

i love this PHOTO

May Byrne says this photo of her grandmother and daughter tells the story of a staunchly proud people.

I took this photo 26 years ago of my grandmother, Gudilbiddi, holding my daughter, Kasey Jan. My gunthayi (maternal grandmother) was a strong spiritual healer. Gudilbiddi was from the Banjima tribe and is of the garltharda (skin) Banaga, like myself. My daughter Kasey is of the skin Burungu, like her grandmother – my mother. Every tribe has their own garltharda system: you have the same garltharda as your maternal grandmother. This is ancient lore. Banjima tribe have four-skin-group system. My maternal side of the family are of the Banaga/Burungu garltharda, who belong to (dialect boundary) Milyuranpa Banjima. We married into our in-law system, who are Pantikurra Banjima (dialect boundary). This is our galtharda, belonging to Banjima, and what keeps our tribe, our dialect, similar – although some words vary. Bidiltha (Hammersley plateau) in Banjima country is the divider for the two dialect boundary groups. We are still one Banjima; each speaks for their own boundary area. My grandfather, Kunga, was from the Pantikurra

Banjima, and was of the skin Karimarda. Kunga's mother, Natha, was a Milanga woman and my mum's kabarli (paternal grandmother). The Banjima people in August last year won our Native Title. Sadly, Native Title, white man's law, does not understand our system of lore, and did not include all our people. One Barjarlee (clar) should have been included and have had the same full rights as the rest of the Banjima people. My mum, a Banjima elder, says they are "dinkum Banjima" – they belong to the bottom end (Pantikurra Banjima). My nana's sister – the oldest Banjima who gave evidence – and my uncle, nana Gudilbiddi's son (both deceased), recognised the family in the Federal Court as Banjima, as with the rest of our family who gave evidence under oath.



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