

Mapping the Cultural Atlas of Tropical Queensland: Ronald “Tonky” Logan a Case Study

Introduction

- This paper aims to establish the context in which ‘Tonky’ Logan performs and lives by outlining:
- A brief history of Aboriginality in North Queensland.
- A brief history of Aboriginal music in North Queensland.
- Country Western music as an Aboriginal expression.
- A brief history of ‘Tonky’ Logan’s life.
- ‘Tonky’ Logan’s musical influences.

Introduction (cont.)

- ‘Tonky’ Logan’s performance highlights.
- Other Aboriginal musicians in the region.
- Defining a Cultural Atlas
- Conclusions

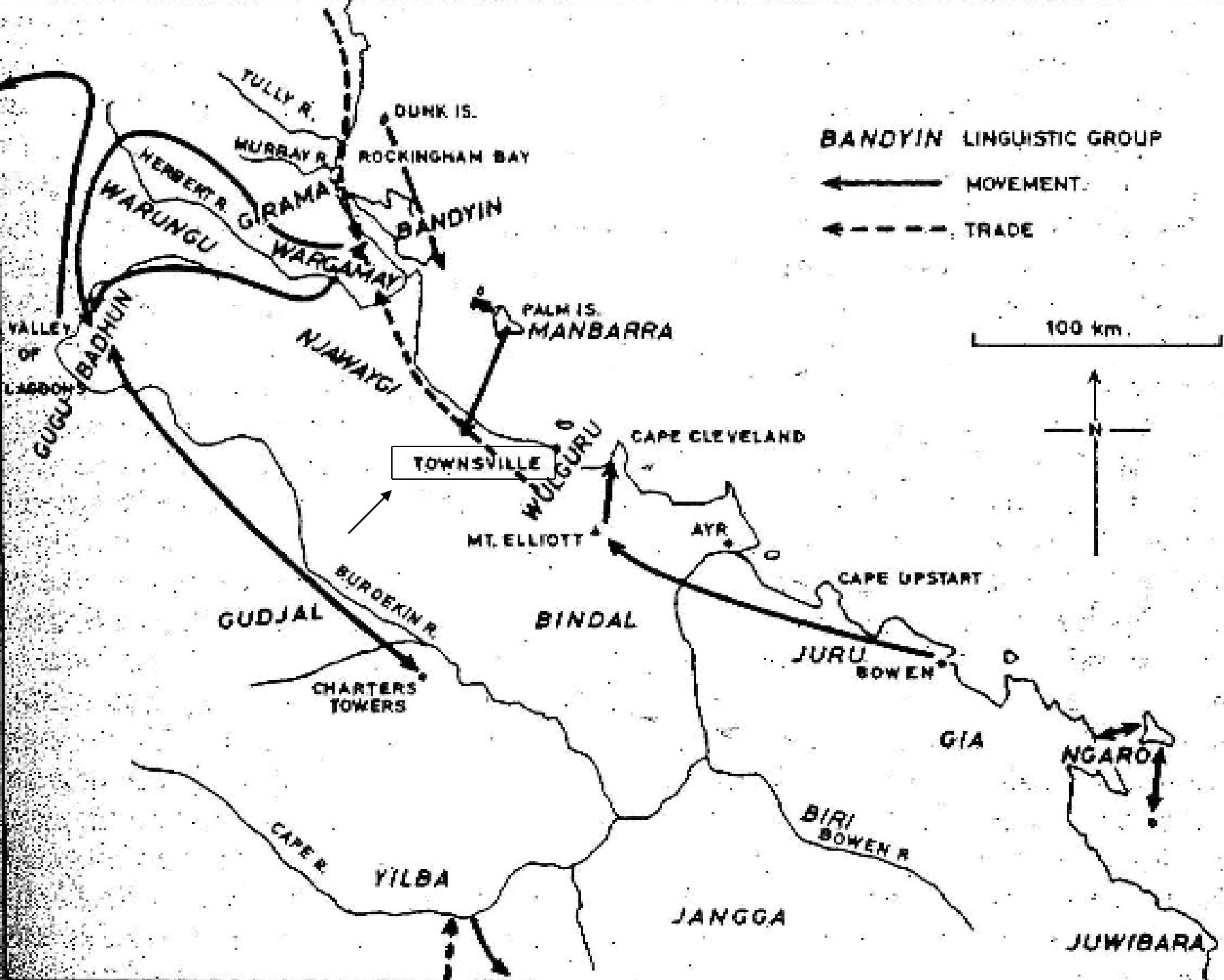
Aboriginality in North Queensland

- As with the case study of this paper mission life was a major component of Aboriginal existence throughout Australia including North Queensland.
- In 1897 the Aborigines Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act was passed and on 15 May 1911 the Taroom Aboriginal Reserve was opened 14 kilometres east of Taroom on the banks of the Dawson River (L’Oste-Brown, Godwin et. al. 1995: 5-6).



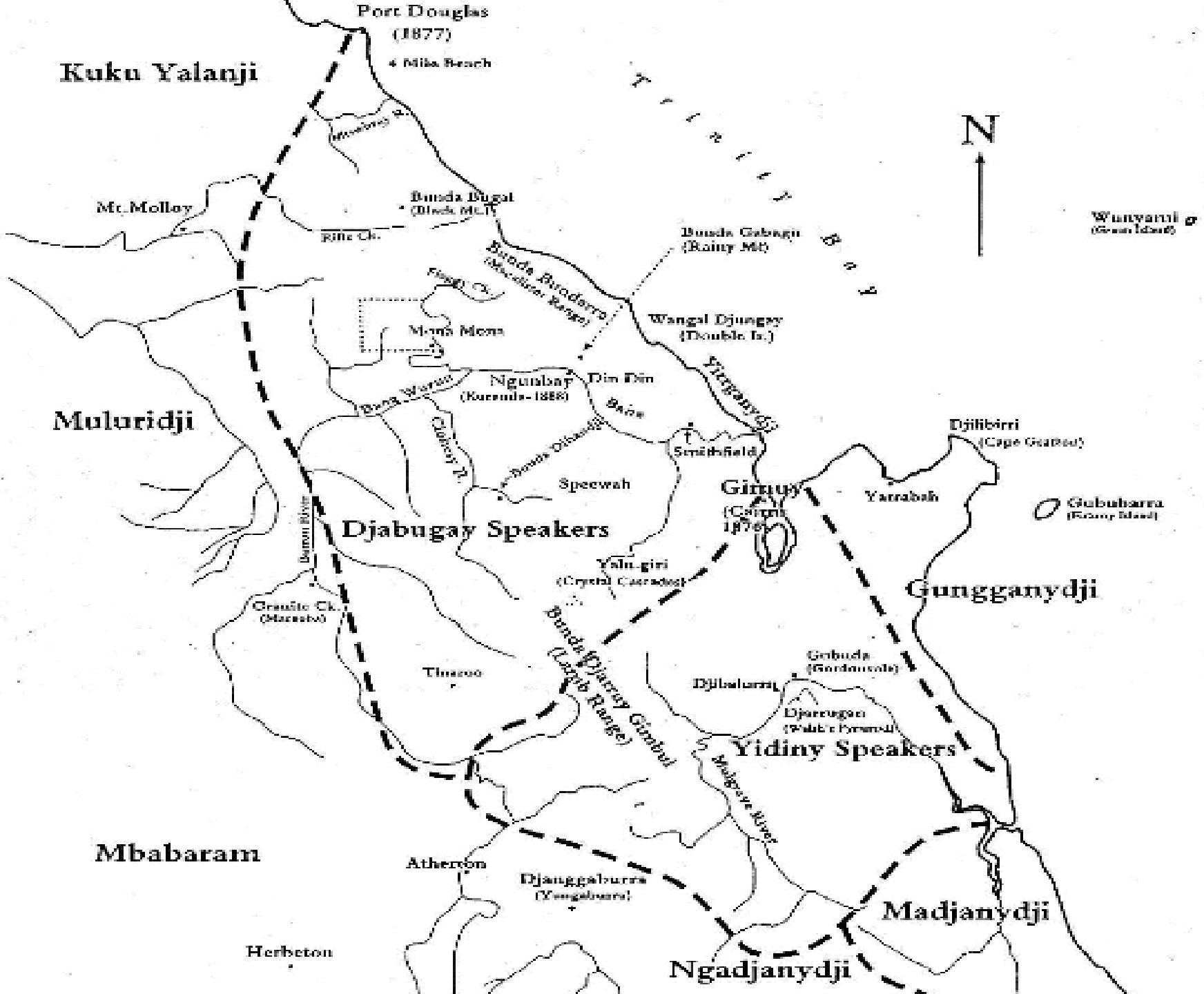
Aboriginality in North Queensland

- Woorabinda Aboriginal Reserve was established in the Duaringa district in 1926 when the Department of Native Affairs moved nine hundred people there from Taroom.
- The first inhabitants were remnants of the tribes from the Taroom, Dawson River, Carnarvon, Emerald and Clermont areas. During the Second World War people from Northern Queensland were brought to Woorabinda until in the words of the Department, the residents today are “conglomerate descendants of different tribal groups, castes and the Cape Bedford (N.Q.) people.
- The bulk of the present older population is made up of removees from all parts of Queensland.” (McDonald 1981: 198-99)

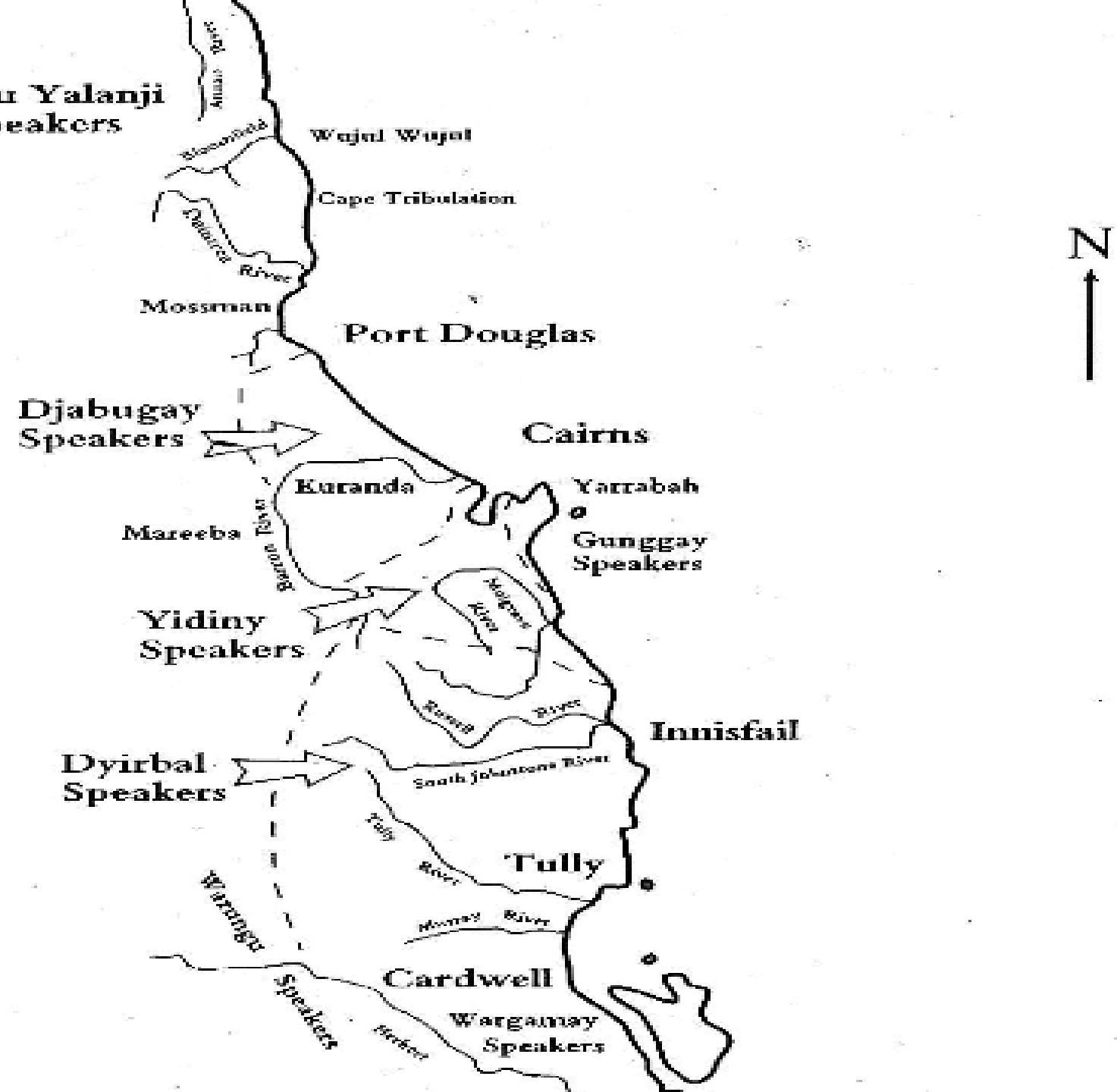


Aboriginal Music in North Queensland

- Dunbar-Hall and Gibson list some of the rock bands and musicians and dancers of the Cairns area or the Djabugay region as Tjapukai Dancers, Gudju Gudju, Mantaka Band, Lance Riley and David Hudson as contributing to the revival of Djabugay tradition and culture (Dunbar-Hall & Gibson 2004: 157).
- They state that there was an estimation of 200 to 250 Aboriginal languages in use prior to colonization and that currently there are only about ninety still known and only twenty that are flourishing (*ibid.*).

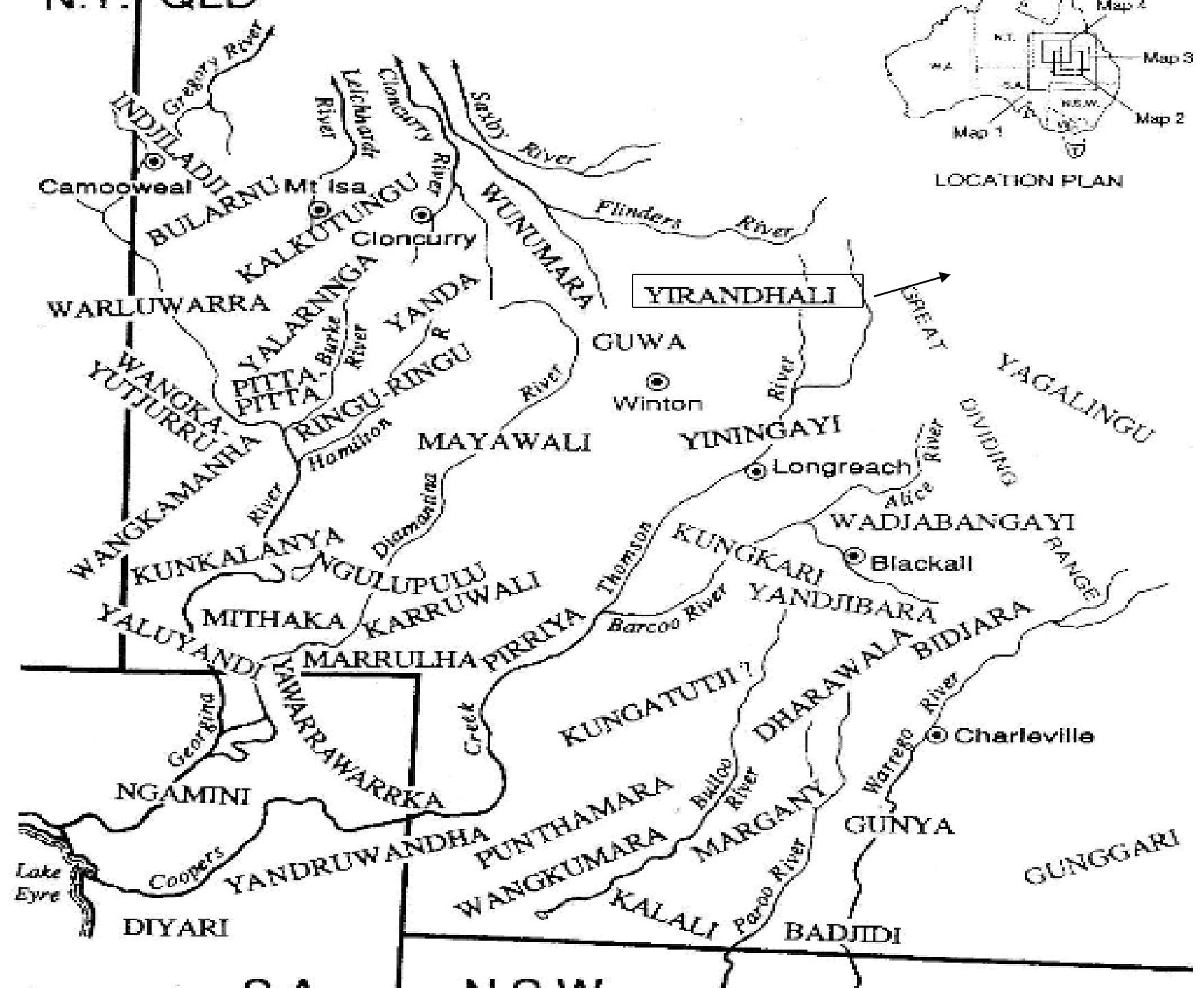


**Kuku Yalanji
Speakers**



Ronald ‘Tonky’ Logan

- Kutjala Language Group (Yerrundulli, Yerrunthully, Irendely, Dalebura, Dal-leyburra, Pooroga are alternate language names).
- Ronald ‘Tonky’ Logan was born in Hughenden but grew up on the Woorabinda mission outside of Rockhampton.
- Hughenden township was surveyed in 1877 on the old Hughenden station taken up by Ernest Henry in February 1864. He named the station after Hughenden Manor, the home of his maternal grandfather in Buckinghamshire, England. The town council was established in 1887.



Ronald ‘Tonky’ Logan

- Woorabinda is an Aboriginal community in central Queensland, Australia, inland of Rockhampton. Woorabinda was first established in 1927 as a replacement for the settlement at Taroom.
- The Woorabinda community is the only Deed Of Grant In Trust (DOGIT) community within the Central Queensland region. Woorabinda has a population of approximately 940 people.

Ronald ‘Tonky’ Logan

- He claims that his uncle showed him a few chords on the guitar and that was the start of his musical adventure. Ronald ‘Tonky’ Logan earned “The Golden Swaggie Award” in 2000 for Best Aboriginal Performance.
- His journey has been a rocky one with many ups and downs as he is now a recovering alcoholic he has devoted himself to helping other change their path to sobriety.

Ronald ‘Tonky’ Logan

- He says he is 57 and that he started playing the guitar around the age of eight or nine and that he also plays a little drums.
- He was first attracted to performing after seeing a parade in Blacktown New South Wales in the late 1980’s and in 1993 he began a job in Darwin as a police liaison officer.

Ronald ‘Tonky’ Logan

- His first performances in 1987 and 1989 in Tamworth were as a ‘busker’ for which he claims to have made a nice bit of money.
- For years he worked as a radio announcer on 4K1G in Townsville producing ‘*Tonky’s Country Country*’ music show for listeners throughout North Queensland and the Torres Straights.

Ronald ‘Tonky’ Logan

- He has performed on stage with such notables as:
 - Jimmy little
 - Roger Knox
 - Troy Casser Daley
 - Gus Williams and
 - Col Hardy
- He is just a happy performing at the Townsville Cultural Festival of a various schools in the region.

Ronald ‘Tonky’ Logan’s Influences

- When asked who were some of early influences, Tonky states that:
 - He attended a Country Western music festival in Blacktown in the Western suburbs of Sydney in 1987 and saw Roger Knox, Annie Briggs and other top Aboriginal performers.

Ronald ‘Tonky’ Logan’s Influences

- **Roger Knox is:**
- The Koori King of Country, Mr Roger Knox, has made music his life. He grew up on the Toomelah mission near Boggabilla on the NSW/QLD border and then took to the streets of Tamworth during the early days of the town’s country music festival.
- Roger, a Gamilaroi man, began his early days as a gospel singer, with his relationship with his family, the law, and surviving an horrific plane crash in the early 1980’s being the inspiration behind his many songs.

Ronald ‘Tonky’ Logan’s Performance Highlights

- Tonky’s performance highlights include the:
 - Australian Country Music Buskers Championship;
 - Tamworth Country Music Festival; Charters Towers Country Music Festival;
 - Townsville Multicultural Festival;
 - All Black Football Carnival
 - and collaborations with many notables such as Jimmy Little, Roger Knox, Troy Casser Daley, Gus Williams and Col Hardy.
- In addition ‘Tonky’ has been a successful radio announcer for 4K1G with his *‘Tonky’s Country Country* radio show.

Aboriginal Musicians In North Queensland

- Although there are many Aboriginal musicians in North Queensland there are relatively few that are primarily country western musicians. Tonky lists a couple of older musicians that he know of in the region as Trevor Pryor and Fred Doolan.
- In an interview Lloyd Wyles a radio announcer at 4K1G the Aboriginal radio station based out of Townsville, list includes Trevor Pryor from Palm Island as well as Noel Buchannan from Palm Island; Mick Thaiday from Palm Island; Doctor Bones from Townsville that included Sylvana Doolan (Blues Singer) and her brother Shane Doolan; Johnny Nicol from Ayr; Monica Whiteman from Townsville although some of these musicians are not really country.

Aboriginal Musicians In North Queensland

- In another interview with Dion Lee an Aboriginal dancer and performer from Mossman above Cairns, lists Barry Cedrick from Yarrabah.
- Several musicians from a group in the past called Broken English such as Andrew Namok better known as ‘Drewz’ from the Torres Strait and King Kadu – (aka Ricardo Idagi) from Murray Island in the Torres Strait.
- One of the more prominent musicians in North Queensland is David Hudson from the Cairns region and member of the Tjapukai tribe in Kuranda, North Queensland.

Aboriginal Country Western Music as Traditional Music

- In Buried Country one of the first scenes features Jimmy Little singing a country song in a movie.
- The narrator states that Aboriginal musicians have been telling their stories through Country Western music for nearly a century only most of the time most of white Australia wasn't listening (Walker 2000).

Aboriginal Country Western Music as Traditional Music

- **In Deadly Sounds, Deadly Places... Dunbar-Hall and Gibson state that:**
 - Study of the extent and uses of country music style by Aboriginal musicians, however, reveals a wide-ranging musical aesthetic, particularly in various representations of Aboriginality and the expression of opinion on issues relevant to Aboriginal listeners and pertinent to understanding current Aboriginal strategies for recognition (Dunbar-Hall & Gibson 2004; 103).

Aboriginal Country Western Music as Traditional Music

- Both of these sources establish a connection of Aboriginality to country music as a traditional music in a contemporary setting in particular colonial and post-colonial Australia.

Cultural Atlas

- So, what is a Cultural Atlas?
 - The basic definition of a Cultural Atlas is based upon a Geographic Information System (GIS) that can work on several levels simultaneously by combining place, time and topic.
 - One example is the Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative developed by Michael Buckland Co-Director, Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative University of California, Berkeley, and Lewis Lancaster Director, Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative University of California, Berkeley.

Cultural Atlas

- The Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative was formed to encourage scholarly communication and the sharing of data among researchers who emphasize the relationships between place, time, and topic in the study of culture and history.
- In an effort to develop better tools and practices, The Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative has sponsored the collaborative development of software for downloading and editing geo-temporal data to create dynamic maps, a clearinghouse of shared datasets accessible through a map-based interface... (Buckland & Lancaster, 2004, D-Lib Magazine, <http://www.ecai.org/>).

Cultural Atlas

- A geographic information or Geographic Information System (GIS) is a system for creating, storing, analyzing and managing spatial data and associated attributes.
- In the strictest sense, it is a computer system capable of integrating, storing, editing, analyzing, sharing, and displaying geographically-referenced information. In a more generic sense, GIS is a tool that allows users to create interactive queries (user created searches), analyze the spatial information, and edit data.
- Geographical Information Science is the science underlying the applications and systems, taught as a degree programme by several universities.

Cultural Atlas

- Traditional maps are abstractions of the real world, a sampling of important elements portrayed on a sheet of paper with symbols to represent physical objects.
- People who use maps must interpret these symbols. Topographic maps show the shape of land surface with contour lines; the actual shape of the land can be seen only in the mind's eye.
- Today, graphic display techniques such as shading based on altitude in a GIS can make relationships among map elements visible, heightening one's ability to extract and analyze information.

Conclusions

- In conclusion it has been shown that Ronald ‘Tonky’ Logan has established himself as a contributor to the Aboriginal tradition of Country Western music in North Queensland both as a performer and advocate.
- His radio show had many fans and he was able to promote Aboriginal country music within the North Queensland region.

Conclusions

- He is part of a long history of Aboriginal country musicians who have “nearly a century of history” (Walker 2000) and has long established connection to North Queensland Aboriginal history and land.
- Although younger musicians are gravitating toward other forms of contemporary music the tradition of country music will remain a strong one in Aboriginal communities.