

# 55000 years and counting: celebrating our shared history



## South Australian Education Pack

“ ...Where Aboriginal Australians have been included in the life of Australia they have made remarkable contributions—economic contributions, particularly in the pastoral and agricultural industry. They are there in the frontier and exploration history of Australia. They are there in the wars. In sport to an extraordinary degree. In literature and art and music.

In all these things they have shaped our knowledge of this continent and of ourselves. They have shaped our identity. They are there in the Australian legend. We should never forget—they helped build this nation. ”

Former Prime Minister Paul Keating,  
Redfern Park, Sydney, 10 December 1992.



Government of South Australia  
Department of Education and  
Children's Services



## FOREWORD

“ The theme for this education pack is *55 000 years and counting: celebrating our shared history*. The idea of Australia as a young nation continues to be challenged as the country embraces the ancient and ongoing cultures of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the traditional custodians of this land. Acknowledging the nexus between this shared history and the fabric of contemporary Australia is critical for us as a society to forge a future, together.

As educators, our role as custodians of knowledge is a profound privilege. With this privilege comes an equally profound responsibility to share this knowledge in a responsible way that encourages our students to acquire an understanding of the relevance and a respect for the factual integrity of the knowledge through inquiry.

In all that we do we should have at the forefront of our minds the qualities that our students should embody as a result of the knowledge they acquire to empower them to actively participate in society as responsible citizens. These qualities should include a life-long commitment to and respect for knowledge, and the responsibility to use that knowledge to promote ethical and inclusive behaviour.

When considering for example, the issue of citizenship in Australia, it is often in the context of identifying with or separating from our British colonial roots. The inclusion, however, of the ancient cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the manifestation of those cultures as forming part of our identity in contemporary Australia is rarely considered.

In the spirit of this education pack, it is worth reflecting on the presentation of the 2009 Australian of the Year Award to Professor Mick Dodson. The citation accompanying the award acknowledged Professor Dodson's lifelong commitment to "justice and reconciliation through a process of education, awareness and inclusive dialogue with all Australians".

It is my pleasure, as Co-Chair of Reconciliation South Australia, to commend this Education Pack to you. ”

Professor Peter Buckskin PSM FACE  
Co-Chair, Reconciliation South Australia  
Dean and Head of School,  
David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education  
& Research, University of South Australia

## INTRODUCTION

# 55 000 Years and Counting: Celebrating our Shared History

“ They have shaped our identity. They are there in the Australian legend. We should never forget – they helped build this nation. ”

*“It might help if we non-Aboriginal Australians imagined ourselves dispossessed of the land we lived on for 50 000 years, and then imagined ourselves told that it had never been ours. Imagine if ours was the oldest culture in the world and we were told that it was worthless. Imagine if we had resisted this settlement, suffered and died in the defence of our land, and then were told in history books that we had given it up without a fight. Imagine if non-Aboriginal Australians had served their country in peace and war and were then ignored in history books. Imagine if our feats on the sporting field had inspired admiration and patriotism and yet did nothing to diminish prejudice. Imagine if our spiritual life was denied and ridiculed. Imagine if we had suffered the injustice and then were blamed for it ... Where Aboriginal Australians have been included in the life of Australia they have made remarkable contributions—economic contributions, particularly in the pastoral and agricultural industry. They are there in the frontier and exploration history of Australia. They are there in the wars. In sport to an extraordinary degree. In literature and art and music.*

*“In all these things they have shaped our knowledge of this continent and of ourselves. They have shaped our identity. They are there in the Australian legend. We should never forget—they helped build this nation.”*

Former Prime Minister Paul Keating  
*Address to the Australian launch of the International  
Year of the World's Indigenous People,  
Redfern Park, Sydney, 10 December 1992*

*“In 1992 the Mabo judgement offered us all an opportunity and indeed a challenge that called for a national acceptance and sharing ... The judgement called for a recognition of the historical reality that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were the Indigenous peoples of this, now shared land.*

*“It was an opportunity for all Australians to come to an understanding of our shared history and realign the distorted relationship that has existed between us for over two centuries ... This was a challenge that was not met. Instead the Governments of this country used the legislative powers that are entrusted to them to diminish Indigenous peoples' rights within the land and introduced administrative regimes to restrict our access and use to our country, the rivers and the seas ... Despite this legislative denial, there are millions of Australians that have recognised and embraced the opportunity that these events have presented to us as a nation.*

*“They have sought to learn and understand the reality of our shared history. They have gone into their schools, their workplaces, their centres of worship and their sporting clubs and said: Here is an opportunity for healing and understanding, an opportunity for something profoundly better than what has gone before us in this country.*

*“They have placed the symbols of our Indigenous society alongside their own in recognition that a shared country requires a society of equals with all the rights and responsibilities that this entails.*

*“Australians of courage and vision walked across bridges in every part of this land in recognition of the fact that we are all Australians and that we do really have something to share.*

*“After more than two centuries, despite the ne'er-do-wells we have determined that we must at last come to terms with the reality of our shared history.”*

Patrick Dodson  
*Beyond the Bridges and Sorry,  
Great Hall of the Parliament, National Reconciliation  
Week, 25 May 2004*



## INTRODUCTION

This teaching and learning resource is designed to develop students' knowledge, understanding, skills, values and actions in relation to the theme: "55 000 years and counting: celebrating our shared history."

The activities in the resource are designed to:

- Develop **knowledge** about the significance of land, climate, seasons, plants, animals and water resources in determining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' identity and social, cultural and economic practices. The significance of "land" has been ongoing in shaping the history of Australia.
- Provide **understanding** that Australia's inhabitants have comprised many nations throughout history, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, European colonisers and more recent immigrants from across the world.
- Foster **values** and **beliefs** about the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' history for 55 000 years, and our shared history since 1788.
- Develop respect towards and to value all perspectives, and foster **actions** toward Reconciliation and a sustainable future.

Activities have been developed with an inquiry focus. Teachers and students are encouraged to adapt and modify suggested activities and resources to suit local contexts.

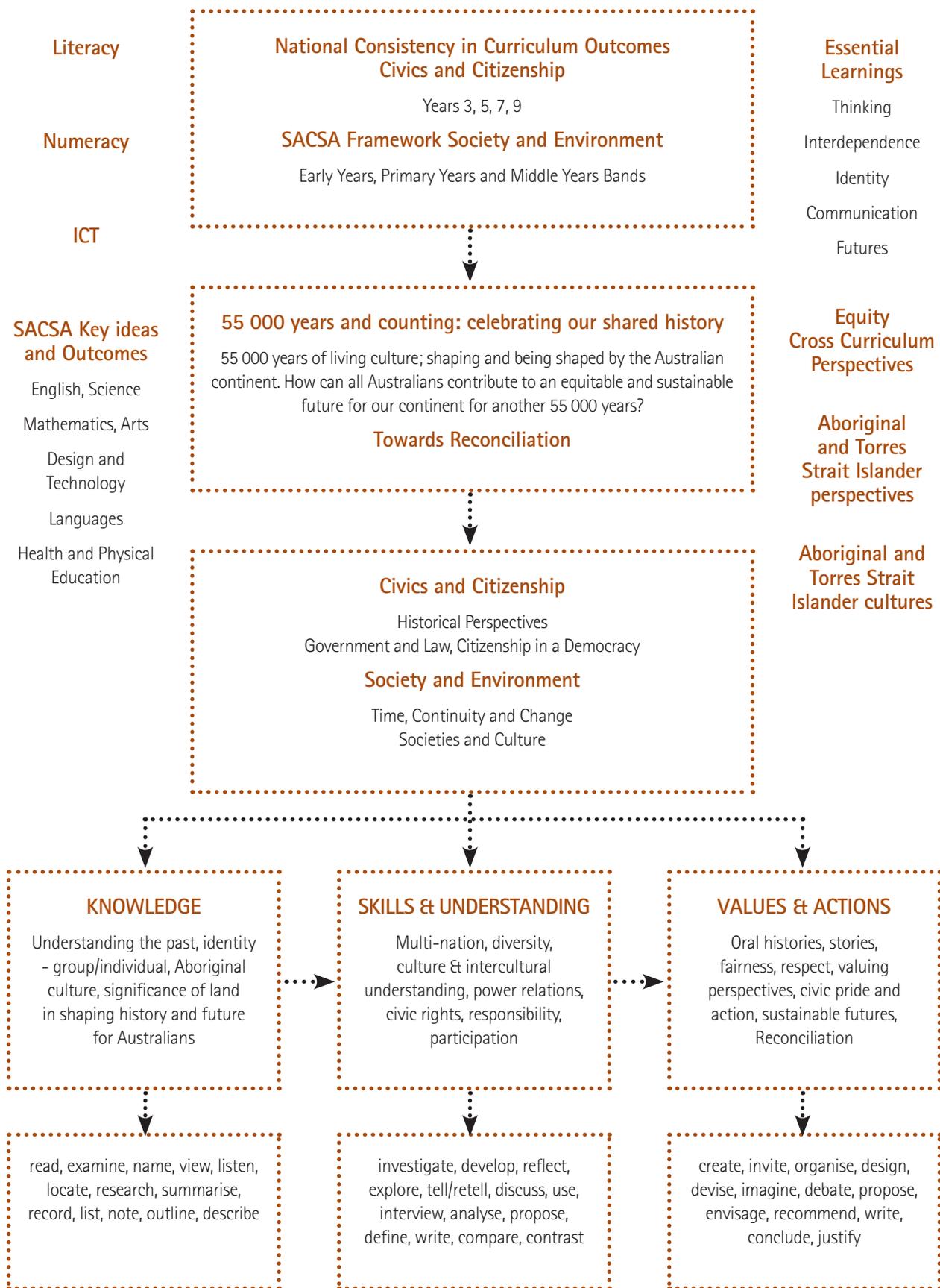
The involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is highly recommended wherever possible. Activities should maximise appropriate local historical information, primary resources and community members.

The three focus areas are developmental and sequential across the Early Years, Primary Years and Middle Years. It may be relevant to adapt and interchange activities across the three phases, depending on local relevance, availability of resources, and students' prior knowledge and interest.

The key focus areas are:

- Land is central to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's identity. Land continues to have a significant influence on cultural, economic, political and social practices and relationships in Australia. Shared stewardship of land will ensure our future.
- The Australian continent is today, and has always been, comprised of peoples from many nations.
- Significant contributions and achievements by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to shape our national identity and Australia's future.





# National Consistency in Curriculum Outcomes Statements of Learning for Civics and Citizenship

Statements of Learning and their Professional Elaborations have been developed nationally for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 English, Mathematics, Science, Civics and Citizenship and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). In 2006, all the state, territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education agreed that these Statements of Learning would be used by state and territory departments (or curriculum authorities) to guide the future development of their relevant curriculum documents.

## STATEMENTS OF LEARNING FOR CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP

The Statements of Learning for Civics and Citizenship describes the knowledge, skills, understandings and capacities that all young Australians should have the opportunity to learn and develop.

**GOVERNMENT AND LAW** explores institutions, principles and values underpinning Australia's representative democracy including the key features of the Australian Constitution; the role of democracy in building a socially cohesive and civil society; ways in which individuals, groups and governments make decisions; how governments and parliaments are elected and formed; levels and roles of government; concepts of power, leadership and community service; the purpose of laws; and the ways in which Australia's legal system contributes to the democratic principles, rights and freedoms.

**CITIZENSHIP IN A DEMOCRACY** explores the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society and the civic knowledge, skills and values required to participate as informed and active citizens in local, state, national, regional and global contexts. Australia's cultural diversity and place in the Asia Pacific region and in the world are explored. Issues of environmental sustainability are examined as well as opportunities to learn to make decisions that build a capacity for futures-oriented thinking. The ways in which the media and ICT are used by individuals and governments to exert influence and the influence that media and ICT have on civic debate and citizen engagement are examined. Opportunities to practise democratic values and processes in classrooms, schools and communities are included.

**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES** explores the impact of the past on Australian civil society. The impact of British colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their pursuit of citizenship rights are examined. The ways in which individuals, events and popular movements have influenced the development of democracy in Australia and the influence of past societies in Australian democracy are explored. The influence of local, state, national, regional and global events, issues and perspectives on Australia's changing national identities and the impact of government policy on the development of Australia as a culturally diverse nation are examined.

An overview of the Civics and Citizenship Statement of Learning can be accessed at [http://www.mceetya.edu.au/verve/\\_resources/civics\\_SOL06.pdf](http://www.mceetya.edu.au/verve/_resources/civics_SOL06.pdf)

## Curriculum Links

### THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM, STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK (SACSA)

In the SACSA Framework the equity perspectives include the following:

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' perspectives, which recognise that a cohesive and diverse society requires each child and student to develop a growing understanding and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' heritage, experiences and issues—past, present and future—and to engage all learners in a process of furthering the aims of Reconciliation ..."**

*SACSA Framework, "General Introduction", p 20, DETE, 2001*

Engaging with the Reconciliation process through inquiry activities around the theme of "55 000 years and counting: celebrating a shared history" provides opportunities for students to achieve Outcomes in a number of Learning Areas, in particular **society and environment, English and Arts.**

## BACKGROUND

### Background Information

Our Australian continent is known to have been inhabited for at least 55 000 years. The first inhabitants comprised over 270 different Aboriginal language/cultural groups across Australia, with 40 independent groups living in South Australia. Each group occupied its own territory and had its own unique culture, beliefs, laws, language, stories, ceremonies and art. Methods for gathering and harvesting food, tools and weapons, shelters and clothing were influenced by environmental and climatic conditions particular to each group's lands. The land has continued to be central to the identity of each of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, determining their social, cultural, economic and political organisation and existence.

When Captain James Cook sailed in search of a great southern land in 1768, he had been instructed " ... with the consent of the natives to take possession ... or if you find the land uninhabited take possession for His Majesty by setting up proper marks and inscriptions, as first discoverers and possessors".

Text of the copy of Cook's instructions, 30 June 1768.  
By the Commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral of Great Britain & Ca.

On landing on the east coast in 1770, Cook misunderstood the relationship of Aboriginal peoples to the land, their economy, and their social and political organisation. He regarded the land as uninhabited.

*Terra nullius* is a Latin term meaning "land belonging to no one". When colonising Australia, the British Government used this term to justify the dispossession of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from their lands. The British colonists did not recognise the ownership of land by original inhabitants. They were unable to observe agricultural, social or religious practices similar to their own, and then incorrectly concluded that the original inhabitants did not own the land but simply roamed across it. By applying the principle of *terra nullius*, the British Government claimed sovereignty over Australia, ignoring the rights of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The establishment of the colony of **South Australia** was based on *The Foundation Act (15th August 1834)*.

"Whereas that part of Australia which lies between the meridians of the one hundred and thirty-second and one hundred and forty-first degrees of east longitude and between the southern ocean and twenty-six degrees of south latitude together with the Islands adjacent thereto consists of waste and unoccupied lands which are supposed to be fit for the purposes of colonization.

".. all of the lands of the said Province or Provinces (excepting only portions which may be reserved for roads and footpaths) to be public lands, open to purchase by British subjects."

The Foundation Act . The original document and transcript is available at <http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/item.asp?sdlID=37>

Ownership and access to land caused conflict, violence and battles of resistance between Europeans and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It was not until the Mabo case (1992), the ruling of the High Court (1993) and the introduction of the *Native Title Act* that Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were recognised as owners of their own land.



# Teaching and Learning through an Inquiry Approach

Inquiry tasks and activities support knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' perspectives and histories over the last 55 000 years and a shared history with European colonisers since 1788. Beliefs, values and assumptions will be examined, leading to acts of Reconciliation. The tasks and activities in this education pack have been designed around the inquiry questions below.

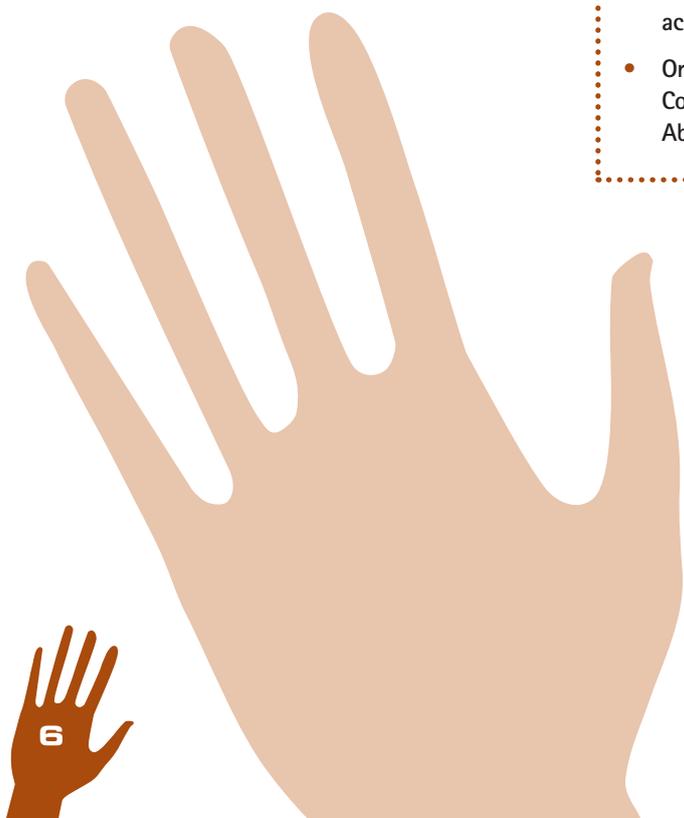
For further curriculum advice, contact your relevant education authority:

- **Aboriginal Education Coordinator or Curriculum Consultant** - Regional Education Offices and Curriculum Services, Department of Education and Children's Services
- **Indigenous Education Program Advisor** - Association of Independent Schools of SA
- **Indigenous Education Team** - Catholic Education Office South Australia

*Teachers please be aware and respectful of the fact that resources, books and films suggested for use may contain the names, images and voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who may now be deceased.*

Early Years Band  
Reception - Year 2

- Aboriginal children were taught about their environment, spirituality and rules for living through stories of the Dreaming told to them by parents and elders. What did children learn from the stories of the Dreaming?
- Morals/values/messages in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories of the Dreaming may be important for all Australians today. What messages are relevant for future generations of Australians?
- Aboriginal groups lived/live in the area you live today, or nearby. What are the names of some of these groups?
- Australia's history includes the achievements of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. How can we make sure their achievements are celebrated on Australia Day?
- Oral stories are important for recording and sharing history. Contribute to Reconciliation by recording the stories from local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. How will these be shared?



### Primary Years Band

Years 3 – 5



- How did land, climate and environment influence the lifestyle practices of people in a region? How did Aboriginal peoples live in selected areas of South Australia by comparison to today?
- "Land" has been central to the clash of culture between Aboriginal people and European settlers since 1788. Australia Day on 26 January can be described as a "day of celebration" and a "day of mourning". What are the reasons supporting each of these descriptions?
- Compare the Aboriginal map of Australia with a map of the Commonwealth of Australia. What differences are there?
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have contributed to our national identity and Australia's shared history in a diversity of ways. How have oral accounts provided valuable information about their lives in the past?
- Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to make significant contributions to Australian history. Sharing of oral histories and stories contributes to Reconciliation. What actions could be taken in your community? How can you contribute?

### Middle Years Band

Years 6 – 9



- How did land, climate and environment influence the lifestyle practices of people in a region? How did Aboriginal peoples live in selected areas of South Australia in the past by comparison to today?
- Compare the Aboriginal map of Australia with a map of the Commonwealth of Australia. What impact have state and territory borders had on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?
- "Land" has been central to the clash of culture between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and European settlers since 1788. Which significant "clashes" should be placed on our Australian history timeline to recognise the determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to maintain custodianship of the land and coastal areas?
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have contributed to Australian history through action and activism focused on "rights to land" and "protection of land". Who are the individuals who actively "fought against" dispossession and more recently those who "fought alongside" fellow Australian servicemen and servicewomen when the nation was involved in conflict?
- Significant achievements by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been acknowledged as "making a difference". Sharing oral histories and stories contributes to Reconciliation. How can you contribute?



EARLY YEARS

# Topic/Theme: 55 000 Years and Counting: Celebrating our Shared History

**Aboriginal children were taught about their environment, spirituality and rules for living through stories of the Dreaming told to them by parents and elders. What did children learn from the stories of the Dreaming?**

Read/view stories of the Dreaming. Students identify and discuss the environmental, cultural, social and spiritual learning, and the connections between these aspects, in the stories for Aboriginal peoples of the region. Refer to the teacher guide in *The Dreaming* (Aboriginal Nations) for further information (see resource list).

**Morals/values/messages in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' stories of the Dreaming may be important for all Australians today. What messages are relevant for future generations of Australians?**

Students reflect on the morals, messages and values in stories of the Dreaming they have heard or viewed. They then write individual stories (or construct collaborative stories with a scribe) that have a moral and message for future generations of Australians. The stories can include information about the environment, spirituality and rules for living (eg Water—the importance of avoiding pollution and over-use of water resources).

Publish their stories in a class book and include illustrations. Share the stories with others.

**Aboriginal groups live all over the land. What are the names of the Aboriginal groups that lived or still live in your area?**

Discuss with students the names and distribution of the 270 different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups shown on the map of Aboriginal Australia, including the 40 South Australian groups (see resource list).

Help students locate the names of the Aboriginal groups that have custodianship of the land in or near the area where the students live. How does the school and community acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land?

Read *You and me, Murrumbidgee* to the students. Discuss and list words to describe the differences that can be found in the river environment 200 years apart.

Use this list of words as a basis for writing two "environment" acrostic poems. The first poem describes "then" and the second describes "now" of the river environment.

Read *Where the forest meets the sea* to students. Discuss changes in the living and non-living environment of the Daintree forest over thousands of years.

Discuss how the environment shapes the identity, customs and lifestyle of the peoples living there.

Consider what happens to the lifestyle and customs of people when the environment changes.

Students gather non-living materials in the school and local community and make a collage to represent the environment of their area.

Students identify and discuss the origins of the materials used in their collages. They identify the materials that have occurred in the local area since European contact. Discuss the changes in lifestyle for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples when Europeans came to live in an area.

**Australia's history includes the achievements of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. How can we make sure their achievements are celebrated on Australia Day?**

Australia Day is celebrated on 26 January each year. Discuss the origins of the Australia Day holiday.

Awards are presented on Australia Day to recognise significant contributions by Australian citizens. Find out about the 2009 Australian of the Year, Professor Mick Dodson, and other Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander recipients from previous years.

**Oral stories are important for recording and sharing history. Contribute to Reconciliation by recording stories from local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. How will these be shared?**

Oral stories told by elders and community members inform us about the past. Record the stories from local people representative of many cultural backgrounds. Writing, filming, taping, digital photos, PowerPoint presentations, photo stories, clay animation and telling someone else can be used to share stories with future generations.

Listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders and community members talk about their memories and life experiences. Use one of the suggested ways above to record their stories.



## SACSA Links

### Society and Environment

- Time continuity and change (Outcomes 1.1, 1.2, 1.3)
- Place, space and environment (Outcomes 1.4, 1.5, 1.6)
- Societies and cultures (Outcomes 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

### English

- Texts and Contexts (Outcomes 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4)
- Language (Outcomes 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8)
- Strategies (Outcomes 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12)

### Equity Cross Curriculum Perspectives:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures

### Essential Learnings – Futures, Identity, Interdependence, Thinking, Communication

## Early Year Resources

### Stories of the Dreaming

<http://www.aboriginaleducation.sa.edu.au/pages/Educators/Publications/>

[http://www.daretolead.edu.au/servlet/Web?s=169694&tp=DTLO8\\_Resources\\_Main](http://www.daretolead.edu.au/servlet/Web?s=169694&tp=DTLO8_Resources_Main)

<http://www.dreamtime.net.au>

*The Dreaming*, DVD set available from Aboriginal Nations at <http://www.ablnat.com.au>

### Aboriginal Australia map

<http://www.reconciliationsa.org.au/learn%20map.html>

### Stories

DECS Tape Services at

<http://www.tapeservices.sa.edu.au/>

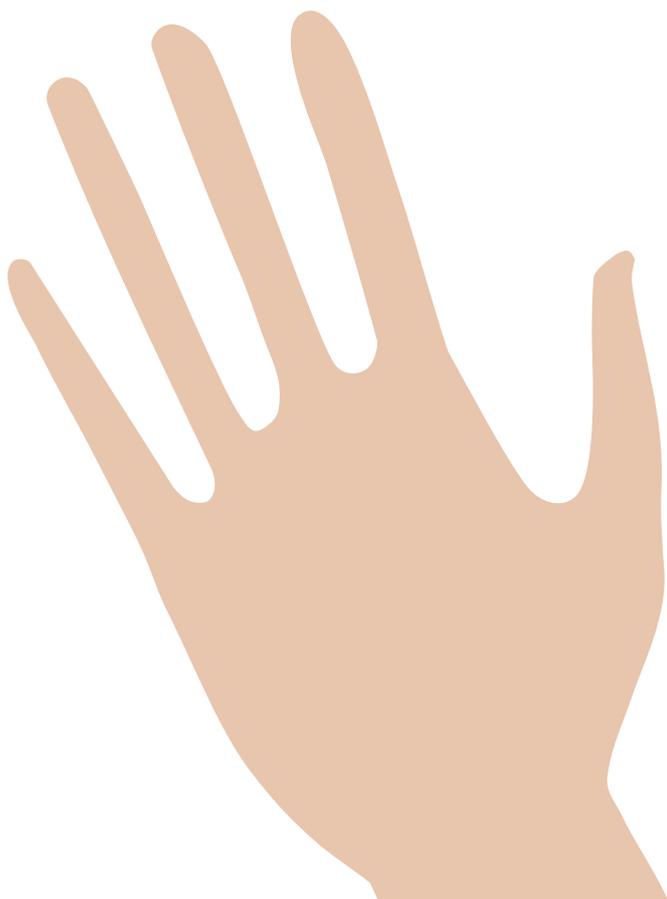
Le@rning Federation: Digital Learning Resources at

<http://www.scootle.edu.au/ec/p/home>

- R6741 "Lift off"—Indigenous children collect bush tucker
- S0973 "Feather flowers"—an example of an oral history (check protocols regarding the use of feathers by Aboriginal people in your area before undertaking further activities using feathers)

*Where the forest meets the sea*, Jeannie Baker, Walker Books Ltd, London SE11 5HJ, 1989

*You and me, Murrawee*, Kerri Hashmi and Felicity Marshall, Viking Penguin Books, 1998



## Topic/Theme: 55 000 Years and Counting: Celebrating our Shared History

### How did land, climate and environment influence the lifestyle practices of people in a region? How did Aboriginal peoples live in selected areas of South Australia by comparison to today?

Students use Google maps at <http://maps.google.com/> and search their local area and other locations in South Australia.

Students choose two areas (one in the north and one in the south) of South Australia and compare *map, terrain and satellite* pictures. Students describe the features of the two areas using key words, focusing on land forms, salt water, fresh water, vegetation, settlement, agriculture/farming, etc. They record the key words in a Venn diagram.

Help students to match the two selected areas with the Aboriginal map of Australia and name the Aboriginal groups living in the selected areas.

Students explain the differences in lifestyle they could expect to find between the Aboriginal peoples living in the areas in the past and in the present.

Students read *You and me, Murrawee* to gain an understanding of the River Murray and the lower lakes and Coorong environment. Students view the film *Storm Boy* and/or read the novel *Storm Boy* by Colin Thiele.

Students consider the statement: "European land ownership has contributed to problems in the Coorong, River Murray and lower lakes area." Students research problems being faced in the area today (eg salinity, low water levels, decline in native flora and fauna). Students consider why these problems have occurred in the past 200 years and what could be learnt from the traditional Aboriginal peoples who inhabited the area for 55 000 years.

### "Land" has been central to the clash of culture between Aboriginal people and European settlers since 1788. Australia Day on 26 January can be described as a "day of celebration" and a "day of mourning". What are the reasons supporting each of these descriptions?

View the two images depicting the landing of the First Fleet and raising of the Union Jack flag at Sydney Cove, 26 January 1788. The pictures show a European and an Aboriginal perspective (see resource list).

Students use a Y chart to describe the landing and flag-raising from the point of view of:

- Captain Arthur Phillip and his party of marines, partners and convicts
- Aboriginal people living in the vicinity of Sydney Cove.

Discuss the origins of our Australia Day public holiday and celebrations on 26 January each year.

**Australia Day could be viewed as a "day of celebration" and a "day of mourning"**—Students write two short expositions, covering both perspectives, stating their opinions and reasons why it could be named in both ways.

Students research the origins and introduction of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags. Students find out the correct protocols for flying the Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.

### Compare the Aboriginal map of Australia with a map of the Commonwealth of Australia. What differences are there?

Students use the Aboriginal map of Australia to find and record the names of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups that lived/live in or near the area they live and other areas of Australia they have visited.

Students record Aboriginal place names in or near the area where they live.

Students explain how the Aboriginal map supports the statement: **The Australian continent is today, and has always been, comprised of peoples from many nations.**

Students compare the Aboriginal Australia map with a map of the Commonwealth of Australia showing states and territories. What differences are there between the two maps? What impact have state and territory borders had on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their connection to the land?

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have contributed to our national identity and Australia's shared history in a diversity of ways. How have oral accounts provided valuable information about their lives in the past?

Personal accounts such as diaries, letters and conversation transcripts recorded in the early days of European contact provide us with valuable historical records. Students research, read or listen to accounts which provide an insight into histories from different areas of South Australia.

Students research historical accounts and oral histories describing the customs and lifestyle of one or two Aboriginal groups. They record key words using the template provided in appendix 5.

Students construct a diorama or paint a mural based on the research about one group.

Students imagine they will contribute to historical records of "everyday life" in Australia through recording oral histories from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in South Australia. Students write a set of 12 interview questions that

could be used to gather relevant information for history writers to share with future generations of Australians.

### Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to make significant contributions to Australian history. Sharing of oral histories and stories contributes to Reconciliation. What actions could be taken in your community? How can you contribute?

Read the "Introduction" to the students or provide them with a copy. Prime Minister Keating's speech in 1992 mentions contributions by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Australia's identity and nation building.

Students record the names of famous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from personal knowledge or research using the internet, books, television, magazines and newspapers. Names are entered on a grid (supplied as appendix 6) matching names, roles and professions.

Students each choose a different famous Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person to research and write a biography. Publish a class book of the biographies to share the research.

Everyday stories, oral records and paintings from local people are important in recording history. Make plans for a community project in which stories and paintings are collected from a range of people who are representative of Australia's cultural and generational diversity today.

Digital photography, film, recorded interviews, painting, writing, collage and murals are some of the ways in which stories can be recorded. Students discuss how these will be preserved and shared in the future.

### SACSA Links

#### Society and Environment

Time continuity and change  
(Outcomes 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)

Place, space and environment  
(Outcomes 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6)

Societies and cultures  
(Outcomes 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9)

#### English

Texts and contexts  
(Outcomes 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4)

Language  
(Outcomes 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8,)

Strategies  
(Outcomes 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12)

#### Arts

Arts analysis and response (Outcome 2.4)

Arts in context (Outcome 2.5)

#### Equity Cross Curriculum Perspectives:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures

Essential Learnings—Futures, Identity, Interdependence, Thinking, Communication

### Primary Year Resources

#### Aboriginal map of Australia

[http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/aboriginal\\_studies\\_press/aboriginal\\_wall\\_map/map\\_page](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/aboriginal_studies_press/aboriginal_wall_map/map_page)

<http://www.shareourpride.org.au/pages/topics/our-shared-history.php>

#### Maps of Australia

<http://maps.google.com/>

#### The River Murray

<http://www.mdbc.gov.au/>

<http://www.murrayusers.sa.gov.au/>

*Ngarrindjeri people and environment: Past, present and future*, DECS, Adelaide, 2002 (sent to all DECS R-7 schools in 2002)

*Storm boy*, Colin Thiele, New Holland, Sydney, 2004

*You and me, Murrawee*, Kerri Hashmi and Felicity Marshall, Viking Penguin Books, 1998

#### Australian history timeline

*First Australians*, An illustrated history book edited by Rachel Perkins and Marcia Langton, The Miegunyah Press, ISBN 978-0-522-85315-5

*First Australians*, SBS (DVD) Episode 1 "They have come to stay"—Sydney and New South Wales (1788-1824), Rachel Perkins

[http://www.hreoc.gov.au/education/bth/download/history/bth\\_trackhistory\\_1r.pdf](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/education/bth/download/history/bth_trackhistory_1r.pdf)

<http://www.loreoftheland.com.au/experiences/timeline.html>

<http://www.loreoftheland.com.au/index.html>

<http://www.shareourpride.org.au/pages/topics/our-shared-history/timeline.php>

<http://www.teachers.ash.org.au/jmresources/history/australian.html>

#### Perspectives

Le@rning Federation: Digital Learning Resources at <http://www.scootle.edu.au/ec/p/home>

- R6799 "Founding of Australia", 1937—Oil painting of the First Fleet crew hoisting the Union Jack
- First Fleet landing re-enactment, 1938—re-enactment of Aboriginal response to the landing

#### Aboriginal high achievers

Le@rning Federation: Digital Learning Resources at <http://www.scootle.edu.au/ec/p/home>

<http://www.abc.net.au/tv/messagstick/>

<http://www.scootle.edu.au/ec/search?topic=%22Aboriginal+history%22&>

<http://www.shareourpride.org.au/pages/topics/success-stories.php>

*Making a difference*, <http://www.scootle.edu.au/ec/objects>

#### Personal stories and oral histories

<http://www.scootle.edu.au/ec/search?topic=%22Aboriginal+history%22&>

Le@rning Federation: Digital Learning Resources at <http://www.scootle.edu.au/ec/p/home>

- L4110 "Mervyn Bishop: The old days"
- L4111 "Mervyn Bishop: Mission life"
- L4109 "Mervyn Bishop: Merv's parents"



## Topic/Theme: 55 000 Years and Counting: Celebrating our Shared History

**How did land, climate and environment influence the lifestyle practices of people in a region? How did Aboriginal peoples live in selected areas of South Australia in the past by comparison to today?**

Students use Google maps at <http://maps.google.com/> to search South Australia, their local area, and other locations. They choose two areas (one in the north and one in the south) of South Australia and compare *map*, *terrain* and *satellite* pictures. They also research the climate classification for the same areas, using the Bureau of Meteorology—Indigenous Weather Knowledge website (see resource list).

Students use a Venn diagram to record words that describe the features of both areas, focusing on land forms, salt water, fresh water, vegetation, settlement, agriculture/farming etc.

Students match the two selected areas from their Google search to the Aboriginal map of Australia and find the names of the Aboriginal groups living in these areas. Students research historical records to identify accounts of the traditional lifestyle and customs of the peoples who lived in these areas and use the template provided in appendix 5 to record their findings. Students then explain the differences in lifestyle that could be expected between the groups in the past and in the present. Answers should be justified by referring to evidence gathered from the earlier research using Google maps.

**Compare the Aboriginal map of Australia with a map of the Commonwealth of Australia. What impact have state and territory borders had on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?**

Provide copies of appendix 1 for students to read. Students compare the Aboriginal map of Australia with a map of the Commonwealth of Australia. Students identify the Aboriginal groups who lived/live in or near their local area.

Students form groups of four to brainstorm and list the impact state and territory borders had on the lifestyle, customs and connections to the land of Aboriginal groups living in South Australia. Provide students with the information that Aboriginal people were governed under laws in each separate state and territory. Even when the Commonwealth of Australia was formed in 1901, they were not included in Commonwealth legislation, nor were they counted in the national census until after the 1967 Referendum. Each student in the group takes responsibility for researching an Act of state legislation (eg *Aborigines Act of 1911* which affected Aboriginal peoples in South Australia).

Construct a class Aboriginal Legislation Timeline for South

Australia beginning in 1836. Each student places a brief summary of the legislation researched at the appropriate date on the timeline (see resource list).

**"Land" has been central to the clash of culture between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and European settlers since 1788. Which significant "clashes" should be placed on our Australian history timeline to recognise the determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to maintain custodianship of the land and coastal areas?**

Students research and compare various timelines of Australian history. As a class group, students discuss the story that is predominantly being told in each timeline—European or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Students then choose two decades of Australian history and develop a timeline, ensuring a balance of both perspectives.

Students research an Australian timeline since 1788 that includes the records of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander "battles of resistance" against European colonisation. Students identify leaders who attempted to prevent dispossession of their land (eg Windradyne, Pemulwuy, Barak and Yagan). Students prepare a convincing 1–2 minute oral presentation explaining the reasons why the chosen warrior leader should be assured of a place in Australian history (see resource list).

In 1992, Eddie Mabo fought a "land battle" of a different kind through the High Court of Australia. His successful challenge resulted in the introduction of the 1993 Native Title Act. Students research Eddie Mabo's challenge in the High Court. The relevant questions were "Did the community of Murray Island have a system of land ownership which predated white conquest and, if so, was that system still valid?" The answer was "yes" in both cases. Students explain the implications of this High Court decision on the concept of *terra nullius*, the original justification for colonisation.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have contributed to Australian history through action and activism focused on "rights to land" and "protection of land". Who are the individuals who actively "fought against" dispossession and more recently those who "fought alongside" fellow Australian servicemen and servicewomen when the nation was involved in conflict?**

Students view Episode 1 of *First Australians: The untold story of Australia*. As a class group, students discuss the difference between "resistance" and "attack" from the perspective of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the European settlers.

In more recent times, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander returned servicemen and servicewomen have stood together with other Australians to serve the nation in times of conflict. Students research an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander returned serviceman or servicewoman and write an epitaph suitable for a war memorial.

After reading appendix 4, "Forgotten heroes", students write a convincing letter to the Australian War Memorial providing reasons why a national memorial honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and servicewomen should be erected in Canberra.

### Significant achievements by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been acknowledged as "making a difference". Sharing oral histories and stories contributes to Reconciliation. How can you contribute?

In Paul Keating's speech at Redfern Park in Sydney on 10 December 1992, he spoke of the many ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have contributed to the nation and our history. Keating also said "By doing away with the bizarre conceit that this continent had no owners prior to the settlement of the Europeans, Mabo establishes a fundamental truth and lays the basis for justice. **It will be much easier to work from that basis than has ever been the case in the past**".

Review timelines of Australia's shared history to date. Students then imagine they are reflecting on Australia 50 years from now. They develop an "optimistic" timeline that acknowledges and celebrates Australia's shared history over this time.

#### SACSA Links

##### Society and Environment

Time continuity and change  
(Outcomes 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)

Place, space and environment  
(Outcomes 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6)

Societies and cultures  
(Outcomes 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9)

##### English

Texts and contexts  
(Outcomes 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4)

Language  
(Outcomes 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8,)

Strategies  
(Outcomes 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, 4.12)

##### Arts

Arts analysis and response (Outcome 2.4, 3.4)  
Arts in context (Outcome 2.5, 3.5)

##### Equity Cross Curriculum Perspectives:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures

Essential Learnings—Futures, Identity, Interdependence, Thinking, Communication

#### Middle Years resources

##### Maps

Aboriginal map at [http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/aboriginal\\_studies\\_press/aboriginal\\_wall\\_map](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/aboriginal_studies_press/aboriginal_wall_map)

Education Pack 1: *The 1967 Referendum*

Google maps at <http://maps.google.com/>

##### Indigenous weather knowledge

<http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/>

[http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/climate\\_zones/index.shtml](http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/climate_zones/index.shtml)

##### Australian history timelines

<http://www.dreamtime.net.au/indigenous/timeline.cfm>

<http://www.loreoftheland.com.au/experiences/timeline.html>

<http://www.teachers.ash.org.au/jmresources/history/australian.html>

"Track the history" Resource Sheet pdf available at [http://www.hreoc.gov.au/education/bth/download/history/bth\\_trackhistory\\_1r.pdf](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/education/bth/download/history/bth_trackhistory_1r.pdf)

##### Legislation

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity *Bringing them home* education module at [http://www.hreoc.gov.au/education/bth/teaching\\_materials/t\\_laws\\_comparison.html](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/education/bth/teaching_materials/t_laws_comparison.html)

*Survival in our own land: Aboriginal experiences in South Australia since 1836*, Chapter 6 "Under the act" legislation, C Mattingley and K Hampton, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1998, 2008

##### Aboriginal leaders

*First Australians: The untold story of Australia*, SBS DVD, Episode 3: "Freedom for our lifetime"

Le@rning Federation: Digital Learning Resources at <http://www.scootle.edu.au/ec/p/home> and <http://www.scootle.edu.au/ec/search?topic=%22Aboriginal+history%22&>

*First Australians: The untold story of Australia*, SBS DVD, Episode 7: "We are no longer shadows"—Queensland and The Torres Strait Islands (1967–1992)

[http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/local\\_heroes/default.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/local_heroes/default.htm)

Making a difference, Learning objects include Windradyne, Barak and Yagan

##### Native title and land rights

<http://www.shareourpride.org.au/pages/topics/beyond-the-myths/hot-topics/native-title-and-land-rights.php>

<http://www.mabonativetitle.com.au/>

##### Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the Australian Defence Force

*Aborigines in the defence of Australia*, Australian National University Press, Sydney, 1991

*Forgotten heroes: Aborigines at war from the Somme to Vietnam*, A Jackamos and D Fowell, Victoria Press, Melbourne, 1993

<http://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/aborigines/index.asp>  
*Ngarrindjeri Anzacs*, Doreen Kartinyeri, Aboriginal Family History Project, 1996

*Spirit of Anzac: A Torres Strait perspective*, Vanessa Crowdey, Education Department Queensland

*The black Diggers*, Robert A Hall, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1995

*The forgotten*, 40 minute film by Glen Stasiuk, Black Russian Productions

##### Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders: Making a difference

<http://www.scootle.edu.au/ec/search?topic=%22Aboriginal+history%22&>



## Education Resources

### Electronic Resources

NOTE: Login access to **Le@rning Federation—Scootle.edu.au** is provided to teachers through the respective education jurisdictions. Access the website and follow relevant login instructions to have access to online learning objects.

- Le@rning Federation homepage at <http://www.scootle.edu.au/ec/p/home>
- [http://www.humanrights.gov.au/social\\_justice/index.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/index.html)
- <http://www.ablnat.com.au>
- <http://www.hreoc.gov.au/education/bth/contents.html#resources>
- <http://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/aborigines/index.asp>
- <http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/map/default.htm>
- [http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/local\\_heroes/default.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/local_heroes/default.htm)
- <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/messagestick/>
- <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/messagestick/pastepisodes/2006/default.htm>
- <http://www.aboriginaleducation.sa.edu.au/pages/Educators/Publications/>
- [http://www.aboriginaleducation.sa.edu.au/files/links/Ab\\_Ed\\_for\\_all\\_learners.pdf](http://www.aboriginaleducation.sa.edu.au/files/links/Ab_Ed_for_all_learners.pdf)
- <http://www.dreamtime.net.au>
- <http://www.12canoes.com.au>
- Reconciliation Australia at <http://reconciliationaustralia.org>
- Reconciliation South Australia at <http://reconciliationsa.org.au>
- Australia Bureau of Statistics at <http://www.abs.gov.au>
- <http://www.classtools.net/index.htm>
- *Resistance and retaliation, Aboriginal–European relations in early colonial South Australia*, Alan Pope, Heritage Action, Adelaide, 1989
- *Ngadjuri: Aboriginal people of the Mid North Region of South Australia*, Fred Warrior, Fran Knight, Sue Anderson and Adele Pring, 2005
- *Ngarrindjeri Dreaming stories, illustrated by Ngarrindjeri artist Jacob Stengle*, 2001
- *Ngarrindjeri people and environment: Past, present and future, A cross-curriculum approach supports learning in Years 4–7*, DECS, Adelaide, 2001
- *Forgotten heroes: Aborigines at war from the Somme to Vietnam*, A Jackamos and D Fowell, Victoria Press, Melbourne, 1993
- *Aborigines in the defence of Australia*, Australian National University Press, Sydney, 1991
- *The black Diggers*, Robert A Hall, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1995
- *Ngarrindjeri Anzacs*, Doreen Kartinyeri, Aboriginal Family History Project, 1996
- *Spirit of Anzac: A Torres Strait perspective*, Vanessa Crowdey, Education Department Queensland
- *My place*, Nadia Wheatley and Donna Rawlins, Collins Dove, Melbourne, 1987
- *Storm boy*, Colin Thiele, New Holland, Sydney, 2004

### Places

- Art Gallery of South Australia, Education Service, <http://www.artgallery.sa.gov.au>
- Botanic Gardens Education Service, for Aboriginal plant use trails
- Migration Museum, History Trust of South Australia, <http://www.history.sa.gov.au/migration/migration.htm>
- South Australian Museum, for Ngurunderi Dreaming exhibition

### DVDs and Videos

<http://www.roninfilms.com.au/video/1871945.html>

<http://www.tapeservices.sa.edu.au/>

*The forgotten*, 40 minute film by Glen Stasiuk, Black Russian Productions

### Books

- *The 1967 Referendum*, South Australian Education Pack, available at <http://www.reconciliationsa.org.au>
- *The Stolen Generations*, South Australian Education Pack, available at <http://www.reconciliationsa.org.au>
- *Survival in our own land: Aboriginal experiences in South Australia*, C Mattingley and K Hampton, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1998, 2008

## Extract from *Survival in our own land*

“ In 1834 the British Parliament had passed an Act authorising the establishment of a colony to be known as South Australia. ”

**“The designated land, half a world away, unseen by those who passed the legislation, was described in the Act as ‘waste and unoccupied’. The earth was untilled. The land was not disfigured by permanent man-made constructions. But indeed it was not ‘waste’. In fact its resources were known and carefully husbanded. It was totally occupied by many and various ancestral groupings of our people.**

“No-one told us Nungas. No-one could tell us. No-one asked us if we agreed with the change. Our ancestors had no choice. On that day in 1836 our sovereign status was changed. We were proclaimed British subjects. From that moment the tragedy began which is the bitter and often brutal history of the past 150 years for all our people in ‘South Australia’.

“At the time of settlement by the British colonists, the land supported a diversity of over forty independent descent groupings: the Adynyamathanha, the Andagarinya, the Arabana, the Aranda (southern), the Banggarla, the Biladaba, the Bungandidj, the Dhanggarli, the Dirari, the Diyari, the Erawirung, the Gugada, the Guyani, the Kurna, the Malyangaba, the Marawara, the Meintang, the Mirning, the Narungga, the Nawu, the Ngadjuri, the Ngalia, the Ngamini, the Ngangurugu, the Ngarinyeri, the Ngarkat, the Ngawait, the Ngayawung, the Ngintait, the Nugunu, the Peramangk, the Pitjantjatjara, the Portawulun, the Raminyeri, the Tanganalun, the Wadigali, the Wangganguru, the Warki, the Wilyagali, the Wirangu, the Wirdjaragandja, the Wotjobaluk, the Yandruwandha, the Yankuntjara, the Yaraldi, the Yardliwarra and the Yawarawarga.

“Each had its own clearly defined territory recognized by all its members, held in sacred trust from generation to generation, and respected by outsiders. Our traditional occupiers of the land knew intimately its physical features, animal and plant life, and water resources. They maintained them ritually in accordance with age-old customs.

“Each descent group had its own religion and laws, and each grouping had its own language and culture rich songs, stories, ceremonies and art. They all had their own tightly woven and meticulously observed social structures providing community welfare and health care through kinship and reciprocal obligations. Older members passed on to younger the wealth

of accumulated information and wisdom through their tried and proven lifelong education system.

“A well established network linked groups through trade in items not locally procurable, such as ochre, pituri, shell and various types of wood and stone. But the hunting and gathering economy, to which men, women and children all contributed, was self supporting, with technology adapted to survival in a wide range of environments. The emphasis of traditional society was not materialistic but spiritual, identifying each individual with the land as the source of life.”

*Survival in our own land: Aboriginal experiences in South Australia since 1836, C Mattingley and K Hampton, Chapter 1 “Before and after”, p 3, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1998, 2008*

## Extracts from *Conquest of the Ngarrindjeri*

“The nation of the Ngarrindjeri was divided into eighteen (*lakalinyerari* or tribes). Each *lakalinyerari* had its own closely defined territory and its own government called the *Tendi*...”

**"The missionary, Reverend George Taplin lived among the Ngarrindjeri for twenty years. His records from the 1850's provide a valuable historical perspective.**

"The *Tendi* of each *lakalinyerari* was also its high court and thus the dispenser of justice as well as the parliament. Men were elected democratically to sit on the *Tendi*; and the President or *rupulle*, was, in turn, elected by that body. The Ngarrindjeri possessed a purely democratic form of government antedating the evolution of European democracy probably by thousands of years."

*Conquest of the Ngarrindjeri, The story of the Lower Murray Lakes tribes, Graham Jenkin, "Introduction", p 13, Rigby, 1979*

"The Ngarrindjeri possessed a magnificent country which enabled them to settle in semi permanent villages, and for hunting people to populate their area very densely. The dominant feature of their country was the lower Murray and its lakes; and, although they exploited the hinterland to the full, it was this great stretch of water that afforded them the security in the form of food, clothing and other necessities of life. Even in times of severest drought, the Murray never dried up, and there were always fish in the lakes, and birds around their shores ... nets were used extensively by the Ngarrindjeri for fishing and also for catching birds and certain animals. In addition the Ngarrindjeri employed lines, snares and various types of spears, boomerangs and clubs for specialised purposes.

"The Ngarrindjeri built large, permanent (or semi permanent) dwellings, some of which were capable of housing several families. They were constructed of heavy close set logs rendered waterproof by grass and clay ... The clothing of Ngarrindjeri consisted of "beautiful cloaks traditionally made of many small squares of possum skins, skillfully softened and then sewn together with kangaroo tail sinews. Some groups also wove cloaks from certain types of seaweed."

*Conquest of the Ngarrindjeri, The story of the Lower Murray Lakes tribes, Graham Jenkin, "Introduction", p 14, Rigby, 1979*

"The Ngarrindjeri were outstanding craftsmen in wood and leather, but their forte as Taplin points out was their basketry, netting and matting. These crafts were highly developed among the Ngarrindjeri and, indeed to this day, some highly Europeanised people of Ngarrindjeri descent still delight in producing mats and baskets using the ancient skills handed down over thousands of years. According to Taplin, the fish nets of the Ngarrindjeri were superior to those made by the Europeans at the time. The Ngarrindjeri manufactured canoes in the traditional River Murray pattern—out of sheets of bark hewn from the *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (river red gum tree). The canoes were a vital part of the economy of all River Murray peoples—and they also played a significant role culturally.

"The two most lethal weapons of the Ngarrindjeri were the *kaike* and the *yarnde*. These were spears with hardwood points, about sixty centimetres long, inserted into either the hollow stem of a yacca (in the case of the *yarnde*) or a reed (in the case of the *kaike*). The resulting weapon, when hurled from a *taralye* (or spear thrower), was heavy enough in the head to be a deadly missile, yet light enough in the shaft to enable it to be thrown over a considerable distance. Taplin once saw a man killed by such a spear at a distance of ninety metres—after the spear had passed through the man's shield ...

"Like all groups throughout the continent the Ngarrindjeri also traded with other peoples. The River Murray itself was one of the several great trade routes that traversed the continent from coast to coast in pre-invasion days. Perhaps the most important item purchased by the Ngarrindjeri was the long, solid hardwood spear (the *wunde*) which was imported from the upper Murray. It was made of the myall tree which did not grow in their own country. And naturally enough the cloaks, basket-ware and netting for which the Ngarrindjeri were famous, were the principle items of trade which they themselves had to offer."

*Conquest of the Ngarrindjeri, The story of the Lower Murray Lakes tribes, Graham Jenkin, "Introduction", p 15, Rigby, 1979*

## Survival

“ Aboriginal culture cannot be separated from the land. On the land are stories, Aboriginal stories that explain why people, rock holes, the hills and the trees came to be there. ”

**“Yami Lester grew up on his traditional country of the Yankunytjatjara, north-west South Australia. He speaks of the relationship of his people to the land.**

“The land is full of stories, every square mile is just like a book, a book with a lot of pages, and it's all a story for the children to learn. The old people always tell stories about it, and at an early age the children start learning that from the land.

“The land holds the people together. The people lived there together and they enjoy the land and know the stories of the land. They know where the rock holes and water holes are, and they go hunting on the land. The relationship with the land is part of their life. It's their spiritual meaning. They feel sad and sick if something happens to their place.

“In the *wapar* the land was made. Our culture, the language, the land we live in, our relationship with people and the religious system that controls our everyday life, comes from the *wapar*. Learning our culture is learning about the *wapar*.”

*Survival in our own land: Aboriginal experiences in South Australia since 1836, C Mattingley and K Hampton, Chapter 9 “Losing our birth right”, p 72, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1998, 2008*

“At a place near Wintja, a swamp ... we sat down ... for a while and lived on wild animals, grass seeds and different types of bush tucker—*kampurarpa*, wild tomatoes and *maku* witchetty grubs ... while the men hunted kangaroos, the women looked for other food, like goannas and honey ants. Honey ants come in good seasons, after rain brings out the blossom ... There is another type of honey on the young mulga tree ... The women and girls gather it from the little branches ... I can remember in a really good year, not far from Wallatina at a place called Latty's Well there was a ... creek with a lot of young mulga trees. With the sun shining through the branches you could see the honey as liquid running down to the ground, right around the bottom of the tree. There it hardened and so we used to break it up into pieces to eat, or suck on it. We'd break it up, heap it up on the hard ground, cut the leaves off the branches and make a bundle of it for everyone to carry ...

“In the old days they used a wooden dish, but when I was there they used an ordinary white fellas dish or a half-gallon drum. First they put the water in them and then all the branches

with honey on them to soak in the water, and you worked the branches up and down so that the water became sweet with the honey. On the sand hills you find a special grass that you can make soft and rubbery. They used it in a dish of sweet water and everyone would suck the sweetness from it. The women folk had this food and perhaps *goanna* or *perenti*, and the men would come home with kangaroos.

“The men shared the meat with the women and the women shared the honey water. Sometimes the men might have nothing after a long walk, because the kangaroos were too quick for them, so the men would eat damper made from the seed grasses, like Johnny cakes. Sometimes there may have been forty or fifty adults with their families living and moving around in the one area; at other times there was only a wife, husband and kids on their own or perhaps two brothers and their families. Usually they would spread out over their own countries, one group at Wallatina, another in Mimili, and other people living further west. When ceremonies were on they all came together in one place, where there was plenty of food and water. Sometimes there were eighty to a hundred people together.”

*Survival in our own land: Aboriginal experiences in South Australia since 1836, C Mattingley and K Hampton, Chapter 3 “From bush tucker to poison rations”, p 19, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1998, 2008*

## Forgotten Heroes – Aboriginal Returned Servicemen and Servicewomen

“The Anzac legend is etched into the Australian psyche. It tells of righteous warriors fighting for the highest ideals, transcending the horrors of war through mateship, self sacrifice and unswerving duty to King and Country...”

**"The Aboriginal people in these stories found the armed forces generally free of racism. They often experienced, for the first time, liberation from the negative racist stereotypes held by white society. In times of common peril and hardship, men and women discover what they had in common rather than dwell upon their differences.**

"A soldier particularly, understands how thoroughly he depends upon the comrades by his side and at his back. They literally stand guard against death for each other. When the earth explodes and the guns roar men are levelled. Leadership and courage come to the fore. The colour of a man's skin becomes utterly irrelevant, at best a stupid diversion in the common struggle for victory, valour and survival.

"And when Aborigines returned from wars they took off their uniforms and medals and were, once again, forced to carry the burden of white negative stereotypes. They left their people in a humpy on the river bank and found them there still when they returned. Nothing had changed. Aborigines were not even citizens in the land they had fought for. They watched the traditional land of their Dreaming broken up for soldier settlement blocks and were denied blocks themselves because they were Aborigines; because mission education stopped at grade three; because only the most menial jobs were offered to Aborigines; because they were legally no better than a ward of the state."

*Forgotten heroes: Aborigines at war from the Somme to Vietnam, A Jackamos and D Fowell, "Introduction" by Terry Garwood, Victoria Press, Melbourne, 1993*

### Reg Saunders (1920 – 1991)

"My father was born on 7 August 1920, in a small town of Purnum, just outside the Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve in the Western Districts of Victoria. After his mother died, when he was about nine years old, his father took him and his brother, Harry, to the Lake Condah Mission where his father could find work and have family support.

"At the outbreak of World War Two, in 1939, he joined the army. This was part of his heritage, of being a warrior. His people, the Gunditjmarra, had fought many battles with white settlers to retain their land; his Uncle Reg Rawlings MM, for whom he was named, and who had brought great honour to his people, was killed in action in Flanders.

"He then began a brilliant and extraordinary military career. During World War Two, he was recommended for Officer Training School in Portsea, where he graduated with men such as Tom Derrick VC. He served with the 6th Division and saw action in the Middle East and New Guinea.

"In Korea he was promoted to captain and was the Officer-In-Charge of C Company of the 3rd Battalion. This battalion won the United States Presidential Citation for the Battle of Kapyong. During the last twenty years of his life he worked with the former Department of Aboriginal Affairs. He travelled widely and met Aboriginal people from a variety of backgrounds. He was a very special Aboriginal man, whose place in Aboriginal and Australian history can never be diminished in time."

*Forgotten heroes: Aborigines at war from the Somme to Vietnam, A Jackamos and D Fowell, Glenda Humes talks about her father Reg Saunders (1920–1991), p 19, Victoria Press, Melbourne,*



**APPENDIX 6**

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples – High Achievers

Athlete	Politician	Returned serviceman	Returned servicewoman
Professor	Musician	Inventor	Political activist
Writer	Poet	Doctor	Lawyer
Journalist	Composer	Actor	Educator
AFL footballer	Artist	Singer	State Governor
Diplomat	Rugby player	Nurse	Other

# Reconciliation South Australia

“ A united Australia, which respects this land of ours; values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage; and provides justice and equity for all. ”

Reconciliation has both symbolic and practical elements. A spirit of goodwill, mutual respect and recognition of the effects of colonisation on Australia's first people are the symbolic cornerstones of the Reconciliation effort.

On the practical side, working towards an improved quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly in areas such as health, education and employment is essential for achieving equity for all South Australians.

Reconciliation South Australia Incorporated is a not-for-profit organisation with a major focus on encouraging the people's movement for Reconciliation at a state level after the cessation of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation.

## Reconciliation South Australia

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