



FOR OUR ELDERS

NAIDOC 2023
Poetry in First Languages



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Uncle Steven Russell is a Bidjigal drawer, painter and weaver, born at La Perouse Mission on the shores of Botany Bay, Sydney.

Hailing from the famous La Parouse Timbery family, Russell's maternal side has long been associated with visual arts in the Sydney region – his mother, Esme Timbery is an award-winning shellworker. His great great grandmother, "Queen" Emma Timbery had her shellworks displayed in London in 1910. His cousin, Laddie Timbery, was a boomerang and shield maker, and his uncle, Joe Timbery, was a champion boomerang thrower who once threw boomerangs as a display for the young Queen Elizabeth during the Royal Tour of 1954.

A celebrated artist, Uncle Steven has work held in multiple galleries and collections and exhibits his weavings, drawings and sculptures regularly. Together with his wife Phyllis Stewart; Steven, Phyllis and their daughter Kristine have established Jungah Weavers artists' collective based in Gerringong, all being master weavers.

'Jungah' is an Aboriginal word for octopus.

His drawings are intricately rendered memories of La Perouse in the 1960s and 1970s and he describes his paintings as "landscape and abstract paintings that depict my country of Botany Bay."

ABOUT THE ARTWORK

Sunset over my Country, 2005

This painting is of my Country. It depicts the Georges River and Botany Bay, Dharawal Country.

~ Uncle Steven Russell

For our Elders NAIDOC 2023

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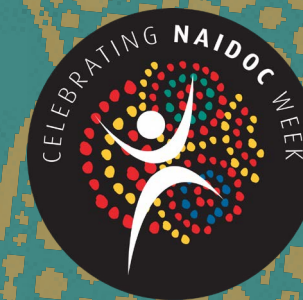
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Acknowledgement of Country

Ngapigan Djuyal

buyiba watiga
nyaaga murapan
nyutja bathu
numa barray
ngarrangga guying-gambal
mungga wirray

Grandmother Talk

breath in the tree
see the flowers
taste the water
feel the land
listen to the birdsong
smell the bush

~ Aunty Anjilkurri Rhonda Radley from 'Ngapigan (Grandmother)'

Red Room Poetry acknowledges the lands, waters and sky where you are reading and using this resource. We also respect and acknowledge First Nations people across the many lands where we live, work and write. We are grateful to collaborate with First Nations communities who have cared for Country for millennia.

Always was, always will be.

Do you know what First Nations land you live on?

How do you and your school acknowledge and care for Country?

Find the [Two Fires Talking](#) activity for musical inspiration.

For our Elders NAIDOC 2023



Created by **Red Room Poetry**, in collaboration with [Erin's Learning Channel](#), *Poetry in First Languages: For our Elders NAIDOC 2023 learning resource* invites students and teachers to **think, reflect** and **yarn** about the importance of our Elders and what the NAIDOC theme means.

In this resource you will find **group activities** and **writing exercises** to suit primary and secondary settings.

The Red Room team & Erin's Learning Channel.

More Information

- >> [Read more about Erin's Learning Channel and The Winanga-Li Teachers' Program](#)
- >> [Red Room Poetry - Poetry in First Languages](#)
- >> [Email Nicole Smede, Senior Manager - First Nations](#)

Indigenous Elders honour traditions through story, song and poetry; preserving their culture and passing down wisdom to future generations.

Their words reflect the land, the people, and the spirits that surround them. Through poetry, they celebrate life, mourn loss, and share their experiences of the world.

Their voices are a testament to the resilience and beauty of Indigenous cultures.

THANK YOU

To our Elders who contributed:

Aunty Theresa Sainty

Aunty Rhonda Radley

Aunty Kerry Moran

Uncle Steven Russell (artwork)

Uncle Phil Pinkney (quotes)

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HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

YARN



This curriculum-linked Learning Resource is designed to support students and teachers to access information about First Nations Histories and Culture, to deepen understanding and reflect on this through poetry.

It features a range of multi-modal **Prompts** to enrich curriculum outcomes across English, The Arts, Humanities, First Nations Histories and Cultures, and Social Sciences.

REFLECT



The order of activities is flexible, although we recommend delivery over two to three lessons to allow students to reflect, conceptualise and respond.

CIRCLE



Inspiration and Activities are designed to encourage conversation 'Yarn', **reflection**, group work '**circle**' and **writing**, to help students engage with NAIDOC themes through sensory experiences, poetic examples, creative thinking and research skills that strengthen understanding, knowledge, language, literature and literacy.

WRITE



Commissioned Poems exemplify a range of poetic techniques and give students insight into different voices, First languages, styles and perspectives. Inspired activities draw on these poems and reflections, providing students with extended writing prompts to support their own creative process.

>> See page 29 for Kirli's tips for Writing Respectfully and working with your Local Aboriginal Community

WHAT NAIDOC MEANS TO OUR ELDERS

Each year, NAIDOC week has a theme. In 2023 this theme is **FOR OUR ELDERS**.

Across every generation, our Elders have played, and continue to play, an important role and hold a prominent place in our communities and families. They are cultural knowledge holders, trailblazers, nurturers, advocates, teachers, survivors, leaders, hard workers and our loved ones.

They guide our generations and pave the way for us to take the paths we can take today. Guidance, not only through generations of advocacy and activism, but in everyday life and how to place ourselves in the world.

We draw strength from their knowledge and experience, in everything from land management, cultural knowledge to justice and human rights. Across multiple sectors like health, education, the arts, politics and everything in between, they have set the many courses we follow.

The struggles of our Elders help to move us forward today. The equality we continue to fight for is found in their fight. Their tenacity and strength has carried the survival of our people.

It is their influence and through their learnings that we must ensure that when it comes to future decision making for our people, there is nothing about us - without us.

We pay our respects to the Elders we've lost and to those who continue fighting for us across all our Nations and we pay homage to them.

>> Read more about NAIDOC For Our Elders on the NAIDOC Website



REFLECTION



A reflection by Aunty Rhonda Radley

The NAIDOC theme 2023 'For Our Elders recognised the work Elders have done and do for our communities. Elders are leaders, role models, knowledge holders and give service to community.

Growing up I was taught to respect my elders, this meant to listen, do what I was told and to care for them. My role model was my Nan (Josephine Pearl Moran), I loved the times we would lay up in bed and share stories.

She was a survivor, lived through the impact of the Aboriginal Protection policy and the separation from her siblings and children.

Nan was strong, resilient and loved her family dearly.

As an Elder I walk in my ancestors footprints and leave footprints for tomorrow Elders. I continue to work towards ensuring our communities are heard, seen, valued, have a sense of belonging and are safe.

My passion is to revive and maintain Aboriginal culture through language and practices.

In giving my time to this passion I gift future generations with a model of care for Country, culture and family (blood and chosen).

>> See page 21 for Aunty Rhonda's poem *Ngapigan (Grandmother)*



Each image showcases an era that has affected Indigenous Australians (both positive and negative) from 1901 - 2023

Aborigines Act, 1905, Section 39.

IT is hereby notified that all the lands comprised in the area described below have now been proclaimed to be an area in which it shall be unlawful for Aborigines or Half-castes, not in lawful employment, to be or remain (in lieu of those published in *Government Gazette* of 27th November.

Proclamation of Prohibited Area issued under 1905 Aborigines Act

Homes Are Sought For These Children



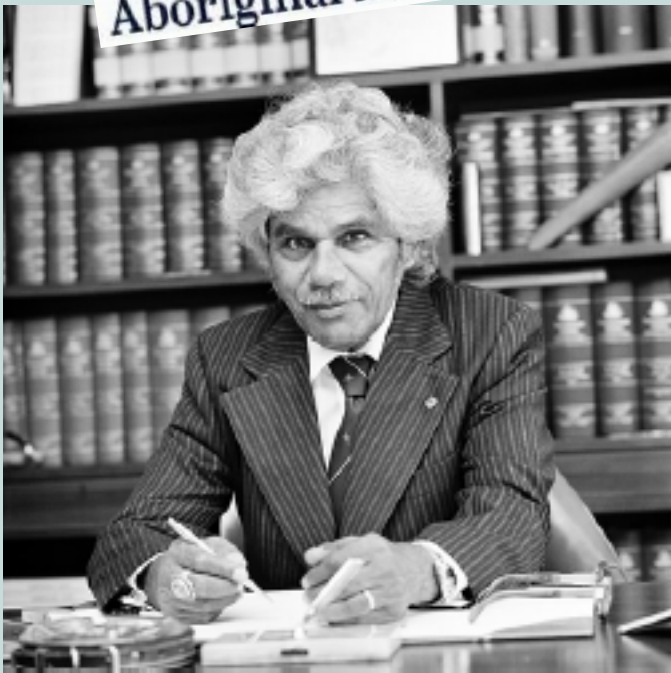
A GROUP OF TINY HALF-CASTE AND CREOLE CHILDREN of the Darwin half-caste home. The Minister for the Interior, Mr. Parkes, recently appeared in charitable organizations in Melbourne and Sydney to find homes for the children and release them from boarding schools.

Keep Australia White

Mr. Holman, Member for Kalgoorlie, and a son of a German, speaking at Woddenburg during the German revolution, stated: "Send every man out of Australia, even if they had to import black, brown or brindle labor to do their work."



From the Archives, 1971: Neville Bonner to be Australia's first Aboriginal MP



DISCUSS AS A CLASS
what you see
how you feel
what is happening
in each image.

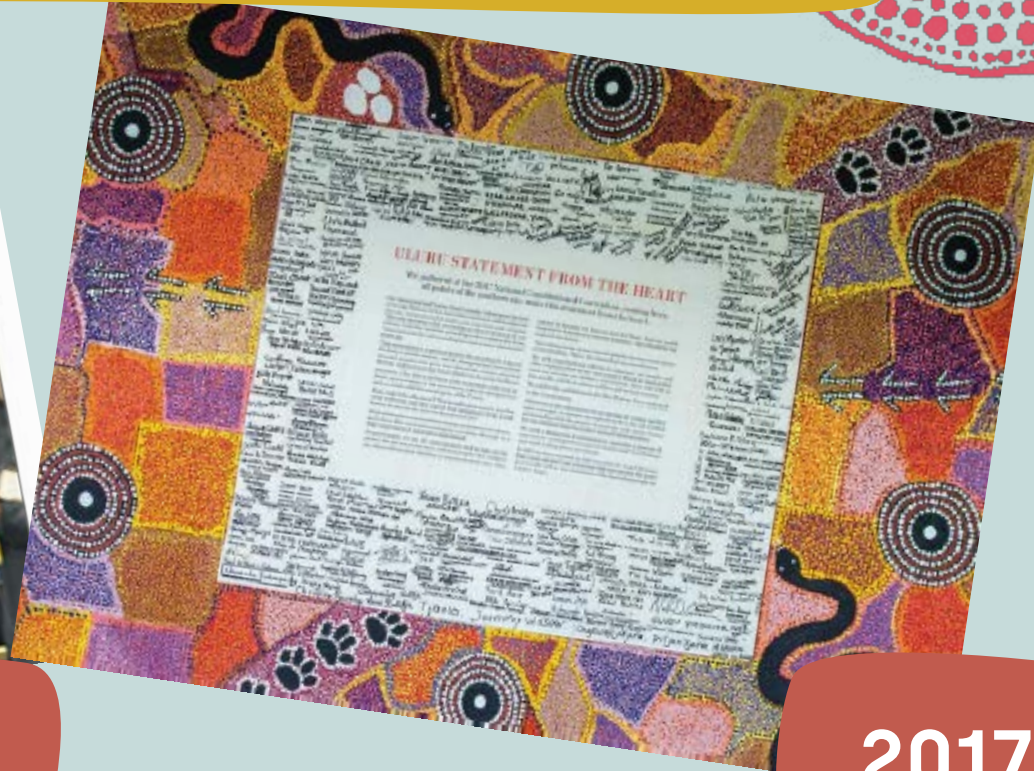
"It's important to know where we've been, to know where we're going..."

~ Uncle Phil Pinkney, Kamilaroi Elder

A parliamentary apology to clear the "blight on the nation's soul" ~ Former PM Kevin Rudd, 2007



2007



2017



Why was the 2007 Apology significant?

How would this have affected our Elders?

Discuss as a class what is now happening with the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart?

What does one have to do with the other?

'AUNTY' AND 'UNCLE'

In Aboriginal custom, we call Elders 'Aunty' and 'Uncle'



Elders are highly respected Aboriginal people held in esteem by their communities for their wisdom, cultural knowledge and community service.

They have gained recognition as a custodian of knowledge and lore.

Age alone does not determine whether someone is recognised as an Elder in their community.

Aboriginal people refer to an Elder as 'Aunty' or 'Uncle'.

However it is recommended that non-Aboriginal people check the appropriateness of their use of these terms as referring to an Elder or leader as 'Aunty' or 'Uncle' may not be appropriate for an outsider, unless a strong relationship has been established.

"If you're not Indigenous, it's really simple... just ask permission first. When you show respect you show an understanding of our culture and of our ways"

~ Phil Pinkney, Kamilaroi Elder

WHO ARE YOU CONNECTED TO?

WHO ARE YOUR ELDERS?



Create a poster outlining who your elders are and why they are important to you

Write a poem that discusses your relationship with an Elder (Grandparent etc)

Write a rap or song about your favourite Elder.

AUNTY ANJILKURRI RHONDA RADLEY

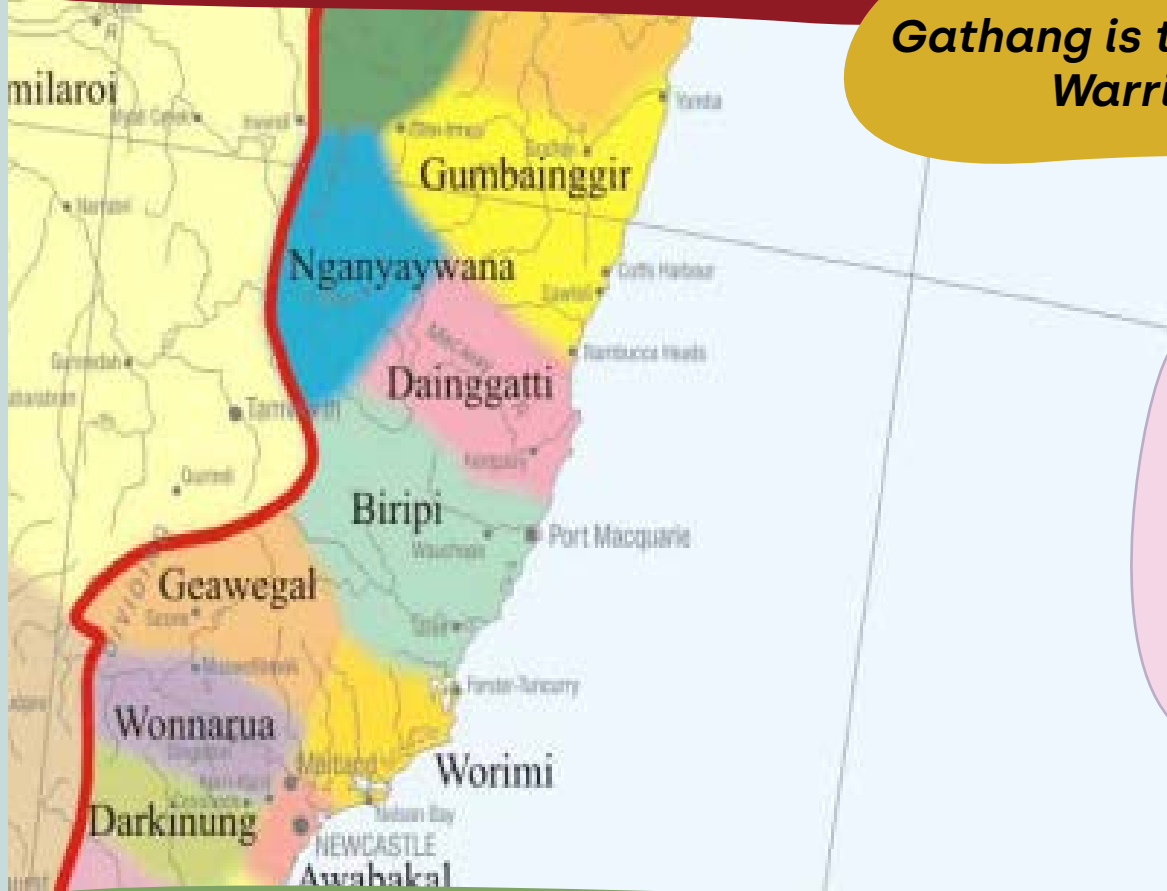
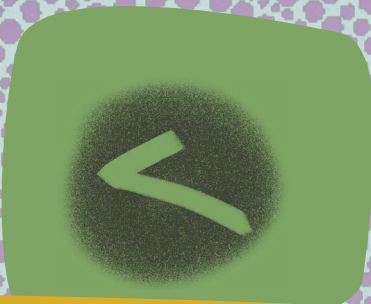
Aunty Anjilkurri Rhonda Radley is proud **Birrbay/Dhaggati** woman from the mid-north coast of New South Wales, Australia and walks with her saltwater, freshwater ancestors. Anjilkurri has recently finished her PhD in the field of language and education, MARCS Institute for Brain, Behaviour & Development, Western Sydney University, holds a Bachelor of Teaching, Graduate Diploma in Adult Community Education (Australian Catholic University) and a Master in Indigenous Language Education (University of Sydney).

She is an active Aboriginal community elder supporting the revival of culture through language and practices in her local communities. Her passion is to revive Gathang language, she advocates for Aboriginal languages to be learnt, spoken, taught and integrated into every-day life.

Anjilkurri values the sharing of stories to; teach cultural expressions, learn from others and connect to other people's life journey. She often walks with her grandchildren on Country listening to the ancestors and messages from Ngaya Barray 'Mother Earth' encouraging the grandchildren to walk the right way on Country and in life.



LETS LEARN SOME OF AUNTY RHONDA'S LANGUAGE - GATHANG



Gathang is the language of the Birrbay (Biripi) Warrimay (Worimi) and Guringai

Yii Gathang-guba barray

this gathang-s Country

This is Gathang Country

Gathay nyiirun

go-will we.all

Let us go together

Language is a gift that we have been given by our Country, our animals (totems) and our ancestors.

AUNTY THERESA SAINTY

Theresa Sainty is a Pakana (Tasmanian Aboriginal) woman.

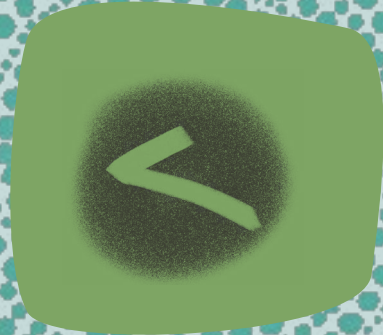
She is an experienced and highly skilled consultant with a history in Government, program evaluation, curriculum development, and public speaking.

She is a Senior Indigenous Scholar with UTAS, undertaking a PhD which is a continuation of her decades long research (which began in 1997) as Aboriginal Linguistic Consultant with the palawa kani Language Program.

Recently Theresa has also worked as a cultural advisor on a number of projects with Roar Film, the National Maritime Museum of Australia, the ABC, Mona and Mona Foma. Appointed for her knowledge and expertise in Aboriginal Advisory Committee providing independent advice on behalf of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.



LET'S LEARN SOME OF AUNTY THERESA'S LANGUAGE - PALAWA KANI



Lutruwita
Tasmania

Kunanyi
Mount Wellington.

Ya pulingina
Hello/Welcome

Nayri nina-tu
Thank you.

*Before colonisation, Lutruwita had
at least 9 different Traditional languages.*

AUNTY KERRY BULLOOJEENO ARCHIBALD MORAN

Gymmagaya – hello! Narrjarrwini – hello!
I am **Aunty Kerry Bulloojeeno Archibald Moran**,
matriarch and medicine woman of Silver City
Aboriginal Reserve – the Mission or Mish – on
Anaiwan gooten country, Armidale.

I'm fifth generation of bloodline descended from King
Robert and Queen Fanny. My great-grandparents are
Frank and Sarah Archibald, pada and bulloo.

I am a traditional dreamtime storyteller. I ochre
dance in the community. I am a bush writer – I come
from the bush, I always had a pen in the bush.

I have a great imagination and I am an explorer. An
adventuress. Resurrecting the memory of our loved
ones that's come and gone through story, through
dance, through puppets – it's tradition, through
everything I do.



LETS LEARN SOME OF AUNTY KERRY'S LANGUAGE - ANAIWAN



Anaiwan (Anēwan) is an extinct Australian Aboriginal language of New South Wales. Since 2017, there has been a revival program underway to bring the language back.

Here are some words Aunty has provided:

ghooten - Country

jarjum - children

wajaarr - earth

noongha - kangaroo

birri-birri - echidna

babaarr - clapsticks

mookoo - ears

miili - eyes

This is exactly why we need to speak as many Aboriginal Languages as possible. Aunty Kerry's language is officially EXTINCT. This is happening for many of our Indigenous languages. This is another reason why our Elders are so important.

UNCLE STEVE RUSSELL



A reflection by Uncle Steve Russell

Every year between March and April, deep sea mullet from the southern ocean travels up the east coast from lower NSW boarder to QLD boarder. Our ancestors waited on it. When the coastal wattle was blooming, we knew they were on the run.

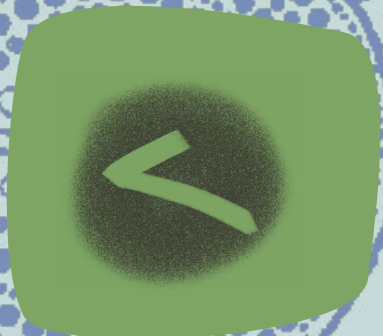
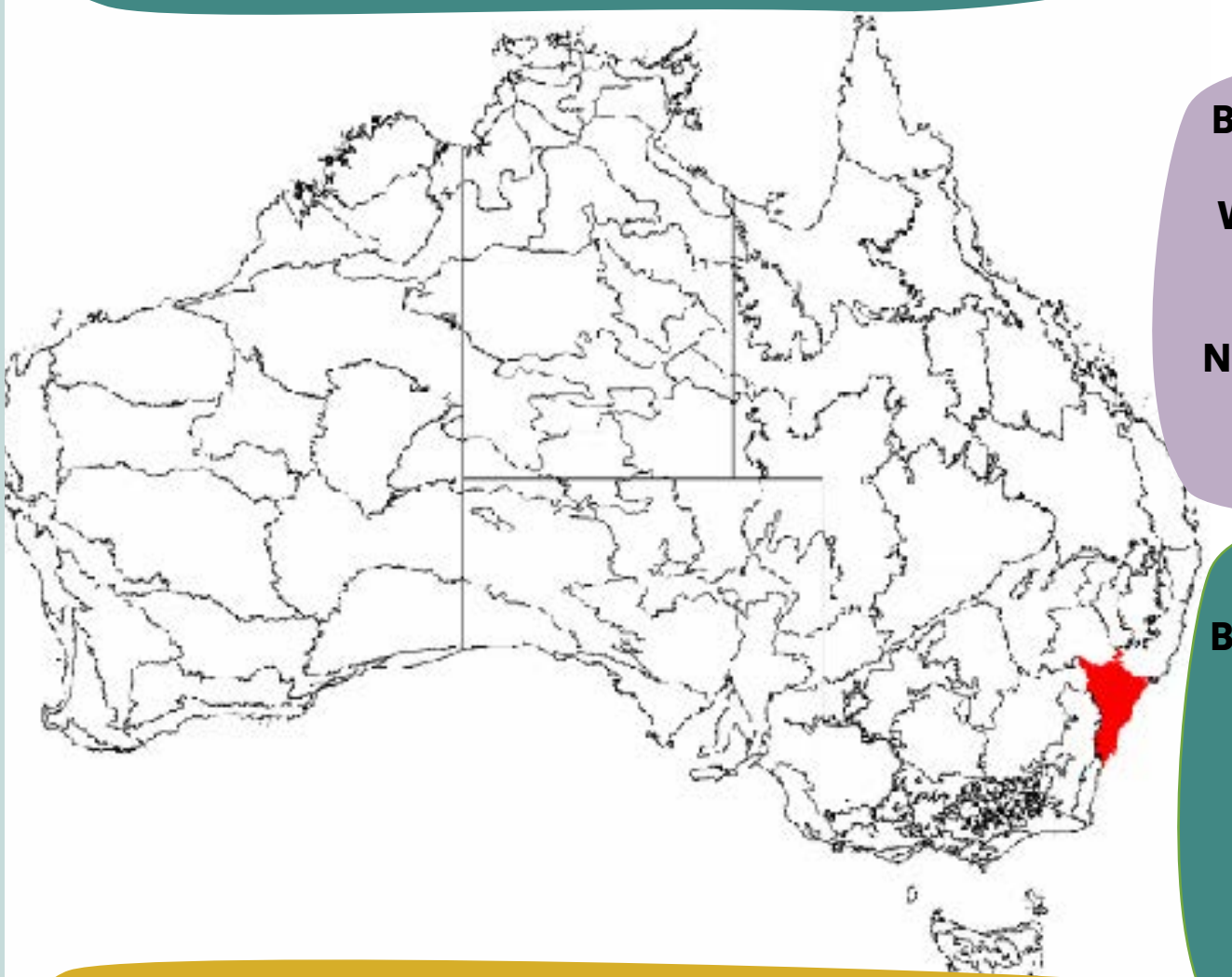
Our ancestors used hand spears in Nawi's on Botany Bay and Lake Illawarra following the mullet that traveled in the rivers and the bays heading up north.

It's also the time when the whales do their run north to warmer waters. They follow the mullet.

I was taught to fish for mullet with a jag hook. They (mullet) sit on top of the water. When the bully's run, we used a boat and a net. What we caught would feed the whole community. When we were growing up as boys 8-9 years upwards, we would get two bully's each for fishing for the community. They get so big, their heads would be dragging on the ground as we walked up the sand.

Sometimes we would swim inside the net, and underwater you could see the fish swimming past. Sometimes there would be little sharks in there too. Big ones would put holes in the net. This was us fishing from La Parouse down the coast – where we traveled for pea and bean season picking.

LETS LEARN SOME OF UNCLE STEVE'S LANGUAGE - DHARUG



Bidjigal means plains dweller in Dharug
Warami – hello/ where are you from?
Yanu – goodbye
Nigiyini budyari – are you good?
Darrabarra – day
Didgerigura – thank you

Budyari nawunya – good to see you
Yuwin – yes
Biyal – no
Budyari – good
Mittigar – friend
Yura – people

FUN FACT: Uncle Steven's mob would have been the first to encounter the First Fleet back in the 1770's!

THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE



Language, culture and Country are interconnected.

Words in Traditional Languages are strongly connected to the local environment (Country) and describe the sound, texture or behaviour of these things, for example names of certain trees may describe how they are used culturally (ceremony or hunting) and the name may change at different times of its life cycle, which may speak of animals that might be drawn to it in certain seasons, when the plant produces fruit, or how its appearance changes over the seasons (*Marmion, Kazuko & Troy 2014; Troy 2015*).

For many First Nations people, identity and wellbeing are deeply entwined with language too. Often the tribe that First Nations people identify with is also a language group; and the tribal name for their group is also the language name (*House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, 2012*).

Because these two aspects are so deeply connected, not speaking your mother tongue means many First Nations people feel cut off from certain aspects of cultural and ancestral knowledge.

Speaking the Indigenous language of your Country is fundamental to ensuring knowledge is passed down. Songlines, for example, contain interconnected knowledge of geography, histories, cultural markers, time, ceremony and spirituality, all of which are so bound by specific languages and interaction with Country that

it's nearly impossible to pass down without connection to languages and place (*House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs 2012*).

It is estimated that 250 languages (600-700 dialects) existed in Australia at the time of invasion. 40 of these languages are classified as endangered.

Within NSW, 35 language groups (120 dialects) exist today, with 7 of those languages still having between 5-20 fluent speakers (Bundjalung, Ngiyampaa, Paakantyi, Wiradjuri, Gamilarayy, Gumbaynggirr and Wangkumarra).

Despite the harm that colonisation has done to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their language and their cultures, some early records created by European colonisers are now being used to reawaken sleeping languages and reconnect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with cultural practices and knowledge that had long been considered lost allowing some First Nations people to reconnect with the language and knowledge of their ancestors.

>>Head over to First Languages Australia's Gambay - First Nations map for a fantastic interactive resource

***Language belongs to the land.
Our original language holders are animals and Country. They taught us their language and names and so it is respectful for us to use this gift, if we have access to it.***

POEMS & ACTIVITIES



Ngapigan (Grandmother)
by Aunty Anjilkurri Rhonda Radley

~ poem written in Gathang



Ngapigan Djuyal

buyiba watiga
nyaaga murapan
nyutja bathu
numa barray
ngarrangga guying-gambal
mungga wirray

Ngapigan Ngapigan

wanay gili-wakulda buba.yangbu gagiliyn
gununbang maayn.gilgaray
gindalan.garay
mirriiyn bitaraliyn djukal butjungga yurraga

Ngapigan Ngapiganbaa

girrang biyan.guwa
girrang nyun.guwa.

COMMISSIONED POEM

English

Grandmother Talk

breath in the tree
see the flowers
taste the water
feel the land
listen to the birdsong
smell the bush

Grandmother Granddaughter

a baby awakening to the first light
old ways with a loving embrace
the star shining brightly in the night sky

Grandmother Granddaughter Place

lives within you
as you live within her.

Aunty Anjilkurri Rhonda Radley's Reflection

My inspiration for this poem came from wanting to honour the relationship of the grandmother and granddaughter. Same language word in Gathang, 'Npapigan'.

Ngapigan, a girl child, a woman Elder, an Ancestor, a deep cyclical relationship that exists through time and space.

The first part of the poem, Ngapigan Djuyal 'Grandmother Talk', I walk with my granddaughters speaking in a way that they will know Country and will pass this knowing on to their grandchildren.

Each expression draws on a sensory engagement and this can lead to a deeper connection to Ngaya-Barray 'Mother Earth'.

Many cultural practices and learnings can radiate out from each of these expressions, for example Buyiba Watiga can lead to a discussion about the reciprocal relationship that exists between trees and humans, the exchange of life force, oxygen and carbon dioxide, what the tree provides (shelter, medicine, food, implements, fire and resources), how to care for our trees (cultural burning, planting, ceremonies).

The second part of the poem, Ngapigan 'grandmother/granddaughter' expresses the movement through the generational cycle.

The third part of the poem, Ngapiganbaa 'grandmother/space/time' expresses a space and time when grandmother carries granddaughter within the womb and the unbroken blood ties that binds them together through the eons.

Ningimpi Nungampi Paywuta Manta by Theresa Sainty

~ poem written in palawa kani



COMMISSIONED POEM

Mina Palawa nungampi pama
ngayapi Ningi Manina Muyini & Rrumitina
pulana nita paya wurangkili-ti
mina takara payarrimi/luwaytini

Mina Lutharakumina ningimpi & nungampi Ngini paya;
takariliya-nanya
milangkani rrala manina-ti milaythina lumaranatana-ta paywuta
lurini waypa Ngini yamina & tina paymi-nanya pungkatina-ti

Mina tunapri Pakana Ngini; tunapri paliti
kani ningimpi-tu nungampi-tu-nanya paywuta manta
mina nuritinga nina nguwana-mana Palawa pumili
mina makara milaythina-ti; takila-nanya-ti
mina nina; nina mina; waranta pama

English

I am Palawa, the first Ancestor/Elder
Born of Mother Earth formed by Muyini & Rrumitina
two star brothers in the sky
I walked down the Milky Way

I am Peppermint Gum; the second Ancestor/Elder;
your family
growing strong in the earth of our Ancestral homeland,
lumaranatana/Cape Portland (country)
beside Old Man Grass Tree and your animal cousins in
the scrub

I am the Old Knowledge; the sacred knowledge
told to your grandmothers and grandfathers since the
beginning of time
I have cradled you in my arms since the time of Palawa
I will always be in Country
in your hearts
I am you; you are me
I am the Ancestors – ningimpi & nungampi Ngini - the
Elders.

Our Responsibility by Aunty Kerry Bulloojeeno Archibald Moran



COMMISSIONED POEM

Narrjarrwinni
Giinagay
Yawayi

It's Tradition
on our mission
here on Silver City Aborigine Reserve
in Anaiwan
Armidale ghooten

it's a tradition
for our jarjum
for they do deserve

from a long time ago
we were made the first people
with wajaarr
for gunganbu

from a time and place
from our Aborigine
ancestors birthing

for now our jarjums
is our gift of gunganbu

we talk the talk
we walk the walk

we sing the songs
we dance the dance

for our jarjums
ceremonies of belonging

in the past, present and future
at ceremonies
we would sing and dance

giving our jarjums
a future to prepare
that same chance

for now they will carry
our voices with feelings
in the ceremonies

has singers and dancers
then the ceremonies
will never disappear

with our old fellas Aborigines
spiritual connection, identities
they will always be near

just like before
back in the time
dancing like the animals
that will appear

dancing like
a noongha

Our Responsibility -continued

like the birri-birri too

that's moving about
on the lands

with the spiritual growth
of a ceremony
the animal's dance
has been found

always was and always will be
a traditional dance
in ceremonies

with our jarjums sounds
of laughter and giggling with fun
this will bring happiness of tears

their feeling of pride
carrying their proudness on
side by side

dancing around
in the dust and sand
with their little hands and feet
dancing on the ground

with the ochre painted
on their skin
wearing it like
a dawaandi
that paint's
the thousand words

COMMISSIONED POEM

with a dijeridoo blowing
music in the sky
vibrating on wajaarr

babaarr
are beating beautifully
enchanted sweet sounds

like the spirit wind
that's lightly moving
all around

bringing the sound's to life
into our mookoo
and our miili

with the tongue that speak
and the hands that talk
with their little feet dancing
all over the ground

this bring the sound
to the ones
who can not hear
singing it and feeling it
through their miili

we dance and sing
with the ones
that cannot see
giving sounds
that's traveling through
their mookoo

giving feeling
dancing inside

dancing with their
hands and feet
the smell of ceremony
is in the air
is a belonging
to our ceremony
a ceremony to share

with this special performances
that we prepared
for our jarjum
with a disabilities

is a ceremony
they will carry it on
a traditional tradition
within their care.

COMMISSIONED POEM

English Translations

Narrjarrwinni - *Hello*

Giinagay - *Hello*

Yawayi - *Hello*

ghooten - *Country*

jarjum - *children*

wajaarr - *earth*

gunganbu - *living*

noongha - *kangaroo*

birri-birri - *echidna*

dawaandi - *picture*

dijeridoo - *blowing*

wajaarr - *earth*

babaarr - *clapsticks*

mookoo - *ears*

miili - *eyes*



Aunty Rhonda

1 [Read and watch Aunty Rhonda's poem.](#)

2 Listen to the language and notice the sounds and repetition in the poem. Some Traditional language words are used to describe more than one thing i.e. Ngapigan means both Grandmother and Granddaughter. Why do you think this is? Annotate the poem from Gathang Language to English ie.g. Ngapigan = Grandmother, Djuyal = Talk (talking)

3 Aunty talks about the bush like it is a living thing (which it is). Why do you think she's done this? What words indicate this? Aunty also talks about the reciprocal relationship between people and the natural environment - in particular Watiga (trees) in her reflection. Listen to [Ngarayamūrah – Listening to Country meditation](#) to connect to the live force of trees, feeling this connection to all living things.

4 Write a poem about what inspires you in nature. What are you drawn to and why? What connects you to the human and non-human world? Do they have something in common? Think about how this relationship grows and changes with the seasons, with time, like in aunty's poem the granddaughter, daughter, grandmother all being versions of each other in different stages of life. How does nature go through these life cycles?



Aunty Theresa

1 [Read and watch Aunty Theresa's poem.](#)

2 Aunty uses personification in her poem - If you were a tree, animal or place what would you be? Choose a natural 'element' from Aunty's poem (e.g. The Peppermint Gum) and draw it on a poster with your peers. Be sure to include reasons why you've chosen your particular natural element, and why it speaks to you.

3 Watch [The Land Own's Us by Uncle Bob Randall](#) from Yankunytjatjara mob. Uncle talks about an important belief in Aboriginal culture and spirituality - how the land is a significant part of connection; this relates directly to the concepts of knowing, being and doing. How does Aunty Theresa talk about this in her poem? Where is this concept touched upon in her words?

4 First Nations people believe that Country is our family and so we care for Country like we care for our family. We cannot care for something we do not love. What do you love about Country? Write a short reflection piece on how you are connected to Country, how Country is your family.



Aunty Kerry

1 [Read and watch Aunty Kerry's poem.](#)

2 Using a highlighter or pen, find the language words Aunty has used in her poem and translate to English.

3 Using Aunty's language, see if you can write a sentence or two. You may need some English words in-between to form a full sentence. Try reading it to a peer and see if they can translate.

4 On a large sheet of paper, create a list of words you think may have come from Indigenous languages. Consider the names of plants, animals, placenames or objects traditionally associated with First Nations cultures (e.g. boomerang, woomera etc). You may want to include any known Aboriginal English words in the list (e.g. deadly, yarning, gammon etc). Find out both the meaning and which language group it comes from.

5 Whose Country are you on? What language is spoken there? Can you find some language words from the Country you are on? Write a poem about where you are, the trees and animals of that place, using the language of Country.



Uncle Steve

1 [Look at Uncle Steve's Artwork.](#)

2 Uncle's work is a map of his Country. Discuss what maps are used for? What information can we find on a map? Are there borders or suburbs on Uncle's map? What is bird's eye view? What way should a map face? What symbols are used on maps and how is this different from Uncle Steve's painting?

3 Maps tell stories. Consider how Uncle Steve's map is a visual poem. What symbols, colours and shapes has he used to interpret Country. [Visit ArtArk](#) to explore common Aboriginal symbols used in art.

4 As a group, create an artwork that depicts Country - a mural, collage or group poem - that uses symbols to tell a story and connection to the place where you live. Each student contributing a line in the poem, a symbol in the mural etc.



COUNTRY IS AT THE CENTRE OF EVERYTHING WE DO



Country is our place of worship, it is at the centre of everything we do.

It dictates our lore/laws, how we live, who we love, how we act/speak/feel...

Aboriginal people who are connected to Country feel a strong cultural and spiritual obligation to take care of her.

If you look after Country, Country looks after you. It is in this 'give and take' relationship that you begin to see how integral Indigenous cultures and relationships are.

>>Head over to Erin's Learning Channel to watch a video of her talking about this concept

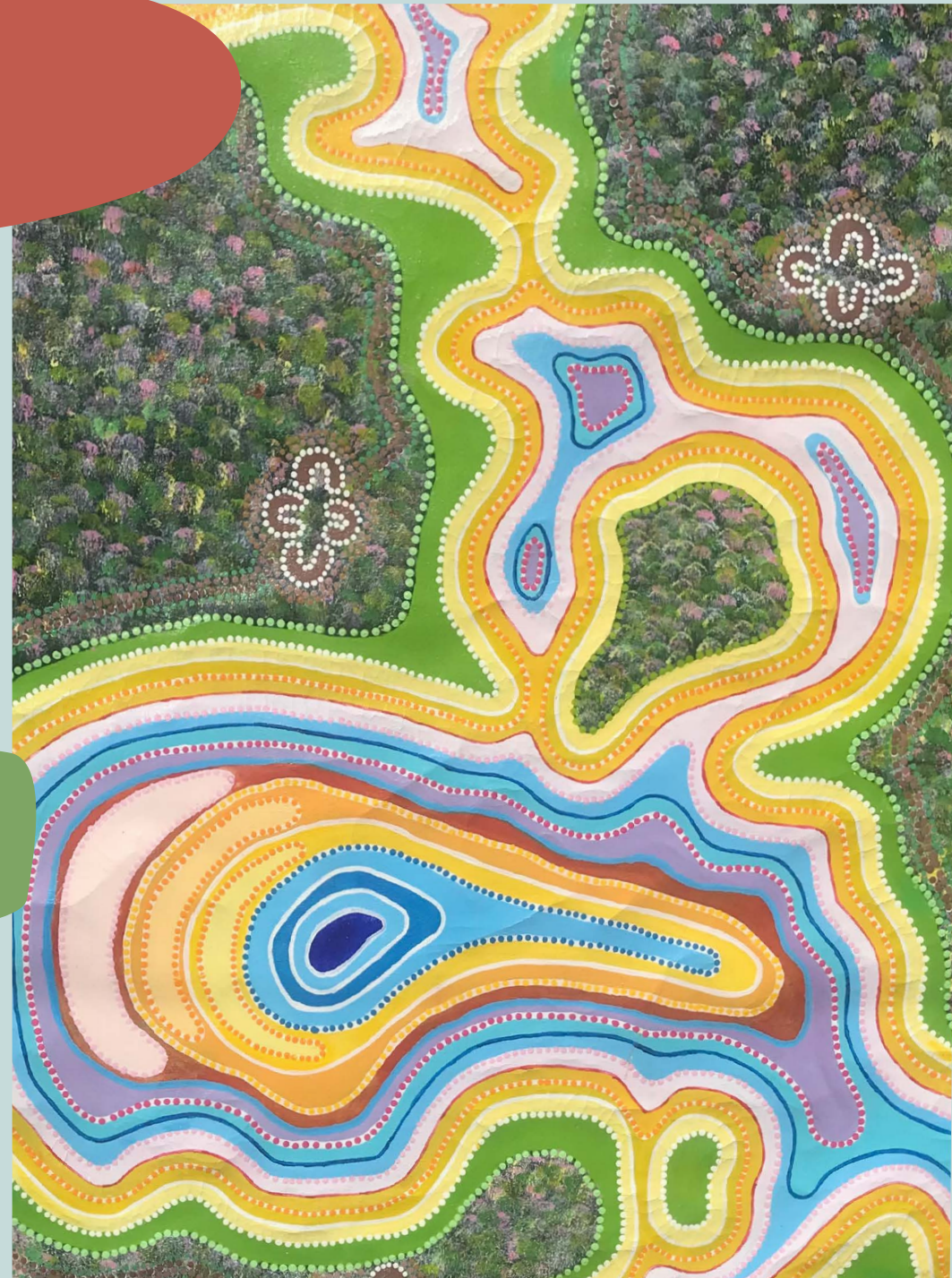


What about your 'Country'?

Even if you're not Indigenous you can still connect, respect and look after Country.

Where are you connected to? Which places? Why? What can you do to look after where you're connected? What things can you personally do or encourage others to do? What is the language of your Country?

>>Head over to AIATSIS for a map of Indigenous Australia



CONNECTING WITH NATURE

Listening

Listen to ['Two Fires Talking'](#) by composer Christopher Sainsbury

- *What images did the music make you imagine?*
- *What sounds connect you to Country where you live?*

Exploring

Sit under the stars and have a camp fire and explore sky country. First Nations people believe that the stars are camp fires - the place where our loved ones go after leaving the earth. The stars are also a map of Country and guide us on our journey - both on the land and in our hearts.

- *What map can you see in the stars?*

Writing and Responding

Think about a place, tree, or animal in nature that is special to you.

- *How would you describe this to somebody who has never seen it?*
- *What makes it special?*

List at least three reasons.

Drawing

Draw the shape of the Country - what you can see around you and on the horizon; the mountains, trees, hills, clouds and water. Sky and water are Country too. You could research a topographical map of where you live and draw your own version using symbols and shapes to depict land forms, water courses etc. Include some descriptive words into your drawing.

Exploring

Go for a walk in nature - a park, Botanic Gardens, the beach. Take your shoes off and feel the grass or sand between your toes. Listen to sounds around you. Make a list of:

- *The sounds you hear*
- *The images and colours you see*
- *What you feel*

Use this list to write a poem.

Listening

Listen to [Muru Nanga Mai - Dreaming Track](#) by Lorna Munroe.

- *What sounds can you hear?*
- *How do these sounds connect to language?*
- *How are these sounds reflected in Lorna's poem?*

Drawing

Explore your natural environment, look to the ground, look to the trees — can you see things that would make a good brush, pen or stamp? This activity explores using nature to make art.. Dipped in ink, a leaf can make a great pen, or bark can create interesting marks or flowers can be a pattern stamp.

Writing and Responding

Think about the wisdom of the ancestors, Elders and mother earth on Country.

What secrets would the rivers, trees, rocks, animals and earth tell us?

What have they seen? What do they know?

Create a new poem about this Dreaming.

With 'Country' at your centre of thinking, can you find where our Elders have drawn on their connection to Country in their work?
Try to explain this in your answer using direct quotes from each poem.



As a class, write an *Acknowledgement of Country* together thinking about your connection to Country.
Try and use Traditional language words to respectfully name parts of Country you would like to honour in your Acknowledgement.
Speak this together each day.

Go for a nature walk and use your senses to immerse in the experience. Collect items such as leaves, small branches, feathers, flower petals, gum nuts, etc.

After the walk:

- create a nature collage using found items, or create an artwork showing their special place
- write a poem that describes your feelings and connections

POETIC STRATEGIES

Adjectives

Think about a place, tree or animal in nature that is special to you. Describe it with a list of vivid adjectives.

Metaphor

Use a metaphor to describe nature. (A metaphor is a direct comparison where one thing is said to be another.)

- e.g. *The tree is a time machine holding stories.*

Personification

If you were a tree, animal or place, what would you be?

Use personification to write three first-person 'I' sentences from the perspective of nature.

Imagery

Use imagery to describe the land.

- e.g. *Your velvet valleys, slumber on lullabies of ancestors*

Repetition

Try using repetition in your writing to come back to an image, theme or refrain. Repeating lines or words throughout a poem can strengthen the meaning and give a rhythmic pulse.

Similes

Create a list of sensory similes that describe how nature smells, feels, tastes, sounds and looks like? (A simile compares two different things using 'like' or 'as')

- e.g. *Rain looks like starlight dripping from the leaves.*
- *Birds sound as loud as chimes in the canopy.*

Onomatopoeia

What music or sounds can you hear in nature? Write a sentence in which you use onomatopoeia to describe what you hear.

- e.g. *Squuuuaark screeches the cockatoo diving through the clouds.*

Alliteration

Write a line that uses alliteration to describe nature.

- e.g. *Ripples in the rockpools, crabs clambering sideways to safety.*

Rhythm

Think about how the words in each line and stanza flow or give a pulse or beat to your work. If writing about flowing water, you may want a slow, rhythmic flow that floats along on words with long vowel sounds. What do short words and sounds bring to your work?

Voice

Use different tones and styles of voice to evoke particular emotional responses in your reader. Experiment with writing in the voice of someone who is (a) awed or amazed (b) excited (c) angry.

Writing Respectfully



Kirli Saunders shares her tips for working respectfully with your local Aboriginal communities.

Connect with your Community

- Drawing on your local AECG, local Council and AIATSIS map, identify the Aboriginal Nation you live on. Re-write your Acknowledgement of Country after a bush walk/ time to observe the land, plants, animals and insects, make sure you include some significant local landscapes!
- Connect with your local AECG, local Council and First Languages Australia to find out what language/dialects are spoken in your area.
- Drawing on your local AECG, local Council, Lands Council, First Languages Australia, Miromaa, find out if there are local language Custodians and teachers working in your community. Invite them in for a cup of tea and to be a part of your week to week poetry writing/bushwalking/gardening/art/science classes!
- Build a relationship, not an engagement for one off events. Our Community is busy, but love being involved in supporting the next generation.
- Don't forget to remunerate Elders and Custodians for their time, be mindful of accessibility, and shape your class times around your Elders availability.
- Books: Read *Somebody's Land* – Adam Goodes and Ellie Laing; *Bindi* – Kirli Saunders and Dub Leffler; *Cooee Mittigar* – Seymore and Watson; and *Guwayu For All Times*, Edt. Dr Jeanine Leanne.

Respectful Inclusion of First Nations Languages/ Lands in your Writing

- You can acknowledge Country in your writing like this:

Poem Title

Creator name e.g. Kirli Saunders

~ Written on Dharawal Lands

- If you use language in your poem, you must ask for permission to include it, acknowledge the Elders or Custodians who taught you language, you can do this under the title of your poem with wording

Poem Title

Creator name e.g. Kirli Saunders

~ Written on Gundungurra Lands,

with Dharwal interpretations

taught to me by Aunty Velma Mulcahy

- If you use language words, it's best to use footnotes rather than parentheses
- Read and watch Kirli's poem '[Sun Downs and Seasons](#)' as a guide to Acknowledgement

Poetry in First Languages

Partners and Supporters



Red Room Poetry

Red Room Poetry's vision is to make poetry in meaningful ways. Our poetic projects are created in collaboration with a spectrum of poets, communities and partners for positive impact.

redroompoetry.org



Erin's Learning Channel

"We need to keep teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, the raw histories. We need to keep giving voices to the once silenced. We need to keep honouring languages and social etiquette. But to make social change, we need to be 'stepping' into both the 'Murri' and 'Western' worlds together. At the same time. All the time. This is my vision for achieving #truereconciliation in Australia. By teaching and coaching educators how to deliver their subjects and content, but in an Aboriginal way." The Winanga-Li Teachers Program is a self-paced online course purposed to improve teaching practices and individual cultural capabilities that align with the requirements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework.

www.winangali.page

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ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE & TECHNOLOGY CENTRE

CURRICULUM LINKS

Australian Curriculum priorities and outcomes supported by this resource include English, Science, Sustainability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, The Arts, Technologies, and Humanities and Social Sciences.

English

F – (ACELA1426) (ACELA1429) (ACELA1430) (ACELA1431) (ACELA1432) (ACELA1433) (ACELA1434) (ACELA1435) (ACELA1439) (ACELT1575) (ACELT1783) (ACELY1646) (ACELY1650) (ACELY1651) (ACELY1652)

Yr 1 – (ACELA1787) (ACELA1447) (ACELA1448) (ACELA1449) (ACELA1452) (ACELT1583) (ACELT1584) (ACELT1585) (ACELY1660) (ACELY1661) (ACELY1662)

Yr 2 – (ACELA1462) (ACELA1464) (ACELT1587) (ACELT1589) (ACELT1590) (ACELT1591) (ACELT1592) (ACELY1789) (ACELY1668) (ACELY1670) (ACELY1671) (ACELY1672)

Yr 3 – (ACELA1475) (ACELT1596) (ACELT1598) (ACELT1600) (ACELT1791) (ACELY1676) (ACELY1678) (ACELY1679) (ACELY1792) (ACELY1683)

Yr 4 – (ACELT1602) (ACELT1603) (ACELT1605) (ACELT1606) (ACELT1607) (ACELT1606) (ACELY1690) (ACELY1695) (ACELY1715) (ACELY1714) (ACELY1717)

Yr 5 – (ACELA1512) (ACELT1608) (ACELT1610) (ACELT1611) (ACELY1704) (ACELY1705) (ACELT1798)

Yr 6 – (ACELA1518) (ACELA1520) (ACELA1523) (ACELA1525) (ACELT1614) (ACELT1615) (ACELT1617) (ACELT1800) (ACELT1618) (ACELY1715) (ACELY1714) (ACELY1717)

Yr 7 – (ACELT1625) (ACELT1803) (ACELT1805) (ACELY1725) (ACELY1726) (ACELY1728)

Yr 8 – (ACELA1542) (ACELA1547) (ACELT1768) (ACELT1630) (ACELY1738) (ACELY1810)

Yr 9 – (ACELA1553) (ACELA1770) (ACELA1557) (ACELT1635) (ACELT1637) (ACELT1773) (ACELY1747) (ACELY1748)

Yr 10 – (ACELT1643) (ACELT1644) (ACELY1753) (ACELT1814) (ACELT1815) (ACELY1757)

Yr 11 – Literature, Create Imaginative Texts

Yr 12 – Literature, Create Imaginative Texts

HASS

F – (ACELT1575) (ACHASSI002) (ACHASSK017) (ACHASSK016) (ACSHE013)

Yr 1 – (ACSSIS029) (ACHASS1024) (ACAVAR109)

Yr 2 – (ACELA1460) (ACELT1591) (ACHASSI035) (ACHASSI041) (ACHASSK048) (ACSSU030) (ACSSIS037) (ACSHE034) (ACHASSK049)

Yr 3 – (ACHASSK066) (ACHASSI057) (ACAVAM110)

Yr 4 – (ACELA1487) (ACHASSK083) (ACHASSK086)

Civics and Citizenship

Yr 7 – (ACHASSK198) (ACHCK053)

Science

F – (ACHASSK016) (ACSHE013) (ACELY1650) (ASCSU004) (ACAVAR109)

Yr 1 – (AC9S1U02) (AC9S1H01) (AC9S1I03) (AC9S1I05) (AC9S1I06) (AC9E1LA08) (AC9E1LE04) (ACSSIS029) (ACHASS1024) (ACAVAR109) (ACELT1581) (ACELT1585) (ACSSU017) (ACSSIS213) (ACELA1444)

Yr 2 – (ACSSU030) (ACSHE034) (ACSSIS037) (ACSSIS049)

Yr 5 – (ACSSU043) (ACSHE086) (ACSSIS231) (ACSSIS093)

Geography

Yr 8 – (ACHGK043) (ACHGK046) (ACHGK047) (ACHGS048) (ACHGK049) (ACHGK052) (ACHGS059)

Yr 10 – (ACHGK080)

Visual Arts

F – (ACELY1650) (ASCSU004) (ACAVAR109)

Yr 1 – (ACSSIS029) (ACHASS1024) (ACAVAR109)

Yr 3 – (ACHASSK066) (ACHASSI057) (ACAVAM110)