Chapter 4
Language, Heart and Mind: Can Aboriginal Languages Be Revived?

John Harris

Abstract This chapter explores John Harris and Stephen Harris's shared interest in Aboriginal languages and their intrinsic role in the maintenance of culture. The words of a rap song performed by Groote Eylandt youth say 'We walk two roads', a major theme of Stephen's life work in bilingual education, what he called 'two-way education'. The rap song also proclaims, 'Strong language, strong mind', naming the deep truth that language is the carrier of culture, without which culture cannot be labelled, envisioned or discussed. The chapter then goes on to consider damaged or 'sleeping' languages and whether they can be 'reawakened'. A major case study demonstrates that Bible translation into the endangered Nyoongar language has prompted language recovery and raised people's sense of identity and self-esteem.

Keywords Aboriginal languages · Aboriginal education · Bilingual education · Language preservation · Language and thought · Language revival · Stephen Harris · John Harris · Anindilyakwa · Nyoongar · Bible translation · Identity

On a beach in the north of Groote Eylandt, Aboriginal teenagers rap and sing, performing a new hip-hop dance, sung entirely in their Anindilyakwa language: *Yirra-langwa Angalya Ayangkidarrba,* 'Our Home Island' (Warnumamalya, 2019).

> *Mikbamurra*, this is our country where we live.
>
> This island belongs to us *Yirrandilyakwa* people.
>
> This language belongs to us people.
>
> This is *Anindilyakwa* we are speaking…

They tread on sand and rock and water. They dance with joy. They sing with conviction.

> Song, dance, story.
>
> We still carry it today.

J. Harris (✉)
ACT, Canberra, Australia
e-mail: john.harris@biblesociety.org.au

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When we dance *alukwaya*, we can feel our ancestors.

Ngeniyerriya, Ngeniyerriya.[1]

Stephen would have loved this performance. Then the dancers sing two phrases which sound almost as if Stephen had written them himself.

Yirrama yuwarnuma ambilyuma manurukwa.

We follow two roads.

Stephen was convinced that the very survival of Aboriginal people as a distinct people depended on their becoming truly bicultural, fully able to live in two cultural worlds. He was convinced of the need for an education which 'simultaneously maintained Aboriginal culture and taught a power-giving knowledge of Western culture' (Harris, S. 2003, p. 57). He wrote Two-Way Aboriginal Schooling to set out this important concept (Harris, 1990). He and I had already co-authored an article on the need for schools and Western teachers to understand Aboriginal communication styles and ways of learning (Harris, S., and Harris, J. 1988). The sad thing for Stephen was that he felt, not only that he needed to educate teachers and officialdom about the value of Bilingual Education, but that he also increasingly found that he needed to defend it, particularly against sceptical decision-makers who controlled funding.

Stephen and his wife Joy made the difficult decision that he would choose Aboriginal education as a career path over the lure of farming with his brothers—and those of us who admire him and his work are glad he did. Fortuitously, as it happened, he made this commitment around the same time that bilingual education became an official reality in the Northern Territory.

Gough Whitlam, as Leader of the Opposition in the Federal Parliament, wanted to find a new initiative in Aboriginal Affairs, something revolutionary and attention-grabbing, something he could implement as soon as he became Prime Minister, an innovative program which signalled his government's commitment to a new and progressive approach to the educational needs of Indigenous people. He began quietly talking to people in Aboriginal education and by the time he became Prime Minister late in 1972, he knew what he would do. He was going to promote the use of Aboriginal languages in Aboriginal schools, and he was going to do it immediately in the Northern Territory, because Whitlam knew he had the power to rapidly introduce a new way of schooling in the Commonwealth's own Territory. He announced the new and innovative program on the day he became Prime Minister.

The program was up and running with remarkable speed early in 1973. There was great excitement. Teachers, dare I say it, the best teachers, were enthusiastic. Specialist bilingual education teachers were trained and appointed. An Aboriginal Teaching Assistant course was commenced. A head office unit of advisors and support staff was formed. Stephen was invited to join this Bilingual Education Section, as it became known, before he had completed his PhD studies at the University of New Mexico.

Gough Whitlam, however, was ousted and very shortly afterwards the Northern Territory was granted self-government. In the Territory, the conservative County

Liberal Party government, with a different set of priorities, would hold power for a quarter of a century. It was easy to destroy the Bilingual Education program incrementally with a time-honoured political ploy—gradually underfund low-priority programs until you can point out that they are not working. It was true that funding was not the only factor in the slow winding back of Bilingual Education in the NT. There were too few trained Aboriginal teaching assistants, let alone Aboriginal teachers, and it was often hard to find suitable people in the community competent in the local language to work as untrained classroom assistants. There were linguists who disagreed about orthography and spelling. But funding was always the main factor behind most decisions. The cutting of funds led to a continual reduction of staff. Whenever there were large-scale cuts to the public service, bilingual education staff were disproportionately included. In 1978, for example, there were 10 advisors in the head office servicing bilingual education programs throughout the Northern Territory. By 1991, there was only one. In 1998, defunding bilingual education unashamedly became the stated policy: to 'progressively withdraw the Bilingual Education program, allowing schools to share in the savings and better resource the English language programs' (Devlin, 2021)[2].

Just before that statement appeared, Stephen and Joy left the Northern Territory. Partly this had to do with his health, his desire to be closer to his mother, and his disappointment at the way Aboriginal education was faring, as well his perceived inability to improve that situation. By the time his *Two-Way Schooling* had been published, official support for bilingual education was observably declining and would be taken away not long after he left. Stephen felt misunderstood, even by the new generation of Aboriginal teachers in whose hands would lie the future of Aboriginal education in Aboriginal communities of the Northern Territory (Harris, 2003, pp. 53–55). Stephen would have welcomed the current awareness of the importance of preserving Indigenous languages and the many school programs now being implemented around Australia. It is sad that this community awareness and the Government-funded programs are happening beyond his lifetime.

Language and Mind—Conceptualising Reality

The rap-dancing Groote Eylandt teenagers sang another phrase that would have sent Stephen's heart racing, a phrase carrying an extremely important message with a very deep meaning.

Eningaba ayakwa. Marrbuda mangma

Good language. Strong mind.

Here, young Anindilyakwa speakers, singing from their own country, express deep truths. At one level, they proclaim the link between competence in mother tongue and cultural survival. It has often been said that the loss of language, the loss of culture and the loss of a people are one and the same thing. Language is by far the

most important means by which a culture is expressed. A particular language like Anindilyakwa names everything that matters to the culture of the Warndilyakwa, the speakers of that language.[3]

At an even deeper level, the rap dancers declare the indivisible relationship between language and thought itself. Take language away and you can no longer label your world, no longer fully conceptualise it. Take away the language pathways of the brain and you can no longer expand and develop your mind from the information gained from the language of others, no longer discuss, let alone defend, those issues of society and culture and the future that truly matter. Take away the specific language in which a people's culture is conveyed and the complex patterns and realities of traditional culture, all unlabelled and all unexpressed, cannot survive or can only survive in a very simplified and token form.

> The most important relationship between language and culture that gets to the heart of what is lost when you lose a language is that most of the culture is in the language and is expressed in the language. Take it away from the culture, and you take away its greetings, its curses, its praises, its laws, its literature, its songs, its riddles, its proverbs, its cures, its wisdom, its prayers. The culture could not be expressed and handed on in any other way. What would be left? (Fishman, 2007, p. 72)

Stephen and I knew this long ago. Our lives were curiously interconnected. We were both sons of CMS missionaries who knew each other and had served together. We shared a childhood experience of Aboriginal children. We were inexorably drawn back to the Northern Territory. Our lives were sometimes parallel, sometimes not. However, at key times, our lives intersected. We shared a Christian community. Most of all, Stephen and I shared a deep interest in Aboriginal languages and a passion for their survival.

Thankfully, the last decade has seen a growing public awareness of the tragedy of the long destruction of Aboriginal society, culture and language. This has come partly from education, where a new national curriculum has helped a new generation of Australians know far more about Indigenous culture and history than did their parents and grandparents. It has also been helped by an ever-growing number of Indigenous people entering higher education and the professions, able to speak with knowledge and passion about their own people, about their past and their future.

One of the consequences of this new appreciation of Indigenous culture and language has been the willingness of Federal and State governments to develop policies regarding the support of Indigenous languages.

The languages of the first peoples of the land comprising New South Wales are an integral part of the world's oldest living culture and connect Aboriginal people to each other and to their land.

> As a result of past Government decisions Aboriginal languages were almost lost, but they were spoken in secret and passed on through Aboriginal families and communities. Aboriginal people will be reconnected with their culture and heritage by the reawakening, growing and nurturing of Aboriginal languages. (Preamble to the NSW Aboriginal Languages Act 2017)

For people to be able to 'follow two roads' as the Warnindilakwa young people sang, there need to be strong policies and well-funded programs to help these young

people achieve that dream: programs which enable the survival and use of traditional languages, as Stephen Harris had advocated. This is not exactly the same as bilingual education, but once there is a changed attitude, leading to the widespread and accepted use of traditional languages in the classroom, something not unlike bilingual education will emerge again, born of Aboriginal people's desires, born of the understanding and encouragement of the wider Australian community and supportive governments prepared to make positive language policies and fund the necessary programs.

Language and Heart—Can Language Be Reawakened?

'Not to lose you, my language' were words spoken by a young Aboriginal girl in Milingimbi when Stephen and Joy Harris were there, expressing her deep understanding of the importance of vernacular education. Her language may not have seemed to be diminishing then (it was in full daily use among all age groups), but the girl sensed and named something deeply significant. Her phrase became the title of an important film about bilingual education in the Northern Territory (Film Australia, 1975).

The languages of Australia's First Nations peoples are said to be dying. The losing of a language is a tragic process. The loss of language, the loss of culture and the loss of identity are inextricably linked. When the British invaded Australia in 1788 there were around 500 separate Indigenous languages. Now it is said that there are perhaps only 13 languages which could possibly survive into the next generation.

In the 2016 census, 65,000 or 10 per cent of Indigenous people reported that they spoke an Indigenous language at home. While many of these came from the few surviving communities where an Indigenous language is fully spoken, many other respondents who said they spoke an Indigenous language, came from places where the language was declining. These people spoke English with an admixture of Indigenous words. Using and perpetuating those words meant a lot to them, reinforcing their identity and their determination not to lose their language. These words which people still use daily came from 160 different Indigenous languages, but the most telling statistic is that of these 160 languages in which some words survive, only 13 Indigenous languages were fully spoken by children as their first language. Unless something changes, these are the only languages which may be able to be properly passed on to the next generation. Almost all these languages are spoken in communities in the north of the Northern Territory and in the Central Desert. Three of them are languages of the communities where Stephen lived and worked—Djambarrpuyngu, Kunwinjku and Anindilyakwa.

Australia cannot be complacent even about these 13 languages for they can be lost very rapidly, in less than a generation. When I was principal of Bamyili School (now Barunga) in the 1960s, older community members spoke Jawoyn as their primary language. The younger members spoke Kriol as their primary language. In a family I knew well, a woman born in 1933 spoke Jawoyn as her first language. Her younger

sister, born only 6 years later, spoke Kriol as her first language. The difference was that the younger woman had grown up during World War II when her family had been relocated to a wartime 'compound' where they mixed with people of different language groups and sometimes worked on a US base. In the war years, Kriol replaced Jawoyn as the major community language. I am not, of course, mounting a case against Creole languages, which I defended years ago in my PhD thesis. I am, however, pointing out how rapidly languages can be lost. It is true today that Kriol is gradually becoming the language of choice for people on the borders of 'Kriol Kantri'. It is also true that in other places, the use of smaller traditional languages is declining, subsumed by larger traditional languages, particularly if they are the languages of the powerful people. But it remains true that the greatest language loss has been due to linguistic imperialism, the conscious or unconscious imposition of English. And that continues today. It is no longer necessary to destroy languages by forbidding their use in schools. The modern world of television, computers, mobile phones and video games succeed very well in relegating traditional languages to fewer and fewer contexts.

A difficult issue is that people do not realise that they are losing their language until the process is well underway, a process that is difficult to reverse. I have often found that Aboriginal people in traditional communities do not really believe that their language can be lost. The adults speak the language all the time and the children all seem to understand it. They do not realise that the children are losing their traditional language, that they are using it in ever fewer contexts. The children are using English or Kriol or even a more widespread traditional language and consequently, their traditional first language is slipping into second place.

An encouraging sign, however, is that an increasing number of Indigenous people elsewhere in Australia are becoming motivated to relearn their languages. This is less difficult a task where there are still old people living who more fully speak the language. The task is much more difficult where no full speakers of the undamaged language remain. Many of these learners, however, do not think of their damaged languages as 'dying', but as 'sleeping'. Rather than reviving their languages, they like to speak of 'reawakening' them.

It is, nevertheless, very difficult to reawaken a language in which there are no accessible examples, no models of sustained continuous text. When a language is declining, the grammar is among the first things to be lost. People retain concrete nouns such as relationship terms, animals and implements, perhaps even short everyday phrases such as 'Come here', or 'I am hungry'. However, they lose grammar; that is, they lose the linguistic means to join more than a few simple words together into a coherent and grammatically correct sentence. They cannot engage in a sustained conversation without English.

It is very difficult, therefore, if not impossible, to reawaken a sleeping language without a model of how it was spoken, how it was put together. The most sustained texts available in any Indigenous language are parts of the Christian Bible. Having this Biblical material in an Indigenous language does not guarantee its survival—there are many forces which can destroy languages. But having a part of the Bible creates at least the possibility that the language can be recovered.

This is not necessarily because of the nature of the Bible itself. The same value could no doubt be given to any significant text, but there simply are no other substantial texts. Relearning a language requires a sizable body of examples to illustrate how that language is put together. The point is simply that no one other than Christian missionaries ever bothered to do this. While Indigenous people owe a great debt to linguists, anthropologists and others who compiled word lists, dictionaries and grammars, no one other than Christian missionaries gifted Indigenous people with such substantial models of continuous text. Some scholars recorded short traditional stories and that is very important and helpful, but the translation of even part of the Bible required a dedicated and concerted effort on the part of missionary translators and their Indigenous colleagues over many years. No one other than them valued a substantial text so deeply that they were willing to spend much, if not all, of their lives translating it into an Indigenous language.

Some part of the Bible has been translated and published in 50 Indigenous languages. The oldest of those translations are in languages which are no longer fully spoken, yet the published texts provide precious and irreplaceable resources for the reawakening of these languages. These include Ngarrindjeri (1864, SA), Awabakal (1892, NSW) and Worrorra (1930, WA). Bible Society Australia regularly receives requests from communities, universities and other educational institutions for permission to republish historic translations such as these for language-learning programs.

A highly significant recent phenomenon is the reawakening of Indigenous languages through the process of Bible translation itself. These new projects have invariably commenced through the initiative of Indigenous people themselves, who are acutely aware of their language loss and want the Christian Bible, or part of it, in their traditional language. This works as a catalyst in reawakening the language, simply because those people are prepared to dedicate themselves to the task over many years. Again, it must be acknowledged that, theoretically, spending years struggling to translate *any* substantial text would have a similar result—but there are simply no people inspired to do that, no text so important to Indigenous people that some are prepared to give their lives to translating it.

Of those Indigenous people who report that they are relearning their language, the single largest Indigenous group in Australia are members of the Nyoongar nation of Perth and the south of Western Australia. Their motivation to do this owes much to the Nyoongar Bible Translation Project.

The Story of the Nyoongar Bible Translation Project

In 1999, two Nyoongar women, sisters Lorna Little and Vivienne Sahanna, approached me about the possibility of a Nyoongar Bible Translation. At the time, I was Director of Translation and Text in the Bible Society in Australia. The proposal interested me greatly. The idea of translating Scripture into a damaged language was itself a statement of hope to an oppressed people. It was a challenge which, if we

could achieve it, if we could show that it could be done, would set an example to the Bible Translation world.

The response of some of the Board members and senior staff of the Bible Society was quite negative. This was 22 years ago and the notion of reviving and protecting Aboriginal languages was not widely contemplated, let alone declared a national priority. I was told this was nothing more than an academic exercise, an esoteric linguistic experiment. What is the point of translating Scripture into a dying language? Why should we waste Bible Society supporters' self-sacrificial donations?

Others, however, glimpsed the possibilities and were prepared to support the proposal. Finally, approval was granted to start a Nyoongar project, provided that the costs could be fitted into the existing translation budget and that donations could be raised to reimburse the costs. I agreed and, given the mixed support, also decided to take on the role of Consultant to the project personally. Thus began a project unique in the world, a Bible Translation Project unlike any other. None of us imagined at the time how significant it would become.

Nyoongar Christians attended a meeting later in 1999 in Perth where the Nyoongar Bible Translation project was formally established. Nyoongar Elder, Pastor Len Wallam, was elected Chair of the project and Vivienne Sahanna its Secretary. Other members of the translation team include Lorna Little, Tom Little and Joanna Corbett. Non-Aboriginal members were respected missionary linguist, Wilf Douglas, and I, as the Bible Society's Translation Consultant.

From the very first meeting to establish the project, the Nyoongar Christians unanimously wanted the first translation to be a Gospel—something I thought at the time would be a hard task. I suggested the Gospel of Mark, traditionally the first Gospel translated, because it is short. They did not want to work on Mark first because, they argued, it contained nothing of Jesus's birth and very little of Jesus's resurrection. That left a choice between Luke and Matthew and everyone accepted my assurance that Luke was the easier of the two. So began the long task of finding the words and the grammar to translate the Gospel of Luke, to re-express the life of Jesus in the language of the Nyoongar people, a language which they loved but which had been literally taken from them.

It was not a surprise that at their first meeting, the translation team asked whether, before we started Luke, we could translate the Lord's Prayer (a form of which is in Luke 11:2–4). This has frequently been a first request and a translation priority throughout the world, although it is surprisingly difficult. Thus it was that the first Scripture translated into Nyoongar was 'Our Father in heaven, your name is holy'.

Ngaala Maaman ngiyan yaaka yira moodlooka,

Our Father who stands above everything.

Noonang korl kooranyi.

Your name holy.

These deeply significant words were written on a Saturday afternoon late in 1999. Pastor Len Wallam returned to Bunbury to lead the Sunday service at his church. He

preached on the holiness of God. It was not until many years later, after Len's death, that the amazing story of that day was told. Len was a greatly loved and respected man as both Nyoongar Elder and Christian Pastor, but he was also an angry man, with a deep hurt inside him. Not only had he lost his traditional land and much of his culture, but his language had been wrested from him. As a schoolchild, he had been beaten if he was heard using Nyoongar and he had put his language away in a deep, dark place. Preaching in English, he always spoke with clenched fists as if restraining himself. When he stood to preach that memorable day, he used the Nyoongar language from the pulpit for the first time. He said those first few phrases of the Lord's Prayer in his people's own ancient language. It was a life-changing moment for him. He unclenched his fists and opened his palms towards his people. For ever after, he preached that way, with open hands.

We noticed the dramatic change in Len when he chaired the translation Committee meetings. Not only was he part of the translation of Scripture into the Nyoongar Language, but Len also got in touch again with the language of his people. His pride in his language became increasingly obvious to members of his family, bringing tremendous affirmation to their own desire to reawaken their language and to inspire those they taught.

The Lord's Prayer contains many translation challenges as it contains complex ideas and grammar. We chose not to finish it at the time, leaving it until later when the members of the translation team were more experienced. Instead, I suggested a narrative, one of Jesus's parables. The team took very little time to choose the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32). Everyone knew exactly what a prodigal son was and it touched a chord with them. The little book, *The Lost Son*, was published in 2002. Cheaply printed, with Wilf Douglas's simple line drawings of an Aboriginal lost son, the booklet was an instant success. It was dedicated in a moving service at St George's Cathedral, Perth. Len Wallam read the parable in Nyoongar from the great Waalitj eagle lectern. It was the first time ever that the Bible had been read in a Christian church in the Nyoongar language, in the language of the land upon which the cathedral stood. It seemed to me that from that moment on, the people knew they could translate a whole gospel.

And they did. It took them 15 years. The Nyoongar words already known and used by the translators were a valuable beginning but far from sufficient for the Bible. Words had to be sought from wordlists compiled by settlers and sailors and missionaries. Old people were interviewed. Grammar was reconstructed from the bones of old sentences recorded more than a century ago. And people remembered the language they had heard in childhood. Words arose in their minds and hearts from the hidden depths where they had long been locked away. Some words and phrases came during sleep as people dreamed of their mother's lullabies or their grandfather's storytelling, words hidden deep within them but now remembered again.

After a year or two, we did indeed translate the whole of the Lord's Prayer. It was printed on cards the size of a credit card so people could carry it with them. A Nyoongar woman who was a gaol visitor gave them to Nyoongar prisoners. 'There was no way many of them would speak to me if I mentioned anything Christian', she said. 'They would turn away. But they took the little Lord's Prayer cards from

my hand because it was in their own language, the language of their ancestors and their land'.

Not all the translators lived to see the final result of their work and join in the joy of its dedication. Wilf Douglas died in 2004, Len Wallam in 2008 and Lorna Little in 2011. We were a very small translation group when *Warda-Kwabba Luke-ang* (Good News of Luke) was finally published in 2014. But the Nyoongar people rejoiced. Again at St George's Cathedral, smoke swirled around the great Waalitj eagle lectern as Tom Little read the Gospel in Nyoongar and Vivienne Sahanna was presented with an award.

The format of this translation of the Bible was a world first. It is a beautifully illustrated and presented book but, as the reawakening of a sleeping language, it needed to be very accessible to those encountering Nyoongar for the first time. On the left-hand page is the Nyoongar text of Luke and on the right-hand page is an English 'back translation', that is, an exact translation of the Nyoongar text as a learning aid. At the bottom of every page is a glossary of all the new Nyoongar words on the page with their English meanings.

Nyoongar educator, Charmaine Councillor, of the Nyoongar Language Centre, recently spoke about *Warda-Kwabba Luke-ang*. 'You have given us back our language', she said. 'We now have a model of how it should be spoken'.

Led by Tom Little, a new group of people are coming together to continue the Nyoongar Bible Translation project, aiming particularly to train a younger generation to take over. Tom knows that there is, nevertheless, a long and challenging road ahead. He has already translated the book of Ruth. Beautifully illustrated in colour by Daphne Davis, an Aboriginal artist, *Bardip Ruth-Ang* (The Story of Ruth) was published in 2020.

The Nyoongar people appreciated the book of Ruth for its insights into the practices of a traditional culture with features not unlike their own. A striking case was the Hebrew word *goel*, which was the traditional role of the man Boaz who rescued Ruth. This was the man whose role was to protect, redeem and restore a woman who, through the death of her husband, found herself without a protector and without an inheritance in the land. English Bible translations struggle to find a word to describe this role, unfamiliar in the Western world. Modern translations use the awkward term 'kinsman-redeemer', but it is a strange and difficult neologism to most people. Tom Little, however, knew a precise word in the Nyoongar language to describe a Nyoongar man with that exact role—*moorditj-moyiran.* The Nyoongar people know this word well and easily translate it as 'right-way man'. In Nyoongar culture, the *moorditj-moyiran*, the 'right way man', is the man in the correct relationship to a woman in need with the responsibility for her. He is duty-bound to become the protector, redeemer and even sometimes the husband of a woman in need of security. There is no language in the world with a better word to translate *goel*.

There are critics of Bible translation who say that to promote Christianity is to destroy Aboriginal culture and identity. But this is simply not true and especially it is not true when the translation is the desire and the responsibility of the Aboriginal people themselves. Receiving their language back again is the most powerful rejuvenation of culture. In particular, the translation of the Bible into their own traditional

language confirms the deep Aboriginal traditional understanding that the world is a created place, a spiritual place. It is a profoundly significant thing that Aboriginal Christian people, encountering the Scriptures in their own language for the first time, find their traditional identity reinforced rather than weakened. They feel even more strongly about their land when they come to see it as the gift of Boolanga-Yira, of the God for whom and in whose name they must care for it as a sacred place. This is no better expressed than in the 'Welcome to Country' which the Nyoongar Bible translation team members were asked to produce.

Boolanga-Yira, ngalang Maaman, baal warn nidja boodjer.

God, our Father, he made this land.

Boolanga-Yira miyalitj boodjer baal kwadja warn.

God saw the land he had made.

Boolonga-Yira waangki, 'Baal kwabba'.

God said, 'It is good'.

God put Nyoongar people in the land.

Boolanga-Yira warranga ngalang maam-inrama,

God told our ancestors,

'Noonooka djarnyak karrodjin nidja boodjer'.

'You must look after this land'.

Ngala yanganan noonooka nidja kooranyap-ak.

We welcome you to this sacred place.

Kana bedik-bedik boodjer-al.

Tread softly on the land

Walk on the land in peace.

Boolanga-Yirang kol-al. Kaya.

In God's name. True/Amen.

Yes it is indeed *kaya*. It is true, and yes, Stephen would have been pleased. Amen.

Endnotes

1. *Ngeniyerriya* is a complex Anindilyakwa word which conveys deep emotion whether sorrow or happiness. Here it expresses their depth of feeling when they remember their ancestors.
2. An extremely valuable chronology and documentation of the history of Bilingual Education in the Northern Territory is Brian Devlin's ongoing *Government Support for Bilingual Education after 1950: A Longer Timeline* on the 'FOBL

(Friends of Bilingual Education) website':https://fobl.net.au/index.php/au-MU/history

3. Today, particularly when speaking among themselves, the people of the Groote Eylandt archipelago tend to call themselves the *Warnumamalya* ('the people') and their language *Amamalya ayakwa* ('the people's language').

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John Harris retired as Director of Bible Translation in Bible Society Australia. He spent most of his life involved with Aboriginal people, from his earliest childhood on Groote Eylandt to teaching in Aboriginal schools, lecturing in Aboriginal education and, most recently, in Bible translation. John has written several books and over 200 papers on Aboriginal language, culture and history. He was awarded the rare Lambeth Doctor of Divinity by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Her Majesty the Queen for his 'advocacy on behalf of Aboriginal people'.