This Information Guide has been developed to support individuals and communities in their research into the Aboriginal languages of the Greater Brisbane area. Its aim is to identify items in the State Library collections which can be utilised to explore the Aboriginal people, cultures and languages of Brisbane and surrounding areas.

While historically there has been much written about the languages and dialects of the Greater Brisbane area, there still exists uncertainty around their structure and relationship. Furthermore, there is even greater ambiguity surrounding the boundaries and extent these languages and dialects were originally spoken. Generally speaking, the languages of Brisbane are related with many shared/borrowed words; and traditionally individuals spoke several languages including their parents’ languages and neighbouring languages. The languages to the north of Brisbane have a relationship to Kabi Kabi, while the Moreton Bay and Brisbane languages were linked; to the south Yugambeh shared more in common with Bundjalung.

While there may be an absence of audio/visual recordings from these languages, there exists some historical language material collected by a range of individuals in the 19th century as well as current community-based language activities. Ideally, language revival entails collating existing materials with local community knowledge.

This listing complements community language information sessions held in South-East Queensland Centres during 2011-17.

Languages or dialects across the region referred to in historical and/or linguistic texts include:

**Brisbane CBD**
- Turrbal – also written as Turubul, Churrabool, etc. [AIATSIS Language Code E86]
- Yuggera – also written as Jagara, Yagara, etc. [AIATSIS Language Code E23]

**Brisbane South**
- Coorparoo – (believed to be a clan group)
- Chepara – (believed to be a clan group)
- Yerongpan – [See AIATSIS Language Code E23]

**Bayside - South**
- Goenpul – [see AIATSIS Language Code E19]
- Gnaloongpin – (believed to be a clan group)

**Logan River – Beenleigh**
- Yugambeh – also written as Yugumbir; related dialects, including Gugingin, Bullongin, Kombumerri, Mingunburri, Birinburra [AIATSIS Language Code E17]

**Gold Coast**
- Kombumerri [See AIATSIS Language Code E17]
- Ngarahngwal – also written as Ngarakwal, Ngaraangbal, etc. [AIATSIS Language Code E79]
Beaudesert
- Mununjali – also written as Manandjali, Manaldjahli, etc. [AIATSIS Language Code E76]

Brisbane West
- Garumngar – also written as Garumnga [AIATSIS Language Code E88]

Ipswich & West Moreton
- Jagara – also written as Yagara [AIATSIS Language Code E23]
- Yugararbul – also written as Yuggarabul [AIATSIS Language Code E66]
- Yuggera – [AIATSIS Language Code E23]

Brisbane North
- Turrbal – also written as Turubul, etc. [AIATSIS Language Code E86]
- Ningy Ningy – also written as Ninghi Ninghi [See AIATSIS Language Code E86]
- Duungidjawu – also written as Dungidjau [AIATSIS Language Code D20]

Bayside - North
- Undanbi – also written as Undumbi [AIATSIS Language Code E94]

Moreton Bay
- Jandaj – also written as Jandewal [AIATSIS Language Code E19]
- Nunukul – also written as Nooonekal [See AIATSIS Language Code E21]
- Moondjan – also written as Moonjan [AIATSIS Language Code E21]
- Ngugi – also written as Gnoogee [See AIATSIS Language Code E26]
- Guwar – also written as Goowar [AIATSIS Language Code E26]

Sunshine Coast
- Kabi Kabi – also written as Gubbi Gubbi [AIATSIS Language Code E29]
- Joondaburri – also written as Djindubari [See AIATSIS Language Code E94]

Note: the names of languages and dialects in the Brisbane area are unclear as some names may refer to clan, horde or family groups. Ford and Blake (1998, p.11) identify the following alternative spellings for Brisbane Aboriginal groups:


In light of this, the **AIATSIS Language Code** is also listed; this refers to the classification and descriptors developed by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). These codes have been incorporated into subject descriptions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language items in collecting institutions, including the State Library of Queensland. Further details at AIATSIS Pathways Thesauri: [http://aiatsis.gov.au/publications/products/pathways-thesauri](http://aiatsis.gov.au/publications/products/pathways-thesauri)
Language Landscape

The above names give an insight into the cultural diversity of the Brisbane area – there was a fair degree of interaction among groups for ceremonies, trade and other social gatherings. Most languages are based on drainage systems and the associated catchment area. In the Greater Brisbane area, this included Brisbane River; Logan River; Albert River; Bremer River; Pine River; Warrill Creek; Moggill Creek; Teviot Brook and Tingalpa Creek.

This traditional landscape changed dramatically with the settlement of Moreton Bay in the early 1800's. Steele (1983) identified a number of clans in the area; the main ones including Duke of York; North Pine; Coorparoo; Chepara and Yerongpan.

Aboriginal camps existed along the Brisbane River and tributaries – these included Breakfast Creek, Victoria Park, Oxley Creek, Alderley, Nudgee, Enoggera, Mt Coot-tha, Norman Creek, Doboy Creek, Sandgate and Musgrave Park. As well as traditional camp sites, these evolved into fringe camps for a number of groups coming into the Moreton Bay settlement. Groups from other language areas of South-East Queensland, e.g. Bribie Island, Sunshine Coast, Ipswich, West Moreton, Logan and Moreton Bay travelled to Brisbane to view the daily events of Brisbane. In light of this migration, hybrid or blended languages became the lingua franca in the Brisbane area from the 1830's.

Around this period, the first lists of words for the Brisbane languages were written down. It should be remembered that these early lists were recorded by non-linguists based on how they have heard these words and their associated sounds. For example, the first words documented from the Brisbane area was by Thomas Pamphlett, a shipwrecked convict, who in 1823 spent several months with local Aboriginals. Explorers such as Leichhardt and Mitchell were the next to document languages from the Moreton Bay settlement. These historical wordlists are rich in heritage, however the language or dialect is not identified and the words are written down phonetically as heard by untrained ears.

Zion Hill, near present day Nundah was established as a Lutheran Mission from 1838-1845; Rev Eipper recorded a wordlist from Aboriginals present at the Mission. In 1841, Eipper compiled a report on the German Mission and identifies the following tribes: ‘Amity Point, Malurbine and Moppie’s tribes on the right bank of the river and the Duke of York’s, Pine River, Ninge Ninge, Umpie Boang and Yun Monday tribes’ (Eipper, pp. 4-5). This document is one of the first accounts of the different tribes who lived in the Greater Brisbane Area.

By the 1850’s an exclusion zone had been put in place around the Brisbane City area denoted by the ring of ‘Boundary Roads’ and the introduction of a night-time curfew which pushed Aboriginal people away from the city centre.

In 1866 Bethesda Mission was established at Beenleigh for local Yugambeh groups; this was followed in 1877 with Durundur established for groups on the north of Brisbane. Deebing Creek Mission at Ipswich was set up by local businessmen and operational by 1892. Aboriginal people from the Brisbane area were moved to these missions and exacerbated the loss of language and culture.

In 1897, the advent of the Protection of Aborigines Act in 1897 saw the removal of many Aboriginal people to Barambah as well as the establishment of an Aboriginal Girls Home in South Brisbane. All of these factors impacted on the transmission of language knowledge and there are few records of Brisbane languages after this time. Meston in his role as Chief Protector has documented languages from across Queensland, including the South-East; wordlists from Brisbane and Moreton Bay can be found in his notebooks and other materials held in the State Library collections.

This historical material often provides the basis for language revival and within the South-East Queensland area there are a number of Aboriginal organisations, language workers and community members actively involved in activities that support the documentation and preservation of traditional languages and dialects. The process of language revival entails collating historical and linguistic evidence and blending it with traditional community knowledge. This guide may be a good starting point for your community language.
Sources

The following list of print resources and other materials are useful starting points for exploring the Aboriginal languages of the Greater Brisbane Area. These items are held at the State Library of Queensland, while further reference materials may be found in local/regional public libraries. Out-of-print materials may not be readily available and held in collecting institutions such as the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (Canberra), University of Queensland or State Library of New South Wales.

**Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)**

There are reference materials for most Queensland languages, including Greater Brisbane Area, located at The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), Canberra – this material may include sound recordings, as well as vocabulary and word lists. AIATSIS has a community access policy and supports communities obtaining copies of materials. AIATSIS has an on-line catalogue: [http://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/using-collection/search-collection](http://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/using-collection/search-collection)

**AIATSIS Language Select Bibliographies**

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in Canberra has produced online/PDF versions of Language and People Bibliographies for a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. The bibliographies provide a list of print materials held by AIATSIS relating to specific languages, including those in South-East Queensland. AIATSIS is currently redeveloping their website [June 2015] and some bibliographies may not be available at the moment – further details: [http://50years.aiatsis.gov.au/research/guides-and-resources/language-and-people-bibliographies](http://50years.aiatsis.gov.au/research/guides-and-resources/language-and-people-bibliographies).

The languages have been grouped under their respective names, e.g.:

- Gubbi Gubbi / Kabi Kabi
- Jagara / Yuggera
- Nunukul / Noonuccal
- Yugambeh / Yugumbir

**AUSTLANG**

AIATSIS also maintains AUSTLANG the Indigenous Languages Database which collates information and research pertaining to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. Further details: AUSTLANG Indigenous Languages Database: [https://aiatsis.gov.au/collections](https://aiatsis.gov.au/collections)

**State Library of New South Wales (SLNSW)**

State Library of New South Wales through their Rediscovering Indigenous languages Project has identified historical materials that contain language material from Colonial Queensland, particularly Moreton bay. The project will digitise language content for community access. Further details: [http://indigenous.sl.nsw.gov.au/](http://indigenous.sl.nsw.gov.au/)

**University of Queensland**

The University of Queensland also has a significant collection of language materials within their collections, particularly within the Fryer Library. Further Details: [https://web.library.uq.edu.au/collections/cultural-historical-collections](https://web.library.uq.edu.au/collections/cultural-historical-collections)

Other materials relating to Aboriginal languages of the Greater Brisbane area may be held in local or regional collections, as well as in local Aboriginal community organisations.
Language Resources – Brisbane

This is only a selection from the State Library Collections – for a comprehensive listing of print and electronic materials [books, journals, manuscripts, videos, images, sound recordings and items from digital collections, etc.] use the One Search facility: http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do

Linguistic/Language Resources in State Library Collections

Aborigines of southeast Queensland. Typescript. VF 994.320049915 abo

Allan, J. and Lane, J. (2001) The language of the Wangerriburra and neighbouring groups in the Yugambeh region. P 499.15 all


Bell, F. M. F M Bell Memoirs. OM83-24


Curr, E. M. (1887) The Australian Race: its origins, languages, customs, place of landing in Australia and the routes by which it spread itself over that continent. RBF 572.994 cur


Meston, A. (undated) Archibald Meston Papers Undated. OM64-17

Meston, A. (200?) Moreton Bay and Islands. J 994.32 MES


Pamphlett, T. and Uniacke, J. (19--) Narrative of Thomas Pamphlett, aged thirty-four years, who was with two other men wrecked on the coast of New Holland in April 1923 and lived among the natives for seven months. VF 910.453 pam

Ridley, W. [Papers, 11 May 1824-c. 25 Feb. 1878, including notes on Aboriginal peoples, 1853-1864] [microform] FILM 0705


Ridley, W. (1866) Kamilaroi, Dippil and Turrabul: languages spoken by Australian Aborigines. RBJ 499.15 rid
Linguistic/Language Resources in State Library Collections (continued):


Watson, F. J. (1944) “Vocabularies of four representative tribes of South Eastern Queensland”; supplement to the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (Queensland)*, No. 34, Vol XLVIII. REFJ 499.15 wat

Watson, F. J. (1941) F J Watson Papers 1941 OM73-20

Welsby, T. (1916) “Recollections of the Natives of Moreton Bay together with some of their names and customs of living.” (Typescript) 6758 Box 11392.

General References and Further Reading in State Library Collections:

These texts have general information about Aboriginal people, histories and cultures in the Greater Brisbane Area.


Ballard, K. (2007) *Brisbane the Beginning*. Q 994.31 BAL


Caboolture Shire (1979) *From Spear and Musket 1879-1979, Caboolture Centenary: Stories of the area once controlled by the Caboolture Divisional Board, Shires of Pine Rivers, Caboolture, Kilcoy, Landsborough, Maroochy and City of Redcliffe, Caboolture Shire*. Q 994.32 FRO


Eipper, C. & Lang, J. (1841) *Statement of the origin, condition and prospects of the German mission to the Aborigines at Moreton Bay, conducted under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales*. RBJ 266.529431 EPP
General References and Further Reading in State Library Collections (continued):


Fraser, J. (1828) *Residence on the Banks of the Brisbane and Logan Rivers Diary 1828*. OM87-25


Kerkove, R. (1985) *West End to Woolloongabba: the early and aboriginal history of a district*. VF 994.31 ker


Pamphlett, T. (1825) *Narrative of Thomas Pamphlett: aged thirty four years, who was with two other men wrecked on the coast of New Holland in April, 1823, and lived among the natives for seven months*. RBJ 910.453 PAM

Pearn, J. (1993) *In the beginning: observations on pre-European life on Coochiemudlo Island, Moreton Bay, Queensland*. P 994.3101 pea


Watkins, G. (1891) *Notes on the aboriginals of Stradbroke and Moreton islands*. P 306.089 wat

Whalley, P. (1987) *An introduction to the Aboriginal social history of Moreton Bay South East Queensland from 1799 to 1830*. Thesis. Q 305.89915 WHA

Winterbotham, L. (1957) ‘The Gaiarbau Story: Some native customs and beliefs of the Jinibara tribe as well as those of some of their neighbours in south-east Queensland’, *Queensland Ethnohistory Transcripts*. Q 994.30049915 SOM
Further Details

For further information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages at the State Library of Queensland, please contact:

kuril dhagun, State Library of Queensland
Stanley Place, South Brisbane Qld. 4101.
PO Box 3488, South Brisbane Qld. 4101.
Telephone: (07) 3842 9836 Fax: (07) 3842 9893

State Library Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Webpages:

State Library Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Blog:

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