

Endangered languages listing: WIARUMUS [tua]

Number of speakers: unknown; population of language group: 458 (2000 census).

Wiarumus (also called Mandi) is spoken only in the village of Mandi, 12 km southeast of Wewak, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea. The language is classified as a member of the Torricelli phylum, Marienberg stock (Laycock 1973: 17).

Tok Pisin has taken over as the main language of Mandi village, due to its proximity to Wewak and high rates of intermarriage. Only a minority of the older generation could understand Wiarumus in 2002. Some adults in their twenties and older understood the language passively, but were unable to speak it fluently. Children and youth understood very little of the language (Arminen and Hoel 2002a, b).

An alphabet design workshop was held June 2002 in the village. At the workshop there was great interest in reviving the language; however, this would require hard work and a major shift in sociolinguistic attitudes.

Language resources:

Spelling guide (Arminen and Hoel 2002b); book of Wiarumus stories, with Wiarumus – Tok Pisin dictionary (507 entries) appended (Arminen et al 2002).

References:

- Arminen, Hilikka and Hanna Marie Hoel. 2002a. Report on Mandi alphabet design workshop. Unpublished manuscript. Ukarumpa: SIL.
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- Arminen, Hilikka, Hanna Marie Hoel, Robert Apa, Leo Balthazar Las, Lydia Balthazar, Tresia Bok, Alois Karingo et al. 2002. *Wiarum stories: story book with dictionary in the Wiarumus (Mandi) language*. Mandi: SIL.
- Ethnologue* (15th edition). 2005. Ed. Raymond G. Gordon. Dallas: SIL International.
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