

# Speaking Guugu Yimithirr



⤴ Roy McIvor, Guugu Yimithirr elder and artist.

The Guugu Yimithirr Country of Far North Queensland covers a large area of land. In 1770, Captain Cook met with Guugu Yimithirr people while his ship *Endeavour* was being repaired, near the place known today as Cooktown. There, Cook heard the word 'gangurru' spoken by local Aboriginal people. The word 'kangaroo' comes from gangurru, the Guugu Yimithirr word for one kind of kangaroo.



⤴ In the 1960s, Roy McIvor did a painting of a gangurru. He painted it on bark from a eucalyptus tree.

In 1885, a mission was established on Guugu Yimithirr land. A **missionary** from the Lutheran Church, George (Muni) Schwartz, learnt the Guugu Yimithirr language from Magdalene Mulun and others on the mission. His studies enabled him to develop school lessons in Guugu Yimithirr.



⤴ The Lutheran Church is still a significant building in Hope Vale.

With help from others, the Guugu Yimithirr elders have worked hard to keep their language alive. As a result, Guugu Yimithirr continues to be spoken and taught to children today at the Hope Vale Aboriginal Community, north of Cooktown.



⤴ A group of Hope Vale residents including elders. Unlike many other missions, the residents of the Hope Vale Mission were allowed to speak and learn to write their own language during the early mission days. As a result, their language has been passed from generation to generation.