A rich and ancient language

Kaya noonakoor — hello everyone. Noongar is the ancient and official language of the Aboriginal people of South West WA. Lisa Quartenmain looks at how young people are keeping Noongar language and culture alive.

HISTORY OF NOONGAR

Noongar was originally an oral language, meaning the first people of the South were communicating through the written word. Young people learnt about everything — history, law, tradition, geography, food and family — from elders who passed down knowledge verbally.

When the Whadjuk Noongar leader was interned on Carnac Island, off Fremantle.

It was generally agreed there was no single standard Noongar language and that the dialects of a closely related range of languages merged into Noongar.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are different spellings of Noongar: Nyongur, Nyoongar, Nyungar, Yungar, Yungjang.

WISE WORDS FROM AUTHOR KIM SCOTT

Noongar novelist Kim Scott has a dream — that Noongar language becomes a key part of what it means to be West Australian.

“Of all of us living in south-western Australia, speak a language strongly influenced by Noongar language — for us, it’s a key identifier of family, culture, country and language, and living language. And I don’t think there is another strong tradition that can bridge language classes and cultural activities.”

“Yarr” is also part of the Wikeren Noongar Language and Stories Project, which produces illustrated books in Noongar language.

PLACES WITH NOONGAR MEANINGS

Yallingup: Cormorant, Balgipin, Dwellingup . . . these well-known South West towns all end with the suffix “up”, which in Noongar means “water”.


Another Noongar word for “noongar” is “noongar”. The word “noongar” is derived from an ancient word for “people”.

Teachers show their students a range of educational material and creates real — that Noongar language.

Bards and on special days such as Anzac

At Moorditj because the school song — sung in Noongar

Languages in 38 public schools last year. Eight

Getting things to discuss the endangered state

Noongar was originally an oral language,

Well-known Noongar place names in Perth are Bagu, Butterly, and Swan.

World’s First Noongar Dictionary

About 20 years ago, Noongar language worker Rosie Whitelaw compiled a 50-page Noongar Dictionary subtitled Noongar Language and English to English.

The dictionary was part of the Language Documentation Project, a world-renowned project that records and documents Noongar language.

As world languages are lost, the importance of Noongar language becoming an official language is growing.

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Noongar Dictionary

Was part of the School Song Project, which produces illustrated books in Noongar language.

WORLD’S FIRST

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