



# Kimberley Society

## Book Note

***Barddabardda Wodjenangorddee : We're Telling All Of You.*** Compiled and written with Dambeemangaddee People by Valda Blundell, Kim Doohan, Daniel Vachon, Malcolm Allbrook, Mary Ann Jebb, and John Bornman. [Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation](#), Derby, 2017, 416 pages, full colour images, ISBN 9780646967646, paperback, RRP \$44.99.

The Worora people of the north west Kimberley coast (here known as the Dambeemangaddee in accordance with the Dambimangari Title Determination Area—the language now spelt Woddordda), have been remarkably well documented in previous books, e.g. the Rev. Love's *Stone Age Bushmen of Today* and Maisie McKenzie's *The Road to Mowanjum*.

The difference with this book is that it springs from the Aboriginal people themselves and, with Fremantle Press as the publishing consultant, it has been produced by the Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation. In particular, it is based on the wisdom of two elders, Donny Woolagoodja and Janet Oobagooma, whose words are quoted verbatim. In addition there is a group of anthropologists and historians, whose well documented research and encounters with now departed elders have been invaluable. To bring such a team together to produce such a large, comprehensive, detailed and readable book is indeed a major achievement.

The stated 'purpose of this book is to bring together information about our country, culture and ancestors to serve as a resource for current and future generations of our people, and as a source of information for others interested in our history and culture'.

Part One: "The Country and Its Culture" deals with the creation stories, the Wandjina religion and culture, and anthropological culture; important for future generations of Aboriginal people and to the anthropology student as well. Chapter 1 is offered as a [sample chapter](#) on the Fremantle Press website.

"Encounters with Outsiders" provides a comprehensive review of contact with Europeans. This is a great summary of this subject (and it is pleasing to note how often our *Kimberley History* is referenced).

Parts Three to Six, deal with the different areas of the land (*dambeema*), the family histories of the ancestors who lived there, their stories and sites of interest and relevance. The pictorial depiction is particularly impressive, ranging from relevant landscapes in the area, historical photos from many archives, to rock art and its meaning. The book delights the eye as well as the intellect.

Any vigorous culture must have its roots well grounded its history. But no culture is static and must evolve to be relevant to the contemporary society. How Dambeemangari culture will change or survive in the 21st century remains to be seen. However, this groundbreaking work, in opening a traditional life to a wider audience, is an important step in the evolution of a culture and an example that others we may hope will follow.

*Hamish McGlashan*