

LINGUISTIC ORGANISATION AND NATIVE TITLE

THE WIK CASE, AUSTRALIA

The image used on the cover of this book shows Noel Peemuggina mapping Kuurn-engkech, a site in his own country (Estate 6, Wik-Ngathan language), with Morrison Wolmby, Kirke River, Cape York Peninsula, October 1977.

At the time Noel said, in Wik-Ngathan:

The water birds, were here, Burdekin duck [minh kuurn], geese and others too. Those two [Peter Pumpkin Wolmby and Bob Peemuggina] used to hunt them. Whistle ducks, magpie geese, and tea tree and the poison tree [*yuk upen*] were here too. My two elder brothers, sons of those two men, used to go hunting Burdekin duck here.¹

The day-shade for this place is Thoeker, up on top there, a place for sitting down. They would return from here to [the base camps] Moekeyn and Pulthalpempang. They never spent wet seasons at Thoeker.² Only there at Moekeyn and Pulthalpempang [in this area] did they erect [wet season huts]. I also used to come here hunting, from there to Kuurn[-engkech], right back to Moekeyn and as far as Thoeker.³

The bushfire meats [e.g. reptiles, mice, small macropods, hunted by organised burns] here belong to us exclusively. Your old grandfathers and fathers left this country [for us].⁴

I have never taken someone else's country, no, only taking my own country – from father to son. Absolutely.⁵

1 Not in Sutton (1995a), *minh kuurn* was confirmed by Ron Yunkaporta (13 September 2019, pers. comm.) as the same as Wik-Mungkan *minh koon*, the Burdekin duck or shelduck *Radjah radjah* (Kilham et al. 1986:70; Barry Alpher supplied the updated Latin name, 13 September 2019, pers. comm.). *Engkech* means 'long, extended, tall': PS.

2 This brief account employs a traditional distinction between wet season base camps, day-shades or 'dinner camps', and the resource site in question (Kuurn-engkech). On Wik site use types see further Sutton (2010).

3 Noel grew up in bush bands and had little contact with Aurukun Mission until well into adulthood.

4 This is a reference to Peter Sutton having been taken as a son by Victor Wolmby, who was a son of Peter Pumpkin Wolmby. Sutton thus was a putative grandson to both Pumpkin and his brother Bob.

5 Translated by Peter Sutton.

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P R E S S

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Cover photograph: Noel Peemuggina mapping Kuurn-engkech, a site in his own country (Estate 6, Wik-Ngathan language), with Morrison Wolmby, Kirke River, Cape York Peninsula, 1977. Photograph by Peter Sutton.

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