

Sursurunga is spoken by over 1700 people living in the Namatanai Subdistrict of New Ireland, Papua New Guinea. The language area begins at Kudukudu village, about 32 km south of Namatanai along the east coast road, and extends south to include Pulpulu village, approximately 64 km further on. On the west coast, there are at least five Sursurunga villages, situated directly across the island from the southernmost east coast villages.

An Austronesian language, Sursurunga is a member of the Patpatar-Tolai Subgroup of the Patpatar family of languages (Beaumont:1972). So far, two closely related dialects have been noted among the east coast villages. One is spoken by people who originally lived in the mountains in the interior but have settled since World War II on the coast. The other is spoken by those who have always lived on the coast. To Tokialir Orim and Sam Tuae, our two main language teachers, are speakers of the latter dialect, and it is this one that is described in this paper.

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