

# Notre Dame Nulungu Talking Heads Seminar Series



*A New Partnership, William Roe, 1994*

## 'The Invisible Languages'

**Date:** Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2021

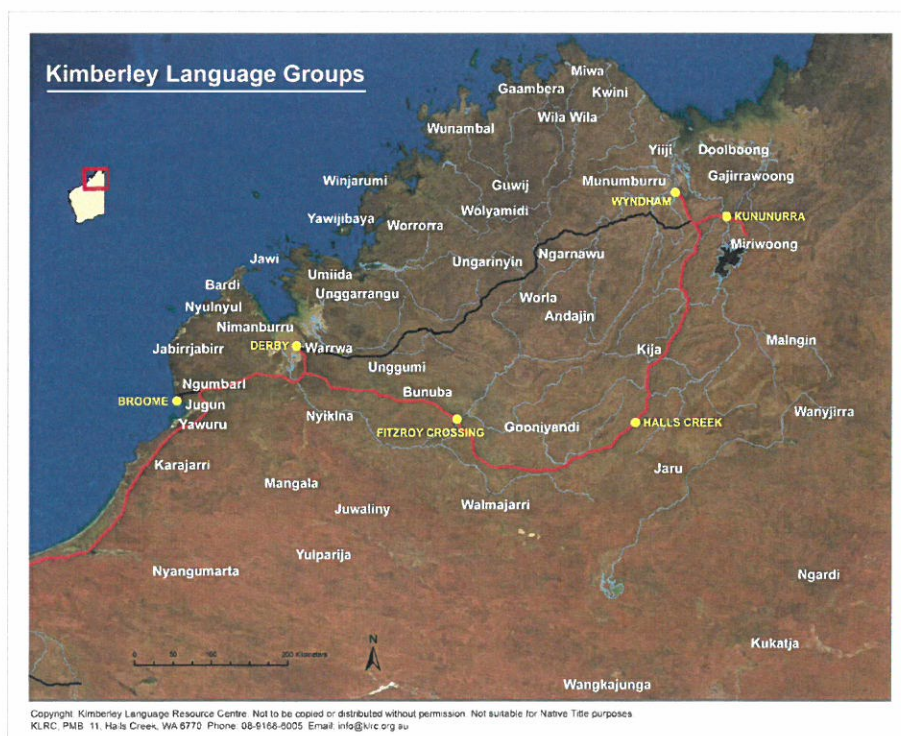
**Venue:** NDB11/L13

**Time:** 12.30-1.30pm

**Zoom:** <https://notredame-au.zoom.us/j/83158817215>

**Zoom Passcode:** 413118

**Presenters:** Ngalu Nyanjili (Patsy Bedford) and Siobhan K Casson



**Nulungu**  
Research Institute  
The University of Notre Dame Australia

Fremantle

Broome

Sydney

[nd.edu.au/nulungu](https://nd.edu.au/nulungu)

## Abstract

Ngalu and Siobhan will talk about the invisibility of Aboriginal languages in the Kimberley from two different perspectives.

For Ngalu the effect of language is internal and so invisible. For Aboriginal people, using or hearing their heritage languages has an impact that cannot easily be shown. How do you give evidence of this? What is being missed out for Aboriginal people when languages are not used?

Written resources make languages visible, but they are not doing the job academics and educators think they are. Siobhan will provide some examples of the problems of accessing, creating or using written resources. Unless the creation of written material is in the control of Aboriginal people from beginning to end it can often be a barrier, not a resource.

## Biographies

Ngalu is a Bunuba woman born on Bunuba country in Fitzroy Crossing. Raised by Bunuba parents, language and culture on country was the foundation of her education. This foundation was set before she was sent for 5 years of western education in Derby. Ngalu's first job was in Native Welfare, and she is currently employed by the Department of Communities. In between she spent 15 years as an employee of the Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC) supporting not just the Bunuba language group, but groups across the Kimberley. She was elected KLRC chair in 2014 and is a Cultural Advisor to the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture board. Her belief is that 'Language is our identity; it is our backbone'.

Siobhan has lived in Halls Creek in the East Kimberley for 20 years. With a Masters in Applied Linguistics, she was employed full-time by the KLRC as a project manager and trainer until the end of 2012. Since then she worked as a grant-writer and governance consultant for many of the not-for-profit organisations and businesses in Halls Creek, before returning to work part-time for the KLRC as a Research Training and development Officer in 2017 and Acting Manager since September 2019.. She has just helped a West Kimberley language group complete a wordbook project which has been sound-printed to help break down the difficulties of using written resources.

