



# AIATSIS

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

## Manuscript Finding Aid

**MS 1720**

### **Wulna/Wuna (N29) elicitations, Gavan Breen Collection**

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## Collection Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Breen, Gavan
<b>Title:</b>	Wulna/Wuna (N29) elicitations, Gavan Breen Collection
<b>Collection no:</b>	MS 1720
<b>Date range:</b>	1980-1981
<b>Extent:</b>	0.05 linear metres (1 box)
<b>Repository:</b>	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

## Cultural Sensitivity Statement

### Use of the material

When using this finding aid, and the collection described within it, clients are encouraged to be mindful and sensitive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; particularly with regard to the use of this material. This includes:

### Language

This finding aid and collection may contain words and descriptions which may be culturally inappropriate and insensitive. The language used in this collection may not normally be used in certain public or community contexts. Clients may encounter terms and descriptions, which reflect the author's attitude or that of the period in which the manuscript was written, that may be considered inappropriate today.

### Deceased persons

Clients using this finding aid should be aware that in some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, seeing images of deceased persons in photographs, film and books or hearing them in recordings etc. may cause sadness or distress; and in some cases offend strongly held cultural beliefs.

## **Access to the Collection**

### **Access conditions for this collection**

Open access reading. Open copying and quotation.

### **Access and use conditions - further information**

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### **Preferred citation**

Items from this collection should be cited as: Title or description of manuscript item, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, MS Number, Series Number, Subseries Number, Item or Folder Number.

For example:

Wulna/Wuna (N29) elicitations, Gavan Breen Collection, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, MS 1720, Series 1, Subseries 1, Item 1.

## Collection Overview

### Scope and contents note

This collection was created by the linguist Gavan Breen. The material includes transcriptions of audio recordings and grammatical notes of Wuna (N29) language. It contains elicitations in English, responses in Wuna written in phonetic script and glossary in English. The recordings were conducted over two years, 1980 and 1981, with Wuna speaker Jack Wandu at Humpty Doo in the Northern Territory.

### Provenance

Series 1, Subseries 1 (1980 fieldwork) was deposited by Gavan Breen in 1981. Tapes and transcriptions for Series 1, Subseries 2 (1981 fieldwork) was deposited in 1984.

Series 2 was also deposited by Breen; however, the date of depositary is unknown. Series 2 was added to this collection in 2021.

### Material separated from the collection

No material has been separated from this collection.

### Related material

MS 1720 includes the transcriptions of field tapes. The related audio collections are as below: BREEN\_G26 and BREEN\_G31.

Wuna (N29) material is included in PMS 3551 (Larrakia (N21) and Wunae (N29) field notes, Darwin, NT 1959-60). These include the elicitations in phonetic script by KL Hale.

For a complete list of works by Gavan Breen held by the Library, and for other related material consult [Mura®](#), the AIATSIS catalogue.

For access to Audio / Visual material please go to the 'Contact us' page on the AIATSIS website at [aiatsis.gov.au](http://aiatsis.gov.au) or phone (02) 6246 1111

**Important:** Before clicking on the links to the catalogue entries please read our sensitivity message found on the 'Search the Collection' page on the AIATSIS website at [aiatsis.gov.au](http://aiatsis.gov.au)

### Biographical history note

Gavan Breen is an Australian linguist who has contributed to the recording and preservation of a large number of Aboriginal languages.

For over a decade from 1967, Breen worked with Aboriginal people to record, research, transcribe and analyse at least 49 endangered Indigenous languages, supported by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (now AIATSIS). Breen made numerous field trips to remote areas of western and central Queensland, parts of the Northern Territory and South Australia, recording languages on reel-to-reel tapes for later transcription. In some cases he worked with the last known Aboriginal speakers of a language. The resulting language materials including tape transcriptions, field notes, vocabularies, grammatical analyses, and audio recordings have been deposited with AIATSIS.

In 2014, the Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity (RNLD) digitised Gavan Breen's materials, available through the Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures (PARADISEC), at:

[https://catalog.paradisec.org.au/items/search?collector\\_id=2467](https://catalog.paradisec.org.au/items/search?collector_id=2467)

In 1970 Breen completed a Master of Arts degree at Monash University writing the thesis *A description of the Waluwara language*. From 1971-79 he was a researcher in the Monash University Linguistics Department. In the early 1980s, Breen continued his linguistic research and worked in the Northern Territory tertiary education sector, teaching Indigenous speakers of Australian languages vernacular literacy, basic linguistics and other skills required for language-related work. He taught and prepared teacher trainees for bilingual education.

Gavan Breen's efforts over five decades have made a major contribution to the salvaging and preservation of endangered Aboriginal languages. He has written and co-authored books, journal articles, and numerous publications such as grammatical descriptions, dictionaries and wordlists. Breen has also conducted significant work on Arrernte and other living languages of Central Australia. He has transcribed and translated Aboriginal language content and provided linguistic services for organisations and projects such as Northern Territory Museums, Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife, the Central Land Council and the Northern Territory Department of Education. Breen has provided linguistic evidence for Native Title Claims for most language claimant groups in western Queensland.

Nominally retired since 2001, Breen still works voluntarily from an office at the Institute for Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs, continuing his research and publications and actively supporting community language revitalisation activities.

In 2016, Gavan Breen was made an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia, for distinguished service to the Indigenous community through the preservation of languages, to the development of orthographies and to education.

## References

Australian National University Press. 'Gavan Breen' viewed 9 June 2021, <<https://press.anu.edu.au/publications/authors-editors/gavan-breen>>.

Sleath, E 2014, 'Veteran linguist's work preserved', ABC Alice Springs, 24 April.

Volling, T 2016, 'Alice man's crusade to save indigenous languages honoured with OAM', Northern Territory News, 26 January.

## Controlled Access Headings

Limilngan language N42

Limilngan people N42

Wuna language N29

Wuna people N29

Language - Linguistics - Language elicitation - Sentences

Language - Linguistics - Language elicitation - Techniques

Language - Vocabulary - Word lists

Language - Linguistics - Vocabulary and grammar

## Archivists note

This finding aid was created in 2021 to document and reassociate the links between the transcriptions and grammatical notes found in this manuscript collection and Gavan Breen's related audio collection.

Appendix 1 cross-references the MS item numbers and the audio collection numbers, and indicates the pages in the manuscript collection, original field tape number and date recorded. Also search on [Mura®](#), the AIATSIS catalogue, for related audio collections.

There are numerous historical documents which refer to Wuna, including word lists. These can be discovered via AUSTLANG, search Wuna or N29 on the Names page.

## Series Description

### Series 1 Wuna elicitation

This Series is divided into two subseries according to the date of recording. Breen called the language Wulna in 1980 and settled on Wuna in 1981.

Appendix 1 cross-references the MS item numbers and the audio collection numbers, and indicates the pages in the manuscript collection, original field tape number and date recorded.

### Subseries 1 Wulna elicitation, 1980

#### Item

MS 1720: Wulna/Wuna (N29) elicitations, Gavan Breen Collection

MS 1720/1/1/1	Tape transcription of BREEN_G26 (A0010992). Discussion about name Djerimanga – not recognised. Intransitive clauses; negation; transitive clauses.
MS 1720/1/1/2	Tape transcription of BREEN_G26 (A0010997 and A0010998). NPs; intransitive clauses; interrogatives; negation; possession; pronouns.
MS 1720/1/1/3	Tape transcription of BREEN_G26 (A0011001 and A0011002). Imperative; interrogative; pronouns; negation; NPs; transitive clauses; intransitive clauses; possession; demonstratives; desire; negated desire.
MS 1720/1/1/4	Tape transcription of BREEN_G26 (A0011006). Modal intransitives; hypothetical; complex clauses; intransitive clauses; transitive clauses; imperatives.
MS 1720/1/1/5	Tape transcription of BREEN_G26 (A0011007). Transitive clauses; intransitive clauses; negation; locative; imperative; interrogative.
MS 1720/1/1/6	Tape transcription of BREEN_G26 (A0011008). Transitive clauses; intransitive clauses; interrogative; etc.
MS 1720/1/1/7	Tape transcription of BREEN_G26 (inaudible, not archived). Transitive clauses; locative; adverbial constructions; imperatives; interrogatives; purposive; instrumental.
MS 1720/1/1/8	Intransitive clauses; transitive clauses; complex clauses; possession; and unrecorded transcriptions.

**Subseries 2      Wuna elicitation, 1981**

**Folder / Item**

MS 1720/1/2/1	Tape transcription of BREEN_G31 (A008720). Imperatives; negative imperatives; complex clauses – intransitive; transitive clauses; purposive interrogatives; interrogatives; pronouns; locatives; hypotheticals; body parts.
MS 1720/1/2/2	Tape transcription of BREEN_G31 (A008721). People; artefacts; reflexive; weather; fauna; transitive clauses; intransitive clauses; body parts, products.



## MS 1720: Wulna/Wuna (N29) elicitations, Gavan Breen Collection

MS 1720/1/2/3	Tape transcription of BREEN_G31 (A008722). Intransitive clauses; transitive clauses; negation; reflexive; people; fauna; artefacts; time; NPs.
MS 1720/1/2/4	Tape transcription of BREEN_G31 (A008723). Complex; imperatives; negative imperatives; intransitives; possession; interrogatives; purposive; time; fauna; flora; family; transitives clauses; instrumental; celestial.
MS 1720/1/2/5	Tape transcription of BREEN_G31 (A008725). Ditransitive clauses; reciprocal; instrumental; negation; complex; transitive; intransitive clauses; interrogatives; adverbial constructions; family; NPs.
MS 1720/1/2/6	Tape transcription of BREEN_G31 (A008724). Intransitive clauses; transitive clauses; adverbial constructions; complex clauses; reciprocal.
MS 1720/1/2/7	Tape transcription of BREEN_G31 (A008726). Complex clauses; hypothetical clauses; intransitive clauses; adverbial constructions; transitive clauses; NPs; imperatives.
MS 1720/1/2/8	Tape transcription of BREEN_G31 (A008727). Using other recorder to play back selections; complex clauses; transitive clauses; NPs; imperatives; intransitive clauses.
MS 1720/1/2/9	Tape transcription of BREEN_G31 (A008727). Imperatives; complex clauses; instrumental; causative; NPs; intransitive; transitive; reflexive; reciprocal?; dual pronouns.
MS 1720/1/2/10	Tape transcription of BREEN_G31 (A008747). Interrogatives; intransitives; NPs; transitives; reflexives; pronouns; complex clauses; imperatives.
MS 1720/1/2/11	Tape transcription of BREEN_G31 (A008758). Interrogatives; imperatives; intransitives; negation; reciprocal; ablative; possession; complex clauses; purposive.

## **Series 2 Wuna (Wulna) vocabulary and grammatical notes**

Series 2 material includes grammatical notes, example clauses and a wordlist. It is supplementary to the transcriptions in Series 1.

### **Folder / Item**

MS 1720/2/1      Vocabulary and grammatical notes. Page numbers in the transcriptions (Series 1) are recorded in the notes to re-associate the tapes and transcriptions.

## Box List

Series	Subseries	Item	Volume/Folder
1	1	1-8	Part 1
1	2	1-11	Part 1
2		1	Part 2

Finding aid compiled by Amanda Lissarrague and Man-Ting Hsu, June 2021.

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## Appendix 1

Item	Manuscript page FT	Date	Audio collection number
MS 1720/1/1/1	1 20.2	29/10/80	BREEN_G26 (A0010992)
MS 1720/1/1/2	11 23.1-23.2	07/11/80	BREEN_G26 (A0010997) BREEN_G26 (A0010998)
MS 1720/1/1/3	25 25.1-25.2	15/11/80	BREEN_G26 (A0011001) BREEN_G26 (A0011002)
MS 1720/1/1/4	41 27.2	22/11/80	BREEN_G26 (A0011006)
MS 1720/1/1/5	49 28.1	22/11/80	BREEN_G26 (A0011007)
MS 1720/1/1/6	57 28.2	06/12/80	BREEN_G26 (A0011008)
MS 1720/1/1/7	64 30.1-30.2	06/12/80	BREEN_G26 – inaudible, not archived
MS 1720/1/1/8	80 31.1-31.2	14/12/80	Recordings unknown
MS 1720/1/2/1	96 32.1-32.2	08/09/81	BREEN_G31 (A008720)
MS 1720/1/2/2	112 33.1-33.2	09/09/81	BREEN_G31 (A008721)
MS 1720/1/2/3	123 34.1-34.2	10/09/81	BREEN_G31 (A008722)
MS 1720/1/2/4	136 35.1-35.2	11/09/81	BREEN_G31 (A008723)
MS 1720/1/2/5	145 36.1-36.2	11/09/81	BREEN_G31 (A008725)
MS 1720/1/2/6	159 37.1-37.2	12/09/81	BREEN_G31 (A008724)
MS 1720/1/2/7	169 38.1-38.2	12/09/81	BREEN_G31 (A008726)
MS 1720/1/2/8	184 39.1	16/09/81	BREEN_G31 (A008727)
MS 1720/1/2/9	190 39.2	26/09/81	BREEN_G31 (A008727)
MS 1720/1/2/10	198 53.2	26/09/81	BREEN_G31 (A008747)
MS 1720/1/2/11	206 54.1-54.2	27/09/81	BREEN_G31 (A008758)