

Foreword

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An excellent heritage dictionary is a cultural foundation stone for any people. This translation of Lutheran missionary Carl Strehlow's previously unpublished comparative Aranda–Luritja dictionary from German into English is one such dictionary. Building on the work of A.H. Kempe, his predecessor at the Hermannsburg mission, Carl Strehlow had over 7,600 entries at the time of his death in 1922, making it by far the largest dictionary for any Aboriginal language up until the present. It was a comparative dictionary because he wanted to show that Aranda and Luritja were two distinct languages, although the people were neighbours.

The enormously painstaking work of transcribing the original manuscript handwritten in four languages, Aranda, Luritja, German and some Dieri, as well as sections in an old form of German shorthand, has been carried out by Dr Anna Kenny. As a native German speaker, she has also translated Carl Strehlow's German glosses into English, checking many of the translations in close collaboration with people whose mother tongue is Aranda and/or Luritja, in particular Rhonda Inkamala and her parents the late Davie Inkamala and Trudy Inkamala.

To introduce the dictionary, Anna Kenny has included six preliminary chapters. She provides an introductory background to the dictionary, and a separate detailed account of the manuscript's complex history. Rhonda Inkamala writes about working on the dictionary and Mark Inkamala provides short biographical sketches of the men who helped Carl Strehlow with learning the language and about Aranda culture. Two further chapters by Dr John Henderson and David Moore, both linguists, spell out in an accessible way many of the complexities involved in any dictionary making, as illustrated by this dictionary. John Henderson shows what important grammatical and other information can be provided by

analysing the organisation of the dictionary, the placement of words, and the many choices that Carl Strehlow made in compiling it, while David Moore sets out the fascinating challenges involved in settling on an orthography to represent the sounds in the Aranda language.

Dictionaries are consulted, not read. One reason for consulting this dictionary is as a baseline against which language and linguistic change can be explored. Because it is available electronically, as well as in hard copy, it opens the way to easy comparison with present day Aranda and Luritja as well as other kinds of work. An ideal heritage dictionary, such as the Oxford English Dictionary, is one based on historical principles—that is, besides showing the spelling and meaning of words, it provides their history or biography. Uniquely, this dictionary opens the way for such a historical Aranda–Luritja dictionary. Carl Strehlow collected many and lengthy texts, which when combined with those collected by his son, T.G.H. Strehlow, make it possible for a future Aranda and/or Luritja scholar to quarry this corpus and expand this heritage dictionary to provide exemplary sentences that illustrate usage at known periods in time. It may be many years before this happens but I have no doubt it will.

When this dictionary is added to the seven volumes of Carl Strehlow's ethnography, the work of Sir Baldwin Spencer and Frank Gillen, of T.G.H. Strehlow, of Olive Pink, of Diane Austin-Broos, of John Morton, and other work by Anna Kenny, not to mention the fund of historical information from the mission post-1877, Aranda people have a uniquely rich written record of aspects of their cultural heritage for future generations.

This text is taken from *Carl Strehlow's 1909 Comparative Heritage Dictionary: An Aranda, German, Loritja and Dieri to English Dictionary with Introductory Essays*, edited by Anna Kenny, published 2018 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.