

THE STORY BEHIND THE WORD 'KANGAROO'

- Read the extracts below.
- Locate Cape Tribulation, Cooktown, and the area of the Guugu-Yimidhirr group on a [map of Indigenous Australia](#).
- Prepare a written or oral presentation explaining how the word 'kangaroo' became the first borrowed word from an Aboriginal Australian language.
- Do you think the word was shared by all language groups in Australia? Why? Why not?

On June 10th, 1770, The Endeavour struck the Great Barrier Reef. Cook names Cape Tribulation and writes in his journal ... because here begun all our troubles. Cook was forced to land and spent seven weeks repairing the ship. Joseph Banks and his team of botanist spent that time exploring and discovering many plants and animals that were new to science.

Captain Cook wrote in his journal on Saturday 23 July 1770

One of the men saw an animal something less than a greyhound; it was of a mouse colour, very slender made, and swift of foot.

View a [painting by George Stubbs of the Kongouro](#)

On Saturday 4 August, Cook wrote in his journal that the animal was 'called ... kangaroo, or kanguru;' thus becoming the first Aboriginal loanword into English! <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/blog/aboriginal-words-english>

Cooktown's Endeavour River is the site where Lieutenant James Cook repaired his ship, Endeavour, after damaging it on the reefs off Cape Tribulation in 1770. During their stay, botanists Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander collected and named many new plant species from the area. The landscape today is very similar to that seen by them in 1770. They also recorded their first European sighting of a kangaroo and named it after the local Guugu Yimithirr language word for kangaroo—Gangurru.

<https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/parks/endeavour-river/about/culture>