

Australian Aboriginal languages: past, present, and future

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Nganhi nhingkirda tharkayi
yurangu yathayatharna
diyari karnaya yawarra

I am standing here speaking to you all in
the language of the Dieri people

Pinarrali widlhapinali nganha
kirringankarna wanthiyi
thanarni yawarra yatharnanthu

The old men and old women taught me to
speak their language long ago

Karari ngathu ngantyayi
yura ngakangu waparnanthu
diyari karnaya mithanhi

Now I want you all to go with me to the
Dieri people's country





tyukurru

pirrinthi



kuti



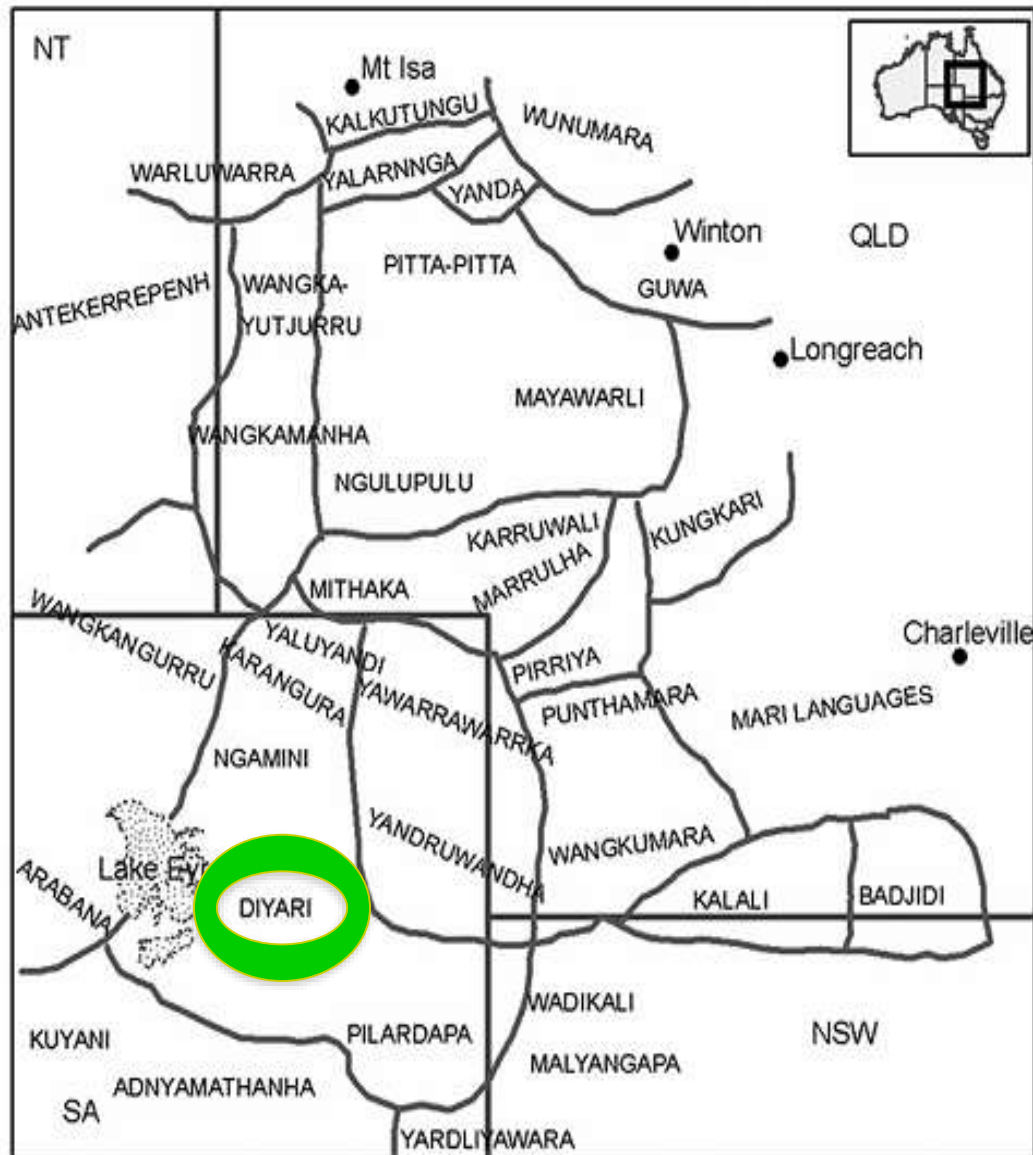


*wirlu wirlu
pirna purka
marna karta
ngathu ngara*

Curlew curlew
A big one is wading
The sound of his call
I am hearing

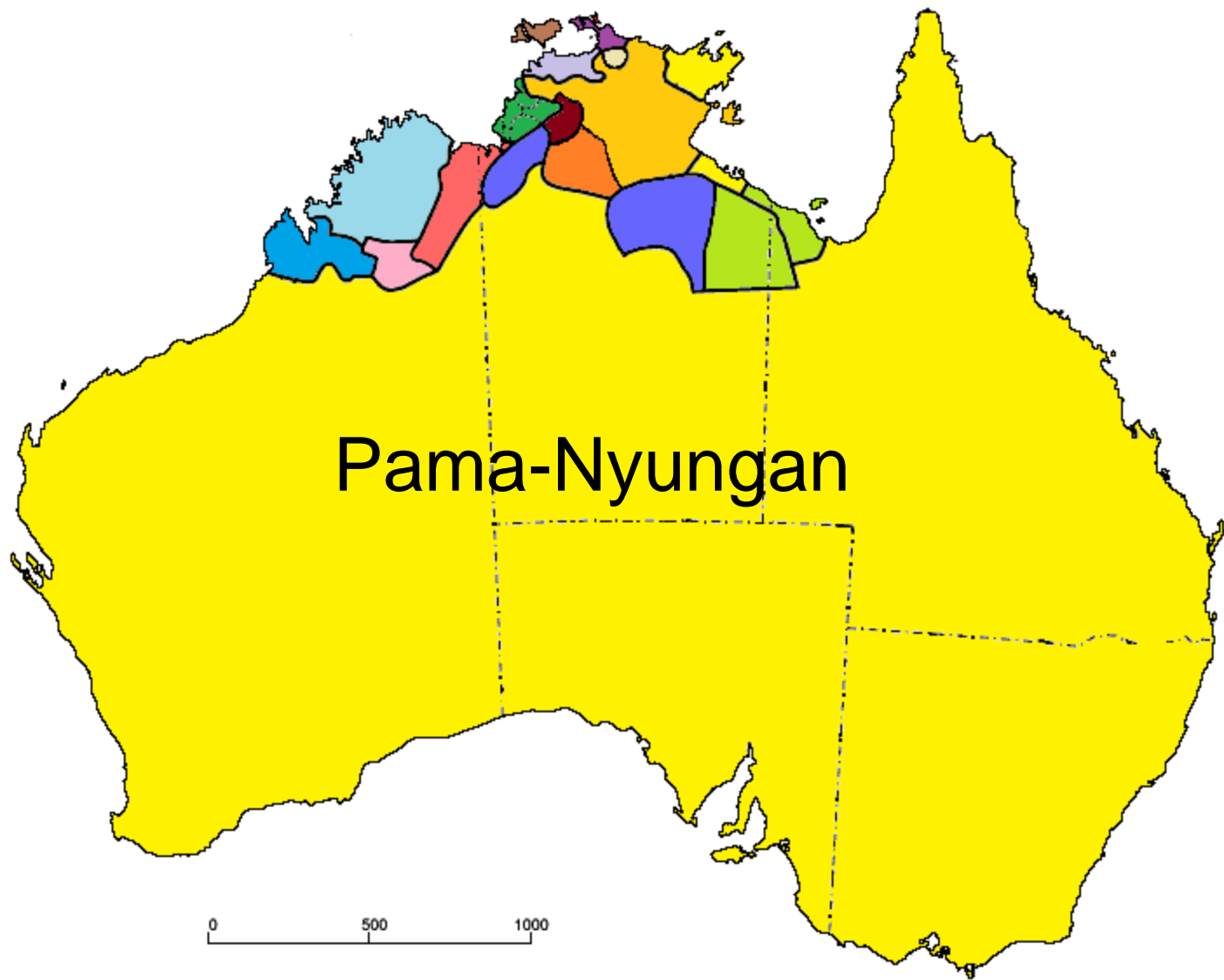


Eastern Lake Eyre languages



In 18th century

- 600 different groups occupied the whole continent
- each group had their own land, laws, beliefs, Dreamings, songs, stories and ways of speaking
- 350 different languages
- people grew up multilingual due to marriage exogamy
- languages can be classified into 17 families (cf. Indo-European vs. Turkic) – these may or may not all be distantly related



Structurally complex

nganhi yurangu yathayi 'I speak to you'

nganhi

yura-ngu

yatha-yi

I.nomin

you.plural-loc

speak-present

yudla-ngu

you.dual-loc

yingka-ngu

you.singular-loc

Structurally complex

‘We speak to him’

ngaldra	nhungka-ngu	yatha-yi
we.dual.incl.nom	he-loc	speak-present

ngali

we.dual.excl.nom

ngayina

we.plural.incl.nom

ngayini

we.plural.excl.nom

kupa tharki-pi-pa-lu-mayi
child stand-cause-benefit-you.dual-emphatic

‘You two stand the child up for me!’

karna-li nganha kirri-nganka-yi
man-trans.subj me.trans.obj clever-caus-pres

yatha-lha

speak-purpose.same.subject

yatha-rnanthu

speak-purpose.different.subject

‘The man taught me (so he could) speak (to me)’

‘The man taught me (so I could) speak (to him)’

Nganhi nhingkirda tharka-yi
I.nom here stand-present

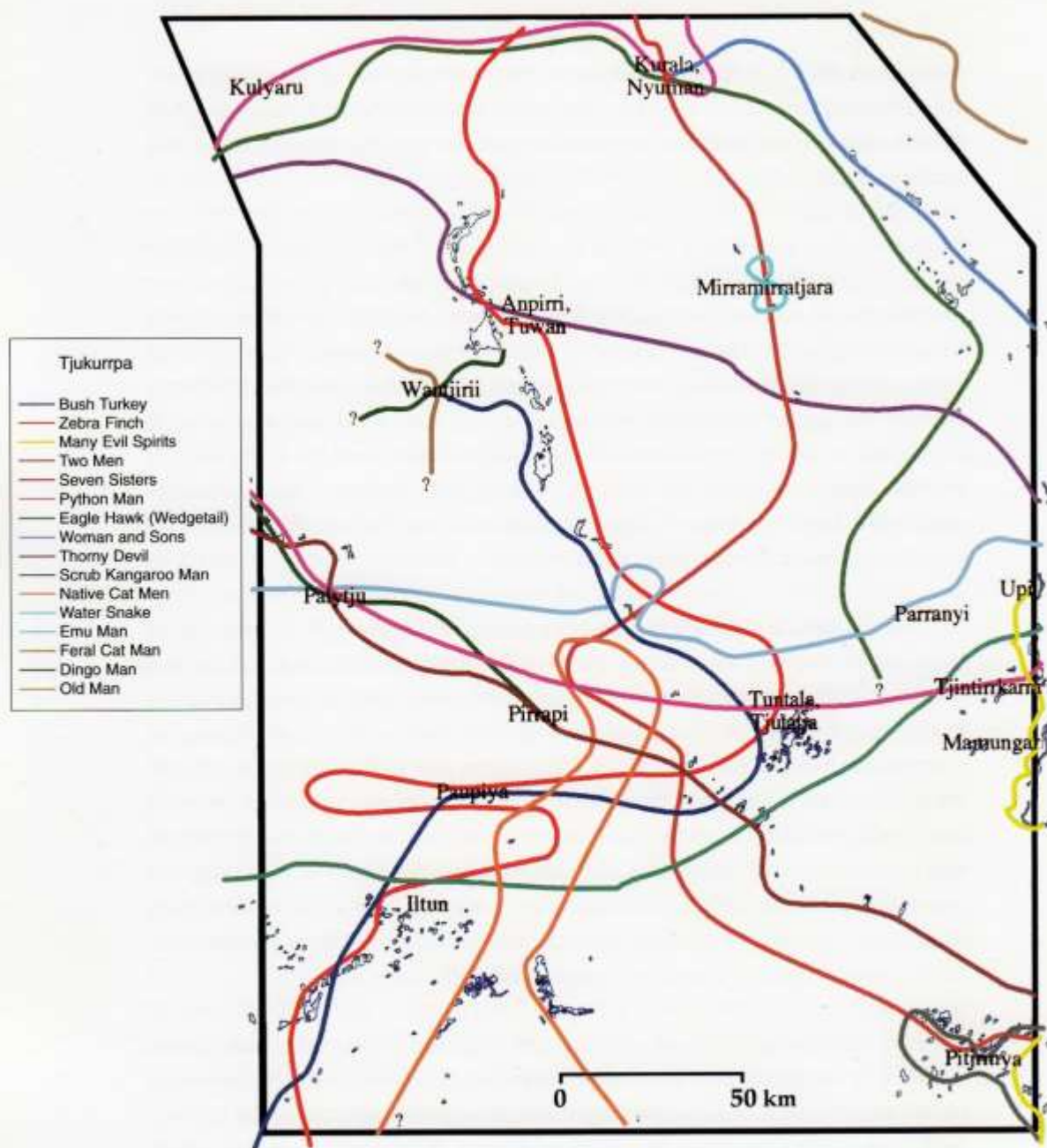
yura-ngu yathayatha-rna
you.plural-loc speak-gerund.samesubject

diyari karna-ya yawarra
Dieri people-possessive language

I am standing here speaking to you all in the
language of the Dieri people

Intimate connections

- People – Land – Dreamtime (creation)
- Songs and stories celebrate the ancestral beings and their travels across the land
- Landscape is covered in dreaming tracks of the ancestral beings
- These can be represented in sand drawings or, in modern times, by paintings that map the land, the ancestors and the people



The Geography of Spinifex Tjukurpa.

Loren Pennington



Walawarru (Wedge-tailed Eagle - shown in black) is hunting the chicks and eggs of *Ngunamurra* (Mallee Fowl - shown in red). An Eagle man and his wife set off to hunt the Mallee Fowl. The Mallee Fowl knows it is being followed and tries to lead the eagles away from his nest

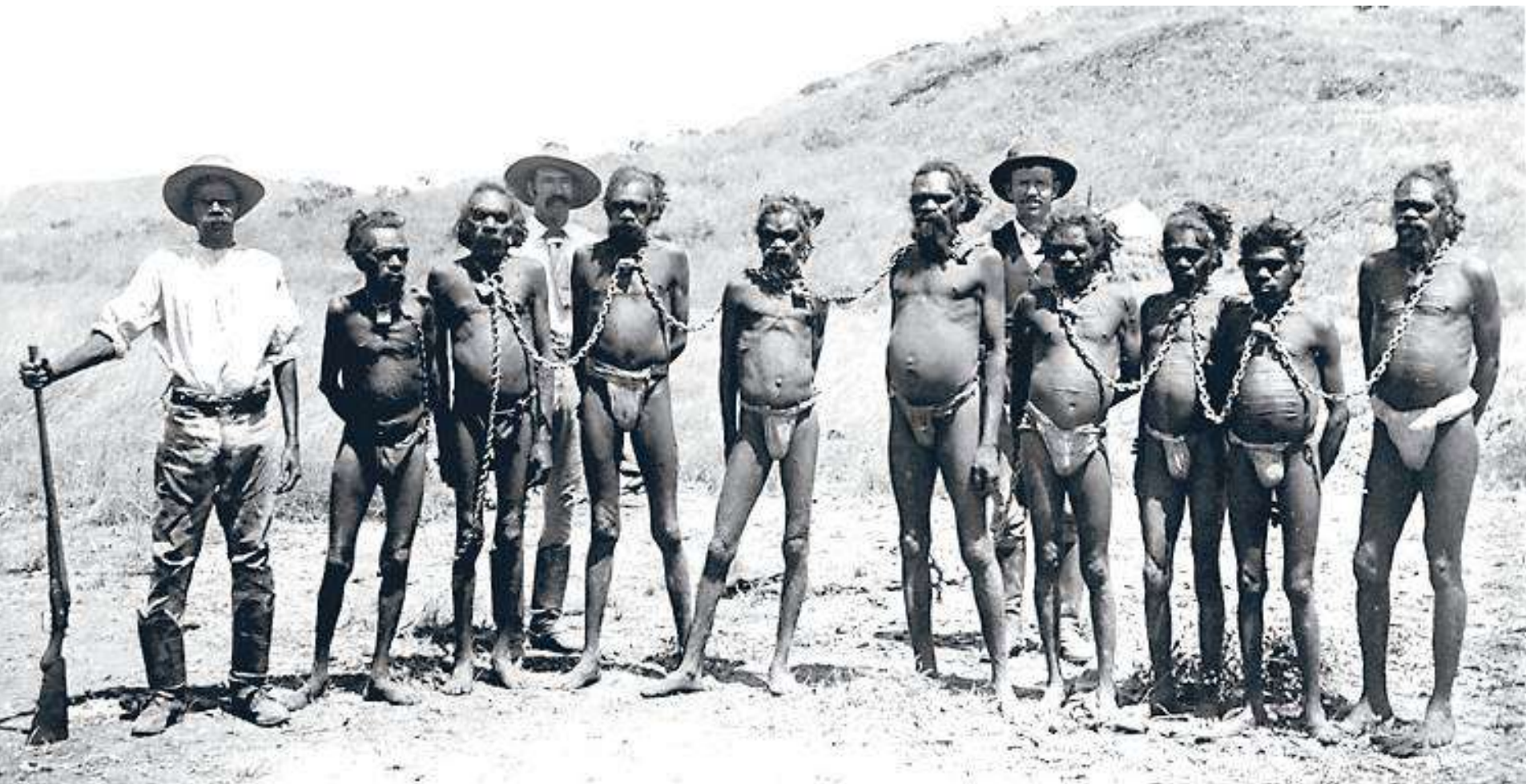
Then, one fateful day in 1788



Settlers take the lands



Those who survived



The Dieri were relatively fortunate

- Lutheran mission established by German missionaries in 1867
- Missionaries learn Dieri language and prepare school books and religious materials
- Literacy well established by 1880s
- Mission attracts Aboriginal people from a wide area, offering a haven from incoming white colonists
- Mission did well from 1890's to early 1900s

Bethesda Lutheran Mission, Killalpaninna, 1910



Roxby Down Str.
Via Woomara West. S.A.
22. 5. 1954

Tyai Kamaneli Nganyaku Ted. Vogelsang
T fidni kara ngaruparala ngamai
ngakangundru pepa manila mai
kamaneli wardaru fidni karari
maja tepi ja ngaiani panyana
tipe ja wolkarli pinna ngamai
jinkanga ja jinkani toani ja kupani
wata mala jurangundru ngarana
wardaru jura panyana ja ngaiani
Gada jurakukananto mula ngaronini
kananiaku tepi ngamalkai fax
Ngaroni karati Roxby Down Str.
ngamai nankana~~xi~~ wendri waru
ngaiani jurangundru ngarana
wonti & ngadani wata marla
ja ngaiani wata kuritarjai wardaru
ngaiani selalu ngarana wonti Kilalpanina
mitani jakajai findni karari marla
ja marla pinaku panti ja ngaiani
wallis tikala ngamai Finnie Springs
Atais jerufa ngaiani paruparu wiraraja
Ngankani wontitarjai ja wardaru

Mission closed

- 1915 – South Australian government orders closure of all German-owned properties; Dieri join mixed population Aboriginal camps on stations to south (Wire Yard, Mulka, Finnis Springs, Muloorina, Murnpeowie and Mundowdna) looking for work, and also further east, around Broken Hill
- Missionaries and their descendants continue to visit Dieri yearly until 1960s
- Vitality of the language severely threatened

In 1975 when I began research

- only a few families continued to speak Dieri
- most other languages of NSW, Victoria, Tasmania, southern SA had no speakers
- only a handful of languages were being learnt by children in the Centre and far north (Top End)
- Aboriginal cultures and ways of life were under threat (Aboriginal people only became legally 'human' in 1967)
- Labor government establishes bilingual education in NT, proper documentation begins elsewhere


Developments 1990s-

- 1992 Mabo decision overturns *terra nullius*
- 1997 Dieri group lodges land claim
- 2001 formation of Dieri Aboriginal Corporation – 600 members in NSW & SA
- DAC purchases properties, Port Augusta & Broken Hill
- Purchase of Maree Station and camp ground – handover at dawn 20th September 2008

Agreement with Santos 2011

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Our Responsibilities

- Sustainability at Santos
- Corporate Governance
- Safety
- Environment
- Public Notifications
- Santos Community Fund
- Community Blog**

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RECENT POSTS

- > Record turnout for Bupa Challenge 2013
- > Santos and Starlight make a young man's day at the Santos Tour Down Under
- > Santos Mereenie staff provide vital assistance in Kings Canyon bushfire
- > Santos Tour Down Under kicks off with glory for Greipel
- > Narrabri office up and running

Santos and Dieri sign milestone cultural heritage agreement


31 Jul 2011

Santos and the Dieri Aboriginal Corporation last week signed a cultural heritage management plan, recognising the significance of traditional owners in the management and protection of cultural heritage in the Dieri native title claim area of the Cooper Basin.


The signing ceremony – which took place at the Art Gallery of South Australia – represented the culmination of formal discussions that began in 2009.

Among the guests at the ceremony were Santos chief executive David Knox, Shane Kemp, Chairperson of the Dieri Aboriginal Corporation, Dieri Elders and the Hon Frances Bedford MP.

The plan brings Santos into best practice for cultural heritage management in its South Australian operations and



To mark the occasion, renowned Dieri artist Mandy Tuipulotu presented David Knox with beautiful painting of a rainbow serpent.

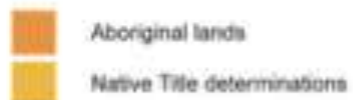


Native title May 2012 (lodged 1997)

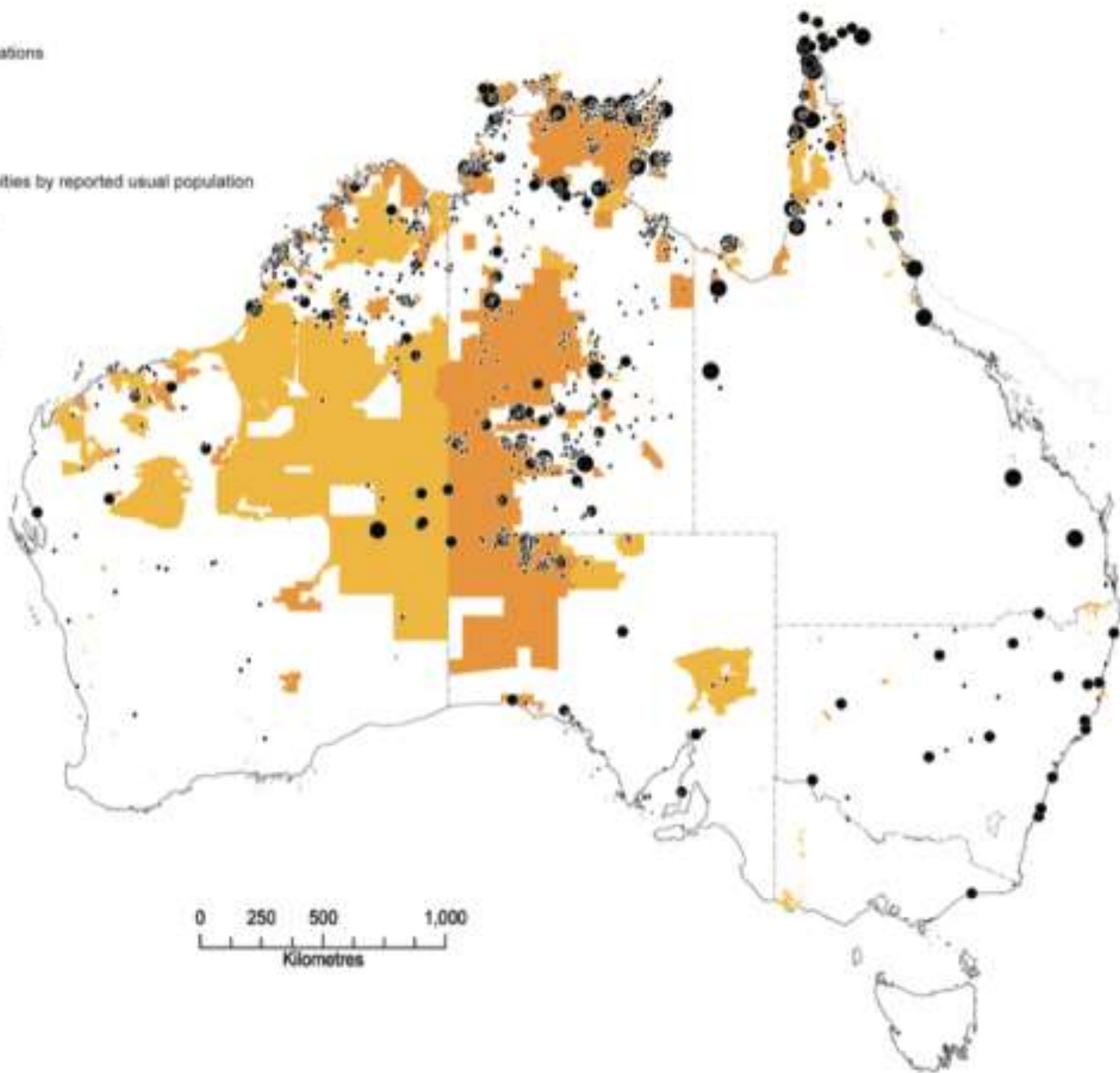


“Consent determination”

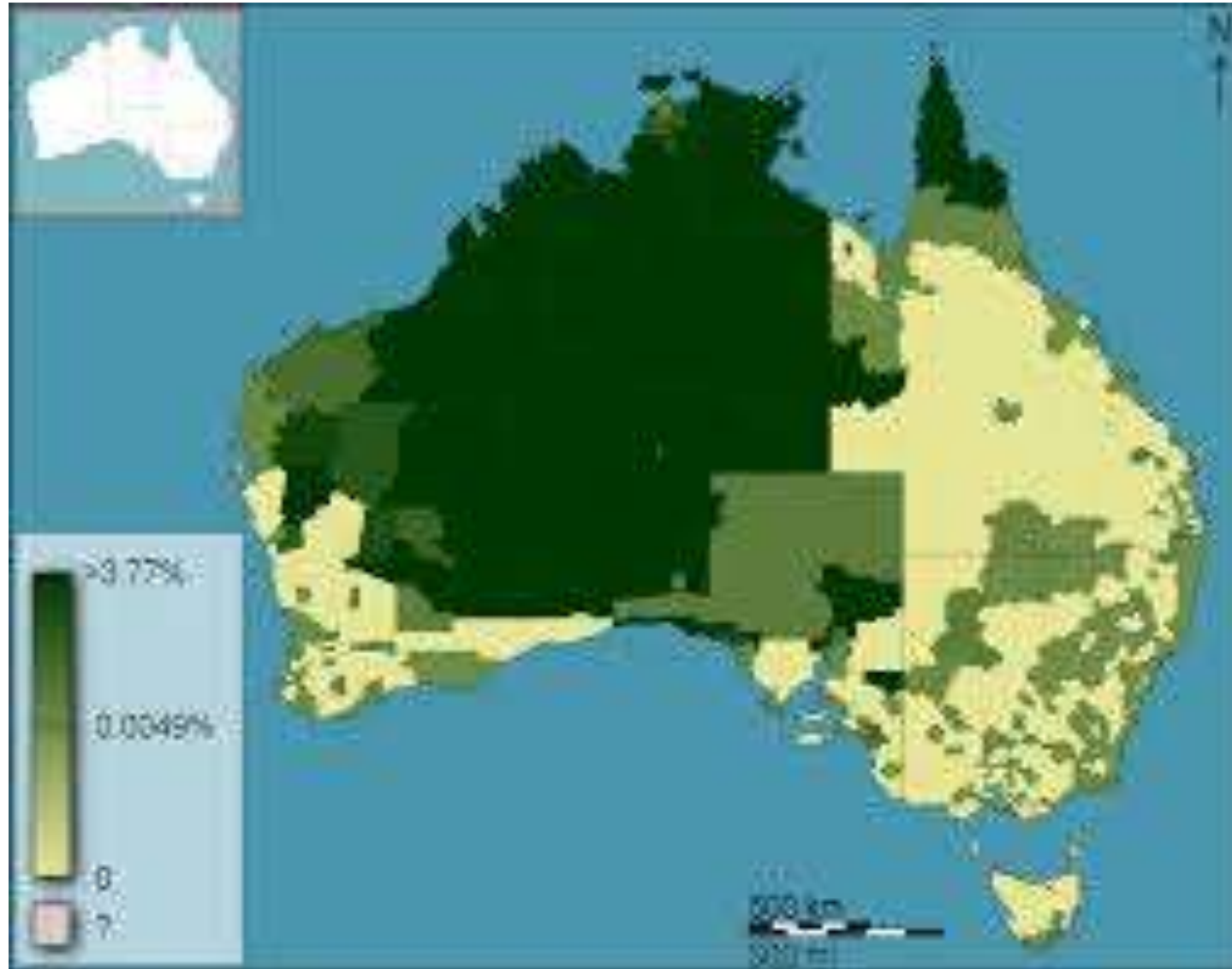
- Covers some 47,000 square kilometres of land, with part of its south-eastern boundary extending into the Strzelecki Regional Reserve and part of its western boundary extending into the Lake Eyre National Park
- One quarter (25%) of Karnataka
- A second Consent Determination 26th February 2014 added to this land



Discrete Indigenous communities by reported usual population



Speakers of Aboriginal languages 2011



Revitalisation – the Dieri ILS project

- 2013 workshops: February Adelaide, March Port Augusta, April Adelaide, August Port Augusta
- Materials development with teacher-linguist Greg Wilson – songs, bilingual dictionary, Willsden Primary school language programme
- Blog dieriyawarra.wordpress.com
- 74 posts, 15,000 page views (as of 2019-04-01), still getting 20-30 views per day
- Community engagement process

Dieri workshop February 2013



March 2013 workshop, 4 generations



Dictionary

kanungka

kanungka *Variant: kadnungka. n.*
spectacled hare wallaby.
Lagorchestes conspicillatus.
Category: Mammals.



kanya *n.* ash of fire.

kanyangarri *n.* jail.

kanyangarriyanganka-rna *utr.*
make go to jail.

kaparra *n.* boss, root.
Category: Plants.
See: mayatha.

kaparramaranha *n.* Kopperamanna.
Category: Placenames.

kaparrawu *int.* come here!
Category: Interjections and particles.

kapawu *int.* look out!
Category: Interjections and particles.

kapi *n.* egg. *Category: Birds.* miri
kagiyamayi warlaya, kapi
manilha "Climb up above to the
nest to get the eggs!"

kapirri *n.* goanna. *Varanus gouldii.*
Category: reptiles. ya
kardiyali wama ya kapirri ya
kadni nandrayi And the
brother-in-law killed carpet
snake, and goanna, and frill-
necked lizard.



kararru

kapitha *n.* bandicoot.
Peramelomorphia.
Category: Mammals.



kapurra *n.* ampit. *Category: Body parts and products.*

kara *part.* perhaps, maybe.
Category: Interjections and particles. yini kara wapa^lha
nganayi nhingki yara
ngalantha nhingki yara
waparnanhi Maybe you go that
way and we go this way.

karakaga *n.* close, nearby. nhayirna
karakaga first thurru nhulu
pularni, wardayari pula
thura^garna parikarnanhi,
thupu nhayirna
thangkuthangkuparna At first
(he) saw their fire close by where
they were sleeping as they went
along, watching the smoke in the
morning. Pula waka^gayi
nhantuyali, thana mankarra
pikirnanhi pakarna
karakara^ldramatha. They
came on horseback, right close to
where the girls were playing.

karaji *n.* today, now, soon.
See: thangkuparna;
waldrawirti. walya
karikamayⁱ, karaji wama
thayil^ha "Wait a while to eat
carpet snake (later) today."

kararru *n.* moiety name, matrilineal
moiety inherited from mother.
See: mathari.

Writing songs



*ngapa-ngapa pirna ngariyi
ngarrimatha wakarayi
thalara pirna kurdayi
ngayanarni mithanhi
daku pirna thana
matya ngayana pankiyilha
ngapa pirna ngakayi
parru pirna pakarna*



Lots of water is coming down
A flood is coming
Lots of rain is falling
In our country
There are big sandhills
So we are happy now
Lots of water is flowing
And big fish (are coming) too

Summary

- Australia has been home to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for over 50,000 years
- In 18th century, 350 languages were spoken across the continent, and all communities were multilingual
- Through their languages, stories, songs and art people expressed their relationships to the land, the ancestral beings, their history, and each other

Colonisation and post-colonisation

- Has resulted in destruction of people and traditional ways of living
- Wholesale loss of languages and traditions, especially in the south and east
- Since 1970s communities and scholars have been documenting languages and cultures, developing educational and other materials
- Since 1990s indigenous people have fought for their lands and worked to revitalise their languages and cultures

- Establishment of training networks, university level courses, national curriculum for indigenous languages study launched in August 2015
- New South Wales establishes laws to preserve and support Indigenous languages in 2017
- Gamilaraay language (New South Wales) taught as a subject in schools, and at Sydney University
- AIATSIS Foundation supports publication of dictionaries across Australia from 2018

In conclusion

Cautious optimism for the future?

Nganhi matya murdayi yathayatharna

I have finished talking

Thank you!

- To the Dieri Aboriginal Corporation
- My Dieri language teachers and friends
- Greg Wilson, colleague extraordinaire
- SOAS University of London for research leave
- CIIL for the opportunity to present this public lecture
- You (plural) the audience