

Buluwai Tribal Estate language

28 August 2020

Testimony by William Cecil Brim (1960-),
direct descendent to Buluwai Elder Tji: Auwin (aka. Toby Brim 1867-1941)

Q. What do you know about the Buluwai language after decades of family research with your sister Dianne?

A. Warren Brim [REFERENCE B] and Gilpin Buluwai Banning [REFERENCE E] were Buluwandji men and major contributors to the salvage of local Bama ngirrama (language) and culture. These men passed *only* names for landscapes and features *south* of the Barron River – on Buluwai Country – the land-language of their patrilineal descent, ie. their forefathers.

Language comes from land – whether it's England, Scotland or Germany – First Nations Australia also had languages and place names that belong to the land. Willie and Dianne's father Ivan's elder brother Warren raised Willie on country as a young man – walking and listening to the stories of the south-side country over many years. Warren was born in 1932 at Mona Mona and knew his grandma and grandpa (Toby and Annie) living in their traditional bayu on the outskirts of the mission (pictured). Warren's father Cecil carried the names, places and stories of his Buluwai people, as taught to him by his father, Toby. [REFERENCE F]

As was the way in the 'Mission Decades', descendants of massacre survivors were prohibited to practice language or culture at all, so if it was conducted, it was only ever in secret. Of the hundreds of photos remaining from the Mona Mona Mission there is one photograph of a man in the 'lock up' - this is Toby. Was he made an example of for his cultural responsibility to pass on knowledge from his own father Merukun? Did he carry on practising culture in accordance with lore to the dismay of the Christian missionaries? [REFERENCE F]

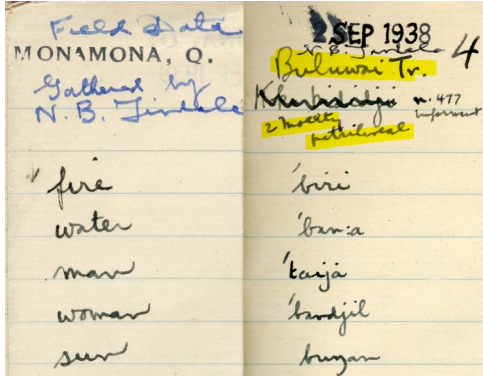
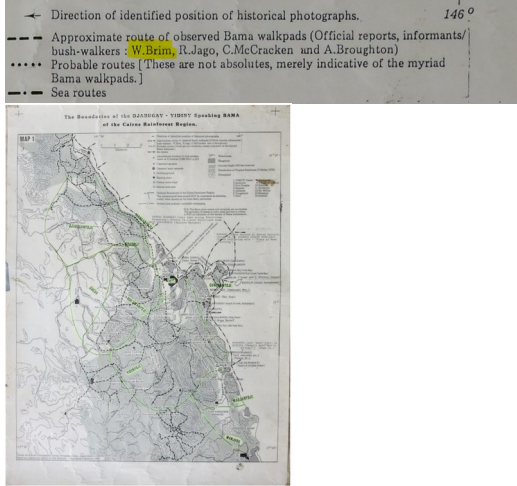
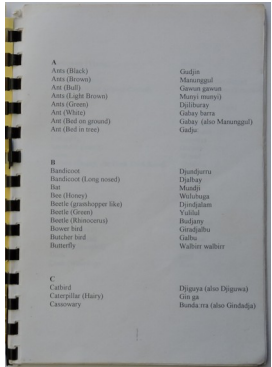
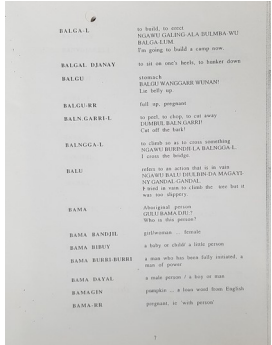
In the early days when Willie Brim was growing up in Kuranda there was no talk of Aboriginality or tribes or clans or Native Title. The local Indigenous family histories had simply not been researched by that time. The first time an Indigenous word was needed was to set up the Tjapukai Dance Theatre in Kuranda Village in 1987. 'Tjapukai' was presumably selected because it was the country where the Mona Mona Mission was located and where Kuranda descendants still felt a strong connection. Interesting to note the original Tindale spelling with a 'T'. The lead dancers David Hudson and Willie Brim learned later they are Ewamin-Western Yalanji and Buluwai respectively. Bertie Riley later learned his father's side is Kuku-Yalandji yet danced at the Tjapukai theatre too. Performing cultural arts in those days was created by those few locals who were inclined to culture – *not only people from the Djabugay tribe*.

The name 'Djabugay' has persisted to umbrella or gloss the historical 'Mona Mona Descendants' grouping with people from many neighbouring tribes including Kuku Yalanji, Djabugay, Muluridgi, Buluwai, Yirrgay, Gunggay, Yidindji, Ngadjan, Mbabaram, Djirubal, Ewamin, Wakaman and many others from further up the Cape. This aberration has been to the detriment of the true, miraculous and heroic story of Buluwandji ancestor Tji: Auwin (Toby Brim), the last cultural man of his clan to survive the killing times, and one of only two older men who made it safely to Mona Mona by 1937.

DTAC was formed in 1992 for Skyrail and DNTAC in 2004 for Barron Gorge Native Title. Willie was involved with both organisations at various times – including chairman when the Barron Gorge Native Title was signed in 2004. Willie spoke personally with then Premier Peter Beatty on his visit to Kuranda and asked him to consider a Native Title on the Barron Gorge National Park – a location steeped with Bama culture and history.

Later, when Willie signed the determination *he believed he was signing it on behalf of his elders 'Mona Mona Descendants'* as listed on the determination, including his great-grandparents Toby Brim (Buluwai) and Annie Brim (Djabugay). He was advised the name 'Djabugay' couldn't be altered at that late stage to divide the claim on the Barron River: the traditional tribal estate boundary. Family history work undertaken in the preceding decade by sister Dianne Brim was demonstrating their patrilineal ancestor came from the Buluwai side of the Barron River at Stoney Creek / Speewah, ie. tourist attractions 'Toby's Lookout' and 'The Kauris' feature today as permanent reminders of Toby's clan area.

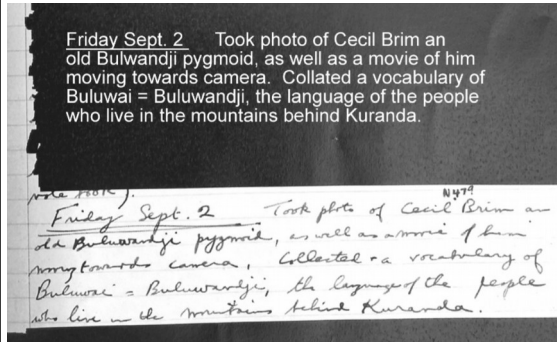
The following language resources were informed by Buluwandji elders and will be salvaged to form the Buluwai tribal language:

Document	Informant/s	Sample
<p>Tindale Parallel Vocabulary – Buluwai, approx 60 words</p>	<p><i>Buluwai tribe, recorded by Norman Tindale 1938 at Mona Mona Mission</i></p>	
<p>Map 1: 1992 book published The Bama People of the Rainforest by Timothy Bottoms, approx 14 Buluwai Country place names, major and minor footpaths, campsites</p>	<p><i>Warren Brim, grandson of Tji: Auwin (Toby Brim, Buluwandji)</i></p>	
<p>Salvaged [Ngirra] Dictionary Fauna and Flora Terms For use in Cultural Guiding program of the Certificate III Tourism, approx 208 words</p>	<p><i>Warren Brim, Buluwandji</i></p>	
<p>Salvaged [Ngirra] Dictionary – Version 1, approx 500 words</p>	<p><i>Wanyarra Roy Banning and Nyuwarri Maggie Donahue</i></p>	

REFERENCES

A. Cecil Brim, Toby and Annie Brim's third born son, Dan Charlie and Oscar were told to run for their lives prior to 1916

Tindale referred to Cecil as *'Buluwandji pygmoid'*



Page 80: <https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/Kuranda-Region-Bama-Bulmba-Tribes.pdf>

B. Warren Brim, Cecil's first born son Dinah pictured with Cecil Brim's children – from oldest to youngest – Marita, Warren, Ivan (Willie's father), Milton (baby)



C. Wanyarra Roy Banning, grandson of Gilpin Banning from Redlynch area (named after local Banning family where Gilpin's campsite was located)



Linguist, Michael Quinn (right) with his Djabugandji teachers Roy Banning and Maggie Donahue.

D. Nyuwarri, Maggie Donahue

"Queen Maggie Donahue of the Buluwandji"

This event has now passed. Check out other events below that are coming up for this artist and at this venue.

"Jillibalu" by George Riley currently on exhibition

Venue: **UMI Arts Gallery of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art**
 Artist: **George Riley**
 10:00am Tuesday 16th April 2013

Map to UMI Arts Gallery of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art

Currently on exhibition at UMI Arts is "Jillibalu", an exhibition of paintings by George Riley inspired by dreams, birds and nature.

Jillibalu is currently on exhibition at UMI Arts Gallery, 335 Sheridan Street, North Cairns until Wednesday 24 April, 2013.

Jillibalu is an exhibition of paintings inspired by George's dreams of flying over the rainforest visiting his beautiful Djabugandji country. Jillibalu which translates to the 'nookie out' in the Djabugandji language was given to me by my great grandmother **Queen Maggie Donahue of the Buluwandji**. Story: Water people of the Djabugandji tribe who lived around Kuranda, said George.

George Riley (Jillibalu, Wallangundji) originates from the rainforest town of Kuranda, (gurunda, meaning echidna). George is the firstborn in his family and his family lived at Koorowra when he was born. George grew up along the Barron River near Kuranda, his traditional country on his mum's side, and that's how he came to know the ways of the river and the rainforest. George would always visit his father's country around Mareeba, including Mount Carbine, Mount Molloy and McLeod River area, going camping, fishing, and walk-about.

UMI Arts is the peak Indigenous arts and cultural organisation for Far North Queensland. It is a not-for-profit company with an all-Indigenous Board of Directors, and it is owned by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts community of Far North Queensland.

To read more about the exhibition please visit www.umiarts.com.au

Link: <https://www.entertainmentcairns.com/quot;jillibaluquot;-by-george-riley-currently-on-exhibition16-event.html>

E. Wurrmbul Balawai Gilpin Banning

Suspected Gilpin Banning may be a brother or cousin of Toby Brim

Gilpin Banning included 'Balawai' with his totem name for the Barron Falls signage.



BARRON FALLS SIGNAGE:
 Wurrmbul Gilpin Banning
 Wurrmbul Balawai – Gilpin Banning

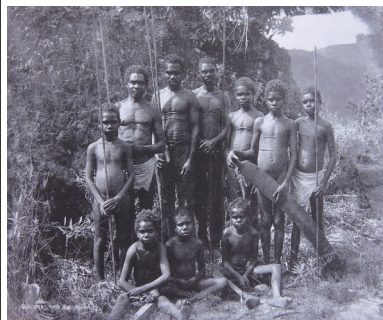
'All things come from one - 'Bulurru', the rivers and mountains and even the people themselves.'

Wurrmbul Balawai - Gilpin Banning

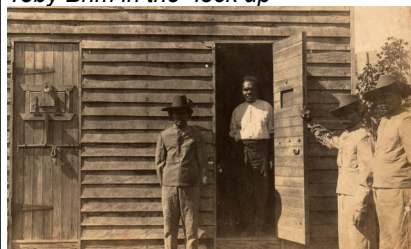
Page 80: <https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/Kuranda-Region-Bama-Bulmba-Tribes.pdf>

F. Tji:Auwin Toby Brim

Third from the left, prior to surrendering to Mona Mona mission in 1916 to save what was left of his family



Toby Brim in the "lock up"



RECOMMENDATIONS

Item	Action
Retrieve Tjapukai Parallel Vocabulary (approx 110 words)	<i>DNTAC / Djabugay elder, SA Museum form with family tree</i>
<p>Progress study Tindale Parallel Vocabularies FNQ Rainforest People Study</p> <p>The Tindale Collection Parallel Vocabularies is an extraordinary dataset of 110 everyday words recorded from around 150 Aboriginal Tribes across Australia. The Aboriginal Rainforest People were among those preserved.</p> <p>In eastern Australia at least nine tribes spread over 500 miles (800 km.) use the term [ˈkoa] for west. They include the Wikmunkan, Kokokulunggur, Kokobujundji, Buluwai, Idindji, Tjapukai, Djankun, Warakamai, and Warungu.</p>	https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/Tindale-Parallel-Vocabularies-FNQ-Rainforest-People-Study.pdf
<p>Review document BAMA BULMBA TRIBES RAINFOREST PEOPLE OF KURANDA REGION in relation to Bulway, Buluwai, Bulwai, Bulwandji (100 pages)</p>	https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/Kuranda-Region-Bama-Bulmba-Tribes.pdf
<p>Review document Buluwai Native Title Appeal Davies Creek National Park 2010 (20 Pages)</p>	https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/2018/01/Buluwai-Native-Title-Appeal-Davies-Creek-National-Park-January-2010.pdf
<p>Review document Katjiraka: The known Clan History of the Buluwai Tribe (60 pages)</p>	https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/FINAL-KATJIRAKA-Dec-2016.pdf