

Language Resources for Toowoomba and South West Queensland

The main Aboriginal language groups in the Toowoomba region are Barunggam, Jarowair, Giabal and Kienjan tribes. Giabal and Jarowair are recognised as the two main groups of the Toowoomba area: Giabal extends south/south-west from the City and takes in Cecil Plains, Pittsworth and Allora while Jarowair extends north/north-west and takes in Oakey. From the west, Barrunggam meets Jarowair near Dalby while Bigambul and Kambuwal borders Giabal near Millmerran and Pratten; Kienjan and Githabul extend from the southern regions while Jagera and Garumga are the neighbouring languages on the eastern boundaries.

This traditional landscape changed dramatically with the settlement of Drayton in the 1840's and the pastoral expansion west. Those Aboriginals that survived the frontier conflict of this time were pushed to the fringe of society in camps and later moved to missions such as Deebing Creek, Durundur and later Barambah. There is evidence that local Aboriginals were working on the properties to the west of Toowoomba in this contact period. Ceremonies such as the Bonye Bonye festival remained active until the late 1800's – groups from South-East and South-West Queensland as well as Northern New South Wales gathered at Gumingurru, near Gowrie (west of Toowoomba) prior to attending the festival. Gumingurru site is being restored and remains an important place for not only the traditional groups but neighbouring groups.

Toowoomba today has an active Aboriginal population comprising descendants of local groups as well as a majority drawn from the Darling Downs and South West Queensland – Bidjara (Charleville), Gunggari (Mitchell), Mandandji (Roma/Surat) and Guwamu, Kulili, Kunya (Cunnamulla) are significant groups. One of the larger Aboriginal groups represented in the Toowoomba region is Kamilaroi/Gamilaraay¹ people drawn from particular communities including Moree, Boggabilla/Toomelah, and Goondiwindi. Many of these people have moved to Toowoomba for economic reasons as rural towns decline; however they still maintain familial and cultural links back to country.

Sources:

There are several references sources for Toowoomba, Darling Downs and South West Queensland located at The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), Canberra – this material includes sound recordings, as well as vocabulary and word lists. AIATSIS has an on-line catalogue: <http://mura.aiatsis.gov.au/>

AIATSIS Language Select Bibliographies

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in Canberra has produced PDF versions of *Select Bibliographies* for a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. The *Select Bibliographies* provide a list of materials held by AIATSIS relating to specific languages, including those from the Darling Downs and South West Queensland, e.g. Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay, Kooma and Gungarri.

A full list of these can be found at the following weblink:
www.aiatsis.gov.au/lbry/fct_shts/biblio_lang.htm

The Toowoomba area languages have been grouped under Barunggam:
http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/6253/Barunggam_Aug06.pdf

¹ In line with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), Gamilaraay refers to the common language of the Kamilaroi Nation; throughout this document, these terms may refer to both the language and/or the people.

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