

# Languages never say die

WHILE Ken Walker welcomes the \$250,000 earmarked for the revitalisation of indigenous languages in last week's state budget, he says much more is needed.

The Gumbaynggir elder and long-time director of Muurrbay Language Centre said the amount of archiving and research required to get all the languages in NSW going was massive.

"Maybe this money will go towards helping some of them," Mr Walker said.

"But there are seven language groups between Gosford and the Tweed alone and they are all putting in submissions for projects."

Muurrbay has three big projects in need of funding dollars.

One is Yuludarla, a collection of Gumbaynggir stories already compiled, written in both Gumbaynggir and English and illustrated by local artists.

Another is Barriyala (Let's Work), a series of student workbooks to support the K-10 language syllabus already being introduced

into Nambucca Valley schools.

The third is Mayambala! (Move It!), an interactive educational resource developed at Muurrbay useful to language teachers anywhere.

Mr Walker said until now all projects had been federally-funded but he believed the State Government also had an obligation to support its Aboriginal languages.

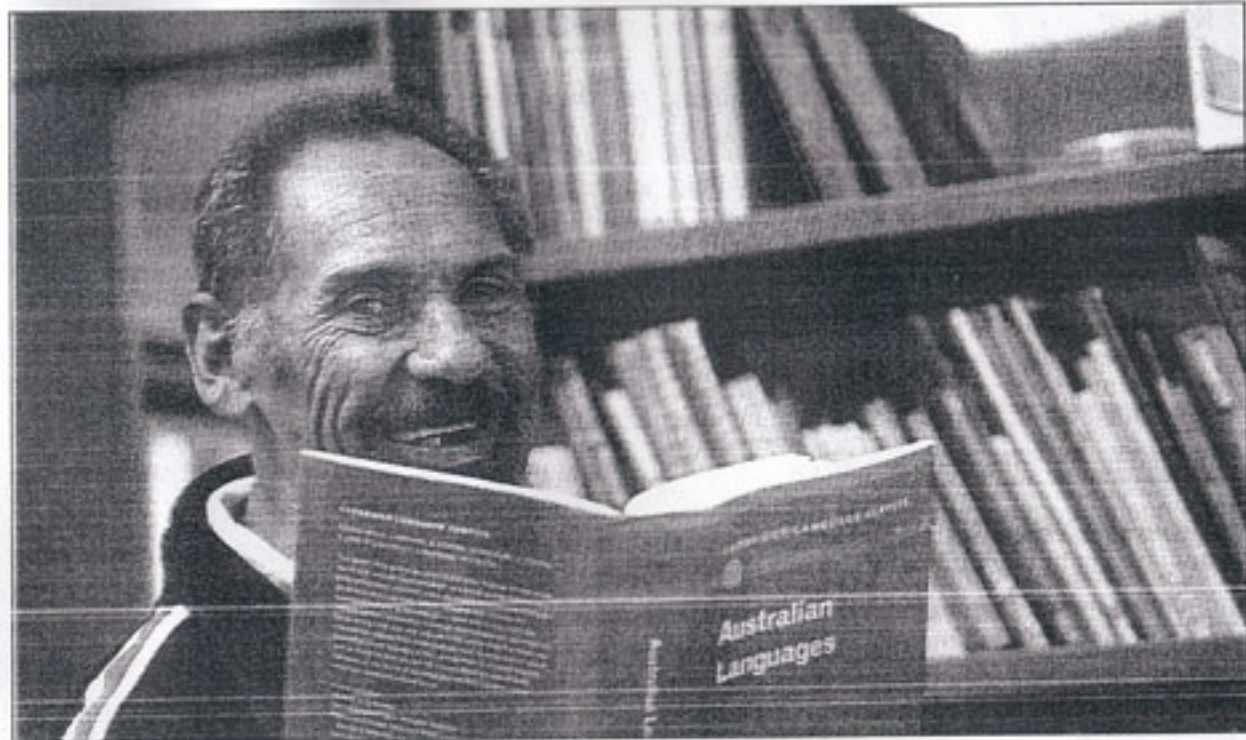
"When the Europeans invaded us, they decimated our culture and language and NSW was the first place to be hit."

"Our work is not only about reviving the languages but making them relevant to our lives now."

He said languages never die if they are used every day and evolve to include new words. One example is the Gumbaynggir word for telephone, Gayigam, which means 'talking thing'.

"There is a lot of stuff in the old language that fits with words today."

"It just takes some thinking about how to do it — it keeps you on the ball!"



Gumbaynggir linguist Ken Walker from Muurrbay Language Centre in Bellwood is pleased the NSW Government is finally getting involved in Indigenous language funding.

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