

## Buluwai Tribal Estate tribal taxonomy

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 contention of Yirrgay and Buluwai being a 'clan' of the 'Djabugay tribe' and 'Djabugay speakers'. You understand local history better than most – how would you explain it?

**A.** In work by linguists from the 1970's on it seems they were tempted to see a different taxonomy of Bama people – through their language similarities from very few speakers – and not from earlier anthropological works, including extensive mapping and descriptions from research done decades before by primary sources Roth, Tindale and McConnell, eg.

*Writing in 1939 Ursula McConnel, stated the order: 'South of Port Douglas is another group – the indyi or andyi tribes of Mowbray, Barron and Mulgrave Rivers, surveyed originally by Roth and later by me in 1931. On the Mowbray River are the Tyabogai-tyanyi, a branch of whom on the Barron River are known as the Nyakali. On the south side of the Barron River are the Bulwandyi; low down on the Barron River are the Yirkandyi.'* [6]  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yirrganydji>

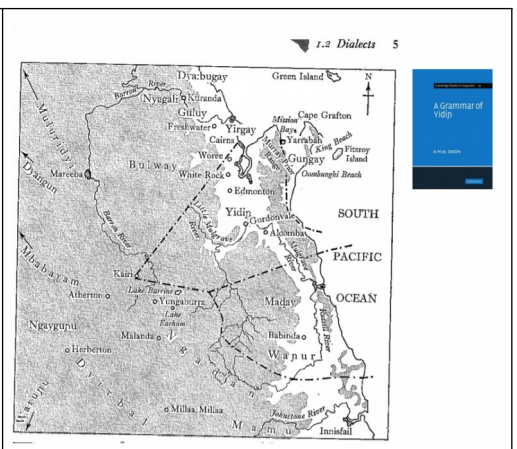
Unfortunately the CRC Native Title is using T.Bottoms 1989 map which includes 'clan' names conflated with 'tribe' names which adds to the confusion, eg. Guluy and Nyakali are inconsistent in historical mapping and primary source tribe descriptions.

See ATTACHMENT G, page 103, <https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/Kuranda-Region-Bama-Bulmba-Tribes.pdf>

It is interesting to note that T.Bottoms later maps do not include Guluy or Nyakali as tribes or clans.

**Q.** What do you think Dixon meant by the following highlighted map notation?

MAP NAME: Yidinj and neighbouring languages, Dixon (1977)  
MAP DATE: 1977 From the book 'Grammar of Yidiny' 1977 Melbourne University Press MAP MAKER R.M.W. DIXON  
MAP NOTATIONS:  
*MAP 1. Yidinj and surrounding dialects. (Based on Roth 1910b, McConnel 1939-40; Tindale 1940; and writer's field work. The broken line indicates approximate tribal boundaries for the peoples speaking dialects of Yininj; it is not known whether the Madayndji and Wanuru were distinct tribes, or two names for the same group. The locations for the groups speaking Dya:bugay language: Dya:bugay, Guluy, Yirgay, Bulway and Nyagali – are each based on a single source and have not been checked; it is possible that some of these terms may be alternate names for a single dialect/local group/tribe.)*



**A.** As a linguist, Dixon studied the Yidinj tribal area extensively and spent far less time documenting the Kuranda, Mareeba and Tablelands areas – using this area more as a comparison area for his Yidinj conclusions. His notation about taxonomy for names is based on a "single source that have not been checked" and admits that "some of these terms may be alternate names for a single dialect / local group / tribe."

It would be appropriate under these circumstances to revert to taxonomy of tribes aligned with primary source Tindale's lengthy descriptions (see excerpt link below) and disposing of Hale/Dixon's incorrect taxonomy (a sole linguistic interpretation) going forward.

See pages 28-32, <https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/Kuranda-Region-Bama-Bulmba-Tribes.pdf>

To us, it is very clear that Guluy and Nyagali are more likely to be *clans* than *tribes*. Primary sources Tindale, Roth and McConnell never listed these names as *tribes*.

Current taxonomy ("Djabugay-centric")						Correct taxonomy (Tindale)				
Tribe	Djabugay (speaking)					Tribe	Yirrgay	Buluwai	Djabugay	
Clan groups	Djabugay	Guluy	Yirrgay	Bulway	Nyagali	Clan groups (landscape areas)		eg. Guluy (Mareeba), Katjiraka (Stoney Ck-Speewah), Ngunbay (Kuranda), Bana Gidgarri (Lake Morris area), Jungarra (Redlynch area)	Nyagali	
Family groups	Cannon, etc	??	Singleton, etc	Brim, etc	??					
						Family groups	Singleton, etc	Brim, etc	Cannon, etc	

Recommendation	Action
Adjust outdated 'copy and paste' phrases to accurate version of tribal taxonomy for the Kuranda/Cairns area and CRC "Three Tribes"	<a href="https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/tjapukai.pdf">https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/tjapukai.pdf</a> <a href="https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/TRACQS.pdf">https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/TRACQS.pdf</a> <a href="https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/Kuranda-Community-Kindergarten.pdf">https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/Kuranda-Community-Kindergarten.pdf</a> <a href="https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/kuranda.org_.pdf">https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/kuranda.org_.pdf</a> <a href="https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/djabugay.org_.au_.pdf">https://buluwai.org/content/uploads/djabugay.org_.au_.pdf</a>
Develop accurate and inclusive 'Welcome to Country' for CRC tribes to adopt	Draft first version in progress