

## GLOSSARY OF RELEVANT ABORIGINAL WORDS

There are more than 250 Aboriginal dialects and hence the words and their meanings vary from one to the other. However, here are some common words which the English settlers also come across in their interactions with the indigenous people. The glossary here provides brief definition of the key terms that are already discussed in details in the Introduction.

**Billabong:** It is a small pool or lagoon.

**Boomerang:** It is an instrument used both as a weapon and as a clapping instrument to accompany songs and dances.

**Bora ring:** It is the Aboriginal ceremonial ground, a sort of raised platform where initiations and naming take place. It is considered to be extremely pious and sacred place. The word 'bora' is also called Burbung in local language. The ring created is permanently erected by engravings on rock and stone. The bora or the 'kuppa' ring is also significant area for councils, meeting and judicial hearings.

**Brigalow:** It is a very famous local tree of Australia around which various Aboriginal myths are related. Its biological name is *Acacia harpophylla*. The tree is very common in Queensland and New South Wales.

**Brolga:** It is an Australian bird originally called 'Native companion' and belongs to the crane family. The bird is the emblem of Queensland and is significant for its dance in the mating season.

**Bulga:** It refers to hilly and mountain areas.

**Bunya Feast:** The tree Bunya pine is a sacred tree for the Aborigines that have provided them with rich fruits called nuts. When the nuts are ripened, its strong smell is scattered all over the space and the Aborigines have gathered to celebrate the fruition in the form of a feast.

**Bunyip:** It is a mythical creature also called Kianpraty. This creature dwells in water bodies. With the infiltration of the European culture, the word is often misappropriated as imposter, pretender and humbug.

**Cooee:** It is a way of communication by making a long, shrill call with someone at a distance. Like the natural process of communication among the animals, the Aborigines used this method especially in the bush.

**Cooloola:** It is a lake situated near Rainbow Beach. The Cooloola coast is primarily an Aboriginal coast which is now very remote and little populated.

**Corroboree:** It is a significant dance ceremony which can be both sacred and informal. This gesture of rhythmic movement reveals a sense of togetherness, collaboration and ritualistic participations.

**Currawong:** They are very famous passenger birds of Australia especially in New South Wales. These birds are terrestrial and have very prominent yellow eyes.

**Dingo:** It is also known as Warrigal and uniquely belongs to Australia. It is a kind of a dog that often used to accompany the Aborigines in their hunting season. They form an important part of the ecological system and have been the most disturbing animal to the settlers. The dingo is often interpreted in the settler's stories and documents as a kind of a cunning animal, harmful and ruinous.

Dreamtime: It refers to the mythological time when the world is created. It refers to the time when the world is created with all its living creatures. The philosophy of Dreamtime dominates Aboriginal cosmology, social structures and one's construction of his/her identity. The dreamtime sets out certain aesthetic, spiritual and social rules and one who does not follow the rule is punished. This dreaming relates metaphorically to the dream of the community. During this Dreamtime, Aborigines believe that the ancestral spirits descend in this world and exist all over the place in the form of water bodies, plants and animals.

Dreamtrack: It joins a number of sites tracing the root of Aboriginal creative process and the dwelling places of the ancestor spirits.

Emu: It is a spirit that has become Pleiades.

Jackey Jackey: It originally refers to the Aboriginal guide called Galmahra who has accompanied Edmund Kennedy in his exploration. Jackey's role is immense perhaps more than Kennedy but his importance is denied by the explorers and is given little importance than a mere helper. The figure of Jackey in later days has become the metaphor of the Aboriginal body, struggling resiliently to survive in dire consequences.

Kangaroo: The botanist Captain James Cook first recorded the word in his diary of exploration. The word has its root from Aboriginal word Gangurru. While noting about the fauna and the flora of the colony, Cook has imposed this name in 1770. There is a myth regarding this word which refers to the meaning 'I don't know'. It is believed that the Aborigines' first reaction in conversation with the settler is the utterance of this word. As a national symbol of Australia,

the animal is the metaphor of Australia and is emblematic in international relations.

Lubra: It means an Aboriginal woman. The word is originally spelt as 'loubra'. The word is first recorded in Tasmania, in 1834. The use of this word is more predominant in south-eastern Australia but now it is used more as a slang.

Mimi: It refers to a trickster spirit of North Australia dwelling inside rocks and barks.

Murri: They are Aboriginal tribes who used to dwell in Queensland region. Most of these Murri children belong to stolen generation.

Nulla nulla: It is a hardwood club used in fighting and hunting.

Oriole: It is a special Australian bird of Australian ancestry which is golden in colour with shades of black. The birds can sing beautifully and they are also famous for being wonderful weavers.

Pindari: It is a pedestal or a high ground where various rituals are performed.

Rainbow Serpent: This is a very powerful spirit of the Dreamtime and is believed to have filled the dry space with water bodies.

Tuan: It is a flying squirrel or a glider. The fur of the tuan squirrel is essential especially when corroborees are performed. A twisted band made out of the fur is used when the Aborigines are dressed colourfully in their best attire during corroborees.

Wadja: They are the Aboriginal tribe who used to inhabit central Queensland. The Wadja tribe is significant in white colonial history of Australia because of their

resilient struggle and resistance they have shown till the end. *Sydney Morning Herald* often revealed about the massacres and genocide of the race.

**Walkabout:** It is a spatial journey on foot across the vast stretch of Australian land that involves a process of shifting and constantly making places of dwelling in motion. It primarily refers to that time when the Aborigines indulge in hunting and gathering along with various other spirits and creatures who have become their companions.

**Wandjinia:** It refers to the powerful spirit that is born out of the milky ways and almost acts like the spiritual authority on the Aboriginal communities.

**Wallaby:** It is smaller than a kangaroo and belongs to the macropod species. The name is derived from the Eora Aboriginal tribe. These herbivores are disturbing creatures for the settlers because they used to destroy their pasture land.

**Willy Willy:** It is a kind of a whirlwind that develops mainly in Western Australia.

**Womma:** It is a special kind of python of Australia. Its biological name is *Aspidites ramsayi* and it is mainly known as carpet snake. The snake is found largely in South Australia. The womma or woma have great significance in the stories of creation of the world during Dreamtime.

**Woomera:** The woomera is a spear used by the Aborigines for hunting and fighting. The more forcibly it is thrown, it gains added impetus but the art of throwing it is a technique, which the Aborigines can only manage. It is also refers to heavy clubs in the Port Jackson language.

**Wurley:** It is an aboriginal hut which is temporary and shaped in the form of a dome.

Yabber: It means to talk or utter and the word is used in Australian Pidgin.

Yabun: It is a rhythmic music accompanied by songs with fast beating movement.

Yacki: It means to shout loudly with full gusto, it is an expression of exclamation.