PREFACE

One hundred and twenty-seven Central Australian Aboriginal women and men have contributed oral history interviews for *Every hill got a story*.

Many stories are translations from Aboriginal languages, while others were directly transcribed from English or Aboriginal English.

Each chapter contains segments drawn from longer interviews to illustrate a particular theme.

The segments have been edited to eliminate repetition and maintain the narrative flow. They reflect contemporary language use as well as the language use of the time of the events the storytellers relate.

As with any form of authobiographical expression the oral histories in this book may not always accord with the historical record.

While the Central Land Council has used its best efforts to check with the storytellers or their families it cannot guarantee that each short profile is free of errors.

'Sound bite' symbol   ((o))   A small selection of 'sound bites' accompanies the book for a richer experience of the voices of the storytellers. To access the audio, visit www.nitv.org.au/everyhill.

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES AND KINSHIP

Aboriginal languages

As with other Indigenous languages, Central Australian Aboriginal languages are closely associated with particular areas of traditional land, and their distribution does not adhere to state borders (see page xx). A number of language groups live in the desert region of Central Australia, extending through the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia, and thus beyond the boundaries of the Central Land Council (CLC) region. Within these language groups are closely related languages that share much common vocabulary and have similar grammatical features. Sometimes the distinctions between the languages within a group may be quite minimal, and in other cases some languages within a group may not be so closely related.

The Arandic group includes Eastern and Central Arrernte, Western Aranda (Arrernte, Arrarnta), Southern Arrernte (Pertame), Central and Eastern Anmatyerr, Alyawarr and Kaytetye. It is this last mentioned that has the most differences from the other languages in the Arandic group. Some of these languages are spoken in Alice Springs, and in Northern Territory communities to the north, south, west and east of there.

The Western Desert language group stretches from Western Australia through to the northern regions of South Australia and into southern parts of the Northern Territory. It includes Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara, Luritja, Pintupi Luritja, Pintupi, Kukatja, Ngaatjatjarra and Ngaanyatjarra.

Another group extends across the Northern Territory–Western Australia border. Known as the Ngumpin-Yapa group, it includes Warlpiri, Warlmanpa, Ngarti, Mudburra, Ngarinyman and Gurindji, spoken in an extensive area to the north-west of Alice Springs, and Jaru, Walmajarri and Jiwarliny, spoken in the Eastern Kimberleys. Across the varieties of Warlpiri, the most southerly language of this group, there are a number differences in pronunciation and vocabulary. So, for example, Warlpiri

speakers at Yuendumu may use some different vocabulary from those at Willowra. Warlmanpa, spoken around Banka Banka, is also in the Yapa group. Gurindji is spoken in the north-western part of the CLC region at Daguragu and Kalkarindji in the Victoria River District of the Northern Territory. Warumungu, which is distinct from the languages of the three groups mentioned, is the main language of Tennant Creek and surrounding communities.

Aboriginal people from Central Australia are typically multilingual. They may speak one or more traditional Aboriginal languages, a variety of Aboriginal English and/or Standard Australian English, the official language taught in schools and used in the media. In some areas, Kriol, the English-based creole documented across the Top End, has often influenced the creation of new languages, which also contain many words and ideas from traditional language. This language situation reflects complex interwoven relationships to land, shared histories, high mobility and marriage patterns. In regional centres these new language types may be spoken alongside traditional languages. Kriol and Aboriginal English varieties have their own set of grammatical conventions, some of which stem from Aboriginal languages. The sounds of Kriol are like the traditional languages of the communities, but the vocabulary consists mainly of English-derived words. However many do not retain their English meaning: 'kilim', for example, comes from 'kill', but it means 'hit'. In most Kriol varieties, speakers use 'bin' to mark the past tense, in the way speakers of standard English would use the '-ed' ending on a verb; for example, 'I bin tok la im' means 'I talked to him (or her)'. The word 'langa' can mean 'at' or 'to'.

Spelling, orthographies and pronunciation

The first written forms of Central Australian languages date from the late nineteenth century. Nowadays most Aboriginal languages of the region have standard orthographies, or spelling systems, that reflect the sound systems of these languages, and for many of these languages there are published dictionaries. The lack of consistent spelling systems in the past has resulted in a great deal of variation in spelling, including that of people's names and place names. Frequently these do not align with currently accepted orthographies. In this book, unless the specific spelling usage of an individual storyteller dictates otherwise, every attempt has been made to spell language words using the currently accepted spelling conventions. Where Aboriginal language words appear in the text they are followed by short glosses, or translations. It is difficult to encapsulate the meanings of some of these terms in a few English words. For example, words glossed as 'Dreaming' – *Altyerre* or *Aknganentye* in Eastern and Central Arrernte; *Jukurrpa* in Warlpiri; *Tjukurrpa* in Pintupi Luritja, Ngaanyatjarra and Ngaatjatjarra; *Puwarraja* in Gurindji; and *Tjukurpa* in Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara – are culturally complex and their meanings may differ from region to region. Fuller explanations can be obtained from the published dictionaries.

There are variations in the ways certain sounds are spelt in Central Australian languages. So, for example, the distinctive sounds called retroflexes, made with the tip of the tongue high in the mouth and curled back slightly, are spelt with an 'r' preceding the relevant consonant in the Arandic languages, in Warlpiri, Gurindji and in Ngaanyatjarra/Ngaatjatjarra (rn, rt, rl etc.). In Pitjantjatjara these sounds are represented by an underlined consonant (n, t, l). The 'flapped' or 'trilled' 'r' sound is spelt as 'rr' in Arandic languages, in Warlpiri, Gurindji and in Ngaanyatjarra/Ngaatjatjarra but using a single 'r' in Pitjantjatjara. The Arandic language spelling systems use 'ty' for the consonant that is written as 'j' in Warlpiri and Gurindji and 'tj' in the Western Desert, even though there are some regional variations in how this sound is pronounced. There is also a deal of variation as to how many contrasting vowel sounds the different languages have, how they are written, and whether or not vowel sounds are written (and pronounced) on the beginnings or the ends of words.

Kinship and skin names

The kinship systems found across Central Australia determine people's roles, responsibilities and obligations in relation to one another, to ceremonial business and to the land. Aspects of these systems of social organisation differ among language groups represented in this book. In addition to numerous kinship terms, most language groups in the Central Australian region use either four or eight 'skin names' (a section system) or eight 'skin names' (a subsection system). A person's 'skin name' depends on the skin names of his or her mother and/or father, but it is not the same as either parent. These names can be used as personal identifiers, like a first name in English. Skin names starting with the letter 'J' (in Warlpiri, Gurindji or Warumungu) or 'Tj' (in Western Desert languages) denote males, and those starting with 'N' denote females. Spellings for these names vary across languages, even when the terms *sound* the same. For example, Warlpiri Japangardi and Pintupi Tjapangati are pronounced the same way, but the spelling differs because different English orthographic symbols were chosen to represent the sounds of the languages. Some languages, for example Pitjantjatjara, do not use skin names at all.

Another important feature of these systems is the principle that various categories of kin are equivalent. Thus the system extends beyond immediate or close family to embrace most people within extended social networks. The meanings of kin terms in Aboriginal languages cannot be simply mapped onto English ones. So, for example, a person uses a language-specific kin term that means something like 'mother' to refer to their birth mother but also to her sisters (who would be called 'aunts' in English). A person's 'sisters' include female siblings and also the daughters of their father's brothers (usually called 'cousins' in English). The table below shows the spellings of skin names in a range of Central Australian languages.

	Eastern & Central Arrente	Central & Eastern Anmatyerr	Alyawarr	Kaytetye	Warumungu	Warlpiri	Pintupi Luritja	Gurindji
Skin name	Peltharre	Peltharr Petyarr	Apetyarr	Kapetye				
male					Jappaljarri	Japaljarri	Tjapaltjarri	Japalyi
female					Nappaljarri	Napaljarri	Napaltjarri	Nalyirri
Skin name	Pengarte	Pengart		Pengarte				
male					Jappangardi	Japangardi	Tjapangati	Jangari
female					Nappangardi	Napangardi	Napangati	Nangari
Skin name	Kemarre	Kemarr	Akemarr	Kemarre				
male					Jakkamarra	Jakamarra	Tjakamarra	Japarta
female					Nakkamarra	Nakamarra	Nakamarra	Nimarra
Skin name	Ampetyane	Mpetyan		Ampetyane				
male					Jampin	Jampijinpa	Tjampijtinpa	Jampin
female					Nampin	Nampijinpa	Nampijtinpa	Nampin
Skin name	Penangke	Penangk		Penangke				
male					Jappanangka	Japanangka	Tjapanangka	Janama
female					Nappanangka	Napanangka	Napanangka	Nanaku
Skin name	Kngwarraye	Kngwarray Ngwarray	Kngwarrey Ngwarrey	Kngwarraye				
male					Jungarrayi	Jungarrayi	Tjungurrayi	Jukurtayi
female					Namikili	Nungarrayi	Nungurrayi	Namija
Skin name	Perrurle	Pwerrerl Pwerl	Apwerl	Pwerle				
male					Jupurla	Jupurrurla	Tjupurrula	Jurlama
female					Narurla	Napurrurla	Napurrula	Nawurla
Skin name	Angale	Ngal		Thangale				
male					Jangala	Jangala	Tjangala	Jangala
female					Nangala	Nangala	Nangala	Nangala