument that the language spoken by ordinary Israelis is best thought of as a hybrid. He uses the story of the successful revival of Hebrew to propose how near-extinct Aboriginal languages of Australia can be brought back to life with immeasurable benefit to their traditional owners. With a multitude of the world's languages staring oblivion in the face, this will be a key text for the new discipline that Zuckermann calls revivalistics."

—J. M. COETZEE, Nobel Laureate, 2003

"Zuckermann is a polymath as well as a polyglot, and *Revivalistics* is a brilliant study, challenging the conventional wisdom in its field, making good use of comparative material, sparkling with perceptive one-liners, and making an eloquent argument for the revival of endangered languages."

—PETER BURKE, University of Cambridge

"Zuckermann gives a linguist's insider view of his native tongue, Hebrew as they now speak it in Israel, including its rollicking humour. He shows how a language could literally 'arise from the dead' but also how different is the task of reviving other languages today."

—NICHOLAS OSTLER, Chair of the Foundation for Endangered Languages

GHIL'AD ZUCKERMANN, D.Phil. (Oxon.), is Chair of Linguistics and Endangered Languages at the University of Adelaide, Australia, elected fellow of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, and President of the Australian Association for Jewish Studies.

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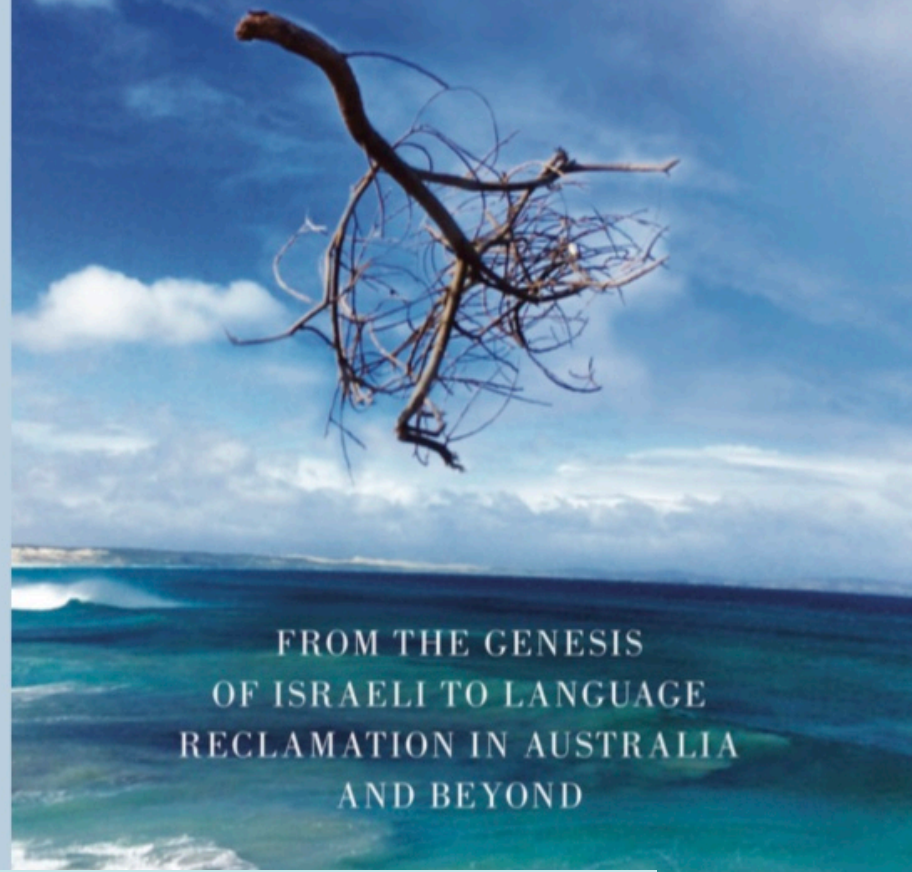
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Revivalistics



FROM THE GENESIS
OF ISRAELI TO LANGUAGE
RECLAMATION IN AUSTRALIA
AND BEYOND

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Also published as Chapter 28 of *Making Sense of Language. Readings in Culture and Communication* 2012, Second Edition, edited by Susan D. Blum:

<http://www.oup.com/us/catalog/he/subject/Anthropology/CulturalandSocialAnthropology/LinguisticAnthropology/?view=usa&sf=toc&ci=9780199840922>

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Zuckermann, Ghil'ad & Amery, Rob 2015. MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) edX Lang101x: Language Revival: Securing the Future of Endangered Languages

<https://www.edx.org/course/language-revival-securing-future-adelaidex-lang101x>

<https://www.facebook.com/Revivalistics>