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# Awabakal fact sheet

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## INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE FACT SHEET



# Awabakal

### General Language Information:

The language spoken around the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie region of NSW. The name 'Awabakal' means people of the plain or flat surface and is believed to refer to the surface of the lake.

Awabakal was studied by Reverend Lancelot Edward Threlkeld from 1825 until his death in 1859, having been taught the language by Biraban (meaning 'eagle hawk'), a Awabakal tribal leader. In 1827 Threlkeld's *Specimen's of a Dialect of the Aborigines of New South Wales* was the earliest attempt at exhibiting the structure of an Australian language. Unfortunately sometime in the late 19th century the language became extinct, there are attempts to revive it.

Professor Nick Evans, Head of Linguistics at the Australian National University reflects: *"language is like an oral encyclopaedia for the people who speak it,... Vast tracts of human knowledge of the world are enfolded in these languages. That knowledge is not available to us if we don't speak, document and translate these languages."* (news.anu.edu.au)

### Useful Links....

Some of the information contained in this Fact sheet is from the following websites:

[www.newcastle.edu.au/group/amrhd/awaba/language/index.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/group/amrhd/awaba/language/index.html)

There is also an online English-Awabakal Dictionary at

[www.newcastle.edu.au/group/amrhd/awaba/language/dictionary/index.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/group/amrhd/awaba/language/dictionary/index.html)



**Some examples of Awabakal words:**

**Wakool—one**

**Bulowara—two**

**Ngoro—three**

**Wara—four or five (also the word for the palm of the hand)**



Aerial photograph of Newcastle taken by Tim Starling, [www.wikipedia.org.au](http://www.wikipedia.org.au)

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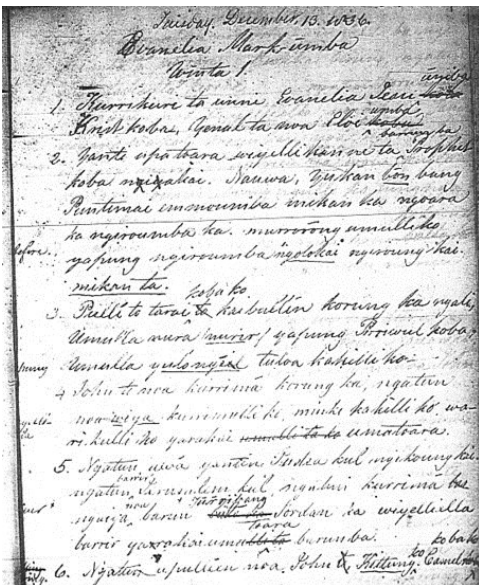
## SCRIPTURE RESOURCES AVAILABLE

### Print

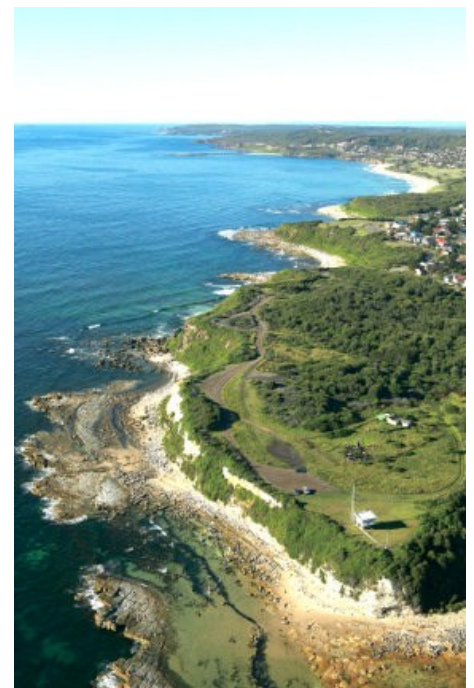
- There is an online translation by Threlkeld of the **Gospel of Mark** in **Awabakal ('Evanelia Mark-umba')** available at : [www.newcastle.edu.au/group/amrhd/awaba/language/st-mark/index.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/group/amrhd/awaba/language/st-mark/index.html)

#### BIBLE STATISTICS

- ✓ Gospel of Mark



**Pictured left:** an image of Threlkeld's original translation manuscript ([www.newcastle.edu.au](http://www.newcastle.edu.au))



**Pictured right:** part of Lake Macquarie's 174Kms of foreshore (Lake Macquarie City Council)

### Audio

- There are no audio-visual recordings of this language as Awabakal ceased to be spoken before the creation of recording equipment.

### Video

- There are no Audio-Visual resources for this specific language.

**For further information about this resource or to order copies please contact:**

**Remote & Indigenous Ministry Support (RIMS)**

**770 South Road, Glandore, SA 5037**

**Phone: (08) 8 8292 4888**

**Email: [translation@biblesociety.org.au](mailto:translation@biblesociety.org.au)**

**Web: [www.biblesociety.org.au](http://www.biblesociety.org.au)**