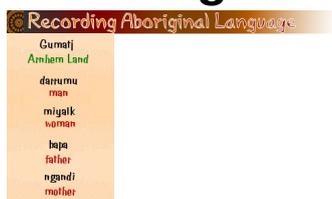


## Recording Aboriginal Language



**Norman Barnett Tindale was born in Perth in 1900. He was not of Aboriginal descent, however, over his lifetime he developed a fascination with recording information about Aboriginal people from Australia.**

Tindale was educated in Tokyo and also in Adelaide. He drew on information gathered from expeditions conducted by the Board of Anthropological Research of the University of Adelaide. He was sometimes directly involved in these expeditions. Many other foundations and corporations interested in recording data on man provided Tindale with and support for his work.

Much of the information gathered by Tindale and his associates was gathered from non-aboriginal people (station masters, stockmen, farmers, patrol officers, etc.) who had an intimate knowledge of the local Aboriginies. Some information was gathered from observing Aboriginies and recording an interpretation of what was seen and heard.

Cultural differences caused a barrier in this type of recording by observation. Often what was being explained by an Aboriginal person was misinterpreted and/or recorded in an inappropriate way. This has caused great concern for Aboriginal people today. Information passed down to them from one generation to the next quite often conflicts with what has been recorded as fact by Tindale.

In western society written language is often given more value that oral language, which is different to Aboriginal Society. Because of this, it is the Aboriginal viewpoint which has been questioned, rather than Tindale's version. As suggested by many of the oral traditions of Aboriginal people and their Dreaming stories, language boundaries were created by the Ancestors together with the land forms, the seas and the waterways.

These natural formations carve a pattern of intricate boundaries into the land and therefore would be depicted on a map as wavy lines following the natural features of an area rather than straight or arbitrary lines.