



## Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 4.1.2/06

### 'YETTO'

#### (Morphett Vale)

(last edited: 28/3/2013)

### Abstract

'Yetto', the name of a railway stopping place on the former Willunga line, was approved by the Nomenclature Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

It was almost certainly a mistranscription of 'Yatto', a word from the language of the Aboriginal people of Streaky Bay taken by the Nomenclature Committee from EM Curr's *Australian Race* (1886).

Coordinates	-35.1277174 Latitude, 138.5303665 Longitude.
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### Language Information

Meaning	'good', according to Provis in the 1880s.
Etymology	
Notes	
Language Family	The language of Aboriginal people of Streaky Bay in 1880s.
KWP Former Spelling	
KWP New Spelling 2010	
Phonemic Spelling	
Pronunciation	
Pronunciation tips	

### Main source evidence

Date	<b>1886</b>
Original source text	"No. 40.-STREAKY BAY.... <b>Good – yatto.</b> "
Reference	EM Curr 1886, <i>The Australian Race</i> , Vol.2: 4, 6-7.
Informants credited	Charles Provis
Informants uncredited	

Date	<b>Jan 1946</b>
Original source text	" <u>Rw St DL 5890/40</u> : The following names are suggested for stopping places on the Willunga line:... <b>YETTO meaning 'good'</b> ."
Reference	Minutes 10 Jan 1946, Nomenclature Committee Minutes Book, GNU: 106.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	<b>March 1946</b>
Original source text	" <u>SAR 6968/45</u> . Stopping places on the Willunga line:... <b>No.4, YETTO meaning 'good'</b> ". [ <i>signed for committee by "AD Smith &amp; RO Segerlind 5/3/46"</i> ].
Reference	Nomenclature Committee Minutes as sent to Director of Lands, in Docket DL 5890/40, State Records.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

### Discussion: 'YETTO' RAILWAY STATION:

Aboriginal words have been all the rage for naming purposes since the 1890s. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1946 PF Cherry, Secretary of the Office of the Railways Commissioner, sent a letter to the SA Surveyor-General:

*We have a number of un-named level crossing stops on the Willunga line which are at present identified by numbers... 2, 4, 6, 9 & 11.... It is deemed desirable that names should be substituted for numbers & the Railways Commissioner would be glad if the Nomenclature Committee would suggest a suitable name for each of the above stopping places. It is suggested that short aboriginal place names be selected containing few syllables.<sup>1</sup>*

The Committee responded with a typewritten Minute to the Director of Lands dated 5<sup>th</sup> March:

*Consideration has been given to the requests of the Railways Commissioner, and the Committee submits the following native names for use in connection therewith:—*

*... SAR 6968/45. Stopping places on the Willunga line:—*

*No.2, PATPA meaning 'south wind'.*

*No.4, YETTO meaning 'good'.*

*No.6, KORRA meaning 'grass'.*

*No.9, TUNI meaning 'sand'.*

*No.11, PIKKARA meaning 'south'.<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> SAR 6968/45, in docket DL 5890/40, State Records of SA.

<sup>2</sup> Enclosure in Docket DL 5890/40, State Records. The information in the typescript is identical with that which appears in the Committee's Minutes Book, with the same internal date but for some reason still under the head of 'Meeting 10.1.46'.

Spellings in this note are identical to those hand-written in the Committee's Minutes Book.<sup>3</sup>

The committee, a little more familiar than the Commissioner with Aboriginal language sources, had wisely not complied with his request to use existing place-names. At that time they were using plenty of Aboriginal words but rarely making any distinction between different languages or lands. For sources they used most of the readily-available Aboriginal wordlists from all over Australia. But they did not say where they obtained 'Yetto', and the word in this spelling has so far proved untraceable.

It appears most likely to be a mis-transcription of *yatto*, a word from the language of the Aboriginal people of Streaky Bay as recorded & translated 'good' by Charles Provis in the 1880s, This is the only known item from old published wordlists which closely resembles 'Yetto' and also allegedly means 'good'. It is found in EM Curr's *The Australian Race* (1886), so this was probably their source.

The Committee was made up of busy men who all had other main jobs. Two other mistranscriptions arose during this one interchange. 'Korro' was actually 'Korra' (also from Curr);<sup>4</sup> the Committee got it right, but somewhere up the Railways line it was changed and the error was gazetted. And for once the Committee chose an almost-local Ngarrindjeri word, *Rikkara*; but the secretary managed to mistranscribe it as 'Pikkara', and this was also duly gazetted.<sup>5</sup> We don't know whether the Committee noticed at the time of publication or regarded the matter as having any importance.

The old line was closed in 1969.<sup>6</sup> It is now followed by the Coast To Vines Rail Trail, where this and other stations are now commemorated by onsite plaques.

In the Kurna language of the Morphett Vale area the word for 'good' is *marni*.

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*End of Summary*

<sup>3</sup> Nomenclature Committee Minutes Book: 106.

<sup>4</sup> See PNS 4.1.2/07 'Korro'.

<sup>5</sup> See PNS 4.3.1/06 'Pikkara'.

<sup>6</sup> [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willunga\\_railway\\_line,\\_Adelaide](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willunga_railway_line,_Adelaide) (16/3/09).