**Mother’s tongue**

We speak our mother’s tongue, as the saying goes. The colonial project to rid Aboriginal languages from the Australian continent was at its most extreme in the forced removal of children from their mothers. Many old people remember being punished, including beatings, for using their mother’s tongue at school.

Languages have thrived in some areas—but in many not. Some have remained strong, others are being revived. Many Aboriginal people tell of languages “sleeping”, waiting to be woken up.[[1]](#footnote-1)

*Minj ngarri-wokbawoyi kun-wok ngadberre* is from Bininj Gunwok, a language group from western Arnhem Land

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1. Denise Karpany, Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages, *Holding out tongues*, ABC Radio National, 2010, produced by Lorena Allam, <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/legacy/features/holdingourtongues/transcript.htm>, accessed 10 May 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)