

Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 4.01.02/02

MARNDUDLA (Marntudla)

(last edited: 22/3/2016)

Abstract

Marndudla (or *Marntudla* in KWP's New Spelling 2010) is the Kurna name for a site in the vicinity of section 622, Hundred of Willunga (around Christie Creek on the west side of the Southern Expressway). By 1840 it had been recorded as 'Mandoodla', probably by the first surveyors.

Its meaning (if any) is unknown; though it might possibly be connected in some way with *marntu* ('uninitiated youth who is of age for initiation'). If so, we do not know what this may have signified about the location.

<i>Coordinates</i>	-35.120295° Latitude, 138.503995° Longitude.
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Language Information

<i>Meaning</i>	Unknown
<i>Etymology</i>	Uncertain
<i>Notes</i>	This word looks as if it might be made up of <i>marntu</i> 'boy of initiating age but still uncircumcised' + <i>-dla</i> 'two' (Dual) > <i>marntudla</i> 'two such boys'. However, in fact it is unlikely to be a Dual, because root words ending in <i>u</i> have a different form of the Dual, <i>-rla</i> , which would make the word <i>Marnturla</i> , not <i>Marntudla</i> . No other known suffix fits. In turn this implies that the root is very unlikely to be <i>marntu</i> alone; and so the structure and morphemes of the word are unknown. It may be a single morpheme and 'just a name'.
<i>Language Family</i>	Thura-Yura: 'Kurna'.
<i>KWP Former Spelling</i>	Marndudla
<i>KWP New Spelling 2010</i>	Marntudla
<i>Phonemic Spelling</i>	/marNTudla/
<i>Syllables</i>	"Marn-dudla":
<i>Pronunciation tips</i>	Stress the 1 st syllable; every 'a' as in Maori 'haka'; 'rn' is <i>n</i> with tongue curled back (retroflex). 'u' as in 'put'.

Main source evidence

Date	1840
Original source text	" marndo , a boy about to be circumcised".
Reference	Teichelmann and Schürmann 1840.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Mullawirraburka, Kadlitpinna, Ityamaitpinna, etc

Date	Dec 1840
Original source text	"[section, District B] 622, 623, 624 – Samuel Myles – Well, 21 feet deep; with 6 feet of water."
Reference	'Statement of the Extent and Cultivation... for 1840', <i>BPP: Colonies: Aust:</i> Vol. 7, 1841-4: 112.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	Dec 1840
Original source text	"(Morphett Vale and Neighbourhood)... Miles, Samuel, Mandoodla. "
Reference	Bennett, <i>SA Almanac</i> 1841, Country Directory: 125.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Kurna survey guides 1839; surveyors.

Date	Dec 1841
Original source text	"(Morphett and Hurtle Vales)... Myles, Samuel, Mandoodla. "
Reference	Bennett, <i>SA Almanac</i> 1842, Country Directory: 123.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Kurna survey guides 1839; surveyors.

Date	1857
Original source text	" marnto , a boy yet to be circumcised, but having past that age; an uncircumcised".
Reference	Teichelmann, <i>MS Dictionary</i> 1857.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Mullawirraburka, Kadlitpinna, Ityamaitpinna, etc, 1838-44

Discussion: MARNDUDLA:

Richard Counsel's field sketches, made in May 1839 during the first survey of the area, record two small waterholes 100 metres apart on the creek at the western boundary of section 622.¹ They were the only waterholes marked for some miles around; not even on section 639 at the creek crossing of the '*native track*' which soon became the '*present road*' of the settlers.²

It seems the creek was then called 'Terrananga' by the Kurna.³ Earlier surveyors had already dubbed its mouth 'Teal River',⁴ but now it is 'Christie Creek'.

It was no doubt these surveyors, inquiring from their Kurna guides, who were told that a site somewhere in this vicinity was called 'Mandoodla'. As a result of their labours, within 18 months this and the two sections east of it had become the property under colonial law of one Samuel Myles, who had imposed a '*well, 21 feet deep, with 6 feet of water... [a] bush fence, potatoes... [which] failed, two dwelling houses... sheep-pens, andc*'.⁵ He also appropriated the name. But he soon discarded it in favour of 'Milton Farm',⁶ and we only know it at all because he had it listed twice in the almanacs.

The clerical spelling in the almanacs is often very unreliable, but in this case it is easily intelligible as a genuine Aboriginal word *marndudla* which fits the Kurna language.

At first analysis the ending looks like the Dual suffix *-dla* meaning 'two', and a root word seems readily available. A different spelling of 'Mandoo-' is *Marndu*, which is reliably recorded by the linguist missionaries as *marndo*, *marnto* and *manno* (in New Spelling *marntu*), signifying a boy or youth who is old enough to have undergone the first manhood ceremony but has not yet done so. *Marntudla* could mean 'two such boys'.

However, in fact it is unlikely that 'Mandoodla' is a Dual. Root words which end in *-u*, such as *marntu*, use a different form of the Dual, *-rla*,⁷ and this would make the word *Marnturla*, not

¹ Counsel 1839, Field Book 94, GNU: [108b].

² cp. maps C 256 'SA No 13', and C 274 'Country south of Adelaide', SLSA.

³ See PNS 4.01.02/01 Tarnangga.

⁴ Finnis Field Book 76: [40], cp. maps C 236 and C 274, SLSA.

⁵ Statement 1840, *BPP: Colonies: Aust: Vol. 7, 1841-4*: 112-3.

⁶ Cotter, *SA Almanac* 1843: 184.

⁷ Teichelmann & Schürmann 1840 Part 1: 5-6. Here the *rl* is a retroflex *r*.

Marntudla. Nor is there any other known suffix which would be heard as 'dla'.⁸ In turn this implies that the root is very unlikely to be *marntu* alone.

Our conclusion must therefore be that we do not know how the word is made up, whether it is a single morpheme or several, nor whether or not it has any connection with the known word *marntu*.⁹

And in any case a place-name need not have any known dictionary meaning: consider 'London', 'Rome', 'Adelaide'.

There are several other known Kurna place-names close around Morphett Vale, including *Mandarrilla*¹⁰ and *Parnangga*.¹¹

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End of Summary

⁸ The suffix *-idla* ('lacking, without') always occurs in full in the known examples, while *Marntu'dla* would require it to elide its first vowel *i*. This is conceivable; but the resultant meaning – 'without an uninitiated boy' – is not likely for a place-name.

⁹ Yet those *two* adjacent waterholes do encourage us to wonder whether the Dual can be rescued somehow in this place-name. Were there some unrecorded variations in the rule about *dla* and *rla*? In which case, could we have *marntu* after all? and was there a Kurna Dreaming story that happened there, or practices at the site, which involved two of those late-coming youths? and were they embodied in the waterholes? Of course all of this is pure speculation.

¹⁰ See PNS 4.01.02/03.

¹¹ See PNS 4.01.02/04.