

## **Indigenous Allstars Rugby League – Statement by Preston Campbell.**

John Giacon ; jgiacon@ozemail.com.au ; February 12, 2010

### **Introduction**

This document is about the translation of a statement Preston Campbell made in the lead up to the Rugby League game of the Indigenous Allstars in February 2010. I was asked by the Sydney Morning Herald to translate the statement.

I checked that Preston was happy to have it translated and then spoke to some Gamilaraay people involved in language. They were happy to have the material translated and published.

As well as the usual challenges of translation, translation into Gamilaraay presents other difficulties. There are no fluent speakers of the language, let alone people who are fluent in both Gamilaraay and English, so there is no-one to go to check translation. And the language has not been fully recorded, so words it may or may not have had, like 'forgive' and 'devastate' are not available. And traditional Gamilaraay had no words for 'football' or 'Indigenous'. So, we don't know all the old language, and the language has not developed words for many new things.

The approach I adopt is to try to do things the way old speakers would have done them. That means studying the language carefully, looking at what other Aboriginal languages do, speaking to people with experience in Aboriginal languages. And then saying: This is my best effort **for now**, with further study and input from other experts we might decide there is a better way to do it.

So here is the translation. After it I have added some comments on words not used before, but specifically developed for this task.

John Giacon

### **Original paragraph:**

"This is part of the healing process. It's a football game but it's about a lot more than just football. Football is a big part of a lot of indigenous people's lives and I don't think people realise how important it is for us to be able to put this game on. So many devastating things have happened, people are finding it hard to get over that and the consequences of what happened are still around. It is something we can't forget but maybe there is a chance we can forgive. I think the only way we can move forward as a country and as human beings is to work together and that is what this game is about."

**Gamilaraay** by Br John Giacon, with assistance from Luise Hercus and Suellen Tighe.

*[Yaama maliyaa – hello friends]*

*Giirr maarumaylaygu nhalay.*

*Yulugilay ngiyani buudhila, giirrbala ngaragaybidi nhalay, gamilbala buudhil yiyal.*

*Giirr bamba buudhil winangaylanha burrulaagu marigiirru.*

*Giirr yaa dhayn.galgaagu gamil winangaylanha burrulbidiban.gaanbala  
ngiyaningunda nhalay yulungindaay.*

*Giirr burrulaabidi gagil gigilanhi,*

*yalagiirmadhibala gamil mari gulbiirr warragil yanaylanha, giirr gagilbidi nhama  
nguwalay warraylandaay.*

*Gamilabala ngiyani muurr gigilanha, giirrbadhaayaa ngiyani gababalday.*

*Ngadhan.gaabala yalagiirra yiyal ngiyaniyuu, gunimaa, dhayn.galgaa, maaru  
yanaylay,*

*maala ngiyaniyuu waan.gigilandaay. Giirr yalagiirmagu ngiyani yulugilay.*

### **line by line translation**

[Yaama maliyaa – hello friends]

"This is part of the healing process.

*Giirr maarumaylaygu nhalay.*

It's a football game but it's about a lot more than just football.

*Yulugilay ngiyani buudhila, giirrbala ngaragaybidi nhalay, gamilbala buudhil yiyal.*

Football is a big part of a lot of indigenous people's lives

*Giirr bamba buudhil winangaylanha burrulaagu marigiirru.*

and I don't think people realise how important

*Giirr-yaa dhayn.galgaagu gamil winangaylanha*

it is for us to be able to put this game on.

*burrulbidiban.gaanbala ngiyaningunda yulungindaay nhalay.*

So many devastating things have happened,

*Giirr burrulaabidi gagil gigilanhi,*

people are finding it hard to get over that and the consequences of what happened are still around.

*yalagiirmadhibala gamil mari gulbiirr warragil yanaylanha, giirr gagilbidi nhama  
nguwalay warraylandaay.*

It is something we can't forget but maybe there is a chance we can **forgive**.

*Gamilabala ngiyani muurr gigilanha, giirrbadhaayaa ngiyani gababalday.*

I think the only way we can move forward as a country and as human beings

*Ngadhan.gaabala yalagiirrma yiyal ngiyaniyuu, gunimaa, dhayngalgaa, maaru yanaylay,*

is to work **together** and that is what this game is about."

*maala ngiyaniyuu waan.gigilandaay. Giirr yalagiirmagu ngiyani yulugilay.*

### **new words**

Almost any translation exercise means new words need to be developed. The traditional speakers led the way in this, quickly developing words for new things like sheep, horse, whitefellow and policeman.

*buudhil* 'football'

There is no word for 'football'. The Gamilaraay word for 'ball' in the Gamilaraay Yuwaalaraay Yuwaalayaay Dictionary is *burugalaa*, but people these days use *buugalaa* or *bugalaa*, and those words are used for 'testicles'. The *galaa* is a suffix, since both *buru* and *buu* are found for 'ball/testicles' in Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay. So for the 'ball' part we go with the current usage, *buu*. We could have used *buru*. Gamilaraay **does not** have a common pattern of putting two nouns together, so it is not appropriate to join *buu* and *dhina* 'foot'. However Wangaaybuwan, a nearby language, has a lot in common with Gamilaraay and is much better recorded. It has a suffix *-dhi-li* 'do with foot', so one can form the word *buu-dhi-li* [ball-do.with.foot] and use it as 'play football'. There is a regular process for forming nouns from such verbs – from *buudhili* – a verb – you get *buudhil* – a noun. This can be used for 'football'. A problem – too late to do anything about this translation – it has gone off to the editor: It is ok to use this for the object 'football' – that pattern is common in Gamilaraay. I suspect it is not ok to use it for the **activity**. That might be better is *buudhildaay*. Something to look at later.

*gababali* 'forgive'

The expression *muurr gigi* literally means 'ears blocked' and means 'forget'. For lots of Aboriginal languages idioms about knowledge and wisdom involve 'ear', and there is a very strong connection between learning and hearing, whereas Western idioms tend to link learning and seeing. *muurr gigi* 'forget' has been used to mean 'forgive' in previous translations of the Our Father, but here 'forgive' and 'forget' are being contrasted. *gaba* is 'good' and there is a suffix *-ba-li* with (at least) two meanings. One is something like 'cause' and the other something like 'say'. So *gaba-ba-li* has the senses of 'make good' and 'say it is good' and so is suitable as 'forgive'.

*marigiirr* 'Indigenous'

*mari* traditionally meant 'person' in Gamilaraay. With the arrival of whites it came to mean 'Gamilaraay person/man'. Other words with similar use in other areas include *mayi*, *Koori/guri* and *dhayn*. There is no obvious word for Indigenous. There is a

suffix *-giirr* 'like' so *marigiirr* is 'the people like (and including) the mari' i.e. Indigenous people.

There is a certain amount of creativity in the structure of the translation too. So much of the translation is uncharted territory, and in fact territory that will never be charted, since language charts come from fluent speakers.

Comments about the transitive welcome. The sound, like all of this is

'the best we can do at this time, and we expect that we will know more and make some changes, hopefully not too big, next time around.'

For more information about Gamilaraay language go to [yuwaalaraay.org](http://yuwaalaraay.org), where, among other things, you can download a talking Yuwaalaraay Gamilaraay dictionary. Sound of the translation will be available at:  
<http://groups.google.com.au/group/garaygamilaraay>.

Luise Hercus is the senior linguist of NSW languages and is a fellow at ANU. Suellen Tighe is a Gamilaraay woman from Coonabarabran with many years experience in Gamilaraay language, including teaching a number of courses.

### **Amended text; for SMH**

**"This is part of the healing process. It's a football game but it's about a lot more than just football. I think the only way we can move forward as a country and as human beings is to work together and that is what this game is about."**

Giirr maarumaylaygu nhalay.

Yulugilay ngiyani buudhila, giirrbala ngaragaybidi nhalay, gamilbala buudhil yiyal.

Ngadhan.gaabala yalagiirma yiyal ngiyaniyuu, gunimaa, dhayn.galgaa, maaru yanaylay,

maala ngiyaniyuu waan.gigilandaay. Giirr yalagiirmagu ngiyani yulugilay.