

AUSTRALIANS  
TOGETHER

TEACHER GUIDE  
YEARS F TO 10

# NAIDOC Week 2021

**Warning** – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and students are advised that this curriculum resource may contain images, voices or names of deceased people.

## Glossary

*Terms that may need to be introduced to students prior to teaching the resource:*

**ceded:** to hand over or give up something, such as land, to someone else.

**First Nations people:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**NAIDOC:** (acronym) National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee.

**NAIDOC Week:** a nationally recognised week to celebrate the histories, cultures and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. All Australians are invited to participate.

**sovereignty:** supreme authority and independent power claimed or possessed by a community or state to govern itself or another state.

## Resource overview

### Introduction to NAIDOC Week – A history of protest and celebration

**NAIDOC Week** is usually celebrated in the first full week of July. It's a week to celebrate the histories, cultures and achievements of **First Nations people**. Although NAIDOC Week falls in the mid-year school holidays, the aim of each theme isn't limited to those set dates. Schools are encouraged to recognise and celebrate NAIDOC Week at any time throughout the year to ensure this important event isn't overlooked. Themes can be incorporated as part of school life and the school curriculum.

**NAIDOC** stands for 'National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee', the committee responsible for organising national activities during NAIDOC Week. Its acronym has now become the name of the week.

NAIDOC Week has a long history beginning with the human rights movement for First Nations Peoples in the 1920s. In 1938, protestors declared Australia Day to be a 'Day of Mourning'. From 1955, this mourning became a celebration of Indigenous culture and was held on the first Sunday in July. Later, the second Sunday in July became a day of remembrance for First Nations people and Indigenous heritage, which resulted in NAIDOC Week. A timeline of the history of the struggle for Indigenous rights and recognition can be downloaded from the [NAIDOC Week website](#).

NAIDOC Week isn't just a celebration for Indigenous communities, it's for all Australians. It's an opportunity to participate in a range of activities and to acknowledge and celebrate First Nations communities. Each year, a theme is chosen to reflect the important issues and events for the coming year.

### 2021 theme – Heal Country, heal our nation

This year's theme, 'Heal Country, heal our nation', is a call to action, to listen to First Nations people and see what's happening across the nation, and to address historical injustices so that healing can take place. It's a call for stronger measures to recognise, protect and maintain all aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage (NAIDOC, 2021).

First Nations cultures have been recognised as the oldest living cultures in the world. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people believe that First Nations people have been in Australia since time immemorial (Munro in Currie, 2008). Archaeological dating methods have uncovered evidence that First Nations people occupied and cared for this continent for at least 65,000 years (Weule and James, 2017). Understandably, the concept of Country for First Nations people is more than just a place; it's the spiritual, emotional, social and cultural connections that have been established over thousands of years.

However, since colonisation the land has been systematically exploited, which has had a devastating effect on the land, climate and First Nations Peoples. The call to 'Heal Country' asks for protections for the land, waters, sacred sites and cultural heritage and meaningful reform of land management processes. It's a call for environmental management that's inclusive and respectful of the Indigenous knowledges and practices that have sustainably cared for the land for thousands of years.

Healing Country also recognises the need to resolve the historical injustices against First Nations Peoples and to work together towards meaningful and lasting reform of the policies and politics that continue to disadvantage First Nations people. It's a powerful call to action to take advantage of the opportunity to be part of radically overhauling the existing systems and creating a new lived experience for First Nations Peoples.

Taking part in NAIDOC activities is an opportunity for students to learn about First Nations Peoples' histories and connection to land. It's also an opportunity to recognise that **sovereignty** was never **ceded**, and that Australia always was, and always will be, Indigenous land.

First Nations people have a continuous connection to, relationship with and management of the land. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the world's first explorers, first navigators, first engineers, first farmers, first botanists, first scientists, first diplomats, astronomers and artists (National NAIDOC Secretariat, 2020). This rich history, culture and connection to the land, has been passed down through generations and interweaves itself into every aspect of daily life – it remains in place today and will continue into the future.

### Activities

Activities in this resource are grouped by subject area (language and literacy, HASS, science, and the arts) The activities are centred on the knowledge that 'Healing Country' begins with understanding:

- the connection between the land and art, language, geography, music and literature
- the ways that connection to land is part of everyday life for many First Nations people
- the historical achievements of First Nations people
- the way Australia's history since colonisation continues to impact the connection First Nations people have to the land today.

Healing Country also recognises the role of First Nations Peoples as custodians of the land and the need to return to a more respectful and sustainable relationship with Country.

The activities examine the connection that First Nations people have and always will have with Country, and encourage students, teachers and the school community to:

- look deeper into their own connection to the places they live, learn and play
- explore their own roles and responsibilities to care for the land and environment
- recognise the role of First Nations people as custodians of land and how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue this role at a local and national level
- explore the role of First Nations community leaders, artists and professionals through the NAIDOC Week Awards.

Other activities invite students to make connections with local First Nations artists and community members through Indigenous-led events throughout the year and explore First Nations artworks, languages, literature and music.

### Australian Curriculum aligned

The activities in this resource are aligned with the Australian Curriculum Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cross-curriculum priority. The specific codes, descriptions and elaborations can be accessed here:

<https://australianstogether.org.au/assets/Curriculum-Resources/NAIDOC-Week-2021-ACARA-links.pdf>

### Learning areas

This resource has been laid out based on learning areas to enable teachers to plan lessons that can be connected with current teaching and learning programs. The learning areas include [history](#), [geography](#), [language and literacy](#), [science](#), and [the arts](#). Suggestions also are included for whole school activities.

### Student activities

Activities support teaching across the learning areas around the theme of 'Heal Country' and encourage deep thinking about this topic while developing critical thinking, research, and literacy skills. Activities have been created with general age groups in mind but can be adapted for your classroom and year level.

Australians Together would love to hear about how students participated in the activities below and see any pictures you have of student work. You can email us at [contact@australianstogether.org.au](mailto:contact@australianstogether.org.au)

### Whole school celebrations and cross-curriculum ideas – NAIDOC Week and beyond

Because NAIDOC Week falls in the school holidays this year, schools may choose another week during the year to celebrate the NAIDOC Week theme as a community.

Schools are encouraged to celebrate and, where appropriate, participate in local community Indigenous-led celebrations or online events and to take the opportunity to connect with local First Nations communities and to make those connections part of ongoing collaborations.

Celebrating the NAIDOC Week theme as a school is also an opportunity to share the work of students with their families and the wider community – either virtually, through the school newsletter, or through an event or exhibition.

The activities in this section are designed to encourage each member of the school community, from students, parents, teachers, and local community members, to explore what NAIDOC Week means for them.

Schools may choose to plan activities by year level or in teaching teams, with a shared year level or whole school focus, to bring together student learning in a celebration at the end of the week.

Consider looking at ways that your school can connect with, celebrate and recognise First Nations histories and cultures throughout the year; for example, by incorporating an Acknowledgement of Country into school events.

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

An Acknowledgement of Country shows respect for the Traditional Custodians of the land you are on and recognises the continuing connection of First Nations Peoples to Country. Acknowledgements of Country can take place at the beginning of important school events. They can also be printed in school publications and websites and on signs, for example near the entrance of your site.

If your school has not already worded an Acknowledgement of Country, consider having each class write and design their own poster for display in classrooms. Or have representative of different year levels work together to create one for display across the whole school, including at school entryways. Personalising and localising an acknowledgment will help to make it as meaningful as possible.

#### **All year levels**

As a class, read an Acknowledgement of Country (see examples in 'Useful resources' below), highlighting and defining any unfamiliar terms.

As a class, discuss:

- Where have students heard or read an Acknowledgement of Country?
- What is it and why do we do it?
- Why do students think an Acknowledgement of Country might change sometimes? (differences in location, audience, event)
- What's meant by the term 'Country' in this context?
- Have students heard or seen a Welcome to Country ceremony? How is it different from an Acknowledgement of Country?

#### **Useful resources**

##### **Acknowledgement of Country**

This article by Australians Together explains the difference between a Welcome to Country and an Acknowledgement of Country and includes some suggested words to use (4-minute read): <https://australiantogether.org.au/resources-2/welcome-to-and-acknowledgement-of-country/>

Reconciliation Australia provides an overview and answers some FAQs in 'Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country' (4-minute read): <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Welcome-to-and-Acknowledgement-of-Country.pdf>

This resource, from the Australian Government, outlines what an Acknowledgement of Country is and the different types (3-minute read): [https://www.indigenous.gov.au/contact-us/welcome\\_acknowledgement-country](https://www.indigenous.gov.au/contact-us/welcome_acknowledgement-country)

##### **Further ideas for whole school celebrations**

- When you host your celebrations, print out copies of the NAIDOC Week posters (with amended dates) and place them around the school, in the school newsletters and on the school website.
- Host a community BBQ or morning tea. This event could be a chance to raise money for Indigenous charities, such as those supporting language and literacy programs with First Nations students.
- Host an art show (virtual or in person) with student work from your NAIDOC Week activities.
- Host a celebration at the end of a community project as part of a collaboration with local Indigenous groups.
- Work with a local First Nations artist or a landscaper to create an outdoor learning area that includes a native garden with local Indigenous plants. Celebrate the opening of the garden area with a special event.
- Host local Indigenous community organisations or members, or take part in excursions to learn more about local Indigenous sites, art galleries/exhibitions, or local Indigenous-led events.

On the final day of your 'Heal Country, heal our nation' celebrations, the whole school may come together to share their learning and artworks, in a whole school and/or community celebration. Beginning with an Acknowledgement of Country, schools may choose to have a bush foods morning tea or BBQ and may invite parents and community members to view their chosen whole school activity (Year 6 mural, Indigenous plants garden area, art show etc.).

### NAIDOC Week Planning

Some whole school activities, such as a fundraiser, morning tea or larger project like a garden or mural, will need advance planning to be unveiled during your NAIDOC Week celebrations.

If inviting First Nations community members to share their time and expertise, be mindful of remunerating people appropriately.

Consider also how your school might support students and their families to become more knowledgeable and informed about the Traditional Custodians of the land in the local area, as well as events, community activities and ways they can connect with and support the local First Nations community. This might include sharing relevant media and local stories in the school newsletter, working in partnership with local groups, and supporting staff to undertake professional learning about incorporating Indigenous content into the curriculum.

Due to the current pandemic situation, in parts of Australia there may be restrictions on holding events, and requirements for maintaining social distancing. Schools in affected areas should consult with their state Department of Health and consider holding virtual events instead or postponing events until later in the year.

### Beyond NAIDOC Week

Many of these ideas can be done at any time throughout the school year. Consider creating a committee to plan additional opportunities for celebrating First Nations histories, cultures and perspectives.

### Useful resources

NAIDOC Week poster: <https://www.naidoc.org.au/resources/get-your-poster>

Attending Indigenous-led events: <https://australianstogether.org.au/resources-2/attending-indigenous-led-events/>

Professional learning resources for teaching Indigenous content: <https://australianstogether.org.au/professional-learning/>

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## HASS – History

For First Nations Peoples and non-Indigenous Australians, NAIDOC Week is a celebration of the rich cultural story that extends thousands of years into the past, and the lasting and significant impact that Indigenous knowledges and contributions continue to have in shaping Australia now and in the future.

Activities in this section explore the unbroken and continuing historical connection of First Nations people have with Country, and the importance of celebrating the NAIDOC Week as a community.

### NAIDOC Week poster

#### Primary

Explain to students what NAIDOC Week is and how it can be celebrated. If NAIDOC Week has already passed, you may show student media or news articles from this year's celebrations, and explain that due to the school holidays, your school is celebrating at a different time.

As a class, create a shared piece of writing or poster to show what students now know about NAIDOC Week. This can be added to throughout the week as you work through the learning activities.

#### Senior primary to Early secondary

Students explore the NAIDOC Week website and work in pairs to write down facts, questions and information to create a class shared learning poster.

#### Secondary

Students research the history of NAIDOC week, and create a poster or visual art/digital media response that encourages communities to come together to celebrate it. A written report or response could be included to explain the importance of NAIDOC week and the theme of 'Heal Country'.

**Useful resources**

The NAIDOC Week website contains useful information on the history of NAIDOC Week: <https://www.naidoc.org.au>

It also has downloadable posters and resources for schools in the Resources tab: <https://www.naidoc.org.au/get-involved/2021-theme>

**A vast history: timeline****All year levels**

As a class, discuss what we know about time – discussion may begin by asking:

- How old are the students?
- How old is the oldest person they know?
- How old is the oldest building they know?
- How long have non-Indigenous people lived in Australia?
- How long have First Nations Peoples lived on this continent?

Upper primary and secondary students can be encouraged to share their knowledge of time in relation to other cultures in the world as well.

Introduce students to the understanding that First Nations people have continuously occupied, lived on and maintained these lands now called Australia and the Torres Strait Islands for 65,000 years (Weule and James, 2017). Comparisons could be made with famous landmarks, such as the Great Wall of China, the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt, the Colosseum in Rome, or eras such as the Metal Ages, the Medieval Age, and so on.

As a class, create a timeline that shows the perspective of how long this is in comparison to British occupation. For example, you could use a piece of string and pegs with cards showing various events. Secondary students could create a rough timeline on the board, which can be added to following the next activities.

**Useful resources**

*Australia: The Land Where Time Began* is a timeline of Aboriginal occupation of Australia: [https://austhrutime.com/australian\\_aboriginal\\_occupation\\_timeline.htm](https://austhrutime.com/australian_aboriginal_occupation_timeline.htm)

**The land where time began: view and discuss****Middle primary to Secondary**

As a class, watch [First Footprints excerpt](#) (3:06). This is a short excerpt from the ABC TV series of the same name and shows archaeological discoveries and rock art that's been dated at over 50,000 years old.

After viewing the video, ask students to answer questions such as:

- How long have Ronald Lami Lami's People lived in this area?
- What do the different layers of paintings tell us about the history and lives of Namunidjbuk People?
- How long ago did the marsupial lions die out?

**The land where time began: NAIDOC Week poster****Primary**

Encourage students to add new information to the class NAIDOC Week poster and to add any new questions they now have after watching the video.

**Useful resources**

*First Footprints* (3:06) is a short video showing rock art, landscapes and archaeological sites that could be used as an introduction to the concepts of Country and the connection First Nations people have to the land: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrqW3Lt7THw>. This's an excerpt from the book by Scott Cane, *First Footprints: The epic story of the First Australians*, Allen & Unwin.

**Ancient artifacts: read and respond****Secondary**

Investigate some of the sources for dating ancient artifacts and what they can tell us about life in the ancient period (for example, tools and technology, food sources, lifestyles).

Invite students to read '[Defining Moments: Mungo Lady](#)' from the National Museum of Australia. After reading the article, ask students to answer questions such as:

- Who was Mungo Lady?
- Why was the discovery important?

- Put the land-based events in order from earliest to most recent. (If you completed the timeline activity above, students could compare the timelines and see where the events listed in the article would fit.)
- The remains of Mungo Lady and Mungo Man were returned to the custodians of the land – why do you think that is important?

### Useful resources

The National Museum of Australia's article on Mungo Lady gives students a useful overview of this important discovery (4-minute read): <https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/mungo-lady>

The article is just one in the NMA's *Defining Moments in Australian History* series: <https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments>

Paul Daley's article from *The Guardian* is a bit lengthy (3100 words approx.) but provides more detail for teachers on Mungo Lady and Mungo Man, and the process of getting the artifacts repatriated to Australia: [Finding Mungo Man: the moment Australia's story suddenly changed](#)

### Repatriation: letter

#### Secondary

There are many artifacts from indigenous peoples in museums around the world, including body parts. Research some of the campaigns working to return these to their ancestral lands (such as the Office of the Arts Indigenous repatriation program), and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's perspectives (such as the article, 'The Power of Repatriation'). Students could respond by investigating a particular artifact and writing a letter to the museum where it is stored explaining why it should be returned and the cultural significance of returning stolen artifacts.

### Useful resources

The Australian Government's Office of the Arts *Indigenous repatriation* page includes the short video (2:33): <https://www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/cultural-heritage/indigenous-repatriation>

NITV's article, 'The Power of Repatriation: Returning stolen Indigenous remains and artefacts to where they rightfully belong', explores the impact repatriation has on one community (4-minute read): <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2020/04/22/power-repatriation-returning-stolen-indigenous-remains-and-artefacts-where-they>

This article, 'Return of Cultural Heritage', has links to work that Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (AIATSIS) have done to repatriate Indigenous artifacts from overseas museums: <https://aiatsis.gov.au/about/what-we-do/return-cultural-heritage>

### Invite a local First Nations speaker

#### All year levels

Schools are encouraged to build and maintain relationships with local Indigenous-led organisations, and engage community representatives to speak with your class or school about the local area – for example, they may speak about Indigenous stories, the history of the area or significant sites in your suburb or city. As NAIDOC Week falls in the school holidays in 2021 and is usually a busy time, this can be done at any time of year. It's important to ensure that appropriate protocols are in place when working with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and communities, including remuneration for their time.

You can contact representatives of your local First Nations community through agencies, such as Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups, Lands Councils, Language and Culture Nests or groups, or Local Councils.

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### HASS – Geography

The continent of Australia, including the Torres Strait Islands, has been occupied by First Nations Peoples for thousands of years. Over time, complex clan and kinship groups formed into nations, with each nation having distinct languages, cultures, food sources, stories and songs. First Nations people's connection to Country is a relationship – a responsibility to care for and protect Country for future generations. The call to 'Heal Country' asks for everyone to protect the land, waters and sacred sites on this continent from damage and exploitation that will prevent future generations from being able to care for and enjoy the land in the same way.

In these activities, students learn the archaeological significance and histories of Indigenous nations around Australia and in their local areas.

Students then investigate landmarks, geography, archaeology and Indigenous foods and plants in their local areas and explore their own connection to the land and community that they're a part of.

Caring for the land is integral to maintaining the cultural connection to the land for First Nations Peoples, and students are invited to explore what caring for the land means for First Nations Peoples, as well as how they can take action and care for their local environment. Students are also invited to consider the impacts of environmental damage to the land, and to people, and the ways that caring for the land can be a means of healing people and relationships. Students can also make connections between 'Healthy Country' and caring for the land as an ongoing, lifelong endeavour, not just a once-a-year event, like Clean Up Australia Day or Landcare Day.

## Glossary

Terms that may need to be introduced to students:

**soak:** a source of water in Australian deserts; also *soakage*.

## Aboriginal nations and languages: mapping

### All year levels

Introduce students to the [AIATSIS map](#), which shows Indigenous nations, and the [Gambay First Languages Map](#).

Ask students what they already know about Indigenous nations and Indigenous languages. Primary students could add key points to their NAIDOC Week shared writing or poster (from the HASS History section).

Explain to students that the AIATSIS map shows the Traditional Custodians of each area, and it represents different language and kinship groups. The Traditional Custodians of each area are still living on, working with and managing these areas.

Ask students to find the Indigenous nation for your local area and the local Indigenous language/s.

Using the Gambay First Languages Map, students may also create a poster of the local Indigenous languages, learn and practise words in local First Nations languages, or find out the Indigenous names for local landmarks.

### Useful resources

The *AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia* shows the general locations of larger groupings of First Nations Peoples across the continent. It can be a valuable addition to the classroom wall as a visual prompt for students to recognise the diversity of First Nations cultures: <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia>

For help with pronunciation of First Nations language groups and locations, the *Gambay First Languages Map* is a valuable interactive resource: <https://gambay.com.au/>

First Languages Australia has many links to language projects and websites that may be of interest: <https://www.firstlanguages.org.au/>

## Torres Strait Islands: read, view, discuss

### All year levels

As a class, take a look at a couple of other sources about the Torres Strait Islands (see 'Useful resources' below). You may also have some books on the Torres Strait Islands and Peoples in the library that could be brought to the classroom.

Watch the ABC Education video [Visit the Torres Strait!](#) (3:34).

- Discuss as a class:
- What's the population of the islands?
- Torres Strait Islanders have their own flag. What do the symbols on it represent?
- What do the kids in the story love about living in the Torres Strait?
- What would they change?
- What do you love about where you live? Are there things you'd change too?

## Torres Strait Islands: adding to posters

### Primary

Having explored some of the resources about the Torres Strait Islands add any new facts that students have learnt to the class brainstorm/poster.

### Useful resources

This article from AIATSIS explains the history and symbolism of the Torres Strait Islander flag (2-minute read): <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/torres-strait-islander-flag>

The ABC Education video *Visit the Torres Strait!* shows the Torres Strait Islands through the eyes of children who live there (3:34): <https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/media/2182257/visit-the-torres-strait->

The Deadly Story website has a comprehensive and easy-to-understand explanation of the culture, language and history of the Torres Strait Islands and its people. It also includes the flag, a map and three videos from the State Library of Queensland's series, *Re-Told, The Myths and Legends of the Torres Strait* (8-minute read): [https://www.deadlystory.com/page/culture/articles/World\\_s\\_Indigenous\\_Peoples\\_Day/Torres\\_Strait\\_Islander\\_people](https://www.deadlystory.com/page/culture/articles/World_s_Indigenous_Peoples_Day/Torres_Strait_Islander_people)

SBS has a '10 things you may not know' article about the Torres Strait Islands (2-minute read), which includes a short video explaining the flag (0:49) and a trailer for the series *Ailan Kastom* exploring customs, traditions and beliefs (8:20): <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2016/09/29/10-things-you-may-not-know-about-torres-strait-islands>

The Torres Strait Island Regional Council has a clear map of the islands: <http://www.tsirc.qld.gov.au/our-communities>

### Virtual tours: viewing landmarks

#### All year levels

Demonstrate how to use Google Earth and Google Street View to virtually explore landmarks such as Uluru, Kakadu National Park, the Kimberley National Park, Ningaloo Reef, Gariwerd (the Grampians), the Blue Mountains and the Great Barrier Reef.

#### Useful resources

These virtual tours can be used to show students the variety of different landscapes, flora and fauna that can be found in Australia and the Torres Strait. They're a starting point for learning more about significant Indigenous landmarks and places. Teachers are encouraged to explore similar resources in their own regions.

- Uluru from Parks Australia: <https://parksaustralia.gov.au/uluru/discover/virtual-tour/>
- Kakadu from Parks Australia: <https://parksaustralia.gov.au/kakadu/discover/virtual-tour/>
- Blue Mountains, Dorrigo, Kosciuszko, Coffs Coast, Sydney Harbour, Mungo, Arwarra from WilderQuest by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service: <https://wilderquest.nsw.gov.au/campfire360>
- Ningaloo Reef from Street View: <https://goo.gl/maps/QNj4uMtESueHJetm8>
- Kimberley with Street View: <https://goo.gl/maps/qw5ZsYWPECmVM8xH6>
- Coffs Coast of NSW, where Uncle Mark introduces the viewer to Country and shares the Yuludarla (dolphin) story, from WilderQuest by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service: <https://wilderquest.nsw.gov.au/campfire360>
- Great Barrier Reef with David Attenborough's project. Each section of the map has videos and information on the history of the reef, impacts on the health of the reef and taking action for the future: <https://attenboroughsreef.com/>
- The Newcastle area, from City of Newcastle, as it was when the Awabakal and Worimi People lived traditionally within the lands, with stories on the cultural significance of the site: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbMqrQd2Fsl&feature=youtu.be>

### Landmarks: table of facts

#### Junior primary

As a class, create a table with at least five columns. The headings of the columns could be:

- Geographical landmarks (e.g. Uluru)
- Location
- Native plants found in the area
- Native animals found in the area
- Indigenous placenames.

Model completing a table with students to show the area on a map of Australia and list the geographical landmarks of the area, Indigenous plants, animals, and First Nations placenames and other connections to the area.

As a class, or in small groups, students can research a chosen region, through books in your library or online resources, and add the facts they find to the class table.

### Mapping landmarks: your local area

#### Junior to Middle primary

*Nations and locations:* Give students a blank map of your state and have them colour in the map to show the local Indigenous nations in your area.

**Landmarks:** As a class, draw a shared map of your local area, or use an existing map, and identify and colour in local Indigenous, geographical and community landmarks.

**Naming:** Have students correctly identify and match local landmarks and geographical features with the First Nations names if known.

**Mural:** Create a class mural of the local area and invite students to create and add landmarks using found materials and art supplies. To do this, the shared map of your local area could be divided up into sections, and individual students or groups of students could recreate their section of the map and the landmarks in it, bringing the sections together at the end, to create the mural.

### **Celebrate Country: travel brochure**

#### **Senior primary to Early secondary**

Students work independently or in small groups to research a chosen region and create a travel brochure on that region. The brochure could include:

- location (e.g. Uluru)
- geographical landmarks
- native plants found in the area
- native animals found in the area
- indigenous placenames
- other Indigenous connections to the area.

### **Reporting on waterways**

#### **Secondary**

Water's a vital resource in Australia. For First Nations Peoples, water has material, cultural and spiritual significance. Students investigate a local waterway (river, creek, waterhole, sea, lake, **soak** or spring in the community), and present a report on:

- location
- sources of water (e.g. rainfall, upstream rivers/dams)
- average rainfall in the area
- local climate
- geographical landmarks
- native plants found in the area
- native animals found in the area
- Indigenous placenames
- other Indigenous connection to the area.

### **Naming of landmarks: mini presentation**

#### **Upper primary to Secondary**

Many Australian placenames are from First Nations languages, including waterways, mountains, rivers and creeks, as well as developed areas such as roads, streets, towns and suburbs.

To get started, watch an episode of *This Place* and the *Behind the News* clip (2:43): [Indigenous Place Names](#).

In pairs, students then research the names of local/state places and landmarks and identify their origins. Look for local landmarks or places that use Indigenous names, and if they have a special meaning. Students share their findings with the class.

#### **Useful resources**

This video from the ABC's *This Place* series describes the origins of placenames in Wathaurung Country (3:42): <https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/media/3475817/place-names-in-wadawurrung-country.htm>

Local option – the full *This Place* series is available on ABC iView, where you may be able to find an episode about your local area: <https://iview.abc.net.au/show/this-place>

BTN's clip, *Indigenous Place Names*, looks at the increasing use of First Nations placenames (2:43): <https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/indigenous-place-names/11164046>

NITV's article, 'Indigenous meanings of Australian town names', lists Indigenous meanings of many Australian town names, has accessible language and could be suitable for middle primary, senior primary and early secondary classes

to read independently (7-minute read): <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2016/08/03/indigenous-meanings-australian-town-names>

The Australian Museum has a 'Place names chart' of Indigenous placenames in and around Sydney: <https://australian.museum/learn/cultures/atsi-collection/sydney/place-names-chart/>. You may be able to track down something similar for your area online.

### **Water as a vital resource: letter to government**

#### **Secondary**

Invite students to research issues affecting water supplies in Australia, such as drought, climate change, logging, Murray–Darling Basin management, competing interests from farming. Students might respond by writing a letter to the relevant local, state and federal members of parliament outlining their concerns and what they feel should be done to address the issue.

### **Land use and sustainability: persuasive article**

#### **Secondary**

Students research food production and land use in Australia, including traditional farming methods inherited from European settlers (wool, lamb and beef; wheat, oats and rice). When researching, they should consider whether the farming methods are sustainable and suited to the Australian landscape, and what could be done to make farming more sustainable.

Students can then investigate Indigenous farming practices, using the resources provided, and write a persuasive article outlining why we should move to more sustainable, localised farming practices to help heal the land.

#### **Useful resources**

Deadly Story's webpage, *Food and Agriculture*, outlines some of the sustainable agricultural practices used by First Nations People and explains some of the land management practices used: [https://www.deadlystory.com/page/culture/Life\\_Lore/Food](https://www.deadlystory.com/page/culture/Life_Lore/Food). It includes a number of useful clips for students' research – allow up to 30 minutes for reading and viewing.

'Rethinking Indigenous Australia's agricultural past' is an article based on a Radio National interview, which outlines the depth of understanding about managing plants and animals that led to ingenuity of farming practices used by First Nations Peoples, such as the Budj Bim eel traps (6-minute read): <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/bushtelegraph/rethinking-indigenous-australias-agricultural-past/5452454>

This article, 'Australia's hidden agricultural legacy', has easy to access explanations of different farming practices including fire management, and yam, eel and grain harvesting (4-minute read): <https://www.integratesustainability.com.au/2019/08/07/australias-hidden-agricultural-legacy/>

### **Healing Country: case studies**

#### **Secondary**

Using the case studies listed, students work in groups to investigate the ways in which First Nations people are working to heal Country. Students can undertake further research to find more information on the specific project or others that are similar.

Students can be allocated or choose from:

- The WA Land Care Network, which has a number of projects to choose from in their Aboriginal Collaboration Case Study Series (4-minute reads): <http://www.landcarewa.org.au/resources/case-studies/>
- The Queensland Government's Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program, which "partners with First Nations communities to care for land and sea country" (4-minute read): <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/plants-animals/conservation/community/land-sea-rangers/about-rangers>
- The 10 Deserts Project, an Indigenous-led land-management partnership that recognises the link between healthy Country and healthy people (3-minute read): <https://10deserts.org>

OR one of *Local Biodiversity Outlooks'* case studies on Indigenous-led biodiversity projects:

- Burning the bush (3-minute read): <https://localbiodiversityoutlooks.net/case-studies/story-from-the-northern-territory-australia-dabboh-and-smoke-money-burning-the-bush-for-people-and-country/>
- Controlling invasive weeds (2-minute read): <https://localbiodiversityoutlooks.net/case-studies/control-of-invasive-pond-apple-infestations-by-indigenous-rangers-in-a-world-heritage-area-north-east-queensland-australia/>

- Using World Heritage to heal (2-minute read): <https://localbiodiversityoutlooks.net/case-studies/world-heritage-as-a-tool-to-heal-gunditjmara-country-budj-bim-indigenous-protected-area-australia/>
- Monitoring sea grass (2-minute read): <https://localbiodiversityoutlooks.net/case-studies/monitoring-seagrass-in-the-torres-strait-australia/>

OR a project local to your area.

### **The importance of land: First Nations perspectives**

#### **Upper primary to Secondary**

Understanding the importance of land, the connections to land and the integral role of land in shaping identity and maintaining wellbeing for First Nations Peoples is important for students.

As a class, read the text and watch the short video (02:18) in the article 'The importance of land' (3-minute read): <https://australianstogether.org.au/discover/indigenous-culture/the-importance-of-land/>

After reading and watching, students might choose words or phrases that resonate with them and respond by using those phrases as inspiration to create:

- their own statement of connection to a place
- an artwork to describe the connection
- a collage of words and images that are used to describe connection and land

OR

Students might work independently or in small groups to explore concepts through art, words or song using one of the subheadings from the article: Connection to Country, The way we treat land matters, Disconnection from Country, Living together on this land.

### **Special places: nature walk and creative response**

#### **All year levels**

As a class, go for a nature walk in or near your school. Encourage students to use their five senses to immerse themselves in the experience. Students may collect items such as leaves, small branches, feathers, flower petals, gum nuts, etc., for a nature collage or to decorate their creative response.

After the walk students can choose to:

- create a nature collage using found items, or create an artwork showing their special place
- write a poem that describes their feelings and connections to their school or special place
- write a descriptive piece for the school newsletter explaining what they love about the school area
- write a letter to a family member, local community or penpal to share their feelings about the local area.

### **Looking after Country: getting involved**

#### **All year levels**

Everyone's responsible for looking after land, and that begins at a local level. As a class, research what's happening in your local area to care for and manage the local environment.

As a starting point, you could contact your local council, local First Nations groups or government Landcare/ environment departments to find out what's happening and how the class/school could get involved.

### **Who takes care of the community?: discussion and poster**

#### **Junior primary**

As a class, brainstorm a list of people who look after the land and the community – firefighters, rangers, farmers, local councils, gardeners, garbage collectors, etc. Discuss how each of these people do this.

Ask students what things they do themselves to look after the land and areas that they live, learn and play in (such as throwing rubbish in the bin, keeping their yard tidy). Discuss why it's important that people have caring roles in the community. What would happen if one of these groups stopped working?

Discuss how First Nations people have cared for the land for thousands of years, using strategies such as sustainable farming, only taking what they need, using the natural resources to create tools and equipment, and looking after the animals.

Students work in pairs to come up with ways they can be caretakers for the land and create a poster to promote looking after the land. The posters should recognise or celebrate First Nations Peoples or Indigenous landmarks, plants or animals in the area.

**NAIDOC Week Caring for Country Award****Middle primary to Secondary**

Break students into groups. Provide each group with a Winner Profile from the NAIDOC Week Awards – Caring for Country section from a previous year. Select 'Caring for Country' from the award drop-down box: <https://www.naidoc.org.au/awards/winner-profiles>.

Students work as group to answer:

- Who won the award?
- What were the reasons they won the award?
- What did they do to care for Country?
- What ideas can we learn from them that we could include in our school?

**Useful resources****NAIDOC Week Awards**

The NAIDOC Week website has a list of past award winners: <https://www.naidoc.org.au/awards/winner-profiles>

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**Language and Literacy**

Of the 250 languages spoken by First Nations people at the time of European colonisation, more than 90 per cent are considered endangered today (DITRDC – Office for the Arts, 2019). Language is more than just a communication tool – it creates connection to culture, self-esteem and a sense of identity that's lost when languages aren't preserved. When Indigenous languages die out, the wealth of knowledge, stories and songs that build and maintain the connection to Country are also lost. There are many projects in place to record, preserve and reinvigorate Indigenous languages to ensure they are preserved for future generations.

Students are encouraged to learn about, share and celebrate the diversity and beauty of Indigenous languages as an act of healing Country. Activities in this section focus on recognising, learning, celebrating and engaging with Indigenous languages and students expressing their own connections to the places they live, learn and play.

**Glossary**

*Terms that may need to be introduced to students prior to teaching:*

**fast:** firmly fixed in place; not easily moved; securely attached: to make fast.

**soak:** a source of water in Australian deserts; also *soakage*.

**tend:** to care for.

**totemic ancestor:** the original form of a totem, a natural plant, object or animal, as it was in the Creation period.

**NAIDOC acronym****All year levels**

Discuss as a class:

- What's an acronym?
- What are some other acronyms students are familiar with?
- What does NAIDOC stand for?

**Engaging with Language in story and song: creative response****Primary**

Invite students to watch, read and listen to stories and songs about Country in First Nations languages. Make use of your school or local library to find appropriate stories.

Students might respond to a text by:

- acting out the story using drama and costumes
- working as a class to retell the story in the correct sequence
- creating a dictionary of new words and their meanings.

### Useful resources

The resources below provide an introduction to First Nations languages through story and song. They can be used in the activities above, as a listening station in literacy activities, or for students to explore in quiet time:

- ABC Little Yarns Podcast: <https://www.abc.net.au/kidslisten/little-yarns/>
- *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* read in the Yuibera and Yuwibara languages: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-06-03/very-hungry-caterpillar-translated-into-yuwi-language/10924188>
- ABC Education's *Dust Echoes* is a series of animated stories from Central Arnhem Land: <https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/digibook/2570774/dust-echoes>
- Learn to count in Kurna (Indigenous language from Adelaide and Adelaide Plains): <https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/media/2007357/learn-to-count-in-kurna-htm>
- The Indigenous Literacy Foundation produces books in Indigenous languages and has three animations of stories in First Nations languages on their YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcZCEkQrOgz3PYr0syUVLY675q2sE3ow>
- List of First Nations picture books: <https://www.bountyparents.com.au/expert-advice/indigenous-australian-picture-books/?jwsourc=c>

### Engaging with Language

#### Secondary

As a class, read the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) article, 'Living Languages', to explore the importance of Indigenous languages to Country, culture and identity.

Split the class into four groups. Each group watches one of the four videos in the article, then they discuss and confirm what they've learnt about the importance of Indigenous languages. Two representatives of each group volunteer or are selected to present their learning to the whole class.

#### Useful resources

The AIATSIS article, 'Living Languages' (4-minute read), includes a number of short videos exploring the topic (3:40, 2:29, 3:51, 7:12): <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/indigenous-australian-languages>.

### Books by First Nations authors and illustrators: read and respond

#### Junior primary

#### *Welcome to Country* by Aunty Joy Murphy

Before reading the book to the class, ask students to make predictions about what they think the book might be about, and explain that the book is a "Welcome to Country" that's an invitation to the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people of Melbourne and surrounds.

Read *Welcome to Country* to the class. During the reading, you may need to pause and check terminology understanding with students (ancestors, Elders, etc.).

Discuss with students the symbols used in the illustrations and how they're used to add meaning to the text.

As a class, listen to Aunty Joy's welcome, 'Wominjeka (Welcome to Country) – Joy Murphy' from 2010 (02:53): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeBWultrpW8>

#### *My Country* by Ezekiel Kwaymullina and Sally Morgan

#### Middle primary to Early secondary

Read *My Country* to the class. This story uses illustrations and text to explain the sense of belonging that a young girl feels for her Country. Encourage students to respond to the story by sharing their own sense of belonging to the land, to place, to Country, and how it shapes their identities.

Students may also wish to respond as a class by writing a class letter to the author to share what they learnt from the text and their responses.

Students may respond by coming up with creative ways to share their family history and family connection to place — such as through song, art or dance. This might be included as a home-learning activity for students to find out more about their own family history.

### Books, poetry and songs by First Nations authors and illustrators: compare and contrast

#### Secondary

Share a selection of picture books that explore the importance of Country with students and invite them to respond by comparing and contrasting two or more texts (check with your school or local library and see 'Useful resources')

for ideas). They should highlight how the texts represent a connection to Country, the different perspectives the books explore, and reflect on how the text impacts on their personal understanding of the world and human experience. Invite students to read a picture book independently and identify the way the author and illustrator suggest connection to Country/place through language features such as alliteration, metaphor, onomatopoeia and personification, and the use of colour, symmetry and pattern in images.

Students could also read and compare poems by First Nations poets. The collection by Red Room Poetry, *Guwayu – For All Times*, is a good place to start. A number of the poems in the collection are also published on the [Red Room Poetry website](#).

Songs are another option for secondary students to compare and contrast.

### Useful resources

Some suggested **picture books** from First Nations authors and illustrators include:

- *Brother Moon* by Maree McCarthy Yoelu and illustrated by Samantha Fry
- *Respect* by Fay Stewart-Muir and Sue Lawson and illustrated by Lisa Kennedy
- *The Little Corroboree Frog* by Tracey Holton-Ramirez and illustrated by Angela Ramirez
- *Little Bird's Day* by Sally Morgan and illustrated by Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr
- *Sea Country* by Aunty Patsy Cameron and illustrated by Lisa Kennedy
- *Benny Bungarra's Big Bush Clean-Up* by Sally Morgan and illustrated by Ambelin Kwaymullina
- *Dingo's Tree* by Gladys and Jill Milroy
- *Cooee Mittigar* by Jasmine Seymour and illustrated by Leanne Mulgo Watson

The **poetry** collection, *Guwayu – For All Times*, is published by Magabala Books: <https://www.magabala.com/products/guwayu-for-all-times>

A playlist of **songs** in Language has been curated by AIATSIS: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/1AGsr7ME2iID9e2b6sBJU0?si=7394e2cec20b447e>

### Connection to Country: perspectives reflection

#### Secondary

In his book *Aranda Traditions* (1947, pp.30–31) anthropologist Theodor Strehlow discusses the connection that Gurra, a First Nations man, has with Country:

The whole countryside is his living, age-old family tree. The story of his own **totemic ancestor** is to [Gurra] the account of his own doings at the beginning of time, at the dim dawn of life, when the world as he knows it now was being shaped and moulded by all-powerful hands. He himself has played a part in that first glorious adventure, a part smaller or greater according to the original rank of the ancestor of whom he is the present reincarnated form ... Gurra said to me: 'The Ilbalintja **soak** has been defiled by the hands of white men ... no longer do men pluck up the grass and the weeds and sweep the ground clean around it; no longer do they care for the resting place of Karora ... [but] It still holds me **fast**; and I shall **tend** it while I can; while I live, and I shall love to gaze on this ancient soil.

Read the quote as a class, then ask students to write down what this quote brings to mind. The following prompts can then form the basis of a class discussion:

- How does this quote provide evidence of the connection First Nations people have with Country?
- In what ways do you think Gurra feels his connection to the land differently from colonists, or Western thinking more broadly? What evidence is there for this?
- All humans have an impact on the landscapes and ecosystems around them. Suggest the ways in which this impact is driven by the connection people have with the land around them.

#### Secondary

Read the article, '[Doug's Story](#)' and watch the included video clip (02:37). Invite students to discuss what they read and saw in Doug's story.

There are other stories within the same series on Australians Together's *Stories* page that students can explore: <https://australianstogether.org.au/stories>

Students might respond by:

- writing an article retelling a person's story as a news piece
- brainstorming ideas around how we can help to heal relationships when hurtful things have been done in the past

- write a manifesto for healing Country and repairing relationships with First Nations Peoples.

### Exploring the role of advocates and campaigns in the media: pair and share

#### Senior primary to Secondary

Students can work in pairs or small groups to explore current advocacy campaigns.

Half of the pairs or groups watch the *Raise the Age? Behind the News* video and the other half can watch *Aboriginal Flag Debate* (see 'Useful resources' below).

Encourage students to consider the different perspectives raised in the videos. What language is used to persuade the viewer? Whose point of view is being presented?

Students may present an overview of the campaign to another pair or group: What was the key concern? What are the arguments on each side? What do they think should happen next?

#### Useful resources

- *Behind the News* video, *Raise the Age?* (4:00): <https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/raise-the-age/12507078>
- *Behind the News* video, *Aboriginal Flag Debate* (3:44): <https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/aboriginal-flag-debate/11205394>

### Exploring the role of advocates and campaigns in the media: article summary

#### Secondary

Following the pair and share, the class can split up into three groups to review and summarise the three articles (see 'Useful resources' below) discussing the difficulties surrounding the use of the Aboriginal flag. The following questions can be considered:

- What is the controversy being explored in the article?
- What are the difficulties mentioned?
- Would this happen today?/Why is this happening today?

Students who've reviewed and summarised the same article come together to compare their understanding before presenting to the class.

#### Useful resources

- 'Aboriginal flag's absence from AFL's Indigenous Round highlights ongoing issues', ABC News (4-minute read): <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-08-18/aboriginal-flag-to-be-absent-for-afl-indigenous-round/12569346>
- 'Aboriginal flag rights debate prompts deeper discussion on Indigenous identity', ABC News (6-minute read): <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-11-13/aboriginal-flag-debate-discussion-of-identity/12873222>
- 'Commonwealth Sports Moments #4: Cathy Freeman carries the Aboriginal and Australian flags on victory laps at Victoria 1994', Commonwealth Games Federation's (7-minute read): <https://thecgf.com/stories/commonwealth-sports-moments-4-cathy-freeman-carries-aboriginal-and-australian-flags-victory>

### Perspectives in song: presentation

#### Middle primary to Secondary

In small groups, take a look at one of the songs that First Nations students from around Australia have put together in collaboration with Desert Pea Media.

Research and present a particular song's geographical context – the Country the singers are from – and analyse the lyrics to consider the challenges that are explored and the potential solutions that the singers raise for themselves and their communities.

For each video ask students to consider:

- What's the message of the kids' song?
- Why is it important for these kids to share their own stories (rather than have them told by someone else)?
- What approach do they take to representing themselves?

A list of suggested songs is included below. It's recommended that the suitability of each video is checked for your particular cohort.

#### Useful resources

The following songs from Desert Pea Media might be particularly useful for exploring the perspectives and challenges presented in the music videos. To view lyrics, select 'SHOW MORE' in the video description:

- Tagai Buway – 'Two Worlds': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0yWYvCj-ic>

- Irwarpaup ft. Tamyok – ‘Small Island Big Fight’: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Zflxj\\_fhrE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Zflxj_fhrE)
- B-Town Warriors – ‘People of the Red Sunset’: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Widykor9c5Y>
- Tagai Buway – ‘Culture Remainz’ (I am the Future): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75Vx3TpW3zc>
- The Gowrie Boys – ‘Take Me Home’: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGKtfctK-IQ>
- The Colli Crew – ‘Change The Game’: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0rJajbls-o>
- The Big M Crew - ‘Moree Madness’: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dv7D0khoRDw>
- Cairns Murri Crew - ‘Built to Last’: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdPvK80IUPo>

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Note: the activity, ‘Perspectives in Song’, has been sourced from Australians Together Year 7 Literature and Context resource ‘Whose experience? Whose perspective?’, which can be accessed for free by registering here: <https://australianstogether.org.au/education/curriculum-resources/>

### Special Places: creative response

#### All year levels

As a class, reflect on what connection to a place means to the students, and create a response that evokes the emotions of the place for them.

This might include:

- writing a letter to or about a place they love – describing the place, how it makes them feel, what they love to do there, how they care for it
- writing a letter to their future grandchildren describing their favourite place and what they’ll do to care for the place so that one day their grandchildren will be able to visit
- creating a slideshow with text and images about their chosen place
- writing a song (this video, *Our connection to the land*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=av3SeQpn37o> (03:29) might be used as inspiration for writing their song)
- creating an art collage about their place.

Consider sharing student work with classes of similar age students in different geographical areas. This provides students with an opportunity to connect with students in different areas and see the differences in landscapes as well as the shared connections they have to special places.

### Caretakers of place: home learning

#### All year levels

As a follow-up/home activity, students might interview an older person they know about their favourite place, and write a report including questions such as:

- What did the place look like in the past?
- What has changed?
- What things do they do to look after places that mean a lot to them?
- Do they remember a place that is no longer the same that they miss? What happened to it?

### What happens when the land is broken?: reflection

#### Secondary

*This activity may not be suitable for all student groups, so sensitivity is advised.*

The place we live, work and play are important to us. In this activity, students are invited to reflect on their favourite places, and what they might feel if something happened to that place. Teachers should help students make the connections between their connection to place, and the connections First Nations Peoples have to Country, and the importance of looking after the environment and living sustainably so future generations can enjoy that place.

Students might view images of before/after bushfires (and the subsequent regeneration) such as these from Kangaroo Island showing the effects of the 2020 bushfires (4-minute read): <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-18/kangaroo-island-bushfires-before-and-after-destruction/11970788?nw=0>

This article from *The Conversation*, ‘5 remarkable stories of flora and fauna in the aftermath of Australia’s horror bushfire season’, has short descriptions and images of good news stories after the fires (5-minute read): <https://theconversation.com/5-remarkable-stories-of-flora-and-fauna-in-the-aftermath-of-australias-horror-bushfire-season-155749>

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## Science

First Nations people have built up a sophisticated wealth of scientific knowledge and understanding from thousands of years of observing the lands and skies. This knowledge is used to manage the land and its resources, predict food and resource availability and to plan seasonal hunting, travelling, ceremonies and land management practices (ACARA 2019). This knowledge and the interconnectedness of seasons, plants, animals and people is central to the concept of caring for Country (ACARA 2019; Schnierer, Ellsmore & Schnierer 2011).

Since the recent bushfires that devastated Australia in 2019 and 2020, there's been an increased awareness of the need for greater respect for the land, a return to more sustainable land management practices and greater interest in 'firestick farming' and Indigenous land management (ACARA 2019).

In these activities, students learn how respecting Indigenous knowledge and understanding can lead to more sustainable land management practices, and the healing of Country. Students will learn more about Indigenous scientific knowledges, especially with regard to land management, the use of fire and the use of plants for food by learning about bush foods and their uses.

### Caring for the land: view and discuss

#### Middle primary to Early secondary

- Show the class this video of Bruce Pascoe talking about trees: [Chapter 6: Trees and Connection](#) (4:17).

Discuss or write answers to the following questions as a class or in pairs:

- Bruce Pascoe introduces us to the idea that Country is our mother and that trees are family. How would understanding the environment this way shape the way we care for it?
- What does the scar on the grey box tree tell us?
- Bruce Pascoe says everything is related and nothing is dead. What do you think he means by this?
- What do you think 'connection to Country' means?

### Fire for land management: view and discuss

#### Middle primary to Secondary

Show the class this video of Bruce Pascoe talking about fire: [Chapter 13: Fire](#) (3:32).

Split students into small groups to discuss or write answers to the following questions:

- How can fire help yield better crops?
- How was fire used to look after Country?

### Useful resources

View the two videos from ABC Education's DigiBook *Bruce Pascoe: Aboriginal Agriculture, Technology and Ingenuity* to watch author and historian, Bruce Pascoe, describe the connection that First Nations people have to the land through trees, and how fire has been used to farm and manage the land:

- *Chapter 6: Trees and connection* (04:17): <https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/digibook/3122184/chapter/6>
- *Chapter 13: Fire* (03:32): <https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/digibook/3122184/chapter/13>

### Fire for land management: discuss, research, report back

#### Secondary

Awareness of Indigenous fire management practices has been growing in recent times in response to both the climate crisis and recent bushfires. Invite students to discuss what they know about fire, management of land and Indigenous land management practices.

Students then research how fire can be used in land management to sustainably care for the land, and report back to the class.

### Useful resources

Areas of research might include:

- Cool burning – The Watarrka Foundation has a useful article, 'What is cool burning', that gives an overview of the topic (4-minute read): <http://www.watarrkafoundation.org.au/blog/aboriginal-fire-management-what-is-cool-burning>
- Seed germination (see 'Useful resources' for the 'Practical investigation: germinating native Australian seeds' activity below)

- A comparison of Indigenous use of fire and Western approaches – this article by Glen Kelly, [Karla Wongi Fire Talk](#) (pp. 11–13), has an overview of both approaches: <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/fire/karla-wongi-fire-talk.pdf>

These articles also provide some useful background information as a starting point for research:

- Landcare Australia (3-minute read): <https://landcareaustralia.org.au/project/traditional-aboriginal-burning-modern-day-land-management/>
- Kimberly Land Council (2-minute read): <https://www.klc.org.au/indigenous-fire-management>

The content elaborations and teacher background information for Years 7–10 has detailed background information on firestick farming, seed germination and Indigenous farming practices, 'Australian curriculum: Science Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross curriculum priority' (2019): <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/media/5157/ccp-tbi-7-10.pdf> (pp. 115–117, 143–146, 151–154, 181–184).

### Bush tucker: visual record

#### All year levels

Ask students what they know about bush foods or bush tucker. Is it something they've heard about, or tried before? Create a visual record, such as a class poster, of what they already know and the questions they have about bush tucker.

Students can work in small groups to learn which traditional food sources are available in your local area, adding their findings to the visual record. This information might be found by contacting local Indigenous communities or local native plant nurseries.

If you're hosting a morning tea or event to celebrate the NAIDOC Week theme, try to incorporate bush foods into the menu.

If your school or class is connecting with a local Indigenous group, you may ask them about local foods, and advice on bush tucker plants that could be included in a native garden for the school.

### Bush tucker: adding to posters

#### Primary

Watch the three short *Behind the News* clips on bush tucker as a class or in small groups and add new learnings and questions to the class poster.

#### Useful resources

These three short videos from *Behind the News* give easy-to-understand explanations of what bush tucker is and how it can be used and grown in gardens around Australia:

- *Bush Tucker Garden* (2:59): <https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/bush-tucker-garden/11724674>
- *Bush Tucker* (3:48): <https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/bush-tucker/10532360>
- *Bush Food* (3:40): <https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/bush-food/10530342>

### Bush tucker: research and recipes

#### Secondary

Watch *Australian native edible plants* from Gardening Australia (3:24): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vEiyP8-OJLU>

Students can respond by choosing a bush food and researching its uses as well as recipes that use that food. If ingredients are made available, students could host a cooking demonstration, record themselves making the recipe, or share what they found out, as a recipe book or poster display to be shared as part of the school celebrations.

#### Useful resources

EvokeAG is an Agrifood innovation community that shares innovative and sustainable agricultural ideas. Some of their feature articles include:

- 'Ripe opportunity for Australia's native bush foods industry' (6-minute read): <https://evokeag.com/ripe-opportunity-for-australias-native-bush-foods-industry/>
- 'Traceable and sustainable: The drivers behind Australia's booming Kakadu plum market' (6-minute read): <https://evokeag.com/australias-booming-kakadu-plum-market/>

### Practical investigation: germinating native Australian seeds

#### Secondary

One way to encourage students to connect with the concept of Healing Country is through experiences that encourage spending time in nature (like the earlier nature walk activity), as well as being immersed in the caretaking

of plants and animals. In this activity, students can improve school surroundings by planting native plants that will diversity the ecosystem and encourage native animal and insects.

Before beginning this practical task, watch Clarence Slockee from Gardening Australia explaining a range of strategies for germinating native Australian seeds (03:49): <https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/germinating-native-seeds/9432212>

Devise and test a method for improving the rate of seed germination for native Australian plants using smoke or fire, or both. Students may be able to harvest seeds from their local environment.

Next, write a report to evaluate the impact of fire on seed germination, using evidence from your experiment to support your response.

### Notes on safety and timing

This practical task is designed to allow for students to develop their own method for seed germination. Please note it's important you complete a thorough risk assessment before conducting this experiment, and only approve students' methods that are safe within your school context.

This task requires at least three weeks to allow for all seeds to germinate. This allows students to take their learning beyond the days set aside for exploration of the NAIDOC Week theme.

### Primary

Primary classes could be invited to watch the secondary students perform their testing and return to see and hear about the results.

### Useful resources

In this Gardening Australia clip, Clarence Slockee explains strategies for germinating native seeds (03:49): <https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/germinating-native-seeds/9432212>

*Note:* this activity, 'Practical investigation: germinating native Australian seeds', has been sourced from Australians Together Year 9 Science resource 'Protecting Australian ecosystems', which can be accessed for free by registering here: <https://australianstogether.org.au/education/curriculum-resources/>

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## The Arts

Indigenous art, including stories, drama, songs, music or other artistic mediums, is not just an aesthetic practice, but is an important communication tool to tell stories (Cameron, 2015). It's important to note that Indigenous art isn't homogenous and goes well beyond the heavily stereotyped dot paintings often associated with this style of art. Indigenous artworks are unique and vary greatly depending on the artist and style, and the language, nation and landscape the artist draws inspiration from. When introducing artworks to students, it's important to highlight where the art is from, who the artist is, and that these images represent one way of telling a story or showing a symbol, and it has a special meaning to the artist and their community.

The art of each Indigenous nation is considered sacred and tells stories of Creation and life on Country. When a First Nations artist chooses to create artistic representations of Country, and the stories and knowledges of their lands, they draw on symbols of that land. Because of the significance of these symbols, it's not appropriate for non-Indigenous people to attempt to recreate or retell sacred stories using Indigenous symbols or artworks. This is called 'cultural appropriation'. When creating art of historical or sacred information, the artist must be given permission before proceeding. Many artworks contain layers of meaning (Cameron, 2015) that speak to distinct levels of knowledge – those that the public would understand, those that adults would understand and a deeper ceremonial or spiritual understanding that only certain members of First Nations Peoples would understand. Artists would need to understand all the levels of knowledge to correctly use the symbols, repetition, colour and pattern to tell the story at the different levels of meaning.

The resources section below has some reference material if teachers would like to explore the concerns and challenges around using Indigenous art and symbols as teaching tools. Because symbols are developed within local community, and draw on stories, landscapes, animals and plants of that area, in the first instance teachers should try to find examples of symbols used by Indigenous communities in their local areas. If using images sourced online, the artist and location of the symbols should be referenced and acknowledged.

In these activities, students listen to and view Indigenous artworks, and learn more about the stories shown in the art, and the ways that art can represent Country and connections to a place. Students learn about First Nations

artists and respond in ways that share their learning and understanding of the importance of art to story, culture and connection.

### Useful resources on cultural appropriation and the use of Indigenous art

The Japingka Aboriginal Art Gallery site has a detailed explanation of different symbols and their meanings, as well as explaining some of the sensitivities around using Indigenous symbols: <https://japingkaaboriginalart.com/articles/aboriginal-art-symbols/>

Artlandish Aboriginal Art Gallery provides an explanation of symbols used in Indigenous art: <https://www.aboriginal-art-australia.com/aboriginal-art-library/symbolism-in-australian-indigenous-art/>

### Indigenous art: gallery excursion

#### All year levels

As a class or year level, explore the artwork of First Nations artists in your local area by visiting a gallery, or doing a virtual gallery tour. You may also have some books on the topic in your school library.

Many First Nations artists create artworks from natural materials, including using ochre and clay for painting. Some Indigenous paintings can be seen in rock art that's been preserved on Country in caves across the continent.

#### Useful resources

The links below are an introduction to some of the more well-known Indigenous artworks and styles. Although there are similarities in artistic styles, there's also diversity in the art of each region and from each artist. Teachers are encouraged to seek out the work of local First Nations artists and to view their work with students.

- Aboriginal rock art around Australia: <https://www.austrialiangeographic.com.au/topics/history-culture/2016/03/top-7-aboriginal-rock-art-sites/>
- Rock art in Gariwerd (the Grampians), Victoria: <https://www.visitgrampians.com.au/see-do/culture/indigenous-culture/aboriginal-rock-art-sites>
- Rock art in the Kimberly region, Western Australia – also see 'Rock Art' tab: <https://rockartaustralia.org.au>
- National Gallery of Australia: <https://nga.gov.au/collections/atsi/>
- Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre – Museums Victoria: <https://museumsvictoria.com.au/bunjilaka/>
- Rock art and shell midden sites in New South Wales: <https://www.aboriginalheritage.org/resources/resources-360virtualtours/#360art>

### Class or Graduation mural

#### Upper primary to Secondary

Art is used to tell stories and create connections.

Senior primary and secondary classes could work with a local First Nations artist-in-residence to create a school graduation or class mural that celebrates the local area, the school and the stories of the school community. This mural could be a living artwork, added to by each graduating year.

### Indigenous music: profile presentation

#### Middle primary to Secondary

Students work in small groups to research and present on Indigenous instruments through listening to Indigenous music and musicians.

OR

Students work in small groups to research and present on a contemporary First Nations musician. Students create profiles of a chosen artist exploring questions such as:

- Who are they?
- What's their Country?
- What's their music style?

If possible, students can include or play themselves an example of music in their presentation.

#### Useful resources

ABC Triple J's Unearthed website has many articles, interviews, and tracks: [https://www.triplejuneearthed.com/indigenous?field\\_unearthed\\_campaign\\_tid=16](https://www.triplejuneearthed.com/indigenous?field_unearthed_campaign_tid=16)

The 2020 NAIDOC Week teaching resource has an extensive list of Aboriginal languages and songs, see p. 9 onwards: <https://www.naidoc.org.au/sites/default/files/files/2020-naidoc-teaching-resources.pdf>

### NAIDOC Week Award winners: art analysis

#### Middle primary to Secondary

Print out or arrange digital access to the work of past winners of the NAIDOC Artist of the Year Awards, via the Winner Profiles. Select 'Artist of the Year' from the award drop-down box: <https://www.naidoc.org.au/awards/winner-profiles>.

Encourage students to describe the artworks in relation to colour, tone, composition, texture, mood, style, materials and perspective.

### Contemporary artists: creative response

#### Middle primary to Secondary

Invite students to work independently or in small groups to choose an area of the arts and research contemporary First Nations artists and their work. They may then respond by creating a poster, digital presentation, group presentation, or write a biography of that person and their work.

For example:

- Dance
- Music
- Digital media
- Film making
- Visual arts
- Sculpture
- Fabric/woven materials

### First Nations artists: report or presentation

#### Secondary

Invite students to research First Nations artists from different parts of Australia and the Torres Strait Islands. Students may respond by creating a report or presentation on two Indigenous artworks or artists that represent and/or interpret Country or place.

They should detail:

- The name of the artist/s
- The name of the art works
- What do we know about the artist/s and their life?
- Describe the artworks using elements of art (line, shape, texture, form, space, colour and value, mark making and materiality)
- What's the artists viewpoint? How does this influence their work?

### NAIDOC Week poster: view and discuss

#### All year levels

As a class, explore the artwork used on this year's NAIDOC Week poster, 'Care for Country', by Maggie-Jean Douglas. There are some guidelines in the overview section for 'The Arts' for teaching about Indigenous art and protocols that can be adapted to different age groups.

Read the description of the artwork to students, then invite them to view and discuss.

Some prompts for discussion:

- What do you like about this piece?
- What elements can you see in the artwork?
- What mediums do you think the artist used to create this piece?
- How has the artist used lines and colours to create a feeling of inclusion in the artwork?
- How has the artist represented the connection that First Nations people have to the land?

As an extension, students could compare and contrast the 2020 poster, 'Shape of Land', by Tyrown Waigana. This artwork was selected as the NAIDOC week poster in 2020 and shows the interconnectedness of First Nations Peoples to Country. Again, read the description of the artwork to students, then invite them to view, discuss and describe the

style of work, including the materials, colours, imagery, symmetry and pattern used, and compare it to this year's poster design.

### Useful resources

NAIDOC's poster for 2021, 'Care for Country': <https://www.naidoc.org.au/get-involved/2021-poster>

NAIDOC's poster for 2020, 'Shape of Land': <https://www.naidoc.org.au/get-involved/2020-poster>

### NAIDOC Week posters – a snapshot of history: discussion

#### Secondary

Explain that every year NAIDOC releases a poster in line with the theme for the year. In pairs or independently, invite students to explore a range of posters from previous years: <https://www.naidoc.org.au/resources/poster-gallery>

In small groups or as a class, discuss:

- Which posters do they like the best?
- What do they notice about the use of colours, texture and imagery in the posters?
- What do they notice about the styles/fonts and use of images over time?
- Have they seen any of the artworks or posters before? What made them memorable?

### Significance of flags: discuss and design

#### All year levels

As a class, read about the history and significance of both the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag.

As a class, students discuss symbols that are important to them as a class/school/generation and then make a flag design that represents their class or school. These could be displayed at the whole school celebration.

### Telling your school history: creative response

#### All year levels

As a class, or independently, students create artworks, songs, dances or multimedia presentations that retell the history of the school to be displayed in a school art show or presented at the whole school 'Heal Country, heal our nation' celebrations.

### Walking together: display

#### All year levels

Students work independently to trace around their own feet or use a template. They then decorate this with an artwork, a story, poem or images to tell their story of connection to the special places in their communities and respond to the NAIDOC Week theme.

Cut out the feet art and display as a whole class/school artwork to symbolise students' parts in walking together towards healing and telling the story of their connections to place.

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### Other resources

#### Further reading on First Nations histories, cultures and politics

Coleman, C 2019, *Terra Nullius*, Hachette Australia, Sydney.

Gammage, B 2012, *The biggest estate on earth: how Aborigines made Australia*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW.

Pascoe, B 2018, *Dark Emu*, 2nd edn, Griffin Press, South Australia.

### References

Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) 2019, *Australian Curriculum: science, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross curriculum priorities*, ACARA, Sydney, viewed 28 May 2021, <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/media/5086/ccp-tbi-7-10.pdf>

Australian Government, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, Office for the Arts, *National Indigenous Languages Report*, 2019, viewed 25 May 2021, <https://www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/indigenous-arts-and-languages/national-indigenous-languages-report>

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Cameron, E 2015, 'Is it art or knowledge? Deconstructing Australian Aboriginal creative making', Arts, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 68–74, viewed 8 June 2021, <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-0752/4/2/68/htm>

Munro, J in Currie, J 2008, *Bo-rā-ne Ya-goo-na Par-ry-boo-go Yesterday Today Tomorrow, An Aboriginal History of Willoughby*, Willoughby City Council in association with the Aboriginal Heritage Office Northern Sydney Region

National NAIDOC Secretariat, 2021, Commonwealth of Australia, viewed 20 May 2021, <https://www.naidoc.org.au/get-involved/2021-theme>

Schnierer, E, Ellsmore, S & Schnierer, S 2011, *State of Indigenous cultural heritage 2011 report*, State of the Environment Committee, Canberra, viewed 28 May 2021, <https://soe.environment.gov.au/sites/default/files/soe2011-supplementary-heritage-state-indigenous-cultural-heritage.pdf?v=1488157317>

Stehlow, T 1947, *Aranda traditions*, Melbourne University Press.

Weule, G & James, F 2017 'Indigenous rock shelter in Top End pushes Australia's human history back to 65,000 years', ABC Science and ABC Darwin, viewed 8 June 2021, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2017-07-20/aboriginal-shelter-pushes-human-history-back-to-65,000-years/8719314>

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