

PROJECT NO: 8801

TAX | NON-TAX

# Australia



## Indigenous Publishing

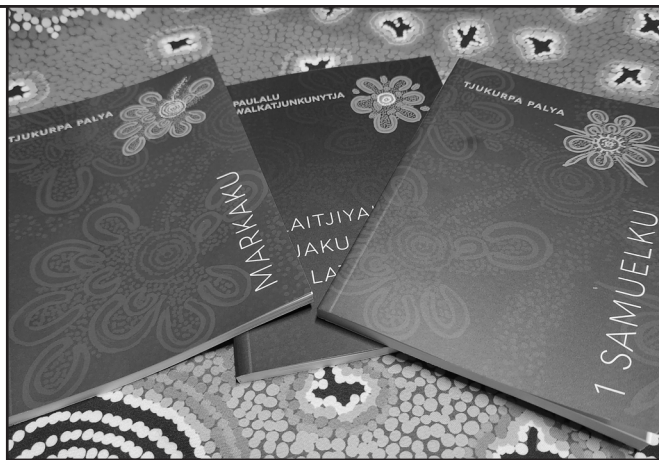
### Overview

Bible Society Australia (BSA) remains the key publisher of Indigenous Bibles in Australia. Working with churches, parachurch organisations as well as Indigenous leaders and translators, Bible Society coordinates the publication, design and typesetting of the Bibles.

### The Need

Prior to the arrival of European settlement, it is estimated that around 400 Indigenous languages were spoken in Australia. Unfortunately, since that time Australia has suffered the highest rate of language extinction in the world and currently only about 10% of these languages are still being used in daily life. There is a need for Bible translation, publishing and distribution to often very remote communities, and a need to keep the cost of published Scriptures at a price people can afford.

"[The first] Gumatj New Testament was available for many years, but the copies ran out and Gumatj people were asking for more. It is not always easy to make more copies, especially when the old way of printing books has changed. A 'print button' could not just be pressed straightaway for more copies, because the first Gumatj New Testament was made before there were computers and fancy printers. In order to get the Gumatj New Testament on today's computers, there were many steps to take to prepare it for printing. Transferring words onto computers doesn't always go smoothly. Computers, scanners and their machines can be a bit 'rough', especially when they do not know and understand Gumatj. But Gumatj people know when the words have been copied correctly into the new computer systems." - Margaret Miller, Uniting Church Support Worker.



# 10%

of the estimated 400 Indigenous languages originally spoken are still being used in daily life.

# 1864

was the year that Bible Society published the Ngarrindjeri Scriptures.

# 2007

was the year that the first full Indigenous Bible was published in Kriol.

## Goals

Since 1864, Bible Society's goal has been to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in translating – and publishing – the Scriptures into their heart languages. Once published, BSA coordinates the distribution of the Bibles to individuals and communities (some of which are very remote), at whatever price they can afford.

By publishing Indigenous Scripture – both in print and online – BSA

hopes to encourage interest and value in keeping Indigenous languages alive from Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike. BSA ensures Indigenous translations are published and distributed in a culturally sensitive and respectful way.

In 2023 Bible Society will support the publication of several translation projects. As well as the publication of various Scripture translations,

Bible Society publishing will be working on a book exploring the story of Indigenous Bible Translation in Australia. This book will feature translations in over 40 different languages, including some Bible translations in languages which have never been published before.

## Impact

In 2022 Bible Society supported several translation projects. The long-awaited Gumatj New Testament revised edition was dedicated in Yirrkala in April, with much celebration. Many translators dedicated their lives to this work but passed away before seeing it come to fruition, notably the two main Gumatj senior women, Gulumbu and Mutilŋa, who were involved in the earlier work of the Gumatj Bible Translation.

A small book series was also printed, made up of small volumes of Scripture in Pitjantjatjara. The 3 books were: 1 Samuel; Mark's Gospel and Paul's Letters. These books were very popular in hospitals and across the APY Lands for outreach.

## Testimonies

"When it came time for me to open the box and hand out the [revised Gumatj NT] Bibles, all the translators and their families came down to the front. As I gave each person the Bible, their faces lit up, and tears of joy could be seen from many – and there was a wonderful sense of unity."

*Louise Sherman, Bible Society Australia's Production Coordinator – Remote & Indigenous Ministry Support (RIMS)*

There has been a great movement of God at Yirrkala since the revised Gumatj New Testament dedication took place in early April 2022. "They've been having fellowship every night since then. There is a move of God's Spirit that has happened. We've been waiting for this Gumatj New Testament dedication for months. But the timing has been absolutely amazing because of this growing encouragement and enthusiasm in the Lord and in God's work and in his Spirit."

*Margaret Miller, the Uniting Church Support Worker who oversaw the reprint of the Gumatj New Testament.*

## Prayer Needs

- Pray for God's healing and restoration for Australia's first nations people, that as communities Open The Bible in their heart language they will be transformed and will know God's love for them.
- Pray that communities will have the strength and conviction to share God's love with others.

