

Yapapunakirri

LET'S TRACK BACK



THE ABORIGINAL WORLD AROUND MOUNT GRENFELL

Written for the Office of the Registrar, *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* (NSW) by
Jeremy Beckett and Tamsin Donaldson with Bradley Steadman and Steve Meredith



Yapapunakirri is translated in the title as ‘let’s track back’. This Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan word has three parts, **yapa-puna-kirri**: **yapa** means ‘track’ **-puna** is added to mean ‘back’ **-kirri** goes on the end to make the whole word mean ‘lets track back’ or ‘gotta track back’ or ‘to track back’.

Tamsin Donaldson



Home

“I call my picture Home
The hand is the mountain
The kangaroo is food
The people are hunting
And the green leaves mean
plenty of water for our people.”

Sharron Ohlsen, Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan

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For further information about the joint management of lands in NSW contact the Office of the Registrar for a copy of the ‘Guide to the Aboriginal Ownership and joint management of lands in NSW.’

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Tamsin Donaldson began learning from Ngiyampaa people in 1972. She is the author of *Ngiyambaa the Language of the Wangaaybuwan*; co-editor of *Songs of Aboriginal Australia*, and co-editor of *Seeing the First Australians*. Formerly research linguist at AIATSIS, she is now a visiting fellow at ANU.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIATSIS – Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Studies

ANU – Australian National University

APB, APB Stations – Aboriginal Protection Board Stations

Lake Mungo – Lake Mungo National Park

Mayi – Aboriginal person or people

Mt Grenfell, Mount Grenfell – Mount Grenfell Historic Site

Mutawintji – Mutawintji National Park

NSW – New South Wales



NEW SOUTH WALES

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

I am honoured to have had some involvement in the process of returning Mount Grenfell Historic Site to its Aboriginal Owners for joint management under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. Since the inception of the legislation relating to joint management, I have been promoting the process and organising additional funding from companies such as Rio Tinto Mining. This additional funding has allowed for an Aboriginal Negotiation Panel to negotiate lease agreements with the Minister for the Environment. Further to the joint management of Mount Grenfell Historic site many outcomes have occurred. This publication is one example of the positive outcomes associated to this government process.

It gives me great pleasure to see a publication of this quality being produced for the Aboriginal people who have a cultural association with Mount Grenfell. The return of Mount Grenfell to Aboriginal Ownership and the joint management of the Mount Grenfell Historic Site have moved many steps forward since the completion of the original report and the registration of Aboriginal Owners. It is inspiring to see the dedication and perseverance of the Aboriginal Owners of Mount Grenfell, who have fought relentlessly to see the return of Mount Grenfell.

A highly qualified research team that has many years experience with the Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan people compiled this report. I believe the teams combined years of research, experience and regular community consultation have definitely influenced the quality of this publication.

The original report and this publication are both a testament to the excellent working relationship between Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan community and The Office of the Registrar. That relationship has resulted in a report that not only allows people to register as Aboriginal Owners, but also provides information and knowledge back to the community. I have always worked closely with the Mount Grenfell Aboriginal community and the Registrar's Office, to encourage the best outcome for the community endorsing the Aboriginal Ownership and joint management model.

The day is fast approaching when Mount Grenfell Historic Site will be returned to Aboriginal Ownership and jointly managed by Aboriginal Owners. I am looking forward to this occurring and congratulate all those people that have been involved in this initiative to empower the Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan people.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colin Markham".

Colin Markham MP
Member For Wollongong
Parliamentary Secretary For Aboriginal Affairs
Parliamentary Secretary For The Illawarra
 7 March 2003

INTRODUCTION

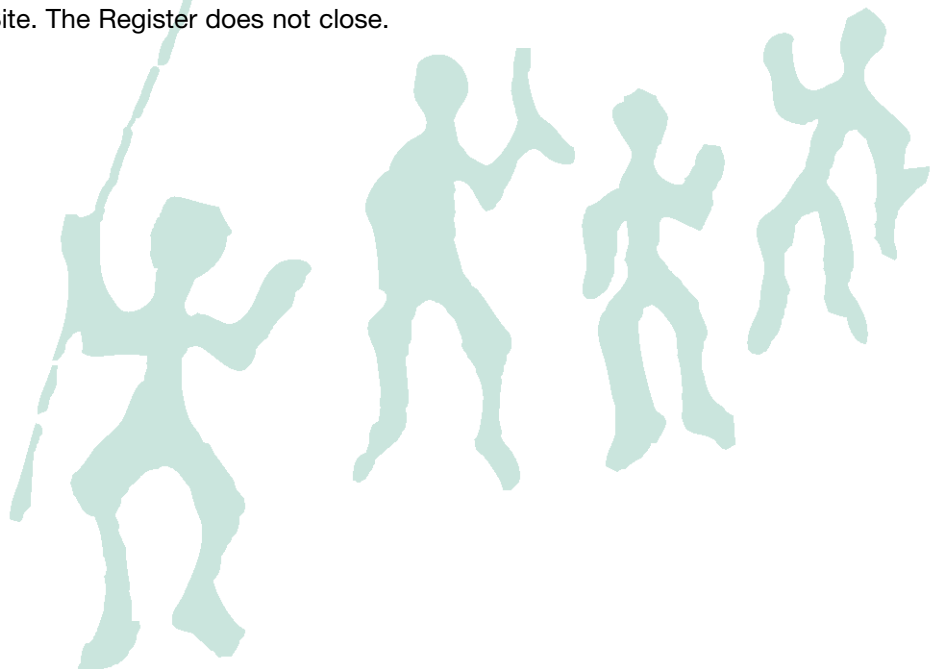
The publication of *Yapapunakirri* represents a culmination of activity that began in mid 2000 by the Office of the Registrar, *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*, to enter the names of Aboriginal people in the Register of Aboriginal owners for the Mt Grenfell Historic Site. Countless hours spent travelling, talking and debating by staff and consultants engaged by the Office of the Registrar, and Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan people involved in the process of the Aboriginal ownership and joint management of the Mt Grenfell Historic Site, resulted in this publication.

The Office of the Registrar was prescribed the role of keeping a Register of Aboriginal owners with the passing of the *National Parks and Wildlife (Aboriginal Ownership) Amendment Act 1996*, by the NSW Parliament in December 1996.

Aboriginal people listed in the Register may be appointed by the Minister for the Environment to boards of management for lands recognised as being of cultural significance to Aboriginal people. These lands are listed on Schedule 14 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. Lands claimed by Local Aboriginal Land Councils and refused on the basis of nature conservation, may also become part of this process. The title to the lands may be transferred to an Aboriginal Land Council and leased back to the Minister for the Environment. The land is then jointly managed by the Aboriginal owners and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

In acknowledgement of the problems and concerns regarding the Register of Aboriginal owners the Office of the Registrar engaged a team of researchers expert in the fields of anthropology, history, linguistics and genealogical research to compile a report detailing the family history of Ngiyampaa people with a cultural association with Mt Grenfell and the history and nature of their associations with the Mt Grenfell Historic Site and surrounding country, and assist in the preparation of personal genealogies and statements of cultural areas and cultural associations for Aboriginal people requesting entry in the Register. This team included Dr Jeremy Beckett, Dr Tamsin Donaldson, Mr Bradley Steadman and Mr Steve Meredith.

A version of this publication has been used by the Registrar, along with other relevant information, to enter the names of Aboriginal people in the Register of Aboriginal owners for the Mount Grenfell Historic Site. Additional requests continue to be received and the names of Aboriginal people continue to be entered in the Register of Aboriginal owners for the Mount Grenfell Historic Site. The Register does not close.



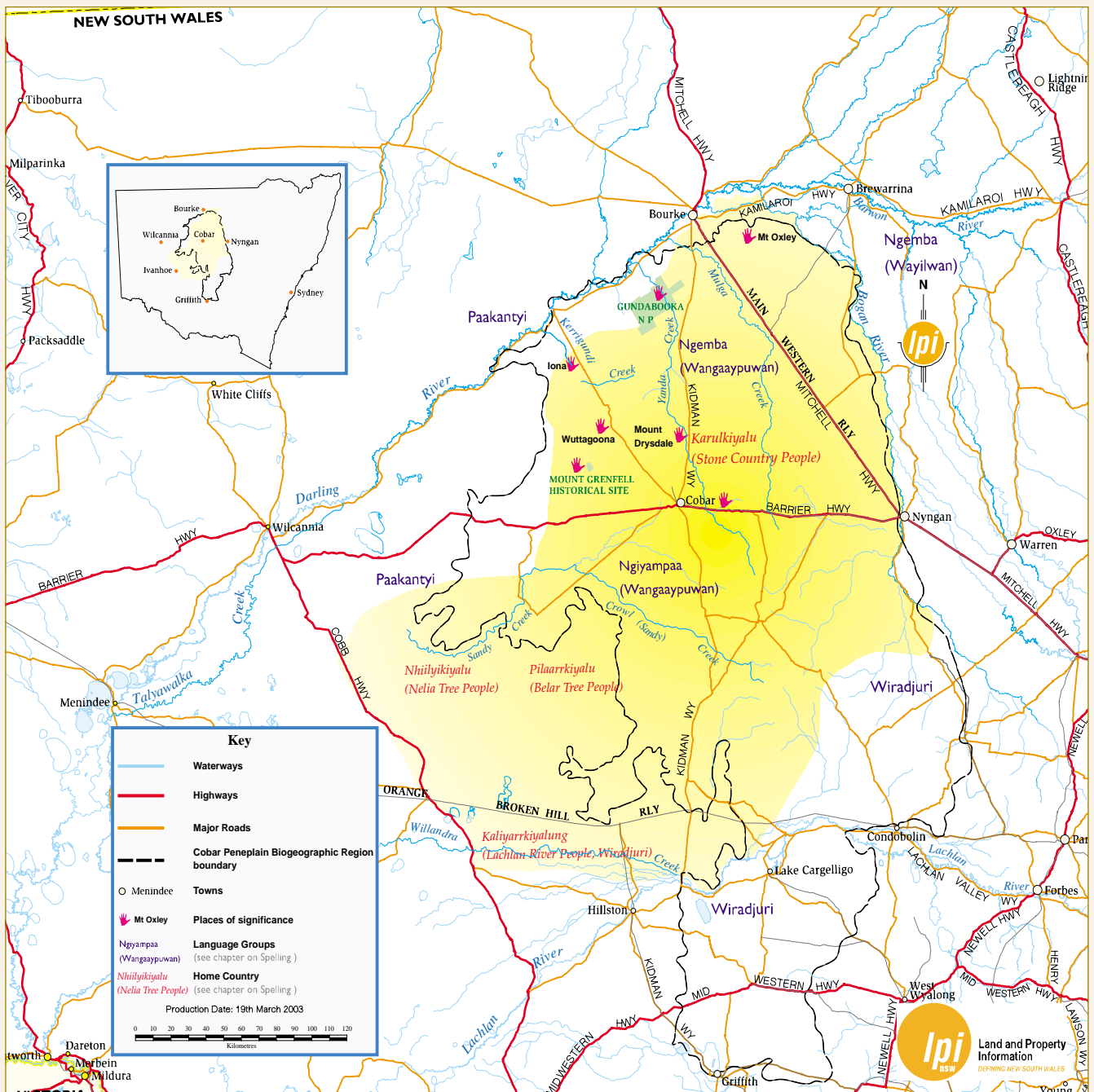
INTRODUCTION

This publication consists of three parts, the first written by Tamsin Donaldson gives an introduction to writing and reading Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan and the way in which the language names have been spelled with particular reference to the maps created for this publication. Jeremy Beckett provides an anthropological and ethnographical discussion of the history and association of the Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan people with the Mt Grenfell Historic Site and surrounding landscape. The final part written by Tamsin Donaldson details the use, application and history of the Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan language or ‘word-world.’ Steve Meredith and Bradley Steadman have been a vital source of information and sounding boards to both Jeremy and Tamsin in the writing of their respective parts, and have been responsible in producing genealogies for people requesting entry in the Register of Aboriginal owners.

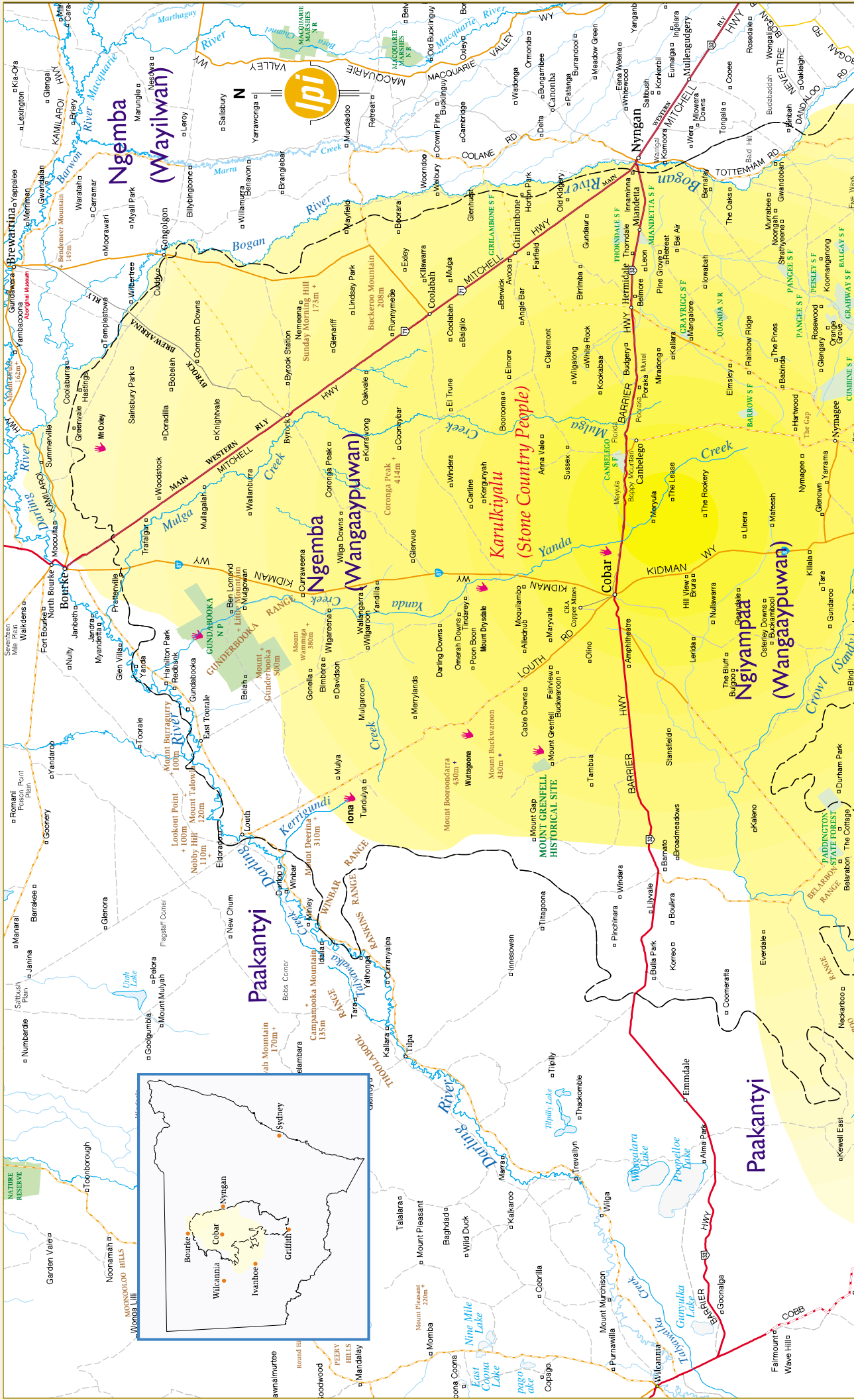
The original report to the Registrar and this publication did not and does not attempt to conclusively identify Aboriginal people across NSW or Australia with a cultural association to land situated within the Mount Grenfell Historic Site; or to be a definitive statement as to the only people considered to be Aboriginal owners of, or who have an association with, or connection to, land in the Mount Grenfell Historic Site or the western region of NSW; nor is it a statement of the connection of Aboriginal people with the land contained within the Mount Grenfell Historic Site for the purposes of claiming and establishing Native title rights and interests.

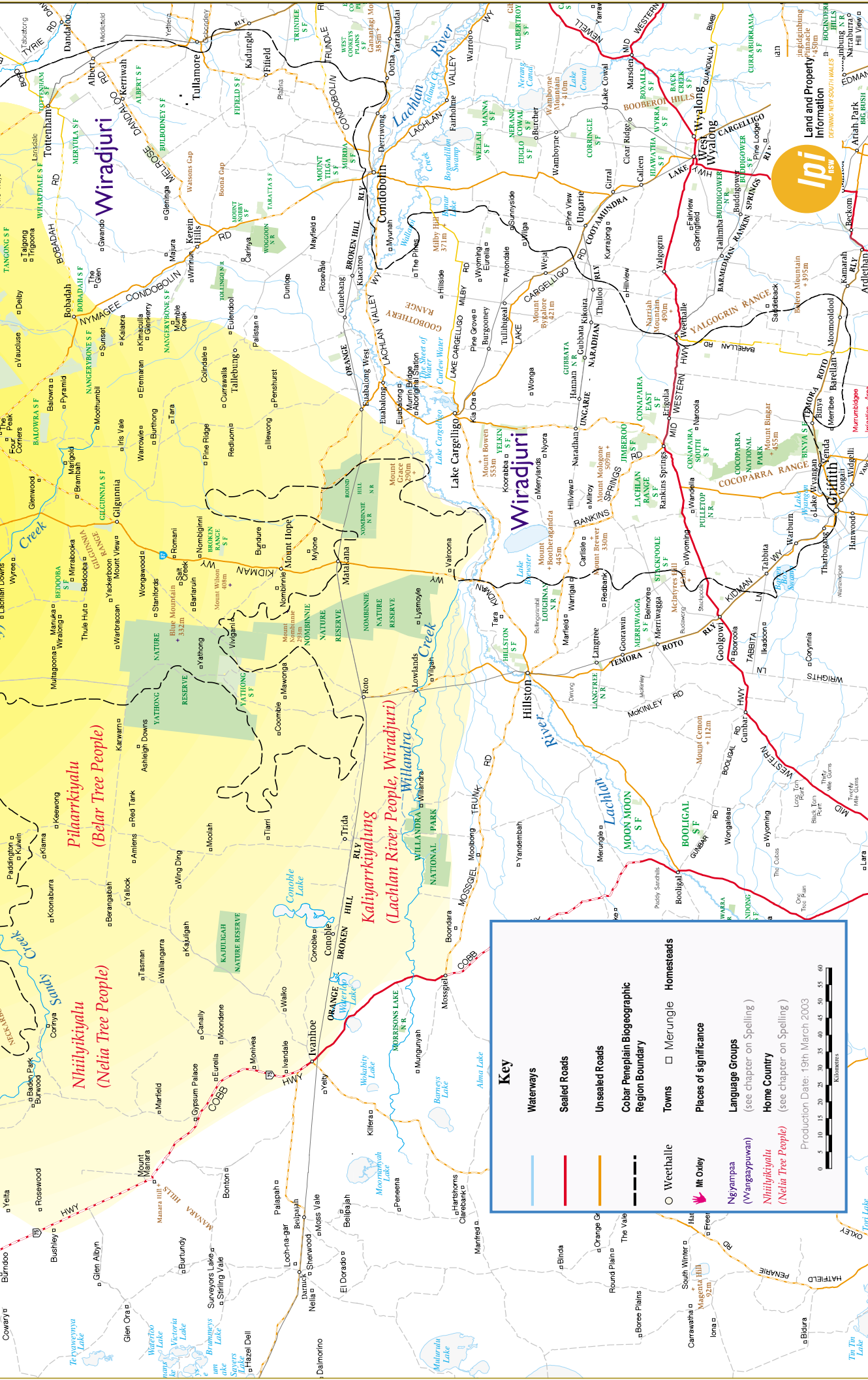
Lastly and most importantly it is acknowledged that Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan and other Aboriginal people are associated with, and connected to, the Mt Grenfell Historic Site and their land by ways, means and forms not expressed in this publication.

The Cultural Area of Aboriginal people associated with Mt Grenfell Historic Site



The Cultural Area of Aboriginal people associated with Mt Grenfell Historic Site





Ngiyampaa-Wangaypuwan people lived within the country roughly bounded by the Darling-Barwon, Lachlan and Bogan Rivers, but they were 'dry-landers' who usually stayed in the back country. The positioning of the borderlands where they met and mixed with Paakantyi, Wiradjuri and Wayilwan people is based on incomplete information and may need some revision.

1 SPELLING: WRITING AND READING NGIYAMPAA WANGAAYPUWAN

In this publication, whenever you see words of Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan written in italics, they have been written according to the 'Ngiyampaa Alphabet Book' system (Johnson et al., 1982). This means that if they are new to you, and you can't ask a Ngiyampaa *mayi* (person) who knows them to say them for you, you can work out how to pronounce them.

The authors of the alphabet book who spoke the tape that goes with it were all Belar country people from the Keewong and Trida mobs. We can't make a tape to go with this publication. If we could we would invite people from all parts of Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan country to join in making it.

In this chapter I am doing the next best thing, setting out the Ngiyampaa alphabet writing system to show the nearest sounds of English for each sound of Ngiyampaa.

1.1 The Ngiyampaa Alphabet Book Spelling System

Each distinct sound in Ngiyampaa is written with a single letter or pair of letters. This is the full list of sounds:

a, aa, k, i, ii, l, m, n, ng, nh, ny, p, r, rr, t, th, ty, u, uu, w, y

These are the sounds that usually begin words:

k, m, ng, nh, p, th, w, y

These are the sounds that usually end words:

a, aa, i, ii, l, n, rr, u, uu, y

Vowel sounds, and how to say them

- a* like the underlined parts of love, touch, mulga (the tree's name in English comes from the word *malka*)
- aa* the same as *a* but longer, like Belar (the tree's name in English comes from the word *pilaarr*)

- i* like tin, pretty: *pilaarr*
- ii* the same as *i* but longer, like see, leaf, ski, nelia (the tree's name in English comes from the word *nhiilyi*)
- u* like put, good: *karul* 'stone or rock'
- uu* the same as *u* but longer, like moon: *muumpal* 'black wattle tree'

Consonant sounds and how to say them

- k* always like skill, never like kill, a bit like kick or gig: *karul*
- p* always like spill, never like pill, a bit like pip or bib: *pilaarr*
- t* always like still, never like till, a bit like tit or did: *yatama* 'good'
- ng* always like singer, never like finger: *ngiya* 'word', *wirringan mayi* 'clever person',
- nh* like nip, but put your tongue between your teeth as for thin: *nhiilyi*
- th* like tin, but put your tongue between your teeth as for thin: *thina* 'foot'
- ny* always like canyon, never like many (flatten your tongue against the roof of your mouth): *wiinya* 'sits, lives'
- ty* like peach or judge, but flatten your tongue against the roof of your mouth: *tyirityirri* 'willy wagtail'
- rr* like a Scottish pronunciation of Mary, marry: *parrima* 'gun', *Kuparr* 'Cobar'

Say *l, m, n, r, w, y*, as you would in English words

Always emphasise the vowel at the beginning of a word unless a long *aa, ii* or *uu* follows immediately: *karul, nhiilyi, pilaarr*.

Some tricky sounds to hear and write using the alphabet

It helps to explain how to make Ngiyampaa sounds by indicating the closest sounds in English. But of course it helps even more to hear a Ngiyampaa speaker say the Ngiyampaa words they come in. (That is why the Ngiyampaa alphabet book has a tape to go with it.)

Most of the Ngiyampaa sounds that are new to people who only speak English are extra sounds that English doesn't have. But there are three, written above as *k,p,t*, which are each a bit like two distinct sounds of English. For instance in English changing 'k' sounds to 'g' sounds changes the meaning: 'kick' means something different from 'gig'. But in Ngiyampaa and all the other languages mentioned in this publication the sound is somewhere between the two, and sounds like the unusual sound of 'k' after 's' in English 'skill'. (See what happens if you try to say a 'g' sound after 's', as if the word were written 'sgill'. You probably won't be able to make it sound different). But there's no special letter for that in the English alphabet, so you have to choose one or the other to write each of these three Ngiyampaa sounds: 'k' or 'g', 'p' or 'b', 't' or 'd'. Some writers have sometimes used both letters of each pair together, like Richardson putting 'dt' together when reporting what the people told him about Wittagoona (See Part 3 A Ngiyampaa description for 'galleries' visited from Wittagoona station). Others have tried inventing a new letter like 'b' on top of 'p' for writing by hand. But then you can't find such a thing on any keyboard.

Whatever set of letters you choose, the meaning of the words you use them in doesn't alter, only the twang of your pronunciation if you read them the English way. So if you read *k* like 'k' in English or *g* like 'g' in English you might just sound as if you come from a different mob that's lighter or heavier in the tongue than your own mob, or like someone who is only used to speaking English.

1.2 Spelling the Language Name

Let us now look at how the choice between 'p' and 'b' has worked out in the spelling of the language name. I wrote a grammar of the language my teachers taught me in the 1970s and we agreed to call it 'Ngiyambaa the language of the Wangaaybuwan' using 'b's not 'p's, and I was writing their tree country name Bilaarrgiyalu (Donaldson, 1980). But when we got together to make the 'Ngiyampaa Alphabet Book' we used 'p's not 'b's. One reason was that my teachers were very disappointed by the way some people who had never heard the language spoken pronounced the name Ngiyambaa. They complained that it shouldn't end in "baa' like a sheep", but should sound more like 'damper'. Another reason was the results of a game we played with people who had never seen words in the language written before. We wrote some using 'b' and some using 'p', some using 'k' and some 'g', some 't' and some 'd' on cards. Then the language speakers said the words and the readers had to find them on the cards. More people found them more quickly on the cards with 'k','p' and 't' than on the ones with 'g', 'b' and 'd'. And so we decided to use *k, p, t* and have kept using them ever since.

In 1997 I put together 'Ngiyampaa Wordworld 1: *Thippingku Yuwi, Maka Ngiya*: Names of Birds and Other Words' (Donaldson 1997). It contains all the stories, songs and example sentences from 'Ngiyambaa the language of the Wangaaybuwan', all of them rewritten using the 'Ngiyampaa Alphabet Book' spelling system.

This is the story of how a lot of mainly Belar country people and others interested in writing the language have got used to spelling the language name Ngiyampaa with a 'p'. Many people further north have seen these books and found the alphabet spelling system useful, but they have a tradition of spelling the name with a 'b'.

1 SPELLING: WRITING AND READING NGIYAMPAA WANGAAYPUWAN

1.3 The Sound Systems of Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan and of Neighbouring Languages

This alphabet book writing system can be used to show how to pronounce all the words Belar people use, and can also be used for the words of people from different kinds of country further north, many of whom are used to writing the name Ngemba, whether they speak with *wangaay* as their word for 'no' or whether they use *wayil* as their word for 'no'. The system can be used to show the pronunciation of Wiradjuri words too. This is because all of these languages and different ways of talking the same language have the same full set of distinct sounds which go to make up words, regardless of how many words each has in common and regardless of which words are exactly the same or a tiny bit different or quite different, and regardless of whether people speak with a slightly different twang or accent.

Paakantyi is the only language on the map whose sound system is different. It has all the same sounds plus some extra sounds that Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan does not, and it has very few words in common with Ngiyampaa.

1.4 Language Names in the Text

For all these reasons and for consistency and simplicity's sake we have decided to use the Ngiyampaa Alphabet Book spelling system for the language names in the text, whichever kind or kinds of Ngiyampaa we are writing about, but on the map we use the spellings the local people tend to know or prefer in each area.

1.5 Language Names on the Map

Ngemba – this is a spelling used by several early writers especially in the north. It became well known when Norman Tindale put it on his language map. It recognises that some speakers especially in the north tend to run the sound sequence *iya* together so that it sounds like English 'e'. It also recognises that the same people usually pronounce the *p/b* sound so that English speakers hear it as more like English 'b' than like English 'p'.

Ngiyampaa – this is the 'Ngiyampaa Alphabet Book' system's spelling.

Wiradjuri – this is another spelling used by Norman Tindale which is in common use today. Ngiyampaa people and their closest Wiradjuri neighbours pronounced the name *Wirraathurray*. There were lots of other pronunciations in different parts of Wiradjuri country before everybody began speaking English nearly all the time.

Paakantyi – this is the spelling in the Paakantyi dictionary system's spelling (Hercus 1993) which works like the Ngiyampaa system where the sounds are the same.

All the other names on the map, whether purple or red, are written using the Ngiyampaa alphabet system. *Kaliyarrkiyalung* is a Wiradjuri name ending in *ng*. Ngiyampaa people pronounce it *Kaliyarrkiyalu*. Wiradjuri people of Peak Hill have chosen to use *g* instead of *k* for the *k/g* sound in their alphabet book (Williams 1993), so they write the name *Galiyarrgiyalung*. *Galiyarr* (*Kaliyarr* in the Ngiyampaa alphabet system) is the name of the Lachlan River.

2 ETHNOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

Mt Grenfell Historic Site is a place of significance for Aboriginal people. Located approximately 50 km north west of Cobar, the area was gazetted as a Historic Site in the early 1970s. The permanent spring, the rock art, the archeological evidence of ancient camp sites, as well as stone working, which have been documented in F. D. McCarthy's pioneering study, *Rock Art of the Cobar Pediplain* (1976), establish this beyond question. Unfortunately, the effects of European occupation, beginning in the mid 19th century, were to make the place inaccessible to Aboriginal people until the early 1970s. Since that time, Aboriginal people have been visiting the place. Some of them now wish to put their cultural association with it on a formal footing. After the interval of some four generations, and a lot of population movement, it is not possible to pinpoint a particular group of hereditary custodians. It is clear, however, that Mt Grenfell is situated in Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan country (in spelling the names in this way, we are following Tamsin Donaldson's linguistic work with Belar tree people (see map and chapter on spelling where other pronunciations and other spellings are also recognised and discussed) and that their descendants are the appropriate custodians, particularly those whose ancestors lived within a radius of approximately 100-150 km of Mt Grenfell at the time of settlement.

Drawing on ethno-historical and anthropological evidence, this chapter will describe the Aboriginal occupation of the Cobar peneplain and adjacent areas as it was before Europeans arrived and during the early years of settlement. It will situate the Aboriginal people who lived in the vicinity of Mt Grenfell in an ecological zone, a language world and a cultural area, describing the various ways in which they identified themselves with and against the Aboriginal people that they met.

The patterns of European settlement will then be documented and assessed for their impact on the lives of the Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan over the next century and a half, particularly the removal and dispersal of those who had once lived in the vicinity of Mt Grenfell.

The chapter will conclude by describing the revitalisation of interest in the past among contemporary Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan people since the 1970s, and it will trace the descent of those who now wish to register as Aboriginal owners of the Mt Grenfell site to Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan who were living in the area before or about the time when European settlement began around the middle of the 19th century.



Early meeting of Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan *Mayi* with the Office of the Registrar, *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* to discuss the Aboriginal ownership and joint management of Mt Grenfell at the Cobar Racecourse in December 2000. (Rachel Lenehan)

2 ETHNOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

2.1 The Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan People

Living on the peneplain

The Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan people are associated with country roughly bounded in the north by the Darling-Barwon and Bogan Rivers, and in the south by the Lachlan (see map). The Ngiyampaa Wayilwan were associated with the southern bank of the Barwon, the Macquarie marshes and eastward towards Walgett. Tamsin Donaldson's study of post-settlement place names through this country establishes that many of them are derived from Ngiyampaa words.

East of the upper, more southern part of the Bogan and along the Lachlan was the country of the Wiradjuri, who were related neighbours of the Ngiyampaa. To the south west, towards the lower Darling River, was the country of the Paakantyi, a people whose culture differed from that of the Ngiyampaa to a greater extent than that of the Wiradjuri. A senior Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan man, the late Dave Harris, stated that the Tallywalka Creek provided a kind of boundary zone between Ngiyampaa and Paakantyi, although both groups visited Mt Manara (Harris 1964).¹ The significance of these identifications will be discussed below; here it will simply be stated that the Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan people were associated with the dry backcountry, visiting the rivers only in times of severe drought.

The backcountry, which the Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan inhabited, consisted mainly of what is today called the Cobar peneplain, together with some country on its south western edge, along Willandra Creek. The peneplain is a plateau of flat and undulating country of which scattered hills and ranges are a feature and it dips

from 240m above sea level in the south to 150m in the north. Temperatures reach 38 degrees in summer and there are frosts in winter. Rainfall is normally around 359mm, but the country experiences periodic drought and flood. There are no permanent streams. However, Theresa Bonhomme's archeological research on the peneplain (1983) argues that the early settlers exaggerated the lack of water. After rain, creeks rise in the hills, including Kerrigundi, Sandy, Mulga and Yanda Creeks, as well as many smaller watercourses. It seems probable that they did not flow as fast as they do today, a result of settlers clearing the creek beds of obstructions (Gaynor MacDonald pers.com.). When these are dry, waterholes and soakages remain, some of them permanent.

The inhabitants also enlarged or constructed water holes, and found ways of preventing evaporation (Cunningham 1964). Rain and run-off also feed shallow lakes or swamps, those which are muddy evaporating more slowly than those which are clear (Harris interview 1964). Bonhomme writes, '...Aborigines used the full range of water sources.' 'A series of lake depressions tracks the backcountry from Lake Conoble to ...Mt Grenfell. The distances between these lakes are not greater than 70 km, with the average distance being about 30 km. Each of these basins responds to a local hydrological regime, not being connected to any large river system.' Bonhomme concludes, '...it is apparent that the average mobile Aborigine would have little difficulty in occupying this region during any but the most severe droughts.' (Bonhomme 1983:17-18).

¹ An early source describes Paakantyi speaking people coming into Ivanhoe (Cameron 1899). Other sources speak of a Parrintyi people inhabiting the country to the east of the lower Darling, but during this research there were no people who claimed descent from this group.

Although the Paakantyi seem to have kept the backcountry people away from the river, they allowed them access during severe drought, though, it is said, only at the points where the soil was red, as it was in the interior (Gresser 1963). There is a similar tradition regarding the Bogan (Brad Steadman pers.com.). Wiradjuri people controlled the Lachlan River frontage and normally excluded backcountry Ngiyampaa who had access to the Willandra Creek, which was fed by overflow from the river.

Mt Grenfell is situated in a valley, the sides of which provide catchment for a number of streams after rain and soakages for some months after. It also has a permanent water hole. After rain, the place could support a large gathering of people for at least a short period, and a small number at any time. A number of old campsites are still to be seen, and there is surface evidence of stone working. Mt Grenfell is like other rock art sites on the peneplain, such as Gundabooka, Wittagoona and Cobar (although its paintings have been destroyed), in having a permanent water hole. This would have had mystical significance, since springs were personified in the 'rainbow serpent' (called *waaway* in Ngiyampaa) which figures in Aboriginal belief throughout Australia. Identified with springs, bores and the formation of water courses, such creatures are beneficent, but are dangerous if aroused (Harris 1964), and have to be approached with ritual precautions by people with the appropriate knowledge. A visitor in 1904 learned from some Ngiyampaa men that a similar site at Wittagoona was '*Pap'padthee*' which he understood to mean holy, sacred or mysterious (Richards 1908; for alternative explanations see Donaldson's section on 'a Ngiyampaa description for 'galleries' visited from Wittagoona station').

Mt Grenfell also provided resources, which were of importance in people's lives. It had a quarry of fine-grained chert, used in the manufacture of small blades; the ground around the creek is covered with flakes and cores, which show signs of stone working. The site also has deposits of red ochre, a material used both for the rock paintings and for ritual body painting. It was traded to the southern end of the peneplain, where there was no ochre.

In sum, Mt Grenfell is a place that combined useful resources of stone, ochre and permanent water for the people of the peneplain, with the supernatural presence of the *waaway* and the significance of the paintings, which at this late date we can only guess. However, Paul Gordon, who has lived in the area most of his life, suggests that they were used for teaching (pers.com).



One of the art galleries at the Mt Grenfell Historic Site. (Adam Black)

2 ETHNOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

Language speakers

The Aboriginal habitation of the peneplain cannot be understood in terms of 'tribal' territories. The delineation of cultural boundaries and the identification of social groups and categories in this region was a complex matter which will take some pages to explain.

Here, as in other parts of the country, people identified themselves in various ways, according to the people they were with at the time and the kinds of transactions going on between them. The early Western writers' impulse has been to stress overarching categories such as 'nation' and 'tribe'; but Wangaaypuwan Ngiyampaa society had no centre. Although people occasionally gathered together in groups of several hundred for ceremonies, they spent most of their lives in small groups, having occasional contact with neighbours. Contacts might be with other peoples such as Wayilwan Ngiyampaa or Wiradjuri or Paakantyi. To organise these various encounters, the Wangaaypuwan, like other Aboriginal people, used a complex vocabulary for the socio-cultural categories they recognised. There has also been a tendency to regard boundaries in terms of hard and fast demarcations of rights; without using a specific Ngiyampaa word for them, the Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan also recognised boundaries, but often as places where people met and mingled (cf. Cameron 1899: 217).

Briefly, language defined the largest groupings: thus Ngiyampaa referred to your talk, lingo or, literally, 'word world'. Wangaaypuwan referred to the people who spoke Ngiyampaa the Wangaaypuwan way, literally, 'Wangaay-with', there being other ways of speaking Ngiyampaa, as well as other languages. Language was associated with a particular territory. People also

identified with a homeland, *ngurram-paa* literally 'camp-world', which might be identified by reference to characteristic features, and with particular named camping places, situated within the locality (Donaldson 1984; this publication). Cutting across the language and territorial identifications, there was also a system of social categories. This is based upon notions of descent and kinship classification, including clans, moieties and sections, as well as classificatory kinship terms which could, in principle, be extended to structure relations with anyone one was likely to meet (Beckett 1959).

The ethno-historical evidence is sometimes confusing, as might be expected in the case of people of the peneplain whose lives have been disrupted by colonisation over some 150 years. Our understanding is that Ngiyampaa refers to the language spoken by the people living on the Cobar peneplain, but also on the southern bank of the Barwon near Brewarrina, and across the Macquarie Marshes as far as Walgett. The Wangaaypuwan Ngiyampaa, however, were associated with the peneplain proper, sometimes referring to themselves as *kaliny-tyalapaang-kiyalu*, meaning 'dry land people', literally 'water-without-people' (Donaldson 1984; this publication).

The historical sources confuse this issue by sometimes referring to Ngiyampaa (allowing for differences in spelling, e.g. Yamba, Gai-amba, Eamba, Engemba, Ngeumba, Ngemba)² and sometimes to Wangaaypuwan (often spelled Wongaibon or Wonghibon) as though they were different groups. As Donaldson has shown (1980; 1984) however, Wangaaypuwan is Ngiyampaa spoken a particular way, and its speakers normally identified themselves by the latter term, unless they wanted to differentiate themselves from other kinds of Ngiyampaa.

² Some of these spellings reflect English-speakers' frequent difficulty in hearing 'ng' at the beginning of a word (no English words begin this way). Those who spelled the name Ngemba not only heard the 'ng', they also heard how many Aboriginal people at the northern end of the peneplain tend to run the sequence spelt *iya* in the Ngiyampaa alphabet book writing system together. They took it to sound enough like an English 'e' to write it that way. Although we use standardised spelling here in the text it should be remembered that Aboriginal pronunciation of words varied according to locality (See map and chapter on spelling).

Wayilwan was another way of speaking Ngiyampaa, by people on the northeast edge of the peneplain, towards Walgett.

Wangaaypuwan i.e. 'with *wangaay*' means the people who use *wangaay* for 'no'. Wiradjuri i.e. 'with *wirraay*' means the people who say *wirraay* for 'no' and this was the largest group in contact with the Ngiyampaa. Among Ngiyampaa living in the Macquarie Marshes and towards Walgett, people used a different word for 'no', *wayil*, and were known as Wayilwan i.e. 'with *wayil*'. This way of naming groups by reference to the word for no is applied to people not mentioned in this publication e.g. *Gamilaraay* the people who use '*gamil*' for 'no'. People also referred to other kinds of linguistic differences among Wangaaypuwan; thus Dave Harris (who grew up on Keewong) referred to 'people' associated with Byrock, Nyngan and Gilgunya, as being 'a different tribe altogether... Talk a bit different, although you could understand them' (Harris 1964; also Donaldson 1980). Harris however, denied that they were Wayilwan, a group he located further east.

Local groupings

Let us review the evidence from around 1900. Mathews (1904) located the 'Ngeumba' 'from Brewarrina southerly, up the Bogan almost to Nyngan. They stretched thence westerly beyond Cobar and Byrock, including the upper portions of Mulga Creek and surrounding country'. Dunbar (1943-4), who grew up in the area, identified the people living round Coronga Peak as 'Ngemba' and suggested that Gundabooka was also their country.

Further south, an early settler, Cameron, located the 'Wonghibone', from Mossgiel and Ivanhoe, up to Cobar, Nymagee and Nyngan, overlapping with Mathews' placing of the 'Ngeumba'. Mathews later stated that Wangaaypuwan territory ran from about Booligal up the Lachlan to Euabalong,³ thence to Nyngan, Cobar, Paddington and Ivanhoe.

These sources could be taken to say that the people to the north of the peneplain were Ngiyampaa, while those to the south were Wangaaypuwan.⁴ However, the grandson of one of the first squatters in the Cobar area stated that the people living round Wittagoona station (near Louth) in the 1870s and 1880s were Wangaaypuwan (Mathew 1935), and the word list taken by Mathew from his father confirms this (Donaldson pers.com.). The article on the Ngiyampaa language that Mathews published in 1905, probably based on interviews with men around Byrock, lists *wangaay* as the word for 'no', which identifies them as Wangaaypuwan.

The amateur linguist Richards, who visited the area in 1908, reported that there were no longer Aboriginal people living on Wittagoona station. However, in Cobar he met men 'who belonged to the Wongai-bon(y)' (i.e. Wangaaypuwan) and N(y)ee'ambaa' (i.e. Ngiyampaa) tribes' who told him that their fathers 'owned the country of the *yabbon(y)*' (i.e. hieroglyphic writing – strictly, the marks) (see Donaldson's section on a Ngiyampaa name for country with 'rock art').⁵

³ In 1957, Beckett found that Aboriginal people from Euabalong identified as Wiradjuri, and were known as such to the Wangaaypuwan who had been settled nearby at Murrin Bridge.

⁴ This is how Janet Mathews draws her map in her compilation of R.H.Mathews' myths (1994).

⁵ Richard's account is confused by his theory that the paintings were evidence of non-Aboriginal influence, and on no particular evidence he suggests that the real owners of the paintings might have been the Darling River people, who sometimes travelled up Kerrigundi Creek.

⁶ Most of the families came either from the southern end of the peneplain, around Willandra Creek, or from Keewong.

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The people that Beckett encountered at Murrin Bridge (near Lake Cargelligo) in 1957, whose ancestors had come from the peneplain,⁶ called their language Ngiyampaa, and only on being questioned identified themselves as Wangaaypuwan, if they knew the term at all (Beckett 1959). Donaldson's experience with Ngiyampaa speakers in the 1970s was similar (Donaldson 1984).

Ngiyampaa further identified people according to the kind of country (*ngurrampaa*) in which they lived: the *pilaarr-kiyalu* or Belar tree people lived in the country bounded by Willandra Creek in the south and Sandy Creek, beyond Cobar, as far as Gundabooka and across to Coronga Peak. Milne (1912) refers to 'mulga tribe'⁷ as does Mathew (1935). This, however, seems to be the settlers' term; there is no record of any Ngiyampaa people speaking of a *malka-kiyalu* (i.e. mulga country people). Mathew (1935) says the name for Mulga language is 'Wongiwolbon'. R H Mathews recorded these same people as Ngemba, these names all referring to the people occupying the country between the upper Darling and Bogan Rivers. These people, the northern Wangaaypuwan Ngiyampaa seem all to have been Stone country people. This argument is supported by another source. Steve Shaw, who was born at Boppy Mountain (near Cobar), dictated an account of the 'bora ceremony of the Gurr-ill-gaa-loo' (i.e. *karul-kiyalu* in this publication) (Scott 1919). The ceremony in question, also described by Milne (1912), occurred in the Coronga Peak area. The 1919 account was part of a narrative of the 'mulga tribes who had their headquarters at Gundabooka Mountain' (Scott 1919; see also Dunbar above). Milne's article included photographs of Shaw and Billy Coleman, who was born at Wittagoona, which is situated to the south of Gundabooka.

Referring back to Dunbar (above), it seems that the people around Coronga Peak were the same as Milne's mulga people, and that their territory may have extended back to Gundabooka Mountain. Whether Wittagoona was on their territory is unclear, but it is worth noting that Billy Coleman, a leading man around the 1900s and mentioned in Milne's article, was born there. Coleman and many other people mentioned in connection with Wittagoona ended their days at the Brewarrina government station (see below). It is argued that all the homeland groups mentioned here were Wangaaypuwan Ngiyampaa.

Donaldson cites comparable Ngiyampaa names for the Lachlan River peoples, *kaliyarr-kiyalu* (*kaliyarr* being the name for that river), but the Paakantyi are *paawan-kay*, *paawan* referring to both the Darling and Barwon.

Dave Harris (1964) referred to local groups or 'mobs' within the *pilaarr-kiyalu* such as the 'Trida mob' or the 'Keewong mob'. These are the names of stations in operation when he was a boy, but there is an older ring to his statement that they used to be 'frightened of one another', and did not enter one another's domain without seeking permission. Presumably, other local names for swamps perhaps would have been used before people became associated with stations.⁸

⁷ Milne also calls them Gunda-ah-Myro, glossed as referring to the people who stay back from the rivers. This meaning is consistent with the literal meaning for the Ngiyampaa word speakers translate as 'dry-landers'. Brown (1923) referred to the area around Cobar and Mulga Creeks as Kängárama, and that around the Bogan as Waránda. He does not say what the latter name meant; the former according to Brown (Notebook 4) means red soil, but this would describe most of the peneplain. Note however that the linguistic form of these words differs from those ending in – *kiyalu*.

⁸ According to Fred Biggs, men could be named after the swamps with which they were associated, calling them out as they entered the ceremonial ground, see also Mathews 1896, 1897.

Social organisation

Men took their names from the swamps with which they were associated; calling them out as they entered the ceremonial ground, though there could be several owners (Biggs pers. com., Mathews 1896; 1897). Regarding this association, Fred Biggs explained, 'It was in marriage, one time, from any of your wife's relations her uncle (MB), father or from your father or uncle or brother. But you could hunt anywhere. If the owner was around you'd ask him and give him half the meat. But there was always plenty of game.' Dave Harris said that men tended to live with their wives' people. This suggests matrilineal residence, corresponding to the matrilineal totemic clans. Although the 'meat' was not localised, mallee hen and bandicoot people seemed to predominate around Trida and Conoble; black duck around Keewong.

The matri-clans were grouped into two matri-moieties (called Nilpungerra or Kilpungerra and Makungarra), and also into four sections, which sub-divided the moieties on a two generation principle. These social categories organised marriage. Fred Biggs (1957) informed Beckett there are two options in marrying these divisions among Wangaaypuwan: (using capitals for males and lower case for females) Buda marries GABI, GAMBO marries Gabuda, Ibada marries MARI, and IBAI marries Mada; the other option being Buda marries MARI, GAMBO marries Mada, Ibada marries GABI and IBAI marries Gabuda.⁹ These four section names fitted into the thick and thin blood division and also shade or caste divisions. Which option was followed depended on the *thingkaa* or 'meat' of the two matriclans marrying, the law in Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan being that you never married your own 'meat'.

These categories also organised other kinds of transactions including trade and initiation during the *purrrpa* boys' initiation ceremony, not only among Ngiyampaa people but neighbouring groups such as Wiradjuri. In fact this form of social organisation extended through much of northern New South Wales and southern Queensland, beyond the regular interaction of the people of the peneplain.

The Paakantyi also recognised matrilineal clans and moieties but not sections. However, the systems were not radically different, and in fact the Kurnu Paakantyi (living along the Warrego) had adopted the sections, presumably from their Ngiyampaa neighbours.¹⁰ The Darling River constituted a cultural watershed, in terms of language, ritual and mythology, as the Lachlan and Bogan did not. While Ngiyampaa had close affinities with the languages spoken by its eastern neighbours, particularly Wiradjuri, Paakantyi was 'structurally quite different' (Hercus pers.com.), and its affinities lay to the languages further west.

Myth and ritual

The *purrrpa* boys' initiation ceremony, focused on the creator figure, Baiami, and his son Daramulan, was practised throughout the central west of New South Wales, it seems with only minor variations. Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan may not have travelled as far as Gamilaraay country, but they certainly mixed with their neighbours to the east and south, though not with the Paakantyi, who practised a different ceremony.

⁸ According to Fred Biggs, men could be named after the swamps with which they were associated, calling them out as they entered the ceremonial ground, see also Mathews 1896, 1897.

⁹ This is the spelling followed in the ethnographic literature. According to the systematic spelling, which represents pronunciation more exactly (see final chapter), the names would be: *putha*, *kapii*, *kampuu*, *kaputhaa* *yipathaa*, *marrii*, *yipaay*, *mathaa*. Tamsin Donaldson's teachers in the 1970s were not familiar with the moiety names.

¹⁰ Since the end of the 19th century, Paakantyi like Fred Johnson and Harry Mitchell, and Kurnu Paakantyi, like Granny Knight have married into Ngiyampaa people, and many others have done so since.

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Women were present on the edge of the *purrrpa*, but only boys were initiated, and those who conducted the ceremony were men. The leaders were the *wirringan* or ‘clever men’ who had occult knowledge beyond that of ordinary men (Berndt 1947). Among the names remembered are Moses Biggs, Cranky Jimmy, Jack Devine, Moolbong Johnson, Marfield Geordie, Jack Shepherd, Steve Shaw, Billy Coleman, and Tom Sullivan.



Mr Phillip Sullivan, Sites Officer with NPWS at Bourke, is a descendant of Thomas Sullivan. (Elaine Ohlsen)

Purrrpa were held in the region during the 1890s, at one of which Fred Biggs, Kemp Smith and Jack King were initiated. During the 1900s, the ceremony was cut short, but Archie King, Lesley Devine, Lindsay Devine, King, Willy and Jimmy Williams, Charlie Parkes, Jack Smith, and Ernie King, all ‘went through’ at the last *purrrpa* out from Trida in 1914. There was an aborted revival in 1922. (The last of the initiated men Archie King died in 1990. But six were alive as late as 1960.) Around Brewarrina Government Station, it is said that *purrrpa* were held, unknown to the manager, as late as 1940.

The *purrrpa* was focused on the creator being, Baiami.¹¹ The creator being of the Paakantyi, by contrast, was the Kurlawirra (Paakantyi dictionary spelling, Hercus 1993) who was associated with the Darling River and the backcountry to the west and north (Bonney n.d., Dutton 1957-68). Boys’ circumcision was associated with a being called the Milya however, and the rites were significantly different from the *purrrpa* (Beckett 1967).

Ngiyampaa myths described Baiami travelling through the area from Byrock through Mt Drysdale and Cobar to Wittagoona, Gundabooka and back to Brewarrina, leaving his mark on the landscape (Mathews 1907). He was also associated with Mt Manara and Bamiri, near Marfield Station (Biggs 1957), and at a place along Sandy Creek (Harris 1964). According to Paul Gordon, Wittagoona was the place where Baiami assembled all the animals after the work of creation. Emu, kangaroo and porcupine failed to return, and became features of the landscape. The emu became Mt Grenfell, an animal of particular importance in Ngiyampaa practice and belief.¹²

Baiami’s travels do not extend any further west than Mt Manara and Gundabooka. The Kurlawirra’s travels run along the Lower Darling River, and to the north west (Dutton pers. com., Bonney n.d.). However, Mt Grenfell and Mt Manara were among the high places to which people fled during the flood, in the Paakantyi story of ‘*The Star that Fell*’, told by Elsie Jones, who grew up around Menindee on the Lower Darling.

¹¹ There were nine men who had gone through the *purrrpa* still living in western New South Wales around 1958.

¹² Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan should always cook emu in the hole; there were fears of supernatural punishment for griddling it. Mieceke Blows (1995) has stressed the significance of the emu in her study of southeast Australian mythology.

In the harsh country of the peneplain, people moved about a good deal, in search of livelihood, but also to attend ceremonial gatherings, which provided an opportunity for initiating boys, contracting marriages, settling disputes and trade. The distances covered were considerable. Thus in 1871 surveyors described the Cobar water hole 'as a sort of central or meeting ground between the Mossgiel and the Gundabooka blacks, in connection with their religious ceremonies and warlike tendencies.' (Department of Mines 1923, quoted in Erskine et al.1997). Older family members told Paul Gordon that Yanda and Mulga Creeks, which run from near Cobar down to the Darling after rain, provided a route for travel between these points (pers.com.). Sandy and Buckwaroon Creeks would have provided a similar route for the people coming from the south. Mathews attended a *purrpa* on the Macquarie River in 1893, which was attended by people from the Castlereagh, the Bogan, the Barwon and 'the tribe from Cobar' (1896; 1897). He attended another on Conoble station (near Ivanhoe) in 1898, which was attended by people from Hillston, Keewong, Cobar, Ivanhoe and Paddington (R H Mathews 1901).¹³

Fred Biggs, born around 1880 near Ivanhoe and initiated before the end of the century, had travelled as far as the Bogan as a young man. He stated that his people obtained their paint from Cobar and Mt Manara, and exchanged wooden spears for reed spears (the latter probably from the Bogan). It seems likely that Mt Grenfell ochre and stone also figured in this trade. As stated earlier, the site had large deposits of fine-grained chert, used for making scrapers and other small blades, and red ochre, which would have gone into the trade network. As seems often to be the case, the significance of the paintings has to be inferred in the absence of

documented evidence, though Paul Gordon (pers.com.) suggests that they were used to teach children about the techniques of hunting. The presence of a *waaway* meant that the area would have had to be approached with ritual precautions, perhaps known only to the 'clever men' (*wirringan*). Just who used Mt Grenfell and its resources cannot be stated with certainty. It was only a short distance from Cobar and its big water hole, but within 100 km 'as the crow flies' of Coronga Peak, Keewong, Paddington, Kaleno, Neckarbo, Wittagoona and Gundabooka, all places where Ngiyampaa people camped, and within 150 km of Byrock, and Baden Park. Trida and Conoble are some 200 km to the south; Brewarrina some 200 km to the north.

Summing up

In situating Mt Grenfell in a 'cultural area' we have to distinguish between the 'bird's eye view' of non-indigenous ethnography and the cultural horizons as experienced by Aboriginal people at a particular place and time. From an ethnographic perspective, we can speak of the peoples of interior southeastern Australia, who participated in the Baiami cult and shared an essentially uniform system of social organisation. Their languages were similar in structure. Using these criteria, we can speak of the Paakantyi people living along the Lower Darling and to the west and north, as constituting a different cultural area. Using the perspective of cultural ecology, we can also differentiate between people along the great river systems of interior NSW and the 'dry land' or 'back country' people who had a way of living finely adapted to its particular conditions. Although the language they spoke was most often called Ngiyampaa, all the backcountry Ngiyampaa speakers were Wangaaypuwan, that is their word for 'no' was '*waangaay*'.

¹³ Mathews calls both of these *purrpa* 'Wiradhuri', although neither was conducted on the country he identifies with Wiradjuri in other articles. Moreover, apart from Hillston, the places he mentions are all in Ngiyampaa country. However, it is clear that the ritual was essentially the same for this group as for Ngiyampaa, and he seems to have regarded the latter as well as those he describes as the Wangaaypuwan as part of a greater Wiradjuri 'nation'. Ronald Berndt made the same mistake (1947).

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Taking the on-the-ground perspective, we can say that the people living in the vicinity of Mt Grenfell identified themselves as Wangaaypuwan Ngiyampaa people: categories that referred simultaneously to country and language. The people who camped in the vicinity of the place described themselves and/or were described as Stone country or Belar tree people, and within these categories are associated with particular swamps or in later years, stations. In the course of ritual activities, which included trade and the contracting of marriages, people travelled considerable distances, and encountered not only Ngiyampaa speakers from other localities, but also other language groups such as Wiradjuri. It does not seem that relations were as close with Paakantyi, at least as far as ritual was concerned, but Nelia tree people who lived closer to the Darling River had some contact with Paakantyi, and learned the language as well as their own.

2.2 European Settlement and the Dispersal of the Ngiyampaa

In this region as elsewhere in the western division of New South Wales, European settlement took the form of pastoralism and mining, supported by small service centres, and linked to regional and state centres by roads, railways and in the early years by river steamers. Settlement disrupted the Aboriginal relationship with the environment and undermined their former way of life. There seem to have been some killings, and no doubt exotic diseases and changes in diet and living conditions took their toll on the Aboriginal population. Those who survived had to adapt to the plans of the settlers, which then included the New South Wales Government Aborigines Protection Board, later named the Aborigines Welfare Board. As a result, people had often to move to other parts of Ngiyampaa country, and in some cases to settle outside it.

Pastoral stations, mines and small towns

European explorers came in the first half of the 19th century, first along the Lachlan River, later to the Bogan and along the Darling and Barwon Rivers. The region was surveyed in the 1840s, and pastoral settlement began in the same decade on the lower Lachlan, and in 1850s on the Bogan and Darling (Clelland 1988). Small towns were established to provide for the needs of the settlers, including Hillston, Mossgiel, Ivanhoe, Brewarrina, Louth and Bourke. The last two were ports of call for the river steamers, which brought supplies to and carried produce from the towns and stations.

The first holdings were vast, but because of the scarcity of water in the backcountry, activities were concentrated along the river frontages. Gundabooka pastoral station was established in 1855, Nyngan in the same year; Louth was selected in 1864 and Boorandarra and Buckwaroon in 1869, with Wittagoona as the head station (Clelland 1988). To the south, there were large holdings along Willandra Creek, including Willandra and Roto. From the 1870s, by digging tanks and sinking wells, pastoralists settled in the hinterland. Marfield, Paddington, Thule, Tharinga Downs, Yallock and Keewong became pastoral leases in the 1870s.

1884 saw the first round of subdivisions, including Mt Grenfell, although it may not have had a homestead at that stage.¹⁴ There were further rounds of sub-division through the first half of the twentieth century, reducing many holdings to what were called home maintenance areas. These were self-supporting as far as labour was concerned, except for seasonal contract labour such as shearers.

¹³ The name had been given to the mountain much earlier by one of the surveyors.

In the early years, mining competed with pastoralism for labour. Gold was discovered at Wittagoona (1867) and Gundabooka (1872) and elsewhere attracted hundreds of miners, but the lode was soon exhausted. Deposits of gold and silver found at Mt Drysdale were more substantial; for some years the town rivalled Cobar, remaining a small settlement until 1944, when the water supply failed (Erskine et al. 1997). The copper and zinc deposits, discovered at Cobar in 1870, have provided the most durable resource. Aboriginal workers, however, were employed mainly on the stations, and rarely if ever in the mines.

Settlers and the Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan

As long as pastoralists stayed on the river frontages, the Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan could live as they had always done in the back country, though they may have been deprived of access to permanent water holes such as Wittagoona and Mt Grenfell, as well as Cobar, where rock paintings were destroyed. But as pastoralism began to push into the interior, transforming the landscape as it went, this ceased to be an option. The Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan population declined during the years when they were adapting to a new way of life.

There are rumours of killings in the region, though as is often the case, long after the event. In 1914 a country newspaper referred to a massacre at Hospital Creek, near Brewarrina, with approximately 300 killed, which occurred back in 1859 (Bourke Historical Society 1982-83). Much later Jo Erskine heard accounts of killings at Mt Drysdale in 1884 and as late as 1934 (Erskine et al. 1997). A parliamentarian, recalling a tour of the Darling River below Fort Bourke in 1859, stated, 'The native police has been out there and it was a common rumour that blacks had been shot down without mercy through the district.' (Norton 1907)

Virtually the only recourse open to the Ngiyampaa was to become dependent on the settlers, providing whatever services were required. The large stations of the early years maintained Aboriginal camps, which provided a reserve of cheap labour, particularly during the times when white stockmen absconded to the gold diggings. The Aborigines received basic rations and blankets (subsidised by the government). This accommodation enabled at least some Ngiyampaa people to remain on their own country, but it was not reached without cost. A visitor of 1859 reported, 'At some of the stations blacks were camped, a wretched poverty stricken lot' (Norton 1907). There are other reports of the effects of a restricted diet, giving rise to an expectation that the Aborigines were dying out.

As holdings became smaller, the pastoralists could no longer afford to maintain an Aboriginal camp; nor did they need its services. Thereafter, Aboriginal families had to move about from station to station in search of work, between jobs squatting on the edge of small towns such as Ivanhoe, Mossgiel, Louth, Bourke, Nyngan and Cobar. Possibly because of the attitude of the miners, they seemed not to have found work in the mines. The same processes seem to have been at work south of Cobar, but Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan people seem to have lived on stations such as Marfield, Keewong, Paddington and Trida into the 1920s (Bob Harris, pers.com.).

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Clelland, in his *Cobar Founding Fathers* (1988: 116), states that the Cobar district never supported a large population of Aborigines and the few still evident in the late nineteenth century congregated around the stations, doing odd jobs in exchange for rations. In fact, the Reports of the Aborigines Protection Board indicate that considerable numbers of Aboriginal people moved between Cobar and Byrock around the turn of the century, gradually declining up to 1915, the last year in which an official census was taken. Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan living on the stations to the south of Cobar were evidently included in the Mossgiel and Ivanhoe censuses, but would most likely have visited Cobar on occasion.

TABLE 1
Aboriginal Populations around the Cobar Peneplain, as reported by the Aborigines Protection Board 1882-1915

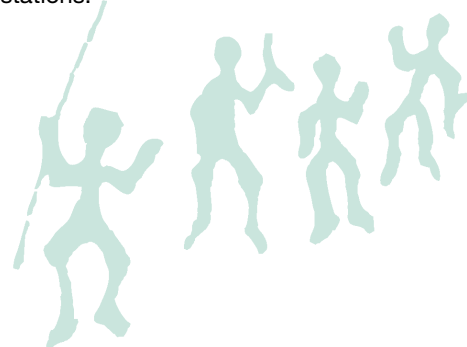
Center	1882	1891	1896	1900	1915
Cobar	17	?	65	72	28
Brewarrina	175	?	197	111	?
Louth	118	133	133*	60	–
Bourke	258	24			
Byrock & Bourke	?	?	24	52	–
Byrock	–	–	–	–	35
Nyngan	?	216	30	16	–
Mossgiel	96	114	98	70	109
Ivanhoe	?	?	?	33	43

* This count also includes Tilpa and Curranyalpa.

The APB ceased taking local censuses after 1915, though it intermittently reported the population of its stations.

Between the wars and through to the 1960s, it is said that only one Ngiyampaa family, the Halls, lived in the Cobar area. Of the people who had lived in the area previously, some died and were buried there, but many others ended up living on Aborigines Protection Board stations. These were located either at Brewarrina as in the case of Billy Coleman and Thomas Sullivan, or Carowra Tank as in the case of William 'Cobar' Williams and his sister Emily.¹⁵ A number of factors contributed to this relocation:

- 1 the dispersal of the old pastoral station camps, following subdivision, requiring Aborigines to move from job to job;
- 2 European communities' resistance to Aboriginal children attending local schools or squatting on the edge of town;
- 3 the government ruling during the Depression of 1929-1936 that Aboriginal families could receive unemployment relief only at APB stations (Goodall 1996). It was in any case APB policy during this period to concentrate Aboriginal people on government stations.



¹⁵ Bradley Steadman's investigation of the Records of Aboriginal deaths available at the Cobar museum reveals considerable numbers of individuals who were born in Cobar but died at Brewarrina or Carowra Tank.

The Brewarrina Government Station for Aborigines was established in 1882 (Goodall 1996). At that time its purpose was to provide shelter for impoverished, particularly aged, 'full bloods'; the able bodied, particularly half castes were not accepted at that time. From early in the 20th century the Board not only opened it to all Aboriginal people, but also virtually coerced them into moving there. During the Depression, people from as far away as Tibooburra were moved to Brewarrina. Carowra Government Tank, between Cobar and Ivanhoe, had been an Aboriginal camping place for some years before the APB made it a government station in 1926. People from surrounding stations, notably Keewong and Marfield, were brought in over the next decade. In 1934 the inmates were moved to a new station at Menindee, on the Darling River, along with Paakantyi people from Pooncairie.¹⁶

We do not know whether Ngiyampaa people were able to visit Mt Grenfell during the early years of the century; there is neither oral nor documentary evidence on the point. The pastoral station was small, and it is possible that the pastoralists either did not need workers, or preferred not to employ Aboriginal people. Whatever the facts, the removal of most of the Aboriginal population to Brewarrina or to Carowra Tank and later further away to Menindee would have reduced the possibility of visiting the place, and so the occasion for old people to pass on knowledge about it to their children.

The Ngiyampaa after 1945

After World War II there was another round of movement in the region. In 1949, the inhabitants of the Menindee Government Station were moved once again to Murrin Bridge on the Lachlan, near Lake Cargelligo. However, the post-war labour market offered more opportunities than it had during the Depression, and the governments placed fewer restrictions on where people moved and resided. Some Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan people were able to work on the properties where they or their parents had been born. In particular, some of the descendants of Keewong Jimmy, including the Harris family, were able to work and live on Keewong station. In the 1970s, the Griffith and Ohlsen families, whose origins were in Keewong, moved into Cobar where they still reside.

In the 1970s, following the depression in the far west pastoral industry, the government began relocating Aboriginal people outside the region. Wangaaypuwan people are now widely distributed, not only within the region but beyond it, in Dareton, Wilcannia, Broken Hill, Griffith, Albury, Wagga Wagga and Parkes etc. However, they can now stay in contact through the telephone, and use their cars to visit and attend funerals and meetings. This network has in recent years become the basis for cultural intensification.

¹⁶ For an account of the movement of Aboriginal people in the far west, see Beckett 1988.

2 ETHNOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

2.3 Mt Grenfell Historic Site and the Ngiyampaa Revival

The Opening of the site

The Mt Grenfell site was opened to visitors around 1970. The initiative came in the first instance from the Shire Council, which wanted to encourage tourism (Sharon Sullivan, pers.com.). Access to the art site at Mt Grenfell was first controlled by the then current owners. They also sold tea and scones to visitors. Soon after, the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service took over administration of the site, putting in protective installations such as grids, and later picnic facilities and toilets. Aboriginal people moving back into Cobar during the 1970s also took the opportunity to visit the site, including Mrs Elaine Ohlsen and her family. Mr Paul Gordon also visited the place in the company of some National Parks officers

Around 1990, Mr Tim Moore, then Minister for the Environment for the New South Wales Government, proposed the idea of 'lease-back and joint management' of a number of areas of land which were part of the national park estate and that were regarded as places of significance to Aboriginal people in western New South Wales, including Mutawintji, Lake Mungo and Mt Grenfell. Meetings were held with interested Aboriginal people in the various centres and in Sydney. After the New South Wales Parliament passed the legislation enabling these lands to be Aboriginal owned and jointly managed in 1996, Ngiyampaa people began requesting that their names be entered in the Register of Aboriginal owners held by the Office of the Registrar, *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*.

Cultural intensification

The process leading up to the Aboriginal ownership and joint management of Mt Grenfell has coincided with an intensification of interest among some Ngiyampaa people in their history and culture. This seems to have been stimulated by Tamsin Donaldson's longstanding linguistic work with the late Eliza Kennedy, which culminated in the writing of her biography (Kennedy and Donaldson 1982), and subsequently involved Karin Donaldson in Wilcannia. The latter began preparing Eliza Kennedy's story into a booklet, on the model of her collaborative work with Elsie Jones, *The Star That Fell*. The story of Eliza Kennedy revived memories of Keewong Station, where she and many others had spent their childhood. Out of this arose a series of camping weekends on Keewong station, including the elder, Bob Harris and Elaine Ohlsen who had spent part of her childhood there, as well as others who knew of it only from their parents or grandparents.

In her introduction to the book, Elaine Ohlsen, a Ngiyampaa woman through both her parents wrote,

'It was so thrilling and also heart-warming to be all together around the camp site, being photographed and swapping stories, and best of all, enjoying some of the real bush tucker which was cooked the traditional way, and sleeping under the stars. 'We repeated these activities a few times, in all weather conditions and on each occasion more and more of our ancestral heritage was brought to surface to be recorded.'



Mr Bob Harris at the Cobar Racecourse for a meeting in March 2001. John Biggs is seated in the background. (Elaine Ohlsen)

This encouraged the younger generation to start researching their genealogies and discovering in the process much else about the history and origins of their Ngiyampaa ancestors. Elaine has also been active in the preparation of the Aboriginal display in the Cobar Museum, and gathering information from anthropologists and linguists who have worked in the area. The site and particularly the paintings at Mt Grenfell provided another way of establishing an association with the Ngiyampaa heritage. A considerable number of people have now declared their interest in participating in the management of Mt Grenfell.

The genealogies

At the time of writing this chapter, the people requesting the entry of their name in the Register of Aboriginal owners, are able to establish their descent from Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan people, because there is a lot of genealogical information. This includes documentary material to be found in the New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

There are also the genealogies collected by Jeremy Beckett in connection with his anthropological research in the period 1957-1964, other material collected by Tamsin Donaldson in connection with her linguistic research in the 1970s, genealogies mainly of the Brewarrina-Bourke community researched by Bradley Steadman in connection with the Brewarrina Museum, the genealogical research on the 'Keewong mob', conducted by Steven Meredith and Sara Martin's research on the Menindee mission. It should be noted that most of this genealogical research was conducted long before research concerned with the joint management of Mt Grenfell began. To cover some gaps in the genealogical record, we have been able to consult official certificates of births, deaths and marriages.

Today, many people with ties to the Mount Grenfell Historic Site and the surrounding country trace their origins to Keewong station, or to stations nearby. Many of their forebears used the name of the station when required to produce a surname, though their descendants subsequently adopted Anglo-surnames such as Williams, Harris and Smith etc. Many are descended from Keewong Jimmy (nicknamed in Ngiyampaa *parrimapuwan* for being the first man to own a gun) who died at nearby Kaleno station in 1914, said to have been in his seventies or eighties, and thus most likely born before the time when Europeans arrived in the area.¹⁷ The mother of his children was known as Kitty Narunga, after a station near Mt Drysdale (north of Cobar). Some people trace their descent from the 'Stone-country' people around Bourke-Brewarrina, while others trace their ancestry from a Belar tree family.

¹⁷ Some of the documentation relating to Jimmy Keewong is incomplete. His death certificate makes no mention of wife or children. However, certificates relating to his children refer to him and Kitty Narunga as his parents. In some situations, Jimmy gave Williams as his surname, as did other Aboriginal people in the area – possibly adopting it from Welsh miners in the area.

3 PLACENAMES, LANGUAGE USE AND PERSONAL HISTORY

3.1 Yapupuwan Karul

This chapter explores what placenames, language use and personal history can tell us about how Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan people have been associated with Mt Grenfell.

The *yapupuwan karul* at Mt Grenfell (the Mt Grenfell ‘rocks with art’) are situated in the riverless dryland region where Ngiyampaa people ‘with *wangaay*’ (that is, Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan people) had their *ngurrampaa*, literally their ‘camp-worlds’. This is the region where places have names in *ngiyam-paa*, literally their own ‘word-world’, their own ‘language’.

There is evidence for Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan being used at Mt Grenfell. There is evidence linked to individual people for it being used on Wittagoona station. There is evidence that Ngiyampaa people ‘with *wangaay*’ spoke about the two neighbouring sets of rock art sites as country ‘with art’. There is also a statement reported in 1902 from a group in Cobar that their fathers owned *yapupuwan*, the country ‘with art’. Details of this evidence will be presented later in this part.

If we study Anglicised placenames of Aboriginal origin throughout this dryland region, it is clear that Mt Grenfell is surrounded by places which have been named by Ngiyampaa people. There is abundant direct evidence from Ngiyampaa people ‘with *wangaay*’ south of Mt Grenfell that current names are based on, or changed from, their names. There is similarly direct evidence relating to east of Mt Grenfell and also to the north. Finally, there is evidence that Anglicised Aboriginal place names in the dryland country west of Mt Grenfell are also of (Wangaaypuwan) Ngiyampaa origin. For details of this evidence, see later in this part.

3.2 Ngiyampaa Names Used at Mt Grenfell and in ‘Rock Art Country’

This section details information from the writings (1902) and captioned photographs (1908) of two non-local, non-Ngiyampaa visitors to rock art sites. I interpret these sources, as I write everything here, with the benefit of knowledge of Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan¹⁸ and of how my teachers used the language to talk about the world and the people they shared it with. The people who ‘made me able to understand’ (*winangaypuwan ngathii punmiyi*) as they put it, were born at the beginning of the twentieth century. They grew up among most of the same older people as taught Jeremy Beckett about Ngiyampaa ways and traditions. They were Ngiyampaa ‘drylanders’ (*kaliny-tyalapaang-kiyalu*) who described themselves as *pilaarr-kiyalu* in Ngiyampaa and ‘Belar’ people in English. They also described themselves and their *nhiilyi-kiyalu* ‘Nelia tree’ neighbours in English as coming from various ‘mobs’. These mobs were named for where people were born or based within their Belar or Nelia countries (Keewong mob, Trida mob, Marfield mob), and for where people were institutionalised or where they shifted to (Carowra Tank mob, and more recently, Dareton mob etc.). Their birthplaces gave them personal names, and when they adapted to the colonisers’ forename and surname system, they often took the names of stations as surnames. Some acquired nicknames based on names of places where they were born or worked (Donaldson 2002).

¹⁸ All Ngiyampaa words are written to show how my teachers pronounced them (see chapter on spelling), except when other writers are being quoted. Only language names start with capital letters. (Spoken Ngiyampaa has no formal way of distinguishing meaningful proper names from ordinary words.) I sometimes separate the different meaningful parts of names and other words with hyphens, when I want to draw attention to their separate literal meanings, for instance to explain that the word *ngurrampaa* literally means ‘camp-world’ although it is more often translated ‘country’.

A Ngiyampaa name for the rocks at Mt Grenfell

Edmund Milne's photograph album (n.d.:16-17) has a double page spread of 8 prints sharing a common caption: 'Pictographs. Kurryula rocks Mt Grenfell run 40 miles West of Cobar'. David Kaus identified seven of them in 1992 as taken at Mount Grenfell Historic Site, sites 1 and 2 and at Wittagoona (pers. comm. 2001). He was unable to locate the eighth, which shows mainly hand prints. He judges the photographs were probably taken in 1908 because of a letter from a Cobar policeman to R. H. Mathews early in 1909. This letter mentions an enquiry from Milne seeking information about Mt Grenfell.



The Mt Grenfell Historic Site, one of 8 photos in the Edmund Milne photograph album believed to have been taken around 1908 (National Museum of Australia).

It is likely that Kurryula is a representation of the Ngiyampaa word *karul* 'rocks' or more probably *karul-a* 'at or on (the) rocks'. *karul* means 'rock(s)' or 'stone(s)'. To make the meaning 'at' or 'on' the rocks, you would need to add the (locative) ending *-a*.

A Ngiyampaa description for 'galleries' visited from Wittagoona Station

C. Richards, in a letter of 1902 to the *Science of Man* (1908:27), gives details of 'a few of the leading exhibits' among rock paintings that he was shown 'through the instrumentality of Mr. Todhunter ... the manager while staying at Wittagoona Station.' They were in:

"...caves or galleries of overhanging rocks ... situated at the foot of a waterfall which has excavated a large hole in the rocks, ... said to be the only permanent waterhole in the country between the Darling and Bogan Rivers. The place is known as "Pap'padthee," which means, (as I found out afterwards) Holy (place), sacred or mysterious. Mr. Todhunter said that the blacks in the early days (there are none left now) were afraid to go near the place, saying that it belonged to the "Bunyip" or "Devil-Devil".

We can identify some of these 'blacks in the early days'. Edmund Milne says that Billy Coleman, whom he describes as '...chief of the Gunda-ah-myro, or Mulgas,' was born at Wittagoona Rock camp' (1912:174).

We also know that both Richards and Milne were trying to write Ngiyampaa words (Wangaaypuwan variety). We know this directly from Belar people. Billy Coleman was known to Belar people as a composer of songs in Ngiyampaa. A Ngiyampaa song which he gave to Fred Biggs was remembered by people who taught me Ngiyampaa in the 1970s.

3 PLACENAMES, LANGUAGE USE AND PERSONAL HISTORY

There are written records too. Andrew D. Mathew lists ‘words of the Cobar district’ learned on Wittagoona Station in the 1860s and 70s (1935). He explains that his father, Thomas Mathew, learned them from the ‘Wongiwoolbon’ (Wangaaypuwan) tribe ... known to the white settlers as the Mulgas’.¹⁹ Andrew D. Mathew also writes that one of these Wangaaypuwan, ‘old Nanny’, died at about 80 years of age around 1914 when the list was compiled. The death certificate of a daughter of Billy Coleman gives him and ‘Nanny’ as her parents (Bradley Steadman pers. com.).

So what exactly does ‘Pap’padthee’ mean in (the Wangaaypuwan variety) of Ngiyampaa? In Ngiyampaa, *pupu* is the public name for the spirit beings involved in the *purrpa* ceremonies for making boys into men, from whom the women must hide without peeping, on pain of death (Donaldson 1980: 308). Someone describing people being afraid of a ‘danger place’ on account of *pupu* would have to put the (circumstantive) ending *-thi* on the word indicating the cause of fear. They would say:

<i>kiyanhthanha</i>	<i>pupu-thi</i>
are afraid	of pupu

I know of no single Ngiyampaa word which would translate ‘holy, sacred, mysterious’. But explaining a place as awe and fear inspiring because of needing to keep away from the ‘Bunyip’ or ‘Devil-devil’ *pupu* would require a sentence in which *puputhi* would probably be the most emphasised and memorable word, and maybe the only Ngiyampaa word, if the rest of the sentence were said in English.²⁰

A Ngiyampaa name for country with ‘rock art’

Richards continues the passage quoted in the previous section as follows:

‘Some blacks at Cobar, who belonged to the “Wong’ ai-bon(y)” [Wangaaypuwan] and “N(y)ee’ ambaa” [Ngiyampaa] tribes told me that their fathers owned the country of the “Yab’ bon(y),” i.e., heiroglyphic writing [as Richards called the rock art]. Their language I found to be very similar to the Wirrad’ er-ree’, who were their neighbours on the Lachlan River.’

Yab’ bon(y) appears to be a representation of the Ngiyampaa word *yapa-puwan*. In Ngiyampaa, *yapa* means ‘track’, i.e. trace, print, any kind of mark including hand stencils and painted marks. *-puwan*, means ‘with’ or ‘having’. That is, the fathers of the Wangaaypuwan and Ngiyampaa people whom Richards met at Cobar owned the country ‘with *yapa*’, the country with ‘rock art’.

According to Richards’ writing system, the final apostrophe after yab’ means stress on the preceding a sound. This stress led presumably to Richards not hearing the unstressed final a of *yapa*. As for *-bon(y)*, this is how he has just represented the *-puwan* of the name Wangaaypuwan, literally ‘no-with’, meaning that Wangaaypuwan is the variety of Ngiyampaa ‘with *wangaay*’, rather than any other word, as its word for ‘no!’²¹

¹⁹ Wangaay-puwan translates literally as ‘no-with’, meaning that Wangaaypuwan people, the people ‘with *wangaay*’, use *wangaay*, rather than any other word, as their word for ‘no!’ The ‘Wongiwoolbon’ list actually gives ‘No – warri’ instead of ‘No – wongi’, as might be expected from his spelling of Wangaaypuwan (*wangaay*). This is because Thomas Mathew must have dictated the word *warraay* meaning ‘no good’, i.e. ‘bad’, not the word *wangaay* meaning ‘no’.

²⁰ As Hercus points out: ‘...most... writers of ...[the] time did not distinguish in spelling between the vowels *a* and *u*’ (1993:15). Richards may have been amongst them in this case. The Wongiwoolbon list gives ‘The devil – booboo’.

²¹ We should not interpret “‘Wong’ ai-bon(y)” and “N(y)ee’ ambaa” as referring to members of two mutually exclusive groups, irrespective of whatever impression Richards may have had, or his intention in writing ‘and’, which is ambiguous in this context.

Wiradjuri,²² (Wirraathurray in Ngiyampaa) the language of the river people ‘with *wirraay*’ to the south and east of the Ngiyampaa, which Richards sees as ‘very similar’, has *yabang*²³ with the same meaning as *yapa*. Recorded instances include its use to mean ‘designs’ and ‘incised marks’. But Wiradjuri does not have the ending *-puwan*, *-thuray* being its equivalent.

Paakantyi, the language of the river people to the west of the Ngiyampaa, likewise has *yapa* ‘track, footprint, any mark made with one’s hand or foot’ (Hercus 1993:92). But it has no ending *-puwan*.

-puwan is a common element in the formation of Ngiyampaa names descriptive of places/areas. It appears in Anglicised versions of the names in many forms, including *-bon*, *-bone*, and *-bourne* (Donaldson in press). An example from Belar people’s ‘camp-world’ is Belarabon from *pilaarr-puwan*: ‘Belar(s)-with, i.e. (place/country) with belar trees’. Belarabon turns up on maps as the name of a station, a range etc. So what were the dimensions of yapapuwan, the country ‘with rock art’ belonging to the fathers of the Wangaaypuwan and Ngiyampaa people whom Richards met at Cobar?

If these were also the people from whom Richards ‘later’ learnt that “Pap’padthee,” means ‘holy...etc.’, and if one individual explained this in the context of explaining that country with rock art belonged to their fathers, an alternative interpretation of the word to the one given in the previous section becomes possible, *paapaa-thii* ‘my father(s)’:

paapaa means ‘father(s)’

-thii added to another word means ‘my’.

In this case the description ‘holy ...etc’ would then be likely to apply to all sites ‘with rock art’ in the country ‘with rock art’ belonging to their fathers, not simply to the place Richards presumably described himself as having visited.

We cannot know from Richards’ account exactly which or how many rock art sites the people he met at Cobar were describing as ancestrally theirs. It is possible that they may have viewed sites located on two different ‘runs’ or ‘selections’ according to colonial land distribution principles as part of the same ‘rock art country’, just as Milne did in assigning the single caption ‘Pictographs. Kurryula rocks’ to photographs of rock art taken on Mt Grenfell run and of art on other rocks on the 200,000 acres taken up in the 1860s as Wittagoona Station. In any case it is sure that Ngiyampaa speakers would have been in a position to describe any rock art site with which they were associated as *yapapuwan* and any rocks ‘with *yapa*’, like any other rocks or stones, as *karul*, without these words necessarily becoming institutionalised as widely recognised names for specific places or country. (The word *karul* forms part of the group name *karul-kiyalu* used by *pilaar-kiyalu*, Belar people, to refer to some of their neighbours.)

²² This is how the language name is now most often spelt.

²³ This is written yapang in the Ngiyampaa spelling system, see chapter on spelling.

3 PLACENAMES, LANGUAGE USE AND PERSONAL HISTORY

In the case of Mt Grenfell, the use of the word or perhaps placename *karul-a* as recorded by Milne indicates a Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan association. If we consider other rock art sites included in McCarthy's study of the Cobar penneplain rock art area (1976), together with some others in the riverless dryland country surrounding Mt Grenfell which he doesn't mention, there is evidence of direct Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan connections with most of them, for instance:

Neckarboo	Ngiyampaa name <i>nhakaapuru</i>
Cobar	Ngiyampaa name <i>kuparr</i> (paintings gone)
Kerrigundi water hole	Ngiyampaa 'with <i>wangaay</i> ' born there (Bradley Steadman pers. com.)
Iona aka Winbar (Range)	Ngiyampaa name * <i>wiim-paa</i> 'plenty fire' (literally 'fire-world')
MacGowan aka Gundabooka	Ngiyampaa 'with <i>wangaay</i> ' born there (Bradley Steadman pers. com.)

3.3 Ngiyampaa Placenames in the Region Surrounding Mt Grenfell

I have previously mentioned placenames for which there is direct evidence from *pilarrkiyalu* Ngiyampaa speakers and/or from Ngiyampaa speakers in the areas concerned.

The Belar people who taught me Ngiyampaa knew plentiful placenames in their own *ngurrampaa* or camp-world and in that of the Nelia tree people to their west. Indeed the working definition of the camp-world in which they were born and grew up was achieved in the introductory maps to my grammar by ringing the area in which they knew plentiful placenames (Donaldson 1980). They also knew a smaller number of Ngiyampaa placenames beyond this *ngurrampaa*, the number depending on individual experience of and/or connections with (people from) places further away.

Later in this part, scholarly evidence based on anglicised placenames will be presented.

Ngiyampaa placenames to the south of Mt Grenfell

Belar people told me around 50 Ngiyampaa placenames in Belar and Nelia tree country that they remembered, together with their equivalents 'in the whites'. The places which bear these anglicised or imported equivalent names lie between Sandy Creek (*karaawi*) and Willandra Creek, eastwards to Yathong and westwards to Karrara. The nine northernmost equivalent names appear on topographic maps of 1975 as names of stations, swamps, hills, tanks etc. fairly close to Sandy Creek and in a couple of cases to the north or on both sides of it (for the Ngiyampaa names see Donaldson 2002: map this publication).

There are around 30 other Ngiyampaa placenames which can't be mapped on the 'cultural area' map in this publication because they have no English equivalents. A couple of these places may also be north of Sandy Creek (Donaldson 2002: Table 3).

Ngiyampaa placenames to the east of Mt Grenfell

Cobar is called *kuparr* 'rattle, ochre' in Ngiyampaa. Dave Harris of the Keewong mob of Belar people tells the Ngiyampaa story of the origin of Cobar city and '...how they named Cobar'. In the English version he says: 'Old blackfellow sitting down there at the *purrrpa*. He's making paint for corroboree. He's painting himself... Whitefellow came riding...'. This white man saw the 'pretty red paint with green in it', and was shown its source (Harris 1970 quoted in Hercus and Sutton eds 1986: 77-81).

Ngiyampaa placenames to the north of Mt Grenfell

There are a number of placenames which speakers, learners and partial rememberers of Ngiyampaa, whether pronouncing the name Ngiyampaa in exactly the same way as the Belar people who taught me or not, and whether using *wangaay* or *wayil* for 'no', could/can all recognise as coming from meaningful Ngiyampaa names, e.g.:

Girilambone from *kirralaam-puwan*, literally 'star-with' (i.e. there was a star there)

Mulgawarrina from *malka wara-nha*, literally 'mulga stand-present tense ending' (i.e. mulga grows there)

Brewarrina from *purii wara-nha*, literally 'acacia pendula stand-present tense ending' (i.e. myall trees grow there).

The first two are names of places in the dryland 'red country'. Bradley Steadman learned the story of their names through Ngiyampaa people 'with wangaay'. The third is the name of a place in the sandy river country of the Ngiyampaa 'with wayil' (pers. com.).

To the far north-east of the area roughly enclosed by the Darling/Barwon (*paawan*) and Bogan rivers, where dryland red country gives way to riverside sandy country, it is recognised that Ngiyampaa people 'with wayil' (Wayilwan) named the places, but these names have been equally intelligible to Ngiyampaa speakers 'with wangaay' (Wangaaypuwan), who have used them too.

Ngiyampaa people 'with *wangaay*' had cultural contacts with those 'with *wayil*', for instance participating together in the *purrrpa* on the Macquarie River described by Matthews (1896:1897) (Bradley Steadman identified Steve Shaw in Charles Kerry's photographs.) They have also been in institutionalised contact through the Brewarrina mission, founded in 1883, often as a result of having fewer opportunities for contact with Wangaaypuwan people institutionalised further south, at Carowra or Menindee.

Ngiyampaa placenames to the west of Mt Grenfell

There is documentary evidence for reconstructing **wiim-paa* 'fire (wood?)-world' for the name Winbar, which Hubert Murray explains means 'plenty fire' (Murray 1947). He writes that the 'wein' part of the Aboriginal name means 'fire'. The Ngiyampaa word for 'fire' also means 'firewood'. There is another Ngiyampaa placename *wiiny-tyalapaa* 'firewood-without' for a place in Belar country (Donaldson 2002: Table 4).

²⁴ We can also assume that they are not based on Darling River people's names. All Paakantyi words, including all the Paakantyi and Kurnu placenames included in the *Paakantyi Dictionary*, end in vowel sounds (Hercus 1993).

3 PLACENAMES, LANGUAGE USE AND PERSONAL HISTORY

We can assume on linguistic grounds that the following anglicised Aboriginal placenames near Mt Grenfell are of Ngiyampaa origin:

Thourumble
Mamble
Buckwaroon

They end in l and n sounds which frequently occur at the end of Ngiyampaa words including placenames. Thourumble appears to end in the Ngiyampaa ending - *pil* 'with a lot of', which occurs in other place names. Mamble could come from the tree name *muumpal*, 'western black wattle (*acacia hakeoides*)' which occurs in another place name *muumpal-paa* 'muumpal-world'. There are other Ngiyampaa placenames consisting simply of a plant or tree name without any ending being added (Donaldson 2002).²⁴

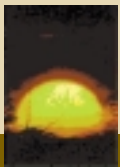
Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan was used at Mt Grenfell. Mt Grenfell is surrounded by places whose current map names are of Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan origin. Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan people have a history of connections and associations with the area. They have recorded for present and future generations the original forms of many of the anglicised placenames surrounding Mount Grenfell, as well as other placenames that have not so far been adopted into English.

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