Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language Resources Dyirbal Everyday Words

The **Dyirbal** language is spoken in North Queensland along the Tully River and Johnston River Catchments. There are several dialects or related languages across the language Nation including Ngadjan, Waribarra Mamu, Dulgubarra Mamu, Jirrbal, Gulngay, Djirru, Girramay and Walmalbarra. Walsh (1981) further distinguishes Dyirribarra Mamu and Gambilbarra Dyirrbal.

Dyirbal is also written as Jirrbal, Djirbalngan, Jirrabul, Dyirbaldyi, Djirbal, etc. AIATSIS have identified Dyirbal as the standardised spelling and assigned it Language Code Y106 which is used by many collecting institutions in their catalogue descriptions.

The following list identifies everyday words from the Dyirbal language and their suggested pronunciation.

Note: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages were oral-based; there may be several variations in spelling and pronunciation. The following list should be seen as a guide – check with local language speakers as to the preferred local pronunciation.

English	Dyirbal	Pronunciation
Bird	Dundu	Dun-doo
Barramundi	Yugurr	Yoo-gurd
Boomerang	Wangal	Won-ull
Bush Tucker	Wudju	Wood-joo
Child	Daman	Dah-mun
Crocodile	Gudjagay	Good-jah-guy
Dilly Bag	Djawun	Jar-wun
Dog	Guda	Good-ah
Ear	Manga	Mun-garh
Eye	Dingal	Din-ull
Father	Nguma	Noo-mah
Fire	Buni	Boo-nee
Fish	Guya	Goo-yah
Foot	Djina	Jin-ah
Frog	Bangguy	Bun-guy
Girl	Gadjin	Gud-jin
Good	Djigil	Jig-ill

English	Dyirbal	Pronunciation
Grandfather (Father's father)	Bulunydja	Bull-un-jar
Grandmother (Mother's mother)	Gumbu	Gum-boo
Ground	Djinbay	Jin-bay
Hand	Mala	Mar-lah
Head	Djilmuray	Jill-mar-eye
House	Midja	Mid-jar
Kangaroo	Yurri	Yoo-ree
Knee	Banggu	Bung-goo
Leg	Ngaga	Nah-gah
Man	Bayabay	Bay-ah-bye
No	Djilbu	Jill-boo
Nose	Gugu	Goo-goo
One	Nyungul	Nun-ull
Possum	Midin	Mid-in
Pretty	Gidjar	Gee-jah
Rain	Gambal	Gun-bull
Rainbow	Yamani	Yah-mun-ee
Sand	Gabal	Gah-bull
Smoke	Garan	Gah-run
Stone	Diban	Dib-un
Tree	Dandu	Darn-doo
Two	Bula	Bull-ah
Wallaby	Bargan	Bar-gun
Water	Balan	Bah-lun
Wind	Gimbil	Gim-bill
Woman	Djugumbil	Joo-um-bill
Yes	Nga	Nah

Learn more about Dyirbal!

Listen to Uncle Ernie Grant talking about Dyirbal language and culture:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSq-jSJbA6M

Sources and Further Reading

Words listed above were sourced from several historical texts within the State Library Collections, including the following items.

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**

Dixon, R. W. W. (1972) *The Dyirbal language of North Queensland*. **J 499.15 dix**

McRobbie, N. (2009) *Who's that jumbun in the log?* **JUVQ A823.3 M'RO**

Unknown (1978) *Speaking Jirrbal and Girramay*. **P 499.15 SPE**

Further Details

For more information on Dyirbal: North Queensland Regional Aboriginal Corporation Language Centre serves as the Indigenous Language Centre for North Queensland; visit NQRCALC's website: www.nqraclc.com.au/

State Library of Queensland

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

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SLQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Webpages:
www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/languages

SLQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Blog:
http://blogs.slq.qld.gov.au/ilq/

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