



INTRODUCTION

To the D'harawal Language

My thanks go to Uncle Percy Mumbler for his patience and his humour, so many years ago.

We were not the primitive savages that the early settlers, and many other non Aboriginal people since would have you believe. We were intelligent, observing people, who had a complex system of protecting knowledge from being lost. We had a counting system that used the base five, rather than base ten, and with the zero activating at one hundred, rather than at ten. We did not have a written form of math because we did not need it. We had our fingers.

We have a language that admittedly had fewer words than any of the modern languages, but which was able to express so much more. To do this we used body language, as well as tongue and vocal tone. It is a language that is given colour by our bodily stance, hand gestures, the expression on our faces, and the tone of our voices. We spoke with our entire beings.

The list of words that follow are just that; a list of words used by the D'harawal Peoples, but in learning and speaking it we will be bringing the D'harawal language back to life, and perhaps, giving ourselves a greater understanding of this place in which we live.