Guringaygupa djuyal, barray

Language and Country of the Guringay people

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Guringay affiliation with language and country is important to the descendants of the people described as *Gringai* in the historical record from the 19th and early 20th centuries. This paper examines the links between Guringay people with language and country north of the Hunter River and documents the invention and ongoing impacts of *Kuringgai*, more recently *Guringai* located northwards of Sydney.[1]

1 Guringay north of the Hunter River

The historical record clearly identifies *Gringai* people in a range of locations north of the Hunter River. In recent times is has been written Guringay based the original *Gringai*, and incorporates reconstruction.[2]

1.1 From *Gringai* to Guringay

Writing a language using the conventions of a different language is hazardous. The historical word *Gringai* (and *Grengai*) is from early colonial sources whose first language was English. In this written form we recognise protocols for written English which do not align with better documented, related Aboriginal languages.

Compare the following written versions of Gringai, Guringay, Guringgay and Kuringgai

1   **g r i ng a i**

2   **g u r i ng a y**

3   **g u r i ng g a y**

4   **k u r i ng g a i**

In the first version *Gringai* the consonant cluster [gr][3] in word-initial position is common in spoken English, e.g. *green, grocer, grimace* etc. But this cluster is not common across Aboriginal languages in this region, where the word structure pattern demands a vowel between these two consonants. It is quite feasible the vowel was deleted when heard, spoken and written by colonial English people, going from [*guri] to [gri] given its common occurrence in English.

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[1] Thanks to Peter Sutton for his comments on earlier drafts. The responsibility for the content lies with the authors.
[2] Wafer and Lissarrague 2008; Lissarrague, 2010.
[3] Called a 'blend' in English early literacy development.

In 1890 Fraser inserted the missing vowel in a later version of this word: <goringai>; the high back vowel written with <o> is designated the phoneme /u/ in the next version.

The second version *Guringay* includes the missing vowel to recreate the first syllable [gu].[4] At the end of the word the letter <y> is used instead of <ai> in order to avoid implication of a phonemic diphthong.

 Version 3 *Guringgay* illustrates the other orthography problem: writing <ng>. In English, <ng> has two articulations: [ng] as in *singer* and [ngg] as in *finger*. We know which one to say when reading because we acquired the spoken version first. But it's problematic when used for a different language because written <ng> could represent either. Versions 3 and 4 re-insert the <g> to make an explicit consonant cluster of two sounds: [ngg].

Version 4 *Kuringgai* was published by Fraser in 1892. By changing the first letter from <g> to <k> Fraser understood there was one sound with two pronunciations.[5] He had learnt the necessity for a vowel in the first syllable: <ku>. Fraser knew that written <ng> is not explicit, so he deliberately chooses a sequence of letters to reinforce two sounds <ngg>. This version finishes with <ai> maintaining the original form.

We work on the premise there is one word with many written forms: Gringai – Guringay – Guringgay – Guringai – Guringgai – Kuringgai – Ku-ring-gai – GuriNgai.

Mathews' written form *Goreenggai* (1897: 320-321) 'agrees' with the colonial form *Gringai* with an implied an unstressed vowel in the first syllable; followed by an implied longer vowel in the second syllable; note the mid-word consonant cluster [ngg]. A phonemic representation of this is /guriinggay/. Following Syron's discovery of Mathew's more explicit representation, its written form deserves revision in consultation with the community north of the Hunter.

1.2 *Gringai* in the historical record

The Guringay in the country north of the Hunter River are well documented in colonial records, letters and maps. The following from William Scott is one of the earliest mentions; he was born at Carrington in 1844, and left the district in 1873. His recollections may have been compiled much later:

> ' … some of my early recollections of the Port Stephens tribe … This was the Gringai[6]
> tribe, a sub-branch of numerous native people that once inhabited the lower
> portions of the Hunter and Karuah River valleys'
>
> (Scott in Bennett, Dungog Chronical 1929).

The use of 'tribe' and 'sub-branch' are not defined, and reflect a colonial, European view. Holmer's much later description of this region is restricted to Birrbay and Warrimay people:

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[4] Note that square brackets represent a spoken sound e.g. [k] and [g]; the angle brackets contain a letter e.g. <k> or <g>; slash symbols indicate a phoneme /g/.
[5] Illustrated by *kuri* and *guri* having the same definition.
[6] This is the same form used by Charles and James Boydell who lived in the same era.

> *'Kattang … was said to have branched into Birripi (Birrimbai, bilbai) – spoken about Gloucester – and warrimi (Warrimee, warrimai) – spoken at Port Stephen …'*
> *(Holmer, 1966:1).*

Between the two descriptions is an inconsistency in people names at Port Stephens, but the language data from both sources indicate consistency in language, with some dialectal variations. One of Holmer's language consultants was Eddie Lobban, born at Gloucester where he acquired *Kattang* from his mother, an acknowledged excellent speaker (1966:6).

A reference to *Grengai* occurs in a handwritten letter from James Boydell to R.H. Mathews, writing from Camyr Allyn near Gresford (1895) in which he refers to the *'last Grengai burial'* he attended *'some months ago'*. Boydell's antecedents had occupied the Allyn River since 1826.

It is challenging to reconcile a pre-colonial context of clan ownership of land and language with colonial and European descriptions of 'tribe'. However, the early and consistent references to *Gringai* or *Grengai* with country north of the Hunter, and the survival of language through place names and language data compiled in the 19th century provide consistent links between people, land and language.

Correspondence between Boydell and Mathews, Fraser and Howitt leaves a trail of clues which may be used to decipher the colonial understanding of the languages, peoples and countries they describe. This communication with Fraser has important implications for the use of this name, which has ongoing consequences today.

1.3 Guringay is a dialect of Gathang language

Comparison of language data[7] from the country associated with *Gringai* north of the Hunter River with data from the surrounding languages indicates that Guringay, alongside Birrbay and Warrimay is a dialect of Gathang language.

Gathang and the neighbouring language to the south, known as Hunter River and Lake Macquarie (HRLM), share many common features; however, their differences indicate they are separate languages albeit with shared origins.

The language data for HRLM was collected in the early 19th century, in a master-apprentice relationship between Biraban and Threlkeld. This provided time for Threlkeld to document and describe grammatical elements of this language in a framework that recognises grammatical categories such as nominal and verbal morphology and pronominal paradigms.

In contrast the main language data for Gathang consists of wordlists from the colonial and later eras. In the twentieth century there was thirty plus years between Laves in 1929, and Holmer in the mid 1960s both of whom document the state of the language at both points in time, including phrases and clauses with examples of grammatical morphology. Both

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[7] In particular Hector's Williams River 1844 and the Allyn River vocabularies; Jack Cook's 1922 Vocabulary.

linguists document a larger range of languages than Threlkeld, but in much less detail, due to personal circumstances and the depth of time, one hundred years later than Threlkeld.

However, given the amounts of and types of language data for both Gathang and HRLM, a structural comparison between them reveals that

- Gathang has regular variation of pronunciation for some word-final sounds; this does not occur in HRLM.
- HRLM words begin with a vowel; this does not occur in Gathang.
- There is a critical difference between the vocabularies in:
  - pronouns
  - demonstratives (*this/here* and *that/there* type definitions)
  - locative; allative and purposive suffix forms
- There is a critical difference between the forms of the verbal suffixes
  - present, past and future tenses
 - nominaliser suffix forms

1.4 Mapping Guringay country

Two hand-drawn maps from the *Howitt and Fison Archive* place the *Gringai* on both the Patterson and Allyn Rivers. The Williams River is labelled Dungog Tribe; our examination of the Williams River Vocabulary from Hector, 1844 confirms it is the same language as the Allyn River.

In Map 1 (below) the Dungog tribe is differentiated but we don't know on which criteria. Towards the Manning River is the word 'Tukala' which is presumably Gathang word **djukala** *many*; the text indicates another name 'Mundi-gutart'. The first word is **manday** another Gathang word defined *many, a lot, plenty*, the second part of this word is unknown. Note that the word final sound in *Dungog* aligns with Gathang sound patterns in word-final position. We argue the Dungog people also owned and spoke the Guringay dialect of Gathang.
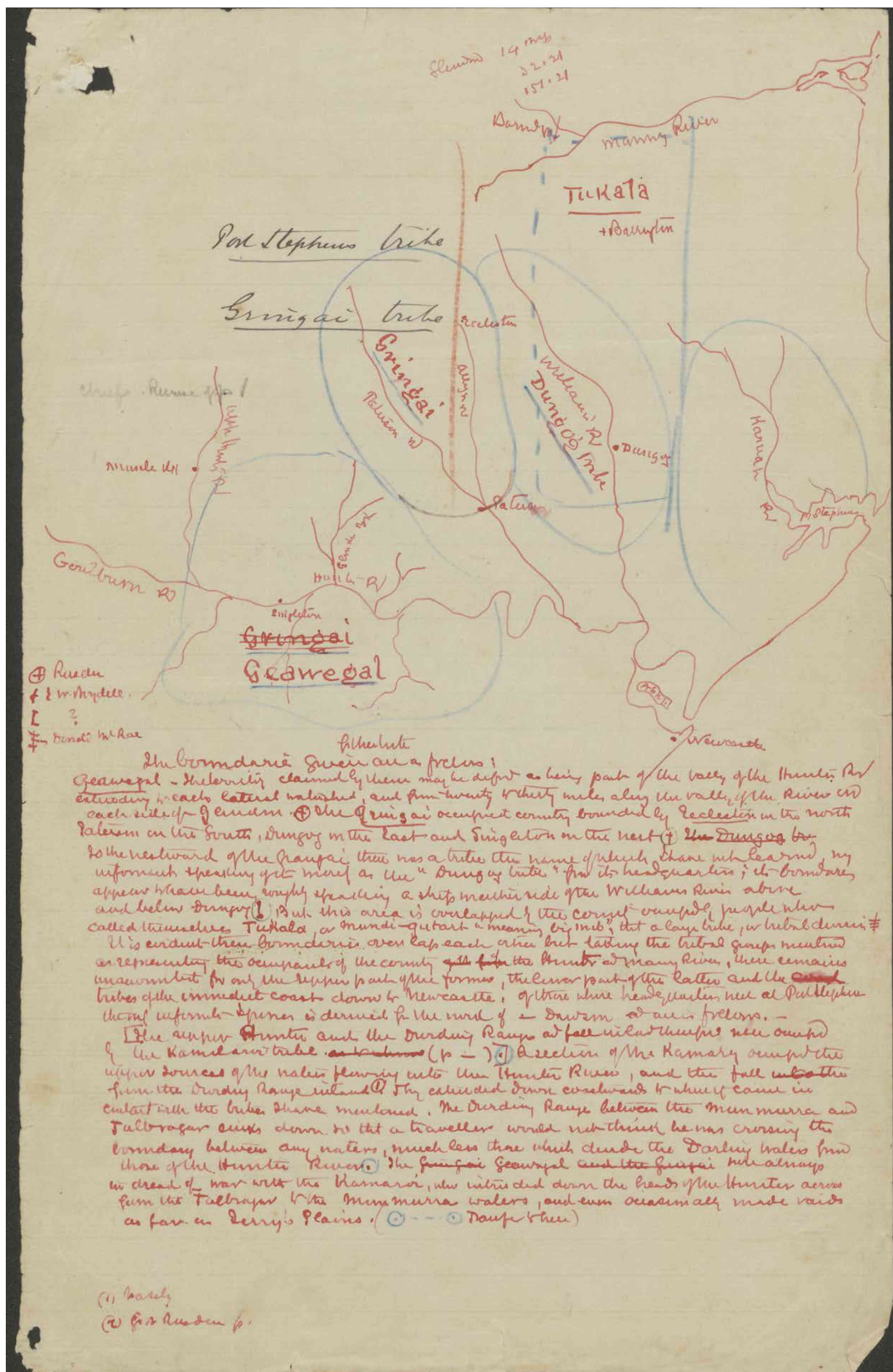
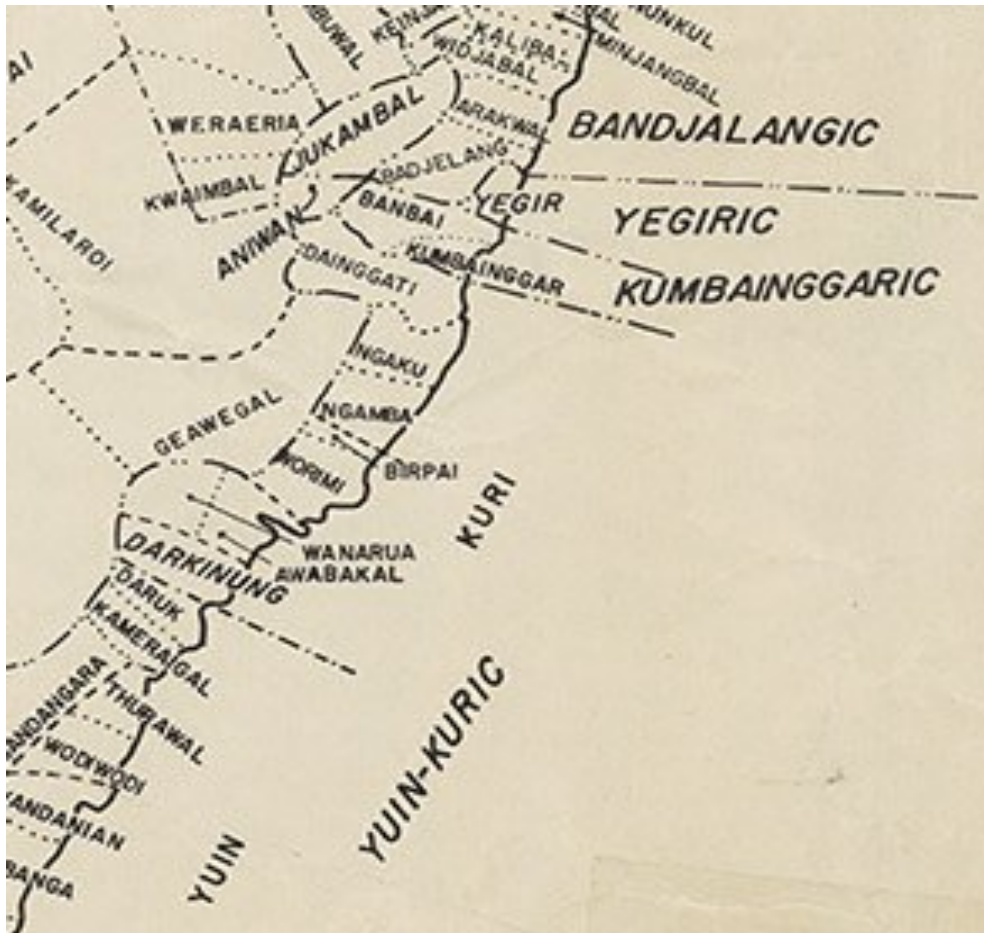**Map 1:** A hand-drawn map attributed to James Boydell places *Gringai* between the Paterson and Williams Rivers.[8] Boydell lived on the Allyn River, which is in between the others.

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[8] Howitt notes of the Gringai Howitt and Fison Archive; p. 0001. hw0146
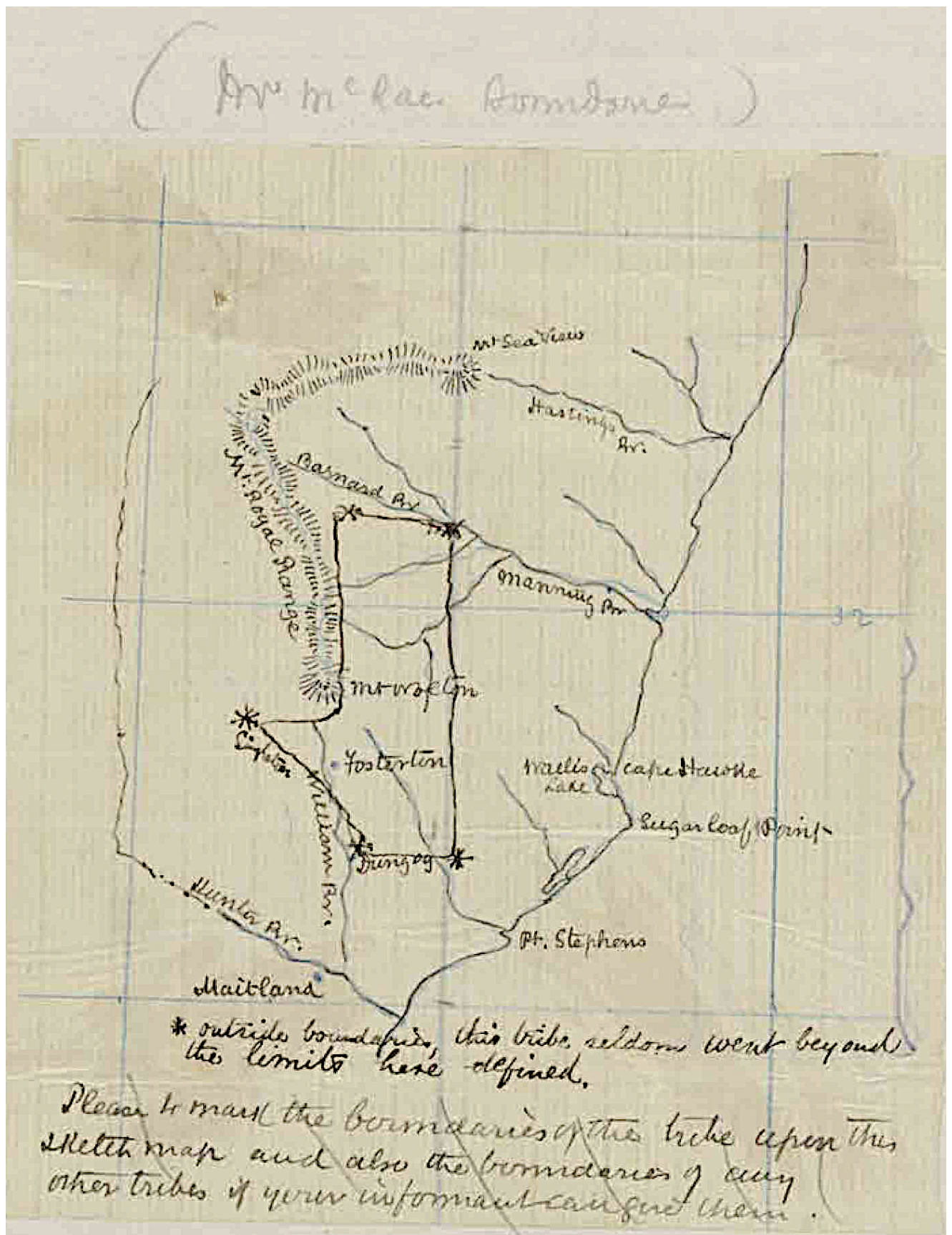
Map 2: A second hand-drawn map in the same archive implies a much bigger region held by the *Gringai* Tribe, as far as the Barnard River.

The last depiction of *Gringai* known to us is in Howitt's published map (1904: 822-823). Here it is clearly marked north of the Hunter River and west from Port Stephens, this is consistent with the broad region that appears across historical accounts. Note the lack of *Kuringgai* between Port Jackson and Newcastle.

Map 3: Howitt 1904.

However, at some point after the Howitt publication references to *Gringai* in maps documenting Aboriginal Australia was excluded. These include: Davidson 1938; Tindale 1940; O'Grady et.al 1966; Tindale 1974 and Horton 1996.

Tindale includes a description under his main entry for 'Worimi' (1974: 201 – 202):
'… Gringai (a name nominated by Howitt), Goreenggai …' (1974:202). The latter version of the same word is from Mathews (see above).

In Map 4 O'Grady et. al. document *Kameraigal, Daruk, Darkinung, Awabakal, Worimi, Biripi'* in a line up the coast … with *Wanarua* and *Geawegal* to the west where *Gringai* is located on the Howitt Map of 1904. The *Kameraigal* form a substantial group south of *Daruk* and *Darkinung*. Notice that there is no mention of *Kuringgai* north of Sydney, four years prior to Capell's 'New Discovery'.

Map 4: O'Grady et. al. 1966

2 The invention of Kuringgai

The story about Kuringgai has been told before; we hope it need not be told again. The following is a short version of a longer story. A more detailed examination is in *Filling a Void* (see References for online link) and in Wafer and Lissarrague 2010. Our focus in this re-telling is the correspondence between the scholars of the 19th century.

2.1 John Fraser 19th century – Kuriġgai / Kuringgai

In earlier pages we allude to correspondence between John Fraser and James Boydell in 1882 discussing the *Gringai* located north of the Hunter.

In his letter to the editor of the Sydney Morning Herald in 1890 Fraser had developed the written form of the tribal name from *Gringai* to *Goringai* and was formenting his theory about the 'Goringai tribe', its 'subdivisions' and 'local portions':

> *I know that the Goringai tribe occupied the whole of the east coast from the Hastings and the Manning down to the Hunter, and had several subdivisions named from particular localities in their territory. These subdivisions correspond with the Cammeray, Cadi, Gwea, &c, of Mr Oliver's letter, which were only local portions of one great tribe stretching along the coast from the Hunter, probably as far south as the Illawarra district.*

We don't know what he means by 'subdivisions', 'local portions' or 'tribe'; nor do we know why he included 'Cammeray, Cadi, Gwea'.

In 1892 John Fraser introduced the word *Kuringgai* on his *Map of New South Wales as occupied by The Native Tribes.* This map divides the state into 14 'Tribes'. Number VIII, stretches from Bulli in the south to north beyond the Hastings River; west almost as far as Bathurst, westwards from Broke, through Singleton, and north as far as Nowendoc, turning north east to reach Port Macquarie. Fraser called this tribe *Kuriġ-gai*. Note that Fraser's (ġg) sequence represents (ngg), so read: *Kuringgai*.[9]

This is presumably the source for the place-name *Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park* established two years later.[10] Fraser's map represents his English understanding of the country and languages of the people, not the actual country and languages of the people. His one language group Number VIII encompasses five languages (from south to north): Dharawal, the Sydney language, Darkinyung, HRLM and Gathang.

Past speculations about the origins of *Kuringgai* include the word *kuri* or 'man' tagged with the Dharruk possessive case *-gai* thus *kuri-(ng)gai* (Kohen in Wafer & Lissarrague, 2010: 156). The same possessive case form *-ngay* or *-gay* occurs on Gathang possessive pronouns, but it is not recorded occurring on other nominals.

We speculate this name which is long recognised as being the invention of Fraser has its origins in correspondence one decade earlier between him and James Boydell:

> *I have had considerable acquaintance with the local tribe the greater part of my life as they consider Camyr Allyn their headquarters…*

A couple of pages later …

> *I will try to answer the questions as fully as I can …*
> 1) *Gresford a [indecipherable] Greengai tribe … Boundaries Eccleston on the North, Paterson South, Dungog East and Singleton West – or thereabouts.*

<div align="right">Boydell, 25 April 1882</div>

The next day Fraser wrote to Howitt:

… I shall be able to delineate on our[?] map the limits of the Gringai tribe or language …

<div align="right">Fraser, 26 April 1882</div>

One year later Fraser published confirmation of Boydell as his primary source for *'the Gringai tribe'* (1883: 199):

> *I owe special acknowledgement to Mr C. Naseby, Maitland (for the Kamilaroi tribe), and Mr J. W. Boydell, Camyrallyn, Gresford (for the Gringai tribe). Both of these*

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[9] In 1892 Fraser published his re-arrangement of Threlkeld's descriptions (grammars and wordlists) of the Hunter River and Lake Macquarie language (HRLM). Somewhat unhelpfully, Fraser reinvented Threlkeld's orthography and changed the language name from *Hunter River and Lake Macquarie language* to *Awabakal*.

[10] The National Park was established in 1894. "The park gets its name from the Guringai Aboriginal people who were long thought to be the traditional owners of the area. However, more contemporary research suggests that this was not the case.[6][7][8]". Wikipedia entry viewed 30/09/24.

gentlemen have had intimate acquaintance with these tribes for more than thirty years.

We conclude the name *Kuringgai* used by Fraser in his publication of 1892 has its origins in his correspondence with Boydell about *Gringai* in the early eighties, which he developed into *Goringai* in his letter to the Herald in 1890.

Fraser was not an anthropologist, a linguist nor an ethnologist (see below); he was a scholar who collected information about Aboriginal peoples from various non-Aboriginal contacts, and published summaries of their collective investigations. It's possible he wanted to honour the Aboriginal people by using a known Aboriginal word, with his re-analysis of its structure and entirely new definition: from *Gringai* to *Goringai* to *Kuringgai*.

Fraser had a penchant for naming things … he created *Awabakal* for the new name of the people whose language Threlkeld named by territory: *Hunter River and Lake Macquarie* (Fraser 1892: Preface (unpaginated).

2.2 Arthur Capell 20th century – Kuriŋgai / Guriŋgai

Almost eighty years later *Kuringgai* was used again, this time by Arthur Capell, but for a different purpose from Fraser's 'super tribe'.

In 1970 Capell published his analysis and conclusions about language data from two manuscripts: one compiled by Threlkeld[11] 'northwards of Sydney' in 1824 with the heading 'Karee'; and another compiled by Mann, (n.d.). Mann's data were collected at Broken Bay from a son of 'Boongarie' (i.e. Bungaree) and was found to 'agree' with the 'Karee' manuscript, i.e. they are the same language.

Capell called the language in these manuscripts *Kuringgai*, seemingly because the data originates from 'northwards of Sydney', i.e. near the place called Ku-ring-gai since 1894. Capell describes a broad region for *Kuringgai*: (note he introduces a third spelling using the phonetic symbol ŋ):

… a language which it is convenient to call Kuringgai (Guriŋgai) was spoken on the north side of Port Jackson, and extended at least to Tuggerah Lakes, merging into Awaba'
(1970:21).[12]

There is no justification provided for the description *'… on the north side of Port Jackson …'* and the *'convenience'* is based on an existing imposition, namely Kuringgai as a place-name on the northern shores of Sydney since 1894.

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[11] Threlkeld learnt and documented the language he called Hunter River and Lake Macquarie in collaboration with Biraban, a native of Lake Macquarie. This language was re-named *Awabakal* by Fraser.
[12] Apparently Capell was not aware of the Guringay, nor the Warrimay peoples north of the Hunter River. Neither appear (nor any variations of spelling) in his *Linguistic Survey of Australia'*(1963), although Birbai E11 and Gadhang E22 are included.

2.2.1 Migration of Bungaree and his people
The Threlkeld and Mann manuscripts provide an explanation for the Port Jackson location in Capell's description. A group of people, speakers of HRLM from the Broken Bay and Pittwater area 'northwards of Sydney', migrated to the north shore of Port Jackson sometime after 1800, replacing the earlier population of Cammeraygal. They are known as Bungaree and his people.

Capell concedes a possible relationship between Bungaree and Pittwater, but concludes if this is the case then Cameraygal were the southernmost speakers of the same language, i.e. HRLM:

'If … this second language preserved by Threlkeld is the language of the Pittwater
people, and included the well-known Cammeraygal on the extreme south, along the
northern shores of Port Jackson, and stretched as far north at least as as Broken
Bay'   (1970:24).

This conclusion may have been influenced by Fraser's similar remarks in his letter to the editor in 1890 (see 2.1).

Capell's conclusion is about two languages he calls 'Kuringgai' and 'Awaba' we call dialects of one language: HRLM. Capell includes 'Cammeraygal' under 'Kuringgai' but does not consider the original population may have owned and spoken a different language (see below) prior to the migration of the HRLM speakers to Cammeraygal country on the north shore of Port Jackson.

Capell consolidates the hypothesis that HRLM stretched from northern Port Jackson to Tuggerah Lakes, and that it was a separate language from 'Awaba'. Capell used two written forms: 'Kuringgai' and 'Guringai' on his map. Capell's version of the language ecology in the Sydney basin and northern extremities has been widely adopted since the 1970s.

2.2.2 The north side of Port Jackson
Records from the First Fleet indicate the Gamaragal (also written Cam-mer-ray-gal, Cammerragal, Cammerragalleon, Kamarigal etc *'..inhabit the north shore of Port Jackson'* (King in Hunter 1793 in Attenbrow, 2002: 25).

Attenbrow considers *'It is probable that the coastal Darug dialect spoken on the south side of Port Jackson was also spoken on the north shore – or perhaps another very similar Darug dialect was spoken there'* (2002: 34). The Cameraygal did not survive the initial invasion, but their presence in that location is well established – see Map 4.

2.2.3 Which language is where?
Capell is ambiguous about the language in the 'Karee' manuscript; on the one hand he indicates there are two different languages *Kuringgai* and *Awaba* (HRLM) on the basis of vocabulary. Capell then used HRLM grammatical structures to reconstruct three *Kuringgai* clauses. This contradicts his first point.

These Kuringgai sentences can be paralleled word for word in Awaba, and brief study
of Threlkeld's Grammar will suffice to identify all the morphemes involved.

Lissarrague (2006) examined the same material and included her analysis of the 'Karee' manuscript using the HRLM grammar to identify words and morphemes in 68 different phrases or clauses. In other words, Lissarrague proves Capell's 'Kuringgai' and 'Awaba' are both dialects of the language from the Hunter River and Lake Macquarie (HRLM).

Consider the close spoken proximity of Guringay and 'Kuringgai/Guringai'. The first represents a dialect of Gathang, and is owned by the people north of the Hunter River. The second pair are inconveniently bestowed on a group who have no affinity with Gathang language. In this way, following Capell's ambiguous discussion about a 'new' language he names 'Kuringgai' for *convenience*, the stage is set for the following developments.

2.3 James Kohen 1993

In 1993 James Kohen published *The Darug and their neighbours* and included in Appendix 6 *Dictionary of the Kuringgai Language*. The sources for this dictionary are none other than Threlkeld's 1824 'Karee' manuscript and Mann's wordlist *'probably collected in 1840s in the Gosford area' from Long Dick, a son of Bungaree and Queen Gooseberry'* (Kohen, 1993: 245). Kohen's use of *Kuringgai* in relationship to the northwards of Sydney follows Capell, thus cementing this borrowed Aboriginal word for use in an 'Aboriginal' context about a different language and people.

2.4 AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia 1996

Map 5: AIATSIS

Kuringgai is absent in published maps known to us until 1996 when it was included on the AIATSIS map.[13] Its identification with a colour different to *Awabakal* indicates Horton[14] had read Kohen and Capell, concluding there are two languages, *Kuring-gai* and *Awabakal*.

The impact of this cannot be underestimated; by legitimizing in 'Indigenous' terms a construct from outside the culture, the AIATSIS Map endorses two post-colonial myths and humbles without mention the documented and recognised people from north of the Hunter River. The map comes with a disclaimer which should be taken seriously:

> *This map attempts to represent the language, social or nation groups of Aboriginal Australia. It shows only the general locations of larger groupings of people which may include clans, dialects or individual languages in a group. It used published resources from the eighteenth century-1994 and is not intended to be exact, nor the boundaries fixed. It is not suitable for native title or other land claims.*
>
> https://shop.aiatsis.gov.au/products/the-aiatsis-map

In other words, the AIATSIS map is unreliable in terms of identifying specific language groups, or anything else. It is a colourful impression of multiple differences between changing criteria which are not defined. It accompanies the *Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia* published by Aboriginal Studies Press (AIATSIS) in 1994, which graced many primary school libraries. The technology used to create the map does not support any realignment, change can only be achieved by new research to develop digital layers representing specific categories of language and social structures.

2.5 Attenbrow 2002

Attenbrow sets the record straight in her map of the New South Wales coastline from Port Hacking in the south to Gosford in the north and west to Penrith (2002: 23, figure 3.3). Clans associated with the country north of Port Jackson include *Gamaragal, Borogugal, Gayamaygal* and most northern *Garigal* on the south side of Broken Bay. Attenbrow includes a very early quote about Port Jackson.

> *The tribe of Camerra inhabit the north side of Port Jackson …*
> *(King in Hunter, 1793 in Attenbrow, 2002:22).*

Note the date of this observation about the *Gamaragal* is 1793; Bungaree and his clan of HRLM speakers migrated into this region after 1800.

Attenbrow correctly warns against including *Kuringgai / Guringgai* as a separate language or people in the north of Sydney region (2002:34) presumably because she recognises how both origins of this word, the invention by Fraser (name of the super-tribe) and the attributing a name for convenience by Capell to unidentified wordlists warranted further investigation:

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[13] https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia
[14] David Horten was the creator of the map.

The status of Guringai (Karee) as a separate language needs clarification. Even if it was spoken around Broken Bay, there seems to be no support in the early colonial records for it being spoken, or for the existence of a separate language or dialect, on the north shore of Port Jackson. (2002:32)

2.6 Brown 2010 Guringgai and Darug

Brown writes about a particular framework for mapping cultural differences against biogeographic features (an ecosystem approach) and describes strong correlations in the Sydney Basin between identified sub-Bioregions and two mappable archaeological features: pre-invasion cultural boundaries; and site distribution. In his discussion about saltwater and freshwater peoples Brown identifies the language groups of the Sydney Basin and demonstrates how working outside one's field can prove hazardous: Kohen's inland and coastal 'Darug' (i.e. two dialects) are described as the equivalent to the relationship between Capell's 'Darug' and 'Guringai' (2010: 10). This search for a freshwater – saltwater distinction, presumably 'Darug' is the inland and 'Guringai' is the coastal dialect, misses the point that Capell is clearly describing 'Kuringgai' as a different language from 'Dharruk'; see above for Attenbrow's conclusion.

Brown promotes ethnohistorical material describing pre-invasion society 'rather than word lists', as if we have to make a choice. His fundamental contention is the differentiated social groupings were based on distinct subsistence economies adapted to different ecological circumstances rather than language. Language is a tool to communicate ideas, but it also directly communicates identity, especially in small scale societies.

2.7 First Languages Australia: Gambay map

Map 6: Gambay Map

First Languages Australia is acknowledged for re-instating Guringay to its rightful place north of the Hunter River. The light blue colour scheme is shared between Gathang, Warrimay and 'Birpai' with an unexplained darker blue for Guringay.

Gambay also includes 'Kuringgai' on the Central Coast. The HRLM dialects 'Awabakal' with 'Kuringgai' are both yellow, indicating their dialectal relationship, an improvement on the AIATSIS map although Capell's nomenclature is still used without his classification.

Each language search in Gambay is accompanied by a link to Austlang, a database and collections management system for languages at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Studies; many Comments are informative.

3 From Kuringgai to Guringai

Given the establishment of an Aboriginal language spoken *'north of Sydney to Tuggerah Lakes'* (Capell) it seems inevitable that somebody would come along to claim it. That turned out to be the 'Guringai'.[15]

The Guringai Tribal Link is active in promoting its activities and establishing itself as the Aboriginal representatives of the northern parts of Sydney.

> *The culture of the Guringai people is very much alive today. The traditional Lands of the Guringai/Wanangine extend from Lane Cove in the south, to Lake Macquarie in the north. … The Guringai nation today is represented by the Guringai Tribal Link Aboriginal Corporation, established in 2003. The purpose of Guringai Tribal Link is to reunite the traditional clans of the Guringai people and to teach contemporary Guringai culture.*
> https://walkaboutpark.com.au/guringai-darkinjung/

What is 'contemporary Guringai culture' if it does not describe the activities of people from north of the Hunter? Where was this culture learnt? From whom? How do councils, schools, universities etc determine cultural identity with local Aboriginal communities to celebrate culture?

The following learning resource for schools is from the *History of Aboriginal Sydney*, copyright held 2010 – 2013 by the *University of Sydney*. It teaches children a known misrepresentation of reality:

> *The area covered by the 'North Coastal' part of the website is, broadly, Wyong to Kirribilli and from the coast, west to the valley of the Lane Cove River. One reason is that this represents the areas where the language now often referred to as 'Guringai' was spoken in 1788. It was a big area, and while there were several regional variations merging into other languages, everyone would have understood one another. Of course other languages like Daruk, Darkinyung and Awabakal were spoken in the region as well.*
> https://historyofaboriginalsydney.edu.au/north-coastal

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[15] Also written 'GuriNgai'.

This description asserts that *'Guringai'* is applied to the language spoken in the region described since 1788, a notion which pays no attention to historical fact or linguistic analysis. There is a lot said about language but no evidence of expertise or knowledge.

The *History of Aboriginal Sydney* webpage summarises our familiar story of exclusion of Guringay from north of the Hunter River and another misreading of Capell. Note how John Fraser has become an 'ethnographer', which presumably lends credence to his practice:

> In 1892 the ethnographer John Fraser used the term 'Kuringgai' for a 'nation' which he showed extending along the coast north of Sydney Harbour. He said the name Kuring-gai meant 'men'. Tracey Howie, 2010 Chairperson of the Guringai Link Aboriginal Corporation, relates that 'Wannungini is our traditional name.
>
> In 1940 the anthropologist Norman Tindale gave the name 'Kamaraigal' as the name of the tribe (not the language) in the Sydney area. In the 1960s the linguist Arthur Capell believed, partly through studying a language list provided by Bungaree's son Long Dick, that there was a separate northside language which he said, was convenient to call Kuringgai. Kuringgai (Guringai) was spoken 'on the north side of Port Jackson, east of the Lane Cove River to the coast, and as far north as Wyong and Tuggerah Lake, merging into 'Awaba'.
>
> Since the 1970s archaeologists and anthropologists working in the Sydney region have adopted Capell's names for the linguistic groups, with some amendments.
>   https://historyofaboriginalsydney.edu.au/north-coastal

Note that Norman Tindale 1940 may have read Kings account of the *Camerra (in Hunter, 1793 in Attenbrow, 2002:22)* to place the 'Kamaraigal' on the north shore of Port Jackson; he didn't 'give' the name to anybody. See also Map 4 which has similar information.

Following Capell's theory of the separate language and the name he gave it, this webpage text illustrates how misunderstood fiction becomes fact.

Despite the historical corrections made in *Filling the Void* and other publications, on the Australian Museum webpage[16] Bungaree's people are described as the *'Kuring-gai mob'* who *'arrived in Sydney in the 1790s'*. Elsewhere the date is consistently 'following 1800'.

Bungaree arrived in Sydney in the 1790s with the remains of his Kuring-gai mob, after conflicts with white settlers had escalated along the Hawkesbury River.
                     https://australian.museum/about/history/exhibitions/trailblazers/bungaree/

We have recounted Capell's analysis of the two manuscripts (by Threlkeld and Mann) and his conclusions i) the data they contain are the same language; and ii) this language is different from Awaba (i.e. HRLM). But Capell also demonstrates how three clauses in

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[16] Viewed 03/11/2014.

'Kuringgai' can be constructed with 'Awaba' (HRLM) morphemes. This infers they are the same language, using the same grammar to construct phrases and clauses; see 2.3.3.[17]

Despite (or because of) Capell's ambiguity the long-term influence associating the name Kuringgai with a language from Port Jackson to Central Coast is ongoing; and it is confused with Guringay people and language from north of the Hunter River.

Summary

We do not question the right of people to explore their family trees, and we encourage anybody who suspects Aboriginal heritage to explore their inheritance.

Reconciliation means listening to Aboriginal people, in particular the people who own something you think you want, like a name.

The authors struggle with the concept that a group in search of a cultural and ethnic identifier would adopt a name with foundations which do not support authenticity.

Using this word which is a possession is problematic for the actual Guringay people from north of the Hunter River. This mistaken identity is overdue a return to its rightful owners. It is incumbent on the Guringai Tribal Link and their supporters to recognise the negative impact on Guringay people, and to express identity using their own cultural property.

It is also problematic for non-Aboriginal people who want to learn about and appreciate Australia's Aboriginal past and express solidarity with Aboriginal people in the present post-colonial society. This relies on transparency.

Given the history we have outlined about Gringai – Guringay – Guringgay – Guringai – Guringgai – Kuringgai -– GuriNgai we strongly discourage the use of this word as a name associated with northwards of Sydney and the Central Coast, in any of its written manifestations because:

- This word is based on two events of cultural appropriation: 1892 and 1970.
- This name across all spellings is precious to all Guringay people, who *own* their language … including this name.
- This use of this word outside the Gathang language context creates barriers for local, state and federal government authorities and private businesses to make informed decisions.
- This use of this word outside the Gathang language context is misleading for the wider community.

In recognition of Guringay people's affiliation with Gathang language and their traditional country north of the Hunter River we support the following recommendation of the Aboriginal Heritage Office (Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Manly, North Sydney, Pittwater, Warringah and Willoughby Councils) and recommend it as essential reading.

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[17] See Lissarrague's transcription 2006: 168-174 of the *Karee* manuscript.

> *It is unfortunate that the term Guringai has become widely known in northern Sydney and it is understandable that people wish to use it as it is convenient to have a single word to cover the language, tribe/nation, identity and culture of a region. However, it is based on a nineteenth century fiction and the AHO would argue that the use of the term Guringai or any of its various spellings such as Kuringgai is not warranted given its origin and previous use. It is not authentic to the area, it was coined by a non-Aboriginal person and it gives a misleading impression of the connectivity of some original clan boundaries.* (2015: 41)

We appreciate scrutiny and any corrections. Some of the descriptions in this paper are technical, which we have endeavoured to avoid where possible. However, human language is complex and clarity of meaning and transparency of sources are essential. Lay readers are encouraged to seek assistance where necessary.

Robert Syron's research discovered the Howitt and Fison papers and letters, colonial newspaper accounts and other historical documents not included and not previously known by Lissarrague (2010). Syron's extensive historical, cultural and social knowledge about the region and the people both past and present informs this endeavour. Robert Syron is a Registered Aboriginal owner of Worimi Guringai Lands; Australian Rwandan War veteran 1994-95; ANZAC Peace Prize 1995, Meritorious Unit Citation and is currently engaged in manufacturing cultural artefacts for the Australian War Memorial.

Amanda Lissarrague has written grammars with dictionaries and translated texts for Gathang (Birrbay, Guringay and Warrimay), HRLM and Dhanggati; she is co-author of the *Gamilaraay Yuwaalaraay Yuwaalayaay dictionary*; *A Handbook of Aboriginal languages from New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory;* and *The Kuringgai Puzzle* as well as learning materials for Dhanggati mob *Guuyata Dhanggati Grammar Stories 1 – 12.* Amanda is currently engaged in producing learning materials with Elders from the Dhanggati Language Group / Ngabu Bingayi Aboriginal Corporation.

Acknowledgments

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