

Optometry WA Life member Gary Cerie offers his perspective and information during NAIDOC week in the following article.

Check back on our webpage for access to the NAIDOC Week Competition Later This Week

[Events Page](#)

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE - COUNTRY AND TREATY

Kaya ngany optometry moort wer koordah (Hello my Optometry family and friends)

Noonakoort moorditj? (How are you all?) Ngany moorditj. (I am good)

Yeyi ngalak kaartdijin boodja (Today we learn about country)

Ngany djerapin nidja Boodja-k (I am happy to be on this country)

COUNTRY:

I remember an ABC comedy show many years ago (1983, the year I married) –

“ Australia, You’re standing in it”

Now the show isn’t relevant to today’s topic but when overseas and we are asked where we are from our response is usually – Australia, or maybe in our case Western Australia. If we were in an equivalent land mass like Europe there would be many countries and so it is for the First Nations People of the land we call Australia.

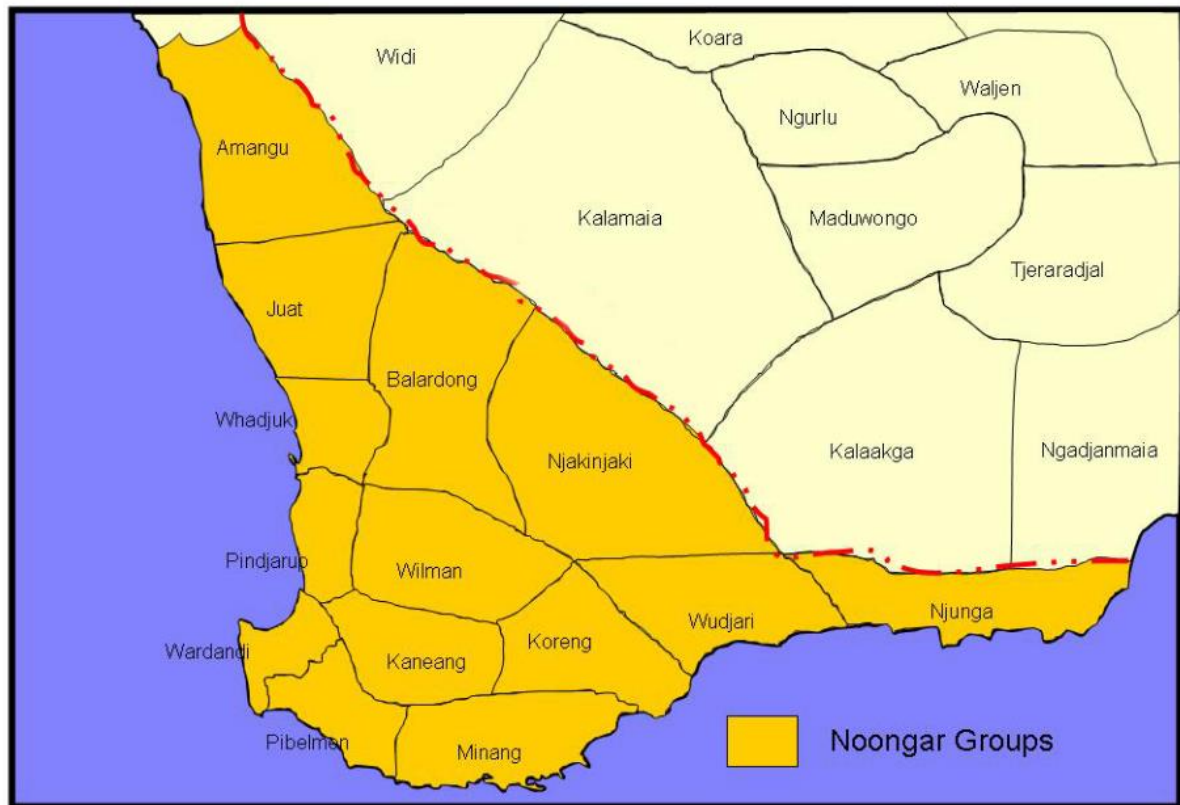


From Donna Murray and Lauren Hutcheson's IAHA presentation on cultural safety presented to Optometry Australia

There are many nations/ countries /language or "skin groups " not just one homogenous Aboriginal population.

[Australia-Aboriginal-Tribes-Map.png \(2432x2217\) \(connectionandwellbeing.com.au\)](http://connectionandwellbeing.com.au)

ABORIGINAL GROUPS OF THE SOUTH WEST OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Attribution: [John D. Croft at English Wikipedia](#)

So I am living in West Perth near Kaata Koomba (Kings Park). The traditional custodians of the land, waters and sky in this area are the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation. You can see that the Noongar lands are quite extensive.

TREATY:

We hear some discussion about the upcoming Voice to Parliament referendum and it comes from some Aboriginal representatives. Some say that Treaty needs to come before voice.

The Victoria government is working towards a treaty for their First Nations People. Are you aware that In WA we already have a treaty. A settlement agreement was made between the Barnett government and the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council representing the Noongar people.

The following is an excerpt from the introduction to an explanation about the settlement agreement from <https://noongar.org.au>

[About the Settlement Agreement — South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council \(noongar.org.au\)](#)

“The South West Native Title Settlement (the Settlement) is the largest native title settlement in Australian history. The Settlement will affect an estimated 30,000 Noongar People and encompasses approximately 200,000 square kilometres in the South West.

Harry Hobbs and George Williams of the Faculty of Law at the University of New South Wales have [described](#) the Settlement as 'Australia's First Treaty'.

The Settlement will resolve the Noongar native title claims in the South West of Western Australia in exchange for a package of benefits...”

As I enjoy the Noongar season of MAKURU (first rains – June- July) I feel the cold winds (Nyidiny) of winter and I miss too the warmth of the Kimberley where I visited recently. Finishing my journey at Kununurra and the country of the Mirriwoong.

It was Werlthang part of what we call the dry season but the Mirriwoong call it the cold season.

“ Warnka-mageny is **the cold season** and is broken up into three categories by the Miriwoong people; *Genkaleng*, *Werlthang* and *Manbilying*. The weather throughout this time of year is dry and gets warmer as the hot season starts to build up before the wet.”

Werlthang is the word for ‘morning dew’ which forms overnight leaving the country wet. The dew dries up by mid-morning. I experienced this on my tent and when I left my clothes out to dry overnight.

Miriwoong people say “**Warralab gejawooleng** – (to light fire) – some areas of the environment are ready to burn at this time of the year.”

Travelling at this time of year in the Kimberley, along the Gibb, you can see signs of official burns.

Miriwoong People say “**Berrayinga Miriwoong Dawang yoowoorriyantha.**” (*This is our country, Miriwoong Country.*)

Yaangka (thankyou) for nihiy (listening), I hope you gained some kaardajan (knowledge) about this boodja and First Nations history from Koora Koora (long ago).

I hope you enjoyed the snippets of language, culture and history this week.

I hope you got involved in some NAIDOC activities and I look forward to seeing you around.

Gary Cerie