

Ngana
ngai?
Who am I?

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Translated by the Kurna Warra
Karrpanthi Committee

NLA Publishing

Ngana ngai?

Who am I?

Ngai kuula

I am a **K**oala

Ngathu patha wilya mutanthi.

I eat eucalyptus leaves.



Ngana ngadli?

Who are we?

Ngadli ngarridla

We are  arrots

Ngadli tarltirna nakuntu!

Look at our feathers!



Ngana ngai?

Who am I?

Ngai kurlu

I am a **K**angaroo

Ngathu ngudlingka idla katinthi.

I carry my baby joey in my pouch.



Ngana ngadli?
Who are we?

Ngadli kurdakidla

We are **C**ockatoos

Ngadli pirrkulayinhi.

We make loud screeching noises.



Ngana ngai?

Who am I?

Ngai wartu

I am a **W**ombat

Tirntu-arra ngai miitu wantinhi
kuma ngulthi-arra yurlunthi.

I sleep during the day and come
out at night.



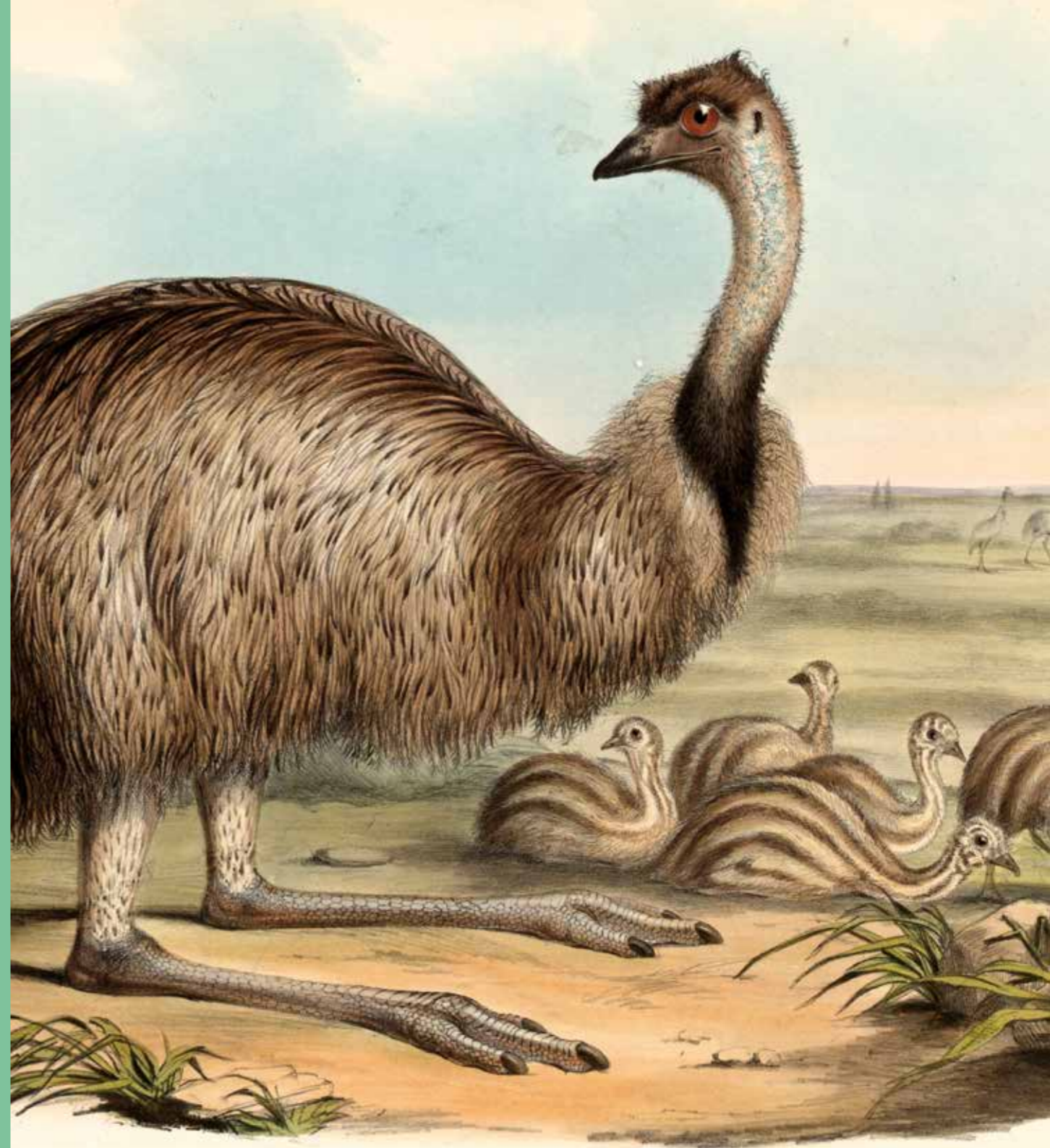
Ngana ngai?

Who am I?

Ngadlu kardi
idlarna kuma

We are  mus

Kardidlu tukutyarna Kangkarrintheta.
The male Emu looks after the babies.



Ngana ngai?

Who am I?

Ngai maityumaityu

I am a **b**at

Ngai tuwina maratidli, wampi-itya.

I have long webbed fingers that
I use as wings.



Ngana ngadli?

Who are we?

Ngadli kurrakarla

We are  agpies

Ngadli paitya palti taakarrintheta.

We love to sing beautiful songs.



Ngana ngadli?
Who are we?

Ngadli naalharla

We are  chidnas

Ngadli tiarrka warinapurtu.

We are covered with sharp spines.



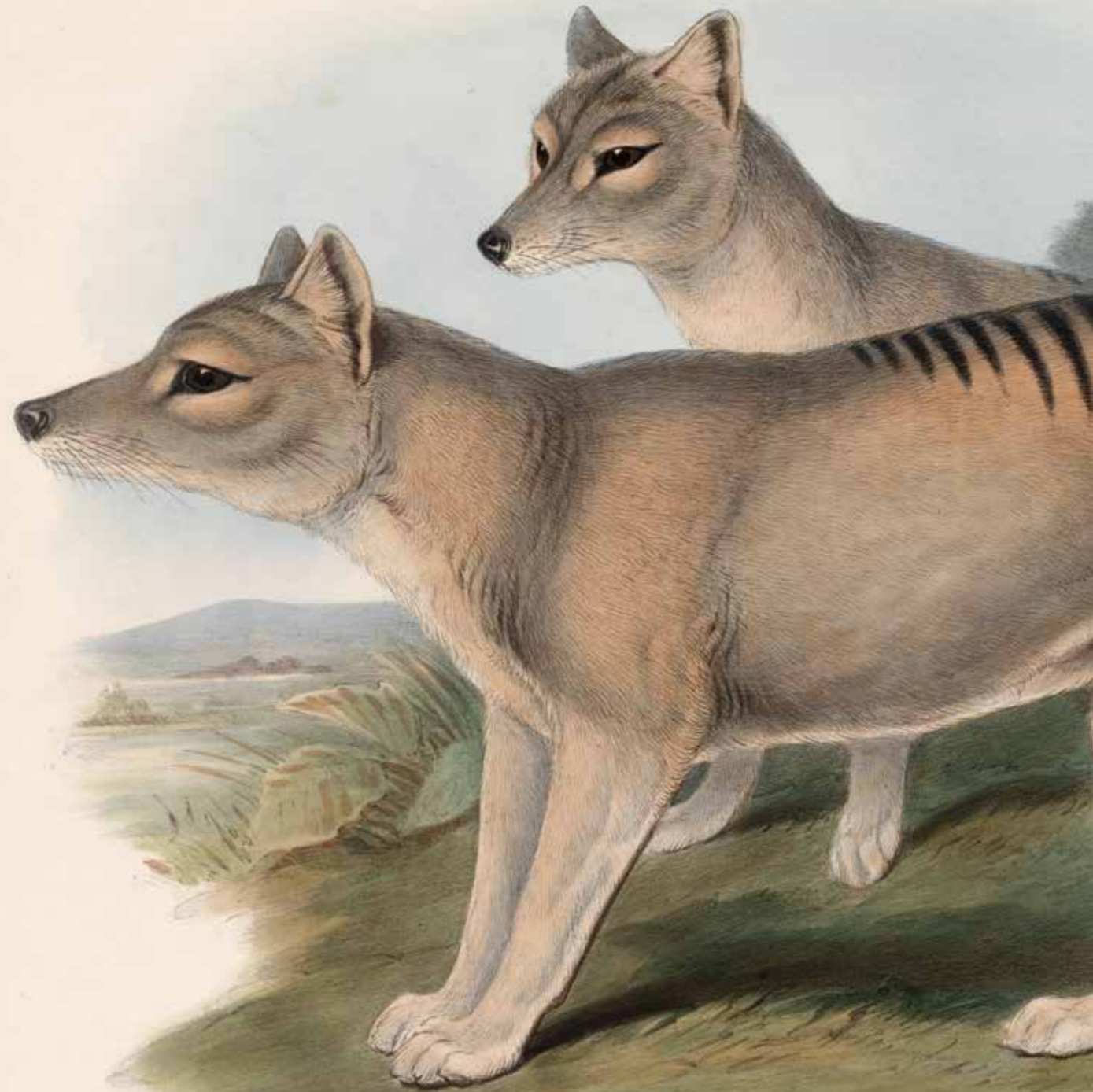
Ngana ngadli?
Who are we?

Ngadli ipiti kadlidla

We are  Tasmanian
tigers

Madlana purruna.

Not one of us is left alive.



Pronunciation Guide

Stress in Kurna is always on the first syllable.

The following letters make up the Kurna alphabet:

a aa ai au dl dlh dly dn dnh dny i ii k l lh ly m n ng nh ny
p r rd rdn rdl rl rn rr rt t th ty u ui uu w y.

Words

Idla	Idlarna	Ipiti	Kadlidla
Kardidlu	Kangkarrintheta	Katintheta	Kuma
Kurdakidla	Kurlu	Kurrakarla	Kuula
Madlana	Maityumaityu	Maratidli	Miitu
Mutantheta	Naalharla	Nakuntu	Ngadli
Ngadliku	Ngadlu	Ngai	Ngana
Ngarridla	Ngathu	Ngudlingka	Ngultheta-arra
Palti	Pardu	Paitya	Pathawilya
Pirrkulayintheta	Purruna	Taakarrintheta	Tarltirna
Tiarrka	Tirntu-arra	Tukutyarna	Tuwina
Wampi-itya	Wantintheta	Warirnapurtu	Wartu
Winaityinaityi	Yaku	Yurluntheta	

Vowels

a	like a in mama	Idla, Idlarna, Kadlidla, Kangkarrintheta, Kardidlu, Katintheta, Kuma, Kurdakidla, Kurrakarla, Kuula, Madlana, Maratidli, Mutantheta, Naalharla, Nakuntu, Ngadli, Ngadliku, Ngadlu, Ngana, Ngarridla, Ngathu, Ngudlingka, Ngultheta-arra, Paitya, Palti, Pardu, Pathawilya, Pirrkulayintheta, Purruna, Taakarrintheta, Tarltirna, Tiarrka, Tirntu-arra, Tukutyarna, Tuwina, Wampi-itya, Wantintheta, Warirnapurtu, Wartu, Yaku
i	like i in sit	Idla, Idlarna, Ipiti, Kadlidla, Kangkarrintheta, Kardidlu, Katintheta, Kurdakidla, Maratidli, Mutantheta, Ngadli, Ngadliku, Ngarridla, Ngudlingka, Ngultheta-arra, Palti, Pathawilya, Pirrkulayintheta, Taakarrintheta, Tarltirna, Tiarrka, Tirntu-arra, Tuwina, Wampi-itya, Wantintheta, Warirnapurtu, Winaityinaityi, Yurluntheta
u	like u in put	Kardidlu, Kuma, Kurdakidla, Kurlu, Kurrakarla, Maityumaityu, Miitu, Mutantheta, Nakuntu, Ngadliku, Ngadlu, Ngathu, Ngudlingka, Ngultheta, Pardu, Pirrkulayintheta, Purruna, Tirntu-arra, Tukutyarna, Tuwina, Warirnapurtu, Wartu, Yaku, Yurluntheta
aa	like a in father	Naalharla, Taakarrintheta
ii	like ee in meet	Miitu
uu	like u in push	Kuula
ai	like ie in pie	Maityumaityu, Ngai, Paitya, Winaityinaityi
au	like ow in town	Kurna

Consonants

p	like p in pig or b in big	Ipiti, Paitya, Palti, Pardu, Pathawilya, Pirrkulayintheta, Purruna, Wampi-itya, Warirnapurtu
m	like m in mother	Kuma, Madlana, Maityumaityu, Maratidli, Miitu, Mutantheta, Wampi-itya
w	like w in water	Pathawilya, Tuwina, Wampi-itya, Wantintheta, Warirnapurtu, Wartu, Winaityinaityi
y	like y in yellow	Pirrkulayintheta, Yurluntheta, Yaku
th	like d in width	Kangkarrintheta, Katintheta, Mutantheta, Ngathu, Ngultheta-arra, Pathawilya, Pirrkulayintheta, Taakarrintheta, Tarltirna, Tiarrka, Tirntu-arra, Tukutyarna, Tuwina, Wantintheta, Yurluntheta
nh	like n in now but with tongue between the teeth	Kangkarrintheta, Katintheta, Mutantheta, Naalharla, Nakuntu, Pirrkulayintheta, Taakarrintheta, Wantintheta, Yurluntheta
lh	like l in Luke but with tongue between the teeth	Naalharla, Ngultheta-arra
t	like t in tip or d in dip	Ipiti, Katintheta, Maratidli, Miitu, Mutantheta, Palti, Wantintheta
n	like n in tenth	Madlana, Ngana, Purruna, Tuwina, Wantintheta, Winaityinaityi
l	like l in bull	Kuula, Palti, Pirrkulayintheta
dl	like dl in goodluck	Idla, Idlarna, Kadlidla, Kardidlu, Kurdakidla, Madlana, Maratidli, Ngadli, Ngadliku, Ngadlu, Ngarridla, Ngudlingka
rt	like rt in court	Tarltirna, Tirntu-arra, Warirnapurtu, Wartu
rn	like n in nod but with tongue tip curled slightly back	Idlarna, Tarltirna, Tirntu-arra, Tukutyarna, Warirnapurtu
rl	like l in log but with tongue tip curled slightly back	Kurlu, Kurrakarla, Naalharla, Tarltirna, Yurluntheta
rr	rolled like r in Spanish	Kangkarrintheta, Kurrakarla, Ngarridla, Ngultheta-arra, Pirrkulayintheta, Purruna, Taakarrintheta, Tiarrka, Tirntu-arra
r	like r in run or curry	Maratidli, Warirnapurtu
rd	like rd in board	Kardidlu, Kurdakidla, Pardu
ty	like ch in church	Maityumaityu, Paitya, Tukutyarna, Wampi-itya, Winaityinaityi
ly	like ll in million	Pathawilya
k	like c in cut or g in gut	Kadlidla, Kangkarrintheta, Kardidlu, Katintheta, Kuma, Kurdakidla, Kurlu, Kurrakarla, Kuula, Nakuntu, Ngadliku, Ngudlingka, Pirrkulayintheta, Taakarrintheta, Tiarrka, Tukutyarna, Yaku
ng	like ng in sing	Kangkarrintheta, Ngadli, Ngadliku, Ngadlu, Ngai, Ngana, Ngarridla, Ngathu, Ngudlingka, Ngultheta-arra

Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this article contains reference to words, terms and descriptions that may be culturally sensitive or considered inappropriate today.

Prior to European settlement, over 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and multiple dialects are believed to have been spoken in Australia. Today, around 170 Indigenous languages are still spoken, but nearly half of these are spoken by fewer than ten speakers. The National Library holds a wealth of Indigenous language material in print, as oral history recordings, and in unpublished collections of manuscripts such as personal papers, diaries, letters and journals. Library collections may be the only places where some fragments or words of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages survive and thus they have an important role to play in language recovery and revitalisation.

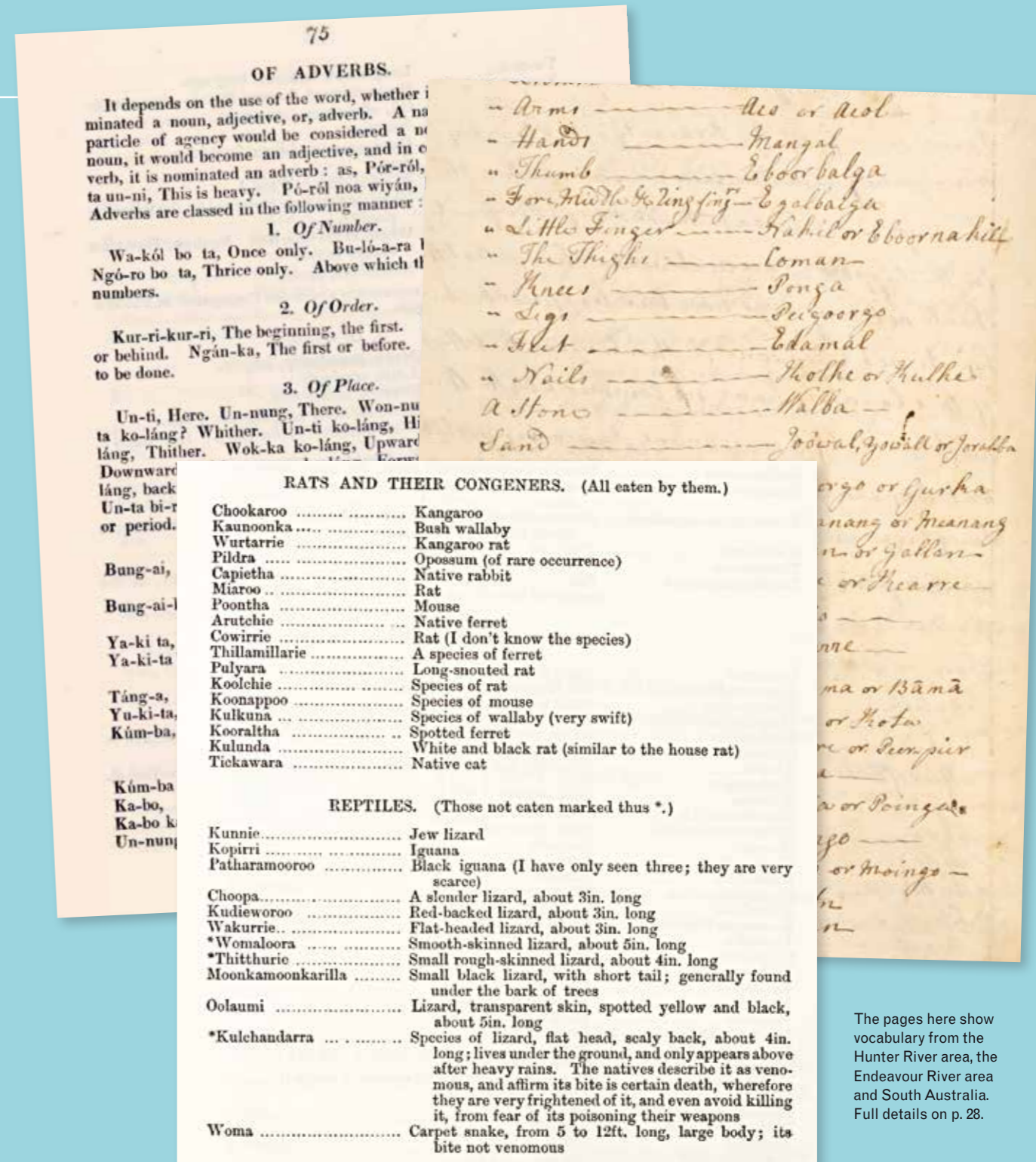
One of the earliest written records of an Aboriginal language held by the National Library is a brief vocabulary list written by James Cook. In 1770 his ship the *Endeavour*, in need of repairs, beached at Wabalumbaal on the Cape York Peninsula in Far North Queensland. Stranded here for seven weeks, Cook made contact with the Guugu Yimithirr peoples and documented words describing, among other things, features of the landscape, parts of the human body, and objects such as cockleshells and canoes.

The Library's nineteenth century Australian Indigenous language collections reflect the imbalance of power between settlers, missionaries and Aboriginal people. Friedrich August Hagenauer exemplifies contradictions inherent in many of

the collectors as recorders of information about Aboriginal people for a non-Indigenous audience, while at the same time engaging in practices which suppressed and destabilised traditional knowledge structures. As a missionary, Hagenauer exercised an extraordinary level of control over Aboriginal people at mission stations in Victoria where he served as superintendent. He was a prolific and meticulous recorder of Aboriginal language, but despite his knowledge and appreciation of language, Hagenauer banned practices such as corroborees which were integral to maintaining language and culture.

Collections of languages such as word lists or vocabularies often reflect the interest of the person doing the recording. One of the most substantial language collections held by the Library is the letter books of Lorimer Fison (1832-1907). A Wesleyan missionary, journalist and amateur anthropologist, Fison became interested in Aboriginal social organisation, marriage and kinship during the mid-to late 1800s. Through advertisements placed in newspapers, he appealed to others who shared his interest to collect and send him information.

The National Library website provides a guide to finding specific language group material in its records: see <https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/indigenous-language-resources>. The material is organised by state and territory, then arranged alphabetically. Under each language group name is a list of manuscripts and a brief description of the contents. Items can be requested through the Library catalogue and viewed in the Special Collections Reading Room. A copy of manuscript material can be ordered through the Library's Copies Direct service and delivered via post or email.



The pages here show vocabulary from the Hunter River area, the Endeavour River area and South Australia. Full details on p. 28.

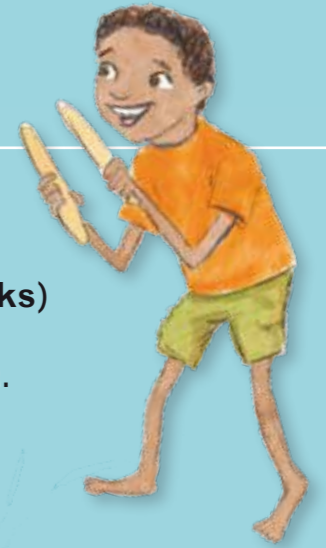
Niina marni?
Are you well?



My name is Luke. I'm a Kurna boy.

Kurna are the Aboriginal people that live around Adelaide. Kurna people call Adelaide **Tarntanya**. That means **red kangaroo place** in our language.

Sometime I make music with **wirridla (clapsticks)** just like my ancestors did a long time ago when Kurna were the only people living in **Tarntanya**.



In those days, Kurna people lived in camps.

On hot days, I like to walk along the **Karrawirra Pari**. That's what we call the River Torrens.
Karrawirra Pari means **redgum forest river**.



On special days I paint **ngaru (white ochre)** on my skin and I perform the **palti (traditional dance)**. I wear a **manga (headband)**.



They camped near the beach in summer to fish. I like to go fishing in a **yuku (boat)** and we catch **kayinpara (butterfish)**.



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book is available from the
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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Main Text: Animal Images

John Gould (1804–1881) *The Mammals of Australia: In Three Volumes*, 1863, nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1119516: Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*); King Lory (*Aprosmictus scapulatus*); Great Red Kangaroo (*Osphranter rufus*); Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita Vieill*); Wombat (*Phascolomys wombat*); Emu (*Dromaius novae-hollandiae*); Spectacled Flying Fox (*Pteropus conspicillatus*); White Magpie (*Gymnorhina organicum*); Echidna (*Echidna setosa*); Thylacinus (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*).

Australian Indigenous Language Collection

Pages from: (left) *An Australian Grammar: Comprehending the Principles and Natural Rules of the Language, as Spoken by the Aborigines in the Vicinity of Hunter's River, Lake Macquarie, &c. New South Wales*, by L.E. Threlkeld, 1834, nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn862264; (right) *Journal of H.M.S. Endeavour, 1768-1771*, National Library of Australia, part 298r, nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn3525402; (front) *The Native Tribes of South Australia* by J.D. Woods (ed.), first published 1879, nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn2019468

Kaurna Life

All cartoon illustrations on these pages are by Tony Flowers.

From left: J.W. Giles (1801–1870) and G.F. Angas (1822–1886), *The Kuri Dance; The Palti Dance*, 1847, nla.cat-vn1846430; J.W. Giles (1801–1870) and G.F. Angas (1822–1886), *Rapid Bay, Encampment of Yankalilla Blacks*, 1847, nla.cat-vn320278; A. Schramm (1814–1864), *Native Encampment in South Australia*, 1850s, nla.cat-vn1770627; (background) S.T. Gill (1818–1880), *Natives of South Australia ... 1849*, nla.cat-vn458129.