

Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 4.1.2/05

‘COORARA’

(Morphett Vale)

(last edited: 26/3/2013)

Abstract

‘Coorara’ is not a Kurna word.

As the name of a railway stopping place on the former Willunga line, it was selected (probably from Taplin 1879) and approved by the Nomenclature Committee on 12th November 1935.

It has also been used as a name for homesteads in the Southeast and elsewhere.

Coordinates	-35.1224297 Latitude, 138.5298980 Longitude.
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Language Information

Meaning	‘clouds’ according to Gason 1879.
Etymology	
Notes	
Language Family	Diyari language of the Lake Eyre region.
KWP Former Spelling	
KWP New Spelling 2010	
Phonemic Spelling	
Pronunciation	
Pronunciation tips	

Main source evidence

Date	1879
Original source text	“Coorara - clouds.”
Reference	‘The “Dieyerie” Tribe (Far North)’ in G Taplin 1879, <i>The folklore, manners, customs, and languages of the South Australian aborigines</i> : 67.
Informants credited	Samuel Gason
Informants uncredited	

<i>Date</i>	1935
<i>Original source text</i>	“Railway Stations names approved: Coorara... ”
<i>Reference</i>	Nomenclature Committee Minutes 12/11/1935, <i>Nomenclature Committee Minutes Book</i> , GNU: 51-2.
<i>Informants credited</i>	
<i>Informants uncredited</i>	

<i>Date</i>	1994
<i>Original source text</i>	“Coorara Railway Station... Abna Meaning Clouds... name approved by nomenclature committee 8/3/1935 – vide dl.1280/1935” [‘Abna’ = <i>Aboriginal name</i> ’]
<i>Reference</i>	Geographical Names Unit, www.placenames.sa.gov.au/pno/
<i>Informants credited</i>	
<i>Informants uncredited</i>	

Discussion: ‘COORARA’ RAILWAY STATION:

‘Coorara’ is a recorded spelling said to be the name of a clan of the Diyari Aboriginal people of the Lake Eyre region in the far northeast of SA, and in their language it was said to mean ‘clouds’.

The SA government’s Nomenclature Committee gave this name to the ‘Coorara’ railway station in November 1935.¹ They rarely made any distinction between different Aboriginal languages or lands, and put no priority on the name being from a local language. They would have obtained this word from a readily available published vocabulary such as those in Taplin’s *Folklore of the South Australian Aborigines* (1879) where it comes from Gason’s ‘Dieyerie’ wordlist and means ‘clouds’; or in EM Curr’s *The Australian Race* (1886) where (in the same spelling) it comes from the Tweed River in NSW and means ‘long’.

The committee’s minutes do not include any information about the word, but the Geographical Names Unit’s internal records say that it means ‘clouds’.² This could perhaps be an indication that the committee had used Taplin.

The old line was closed in 1969.³ It is now followed by the Coast To Vines Rail Trail, where this and other stations are now commemorated by onsite plaques.

¹ Minutes 12 Nov 1935, Nomenclature Committee Minutes Book, GNU: 51-2.

² www.placenames.sa.gov.au/pno/

³ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willunga_railway_line,_Adelaide (16/3/09).



The Southern Kurna Place Names Project

The word 'Coorara' has also been introduced to name quite a few places in SA from the West Coast to the Southeast.

In the language of the Kurna people of the Morphett Vale area, the word for 'cloud' is *makko*.

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End of Summary