Widjabul Aboriginal People

North-east New South Wales

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Research Unit
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Introduction

The Tribunal’s Research Unit prepares bibliographies as a ready reference for anyone wanting to locate readily available, published material about Indigenous Australian people within a particular region or locality. The bibliographies are produced for general library use from reports prepared by the Tribunal for parties to native title mediations. The bibliographies are not exhaustive reference lists about any particular Indigenous group, nor is the published material necessarily an accurate or insightful report of Indigenous society. The Research Unit may update bibliographies from time to time, usually because a new research report has been reproduced for parties to mediation.

It should be noted that the contents and production of these reports are governed by time and resource constraints. They are often prepared in four to eight weeks by a single research officer with some input from a research assistant and Tribunal librarian. Generally most of the references sought for these reports are available only from the AIATSIS library, which in turn has limited resources available to supply material. Therefore care is taken to request only that material which appears relevant to the scope of a particular report.

Disclaimer: The bibliographies are a list of materials that have been used by the Research Unit of the Tribunal to provide background information for native title mediations. The Tribunal forms no view on the accuracy, completeness, or relevance of the reference material cited in these bibliographies. Most of this material is held at libraries and is available to the public. The Tribunal library may be able to assist in locating items.
Widjabul Aboriginal People

This report was prepared by staff of the Research Unit of the National Native Title Tribunal, in order to assist with the mediation of a native title claim by the Widjabul Aboriginal People of the Lismore region in north-east New South Wales. A native title claim on behalf of the Widjabul people has been registered to date:

- Widjabul Aboriginal People (NC01/7; NSD6019/01);

The Widjabul Aboriginal People's claim is located inland from Cape Byron in the State of New South Wales and covers an area of about 1617 km sq. The claim extends from a point north of Coraki on the northern side of the Richmond River near Ruthven and travels east across the southern border of the Tuckean Nature Reserve. The boundary then travels north along the Blackwall Range through the towns of Wollongbar and Tyumba to a point south of Coorabell then northwest towards Palmwoods along the Koonyum Range. The boundary then runs west through the Nightcap National Park to Blue Nob and a small finger of land runs north into the Mebbin Nature Reserve. The boundary then continues south through Upper Horseshoe Creek and skirts east of Kyogle and then southeast through the towns of Spring Grove and McKees Hill to Ruthven.

Research Method

This report is based on publicly and readily available information that describes the location of the Widjabul and other Indigenous peoples (Arakwal, Minjungbal and Kalibal people) in the area covered by the claim NC01/7. It should be noted that the content and production of these reports are governed by time and resource constraints. They are usually prepared in six weeks by a single research officer with some input from a research assistant and a Tribunal librarian.
The material used for these reports is derived largely from a search of the AIATSIS online catalogue. A large proportion of this material is available only from the AIATSIS library, which has limited resources available to supply material. Therefore care is taken to request only that material which appears relevant to the scope of a particular report.

The Tribunal Library also has substantial holdings of reference material which is used where appropriate. In addition, a number of general references were used, including:

- Tindale, 1940, 'Distribution of Australian Aboriginal tribes: a field survey'; and
- Tindale, 1974, *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia*; and

This report contains summaries of information that is publicly available and relevant to the location of the Arakwal, Minjungbal, Kalibal and Widjabul peoples relating only to the areas that form part of the native title claim. These four groups are reflected in the literature as having an association with the region. Additionally, a search was conducted of the language term 'Bundjalung' since this term is used in the literature to describe a larger language group to which the above four 'dialects' may have belonged.

The literature contains much salvage linguistic work from the 1960s onwards, as well as other material by researchers associated with the Richmond-Tweed Historical Society based in Lismore. This research material has a fair component of contact history, and a similar amount of material from living Aboriginal people with knowledge of past practices and aspects of cultural history. This information, gathered in the period from the 1960s, is valuable though often repetitive. Information relating to the location of Aboriginal groups within the claim area has been reported only once. Subsequent accounts of the same information have been omitted.
A search was made of the AIATSIS library catalogue using the groups’ ‘language group’ names.

Each record was examined to determine its likely relevance or usefulness. Materials with access restrictions were omitted as were foreign language materials, obvious apparent cataloguing errors, microforms, audio material and material that appeared to deal with technical aspects of language or education curricula. The result of these searches is set out in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search term</th>
<th>Raw result</th>
<th>After filtering</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Group: Arakwal</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Number of purely linguistic articles filtered out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Group: Minjungbal</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Numerous articles purely on linguistics, and duplicated sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Group: Kalibal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Term not used in AIATSIS database though used throughout the literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language group: Widjabal</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Some duplication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language group: Bunjalung</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Large number of sound files, also numerous articles purely on linguistics, items with restricted access and transcripts of excessive length</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total                        | 292        | 129             |                                                                      |
Bibliography


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Tindale, N.B. 1940, 'Distribution of Australian Aboriginal Tribes: A Field Survey', *Royal Society of South Australia*, 64(1).

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