INTRODUCTION

The aim of this kit is to introduce both primary and secondary teachers and their students to the Aborigines of the Hunter Region. It has been compiled by a group of teachers and educators who are either well versed in local aboriginal life and legend or who are well aware of the school teaching aims and objectives behind such a subject. The kit has been evaluated by the experts themselves - the Aborigines. They have modified where modifications were needed, they have suggested where suggestions were necessary, they have censored where the material was not indicative of their people.

This kit is a total package. It is designed to give vital background information to teachers, and to give suggestions as to how the material could be taught. The kit is NOT a curriculum. Rather it is an attempt to explain the creeds, mores, lores and way of life of a little understood race of Australian people.

The committee feel that to give the subject matter fair treatment, teachers should read the background information thoroughly. It is hoped that in this way the teachers will develop a feeling for a race of people and a way of life which is in many respects totally opposite to modern Australian white society. This is the very feeling which we feel should be imparted to the students. The committee feels that this aim can be made meaningful by comparing it to the white social equivalent. The advantage of such an approach is to see that both forms of human society are similar in outline although they differ in detail. At the same time the people of both societies have the same biological needs and feelings although they find expression in different mores and customs.

It must be stressed that the background information is for general understanding. It is not designed to be taught in its entirety. Rather, any section or subsection which is relevant to a teacher's aims and objectives can be freely used on its own. In this way the kit remains totally flexible to suit the individual needs of teachers. In places, suggested activities have been included to assist teachers.

The selection of material, and to what level it is to be taught, will be left up to the discretion of the educator concerned. He/She alone knows what educational aims and objectives they have in mind.

It cannot be stressed enough that the kit is solely a source of information - factual information - in the form of notes, photographs, slides and tapes. Their usage is best left to the professional educator in their own particular niche. Obviously, the amount of information presented is designed to cover all levels up to Year 12 of secondary school.

The ultimate objective, therefore, is to inculcate the children of the Hunter Region, and that encompasses many ethnic groups, with a respect for and an understanding of a race of Australian people.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

People involved in the preparation of this kit were:

Perc Haulam - Visiting Scholar (Aboriginal Studies) Newcastle University.
John Heath - Education Officer Aboriginal Grants, Member of the Awabakal Co-operative.
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Special thanks to
1 Dianne Roberts - Rutherford P.S.
2 Hunter Region - P.E.P. Consultants
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*Slides - errors in numbering
No. 27 is 26
No. 29 is 27
No. 36 is 29

Audio visual material contained in this kit is available for purchase at $10.00 from the Hunter Social Studies Association.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following list of written material has been compiled to assist the teachers in selecting material for their own background reading or for use with their students. This list is to supplement other sources:


CAUTION: The books selected in this listing are included on the basis that they have material that some teachers would find useful in their Aboriginal Studies work. Although undesirable books have been excluded, it is not educationally justifiable to exclude valuable sources of information because the writers from last century reflected the attitudes of their time in some of their comments. However, teachers are reminded to bear this in mind when using such sources.

N.B. It is anticipated that copies of primary sources of information will be made accessible for original research in the Local History Library, Newcastle, in the future.
(A) LOCAL RESOURCES FOR THE HUNTER REGION

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Part 1 Location, Population, Tribal Territory
Part 2 Food Sources
Part 3 Methods of Hunting, Fishing and Gathering
Part 4 Preparation of Food and the Role of Fire
Part 5 Weapons
Part 6 Implements and Utensils
Part 7 Dwellings and Canoes
Part 8 Social Organisation
*Part 9 Corroboree and Initiation
*Part 10 Initiation (cont.)
Part 11 Burial Practices
Part 12 Beliefs
Part 13 Summary and Discussion
Part 14 Contact History: Change in Traditional Lifestyle

(*Caution: in depth treatment of initiation should be avoided; or only with the aid of an Aboriginal resource person.)*


(*This includes an appendix of sources for illustrations of how Aborigines used fire; the importance of fire; the effects of fire in the natural environment.)*


The Aborigines of the Canberra Region

The Aborigines of the Canberra Region

An Aboriginal Studies Kit for primary and secondary schools

- Developed by the A.C.T. Schools Authority in conjunction with the Aborigines' Institute of Aboriginal Studies and the National Aboriginal Education Committee
- Intended for two basic purposes:
  - To present the cultural background of the Aborigines in the Canberra Region
  - To explain why the Aboriginal tribe failed to survive European settlement
- Includes: The contact period from 1829, when the first Europeans came, to 1897 when the first Aboriginal died

The Components of the Kit

The kit comprises seven student books, a teachers' manual, seven audio-visual programs, five additional audio programs, OHPs, a map of the Canberra region, and a teaching strategies chart.

Student materials

Books:
- An Introduction (11 page)
- Foods (11 page)
- Personalities of the Time (11 page)
- The Contact Period (11 page)
- Myths, Legends and Music (10 page)
- The Coming of the Europeans (10 page)
- Extracts from Old Newspapers (21 page)

Maps:
- Exploration Route of Capt. Mark Curn

Audio-visual programs

- An Introduction (25 frames/20 min taped)
- Foods (20 frames/20 min taped)
- Campfires (15 frames/10 min taped)
- Edible Plant Foods (43 frames/5 min taped)
- Bagging Mutton (120 frames/3 min taped)
- Trip to Gundaroo (47 frames/3 min taped)
- The Contact Period (19 frames/3 min taped)

Audio programs:
- Evidence of Aborigines
- Myths and Legends
- Interior Family
- Migration from the British Isles
- Personalities of the Time

Teacher materials

- Teachers Manual (11 page)
- Teaching Strategies (chart)
- OHPs - Campfires of the ACT
  - Vegetation and Soils in the A.C.T.
  - Physiology of the A.C.T.
- Tape/Slide scripts for each of the seven programs.

All this for only $9.95!
The term 'prehistory' describes that period of time in Australia when events were not recorded in a written language i.e. all of Australia's past up to 1788 with the exception of the few impressions of Australia by earlier explorers such as Hartog and Danzig. The gathering and interpreting of information about this period is done by archeologists who 'dig up' material through scientific excavations. Their evidence for facts and theories come essentially from the remains or refuse that survive the ravages of time. In Australia archeologists have access to only a small part of what was traditional Aboriginal society, the non-perishable part - stone tools, bones (human and animal) and rock carvings. Thus archeologists can unearth some facts about some of the material culture of Aboriginal society but can only hypothesise about social and spiritual aspects.

Archeology in Australia has only recently generated interest in universities and government. Now many new exciting finds are coming to light destroying earlier assumptions as new evidence is found e.g., the discoveries of bones and artifacts at Lake Mungo in south-western New South Wales indicated that Aborigines had been in Australia for AT LEAST 40,000 years destroying the earlier belief that they had occupied Australia for only about 16,000 years. More archeological work is likely to prove the 40,000 years inaccurate also, hence the emphasis on 'at least'.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE ABORIGINES

It is generally agreed among archeologists that the Aboriginal people migrated to Australia from somewhere in the Asian mainland. This theory is supported by geological evidence of lower sea levels between 80,000 and 8,000 B.P. (before present) which meant that much of what is now the continental shelf of Australia would have been land and that New Guinea and Tasmania would have been linked to the mainland. Whilst this geological evidence supports migration to Australia from Asia, it is important to consider other explanations - perhaps migration from some other part of the world or perhaps the Aborigines evolved here in Australia and perhaps both explanations are valid. A recent newspaper article suggests such an approach.

HOMO SAPIENS COULD HAVE EVOLVED HERE

New evidence uncovered by genetic research shows Australia may have been the nursery ground for Homo sapiens, or modern man.

The evidence, which challenges some of the traditional views on human evolution, will be presented next week at a Canberra symposium, Bones, Molecules and Man.

A spokesman for the Australian National University claimed yesterday that a new theory gaining strength puts Australia at the centre of the evolution.

The spokesman said the traditional view was that modern man evolved in one part of the world, then migrated to the rest of the world in one wave.

"That view has recently been overturned on the strength of the latest genetic and fossil research on the variations in genes and skull bones in various populations," he said.

"The results of this recent research suggest that there was an initial wave of migration throughout the world some 200,000 years ago, and modern man is a result of the mixing of this initial wave with later waves.

"Australian and American scientists have found the clearest evidence of such mingling among Australian Aborigines.

"This has led to speculation that Homo sapiens may have evolved in Australia."


Newspapers are often useful sources of articles for teachers, indicating new developments in Australian archeology and providing stimulation for further research.
THE TASMANIAN ABORIGINALS

The Aboriginal people who were living in Tasmania when Europeans first came to the island showed some distinct differences from the Aboriginal people of the mainland. Some suggest that they were in fact a different racial group but it is also possible that the extended period of isolation could be responsible for both physical and cultural differences. Perhaps the Tasmanian Aborigines developed from a small group of Aborigines who moved southward from the mainland across the land bridge, remnants of which can be seen in the islands of Bass Strait. Once the sea level rose after the ice ages these people were cut off from the new ideas and developments that took place on the mainland. Their physical differences from the mainland people could be a function of the limited genetic pool of the original small population.

The significant cultural differences were:

(a) the boomerang, shield, axe and woomera were not known. They used simple wooden spears and clubs;

(b) their stone tools were held in the hand — they were not hafted (i.e., no handle);

(c) the dingo was not available.

The Aboriginal people of Tasmania provide an interesting example of more questions being posed by archeological discoveries rather than answered. The work of Rhys Jones has revealed that the people who lived in the Rocky Cape area apparently gave up eating fish which would have been a very valuable, natural resource. His chapter, 'The Tasmanian Paradox' in Wright, R.V.S. (1977) Stone Tools or Cultural Workers: Change, Evaluation and Complexity, makes very interesting reading.
EVIDENCE OF CHANGE IN ABORIGINAL PREHISTORY

All societies change but sometimes it happens so slowly that it does not disturb the routine of the society and may not even be recognised as a change. Some societies change very rapidly (e.g. modern Australian society) and it is easy for the older generation to see how different is the lifestyle of the younger generation.

Whether it is noticed or not, all societies change. Early Aboriginal society changed but some changes were so gradual as to be almost imperceptible. e.g. the climatic changes that occurred over thousands of years must have required Aboriginal man to adapt his lifestyle to the new requirements. In central Australia as the environment became more arid, the search for water must have increasingly gained priority in the techniques and skills utilised by people living there.

Other changes can be identified, such as the change from hand-held tools to hafted tools, i.e., tools with handles. This was a significant change that provided Aboriginal man with a much more efficient technology. By gluing and binding a stone axe to a handle or stone chips to a spear Aboriginal man increased his chances of success in the food hunting and gathering process.

Mulvaney estimates that this change began to occur about 3,000 B.P. It is difficult to say why this change occurred at the time. Perhaps environmental changes brought pressure on Aboriginal society so that an improved technology was needed for some groups to survive. Perhaps it occurred by chance. Once developed the idea would have rapidly been adopted by other groups.

Culture contact is another significant source of change in any society. Aboriginal tribes in the north-west of Australia had contact with Indonesian traders before European settlement and adopted some of that culture e.g., wooden dug-out canoe and the smoking of tobacco in a pipe.

When Europeans began to colonise Australia, Aboriginal society faced a dramatic change.

READING


BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Lake Mungo Archeological Excavations

See EXTRACT - pages 5 and 6 - following
The history of the region effectively began with a lower Tertiary marine transgression in the Murray Basin, which deposited calcareous sands, marls and limestones. These were overlain by sands and dune fields of Quaternary age. Low elongated sand ridges form a most characteristic feature, their west to east orientation reflecting the controlling wind system. These relict features were stabilised by vegetation, although they were reactivated in the period around 18,000 to 16,000 BP and subsequently re-stabilized.

The stratigraphy of the region in late Pleistocene times has been determined by J.M. Bowler, and despite much subsequent research and modification during the seventies by Bowler and his colleagues, particularly J. Magee, his initial tripartite soil-sedimentary unit sequence serves usefully to summarise approximately the last 100,000 years.

(a) The basal Goigol unit:
Bowler postulated that the Goigol lunette formed during the late full stage of a previous glacial period, possibly 120,000 BP, and thereafter remained dry. No evidence of human occupation has been detected on any Goigol exposure in any lunette.

(b) The Mungo unit:
Lakes probably filled some 50-60,000 years BP, cliftting the earlier Goigol lunettes and depositing sand and gravel beaches. The old lunettes were buried under forerunes of clear, quartz sands deflated from the beach. Although lake levels fluctuated, they remained virtually full and fresh untill about 26,000 years BP. Lake margins were vegetated. It was during this phase that abundant archaeological material accumulated and many hearths survive. Human occupation certainly predates 30,000 BP; at Outer Arumpo, Mungo and Garnpung probably it is of the order of 40,000 years.

(c) The Zanci unit:
This comprises the last major aeolian deposit in the development of the lunette stratigraphy. Between 25,000 to around 18,000 BP, lake levels fluctuated and lowered. Conditions became more saline, as indicated by the onset of calcareous aeolian pedietal clay deposition on the lunettes. Around 18,000 BP there was a brief return to high water level. This was followed at about 17,000 BP by a drastic drying phase. For about 1,500 years the accumulation of aeolian clays continued as the lakes retained water. Preservation of the fine bedding reflects the rapid and probably seasonal nature of deposition.

Lunette building ceased and the entire system downstream from Garnpung had become inactive by 15,000 BP. It thereafter remained dry. During this phase the water in each basin contracted and smaller inner basins developed with their own lunette margins. By about 14,000 BP, all dunes had restabalized and freshwater penetrated down Willandra Creek as far as Lake Mulurulu. Subsequent millennia have witnessed ephemeral flooding of Mulurulu, but otherwise, the system remained dry.

Human occupation of the area continued throughout the past 25,000 years. That availability of freshwater was the controlling factor may be inferred from the fact that most evidence for human activities after 15,000 BP occurs near Lake Mulurulu, whereas no archaeological finds have been made near saline Lake Chibnalwood.

This relative abandonment represents one of the major archaeological advantages of the region. Sites in the lunettes must be a minimum of 15,000 years old; there is little chance that many sites have been overlain or interfered with by later occupation. Presumably, the whole region was accessible only during winter in good seasons.

European Occupation
The pastoral expansion of the mid-nineteenth century soon reached the Darling River, and there were already settlements at Balranald and Menindee in 1880, when the Burke and Wills expedition crossed the Willandra area.

The woolshed at Mungo Station is a remnant of this expansion having been built in 1859 with locally sown Callitris columellaris pine logs, utilising Chinese labour. "The Walls of China" is assumed to derive from that link.

The area only became known to science in 1968. Since then it has attracted wide interest amongst Australian and overseas scientists. In addition it has been the subject of several television documentaries.

Few places in the world possess multidisciplinary research qualities of comparable significance, reflected by the large number of prominent academic scientists and overseas departments that have conducted research there.
We should not forget that the theories and archeological evidence outlined above are not conclusive, that is, they should not be understood as fact. Theories are only theories until they are either proved or disproved. If proved they become fact. If disproved, or until proved, they are purely hypothetical and may often be misleading. Too often we are led to believe that theory is "fact" - this is untrue.

Similarly archeological evidence leads to assumptions. These again may be misleading and therefore should not be seen as fact. With archeology only in its infant years in Australia and given that it is not static but continually offers new evidence it should be seen that it cannot provide the answers infinitely, but can provide the answers at a particular point of time. This point is illustrated by archeological evidence prior to the Lake Mungo discoveries which led archeologists etc. to conclude that the Aborigines were only in Australia 15 to 20,000 years ago. People accepted this FACT. Then when the Lake Mungo discoveries were made these same people revised the figures to c.45,000 years.

CHART: Aboriginal Occupation of Australia

Prior to Lake Mungo Discovery

| 0 | 10 | 20 (000 years) |

After Lake Mungo Discovery

| 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 |

Who can say where this figure will be when the next major discovery is made.

The "Ice Age"/"Land Mass" theories are also open to debate. They are based on "evidence" of older civilisations existing in Asia and similarities between the cultures of the people of the two continents. What happens if evidence is found that the Australian continent was inhabited by people at an earlier age? Could it be that the Asian races descended from the original Australians? Or could it be that civilisations developed independently of each other?

Whatever the answer the fact is that all answers have been propagated by non-Aborigines. Aboriginal Australians, a people with a culture which stretches back much further than that of the non-Aborigines in Australia, have never been asked this question.

A look at "Dreamtime" legends gives Aboriginal explanations to the beginnings of man - Aboriginal man was created when the world was created. When the hills and mountains, the rivers and creeks, the grass and the stones, the trees and birds, the animals, the fish, the stars and the sky. It was then that Aboriginal man was created. (See The Rainbow Serpent, Dick Roughsey)

Other legends tell of Aboriginal man coming from the sea - and people met by Aborigines on their arrival.

Wandjuk Marika, a tribal elder from Yirrkala in Arnhem Land (N.T.) and former Chairman of the Aboriginal Arts Board of Australia, on one of several visits to the Newcastle/Lower Hunter area visited a sacred site in the Watagan Mountains. He interpreted the legend of the giant lizard as can be seen at this site and declared that this site was where the Aboriginal people originated and moved out to settle the other areas of the continent.
TASKS: Awabakal legend of how coal was formed describes a volcano in the Newcastle area.

How long ago would this volcano have been active?
How could people describe an active volcano without having seen one?

It can thus be seen that Aboriginal opinion may in fact conflict with the theories and "evidence" of non-Aboriginals. It cannot be assumed to be any less correct therefore any explanation of Aboriginal pre-history must include the Aboriginal viewpoint. For too long Aboriginal opinion has been denied in all facets of life- especially in the area that one would suspect Aboriginal people know the most about - themselves.
The antiquity of the Aboriginal is now documented by a number of world archeological firsts found in the past few years.

Not only the first cremations in the world (26,000 years old), but the first ceramics (30,800), the earliest use of ochre for art (32,000), the first edge-ground axes (23,000), some of the earliest rock carving (at least 20,000 years old) and the earliest mastery of the boomerang (12,000 years old). Moreover, the founding Aboriginals who crossed from Timor to the north-west shelf of Australia (estimated at between 50,000 to 75,000 years ago) were also probably the world's first.

The richest evidence is coming from the shores of Lake Mungo, a prehistoric lake 100 kilometres north-east of Mildura, where excavations began four years ago, and revealed a female skeleton.

She is only a pile of charred and pulverised bones, but this once-graceful lady has now come from her 26,000-year old grave to push the story of civilisation back tens of thousands of years. She is the earliest evidence of cremation in the world, and through this ritual she has opened a new window on the soul and intellect of man in the dawn of modern times.

The Lake Mungo lady, as archeologists dub her, is a key link in a chain of exciting new archeological discoveries in Australia that are reshaping the story of the ascent of man.

Her remains and other recent finds on the shore of an Ice Age lake in south-western New South Wales, have established that a remarkable culture flourished there 26,000 years ago, and possibly as far back as 50,000 years ago.

Lake Mungo today looks like some strange moon crater, but 40,000 years ago it was an abundant freshwater lake that covered 100 square miles, one of a network of huge Ice Age lakes. Bush and plant life flourished round the lake in the temperate Ice Age climate (a period vast glaciers lowered the sea 500 feet below today's level) and the pleasant environment supported many hundreds of people for 35,000 years until they dried up 15,000 years ago.

This highly regulated and ordered life, typical of Aboriginal tribes down the centuries, also suggests a highly ordered and complex social, kinship and religious structure. The cremations - evidence of four have been found so far at Lake Mungo - bear this out very strongly. It is they that throw light on the soul and the intellect of early man.

The Lake Mungo lady is the earliest of the cremated remains found so far. Described by archeologists as gracile - slender and graceful - she was cremated and then her bones were vigorously smashed, reburnt and buried in a small round hole.

**THINGS TO DO**

A. Newspaper extract and questions:

1. How long ago did man master the use of the boomerang?
2. Name an important site providing evidence of how Aborigines lived many thousands of years ago.
3. How old is the female skeleton called Lake Mungo lady?
4. Today Lake Mungo looks like a sandy desert. What did it look like 40,000 years ago?
5. What food did the Aboriginal people eat who lived at Lake Mungo 40,000 years ago?
6. What did these people do (a) in the summer? (b) in the winter?
7. How did they cook their food?
8. What is a cremation?
9. What do these words mean?
charred
pulverised
marsupials
incipient
nomadic
intentionally
concave

B. Draw a picture, or make a model, depicting the lifestyle of the people of Lake Mungo 40,000 years ago.

C. Draw a time line showing the earliest evidence of man in a variety of places. e.g. Britain, Greece, China, America, New Zealand and Australia.

D. Imagine what an archeologist of the future (say the year 5,000 A.D.) would find remaining from today's society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remaining as evidence</th>
<th>Rotting or rusting away</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>food</td>
<td>bones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clothing</td>
<td>metal buckles, plastic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>buttons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>household goods</td>
<td>knives, plastic,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aluminium cans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4 LOCAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS

SWANSEA HEADS

In 1972 a salvage archaeological excavation was conducted at Swansea Heads with the approval of the National Parks and Wildlife Service of N.S.W. under the leadership of Professor Len Dyall of Newcastle University. Site clearance for housing development revealed the presence of an Aboriginal "midden" and a human skull. (A midden is a mass of shell, bones, stone and darkened soil — the result of occupation by Aborigines whose campfires blackened and stained the sand in which the refuse of their meals accumulated over a period of time.)

An archaeological excavation is a carefully conducted, systematic uncovering of cultural evidence. The process involves: preliminary survey; gentle excavation with trowels and brushes; sieving; sorting, labelling; and filing. Finally an analysis of the discoveries is made and a report made of the excavation and the cultural material revealed.

The important discoveries were the large quantities of food remains in the form of shells and bones. There were many varieties of shellfish once gathered by the Aborigines, which together with the numerous fish-bones, indicated that these formed a staple part of their diet. Most of the fish were quite small which suggested they were caught by netting or trapping. Other likely methods, especially for large fish, were by use of hook and line as well as spearing. Other food remains included bones of reptiles and mammals.

Stone arrangements uncovered in the process of excavation indicated sites of campfires. Other stones showed working on the edges. Some very fine examples of craftsmanship included backed blades called "bondi points" as well as stones used for scraping and chiselling purposes in woodwork. Another type of implement recovered were several bone points. These may have been used as spear barbs or for fishing.

The site had been occupied over a long period of time. A dating technique, called radio-carbon dating, has established that this spot was used by the Aborigines from 7,800 years ago.

Another important discovery of 15 skeletons suggests that this occupation site was used for the burial of deceased members of their tribe, though not necessarily at the same time as when camping.

BIRUBI:

In late 1978 and early 1979 another salvage excavation was carried out at Birubi. The site was under threat of erosion by the agents of nature and man. Techniques of excavation similar to those at Swansea Heads were used.

Archaeological excavation relies on the stratigraphy inherent in the nature of the accumulation of deposits. As sand, stone, bone and shell are added to a deposit, the top layer is the most recent while those below are relatively older, i.e. the further from the top the older the material.

The occupational evidence (the stone, bone and shell material) when viewed according to the stratigraphy, site location and the local environment, becomes more meaningful and an interpretation of the possible life-style can be made. This archaeological evidence is used in the prehistoric period which existed until settlement of the Hunter Valley by Europeans occurred early last century. The observations made and the records kept by the newcomers add to our knowledge of the Aborigines in the historic period.

The Aborigines in the lower Hunter Valley made greater use of the resources of the marine environment. This is according to the historic evidence, which is confirmed by the archaeological work conducted in the Lower Hunter.
The largest proportion of excavated material consisted of edible shellfish, with the dominant form being the pipi, as well as limpets, nerites, turbans and cart-ruts. The large turbans were used for the fashioning of fine shell fish hooks, of which a significant number were found in various stages of manufacture, at this site (see below). Some fine bone points made from the shank bones of a macropod were discovered.

Stone cultural matter recovered include hearth stones, hammerstones, cleavers or choppers and scrapers.

The sea provided many food sources, including shellfish, various crustaceans and sea urchins.

Fish formed a staple part of the diet, with the major species being caught off the rock platform using a hook and line, netting or trapping. (Snapper and wrasse were the major species of fish found.) Other faunal remains were marsupials, birds and lizards, which indicates the exploitation of food sources other than those from the sea.

Significance of the presence of shell fish-hook: The presence of such a large number of shell fish-hooks, in various stages of manufacture, indicates how important fishing was to the Aborigines here in the past. Their presence in association with the wide variety of fish bones, supports the evidence of the observers during the historic period. (See Economic Life: extracts and tables.)

Fish-hook Manufacture: A suitable shell, the large turban, was fragmented in such a way as to leave by its nature a piece with a convex surface. This was then trimmed to the desired elliptical shape. The centre of the convex was then ground down on a suitable stone surface like sandstone, until a hole was developed. This was nibbled larger into a crescentic shape. A break was made and the final delicate grinding done with a piece of sandstone, called a fish hook file. (See Slides No. )

Suggested reading:

"Aboriginal Occupation of the Newcastle Coastline",
"Aboriginal Occupation of the Dudley-Jewells Swamp Area",


Experts find relics in black campsite

A team of amateur and professional archaeologists have completed work at Birubi, near Nelson Bay, on an aboriginal site endangered by the steady encroachment of 20th Century man.

A rescue dig was initiated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service to Professor L. Dyall, an associate professor of chemistry at Newcastle University and a keen archaeologist.

The project was funded by the University's Board of Environmental Studies.

Professor Dyall said yesterday that the shell middens were the last example of that type of aboriginal campsite left on the Newcastle coastline.

"The whole of Birubi was once a midden but the encroachment of housing lots and the damage caused by storms and off-road vehicles has reduced the site from 10 acres to less than one," he said.

The archaeological team, all volunteers, worked on two trenches last November and recently completed work on a third.

Professor Dyall said he believed the site had been occupied as long as 1000 years ago and as recently as 1880.

A more accurate time-scale would be known in about two months when finds from the site had been radiocarbon-dated by Sydney University.

A substantial record of the shellfish, fish, bird and mammal remains at the site was recovered from the first two excavations.

Fish, mainly mullet and groper, and shellfish, mainly pipi, were the main components of the diet.

Some birds and mammals including whales were eaten, Professor Dyall said.

They also had recovered examples of all the stages in the manufacture of fishhooks from the heavy turban shell, analina brunnea.

"A piece was broken from the shell, the centre was ground out, it was then shaped with a small stone rasp and when completed, tied to a fishing line," he said.

The trenches were full of fire ash, suggesting the occupants did a lot of cooking.

The most recently excavated trench, which is contemporary with one of the others, had only stone implements and no fishing hooks, suggesting it was a men's camp.

Professor Dyall, of Newcastle University, inspects the Aboriginal fish hook yesterday.

Fishing and making fish hook, were traditionally women's work.

"Also the charcoal from one of the fires, isolated analysis of the charcoal showed the material we have recovered was that of about 1840," he said.

The area of the middens were to recover as much information as possible about the aboriginal fishing methods, the tools they used and the ways in which they made implements of shell, stone and bone.

"We will also be trying to work out when they used their rock for food, probably from Nobbys or Darley island because the local rock was unsuitable," he said.
1. Green Turban (Subninella undulata)
2. Heavy Turban (Ninella torquata)
3. Hercules Club (Pyrazus eburninus)
4. Horn (Pyrazus australis)
5. Black Nerita (Melanerita melanotragus)
6. Cut-rut (Diochus orbites)
7. Zebra Top (Australocochlea obtusa)
8. Speckled Top (A. convallamenta)
9. Tapered Ark (Anadara trapezium)
10. Pink Cockle (Cardium rockeii)
11. Oyster-rock (Crassostrea commercialis)
12. Edible Mussel (Mytilus plumularius)
13. Pipi (Nebidomax delitiae)
14. Colourful Limpet (Cellana transversa)
15. Scaly Limpet (Patella ovata)
16. Shield or Buck (Scutus antiquus)
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES – ACTIVITIES

CORE/EXTENSION

SWANSEA HEADS

1. Whose approval was required before excavation was permitted?
2. Why was the site at Swansea Heads chosen for the archaeological excavation?
3. Can you suggest any reasons why the Aborigines had used the spot for camping?
4. What is involved in archaeological excavation?
   (Ext. Look up books about archaeological excavations and describe in detail the various activities performed by archaeologists.)
5. List the items of food on which the Aborigines lived.
6. How can archaeologists tell that these were eaten by the Aborigines?
7. What methods were used to secure the catch?
8. Besides shells and bones what other materials were discovered?
9. Over what length of time was the site used by the natives?
10. How was the earliest date arrived at?
   (Ext. Find out more about the dating process and other dates for coastal settlement by Aborigines.)
11. Why is it unfortunate that there are houses built on this Aboriginal occupation site?
12. Ext. Try to find out what other fishing gear was used for hooking fish besides shell fish hooks in Australia.
13. What indicates that the natives took pride in their appearance?
14. How different were some hair styles?

BIRUBI

1. What is stratigraphy?
2. Why was the excavation started?
3. How was this excavation valuable for the information revealed?
4. List the shell types used by the Aborigines.
5. Which kind was preferred for fashioning fish hooks?
6. Imagine yourself as an Aborigine in the process of making a shell fish hook – describe the stages in your own words.
7. Can you suggest reasons for the apparent variety of fish hooks?
8. Why were there no wooden implements discovered buried?
   Extension Experiment - bury a number of various items. Inspect at periodic intervals to see the stages in deterioration. This, of course, would be most suitable as a long term project involving perhaps a systematic experimentation over a year and several years.
9. Of what importance was the archeological excavation at this place?
10. Compare the discoveries made here with those at Swansea Heads. Write down the similarities and differences.

EXTENSION

1. See No. 8 above.
2. Divide yourselves into two groups (there could be multiples of these); one group decides who they are and describes (or write down) their life style. Elements of that life style are to be buried in a convenient location. The next group then excavate the site and reconstruct the life style from the evidence uncovered. (This could be done over a long term as well to make it even more realistic where the element of survival of material culture after burial over a period takes place.)
For information concerning the ordering or purchase of Aboriginal art and craft write to:

Aboriginal Arts & Crafts Pty Ltd
P.O. Box N40,
Grosvenor Street,
SYDNEY. N.S.W. 2000.
Traditional Aboriginal Society
Economic and Material Culture

ABORIGINES OF THE HUNTER REGION

No 1. Wedge or Fish Grip
No 2. Canoe or Spear
No 3. Spear or Spear Head
No 4. Spear or Pointing Stick
No 5. Hook or Tenting Stick
No 6. Hook or Fish Hook
No 7. Hook or Fish Hook
No 8. Hook or Fish Hook
No 9. Hook or Fish Hook
No 10. Hook or Fish Hook
No 11. Hook or Fish Hook
No 12. Hook or Fish Hook
No 13. Hook or Fish Hook
No 14. Hook or Fish Hook
No 15. Hook or Fish Hook

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
HUNTER REGION

HUNTER SOCIAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION

MINISTRY FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS
NEW SOUTH WALES

I.S.B.N. 0-7240-8127-5
3. TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL SOCIETY –
ECONOMIC AND MATERIAL CULTURE

3.1 HUNTER GATHERERS

Traditional Aboriginal society was (and still is) a complex of inter­relationships. The backbone of their social structure centres around a hunter-gatherer existence. Survival was the important theme. Interwoven with this basic idea the men channelled their energies into the hunting activities and the women into gathering activities, in general. Both activities hinged on a deep understanding of nature. The men and women knew the haunts and habits of each and every animal. They could recognise the signs of their passing, their particular niches. They knew the seasons, their coming and their waning, and any variations in animal behaviour as a result of these changes. The women knew when to harvest the seeds, berries and the roots of plants, how to treat and prepare them for eating.

Meshed into this intricate knowledge of nature's ways the Aborigines relied upon an equally intricate pattern of understanding the attendant facets of Mother Earth. Every nook and cranny of every gully and hill within their territory was etched into their memories. Moreover, they also knew the religious parable behind it, the stories and legends behind the origins and behaviour of the flora and fauna. For the Aborigines, their lives were intimately linked with the material and religious lores.

Historical Accounts:

The following section consists of historical accounts written by Europeans who came in contact with the Aborigines in the Hunter Region during last century when the Aborigines were in various stages of traditional life and detribalization. Since the Aborigines did not leave any written account of their history and culture we have to rely on the observations of the newcomers: explorers, missionaries, settlers and government officials. These people seemed favourably disposed towards the Aborigines, so their observations may be accepted as genuine efforts in interpretation and reports of what was seen. However, it must be noted that not all the observers were skilled in the understanding of traditional life styles so elements of misinterpretation and selective choice may have affected their observations. Though sympathetic, their comments reflect their backgrounds and outlook. Also, the intensity of observation is important - inadequate periods of watching and notation may have had a bearing and possibly explain a bias towards certain activities. Nevertheless, these accounts are what we have to rely on since the Aborigines living at that time have left no written records of their activities and lifestyle. These provide an insight into the traditional lifestyle, but may not be the entire way it was.

N.B.: It needs to be noted that the terms used by these early observers are not necessarily in accord with the viewpoint of present day Aborigines but yet are relevant in the historical context and retained for this reason. Such words as "native", "black" are examples, which they prefer to replace with the term Aborigine.

* Robert Dawson: the first agent for the Australian Agricultural Company;
Rev. L.E. Threlkeld: a missionary who established a mission at Belmont;
H.F. Ebworth: author employee of the A.A. Co.;
Ludwig Leichhardt: the famous explorer who spent some time in the Hunter Valley, 1842;
William Scott: the son of a servant of the A.A. Co. born 1844;
James Backhouse: a visiting missionary from America who came to Australia in 1832-37 along with
G.W. Walker, another missionary;
Are your children involved?

THE YAMULOONG PROJECT

Sponsored by the Awabakal Aboriginal Co-operative, the Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group and the Newcastle Herald.

Two creative competitions for Hunter Region School students, organised by the Awabakal Newcastle Aboriginal Co-operative, the Newcastle Aboriginal Support Group, The Newcastle Herald, BHP and the Commonwealth Banking Corporation.

This competition is organised each year during Term two. Watch for information in the Newcastle Morning Herald or in your school's mail.

Have you seen these?
Arrangement of the Historical Accounts:

For each tribe in this study, the Awabakal and the Worimi, the observations are grouped under headings. For comparative purposes look under the same heading for each tribe. The subject headings are:

- Food Sources and Preparation
- Hunting and Gathering
- Fishing
- Weapons
- Implements
- Canoes
- Dwellings and Encampments
- Apparel

As well there are useful tables to help compare and contrast the two tribes:

- Food Sources
- Natural Materials Used

In the future, similar information will be made available for other tribes in the Hunter Region which may be inserted in this section of the kit.

REMINDER: In using these historical accounts it is advisable to refer to the relevant transparencies in the Slide Set, the Photograph Study and the line drawings. These will make the descriptions more meaningful.
3.2 Worimi Tribe

Food Sources and Preparation

The forest in its natural state, affords them every thing necessary for their subsistence.

(Dawson, p.203)

Their food consists of fish near the coast, but in the woods of possum, bandicoots and any other animal they may spear or catch.

(Ebsworth, p.80)

The waters of the bay teemed with fish of every description, easily taken at all times. The rocks were covered with oysters, which formed a staple part of their diet. The bush abounded with game in the form of kangaroos, wallabies, possums, emus, flying foxes, wild duck, swans, parrots.... There were edible roots in the gullies, wild fruits in the bushes. It was really a land of plenty.

(Scott, pp.18-20)

Oysters were to be had for the gathering and the natives appreciated the succulent shellfish mightily. But very seldom did they eat them raw. They would knock them off the rock, or carry the rocks away, and roast the oysters over a fire.

(Scott, p.19)

The young, tender stalks of the gigantic lily, was another form of vegetable delicacy, only procurable at certain seasons of the year. These stalks were soaked in water for some time, probably to remove any toxic properties that might be present, and then roasted in coals.

(Scott, p.22)

Bungwall is fern-root, which they roast in the ashes, and afterwards pound into a paste between two stones: they are fond of it, and it appears to be nutritious.

(Dawson, p.92)

Water

It sometimes happens, in dry seasons, that water is very scarce, particularly near the shores. In such cases, whenever they find a spring, they scratch a hole with their fingers (the ground being always sandy near the sea) and suck the water out of the pool through tufts or whisks of grass, in order to avoid dirt or insects. They would walk miles rather than drink bad water. Indeed, they were such excellent judges of water, that I always depended upon their selection when we encamped any distance from a river, and was never disappointed.

(Dawson, p.150)

Plants

We now and then came to tracks of white gritty soil bearing the grass-tree, from which the natives extract the wax-like gum with which they glue their implements. Their spears are also made of the smooth, straight stalks of this plant, which grows to the height of seven or eight feet, with a top like a bulrush when in full bloom. The flower contains a considerable quantity of juice, which is sweet and very agreeable. The natives especially the children, are exceedingly fond of it, and constantly in search of it during the season. Also the dwarf banksias, which, when in blossom, contained saccharine [sweet] juice similar to the grass-tree.

(Dawson, p.244)
They roast all the fish and animals in ashes, skin and all, just as they catch them. When it is pretty well done, they divide it amongst themselves by tearing it with their teeth and fingers.

(Dawson, p.68)

**Fire Making**

The fire making sticks used were usually parts of the dried stem of the grass tree. The principal piece would be about two feet in length and about \( \frac{1}{4} \) an inch (1cm) in diameter, from the front of which would be removed a narrow strip of the outer shell exposing the hardened pith. The other piece would be thinner, and rounded in a blunt point.

The fire maker would squat himself on the ground, the soles of his feet on the larger length of wood to hold it firm, the thinner section between the palms of his hands, its tapered point on the exposed pith of the under piece. Rubbing the palms together he would cause the upright stick he held to revolve rapidly, the point gradually boring its way through the pitch beneath. When nearly through, smoke would begin to rise, whereupon the efforts of the operator would be re-doubled. Whirling the stick with amazing speed its hardened point would emerge from the pitch, spilling a fiery dust that dropped on a little heap of soft, fine bark placed to catch it. The sparks would be gently blown upon until a flame appeared, when thereafter it was no trouble to build up a roaring fire.

Naturally they avoided as much as possible the necessity of going through this process. Once a fire was made it was kept burning as long as could be continued. In travelling from place to place a fire stick was always carried, the brand being whirled and twisted so that it would not go out.

(Scott, p.24)

**Uses of Fire**

Even in their bark canoes they maintained a small blaze on a mound of clay so that cooking operations could begin ashore whenever necessary.

The natives never moved off camp at night without carrying a fire stick to ward off attacks of evil spirits. In times of wet weather when long continued rain made everyone and everything miserable and gloomy, the old men of the tribe would perform a remarkable ceremony to ensure a recurrence of good weather. Snatching fire sticks from the camp fire, they would hurl the blazing brands in the air at the same time puffing loudly with the mouth.

(Scott, p.24)
HUNTING AND GATHERING

Honey and Possum

The Australian bee has no sting and stores its honey in holes in the trunks and boughs of trees. To find the honey the natives catch a worker, attach a tuft of down to one of its feet, and their sharp eyes follow it as it flies towards its hive.

(Leichhardt, p.552)

Bill began most furiously with the hatchet to cut notches in the bark of the tree, just large enough for the great toe to rest upon. The first was about the height of his breast; upon this he rested by the great toe of the right foot, while his left arm was wound around the body of the tree; the second was out above his head, chiefly by the action of the wrist with great adroitness, and then with the hatchet in his mouth and both arms round the tree, he placed the great toe of his left foot in the notch, exhibiting an astonishing stretch and pliability of limb.

(Dawson, p.238)

Finding the site of the busy colony, he would cut open a hole large enough to enable him to reach the comb. Then hauling out great handfuls, he would drop it, the women expectantly underneath catching it deftly in their bark, canoe-shaped bowls.

(Scott, p.23)

By scratches in the bark and other signs incomprehensible to a white person, they would select the forest giant in which the possum had made his home. One would be deputed to climb for the quarry, and with his tomahawk (stone axe) would set about making toe holds in the bark up the straight hole. It was marvellous how swiftly they could climb by means of these tiny notches, literally swarming up the smooth tall trunks. The possum was hauled from his hole in a rotted limb or spot and tossed to the ground. Sometimes a blow on the head or the fall would kill him, or if he were thrown below alive, those beneath would perform the final ceremony of dispatch.

(Scott, p.21)

Gathering

We everywhere saw traces of them in abandoned gunyers, in notches they had cut in the trees, by which they ascend for the wild honey or the possum, and in the incisions in the bark whence they had extracted the grub-worm, or large larva of an insect which is deposited there.

(Dawson, p.209)

HUNTING: Stalking

He placed himself in a line with the trees, which concealed his body as he advanced. He crept on exactly like a cat occasionally shifting his position with the greatest caution as the kangaroo moved, so as always to have a tree in a line between himself and his game. The kangaroo would sometimes take alarm and place itself suddenly in an erect position upon its haunches, with its ears pricked up, listening and looking in every direction about him. Upon this Mickie would instantly pause, and in whatever position his body might be in at the moment, he would remain fixed to the spot like a tree in the forest, until the kangaroo resumed its feed again.

(Dawson, p.216)
We very faintly distinguished the hunting shout of the natives, though, at a considerable distance from us. Our black friend knew that they were driving the kangaroos within a certain space before them. When circumstances admit it, I have seen them take their game in this manner in large quantities. They form themselves in a line, and move forward, shouting and driving the kangaroos before them. The two extremes of the line are gradually drawn in, until the kangaroos find themselves enclosed in a nook, with the bend of a river, or some other obstruction, in front of them. The natives then closing upon them, the slaughter commences, and the greater part, if not the whole of their game, is secured. The animals have no security in taking to the river, for the hunters pursue them there, also, and knock them on the head with their waddies.

(Dawson, p.182)

FISHING

They venture miles from land when fishing and manage the canoes with great dexterity. (See Slides and Photograph Study)

(Ebsworth, p.82)

It was very common to see canoes, constructed of bark, lying like small black spots on the water at a distance for hours, according to the tide .... frequently the grandmother and her married daughter, one at each end of the frail bark, watching and hooking the fish as they came in and went out with the tide. They always put a flat stone or two in the centre of the canoe, and place upon it several fire brands, with which they warm themselves when the weather is cold, and they also cook their fish and roast oysters for their subsistence while in the canoe.

(Dawson, p.314)

Although the men fish when it suits their convenience or pleasure, still it is the women who looked to the supply of the members of the family. So important an office do they consider this near the coast, that the mother nominates one of her female children to it as soon as born, amputating the little finger of the right hand, as a token of such appointment.

(Dawson, p.314)

The lobsters were caught by the women who, in the sea front, dived down among the rocks for them. Their men folk ... threw stones into the water ... the purpose being to scare away the sharks.

(Scott, p.19)

While the women used the lines, the men mostly fished with the spear - they were extraordinarily skilful. It was interesting to watch the onslaught in the sea mullet when they came into the harbour. By some unnerving instinct the blacks knew to within a day when the first great shoals would appear through the heads. The women would be on the lookout for the shining, shimmering mass of fish to come around some wooded headland, and when their shrill outcries told of the approach ... the men would rush to the shore.

The fish always travelled from west to east, and close inshore, on the northern side of the harbour, usually ... about high-water. At the given signal the men would dash into the water up to their middles and stand motionless, spear poised on woomera, ready to launch the fatal dart. The leader, scanning the water with eager eyes, would watch until the shoal came within striking distance. "Muk!" (Now!) he would cry. Hissing into the water would hurtle the heavy spear, and next instant excited natives would be tossing great, gleaming fish to the beach.

(Scott, pp.18-19)
**FOOD SOURCES OF THE WORIMI TRIBE.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>METHOD OF COLLECTION OR HUNTING</th>
<th>COMMENT</th>
<th>HABITAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shellfish:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oysters - rock (Dir-ra-bwee)</td>
<td>Gathered by the women and children.</td>
<td>Great abundance.</td>
<td>Estuary or rocky seashore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- mud (Nin-nung)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Staple part of diet.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mussel, Welks, Cockles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sandy seashore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crustacea:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rocky shore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobster (wir-rah)</td>
<td>Men acted as lookouts, women dived down to crevices and pulled out lobsters with sharp sticks.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Estuary, rocky shore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crabs (tee-rah)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fish:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>As important as shellfish.</td>
<td>Estuary, Seashore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mullet (Mi-poo-yoo)</td>
<td>Men speared the large fish, especially mullet on communal basis; women used hook and line from canoes mostly using crustacea and shellfish for bait. Occasionally husband and wife fished at night by torchlight. Nets and fish traps may also have been used.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schnapper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flounder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bream (Coo-pe-ra)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flathead (Yu-ka)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jew-fish (Gur-ra-wur-ra)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torpedo-fish (Kir-re-poon-too)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tunicata:</strong></td>
<td>Logs hacked with stone axes and worm dragged out.</td>
<td>Eaten raw.</td>
<td>Estuary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teredo (cobra)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fish:</strong></td>
<td>Poisoned waterholes with narcotic bark. At drought time stirred up mud, forcing fish to the surface. Speared with multi-pronged spears.</td>
<td>Great quantities.</td>
<td>Water hole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eel (Too/nang)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marsupials:</strong></td>
<td>Driven into mobs, then speared or clubbed.</td>
<td>Abundant; favourite food.</td>
<td>Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangaroo (small) (wam-boyn)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(large) (wol-loo-ya)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallaby (bur-rid)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Possum:</strong> (Bur-ran-gee) (wot-too) (pil-loo)</td>
<td>Sought for claw marks on tree trunks; climbed trees by means of notches cut with a stone axe; victim dispatched with a blow on the yeard.</td>
<td>A great delicacy.</td>
<td>Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITEM</td>
<td>METHOD OF COLLECTION OR HUNTING</td>
<td>COMMENTS</td>
<td>HABITAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flying Fox (Gun-dee-wi)</td>
<td>Tugged down vines and branches or speared.</td>
<td>Most fancied.</td>
<td>&quot;Brush&quot;, rainforest, Forest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monotreme:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echidna (Mak-ree)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platypus (Yap-pee)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avifauna: Birds (general)</td>
<td>Secured with thrown stones or spears. Found in burrows on islands.</td>
<td>Abundant part of menu.</td>
<td>Broughton Is., Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutton-birds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emu (Wit-tar-kee)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyre-bird (Nu-rewin)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crow (Wah-kun)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey (Ghin-doo-ee)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Cockatoo (Fok-a-too)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King Parrot (Cir-Cir)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Cockatoo (Wil-la)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosella (Bur-oo-lit)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelican (Doon-ge-ra)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teal (Ber-ri-za)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Freshwater or Sea-shore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cormorant (Gun-gul-ba)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Duck (Kur-run-gi)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan (young) (Wor-ree-a)</td>
<td>(adult) (Kool-wun-nung)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lizards (small) (Muk-kun)</td>
<td>Forest, heath.</td>
<td>Favourite morsel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Jew) (Woo-roo-bung)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables and Fruit:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferp roots (Bungwall)</td>
<td>Gathered usually by women and children but when necessary all members of the tribe join in. Also gathered incidentally and eaten by the men whilst in search for larger game.</td>
<td>An important part of the diet.</td>
<td>Swamp margins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macrozami (Burrawang)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwarf Banksia bloom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Heath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITEM</td>
<td>METHOD OF COLLECTION OR HUNTING</td>
<td>COMMENTS</td>
<td>HABITAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit (cur-ra-mah)</td>
<td>Easily procured in the right season.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yams (wombie; mug-gin)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Principal food.</td>
<td>Swamp margins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grass-tree (Boo-merri; Nun-doo)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Juice of flowering stem contains nectar.</td>
<td>Forest, heath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gigantic Lily (Poo-loon-gearn)</td>
<td>Gathered when young.</td>
<td>Stems and roots delicacy.</td>
<td>Forest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insects: Honey (Gir-ra-gar) Native Bee (Wal-lin-gul-ga)</td>
<td>Agile and swift in scaling trees by cutting notches in tree trunks with stone axe; nest chopped out.</td>
<td>Relished, especially the young brood combs.</td>
<td>Forest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 WORIMI TRIBE

WEAPONS: General

It is marvellous what they were able to fashion in the way of weapons and equipment of various kinds ... the art of fashioning their weapons was inherited from countless generations who had to pit their wits against Nature in the battle for survival.

(Scott, p.29)

Spear - Structure

The spears were really wonderful weapons; long, slender and graceful, and fashioned with a balance that was amazingly perfect.

Some had straight long shafts tipped with pointed bone, either of fish or animal; others were pointed and barbed. The shafts of the spears were made of various hardwoods, scraped carefully to the required thickness with shells. The ironbark (tee hurah) was mostly favoured for making them. A straight young sapling would be chosen, cut to the required length, and set to soak in water for some three or four weeks. This would take out the sap and render the wood reasonably soft for the application of the tools used as scrapers. The hardening was done by fire later on.

The end piece, comprising the barb, or pointed tip, was affixed to the main shaft very skillfully, considering that the hole for its reception had to be bored with a piece of hardwood, twirled between the hands. The top, fitted into its slot, would be made firm and solid with cords of animal sinews or fibre, and coated over with gum from the grass tree.

(Scott, p.29)

He scraped the point of his spear, which was at best about eight feet (2.5m) long, with a broken shell, and put it in the fire to harden. Having done this, he drew the spear over the blaze of the fire repeatedly, and then placed it between his teeth in which position he applied both his hands to straighten it, examining it afterwards with one eye closed. The dextrous and workmanlike manner in which he performed his task, interested me exceedingly.

(Dawson, p.16)

Fishing Spear - Structure

While the women used the lines, the men mostly fished with the spear, and they were extraordinarily skillful. The fish spear was the dried stem of the gigantic lily, and into this was fitted a secondary portion, a part of the dried flower stem of the grass tree. The head was made of ironbark and hardened by fire. The weight and strength of the whole spear was regulated according to the purpose for which it was intended, thus the heaviest of them were utilised only for spearing the big sea mullet which swarm into the harbour in countless millions at certain times of the year.

(Scott, p.18)

Fishing Spear - Prongs

The fashioning of these prongs was an important piece of work. The section of the tree intended to be used for the purpose was first shaped in the rough and then put in sea water for a lengthy period until the sap had gone and the tissue toughened. This also made it easier to scrape the billet down to the required thickness with a broken shell.

When the prongs were properly fashioned and barbed, the head would be fitted to the shaft with fibre cord and gum from the grass tree. The fitting was done so closely that the whole would be as solid as though in one piece.

(Scott, p.18)
Spears - Skill

It would be no exaggeration to say their aim was very accurate up to a hundred yards. With a woomerah they could hit a mark at almost every throw up to a distance of 50 to 75 yards (50-70 m).

(Scott, p.30)

Spear - Thrower

The woomerah was used to give further competence to the flight of a spear. It was a well-balanced flat or round piece of hard-wood, 24 inches to 30 inches long (76 cm), having at the narrow end another piece of hard-wood, about three inches (8 cm) long affixed at a slight angle to receive the slightly hollowed end of the spear shaft. This smaller section was held in place by a binding of fibre and grass tree gum. The ends of the spear shafts were also bound with similar material to form a notch. The added leverage launches the lance with incredible swiftness. Most were highly polished by fat and ashes rubbed into them.

(Scott, p.30)

The Shield

It has a small target, called a carrille, made of thick bark, hardened by the fire, and generally proof against a spear. It is two feet and a half long, by fifteen inches wide ... beautifully made, and ornamented with pipe-clay and red ochre. The ground was white, and quartered with red lines, with a red margin. (See Slides and Photograph Study).

(Dawson, p.64)

The shield was an important article of warlike equipment for the warriors. It was an oval shaped piece of hard-wood some two feet wide (60 cm) having a hand grip on the back made of a length of vine affixed in holes made for the purpose. With this seemingly ineffective guard, they could ward off with dexterity spears and stones hurled at them from any angle.

(Scott, p.31)

Waddies

The waddies were neatly fashioned and perfectly balanced. They ranged in length from three feet to three feet six inches (80cm - 1 m), being shaped like a club having a slightly tapering end. Some of these were notched at intervals along their whole length, or else carved in fantastic patterns. These weapons were very effective in a fight.

The nullah nullah usually had a head of some description at one end, and shaped either like a hammer or a ball. Iron-bark was used in their manufacture, and the bulging knob was capable of putting an enemy out of action with little trouble.

Clubs were also used, roughly fashioned from any suitable piece of timber.

(Scott, p.30)

Boomerang

At Port Stephens there were two varieties in general use, the slightly curved weapon, utilised for striking down game of all description, and the sharply curved variety which would return to the thrower. These weapons were usually made of wood from the wild myrtle (wattle), hardened, like all their other wooden implements, by fire. The throwers had marvellous command over them - could actually direct and control their flight in any direction.
It was no light task to make a boomerang, for a good deal of skill and more than ordinary patience was necessary. A piece of suitable wood invariably myrtle, had to be found curved as much as possible in the rough shape of the finished article. This could be chipped and shaved with extreme care until the desired curve had been obtained, when the finishing touches would be put on it with scrapers made of shell or glass.

(Scott, p.30)

**IMPLEMENTS - Stone Axe**

I presented each man with a Tomahawk (stone axe) (or mogo, as they call it) which they prize above all things.

(Dawson, p.59)

Before we became acquainted with them, they used stone hatchets, which were sharpened by other stones to a pretty fine edge. These had a groove worked near the head, around which they twisted a stick, to serve as a handle. They were closely fastened round the head by a very adhesive gum, resembling pitch, taken from a plant called the grass tree. This gum undergoes some refinement before it is used, and forms part of the stock which the women carry in their nets. It easily melts in the fire, but does not appear to be softened by the sun.

With their stone hatchets they can cut notches in the bark of trees, which they climb for the wild honey, or for possums and goannas.

(Dawson, p.202)

The men invariably carried their tomahawks in their belts and a piece of grass tree gum, which later seemed to be an indispensable part of their equipment. This had so many uses that no aborigine would be without his ready supply at hand.

(Scott, p.8)

**Nets and Fish-hooks**

The women are very ingenious; they form fish-hooks from the oyster shell, and make string from bark with great facility, equally as good as can be purchased in England, they twist and roll the bark in a curious manner with the palm of the hand upon the leg; with this string they form nets of curious workmanship. In some the meshes are very small and neat, and the whole is without a knot, excepting at its completion; their nets are slung by a string round their foreheads, and hang behind them; they are used like workbags, containing all the articles they carry with them from place to place, such as their fishing hooks, prepared bark for string, gum for gluing their spears and sometimes oysters, or fish, when they move from the shore.

(Ebsworth, pp.79-80)

**Digging Stick**

While the men procured meat from the chase, it was the particular function of the women to provide what represented the vegetables of the daily dietetic regimen. Principal of these was wombie, a species of yam, the root of a slender vine that flourished in the scrubby gullies, which were dug up with their wombie sticks, pieces of round hard-wood, three feet long (90 cm), pointed and toughened by fire. The tubers varied in thickness from an inch to an inch and a half (4 cm), in and were a few inches (5 cm) in length. When baked in ashes these yams were very palatable.

(Scott, p.122)
Shells/Fibre Cord/Gum

In the nets were broken shells to scrape the spears to a thin and sharp point, with prepared bark for string, gum for gluing different parts of their war and fishing spears. (Dawson, p.67)

(See also Stone Axes, Spears, Food - Grass Tree)

They are all, both men and women, marked in various parts by raised scars: the process commences by making deep incisions on the chest, back, shoulder, or loins with sharp edge of shell, according to the taste of the operators. The wounds are afterwards kept in a state of irritation for a long period, and when the proud flesh is raised sufficiently above the surrounding surface, the wounds are allowed to heal, having raised lines of various lengths and forms. The operation is performed at various ages, from one or two years, to ten or twelve; and as the wounds are sometimes left open for a year or more, the pain and inconvenience must be very great: indeed, the wasted frames and haggard appearance of the little sufferers during this period indicates this. (See Slide set) (Dawson, p.319)

Sea shells with which they scrape and sharpen their spears.

(Dawson, p.135)

Fibre String

These fibre strings were also used to make dilly bags in which picanninies were carried as well as articles of food, and puppies. (Scott, p.18)

Fishing Line

Fishing lines were cleverly made from the inner bark of the kurrajong trees, the finished article being of extraordinary strength and capable of landing the heaviest of edible fish. Selected women specially dedicated to the fishing prepare the lines. The outer bark would be carefully stripped from the tree and soaked in water until the outer portions could be readily scraped off with a shell. This left a white, flax-like fibre, very tough and strong. (Scott, p.18)

The women twisted this fibre to the required thickness and length by rolling it on the front part of the thigh with the hands. Where the line was rolled the skin was hardened by the application of ashes and in time became calloused, smooth and as hard as dried leather. (Scott, p.18)

Fishing Hooks

He was sure to wait upon me frequently with a net full of shells and pearl fishing hooks, which I received as curiosities. (Dawson, p.308)
CANOE

They have canoes made of bark with which they go about this harbour, and cross the rivers and creeks; but they manage these with a paddle. They place themselves on their knees on a kind of bark cushion, at the bottom of the canoe, and steer and propel their bark canoe, first pulling on one side, then on the other, with great dexterity and rapidity.

(Dawson, p.79)

On the border of an extensive lake which communicated with the river Myall; but it was too far above the influence of the tide for its waters to be salt. A fleet of small bark-canoes, belonging to the natives, was lying moored to some mangrove-trees at the back of the encampment; and in the centre of the lake were several small rocky and well-timbered islands, rising high above the water and covered with grass.

(Dawson, p.246)

(See FISHING, also Slide Set and Photograph Study)

CANOES: Values and Uses

The canoe was an essential part of the fishing operations and were greatly in evidence. These enabled many a meal to be obtained by the fisherwoman when the great schools of fish were not in evidence. It was not an uncommon sight to see a dozen or so out on the waters of the bay, a little fire, built on a heap of clay in the centre, glowing and smoking.

(Scott, p.20)

It was amazing the speed at which these seemingly cumbersome craft could be driven through the water by their owners, their lightness and shallow draught having a good deal to do with this. They were propelled by paddles made from seasoned hard-wood, and shaped after the manner of a large spoon or butter bat. Kneeling in the middle of his canoe, this able mariner would dip deeply on one side and then, swinging with rhythmic grace and perfect poise, half turn, and dip on the other side.

They avoided rough water and always chose a calm day for crossing the harbour. The canoes were greatly prized by them and were so fragile that they would not stand rough usage.

(Scott, p.32)

CANOES: Structure and Construction

In fashioning their canoes the aboriginals showed skill and craftsmanship. The method was crude but very clever in its way. The hull of the little vessel was made of a single sheet of bark of the stringybark (punnak) tree obtained from a tall straight clean bole. Great care was exercised in selecting the right tree, as any fault, caused by a knot or protuberance, would spoil the value of the sheet when stripped. The stripping operation was carried out with an exact judgement, lines being cut crosswise with a tomahawk around and across the tree so that the section removed would be of the required size and shape. Very carefully was the length of bark separated from its hold so that not a crack appeared in its tough surface.

As soon as it was taken off it would be passed back and forth across the flames of a fire to turn up the ends, which would be tied into position with sections of vines and fibre. The rough, outside bark, the exterior of the canoe would be carefully trimmed away with the blade of a tomahawk until the surface was smooth and clean. The inner part, the inside of the craft, would of course be the naturally smooth sappy portion.

The gaps between the ties of the vines at stern and bow would be plugged with clay, so skillfully introduced that the whole craft would be absolutely water-tight. To give the canoe rigidity so that it could bear the passengers safely, stretchers were ingeniously fitted at intervals along its length.
On the floor of the canoe, usually at the stern, there would be the inevitable mound of clay, the floating fireplace, on which a few embers were always burning. (See Slides and Photograph Study)

(Scott, p.31)

**Dwellings and Encampments**

A native can go up the smooth and branchless stems of the tallest trees, to any height, by cutting notches in the surface large enough only to place the great toe in, upon which he supports himself, while he strips the bark quite round the tree, in lengths from three to six feet. These form temporary sides and coverings for huts of the best description.

In some cases I observed that the natives placed a forked stick starting from the ground to the tree (with the fork resting against the body of the tree) eight or ten feet from the earth, while the other end was stuck in the ground. Upon the forked part of the hole they mounted...they used a stick....called the hornerah (which assists them in throwing the spear) with which they peel the bark after having made the incision with their hatchets. The edge of this instrument is thin and sharpish at the flat end.

(Dawson, p.19)

They sleep before their fires, frequently in a circle, with their heads upon each others hips, without any covering in summer; but in winter or rainy weather, they cut large sheets of bark, which they either sleep under, or set up in the shape of a half cone, supported by sticks at different angles. This is all they require and so long as they are constantly wandering, it is the best and most simple plan they could pursue in such a climate as this.

(Dawson, p.68)

At the foot of one of these hills, and at the margin of the brook, we met with a native encampment, consisting of eight or ten "gunyers". This is the native term for small huts, which are supported by three forked sticks (about three feet long) (90cm) brought together at the tops in a triangular form. The two sides towards the wind are covered by long sheets of bark, the third is always left open. In winter each family has its own fire in front of the hut. When the wind shifts, the gunyer is shifted also and this operation takes only about ten minutes to perform; they seldom, however, stay more than a few days at these places, frequently not more than one night. In dry summer weather they do not feel it necessary to provide themselves with any shelter at all. If the gunyers should be found standing on their return during summer, it is well; but if they have fallen down the natives will not take the trouble to rebuild them. Those which we saw had been built a considerable time, but the freshness of the timbers, the bones of the kangaroos and the pieces of recently broken spears which lay scattered about, convinced us that they must have been inhabited only a few days before. We found also a bundle of spears also standing against a tree, which was a strong indication that the tribe intended soon to return.

(Dawson, pp.171-2)

On one side of the fire lay the natives huddled together, without having the slightest covering over them, having, according to custom, the greatest part of a kangaroo carcase between themselves and the fire, ready for a fresh meal whenever they should wake.

(Dawson, p.160)
The natives slept soundly, as they usually do, after a full meal, when nothing appears to disturb them but the want of fire, which about two or three o'clock in the morning, generally becomes low when the cold air chills them and forces them up to renew it. Many a time have I been awoke by the breaking of sticks and the blowing of embers when the heat has been too much diminished. Upon these occasions too it is, that they again fall to on the kangaroo which happens to be placed near them.

(Dawson, p.178)

We soon ascended a small rise, on the top of which we found an encampment belonging to the natives we had just heard. It appeared to leave them abandoned within a day or two. The gunyers were exactly the same as those which our natives were in the habit of constructing. Quantities of bones, broken spears, several drinking vessels formed of the excrescences of trees and a shield lay scattered about.

(Dawson, pp.182-3)

We everywhere saw traces of them in abandoned gunyers....

(Dawson, p.207)

We came to a spot where there were ten or twelve gunyers, which do not appear to have been recently inhabited .... a pleasant spot, with good water....

(Dawson, p.239)

We took up our quarters in the evening, by a water course.... The horizon appeared overcast and the natives, who are excellent judges of weather, predicted rain. They were, therefore, more than usually alert in stripping the neighbouring trees of their bark, for protection from the rain and night chill.

(Dawson, p.243)

As we drew near we saw no other sign of natives than a fire and a row of gunyers.... all they found was one poor solitary girl, who was sleeping soundly between two dogs in one of the gunyers, with a small fire at the mouth of the hut and half a roasted kangaroo lying before the fire.... Enquiries were then made as to the tribe to which she belonged and we were informed that they were out hunting kangaroos and would not return till the evening.

(Dawson, p.245-6)

She had cut a single sheet of bark, which was placed on the ground near the fire.... she crept under it and as it preserved, in a certain degree, its circular shape, she was protected by it from the wet and cold.

(Dawson, p.249)

As they were going to pass the night near the spot where we met in ten minutes. They took us to a hollow between two sandy hills, which were covered with flowering shrubs and ivy-like vines running on the ground, and peculiar to that kind of country near the sea. There they showed us a spring of pure water, which from the pieces of tea-tree bark that lay near the spring and marks of fires, appeared to be the common place of resort for the natives when travelling on or near to the beach, where fresh water is in general very scarce.

(Dawson, p.254)

A few sheets of bark, leaning on a pole against a tree, served him as shelter through days of sunshine or nights of storm and rain.... But the summers were temperate and the winters genial for the most part, so that constitutions inured through centuries of experience to vagaries of the seasons took no hurt from the changes of temperature when they did come.... Fires were always kept burning about the camp. In most seasons the natives slept between two small fires getting the warmth on both sides of their
bodies so that they could slumber in a reasonable degree of comfort. To maintain the blaze the simple expedient was adopted of pushing a long pole onto the flames, and shoving it forward from time to time as the top was consumed.

(Scott, p.14)

APPAREL

Bungaree was altogether a curious fellow: his was both, in appearance and manner, a complete character (in savage life) He was about 20 years of age, tall and thin and like the generality of the natives, his arms and legs were lean, possessing but little flesh or muscle. His cheeks and forehead and generally his breast, were painted or rubbed with red ochre. His right leg had been broken when young, a little above the ankle, by a fall from a tree, when endeavouring to catch a possum and as it was crooked and rather shorter he limped a little. His native costume consisted of a belt of possum fur, spun or twisted like coarse yarn into skeins to the length of five or six yards, which was bound round his loins; his waddy ... was stuck in one side of his belt and his tomahawk in the other. His long hair was turned up and bound about the head with possum yarn, having a tuft of grass in the centre sufficiently long to be seen above the hair, so as to present at a short distance the appearance of a plume. In the hair, a little above the ear, was placed a small sharp pointed bone from the leg of a kangaroo: this was used as a comb, or rather to unravel the hair with, when upon particular occasions it was turned down like a common mop.

(Dawson, p.115)

On our journey we fell in with a wild, fierce-looking man, about middle age ... armed with a long spear; his beard was short and bushy like his hair and his body naked; while he had placed in his girdle of twisted opossum fur, which he wore around his loins, an iron tomahawk and a large piece of half-roasted flesh.

(Dawson, pp.15-16)

The natives ... accompanied us ... the first had his wife, who carried her little boy, about twelve months old, astride on her shoulders, while the little black urchin fastened his fingers in her hair to prevent himself from falling. They were all three naked as when they were born, and appeared to suffer no inconvenience from the want of covering....

(Dawson, p.15)

...their bodies and faces painted or coloured red, their frizzed hair hanging about their shoulders in an unusual manner, and armed with their war spears and clubs.

(Dawson, p.90)

Two very fine and handsome men made their appearance, dressed in a similar manner to our natives. They approached us slowly and unarmed; each one had a piece of kangaroo flesh hanging from his possum girdle; their beards were short and thin and they wore mustachios. The countenance of them was remarkably fine, bearing a striking resemblance to a Roman face and head. The other was more like a handsome European: the colour of the latter was of a bright copper while that of his companion was black. They each appeared to be about twenty five years of age, of middle stature, perfectly erect in figure and of an easy deportment.

(Dawson, p.130)
He was a very tall copper-coloured young man, with a short thin beard and mustachion, the nose inclining to flatness, but otherwise his features were expressive and handsome - he possessed a fine sonorous voice: he was exceedingly erect, easy and independent in his manners and very communicative. He was dressed similar to the others and curiously painted with red ochre on every part of his body.

(Dawson, p.131)

I, therefore, thrust my stick into his belt, where they place everything.

(Dawson, p.185)

Every native had his hair dressed in the conical form...ending in a tuft of grass. (Some were entirely naked, others wore trousers, drawn up to their armpits by braces, and several had an old soldier's jacket without trousers.)

(Dawson p.234)

Ceremonial Dress

They had painted their bodies with red and white stripes, similar to what I have before described when they were dressed for their corrobories or dances; their hair had been untied and hung around their heads, which were stuck all over with small feathers of various colours from parrots and cockatoos, procured for this occasion. Around their loins was the possum belt, in one side which they had placed their waddies... and on the other the throwing stick... each had a long spear in his hand, while several carried bundles of them and two or three had only shields, which were whitened with pipe clay and quartered with red ochre. Their bushy heads ill corresponded with their lank bodies and stick-like arms and legs, the latter of which ending with broad and muscular feet, were as disproportionate to those parts of the body as were embellished heads had become. The standard of beauty in their eyes and mine were very different.

(Dawson, p.279)

Little Sinbad had his hair turned up and tied in a point; he wore an opossum belt and a waddy in it, an imitation of the men.

(Dawson, p.297)

North of Sydney, immediately on the coast, where it is warmer, I never saw cloaks made of the kangaroo skins; but not more than thirty miles inland from the sea, on the north-west part of the Company's grant, I saw similar cloaks in the possession of the native and some of them were brought to the establishment by our natives.

(Dawson, p.337)

For the most part full dress consisted of a possum-fur belt, with narrow strips of skin pendant both in front and at the back. This was all their bodily protection against the elements and their fullest concession to the conventions imposed by the white people about.... The rugs they used were made of animals' skins, principally those of the possum. They were very neatly made and provided both warmth and protection from rain when occasion arose.

(Scott, p.8)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>NATURAL MATERIALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WEAPONS:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spears:</td>
<td>Bone Tip (fish or animal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) hunting/war</td>
<td>Ironbark (Eucalyptus crebra or E. siderophloia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;cummi&quot; or &quot;gummi&quot;)</td>
<td>Kurrajong fibre (Hibiscus heterophyllus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;teckurah&quot;)</td>
<td>Animal sinew (kangaroo tail)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;gundimurra&quot;)</td>
<td>Grass-tree stem and gum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) fishing</td>
<td>Gigantic Lily (Doyanthes excelsa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;mooting&quot;)</td>
<td>Ironbark Prongs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throwng Stick:</td>
<td>Hardwood (Eucalyptus spp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;yukree&quot; of &quot;purrahamirre&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shield:</td>
<td>Ironbark (Eucalyptus crebra/siderophloia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;cooreel&quot; or &quot;gooreel&quot;)</td>
<td>Mangrove Wood (Avicennia marina)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boomerang:</td>
<td>Myrtle Wood (Trochocarpus laurina or Eugenia myrtifolia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;bomereng&quot;)</td>
<td>White Ironbark (Eucalyptus leucoxylon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;barrakun&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;turee&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clubs:</td>
<td>Ironbark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;waddy&quot; or &quot;wattie&quot;)</td>
<td>Myrtle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;goothera&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axe:</td>
<td>Igneous Rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mangrove Withe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fibre cord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grass-tree gum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IMPLEMENTS:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digging Stick:</td>
<td>Hardwood (Eucalyptus spp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;kunmi&quot; or &quot;wombie&quot;)</td>
<td>Kurrajong fibre (Brachychiton populneum, B. acerifolium, Hibiscus heterophyllus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>String or Cord: For</td>
<td>Possum Pur (Trichosurus yulpecula)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Fishing lines</td>
<td>Tea-tree bark (Melaleuca quinquenervia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;yirravarn&quot;)</td>
<td>Hardwood (Eucalyptus spp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Fishing nets</td>
<td>Oyster shell (Crassostrea commercis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;burrin&quot;)</td>
<td>Turban Shell (Ninella torquata)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Dilly Bags</td>
<td>Earshell (Notalaliotis ruber)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;butthoom&quot;)</td>
<td>Mud Oyster (Ostrea sinuata)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Composite Tools</td>
<td>Pipi (Plebidonax deltoideae) cont.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITEM</td>
<td>NATURAL MATERIAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IMPLEMENTS cont...</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish-hook Files:</td>
<td>Sandstone, shale or quartzite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;dipoonga&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needles/combs/&quot;kooyeroo&quot;)</td>
<td>Kangaroo leg bone &quot;ghimbick&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scraper/knife:</td>
<td>Shell or stone &quot;willah&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SHELTER/TRANSPORT:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwellings:</td>
<td>Stringy-bark (Eucalyptus obliqua)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;googeree, gunya, kupondee,</td>
<td>eugenioides) (E. capitellata)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purrupa&quot;)</td>
<td>Tea-tree bark (Melaleuca quinquervia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoes:</td>
<td>Stringby-bark (Eucalyptus obliqua/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;kooyuk&quot; or</td>
<td>eugenioides, E. capitellata)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;cooeyung&quot;)</td>
<td>Vine (Flagellaria indica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fibre Cord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddles:</td>
<td>Native Pear (Xylomelum pyriforme)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Wolloong&quot;)</td>
<td>Hardwood (Eucalyptus spp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPARAL/DECORATION:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugs/cloaks</td>
<td>Possum pelt (Trichosurus vulpecula)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kangaroo pelt (Macropus major)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belt/forehead network</td>
<td>Possum fur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>band</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nose-peg</td>
<td>Kangaroo bone or twig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necklace</td>
<td>Shells, seeds, quartz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CEREMONIAL:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bull-roarer</td>
<td>Hardwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;goo-nan-duk-yer&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceremonial Stones</td>
<td>Crystals or quartz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burial wrappings</td>
<td>Tea-tree bark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stringy-bark</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Animals

In regard to supper, it consisted of kangaroos, wollobi, and fish cooked by being thrown on the fire, when after the fur and skin of the animal were thoroughly scorched, black as charcoal, the carcase was carved with a small hatchet into small portions. The fish underwent a similar process.

(Threlkeld, p.45)

Shellfish

Cockles were the everyday dish on the lake, not because they are the favourite food, but, because they be at all seasons, most easily obtained. These are roasted and eaten, squeezing them first in the hand to press out the superfluous fluid contained in them, but they are a tough morsel.

(Threlkeld, p.55)

Plants

The fern root they roast and beat with a stone upon a larger one, when they use it for bread. There is a pine apple looking cone that grows from a stem (burrawang). Each one is larger than a walnut, of yellowish red colour, very pretty to look at, but of a most acrimonious nature in its wild state. To render it edible, the blacks soak the seeds in a swamp for a week or a fortnight, they then roast the kernels. There are also at certain seasons a sort of wild plum found in the scrubs. The wild fern root roasted forms a substitute for more nutritious food.

(Threlkeld, p.19)

They roasted and ate the flower stems of the gigantic lily when they were but about $\frac{1}{4}$ feet (45 cm) high. The roots of this plant, which forms a sort of large bulb, were eaten by them; being first roasted, and then pounded into a sort of cake. This is the process which the seeds of Tamia spiralis (burrawang) undergo; but here the cakes are soaked for two or three weeks in water to take out the bitter principle.

(James Backhouse in Threlkeld, p.124)

Use of Fire

In the centre (of the canoe) a hearth is made of earth upon which a fire is always kindled when they are upon the water. When fishing it not only serves to warm their feet and hands, but is used principally to roast the bait, whether cockles, or the flesh of the star - or any other fish, besides which the fire is useful to cook the fish as soon as it is caught.

(Threlkeld, p.54)

I observed when the sun went down McGill [Biraban] collected some bark from the trees, with which he soon made a torch, and carried it lighted the remainder of the journey. The presence of fire seems to relieve them from the dread of travelling in the dark.

(Walker in Threlkeld, p.125)
HUNTING

Prowess

From the quick and eager exercise of their eyes, in seeking for their prey, they are exceedingly keen sighted, and discover birds in the trees, or venomous reptiles in the grass, where Europeans see nothing. They are proportionately skilful in tracking the kangaroos, the emu, or any other animal over grass.

(L.M.S. Hunters River in Threlkeld, p.338)

Drive

For when the sun was fully up, the whole tribe prepared for the hunt by taking their spears, throwing sticks, hatchets and fire-brands, proceeding to the hills, they scatter themselves so as to surround a valley, leaving the entrance guarded by several good marksmen armed with spears. The surrounding party, chiefly women, then begin to enclose shouting with all their might, but still in regular time. The kangeroos and other animals become alarmed and make towards the entrance of the valley, where a shower of spears transfixed them in theirendeavour to escape. Seven or eight animals were obtained in less than two hours.

(Threlkeld, pp.26, 191)

FISHING

Variety of Methods

Their mode of fishing is curious, sometimes angling with hook and line thrown by the hand as they are seated in the bark canoe, sometimes diving for shellfish, sometimes standing in their frail bark canoe darting their spear into fish as they pass, or at other times using hand nets forming a circle in shallow waters, and enclosing the fish: but the most curious method is that of plant sprigs of bushes in a zig-zag form across the streams, leaving an interval at the point of every angle where the men stand with their nets to catch what others frighten towards them by splashing in the water.

(Threlkeld, p.190)

Solitary – Spear

It is a most picturesque sight to see a naked well formed aborigine standing on the left leg with spear poised, and the other drawn up resting the sole of the right foot on the inside of the knee joint of the standing limb. Not a muscle moves, his bright black eyes glancing, to observe the slightest motion and dart the spear, generally with unnerving aim, into the unsuspecting victim.

(Threlkeld, p.190)

Hook and Line

Naked and shivering with the cold the women used to be seen, in the winter seasons suffering severely from the effects of the bleak wind until a sufficient supply of fish was obtained, when they returned to shore. It was a pleasing sight on a calm summer's evening to see a number of the natives canoes on the glass-like surface of the lake, sending up their straight columns of smoke from the centre of the barques.

(Threlkeld, p.54)
### Food Sources of the Awabakal Tribe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Methods of Collection or Hunting</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Habitat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shellfish:</strong> (General) small (Bir-ra-ba) Rock oyster (Mun-bon-kan) Mud oyster (mo-koti) Mangrove oyster (pir-ri-ta) Cockles (pur-ra-mai)</td>
<td>Gathered and dived for from canoes.</td>
<td>All good eating.</td>
<td>Estuary or rocky shore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Easily obtained at all seasons</td>
<td>Everyday dish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crustacea:</strong></td>
<td>Dived for by men and pulled out of the crevices by the antennae.</td>
<td>A favourite food.</td>
<td>Rocky shore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crayfish</td>
<td>Caught by men, women and children during the ebb of tide.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Estuary, rocky shore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teredo</strong> (cobra)</td>
<td>Rotten limbs riddled with these gathered from the water.</td>
<td>Roasted or eaten raw.</td>
<td>Estuary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sea-squirt or cunjevoi:</strong> (bun/kun)</td>
<td>Men, women and children adept at ripping them out with small sharpened sticks.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rocky shore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mammalia:</strong></td>
<td>Found cast on the shore.</td>
<td>A feast shared with neighbouring tribes.</td>
<td>Seashore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whale-black (to-roug-gnun)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Porpoises</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Never refused.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fish:</strong> (General) Ma-ko-ro Mullit (Wot-ta-won) Whiting (ka-ro-burra) Salmon (pur-ri-mun-kan) Flathead (tupea-ta-ra-won; ni-nang) Bream (tu-rea; yo-ro-in) Schnapper (general) (mut-tau-ra) (small) (kur-rung-kan) (large) (ngo-lo-ko-nung)</td>
<td>Men used the multi-pronged spear while the women provided most of the fish with hooks and line. Nets and fish traps were used in common.</td>
<td>Most abundant Daily food.</td>
<td>Estuary and seashore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITEM</td>
<td>METHOD OF COLLECTING OR HUNTING</td>
<td>COMMENTS</td>
<td>HABITAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
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<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish: Eel (ka-nin)</td>
<td>&quot;When the water is low the natives wade in and actually drag out cart-loads.&quot;</td>
<td>Swarm with delicious fish in summer.</td>
<td>Lagoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsupials: Kangaroo (moani) Wallaby (bul-bung)</td>
<td>Stalked and speared. Bush beaten by women and children while the men speared the prey as they tried to escape. Periodically the bush was burnt to attract more animals to fresh pasture. Tame dogs used also (Warikal &amp; Wai-yi).</td>
<td>In great abundance. Daily exercise.</td>
<td>Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandicoot</td>
<td>As for kangaroos and wallabies but waddies were used to kill them.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possum (Willai)</td>
<td>Trees were climbed by means of notches and the prey clubbed.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mammal: Wild Dog (Mur-rong-kai)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Restricted to the elder as food.</td>
<td>Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ducks (pi-ra-ma) Drake (wom-ma-ra-kan) Geese Black Swans (kun-bul) Herons</td>
<td>Often killed them on the wing with the spear.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Freshwater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muttonbirds and eggs</td>
<td>Gathered in the breeding season.</td>
<td>Highly esteemed feast on eggs and young.</td>
<td>Moon Is. (Seashore.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITEM</td>
<td>METHOD OF COLLECTION OR HUNTING</td>
<td>COMMENTS</td>
<td>HABITAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reptiles: (General) (Mai-ya) Snakes</td>
<td>Keen sighted; discovered in grass.</td>
<td>Restricted to elders.</td>
<td>Forest, Heath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death Adder (te-ri-be-e)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Great appetite for roasted snake.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Snake (mot-to)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lizards</td>
<td></td>
<td>Restricted to the elders.</td>
<td>Forest, Heath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables and Fruit:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fern Roots.</td>
<td>Grubbed up with the digging stick by women and children.</td>
<td>Roasted; decline in use of fern root in historic time as an important food source.</td>
<td>Freshwater margins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchid Tubers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lily tubers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macrozamia (Burrawang)</td>
<td>Gathered by the women when ripe (fruiting bodies).</td>
<td>Particularly fond of. Soaked, roasted and pounded before eating to ensure removal of the toxin.</td>
<td>Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gigantic Lily</td>
<td>Flower stems gathered when 1 1/2 ft. (1 ½ m.) high.</td>
<td>Roots roasted and pounded into 'cakes'; stems also roasted.</td>
<td>Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insects:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey</td>
<td>Followed the native bee back to its nest by attaching small pieces of feather with gum to it. Climbed tree to the nest by means of notches cut in the tree trunk with the stone axe.</td>
<td>Highly delighted.</td>
<td>Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larvae</td>
<td>Picked out of grass-tree stem and wild plum fruit.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diving

The crawfish [crayfish] is a favorite food, and much hazard was undergone by the aborigines in endeavouring to obtain them. Their general mode was to go out choosing a calm day at sea, in one of their frail canoes, and dive along side of the rocks, and pull the fish out of holes in the rock under water, by their long horns, sometimes a shark would make its appearance.  

(Threlkeld, p.55)

To catch crayfish the men go right out to the outermost submerged rocks, where they plunge head first into the deep fissures between the rocks and drag the crayfish out of their hiding places by the antennae.

Gathering

On another occasion I saw some men, women and children catching crabs during the ebb of the tide, and gathering congevoi, ripping them out of their sleeves with small sharpened sticks.  

(Leichhardt, p.547)

WEAPONS: General

The principal weapons employed by them are the spear, the shield, and occasionally the club; and they are commonly remarkable for their skills and dexterity in the use of the implements of war. They throw their spears with great precision and force, but ward them off or receive them on their shields with astonishing dexterity.  

(Threlkeld, p.41)

Spears - Use

Spears are used more for hunting and fishing than for war, though they do battle with them in a fearful manner.  

(Threlkeld, p.67)

Structure

The spears are from 6-7 ft (2m) long, generally made with three divisions - two of grass tree and one of the hard-wood. The joints are cemented together with gum resin which exudes from the grass tree. The ends of the grass tree are charred in the fire, fitted one into the other with the melted resin infused, the joint is tied with a filament of bark, and a lump of the gum is wrapped around the joint. It is roasted over the fire, and as it is softened by the heat the softened gum is put into shape by the wetted fingers. The hard-wooden skewer like end is sharpened to a very fine point, charred in the fire and covered whilst hot with melted gum, and in some instances a bone barb fastened at the point, in the same manner as the joints are made to adhere together.  

(Threlkeld, p.61)

WEAPONS: Variety of Spears

The hunting spear is likewise made from the stem of the grass tree, but having only one hardened joint of wood inserted at the end. The battle spear is made of the same material, but often with the addition of pieces of sharp quartz stuck along the hard-wood joint on one side so as to resemble the teeth of a saw, called by the same name as the hunting spear.
"NATIVE ARMS" (Specimens of arms of the Newcastle District drawn by R. Browne in the Skottowe MS.)
The fish spear is made from the stem of the grass tree, at the end there are four pieces of hard-wood, about two feet long, which are fastened with a bark thread covered with the grass tree gum, heated in the fire until at a melting point, when it is worked round the thread fastening it. The three or four shorter spears thus fastened to the long stem of the grass tree, of about six feet long (2 m), becomes thus eight feet (2.6 m) in total length. Small wooden wedges are inserted between the attached short spears just at their base where they are tied, and likewise gummed over firmly. These serve to spread out the three or four attached short spears, so that if one miss the fish in striking, the fish may be caught between the expanded hard-wood skewers. The points of each skewer is hardened in the fire, by charring it when hot, covering it with a coating of grass tree gum, fastening at the same time a barb of bone at the point.

(Threlkeld, p.67)

Spear Thrower

This instrument is generally about four feet long (1.3 m), made of hard-wood, half an inch thick, and tapers to a point at one end, where is fixed a sort of barb, about three eighths of an inch (1 cm) long, tied and gummed firmly to the small end; the other end is made flat and wedge like about an inch and a half (2.5 cm) wide, and is used to open an oyster, split up crayfish, embowel a possum, or split a piece of rotten wood to obtain the large grubs therein.

The wom-mur-rar they hold in their right hand about one-third up, and inserting the barb into the end of the spear, which has a small hole for its reception, and is carefully tied round and gummed to prevent the weak reed-like substance of the grass tree stem from splitting.

(Threlkeld, p.68)

Throwing Spear

The warrior grasps the spear and throwing stick in the right hand, and poising the spear until his arm is sure, when he hurls it with all the force of the four feet (1.3 m) lever, in addition to that of his muscular arm.

Seldom does the marksman miss his aim. Such is the force with which the spear is thrown that it often pierces through the wooden shield held in defence by the opponent, and has frequently been known to transfix the hand and shield together, although the shield may be at the part held full an inch thick.

(Threlkeld, p.68)

The Shield - Structure

The shield is usually about three feet (1 m) long by eighteen inches (0.5 m), or so; at most lozenge-shaped, pointed at the top and bottom, and pigeon-breasted rather than flat. The thickness in the centre may be an inch, not more, and thins off to about a quarter of an inch at the edge. On the inside in the centre, a piece of tough wood is bent and inserted like the handle of a basket, just sufficiently large enough to hold by, and a soft piece of tea-tree bark is fixed on which to rest the knuckles and preserve them from abrasion.

The shield is made from the buttresses of the nettle-tree selected for size and thickness as best suits their purpose.

The shields are always painted white with pipe-clay and generally are ornamented with a St George's Cross, formed by two bands two or three inches (5-8 cm) wide, one vertical, the other horizontal, coloured red, with the pigment which they paint for their dances or the fight.

(Threlkeld, p.68)
It is astonishing to see the agility with which they will cover their whole body with so small a shield from the continued steady assault of their opponents. The defendant holds the upper point of the shield level with his nose, looks over it at his assailant, lowers or raises, shifts to the right or left, the shield, just as occasion requires.

(Threlkeld, p. 68)

**IMPLEMENT: Stone Axe**

The bowl is formed from one large protruberance of a growing tree which they chop round with stone hatchets and disengage it from the trunk on which it grew.

(Threlkeld, p. 67)

Carving large carcasses of animals.

(See also Food Sources and Preparation, Canoe, Hunting.)

**Containers**

Water from the neighbouring swamps are brought in sheets of bark, which are tied up at the end, and a bent twig forms the handle.

(Threlkeld, p. 67)

The cup was made of a piece of bark of the ti-tree, about a foot square. The ends were folded in and tied together, to form a cavity of trough-like shape.

(Threlkeld, p. 156)

The bowl is formed from some large protruberance of a growing tree, which they chop around. These they carry about with much care, together with the few other domestic utensils used in their camps or resting places.

(Threlkeld, p. 67)

**Fibre Cord**

The bark of the cabbage tree forms the thread, the end of which is applied continually to the fire to harden it.

(Threlkeld, p. 191)

**Fish Hooks**

Their own native ones being made of shell ground down on a stone until it became the shape they wished....

(Threlkeld, p. 54)
Plain canoes were made of the bark of a tree about 12 or 14 feet (3.5 - 4 m) long, and from 3 to 4 feet (1 m) in width. The aborigines are always on the lookout in their travelling through the bush, and when they find a straight trunk suitable for the purpose, they chop round the bark, at about a couple of feet from the root, a space of three or four inches (8-10 cm). They procure the limb of a tree, and set it up against the standing trunk, as a ladder, on which they ascend and cut around the whole circumference of the tree in the same manner as done at the bottom.

They then chop down a perpendicular line, when they insert their throwing stick ... betwixt the bark and the tree, and choosing the season when the sap is either ascending or descending ... they proceed to separate the sheet of bark from the tree whilst it is most carefully allowed to slide down and then is laid flat on the ground the rough side upwards.

A fire is then made upon the bark and being heated the steam of the sap softens it so as they can crumble up each end like a folded fan, which they tie securely with vines from the bush.

Sticks are placed across one at the one end, another at the other, for both ends are alike, they having no head or stern to their vessels. A cord made of the vine, is tied across the middle which, whilst the two sticks press out the sides of the canoe, confines the edges and prevents it spreading out.

(Threlkeld, p.54)

Uses

A few sheets of bark, one upon the other form a seat whilst gliding across the silvery stream, paddling with short paddles one in each hand.

(Threlkeld, p.54)

Repair

Two soft pieces of tea-tree bark, one for each rent (tear), formed it into a bolster like shape, applied one bolster to the rent, as a pad over leak, and then sewed it to the canoe, through and through applying the end of the thread to a stick of fire, burning the end to charcoal in order to harden it and thus form a substitute for a needle. The shank bone of a kangaroo ground to a point, pierced the bark, and was used in the stead of an awl. The grass tree gum was melted by the application of the fire stick and smeared over the holes and sticks.

The wild vines of the bush formed their cables and a heavy stone was the substitute for an anchor.

(Threlkeld, p.54)

A quantity of clay is placed in the centre as a hearth, on which they roast the fish as they catch them.

(Threlkeld, p.191)
ENCAMPMENTS AND DWELLINGS

The native camp gave a cheerfulness to the scene at night in consequence of the number of fires kept up by the families in front of their respective sleeping places, which were erections of boughs of trees, or sheets of bark placed upright supported by stakes.

(Threlkeld, p.45)

After proceeding a few miles they came upon a little encampment of natives, crowding around fires in front of their huts which were... made of a few pieces of bark laid against a stump and covered with bushes; they barely sufficed a screen to keep off the wind.

(Hale and Agate in Threlkeld, p.156)

If a gale of wind arise, and pouring rain descends upon their forms, they will then seek for shelter, or raise up sheets of bark to cover them from the storm.

(Threlkeld, p.53)

APPAREL

The natives are perfectly naked both men and women living in the woods....

(Threlkeld, p.182)

McGill* was dressed in a red striped cotton shirt, not very clean; a pair of ragged trousers and an old hat; he had a brass plate, half moon-shaped suspended round his neck with a brass chain and engraven with his English and native name and declaration of his kingly dignity.

(G.W. Walker in Threlkeld, p.124)

Most of them wear some kind of clothing and probably owing to this they are less disfigured with cuts and excoriations as when clothing is used it would be unavailing to mark their persons.

(Walker in Threlkeld, p.128)

*Biraban was his native name. Here the Aborigines have been influenced in change to Aboriginal custom in their adoption of European ways, to their detriment. Clothing became sodden in wet weather, causing the Aborigines to catch chills and colds which often resulted in their deaths. The brass plate was not held in much esteem by the Aborigines as the Europeans assumed. The recipients were often regarded with contempt by their kind and the Europeans, despite the original intention.
### Table D

**Natural Materials Used for Articles of Material Culture by the Amarakal.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Natural Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weapons:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spears:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) hunting (&quot;warai&quot;)</td>
<td>Grass-tree stem (Xanthorrhoea spp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gigantic Lily (Doryanthes excelsa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grass-tree gum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gigaic Lily (Doryanthes excelsa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hardwood prongs - Grey Ironbark (Eucalyptus paniculata)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bone barb (kangaroo shank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) battle (&quot;worowal&quot;)</td>
<td>as for hunting spear + quartz/cht pieces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) fish (&quot;kullara&quot; &quot;mooting&quot;)</td>
<td>as for hunting spear + Four prongs - Grey Ironbark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barbs of bone (fish/kangaroo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bark Thread (kurrajong, stringy bark, native hemp)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throwing Stick: (&quot;wommera&quot;)</td>
<td>Hardwood (Eucalyptus spp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shield:</td>
<td>Buttress of Giant Nettle Tree (Dendrocnide excelsa) or Fig Tree (Ficus spp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waddy:</td>
<td>Hardwood (Eucalyptus spp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boomerang:</td>
<td>Hardwood (Eucalyptus spp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Axe:</td>
<td>Igneous rock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mangrove/hardwood with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fibre cord (kurrajong, stringy bark, native hemp)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grass-tree gum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>** Implements/Utensils:**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Containers:</td>
<td>Kangaroo shank bone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;taude&quot;)</td>
<td>Paperbark (Melaleuca quinquenervia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;kokei, winnung winmbi&quot;)</td>
<td>Hardwood excrescence (Eucalyptus spp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilly bag:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;kinnun&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nets:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing Line:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cord:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish Hooks:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish Hooks:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digging Stick:</td>
<td>Rock Oyster (Crassostrea commercialis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knives, scrapers, choppers:</td>
<td>Rock Flakes: chert, tuff, shell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish Hook Files</td>
<td>Sandstone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITEM</td>
<td>NATURAL MATERIAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHELTER/TRANSPORT:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hut (&quot;kokera&quot;)</td>
<td>Bark and saplings of hardwood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoe (&quot;aanwai&quot; and &quot;pupa&quot;)</td>
<td>Stringybark (Eucalyptus augenoides)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grass-tree gum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fibre cord (see Implements)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hardwood/Acadia saplings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tea-tree bark vine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddledore</td>
<td>Hardwood (Eucalyptus app.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPAREL:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waist Cord</td>
<td>Possum fur (Trichosurus vulpecula)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugs/Cloaks</td>
<td>Kangaroo and Possum pelts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nose-peg</td>
<td>Animal bone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>Animal fat/oil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEREMONIAL:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decoration</td>
<td>Red ochre, pipe-clay, bird’s feathers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bull-roarer</td>
<td>Hardwood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceremonial stones</td>
<td>Quartz crystals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceremonial bag</td>
<td>Animal or plant fibre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical sticks</td>
<td>Hardwood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burial wrappings</td>
<td>Tea-tree bark (Melaleuca spp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stringy bark (Eucalyptus spp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koradjee Bones</td>
<td>Animal bones?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Diagram of a bird and a Melbourne Cup](image-url)
3.10 ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC LIFE

Questions and Activities

CORE: Food Sources and Preparation

1) Compare the food preferences of the tribes in the quotes and tables; discover the similarities and differences.

2) Which would take longest/shortest length of time to prepare for eating?

3) Discover which individual item of food would provide the most food according to its size.

4) What were the most favourite food items.

5) Draw or collect pictures of these food items.

6) Which plant was more useful to the Aborigines not only for food but also for weapon manufacture. (You might need to look up other sections including WEAPONS AND IMPLEMENTS). Describe its main uses.

7) What sources of food provided sweetness? (Also look at Hunting and Gathering.)

EXTENSION: Food Sources and Preparation

1) Make a list of food items from the various zones of exploitation (e.g. forest, beach, rocky platform).
   Read about the life style of the animals/plants and place in a priority listing according to:
   (a) ease of capture or gathering;
   (b) abundance;
   (c) nutritional value.
   You will need to consult other books or organisations like National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Fisheries.

2) Discover which of these food items is still available in your area. Compile a chart according to type, habitat/zone, scientific name, characteristics.

CORE: Hunting, Fishing and Gathering

1) Compare the methods used by the tribes in the quotes and tables; note the similarities and differences.

2) Which was the most effective method for capturing a large number of animals?

3) Why were the natives so good at hunting?

4) Which method of fishing was more reliable? Why?

5) What were the differences in the hunting, fishing and gathering activities between the men and women?

6) What role did the children play?

7) Who provided most of the food?

8) Which weapon or implement was the most favoured? Can you suggest a reason?
9) The tame native dog. How were they used by their masters?

10) What was the most unusual method of hunting?

**EXTENSION:**

1) Try to track some animals yourself. Make a reference list of paw prints to help identify animal tracks.

2) Compile a reference chart for animals according to their habitat, characteristics, identification marks and calls.

3) Construct a game involving food sources, weapons/implements, habitat and method of hunting, fishing or gathering. Illustrations from books or magazines would be useful.

4) Try to stalk an animal and see how close you can get to it to take a photograph of it. The better the photo the more successful your stalking.

**CORE:** Weapons and Implements

1) Which weapon or implement would have taken the longest to make?

2) Name the weapons/implements that involved more than one piece of raw material.

3) What natural material was more commonly used in making their weapons/implements?

4) Make a comparative list of weapons and implements, grouping similarities and emphasising the differences between those of the different tribes.

5) In making their composite weapons and implements, which powerful adhesive and binding materials were used?

**EXTENSION:**

1) Try to manufacture similar weapons and implements with the traditional materials, noting the materials used, the time taken, how long the implements (of bone, shell, stone) you used lasted before you needed a fresh one. Make use of them carefully, noting how robust or fragile are the weapons and implements made by you.

2) Discover whether and how much natural material is available in your district. Make a chart of the natural material available in your district and relate them to the natural zones and habitats.

3) Find out the impact that Europeans have had on the natural environment which has altered the availability of the raw material.

4) Explore the ease or difficulty of the use of the weapons and implements you have made by practicing under supervision, against targets. (It is wrong to use them against wildlife as not only are the native animals protected by law or property of people but the creatures may be harmed and hampered in the process.)

5) Which weapons were suited for close combat?

6) In what way did the Aborigines express their artistic talents in their weapons and implements?

7) How important were (a) the spear (b) the shield (a) digging stick?
8) In what ways was the spear thrower used?
9) Why did the fishing spear have multi prongs?
10) What was the purpose of barbs on spears?
11) Can you suggest reasons for some spears being made of several pieces of wood or different material?
12) Why was the grass tree such an important plant in the natives' material culture?
13) In what way was the spear thrower a clever invention?
14) How else was the spear thrower used as well as propelling spears?
15) The boomerang was just for fun. Do you agree, or are there other uses for it?
16) How were the weapons protected and made to last longer?
17) What was required for hardening the points of wooden spears?
18) What common quality was required of the wooden and stone implements used for striking purposes.
19) What sort of qualities does the Aborigine look for in selecting the timber material for (a) spears (b) shield (c) boomerang.
20) Why is the paperbark or ti-tree selected for making their water containers?
21) Why is the hafted stone axe such a treasured implement of the men?
22) The Aborigines practiced division of labour so that men and women had particular work to do. Prepare a chart to show who made and used the various weapons and implements.
23) Make a selection of different stone material that you think would be suitable for striking and scraping purposes. Test each one to discover which is the best for the purpose and try to discover the correct name for the stone type.
24) After making fibre cord in the Aboriginal fashion, test it against some similar fibre line readily available in the shops.
25) Compare the success of catching fish with shell fish hooks as compared with steel ones. This may explain why the Aborigines soon preferred the metal imports.
26) Which stone was best in shaping the final effort of your shell fish hooks.
27) Shape some animal bones, that you normally throw away, into awls and try piercing some pieces of leather. Compare with a metal one.
28) Use the natural colours from ground-up coloured stone clays to decorate your weapons/implements or other art work.
CANOE

CORE:

1) For what reason was a particular bark used in the construction of their bark canoes?

2) Why was the canoe such an essential part of the coastal Aborigines' life style?

3) Who made the most use of these aquatic craft?

4) Describe how the fire was used in relation to the canoe both in its construction and after its completion.

5) Where were the canoes used by the Aborigines?

6) How are the canoes made waterproof?

7) Why is it important that a straight trunk without low branches is selected?

8) How is the stripped bark handled as it is carried to the place of construction?

9) What implements and materials are used other than the bark?

10) Can you suggest a reason why the Aborigines preferred to use pleated bark canoes?

11) How were they propelled?

EXTENSION:

1) Build a model canoe, scaled down, using the similar material and note the difficulties you encountered.

2) What other types of water craft were used by the Aborigines in Australia?
DWELLINGS AND APPAREL

CORE:

1) Why was there not the need for permanent buildings in this part of Australia for the Aboriginals?
2) When was it necessary for more shelter than usual?
3) In what way is fire important for warmth?
4) Why are the shelters faced away from the wind?
5) Where were the encampments sited?
6) For what purpose was the possum fur belt used?
7) Who wore fur cloaks?
8) Why were the cloaks used away from the immediate coastline?
9) From what were the rugs made?

EXTENSION

1) Look up the weather records in the local newspaper over several years. Contact the local weather stations. Make a chart indicating the coldest/windiest months of the year when extra shelter and warmth would be required. Calculate what proportion of the year would be mild enough for minimum clothing for yourselves.
2) Build a bark shelter and discover how effective it would be against cold winds and rain.
3) Experiment with water repellent qualities of natural materials including bark, fur, leaves and discover which is the best. Compare with material from our modern society such as blankets.
4) Do some original research. Refer to statistical records of the decline in Aboriginal numbers. Build up a sequential tabulation of changes. Try to ascertain what may have been the causes for the decline. What proportion was due to illnesses?

STRONG RECOMMENDATION:

For all the above activities, wherever possible consult with local Aboriginal communities for direct information on the subjects researched. Their perception and knowledge is invaluable and you may be privileged to share their knowledge if you approach them with care and consideration.
OTHER SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

A) ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

(1) FOOD SOURCES

a) Compare diet of Aborigines to present day Australian diet. Comparison could involve similarities, differences, nutrition (carbohydrate, protein etc.). "Sources" is also a good angle to pursue this. Trace modern white food back to its origin and note how similar they are in type to Aboriginal food.

b) Compare foods from a different angle: e.g. under a heading INSECTS, detail the animals which are food sources and what they provide for each culture. Examples of insects include bees, moths, witchetty grubs. Mammals: pigs, cows, kangaroos. (The aim here is to show that the food is the same, it's just packaged differently.)

c) Compare advantages and disadvantages of agricultural society versus nomadic society, e.g. monocultures produce pests, hunters and gatherers have an unreliable food supply.

DO NOT TASTE FOODS, AS SOME ARE POISONOUS AND WERE SPECIALLY TREATED FIRST.

(2) MATERIAL CULTURE

Make some weapons or implements using the authentic raw materials or some facsimile. Here is a list:

i) Volcanic rock - indeed any rock - grind for use as an axe-head. Bind it onto a handle. AXES.

ii) Obtain quartz - pebbles would possibly be good enough - and scrape them to fashion a blade. It is harder to chip them into shape but you can try. Use a steel chisel and hammer until you get the feel of it, and then try it with another hard stone. The trick is to look for the cleavage lines (i.e. the way the stone will break) on the stone. These made it easier to work. SCRAPERS and BLADES.

iii) Grass tree spikes or reasonably straight pieces of branch. Grind an edge (a point) at one end. Trim the spear's length for balance. See how it flies. SPEARS.

iv) Fashion a short piece of thicker wood so that it has a hand-grip at one end and a notch at the other. Attach a 'spear' and compare the range of flight this way as against a hand throw. Try it in a clump of trees and see how easy it is to miss the trees. WOOMERA.

v) Obtain a curved piece of wood and trim it to the approximate size and shape of the real weapon. See if it flies and returns. Obtain the real thing and compare the weapons for differences. This can be done for the other weapons also. BOOMERANG.

vi) The ideas behind these implements is essentially the same as for those already mentioned. e.g. Try and make a bag from dried grass. NULLAS, SHIELDS, WATER-CARRIERS, DIGGING STICKS, GRASS BAGS.

The purpose behind such activities is to show the student that the manufacture of such items required skill, care and forethought. It was not as easy as it appeared.
Traditional Aboriginal Society

Social Aspects

ABORIGINES OF THE
HUNTER REGION
4. TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL SOCIETY - SOCIAL ASPECTS

4.1 TRIBAL STRUCTURE

It is estimated that there were about 500 different tribes spread throughout the entire continent. Tribal structure was based on hordes and clans. In this instance, a horde was either a small group of families or just a minor assembly of 20 to 30 people, living within an area agreed to by the tribe. Similarly, a clan could have from 80 to 150 persons, again with its own hunting ground. The tribe would comprise any number of clans, spread over tribal territory according to physical need. The basic social unit was the family comprising a man and his wife or wives* and their children.

A horde would have as leader a senior person, probably the oldest man present. A clan would have a headman - perriwar, traditional healer, council of elders. The tribe would have its paramount perriwar, messenger, as well as male and female elders. For important matters all clan leaders and elders would be called together for consultation (and decision on certain issues only); otherwise, all members of the tribe participated in decision making.

The headman gained his position because of leadership qualities and bravery. It was not a hereditary title. He was respected by all members of his clan or tribe. His view on most matters carried weight, particularly in negotiations.

The karadji (traditional healer) was feared and respected, in that order. In some respects he had more power over an individual than an elder; it was not only a matter of life on earth but also what happened after death that often counted with the tribal individual when dealing with persons of authority and power.

Every member of the tribe regarded themselves as a part of a large and united family (extended family); that all persons were knit together because of the traditional kinship structure. Thus boys and girls could have innumerable cousins, aunts and uncles, and adults any number of brothers and sisters and in-laws.

Naming was not a simple procedure. An Aboriginal in a lifetime could have several names, beginning with a common name given by parents at birth; then a second name to indicate totem attachment; and a third and fourth given at initiation (a secret one to be used only by initiated persons and the other for general use to show that the owner had been through the ceremony); and, finally, one given to a person honoured in a special way.

At least one of these names would die with the person concerned; it would not be mentioned in any circumstance, but such person could be referred to by other names. This was not the situation with all tribes. In some tribes persons rarely got more than two names; in fact, some Aborigines had only one common name, which disappeared after death.

Tribes had varying systems of justice for breaches of law or individual complaint. Elders could meet, hear evidence and decide immediate punishment, from banishment to death. They could decree that the offender face a trial by spears; that is, defend himself from the spears of a chosen number of warriors in line. If the accused escaped fatal injury, he was considered purged of his offence. The more serious test was the running between a human gauntlet carrying clubs; rarely did the culprit escape death. One minor punishment was the spearing of a person in the thigh or lower part of the leg.

There was also the "court of honour" for two individuals to settle a personal grievance. Each would submit his head for cudgel blow. The weapon had to be directed to a certain part of the skull (the very thick section); otherwise the striker would be deemed to have broken the rules and would suffer drastic tribal punishment. The head knocking would continue until sufficient blood letting had been reached; the parties would then agree that honour had been satisfied. Sometimes the contestants fought this duel to death, but no reason is known for this extreme measure.

* Some tribes practised polygamy - in some areas it was normal to have more than one "wife" (different to European concept)

* Totem: a relationship between a person and a natural object.
THE TRIBES OF THE HUNTER REGION
TRIBAL TERRITORY OF THE AWABAKAL

(From: L.E. Threlkeld - Australian Reminiscences and Papers)
TRIBAL TERRITORY

Showing extent of known hordes (firm lines - known boundaries)

OF THE WORIMI
Aborigines were brave in a physical personal sense; they showed no fear in battle or in the hunt. They knew each other's capacity in forms of tribal conflict, but did not grasp until much too late the killing effect of European arms.

Briefly, original tribal structure was compact, well disciplined and orderly, and adaptable to meet most situations. It was no match for the imported culture of the Europeans: guns, grog and disease.

TRIBAL STRUCTURE/TERITORIAL BOUNDARIES - ACTIVITIES

Investigate the nature of a tribe's social structure and compare it to the standard white social structure. This study could arise from several angles: the family unit, aunts and uncles, other relatives, the responsibilities of individuals to the family, adolescence and the making of adults - for each society.

On a broader scale, investigate the interrelationships in each society, rules which bind its members, responsibilities, roles, etc. See which are common and uncommon to both, and more importantly the reasons why.

Again, select a typical society, identify its members and their roles, and look for an Aboriginal equivalent, if any. If not, why not.

With respect to territorial boundaries, there are many suggested activities in section: Traditional Sites. Several others could include comparing the nature of Aboriginal territory to white territory, say Australia as a whole country. Aspects of human territorial behaviour, like defence, fishing and mineral rights, reasons behind wars etc., and compare these to Aboriginal territorial behaviour. (The features are generally the same, it is usually just a difference in quantity.)

4.2 INTER-TRIBAL RELATIONS

Inter-tribal relations were governed by two considerations: ceremony and trade. A third facet developed in the detribalisation period for tribal groups in the mid and lower sectors of the Hunter Valley when the powerful Kamilaroi people of the extreme northern point of the valley and Liverpool Plains began a downward thrust in force. Prior to this, however, there had been some Kamilaroi intrusion on a small scale as far south as Wollombi, where as early as the 1830s they suffered heavy losses. About the same time they tried to move into Lake Macquarie via the Watagan Mountains, where they were repulsed. The mountain area contained not only very sacred sites but also had a number of defence outposts. This form of protection was associated with the high ridge system of regular tracks, which were used as trading routes.

Mount Sugarloaf was another point of defence because of its height. At its peak Aborigines had a 360 degree view of many miles. Human movement could often be discerned from smoke of camp fires.

There was a set system of trading based on the exchange of essential materials or goods. There was also an exchange of gifts - of finished products - that resulted from friendly visits.

According to Threlkeld, the Awabakal were regarded by other tribes as fine makers of spears. This tribe had ample sources of raw material with which to make weapons of war and articles of general use. Mountain areas of Awabakal tribal territory abounded with grass trees, which for spear-making provided strong and durable shafts and gum to stick the pointed tips. The Awabakal also traded, to a small degree, in coal and tar.
Threlkeld said the Lake people took their spears fairly well into the Hunter Valley for trading. It is reasonable to assume that their main trading was with the Wonarua and to a lesser extent with the Geawegal. In return they would get to make stone axes and other implements.

Trading excursions, like those for special ceremonies and festive gatherings, were a matter of arrangement. The messenger would travel from clan to clan, tribe to tribe, to organise inter-tribal visits. A remarkable feature of this organising was the ability of the puntimal (messenger) to remember every detail. He did not have a book to record the results of negotiations.

As many as 50 men would form a trading party. There would be no risk of attack while travelling through another tribe's territory. Continuance of the system of exchange was too vital to all. The same neutrality would obtain for parties of family groups travelling to a selected place for initiation. The men on such occasions would have body decorations to signify the purpose of their movement through other territory. In addition, the host tribe would have scouts scattered throughout its territory to greet visitors and accompany them to the main camping site. Since such a camp could contain 500 persons, much preparation was necessary. Each visiting group had its own area at the camp and was afforded every facility to get food locally. This was in addition to that provided by the host clan or tribe.

On long treks, if the season were appropriate, Aborigines would take part of their food supply with them, such as bark container with witchetty grubs, kept fresh in moss and other damp material, and dried fish. It is possible that the Lake people knew how to smoke fish because of their use of stone ovens for other purposes.

Generally, combined corroborees were inter-clan affairs, due to the large number of Aborigines living along the coast before the advent of white man. Such assemblies could last a week or more, with activity day and night. There would also be ample opportunity to settle amicably outstanding differences and to exchange gossip. (In this regard the men were just as voluble as women.) Any male boasting was superficial. They would mainly speak, not about themselves, but their waterholes and hunting grounds.

The language problem did not arise when one tribe visited another. Due to the closeness of tribal boundaries and relative smallness of some tribal territories, exchange of language knowledge was common. With what has been described as "cousin" tribes or sub-tribes there were language affinities; thus it was not unusual for even young people being sufficiently multilingual to be able to communicate freely in two or three, or even four, mother tongues of other tribal districts.

There would be special reasons or motives for one tribe to enter the area of another without prior arrangement. The main reason would be a reprisal for a death or breach of law. They would also cross lines when hunting; fleeing kangaroos were not aware of boundary lines.

Most tribal boundaries in the Hunter Region were defined by a waterway or mountain. This ensured little error to recognise where the area of one tribe ended and another began. Travelling ridges on mountain boundaries were regarded as neutral; the breach occurred with descent into other territory.

Coastal tribes with the eastern shoreline were considered fortunate ones, but in special circumstances this boundary could be shared. For most of the N.S.W. sea-board coastal tribes allowed inland people to make at least yearly visits to the coast for fishing and to get salt. One special occasion would be the stranding of a whale on the beach. All Aborigines within a reasonable travelling distance would be invited to this feast lasting several days. One such visit depicted by painting at Wollombi when the Awabakal invited the Wonarua and Darkinoong people to partake of whale flesh high and dry at Redhead Beach. The Awabakal and Darkinoong did not fear the enemy from the rear, though all tribes were aware of the aggression practised by the roving Kamilaroi; the Gringhai openly expressed fears about larger and hostile tribes moving into their territory. The two coastal tribes mentioned believed their enemy would come from the sea, as they believed their ancestors had done. This belief was strongly suggested in the few sea lore that have survived.
It is difficult to define what were the actual boundaries of the Hunter region tribes. Maps published by authorities differ. The only real clue left today is the naming of areas. If an Aboriginal name fits with a language, then it is more than reasonable to assume that this was the territory of the tribe that used that language.

Since Aborigines had no written language, difficulty has also been created by the different spelling by people, even in early days. For example, the word "Comleroy" has been used to describe the Kamilaroi in several places. This spelling was used in the 1830s and has persisted in the Singleton area, which rightfully was the territory of the Wonarua.

**Relations in the Hunter Region**

Kamilaroi and Worimi (both large and powerful, well organised for movement, and aggressive. The Worimi in Maitland district fought among themselves, reason not known).

Ginghrai, Ngaruogal (Raymond Terrace district sub-tribe), Awabakal, Wonarua, Geawagal and Darkinoong: more or less passive but determined fighters when their territory was threatened.

Skirmishes were common but major clashes infrequent; inter-tribal hostility developed after the first impact of detribalisation but the Aborigines soon realised they could not hope to resist the gradual intrusion of their traditional land by whites. The Awabakal, Wonarua and Darkinoong were early sufferers, and tribes in areas of Port Stephens. A big factor was the penal presence. Tribes in Port Stephens did not suffer to the same extent as the others mentioned, since they had better territory in which to adapt themselves to white man's acquisition of land. This has been shown by the survival of small pockets of people living in Port Stephens in semi-tribal state until after the turn of the century.

**INTER-TRIBAL RELATIONS - ACTIVITIES**

(a) **Nature of tribal relations.** Hostility or Peace. Reasons behind such relations.

Type of items traded (stone, resin) and reasons behind such trade (lack of local supply). Extent of trade: from Newcastle to Sydney, Taree, Maitland.

Tribal visits. Nature of visits: Feasts at certain times of the year when food was in season (e.g. fish, a pack of beached whales).

(b) **Corroborees.** Nature: secular or sacred. Function of such corroborees.

The aim here is to identify such relations, and their purpose, and then to compare them to white society. For example, trade between New Zealand and Australia - there are similarities, it's just the scale which is different. White equivalent of corroborees: Royal Charity Concerts? Similarities and differences between such social events.
One of the mistaken views about Aboriginal mother tongue is that it is a limited language lacking the richness and beauty of romance and classical languages. While it is true that some Aboriginal languages seem to be abrupt in their complicated and unusual structures, there is indeed another linguistic picture presented in the form of ceremonial and ritualistic uses of mother tongue.

With few exceptions, most Aboriginal languages studied by Europeans have concerned the primary facet of expression and communication - the ordinary language spoken by all the people of a tribe. This facet has some idiom, but generally there has been a strict adherence to rules that have probably obtained for thousands of years.

The term "ceremonial" applies to two aspects of language: the more fluent use of words in ordinary language on special occasions and the changing language used by initiated persons only. The ceremonial use incorporates all the richness of vocabulary and expression, with the emphasis on the use of special personal pronouns and verbs. The language spoken by initiated persons can change more than once during the process of initiation. It is used as a means of identification among members of the culture's secret brotherhood. It is still spoken by some aborigines in Central Australia.

Because it was directly associated with the Bora (initiation) rites, very little of this language has survived in the Hunter region. It would have probably been forgotten but for primary references by Rev. L.E. Threlkeld when discussing the mysteries of the Awabakal tongue at Lake Macquarie. He quoted one example: Yarro, the noun for egg, yet a word used by initiated persons to mean something different.

Another facet revealed by Threlkeld was the domestic or family language, also in one way concerned with family relationships after somebody has been initiated. He wrote of the Awabakal: "The men, after the tooth is knocked out in the Bora rites, call women kunnai-karah and themselves yirabai, previous to which the men are styled koromun."

In ordinary language a woman is nu-koong and a man koree. Yira-bai suggests an overtone of the person having attained some sacred standing, since the word for holy or sacred is "yirri".

W.J. Enright also recorded a few words that the males used after they passed through the initiation rites of the Worimi (Wor-ree-mee).

An examination of Threlkeld's translation of the Gospels into Awabakal shows the use of some ritual language. It will never be known whether this was intentional or unintentional, since the missionary died while he was completing his extended language lexicon in 1859.

It should be noted that of the tribes in the Hunter region only the Awabakal language was fully translated in full tribal state. Moreover, it did not contain any of the "soft" consonants, such as "ch", or "jer". No tribe used "s".

In both the Hunter region and coastal districts from the Hawkesbury to beyond Taree there was an interchange of some consonants, even within the tribe itself. These were P and B, T and D, K and G.

All tribes extensively used the "ng" sound, as in sing. This sound was used at the beginning, middle and end of words. It was distinctly a nasal sound in most areas; in some places the "g" was sounded heavily; in others the sound was softer.

Generally, Aboriginal languages, notwithstanding some harsh and gutteral sounds, are musical when properly spoken.
Most early translations of Aboriginal languages are in the grammar of the 19th century and contain a strong emphasis of classical language structure. But men like Threlkeld and William Ridley, who translated in a period when their Aboriginal tutors were in full tribal state, were painstaking and accurate. Their Aboriginal teachers were first class. Threlkeld probably had the greatest English-speaking Aboriginal scholar of the 19th century to help him - Biraban, head of the Awabakal, whose ability to speak English was praised by highly educated white people.

Threlkeld, who studied other languages to ascertain how they compared with the Australian languages generally, found that North Indian and some Pacific languages had features similar to a number of Australian mother tongues. This is an interesting discovery, particularly since a number of historians believe that languages can be an important link with the ancient past with the beginning of the Family of Man, and perhaps can more help to trace the origin of tribal groups than other sources of data. It is significant that while some coastal tribes of N.S.W. have linguistic affinities with the Pacific islanders and American Indians, a number of N.S.W. inland tribes reveal Dravidian roots in both language and belief, supporting the contention of migration from the North, with the start of the movement located with the hill tribes of India.

There is little doubt that tribes borrowed many words from each other, especially in the period of land dispossession as detribalisation gained in force and scope.

Another aspect of mother tongue requiring close examination because of confused thinking by some writers relates to the firm practice of never mentioning the name of a dead person. Some writers have claimed that this strict observance of "not interfering with part of a dead person's spirit" caused even common nouns to change several times within a few years. What obviously has been overlooked is the fact that in the period when this practice was observed fully an adult Aborigine would have had several names. It is more than likely that the unmentionable name was not a sacred one in terms of initiation, but rather a name given for use by everyone in the tribe.

**Geographical Distribution of Languages**

**AWABAKAL**
Lake Macquarie district to the Hunter River.

**WONARUA**
Northwards from Wollombi to Singleton and slightly beyond.

**GRINGAI**
This tribe, or perhaps a sub-tribe (the truth will never be known) occupied an area extending from the Dungog district, extending to parts of Paterson and Gresford districts, and that section of Port Stephens called Carrington - the base of the Australian Agricultural Company's settlement.

In some ways this language is akin to Awabakal, though lacking the tense structure and other advanced features; in some respects it is like the Kattang group of aboriginal languages and dialects.

As yet, a full and compact recording of this language has not been set down.

This vocabulary was recorded in 1873 by a person who remembered the tribe in almost full tribal state. Thus it would have much more authenticity than later recordings.

**KATTANG (OR KUTHUNG) LANGUAGE**

Spoken by the Worimi tribe, which occupied an area from Maitland and a large part of Port Stephens, ending its boundary in the Gloucester-Forster line, the starting point of Bir-r-pai territory. The latter tribe spoke a similar, if not identical tongue.

It should be noted that both tribes used the interchangeable consonants, particularly T and D. This language is also noted for the exchange of the soft "a" and "u" sounds.
Teaching Strategy

Where Aboriginal children are members of a class, the teacher is advised to give them the opportunity to become familiar with the language material before classwork is commenced. They will thus be seen to be able to take some initiative in language activities and develop pride and self-esteem from the exercise.

Vocabulary

The following word lists show similarities/differences between districts. Some of these words could be introduced in conjunction with Natural Science lessons, labels on art work, or as examples of onomatopoeia, e.g. kookaburra, wak-koon (crow).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Awabakal</th>
<th>Wonarua</th>
<th>Gringai</th>
<th>Kattang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>boomerang</td>
<td>turra-mah</td>
<td>barragan</td>
<td>cooteerah</td>
<td>ba-ra-kun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>club</td>
<td>koteerah</td>
<td></td>
<td>cooreel</td>
<td>boon-dhee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shield</td>
<td>koree-il</td>
<td></td>
<td>wai-la</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>black cockatoo</td>
<td>wye-eelah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>white cockatoo</td>
<td>keah-rapeye</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crow</td>
<td>wak-koon</td>
<td>wagan</td>
<td>kookaburra</td>
<td>wah-kun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kookaburra</td>
<td>were-kata</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eel</td>
<td>kameen</td>
<td>kannung</td>
<td>kookandy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jewfish</td>
<td>kurra-koi-yong</td>
<td></td>
<td>toonang</td>
<td>doo-nong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shark</td>
<td>kurra-koi-yong</td>
<td></td>
<td>turrahwurrah</td>
<td>ga-ra-wura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schnapper</td>
<td>kur-rung-kun</td>
<td></td>
<td>too-rarle</td>
<td>goo-ee-wee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turtle</td>
<td>yoonoong</td>
<td></td>
<td>kurrang-can</td>
<td>gar-ra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bandicoot</td>
<td>moe-toe</td>
<td>koitoun</td>
<td>coorah-cumern</td>
<td>book-ut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>black snake</td>
<td>eel</td>
<td>mutoo-kungoan</td>
<td>boocan</td>
<td>mat-too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emu</td>
<td>kong-koe-rong</td>
<td>murrin</td>
<td>wittarkee</td>
<td>wt-ta-kit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fly</td>
<td>woo-rromkan</td>
<td>booroolong</td>
<td>bar-rel-la</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flying fox</td>
<td>mee-arnee</td>
<td>womboin</td>
<td>kundewung</td>
<td>gus-dee-wi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kangaroo</td>
<td>mee-arnee</td>
<td>womboin</td>
<td>wambourne</td>
<td>woo-boyn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>koala</td>
<td>mee-arnee</td>
<td>womboin</td>
<td>coolah</td>
<td>goc-la</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>platypus</td>
<td>purra-mye-bern</td>
<td>beekan</td>
<td>yappee</td>
<td>niccarree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>porcupine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mak-ree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possum</td>
<td>wil-lye</td>
<td>willie</td>
<td></td>
<td>wottoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wallaby</td>
<td>bulboong</td>
<td>barin-bellong</td>
<td></td>
<td>bur-rin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Counting in Gringai: one wakool
two bullora
three bullora kooti
four bullora bullora
five bullora bullora kooti
more than five mundi
Sample Phrases (Gringai)

Who are you? Gharner Bai (who you)
Where are you going? Wonder Beay (to where you)
What is your name? Gharner beay (who being you)
Where do you come from? Wonder tin beay (where from you)
Will you come with me? Kutti barley (to go us?)
(Let us go together)
Let us go fishing Muckerroo barley marugey (fish us let)
Let us go kangaroo Kutti barley buckoorah (to go us kangaroo-for)
What did you say? Minarm beay wee-ahlin (what you saying)
I am tired Ghit-too mooreo-mooreo (I tired)
Look at the snake Biteer narker (snake to look)
Kill him with a stick Poongar watty-kee (strike stick-with)
The lightning has struck Wuttah ghuttor narkillin (camp fire I see)
The tree Weenum-too poong-gillin watty (lightning it striking-did tree)
The children are crying Wuttah ghuttor natkillin (camp fire I see)
The dogs are barking Poori toong-killing (children crying)
Give me something to eat Weel Chooker pur-rer (I say. Me-of to eat)

NOTE: It is hoped that more detailed vocabulary lists and other aspects of local Aboriginal languages will be made available in a later supplement to this kit.

ABORIGINAL NAMES

Rev. L.E. Threlkeld still remains the most important authority on Aboriginal names and name-places for the Hunter region. Admittedly, his collection refers only to the Awabakal language, but he did two things so much absent from other records: he gave the correct pronunciation and meaning, and often provided explanatory information.

Even so, there has still been some corruption of Awabakal names, either because some English-speaking people found the words too difficult to pronounce correctly, or as names were passed down orally, not enough care was given to adhere to the original pronunciation.

In this way errors are being perpetuated in books that purport to present Aboriginal names and their meanings. Let us examine a few examples.

Teralba: Not mentioned in the official Threlkeld list of the 1830s. He mentions Tool-kar-bah (Tulkaba), a soft ti-tree place. This is now the name of part of the Teralba area.

Teralba comes from Tir-reel-ba, place of ticks. The first white naming concerned Barnsley (the first school), near West Wallsend. It was the type of bushland where ticks would be found in large numbers.

For some time, the second Teralba was interpreted as meaning 'vhi te stones' (from the Latin "alba", white). One book claims it is a place where edible bush grmoJs; there is no authority quoted for this source.

Boolaroo: Has been widely published as the place of flies. And it is given as an Awabakal word. The Awabakal word for sand flies is me-eenie and boongkeen as flea. The latter were very troublesome vermin, especially in sandy spots, to aborigines. A collective word for insect was "rool". The word for "they-two" was boolar - thus we get two lots of vermin.

An area south of Swansea is still called Galgabba. There is a flat part and a point on the Lake. But on the opposite side some distance away from these sites there is a creek, near Cam's Wharf. Old folk who remembered some of the last remnants of the tribe recalled that the name was pronounced "nga-galol-gabah". Two meanings have survived. The first in ordinary language means sand spit; the second in ritual tongue means a place to relax.
Distortion of the Aboriginal tongue persists. Awaba, an old township of Lake Macquarie district, is still called "a-wob-a" (soft a and o, and a short ar). This is one of the important sacred words of the Awabakal tongue. It belongs to a group of words in the "aw" prefix - "arwah" - from the dative infinitive "arwahlleeko", to smooth out, to even out into a plain or level surface. As Threlkeld showed, the word should be pronounced ar-wah-bah.

The word "Awabakal" is the masculine gender to describe the man and his tribe; the feminine gender is "Awabakarleen". Similarly treated are two spirits part of the trinity associated with the main sky being called Koe-in: Tipperkarli and Tipperkarleen.

It should always be remembered that when dealing with proper or place names, inquiry should be made to ascertain their tribal significance if such data has been passed on. Tribes such as the Awabakal had several facets of their mother tongue: ordinary communication, domestic or mother-in-law, and the sacred or ritual language used only by initiated persons. Threlkeld was the first European to perceive this several-tiered structure, but only brief references survived. Unless it is known under which heading the name was given, it is always possible that a wrong interpretation can be made of name or place.

Names

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place/Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muloobinba</td>
<td>Place of sea fern (site of Newcastle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onebygamba</td>
<td>Mud crab place (Carrington)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derrigarbah</td>
<td>Flower on sand (Wickham)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meekarlbah</td>
<td>Plenty honey here (Honeysuckle Point)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alwarta-bulboomga</td>
<td>Flat it is, wallaby place (Wallaby Flat, Hamilton)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotara</td>
<td>Round waddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waratah</td>
<td>Name of flower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nulkabah</td>
<td>Place of ironstone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yirritabah</td>
<td>Sacred place (Swansea Heads)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millabah</td>
<td>Place of fun (Speers Point)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biddabah</td>
<td>Silent resting place (Warners Bay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellebana</td>
<td>Peaceful or quiet place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koe-imbah</td>
<td>Home of white ant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deram-bambah</td>
<td>Rising ground (Toronto foreshore district)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poontee</td>
<td>Narrow neck (Coal Point)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pondee</td>
<td>Overlooking view (Toronto itself)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xurra Kurram</td>
<td>Blackalls Bay (men turned into rock - site of petrified forest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kintee-irrabeen</td>
<td>Red head (earth fire was here)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boeoon</td>
<td>Maitland (the plain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butta-ba</td>
<td>Hill near Wangi (Cliff straight into water)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bah-tah-bah</td>
<td>Belmont (hillside by lake)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K ahibah</td>
<td>From Ky-yee-bah, place of games. Note: Until 1881 Kahibah was put on maps as the area now called Blacksmiths and Pelican. Corroborees were held at the latter place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kai-a-rahbah</td>
<td>Place of weeds (Flaggy Creek to ocean)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kutta</td>
<td>Sydney (place of lighthouse)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngoeloe-yah-co-way</td>
<td>Belmont Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yir-annar-lai</td>
<td>Between Newcastle and Bar Beaches; sacred sites; place of soft cliff tops (carving).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wau-wareth</td>
<td>Freemen's Waterhole (home of Wau-wai, the Awabakal bunyip. Probably one of the oldest stories of this mysterious and most sacred animal spirit).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moon Island off Swansea Heads (once breeding place of mutton birds).

Place of pipe clay

Mountain in Watagans (means mountain human head like being).

Should be pronounced Bool-bah, meaning island. (Water home of Boor-oo-yir-ong, water monster who guards the island, which is a most sacred place where high degree ceremonies were performed).

Place of clay (Toronto West)

Plain surface (see note in introduction)

Beautiful scenery

Cold place (also Tuckerah)

Mountain

High place

Clear water

Converging place; in Wonarua meeting of waters.

Bushfire

Yam place

Restful place

Swan place

Dog died here

Place of brambles

Any ants' nest place

Place of coal (native name for Lake Macquarie area)

A point just south of Swansea under which there is coal.

Place of yellow earth, which when burnt turns into red ochre used for body decoration and cave painting.

Mountain extreme northern end of lake. Had stone yellow veins used for war paint.

Any place where red ti-trees grow

Place of ferns

Where inferior brambles grow (that is, the type that does not produce food).

Where female emus breed; one place was near Jewells Swamp.

Sea slug

Warm place

(Belmont South). Corruption of imported word of Woomer-ah (throwing spear stick). The Awabakal word is Yar-kirree.

Grass trees in abundance

From Killibinbin, bright shining

Pronounced Ngorokan, morning light, dawn

Sea snipe place (Pelican-Coon Island were spots)

Near Bolton Point (meaning not known)

Fraser Park (do do)

Inlet place

Fraser Park

Between Morisset and hospital (also called duckhole).

Swampy place

Near Lake View
Kol-karl-eengbah  Any place where the native raspberry tree grows.
Wambaral  The sea
Kour-an-bong  Coorambong (water over rocks).
Doree  Early name for Dora Creek, another was Newport. Doree Doree meant creek running from lake.

Other Areas

Legend:  W = Wonarua
Gr = Gringai
Br = Birrpai
Wo = Worimi
D = Darkinoong
Dk = Darook
Ng = Ngaroo-argal

Ettalong D  Drinking place
Girra Kore Dk  Place of waters
Narara D  Black snake or rib-like
Deerab-ban Dk  Hawkesbury River
Kincumber Dk  Tomorrow and to the rising sun
Koolewong Dk  Koalas there
Kourong, Gourong D  Fast running beach
Umina D  Place of sleep
Patonga Dk  Place of oyster
Terrigal Dk and D  From root of Tar-ri-ga (Tarragal, place of little birds); but tar-ri-ga, wild figs here.
Karagi D  Way in or entrance
Tudibaring Dk  McMasters Beach (where waves pound like heart beat)
Tag-go-rah-yago D and Awabakal (some slight variation) to shiver
Woy Woy D  From Wy Wy Much water, big lagoon
Booral Br  Large
Boree D  Fire
Bulga W  Mountain
Bulahdelah Wo  Meeting of waters
Bungwahl Br  Swamp fern roots
Coopermook Br  Elbow
Dungog Gr  Also Tunkok, soft hills
Dural Wo  Hollow tree fire
Illalong Ng  Running water
Karua Wah Wo  Native plum tree
Minimbah W  Teaching place
Moonan W  Hard to find
Nabiac Br  Wild fig tree
Narara Dk  Black snake
Curimbah D  Sacred initiation site
Taree Br  Should be Taree-beet, place of many wild figs
Tarro Wo  Stone
Bombi Dk  Water swirling around rocks
Norah (Head) Dk and D  From Moorah, grinding stone for axes
Budgewoi D  From Pidgee-woy, Yiung grass or decayed weed
Awabakal Poem (also on cassette)

Here is a poem in Awabakal recorded by a family south of Swansea in the 1850s. It is a camp song praising the welcoming the morning dawn ... Ngoe-ro-kan.

This name is perpetuated in a Central Coast town called Gorokan.

* * * * * * *

Ella! Ngoe-ro-kan-ta killi-bin-bin katarn; Hail! Dawn is shining, glory doing.
Dennal-la bulleen kooleen; The sun is shining.
Tokoi-ro cowarleen; Night moving.
Koree-la ngara-been; Men stirring.
Wonnai-baran korien koe-room yikora; Children restless.
Nu-koong-baran kullat tirrika koe-tilleen; Women fire-wood thinking.
Tibeen-tara wee-yaarleen; Birds singing.
Bootleen-ama Koriens bere-karben yikora; Animals awakening.
Kolbee koi-yoong koba kawaul; Camp noise grows.
Koree-baran koroo ng koe-room cocarleen; Men bush towards moving.
Nu-koong baro bahtoe boah-marleen; Women water gathering.
Wonnai-baran kippiri yamteen kai-balilin; Children they hungry, all shouting.
Nu-koong bahtoe boah-mah; Women water collected.
Koree baro tura makoroe-lo man-kullam; Men spear fish, return.
Kuri yamteen tarkileen; People all eating.
Katarn ta-ba koi-yoong wee wee. Camp quiet again.

* * * *
4.4 WOMEN’S ROLE

Aboriginal women enjoyed more freedom and were more important in their society than is generally supposed. Very few authentic pictures have been presented of the rights and powers in full tribal state. Too many descriptions have emphasised a lesser role of females in traditional Aboriginal society. Women in parts of the Hunter Region have their own initiation and other ceremonies, some of which males were not allowed to discuss, let alone see. This right of self-determination is some areas of tribal life persists in parts of the Northern Territory, where today women conduct their own ceremonies and have separate groups of female elders.

WOMEN AND MARRIAGE:

The main requirement of marriage in tribal state was conformity to the totemic structure of the clan or tribe. These divisions were not always the same: tribes with expansive territories had complicated totemic lines because the spread of Aboriginal population over a wide area, whereas those with compact territories, such as the Awabakal and Wondaw, had a more simplified yet still traditional structure. The main purpose was to ensure purity of blood lines, but there were other factors. One could not kill or eat one’s totemic representative; in this way there was some control of food use, particularly in areas where free consumption of certain living items of diet, mostly animals, could lead to food source problems. Another factor related to the continuing acceptance of Aboriginal spiritual belief that as humans they were part of one great creation of living things; that in other times birds and animals had once ruled the world; and that the process of reincarnation was continuous. The Aborigines of the "first race" did not divorce themselves from basic beliefs dealing with creation.

It was not unusual for natural love affairs to develop, but always the participants were aware of their totemic obligations. They knew that a departure would mean instant and unpleasant punishment, mostly death. But once a couple were united and became parents, they displayed a high degree of fidelity. There were, of course, exceptions, sometimes because of the intrusion of "true love" feelings. A man who deserted his wife or a woman who did the same to her husband faced severe tribal punishment, often ending in banishment.

Totemic rules were stretched and even fragmented in the final stages of detribalisation, say 1850 to 1890 but there always remained with Aborigines of deep tribal belief antagonism to mixed marriages, since, with few exceptions, it was the Aboriginal woman who was the victim of seduction of rape that could lead to marriage.

It is not known for certain whether the betrothal rite practised on the mid-North Coast was followed in this region. This rite has been recorded by present day Aborigines at Grafton. It concerns a woman who refused to marry a man selected for her and who had become pregnant to the man whom she loved. The women elders chose for her a tree that she had to climb and cut off with her stone axe all the branches, and then descend to the ground. In doing this she could free herself of any other marriage obligations and then mate with the man of her own choice.
WOMEN AND WORK:

Young girls were made available to help old and sick women. Children suffering from a permanent disability, probably from accident, had special care bestowed on them by all the clan.

Women were responsible for many camp chores - looking after children, preparing camp fires, cooking, gathering firewood and food such as honey, wild fruit, yarns and insects. She also did ornamental work on rugs and cloaks, and made dilly bags. She often helped to spin cord from possum fur and made fishing nets.

According to early white records each horde or clan had its special fisherwoman, so designated from early age. She would be chosen quite young, when a ligature was tied about the first joint of her little finger and kept there until the section mortified and fell off. The girl bore the obvious pain without complaint. The separated piece of finger was bound in some marine growth and committed to the water. In Port Stephens this was done in a bay; at Lake Macquarie the ceremony took place in the middle of the lake. It is thought that the Aborigines believed that fish would eat the finger portion and thereafter be attraction to the fisherwoman owner. Either hand was used. In some coastal areas the joint was severed by a sharp blow. Her role on festive occasions was to harmonise with "wood beat" music, using a pair of clapper sticks, and beating a drum, either solid or hollow. The people of Port Stephens particularly became adept at gum leaf music. She would join in the singing and dancing, and sometimes figure in special dances for females only.

A woman could walk miles through the bush yet feel safe from attack by anybody of her clan or tribe. A married woman commanded special respect. It was assault and rape by Europeans, especially in the heavy penal areas of the Hunter Valley, that she had to fear most.

CHILDBIRTH:

The claim that Aborigines did not understand the mechanism of conception requires examination. It has been said that Aborigines did not consider sexual intercourse necessary to have children, and that pregnancy was the result of intervention by a spirit - a type of immaculate birth process. It is true that when a tribal woman conceived it was recognised that she had received a rich gift from the great spirits.

Once a woman became pregnant she was constantly under the watchful eye of the senior women of the camp. She continued to perform her normal camp duties until her condition warranted rest. When the time arrived for her to give birth she was taken to a specially-prepared spot, where the birth was supervised by experienced women. The medical attention given to her would perhaps surprise the modern white doctor, but much of this information is secret. There is not one record of an Aboriginal woman in tribal state known to Europeans having died from post-birth infection that caused so many deaths among white women until just before the turn of the century.
CAMP ARRANGEMENTS:

Camps were arranged in three divisions, with the married sections in the middle. On the left would be the section for single men and youths, and on the right that for girls and young women. Woe betide any young man found wandering into single female territory without a valid reason!

Children generally had the run of the camp, except the sacred parts, where, for example, a traditional healer might keep tribal sacred relics. Mothers rarely chastised a child with a beating; she would admonish and scold, but their love for their children was too great; physical punishment was inflicted reluctantly. In the presence of tribal elders children were very obedient and well behaved. From almost when they learned to speak they were told that the "clever men" of the tribe had direct access to the spirits.

There were some laws relating to family relationships. For example, a man could not speak to his mother-in-law. All communication was made through a third person whose totem was acceptable to both parties.

SUMMARY:

Thus a female of the tribe, as with the males, from the time of reaching puberty to initiation and marriage, had tribal rights and obligations. Their degree of morality and attachment to each other were fine examples of marital responsibility, often unequalled by the white society that failed to recognise them.
Traditionally sporting activity among Aborigines had a two-fold purpose: to develop natural skills and to have fun. Aboriginal boys and girls had early tuition in using utensils and weapons, in learning to swim, and being able to identify their surroundings. At the age of six or so, boys were given their first weapon - a boomerang, spear and flat waddy, small but effective. All were identical with the weapons used by adults.

The early inculcation of trying to live with the environment prepared the lad to develop stamina, courage and special skills required of tribal men, from the time they were initiated. The Aborigines, a naturally fun-loving race, were able to face tasks requiring sacrifice and hardship because of experience and understanding gained in their youth. There was much discipline in all phases of physical activity, but this did not deter them from enjoying whatever they had to do, whether it was sport or had training. While engaged in sport they always did their best; their efforts lacked the competitive spirit of the whites in that there was no reward to be earned. If a member of a tribe excelled in one phase of sport, he would be deemed a leader, and later would become an instructor. His special gifts belonged to the tribe, not to any person. Exploitation of individuals was expressly forbidden.

In areas of suitable waterways, canoe races were popular. Lake Macquarie was a favourite spot, and it attracted visitors from other tribes. The Awabakal made two types of canoes: one was the stripped bark, tied at both ends, and held together with either the gum of a grass tree or coal tar. Though frail in appearance, the canoe safely held two people. They were mostly used for fishing and races. The other type of canoe came from the mountain areas, mostly after bush fires. When they found a suitable log burning, they used the fire to burn the log in its centre to form a canoe. Both ends of the log were sharpened by stone axes. Some of these canoes, larger than the bark variety, could hold up to four persons.

Early white accounts state that the Awabakal held canoe races down Swansea Channel and on the Lake. One youth stood in the canoe holding a sail made from palm fronds while a younger male sat at the stern, using one leg as a rudder.

A third type of canoe - a fire-hardened piece of bark, flat with up-turned ends - was largely a product of Port Stephens and some inland Aborigines. Though Threlkeld saw large numbers of canoes on the lake it is not known if any have survived.

Tree climbing was a favourite sport, and often young women proved superior. It is more likely that in some parts of the Hunter Region women did more tree climbing than men; they were certainly the greater gatherers of native bee honey. Children first began to climb trees when eight to ten years old. Often they were employed to gather young birds out of nests on slim limbs that would not withstand adult weight. These birdlings would be nurtured and tamed to complete domesticity, particularly parrots. The Aborigines did not need to clip the wings of their avian pets to keep them.
This understanding of natural life also applied to animal pets. In days of early black and white contact Europeans were amazed when visiting camps to notice marsupials moving freely as pets of children.

Wallabies, kangaroos and emus were evidently easy to tame: sometimes the animals actually bred close to the camps. Children at an early age were taught to swim, dog paddle and dive at depth. They had special breathing exercises and knew that when diving for lobsters or shellfish, that this had to be done before a meal. They swam for most of the year; swimming was not just a summer activity. In cold months they would plaster themselves with protective fats, mainly from the kangaroo or wallaby.

An important sporting event was the boomerang contest, open only to those with much practice. A boy at 10 years reached a reasonable level of skill in boomerang hurling, both for aerial thrust to return, or the wristy throw on the ground to gain force to hit the object with greater strength.

Two types of boomerang were used. The returning one had a sharp angle in design and was perfectly balanced in every way. It would take weeks for even an expert to make a reliable returning boomerang.

The killing or hunting boomerang was moon-shaped, generally heavier, and at times one end was slightly larger or longer than the other. Both weapons had hard and sharp edges able to cut or pierce deeply.

One way to test skill was to make a returning boomerang circle one to three trees, and to make a complete arc before coming back to the exact location of the thrower. The Awabakal had a throwing area near Belmont, where young people were also taught to use the three-pronged fishing spear in the Belmont South swamps, all now reclaimed for sporting and other developments - and some sand mining.

Another sport concerned the spearing in motion of discs cut from bark. They ranged from four to eight inches in diameter and were rolled on level surfaces or down inclines. Males stood in line at intervals. They had to spear discs as they rolled quickly by. The purpose was to learn how to judge the speed of moving objects, particularly fleeing animals.

On other occasions pieces of bark cut into various figures and shapes were either flung into the air from an elevated position for both spear and boomerang practice. (European clay pigeon shooting came later).

Games were mostly played by children. They included hiding objects and laying false tracks. Children also spent time teaching their pets tricks, often using their tricks to play harmless pranks on their parents. The parents, victims of such pranks, would scold their children but around the camp fire would relate how clever their children were.

While clans might take part in sports at a full tribal meeting, there is no records by whites of tribes (say the Awabakal and Wonarua) competing against each other. Hand games with string were also very popular and played an important part in the teaching of young children.
4.6 THE INITIATION

One of the most important components of traditional lifestyle was the initiation. Although very little is known about the initiation, other than by initiates themselves, it can reasonably be deduced that initiation was one of the ceremonial and spiritual foundations on which Aboriginal society has been built.

Initiation, for both males and females, was a time of great happiness and joy for the participants and their families because of its deep spiritual significance.

It has been stated in early European writings that the last full initiation ceremonies in the Lower Hunter Valley were held in 1852. Of this we cannot be sure but we do know that full initiations were still held on the North Coast of New South Wales in the 1930s and that people are still alive today who participated in partial initiation ceremonies in the Lower Hunter Region.

The initiation ceremony of the Australian Aborigines must remain one of the world's great mysteries. For many years non-Aboriginal interests have sought to probe the inner secret of this mystical ceremony, so full of symbolic and other teachings; but, despite what has been revealed, most of this knowledge has remained with the people of the culture. Because of this, it can safely be said that great portions of some ceremonial knowledge has been lost forever, for it disappeared with the people of those tribes who progressively were destroyed as white encroachment on tribal territories expanded.

Initiation was not the only important ceremonial rite; there were also special ceremonies to appease the spirits for certain acts, to plead for rain, food and success in hunting and battle.

Both males and females in the Hunter Region underwent initiation rites, but those for women were limited in number and scope, and generally were conducted in low key. But for the youth there was no greater moment nor awesome mystery in his life. He was about to enter a new world - a spiritual world requiring tremendous personal responsibilities and disciplines. The earthly matters, particularly those closely connected to his mother, would be left behind forever.

Types of Ceremonies

Ceremonies in full tribal state differed in character, time and location according to the ritualistic traditions for the tribe concerned and the terrain. All had stages of progression, which could be covered from one year to 18 months, or could be extended over several years. Some tribes conducted ceremonies at stated intervals of two to three years to meet age requirements. In any case, time was not an essential factor for those proceeding to the highest degrees.

In between ceremonies the boy was shown how to develop natural skills, such as tracking, making medicine, purifying water with charcoal of selected twigs, and smoking or salting certain flesh foods. Salt pans still exist at least 30 to 40 miles inland from the coast.

One final coastal degree was called garunda. It required the initiated to spend at least six months in the bush so that tribal elders could teach him advanced aspects of bushlore, the songs, poetry and dances that had their origin in the dim past.

Promotion to higher levels was not automatic: the youth was rigidly tested in personal discipline and responsibility and examined in knowledge. One of the lost arts is the ability to mimic bird calls and animal sounds. This was related to special instruction. It is probably man kind's last living link with prevocal man. In N.S.W. such natural knowledge was still being used in the 1930s, even for modified ceremonies. The Aborigines used signs and passwords and sounds, all these were part of the Aboriginal scene thousands of years ago.
4.7 ABORIGINAL LORE

Aboriginal lore is made up of teachings from two sources. The first were recitals of some events of the long past: stories embellished with traditional symbolism and mysticism. The second were records of the beliefs and practices of the sacred spirits, whether they roamed the earth or dwelt in the heavens. Both sources contained strong elements of warning and discipline, all directed to a full observance of tribal laws, particularly those relating to secrecy and morality.

The records of the beliefs and practices of the sacred spirits were associated with accounts of primary creation that often found repetition in ceremonial instruction. In this regard they cannot be divorced from re-incarnation beliefs, which were strong in the Hunter-Coastal Region, though not recorded in detail as found in recordings made of Victorian tribes. But in the mountain territory of the Awabakal and Darkinoung tribes there are still to be found carvings showing how Aborigines viewed the processes of re-incarnation. The mystery of re-incarnation was a two-way process; natural life being supplanted by humans, and birds and animals, having gained credit for deeds done, being transformed into humans by the spirits.

CREATION:

The different versions of human creation throughout N.S.W. and Victoria suggests primary settlement and movement of Aborigines followed by subsequent migrations. Aboriginal lore speaks of birds once ruling the country: in fact, one belief is that the Aborigines consider that birds could have been wiser than humans.

The "Lord of the Avine Kingdom" was the eagle or eagle-hawk, portrayed to be a trusting and noble leader, who could suffer indignity but was always the victor in the end of any conflict. Next in line was the crow - clever, devious, but generally survived conflicts with the eagle or protecting spirits. The third bird mentioned, but apparently of much less importance, was the Mopoke. The Pelican is also featured when dealing with water.

Thus in New South Wales, particularly on the coast or slightly inland, and to a lesser extent in Victoria, there is a large and varied number of "long, long ago" or "in the beginning" accounts of the leadership struggle between the Eagle and Crow.

The Awabakal tribe, whose territory covered Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Stockton to Fern Bay, Central Coast to Wyong, and the Coalfields area, Watagan Mountains to Wollombi, was an Eaglehawk tribe. The eaglehawk (Biraban - bee-rar-bahn) was said to have created in the sky stones of great ceremonial significant and dropped them circular-wise on the tops of mountains. Also, often human bodies were burnt as a propitiation to this spirit.

Pund-jel (or Bun-jil) was a Victorian imaginary being said to have created the first two Aboriginal men from clay models he made himself. His historical link with this region is simple and clear: this is the power given to men in many areas to perform such acts, as curing illness or creating life forms. One example of the latter is the belief of how a man became a porcupine. On one hand, the evil man of this story had "magic" to make a baby girl grow into a young woman to become his wife: on the other, this wife had power to make a tree grow very tall and "bend like a rainbow" to enable her to escape him.
Again, the early beliefs relating to female possession and control of fire, in a period when hunters and their families had to eat raw food and suffer cold, found positive expression in coastal initiation ceremonies when, by special gestures, women indicated they would never again withhold light and fire from men.

ASPECTS OF THE AWABAKAL LORE can perhaps be better understood and appreciated than most of the rest of the region because many beliefs were recorded by the pioneering missionary, Rev. L. E. Threlkeld, of the London Missionary Society, who was able to acquire such knowledge when the Aborigines were in full tribal state. He, more than most of his time, dedicated himself to learning the mother tongue, of which he left a rich and almost complete vocabulary in all facets of this dominating language of the region. Because of the availability of this language a better appreciation can be made of some deeper meanings of Awabakal lore, particularly those facets dealing with discipline. All such tribal laws and powers were derived from the sacred spirits - mixture of good and evil.

The most feared - and respected - sky spirit was Koin, or Ko-een, or Coo-in, as variously pronounced in the area encompassing much of the Central Coast, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Port Macquarie, Port Stephens and parts of the Lower Hunter Valley. He was a remarkable spirit. Though his home was in the sky, he was ever present in the heavens and earth, day and night, responsible for the provision of natural life in all its forms. He was also the spirit to cause the heavens to thunder as a mark of annoyance with his earthly subjects below. It is thought that the Aborigines were terrified of thunder and lightning. "Devil, Devil," they would cry, and run to their shelters, to huddle together until the storm had passed.

The duality of Koin had another personification, as shown by Threlkeld when he was being rowed across the lake by Biraban during high winds. To a question on the intervention of Koin as a help in a crisis, Biraban said he would plead to this spirit by saying "Koin teeah" - Koin, come to me. This showed that Koin was all-embracing in his spheres of influence.

Back to birds: in substantial areas of the Lower Hunter and Port Stephens (and these each had their many affinities in terms of tribal belief and practice) the men and women each had their separate avine and animal spirits of creation. For the women this earthly representative was a small woodpecker bird (Teelmoon by the Awabakal and Dilmun by the Gringhai). The women believed that this bird was part of their creative life, in the same way as some white people believe that after death their form can materialise into a ghost. Woe betide any male who injured or poked fun at this bird!

It is thus obvious that almost all, if not all, of the stories contained in the lore of the region had a special message for the Aborigines concerned. One dealing with discipline involved Putti-kan, who lived in Mount Sugarloaf area but frequently roamed the bushlands of the lake and Newcastle. He was very tall, having a mane like a horse and a tail like a cutlass. He jumped instead of walking. His toes were in reverse, so that his tracks would mislead those searching for him. His main task flowed from the tribe's most important requirement of the male - the obligation of initiation. The knocking out of one or more teeth from the upper jaw was an essential part of the initiation procedure. In some tribes of the Hunter Region the tooth was bitten out by an elder.
When Puttikan met a young male he would demand that the man open his jaws to show whether the tooth was missing. If it were, he would be allowed to proceed in peace; if not, the man would be clubbed to death. One translation of "Puttikan" is bite man. It is at least appropriate in a sense of symbolism. He is not to be confused with that elusive hairy figure so feared by coastal Aborigines who was known as Yahoo but had other names.

Another Lake belief is one of several involving the theme of petrification - a form of penalty found in Aboriginal folklore over a wide area of New South Wales and Victoria. (It should be remembered that this work is not based on European-created State boundaries so far as tribal districts are concerned: often tribes could originally occupy parts of two or three States; neither do tribal boundaries and state boundaries co-incide).

"Muloong-boola" (together two) is the story of two Aboriginal women who after an involvement with a warrior at Swansea Heads were turned into pillars of stone. They were to act as sentinels for the Awabakal tribe. At first sighting of strange canoes coming from the sea, they would return to human form, and so be able to warn all the clans and tribes to resist the invaders.

Another "stone" story relates to Kurra-Kurrarn (Blackalls Bay), where there still exists a large quantity of petrified tree growth. Much has been removed from the lake bed to build rock fences of a number of Blackalls Park residents.

The Aboriginal account tells how a group of men were one day improperly killing lice, contrary to tribal law. The act greatly annoyed the Giant Lizard (Naroota Kow-warl) in the sky, so he got his magic sheaf and from the sky stabbed all the men, who were then turned into stone.

This recording of the giant lizard separates in a totemic sense the coastal tribes from those of the far north, where the feathered serpent is the most important reptilian deity.

One belief to illustrate the strict code of tribal morality, concerned the creation of the platypus. There was a large waterhole with much weed growth where a nasty water rat was always waiting for a victim. The mother duck warned her children never to venture there alone. One young duck disobeyed and went to the waterhole by herself to be accosted by the rat. Some time later she felt a movement in her body. She laid an egg. When hatched, behold; instead of a feathered duck, there was a furred animal, with a bill, which could swim under and above water. The platypus had been added to the animal kingdom.

Other aspects of the lore are the stories dealing with making of coal (an interesting Aboriginal recording of possible geological upheavals), and the transformation of the kookaburra into a kingfisher (one of totemic significance).

It must be accepted that many beliefs told to Europeans were not the full story, that some facets were kept for secret instruction imparted at Bora ceremonies.
Celestial bodies: It is almost impossible to determine when many Aboriginal stories were first told, but it is likely that the age of some creation beliefs can be counted in thousands of years. The people had a comprehensive understanding of the celestial sphere. To tribes throughout Australia the heavens on clear nights presented a spectacle of memory demanding deep reverence. It represented a heavenly record for so many of warriors and other people who had performed good works. But there are some startling revelations of great antiquity that must give modern historians an incentive for a serious re-examination of ancient and pre-history.

Example one: some tribes believe Mars is the eagle who went to heaven as a reward for his services on earth, so selected because he was aggressive and brave. Also, that a smaller star close by is the crow, and that the still smaller stars around the crow are his many wives. (The Crow is often depicted trying to steal the wife or wives of other beings).

In general, there is a widespread belief that the stars represent an everlasting reward to those who gained credit on earth; that they are so placed in the sky to "shine ever brightly", and always be on view at night.

Example two: The Awabakal and many other tribes believed that there was a man in the moon, and that the sun was a woman. But this belief was not consistent throughout Australia. The Awabakal man was called "Ponteeboong" and the women "Punnal". They are the source of one of the regions most beautiful beliefs, "When the Moon Cried" (the creation of Belmont lagoon at Lake Macquarie).
4.8 ILLNESS

Few Aboriginals reached a very old age in full tribal state. This was not so much of longevity being governed by health, but rather it was a fact of life determined by other circumstances, particularly fighting and accident. Snake bite was an ever-present danger in hot months, particularly in areas of lush growth. Aborigines did not wear protective footwear of any kind.

Until the advent of white man they rarely suffered from epidemic diseases. Conventional social diseases were not known.

They frequently suffered severe bouts of indigestion from excessive eating; but early medical records dealing with Aboriginal health make no reference to development of ulcerated conditions of the digestive system.

It was only natural they would have attacks of dysentery, not so much from the contamination of food (their keen sense of smell prevented that) but rather because of the characteristics of the food itself. For example, an over indulgence of certain berries, especially when they were available in tens of thousands. They would have a temporary effect on bowel movements, but Aborigines did not suffer this physical discomfort for long. They had at least one remedy immediately on hand, whether it be bark (which was sometimes heated before it was chewed), or the sap of certain trees, or a species of native grass. Most of this herbal medicine is still secret, known to initiated person on the North Coast, but in other days was part of the medical knowledge of all coastal and inland people. This area of knowledge is being revived in the region due to the progressive programme of culture instruction organised by the Awabakal Aboriginal Cooperative in Newcastle. Visiting elders are passing on their knowledge to children of Aboriginal descent who are participating in this return to tribal practice.

Remedies mainly comprised extracts of gums, saps and barks; sometimes they were used in raw state; on other occasions special preparations were made from them.

The Aborigines also found benefit in leaf or twig chewing. Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of Aboriginal medical history is a number of reports made in early tribal days concerning the ability of Aborigines to cure venereal disease. Reference (from a medical source) is to be found in Brough Smyth's excellent works. It is stated that some Victorian natives were known to have cured themselves of this condition by using a type of red bark or gum. Rev. L.E. Threlkeld also made a vague reference to this cure being known in the Lake Macquarie area.

The main illness of Aborigines, apart from those associated with eating, drinking and fighting, were colds affecting the nasal tract and ears (particularly in children living in areas of constant and heavy rainfall, but they seemed to grow out of this condition after reaching teenage); rheumatic conditions due to wet and cold environment; skin sores caused by insects and scratches.

Aborigines regularly covered themselves with oil or fat to counter insects, particularly mosquitoes, and to keep out cold in winter. Though they did not regularly wash in the same fashion as whites, those living near water fished or swam in water almost every day. Aborigines close to sea water - Lake Macquarie and Port Stephens are examples - were aware of the cleansing properties of the salt in the water. This aid, combined with the natural ability of their flesh to heal quickly, meant that large, gaping wounds, which if suffered by whites would need stitching and possibly other attention, closed after a few days and rarely suppurated.

Occasionally they would have boils because of unbalanced diets, such as eating too much fish, but this condition was rarely noticed by anyone.
The spear, waddy and snakebite accounted for a substantial proportion of Aboriginal mortality in full tribal state. To which must be added the "pining" deaths caused by punitive practices, such as "pointing the bone" or "singing" a victim.

Aborigines also suffered from severe headaches, but no data is available as to the reason. It has been suggested that headaches could have resulted from over-exposure of the eyes to the sun in very hot periods. Another reason advanced is that such pain was associated with gastronomic upsets.

They suffered the run of the mill internal conditions, such as worms, but this was adjusted by a change of diet. Their body structure was not immune to the physical deterioration that is the price of advancing age.

All pain for which there was no outward physical explanation became the realm of the tribal witch doctor to effect relief or cure. He had magic to handle such situations. But he was at risk: if a patient died, he could suffer the same fate. Relatives dispensed their own fatal medicine to the tribal medical profession who failed to deliver without adequate reason.

The sorcerer would diagnose that his suffering patient had unfortunately (and mysteriously) acquired a bone or stone to cause such agony or discomfort. He would want the patient to understand that only by removing this unwanted intrusion could a cure be made. So he used his magic, saying sacred words and massaging the part of the body affected: and, lo! he would withdraw from the afflicted region a bone or stone. Such was his magic that no mark was left where the extraction took place. And such was the confidence of the patient; he believed that the cause had been removed and the pain would disappear. It was a clever piece of sleight of hand, to be recognised by any conjuror worthy of his tricks.

It should be understood that in the Hunter region Aborigines did not use narcotic or exciter drugs, though one species of bark is claimed to have had refresher properties.

Another form of psychological treatment was related to blood letting. The kit included a wooden water vessel and possum-fur cord, which was wound around the affected part, body or limb, at least twice, and both ends were held in the mouth of the "doctor", sometimes a woman. The "doctor" rubbed the ends of the cord across his lips until they began to bleed and blood fell into the water vessel. The Aborigines believed that the 'evil thing' was in the patient's blood, but with the friction of the cord had been withdrawn from the affected part. This practice was still in use in some coastal areas until 1910.

For pain caused by nervous conditions Aborigines used hot water and steam baths. At night, if too cold, flat stones would be heated and covered with animal rugs, on which the patient would be placed. Sometimes the affected area would be rubbed with an ointment largely made from a eucalyptus extract.

Aborigines rarely cried because of pain, which they endured with much stoicism. Even children seemed to understand that pain was sometimes to be borne with a minimum of complaint. No greater example of the Aborigine's ability silently to bear sharp pain is the tooth evulsion ceremony, whether the molar was knocked out with a chisel or bitten out by an elder. All witnesses of this rite emphasise in their accounts that the youth did not flinch, though the pain must have been severe.

The coastal region is cursed with a stinging tree with two types of leaves. Contact with flesh results in immediate and excruciating pain, which continues unabated for at least three days. Whites affected by this sting have had to be given sedation. But Aborigines knew an immediate antidote: a native lily whose sap quickly eased the pain, and then killed it. It was many years before whites learned of this antidote. In the Gloucester area it was first eaten after being made into a syrup, and then drunk.
Generally, it could be said that Aborigines in full tribal state in the Hunter region had relatively few major illnesses or diseases that were as infective and fatal as those introduced by Europeans. The native illnesses were mostly cured by herbal remedies or psychological sorcery. The natives had a rare purity of blood lines, due to two factors: their isolation from other races and the strict disciplines of their totemic structure. (The latter prevented close intra-family marriages.)

They had quick and effective methods of arresting superficial bleeding - the application of clay or earth or cobweb.
Burial ceremonies and patterns differed tribe to tribe, but there was one common facet: the high honours paid to and the degree of mourning observed for people of prominence, such as men of high degree or brave warriors. On such occasions the internment would be marked by much ceremony and lamentation. Women particularly were emotional mourners; they almost covered themselves with white pipeclay or yellow ochre, and they inflicted nasty cuts on their head and body. This letting of blood had some ritualistic link with birth. Their cries of grief would last for days because for them death was a time of sincere mourning.

The site of a grave was generally in loose soil and the grave itself shallow. But some disturbed burial grounds in Lake Macquarie revealed a tiered arrangement—a form of burial that has a carbon dating determination of about 8000 years. In all cases burial was so arranged to prevent animal or water interference to the corpse; the latter precaution applied particularly to cemeteries close to the sea, lake or river. Sometimes boughs or rocks were put on top of the grave to give it security.

In some places mounds, oval in shape, were part of the burial site, especially where the body was sat upright, with the end above ground level. Generally, the face would be looking to the east, probably symbolic of greeting the dawn in a new life. A number of burial grounds on the coast, particularly one at Swansea Heads, called Yirri-ta-bah (the sacred place) had an easterly aspect.

Throughout the Hunter region the body, when buried horizontally, was laid east to west or north to south, the exact position being governed by the sun. The body was covered with animal skin or think bark. The grave had a bed of leaves and bark, and on occasions boughs would be laid in the form of an oblong. Sometimes there would be flowers, but this decoration would depend on the deceased's totem. The person's implements of war and hunt and other material possessions were put in the grave, often wrapped in bark or skin.

Those buried in sitting posture had arms and legs tied but the face held up. Those of high degree had a coloured band placed around their forehead to ensure that their status was recognised in the new life they were about to enter. Some Aborigines believed that after assessment by the great spirits they would join those of the tribe who had gone before. Others accepted that if they found much favour in the heavens they would be created as stars, to be seen at nights by those on earth below.

At Lake Macquarie the karakal (spiritual man) would jump into the grave and seek to speak to the corpse, wanting to know how and when he died, and how he felt. The karakal, in modified way, and this was also the practice of doctor elsewhere on the coast and inland—prepared the departed member of the tribe for the new life ahead in the same way as clergy officiate at white burial ceremonies.

Efforts to seek those responsible for the death of the Aborigine included putting ants near the grave and watching the direction in which they moved, thus indicating where avengers should seek the culprit; or a number of men holding the body shoulder high while names were called out, and should the corpse move at the mention of a particular name, then it would be deemed that this was the person who caused the death of the man.
In most instances a sign or signs were provided near the site to indicate the presence of a grave or burial ground. Zigzag or wriggling parallel lines would either be painted on a rock face or carved on a tree. In addition, trees near the ground would have trunk carvings.

Different beliefs were attached to death. Some tribes cleared the area surrounding the grave, and either cut into the ground or raised the soil to create two circles around it. The path so created between the two rings would be strewn with pieces of bark, and to end. These would keep the grave itself safe from earthly or spirit intruders, since it was believed that imaginary beings and ghosts would neither jump over the bark nor walk under it.

Platform burials took place in the Barrington area, but unlike those elsewhere the corpse was allowed to rest in peace, and not have a fire lit under the platform.

Throughout the region some bodies were decapitated for penal or ritual purposes, it was believed.

Very few Aborigines were buried in a standing position in the region. No reason has been ascertained for the degenerate into reclined burial practice. Such graves were in isolated sites.

Occasionally chiefs of tribes as distinct from clan leaders were buried on a hillock or peak with a 360 degree view - the same setting as a Bora ring for initiation.

The Awabakal at times burned their dead as a propitiation to the great sky spirit, the Eagle Hawk. Instances have been recorded of other tribes in the region burning instead of burying elderly dead people.

Aboriginal respect for death was largely governed by different beliefs. No-one would pass a grave or burial ground at night.

Some Aboriginal cemeteries contained up to 100 graves. In tribal days Aborigines were reluctant to reveal such sites; they feared scientists and others would rob the graves, and even today some sites are threatened by developments of various kinds.
Hunter region Aborigines loved to sing and dance, whether at ceremonial rites or convivial gatherings. Relatively little of the poetry and songs have survived and even with some of the songs we have there is an uncertainty about correct translation, since it was in this field of expression that Aborigines used most of their idiom.

Groups of Aborigines made up their own songs and poems, collectively or individually, rarely long but always much to the point. They would laud brave warriors, ridicule persons deserving scorn (particularly whites), and would comment on a current happening. These were the pieces favoured for the nightly camp fire. If dancing could be woven into song, then there would be a new dance.

But the big event would be the arrival of a travelling singer or poet, who though originally from a tribe hundreds of miles away would have no language problem. This person was always popular: he would bring the latest catchy tune from the north, south or west. He would be a privileged guest and would remain at the camp until the local natives could handle the new hits without his help. Then he would move on, always welcome, for he was the bringer of vocal pleasure.

Occasionally, a female would have this role, often adding to the joy of singing new songs by cavortingly demonstrating her physical charms.

On rare occasions a clan would spend a night singing sacred songs relating to the spirits and seasons. One special occasion would be the eve of an initiation ceremony.

A corroboree was a distinctive form of expression involving singing and dancing. Everything done on that night was related to the mystical past; the programme would include special dances that identified the people with their environment and other forces of nature. The coastal people were noted for their ritual dances involving the animal kingdom to establish a physical link with the time of creation. Thus the kangaroo dance was very important; it reminded the people of the myth when humans were animals, of which the kangaroo was the most important. When Pundjel, one creator of the race, made men from clay models, he gave his first two men spears with which to kill the kangaroos. This is why in the kangaroo dance men wore genuine kangaroo tails - a form of affinity. All coastal paintings and carvings show this tail on human figures, but it is absent from the so-called "dreamtime" territories of Australia's far north. While many clans of a tribe and even visiting tribes might take part in a corroboree, the evening itself was planned and controlled by the host group. There could be much convivial singing and dancing at a combined corroboree but there would always be the essential part relating to some sacred objects or purpose.

Lake Macquarie was a popular area for gatherings because of the availability of food and the pleasant surroundings. The Awabakal received many visits from the Central Coast, Lower Hunter Valley and Port Stephens groups. But there were occasions when such visits were not friendly; but on the occasions of "grand assembly" neither food nor entertainment would be lacking. There would be exchanges of gifts, particularly if the combined social gathering coincided with the successful termination of trading expeditions.

The tribes had their poets also. These were generally old men who had passed through all the tribe's ceremonies of mystery and belonged to the council of elders. They liked to live a hermit-like life, but would have no compunction in descending from their mountain lair to the nearest camp for a meal. The "learned" visitor would be invited to stay awhile and display his gifts of oratory. The bard would recite his latest compositions, a mixture of
There were the sacred songs and dances known only to the initiated persons. The sacred, or ritual, language was used, according to the degree level of the initiated person. Sometimes these gatherings were related to only the mysteries of initiation; on other occasions new songs and dances would be taught to the initiands to prepare them for the next step in their initiation.

The tribal sorcerers, or medicine men, had their special songs, which they would sing alone — to be heard only by the spirits to whom the singing was directed. They would disappear from their camp to wind their way to a mountain top, out of bounds to all except those appointed to communicate direct with the spirits.

Songs at corroborees were usually short and sung in a dirge-like manner, whereas the social singing was more gleeful and harmonious. Women often made up their own rondos, such as the following of the Awabakal recorded by Threlkeld:

Translation:

*Nga yah ba!*
*Koree wonnoong kay?*
*Koree yoe.*
*Koree Wonnoong Kay?*
*Nga yah ba!*

Ah, it is so!
Man where be?
Man away.
Man where be?
Ah, it is so!
4.11 SIGNIFICANT ABORIGINAL SITES

What teachers should know

Aboriginal definition of 'sacred' went much deeper than white equivalent. There were also several levels of sanctity which hinges on and reflected the complex tribal organisation.

What could be considered as 'sacred'.

1. **THE TRIBAL TERRITORY**

   Each native considered his/her area as -
   
   1. handed through generations from the dreamtime;
   2. a physical manifestation of this dreamtime via the landforms, flora and fauna.

   **The Tribal Territory**
   
   a. Draw a map of the Hunter Region outlined with the known tribal boundaries.
   b. Identify the names of the tribes, and the meanings of such names where possible.
   c. Select the tribe which inhabited the area where your school now is. Identify the most outstanding natural features of that area: mountains, swamps, watercourses. Find their names and meanings where possible. These could give an insight into the sacred story behind the feature.
   d. Draw the most outstanding landforms. Compare their similarity to native Australian animals. Any such similarity could reflect some lost aboriginal legend.
   e. Make a list of place-names and their meanings.
   f. Ask old people who have lived in the area all their lives. They might know of some stories about Aborigines.

2. **THE FLORA AND FAUNA**

   These reflected the dreamtime, for each and every plant and animal depicted some lore from that era.

   **The Flora and Fauna**
   
   a. Old timers might be a source of information concerning such lore. (If so, consider yourself very fortunate and please write them down!)
   b. Obtain known lore from other areas of Australia (especially Arnhem Land), and find out if the same type of plant/animal lives in your area. Some comparison could then be made. Expand on this by analysing the lore from different areas for the same animal or plant and then find any common threads in the stories. Make the necessary inferences for your area.
   c. Find out the types of animals and plants which live/used to live in your area.
   d. Find the biggest tree/the tree with the thickest trunk in your area. Consult the Forestry Department about growth rates. Estimate its age. Decide whether it grew during traditional times. It could possibly be a totem tree for some deceased native.
   e. Find out what trees in your area were used by the natives for food or materials. The natives believed that the trees housed spirits, who nourished them by producing food on the trees. They were therefore sacred places.
Aboriginal sites can be broadly grouped into several categories. The descriptions which follow are those permitted by the Aborigines to be made public. The majority of the information related to the sacred sites in particular is not available owing to the sanctity of the information.

3A. Sacred Sites

(a) Initiation Sites - There were separate sites for the initiation of both the males and the females. So there were different levels of initiation, different sites were pertinent to the different levels. All sites would involve the lore related to the All-Father, the Sky Hero who made the Aboriginal. These sites would involve both the traditional rock carvings, with the tribal lore etched into the rocks, via figures and symbols (sacred waterholes and stones), and the Bora Grounds, where initiation involved stone and earthen mounds, sacred trees and stumps, and sacred circles or rings.

(b) Churinga Sites - The most sacred of all Aboriginal sites, where all the tribes or tribal representatives could meet together. At these sites would be the mark or totem of each tribal headman.

(c) Burial Sites - These sites are always close by or below trees, where the spirit of the deceased could be reincarnated after death. Many of these trees have tree carvings, depicting the totem of the native. Unfortunately, many of these have been destroyed by logging operations.

3B. Ceremonial Grounds

a. Draw an outline of the ground itself. Measure the size of the corroboree ring.

b. Carefully scrutinise any large trees nearby for signs of tree carvings. Do not look at smooth-barked gums as they lose their bark annually. Trace any pattern and draw it.

c. Look for any stone piles or arrangements. Measure their size: width, breadth, height. Draw out their shape (outline). This is important as it is related to the myth of the site. Map out the numbers of sites and their relationship to the corroboree ring. Also, the position of the site relative to any local landmark. The stone piles were left there by their spirits.

3C. Workshop Sites

Such sites include rubbed grooves or rocks for sharpening axes, canoe trees, trees where bark for shields and containers were removed, quarry sites for blanks for stone tools, and middens (or kitchen refuse heaps).

* Most easily identifiable middens these days are on the coast, on the headlands of beaches.

* When looking for canoe and other trees, be careful not to be confused by scarring of trees by natural means. First look at an actual photo of such a site so you know what to look for.

4. CAVE PAINTINGS

Sacred cave paintings held a story in the symbols and figures whereby some aspect of tribal lore was explained to the natives. This was particularly so in relation to women's initiation sites, where the girl novices would have explained some aspect of women's lore. This was especially important for teaching the role women were to play in tribal life. A girl's first initiation was at 14 years, and there were different sites for the different levels of her initiation.

The non-sacred cave paintings contained hand stencils. animals. weapons.
4. **Sacred Initiation Sites**

a. Map the sites of cave paintings in your area.

b. Photograph/Draw (drawing is better – it is more informative) cave art. Make a table of the subject material: types of animals (plants are rare), hand stencils, symbols. Numbers of each. Type of medium used: charcoal, white, red, yellow ocher. (Red is ceremonial and symbolized blood.) Stylized drawings are seen even better, and they give you the relative position of subject matter. This is important, for they are often related.

c. Look for unusual features of any painted body anatomy. Six fingers, missing fingers (sign of mourning). Measure size of fingers, wrists, arms. Compare to white people’s sizes. (DO NOT TOUCH ART). Measure size of weapons: axes and boomerangs. Find similar size piece of wood and assess usefulness (weight etc.).

d. Record any vandalism, and any natural damage: water seepage, swallow’s nests, wombat holes, wasp’s nests. Type and extent of damage.

e. Hands near weapons indicate weapon in use. See if any animals point to landmarks, watercourses or other caves – identify them as direction-markers.

f. List the subject matter of cave art in a valley, and see if there is any relationship between sites.

g. The style of art: stencil, painting, drawing, outlined or unfilled drawing.

5. **ROCK CARVINGS**

Usually found on ridges or prominent outcrops of land.

a. Scale drawings of a carving or a set of carvings. Again there is a story behind such pictures, and such a copy will be an accurate reflection of the message.

b. Relative position of carvings with respect to compass direction. Ceremonies held usually in winter and the carvings could be related to stars, planets or constellations in the night sky. Worthwhile to follow this up.

c. Nature of carving itself. Is it a series of joined punctures or is it one continuous groove? This reflects the importance of the carving itself. Natives went over outlines of carvings if they assumed special significance, so those with the deepest grooves were the most significant.

d. Interpret the pictures. Story usually related to initiation, or the pursuit of food. Any unusual markings? Any tracks? Type of tracks. Any animals – these could be native totems. Any natural potholes or rock protuberances which could be relevant? Any axe-grooves where axes were sharpened? Tie all these in. Do the tracks lead anywhere? etc. Perhaps initiates followed a designated path.

e. Map the locations of carvings in an area. Do they follow any pattern? Are they close to ceremonial rings, or known camp-sites?

f. Any human forms? What are they doing? What are they wearing? Any anthropomorphic figures, i.e. half-human, half-animal? These represent spirits, and are therefore special.

g. Vandalism at sites: graders and vehicle damage, people walking on them. Do not outline carvings with anything for photos. This is the biggest source of damage. Any natural damage, e.g. water channels, lichen growth, plant growth.

h. Obtain photos/drawings if excursions are not possible.

**NOTE:** a) the nature and number of these latter sites depended upon the
6. **HISTORICAL SITES**

These sites are those related to contact with the white man, and so are less than two hundred years old.

There are two types - massacre sites and mission or reserve sites.

**ACTIVITY:** Find out where any such sites were in your area. If possible, research and discover who was involved and what happened at the site.

**NOTE:** To arrange a visit to an Aboriginal site - please contact the Awabakal Aboriginal Co-operative in Hunter Street, Newcastle (Telephone: They will advise you as to what site you can visit and arrange for an Aboriginal to accompany you on your visit.

7. **BURIAL PLACES**

Size of plot. Is it beneath a tree, and if so, what type of tree? What direction does it face? Tree may be totem tree, and the head of the deceased faces north (usually). The location of the plot. Is it on a ridge, in a dune, on the floodplain? Any carved trees nearby? If so, then the deceased was an important person: a warrior, or a man of degree.

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An Aboriginal carved tree at Tonalgo, from which a ceremonial shield had been cut. (The stump has been preserved in the grounds of Tomago Aluminium.)
Aborigines of the Hunter Region
The Aborigines had lived in Australia in relative isolation until the arrival of the first Europeans. The pre-conceived belief in white superiority was evident from the time of Dampier in 1697 - "The inhabitants of this country are the miserablest people in the world...." The Europeans had little or no understanding of the Aborigines, their beliefs and way of life. The following quotes, together with the suggested questions for discussion, could be used as a whole, or sections might be used to develop understandings of the black and white contact and the movement towards inevitable conflict.

This part of the kit covers - Early Government Policy
- Convicts
- Timbergetters
- Pastoralists
- Missionaries
- Reserves

The consequences of the black and white contact follow with sections on
- Disease
- Alcohol
- Resistance

EARLY GOVERNMENT POLICY

King George III. Instructions to Captain Arthur Phillip:

You are to endeavour by every possible means to open an intercourse with the natives, and to conciliate their affections, enjoining all our subjects to live in amity and kindness with them. And if any of our subjects shall wantonly destroy them, or give them any unnecessary interruption in the exercise of their several occupations, it is our will and pleasure that you so cause such offenders to be brought to punishment according to the degree of the offence....

- How does King George show his good intentions towards the Aborigines?
- Do you think his good intentions could have been carried out?
- Do you think the British had a right to settle/invade at all?

5th May 1788. Governor Phillip's first despatch:

With respect to the natives, it was my determination from my first landing that nothing less than the most absolute necessity should make me fire upon them, and tho persevering in this resolution has at times been rather difficult, I have hitherto been so fortunate that it never has been necessary. Mons. La Perouse, while at Botany Bay, was not so fortunate. He was obliged to fire on them, in consequence of which, with the bad behaviour of some of the transport boats and some convicts, the natives have lately avoided us, but proper measures are taken to regain their confidence....

- What is Governor Phillip's attitude?
- Why did the Aborigines come to avoid the white men?
- Why do you think the Aborigines may have been unfriendly at first?
9th July 1788. Governor Phillip.

One of the convicts who, in searching for vegetables, had gone a considerable distance from the camp, returned very dangerously wounded in the back by a spear. He denies having given the natives any provocation, and says that he saw them carrying away a man that had been wounded on the head. A shirt and hat, both pierced with spears, have been found in one of the native's hut, but no intelligence can be got of the man, and I have not any doubt that the natives have killed him, nor have I the least doubt of the convicts being the aggressors....

Who does Governor Phillip see as being the real troublemakers?

In 1790 Phillip's personal gamekeeper, McEntire, was speared, and an extraordinary change came in his attitude. Captain Watkin Tench recounts his instructions from Phillip to "make a signal example of that tribe".

That we were if practicable, to bring away two natives and to put to death ten....that our operations were to be directed either by surprise or open force....that we were to cut off and bring in the heads of the slain, for which purpose hatchets and bags will be furnished....

....from the aversion uniformly shown by all natives to this unhappy man (McEntire) he had long been suspected by us of having, in his excursions shot and injured them.

How does Phillip show this change in his instructions to Captain Tench?

Why do you think he reacted so?

Who do you think was really in the wrong from what Tench says?

THE TIMBERGETTERS

The timbergetters were convict gangs operating as early as 1807 on various navigable rivers on the coast.

Robert Dawson, the chief agent of the Australian Agricultural Company, write in "The Present State of Australia, a Description of the Country";

The timber-cutting parties therefore were the first people who came in contact with the natives in the neighbourhood of the sea: and as they were composed of convicts and other people not remarkable either for humanity or honesty, the communication was not at all to the advantage of the poor natives; or subsequently to the settlers who succeeded those parties.

He further observed:

In the first instance the natives generally show fear, and symptoms of hostility towards strangers occupying their country, although little difficulty is experienced in conciliating them, to those who are rightly disposed and take proper steps to accomplish it.

What might the "proper steps" have been?

The effect of the timber getters was experienced by convicts escaping from Port Macquarie, who, arriving in a sorry state at Port Stephen, all told a similar story, as Dawson recounts:

...that no hostility was exhibited towards them by any other tribes than those inhabiting the coast about Cape Hawke and the river Myall, near both of which the timber cutters were at work, and that the natives were exasperated in the highest degree against them.
Dawson shows how many Aboriginals were treated like dogs, and how they frequently complained of white people shooting their relations and friends.

They pointed out one white man, on his coming to beg some provisions for his party up the river Karuah, who, they said, had killed ten: and the wretch did not deny it, but said he would kill them whenever he could.

PASTORALISTS

With expansion came an increase of black and white confrontation. For all the good intentions the government may have had, it was impossible for them to control the free settlers with opinions and ideas of justice of their own. Many of these felt that because the Aborigine did not plough or stock the land, as 'providence had intended it to be', they had no right to it. There was a widespread feeling that the Aborigine was not as intelligent or as civilized simply because his culture was so different and little understood by white people. Some Europeans even believed that the Aborigines should die as an inferior people and that the 'superior' white would be the survivor in the 'survival of the fittest'.

Threlkeld, p.49:

Not far from Newcastle in one of the upper districts, a settler saw a black stealing his growing corn in the open day. He caught the culprit, hung him by the neck on the limb of a tree, stuffed a cob of corn into his mouth and left his body as a scare crow for the Aborigines.

Threlkeld, September 1826, 37, p.213:

We are in a state of warfare up the country here - two stockmen have been speared in retaliation for the 4 natives who were deliberately shot without any trial or form whatever. Martial law is the cry of the settlers.... many will be shot and if the English will be murdered in retaliation, their land (i.e. aboriginal) is taken from them, their food destroyed and they are left to perish.

What was the attitude of the early hunter settlers to the Aborigines?

Scott, c.1850 p.12.

CHARACTER OF THE BLACKS

As to the behaviour and character of our dusky friends at Port Stephens I can only speak in the most glowing terms. From earliest childhood I was closely associated with them under all manner of conditions and in all sorts of circumstances. I found them to be wonderfully courteous, with a code of etiquette that many white people, supposedly more enlightened, might well copy to advantage. They had a fine sense of delicacy in the matter of behaviour to whites and strangers of their own color, and their tact and for-bearance on occasions were truly remarkable. They were honest in so far as the greater things of life were concerned, with a naiveté of the untutored savage who, while he may envy most of your possessions, will seldom purloin anything more than food. They were kind to one another, and to those with whom they came in contact, their tenorosity being proverbial. They were happy, simple in their ways of living, and more prone to laughter than to tears.

During my long experience with them I always found that they treated those with whom they associated with the greatest deference and consideration.
Bennett, p.27

Thomas Cook, 1841:

Being at Stroud this week I had an opportunity of hearing some of the aboriginal natives enquire most anxiously for their blankets. I fear that unless the blacks get some little shelter in the shape of a blanket they will get discontented. They are numerous here and have been quiet and harmless.

How do these descriptions differ from the general approach and treatment of the Aborigines by the early free settlers?

Threlkeld, September 1826, 38, p.214:

You will be grieved to hear that war has commenced...against the Aborigines of this land. Yesterday a party of 40 soldiers were ordered to the interior...three families have suffered by the blacks but the particulars I cannot yet ascertain.

Bennett, pp.23,24. Williams River, 1833:

One of the earliest records of a conflict was when John Bear complained to the bench of magistrates at Dungog that an aboriginal named Mully had assaulted one of his assigned servants with a spear and stole half a bag of flour. The result of the case shows that Mully had serious provocation as the convict had carried off his wife by force. Magistrate Thomas Cook dismissed the charge against Mully and sent the convict to the treadmill at Parramatta for a month.

- What was the general policy in regard to Aborigines "stirring up trouble"?
- Why did the Aborigines react to the free settlers the way they did?

Threlkeld. Concluding Remarks, p.145:

The list given consists of 15 Europeans killed by the Aborigines from 1812 to the present year 1838...whilst a secret hostile process has been encouraged and carried on against the blacks by lawless Europeans...in the loss of upward of 500 Aborigines within the last two years.

- Why was there little reaction and follow-up to Aboriginal deaths and murders?
- Why were Aborigines not accepted as witnesses in a court of law?

(Threlkeld, 8th Report, p.132)

- Do you think this was fair?

Many murderers were acquitted because of this 'lack of evidence'. One case which was followed through, because a white witness was available, was the Myall Creek massacre (near Tamworth), November 1838.

George Anderson's eyewitness account:

I am assigned servant to Mr. Dangar: I was at his station at Myall Creek, as hut-keeper, for five months in June...He left home, to go to the Big River...when he left, there were some native blacks there...20...and upwards; I would not swear there were not 40. While master was away, some men came on a Saturday, about 10; they came on horseback armed with muskets and swords and pistols; all were armed.... I was sitting with Kilmeister, the stock-keeper....The blacks when they saw the men coming, ran into our hut, and the men then, all of them, got off their horses.... I asked what they were going to do with the blacks, and Dangar said, "we are going to take them over the range, to frighten them", and some one or two went in.... After they were tied.... The party then went away with the blacks.... Some of the children were not tied, others were; they followed the rest that were tied; the small ones, two or three, were not able to walk, the women carried them on
their backs in oppossum skins... I was frightened....

It was just before sundown next night after, the same men came back to the hut...they stopped all night.... Next morning...they went in the same direction as they took the blacks.... One of the men was left behind...named Foley.... I asked Foley if any of the blacks made their escape, he said, none that he saw, he said they all were killed except one black gin....in about an hour the other men came back to the hut: I saw smoke in the same direction they went.... Fleming told Kilmeister to go up by-and-by and put the logs of wood together and be sure that all was consumed.... ...I wanted to speak the whole truth; I neither expect nor hope for my Liberty...only for protection."

In the evidence given in the Supreme Court, Sydney, New South Wales to the massacre of the Myall Creek Tribe of Aborigines, Edward Day, Police Magistrate at Maitland stated:

I went accompanied to where the fire had been. The place appeared to have occupied a space fourteen yards in circumference. We found fragments of bone, a rib of a child, jaw bones of human beings and human teeth. Mr. Hollis(?) states "I saw severed heads with the flesh off, but I could not recognise the features of any; there were female heads among them.... I endeavoured to count the children's skulls but the small prevented me. The natives had not been on the offensive at all."

How do you think you would have reacted if you had been the judge or jury at this trial?

The first jury actually sympathised with the murderers and acquitted them, but Governor Gipps had been instructed to "take every precaution to prevent clashes" and "impress the natives with the justice of the law and its equal punishment regardless of race". He made sure that seven of the murderers were further tried for murdering a child in the massacre. This time they were convicted and executed.

As a result of this occurrence, Gipps got the Legislative Council to pass an act accepting Aborigines as competent witnesses but the Colonial Office reacted with horror. "...it would be contrary to the principles of British jurisprudence to allow heathen to give evidence." British justice relies on truthful answers based on an oath sworn on the Bible. Since most Aborigines were not Christians their evidence could not be accepted on such a basis.

The Government at a number of times attempted to improve the situation, but although the policies were often well-meaning, they usually left the Aborigine no better off.

In 1810 Governor Macquarie tried to relieve the situation by forbidding any gathering of Aborigines near farms. They were not to carry weapons, nor punish tribal members who broke their own laws. The intention was that those obeying these rules would be protected, but as aggression on both sides continued, Macquarie declared a number of Aborigines "outlaws", to be shot or captured on sight.

Macquarie also tried to start a native school, which failed because parents withdrew their children on the grounds that their minds were being taken away from the tribal ways and customs. He also offered to any Aborigine who wished to settle, six months rations of food while they cultivated portions of land, agricultural tools with wheat, maize and potatoes for food, and one issue of clothing and one colonial blanket for each person of the family, but Dalaipi (a Queensland elder) summed up Aboriginal feelings when he said:
"N.S.W. and her duty to posterity"

Daily Telegraph, June, 1892
Before the white man came we wore no dress, but knew no shame, and we were all free and happy; there was plenty to eat and it was a pleasure to hunt for food. Then the whiteman came among us, we were hunted from our ground, shot, poisoned, and had our daughters, sisters, and wives taken from us. Could you blame us if we killed the whiteman? Another thing the whiteman did was to teach us to drink, smoke, swear and steal. They stole our ground where we used to get food and when we got hungry and took a bit of flour or killed a bullock to eat, they shot or poisoned us. All they give us now for our land is a blanket once a year.

- What problems did the government have in trying to settle black and white differences?
- What solutions were tried and why did they fail?
- Can you find out anything about the Tasmanian Aborigines?

MISSIONARIES

G.A. Robinson who had persuaded the Tasmanian Aborigines to live on a reserve was also called to the Australian mainland to divide an area between four protectors who were to try and persuade the Aborigines in their area to settle. Central stations were established, land was cultivated, schools were built, and food was distributed until the government stopped supplies, making it difficult for the Protectors to attract Aborigines to the settlements. In 1849 the Protectorates were closed down largely due to opposition from white settlers.

A number of other attempts were made to educate the Aborigines largely by missionary groups.

Clouten Reids Mistake, p.21-34.

Reverend L.E. Threlkeld established the first mission in Australia for the Aborigines at Bastahbah (Belmont) on Lake Macquarie in 1826. The mission moved to Pompe (Toronto) in 1831. Threlkeld realised by 1837 that the Awabakal Aborigines were a dying race. The Lake Macquarie mission provided some help and protection for 15 years but Threlkeld's work was cancelled out by the moral code of the colony especially the convicts and the attitude of the free settlers to the Aboriginal Tribal land, their freedom and often their lives.

- Why did Threlkeld's mission achieve little for the Aborigines?
- Why is Threlkeld's work regarded a great resource?

F.J. Gillen, an "expert" on Aborigines, who obviously thought Aborigines would eventually die out, gave the following evidence on missions in 1899.

I greatly admire the missionaries. I do not think they have succeeded in making Christians of any of the blacks.

The missionaries are making the Native's path of extinction easier, and every man in Australia who is doing that for the blackfellow helps him. A (aboriginal) boy was taken from the interior eight to ten years of age and brought down the country...when he got back he had almost forgotten his own language, and he could speak perfect English. One day he came to me and said, 'I think I will go and get cut' (to be accepted by his tribe)- and I said 'Look here, Jim, you are a fool to submit to that'. He said in reply 'Well, I can't put up with the cheek of the men and children. They will not let me have a lubra, and the old men will not let me know anything about my countrymen'. Here was a young blackfellow, quite civilized and yet he voluntarily underwent this awful ordeal. It is hopeless to try to regenerate the blacks.
In what ways do you think Gillen failed to understand the real needs of Aborigines?

What does he mean: "I will go and get out"?

What did the boy in the account really want?

Does he mean civilized or assimilated?

Do you think Gillen meant by 'regenerate'?

Do you think the Aborigines want this regeneration?

In 1928 J.W. Bleakley, Chief protector of Aborigines in Queensland, concluded on the Mission system, that they were generally working on the right lines with those in charge learning the native languages and customs and inducing them to see the advantages of the "settled and industrious life". He also outlined disadvantages as being:

that such institutions, by encouraging them to leave their tribal grounds for the reserve, cause disintegration of their tribal life and eventual extinction... (white) men do harm by allowing religious enthusiasm to over-ride the native culture... harm is done by gathering natives together for purely religious teaching and bringing them up as pensioners. Unless such a work is adequately supported, an injustice can be done to the children by drawing them away from the bush life and its training in bush-craft and then, having to abandon the work, leaving them stranded.... The native, once having come into contact with the white man or alien and acquired a taste for his foods and luxuries, is not likely to longer remain a contented savage....

- What were some of the problems missions created for Aborigines?
- How were some Aborigines being changed?
- Do you think they helped the Aborigines at all?
- What are the churches doing for the Aborigines today?
- Aborigines do not like to be thought of as "savages". What do you think of as a "savage"? Can you understand why they would not like the term?

Missions were not the only things to influence many Aborigines away from their old ways of life. Many were forced to work for the white settlers because he had stopped them getting to their waterholes, reduced their game and destroyed their food producing plants. Some settlers chose to rid their runs of Aborigines as quickly as possible, and the killing of blacks and some missions continued until the 1930s. Aborigines who did work for whites usually received no pay other than a minimum of food and clothing, or perhaps liquor or opium, and often they were forced to work for white men against their will.

RESERVES

Royal Commission report on reserves for Aborigines in 1904. W.E. Roth's findings:

A grave responsibility rests upon the Executive in pursuing a policy of allowing large areas of country to be taken up and occupied without the slightest provision being made for the natives, who are thus dispossessed of their hunting grounds. The pastoralist gets a grant of land to raise sheep and cattle, and accordingly the kangaroo, the native food...has to be got rid of. When these animals get scarce the blacks must kill the cattle or sheep....the blacks can only get water where the cattle are watered; once they are driven from these places, they have nothing to live on.... the black is not allowed to have more than one male dog unregistered, the...effect...being to prevent Aborigines using dogs for hunting... (Dog Act 1904, Sec.29)

A warimento on "Real Heilbora" from John Heath at the Awabakal
In the same way that reserves are required for the exclusive use of the natives, so are others, e.g. township sites, required for the use of the Europeans; blacks should not be allowed to enter the latter except under lawful employment.

- Why did the Commission think reserves were necessary for Aborigines?
- What do you think of the idea?

1913 South Australian Royal Commission of Aborigines: Committee report.

Proposed reforms:

...with the gradual disappearance of full-blooded blacks, the mingling of the black and white races; and the great increase in the number of half-casts and quadroons, the problem is now one of assisting and training the native so that he may become a useful member of the community, dependent not upon charity but upon his own efforts...

...The principal duties of the board will be to see that all aboriginal and half-cast children are educated up to the primary standard; to provide means for their being trained after they leave school for their future occupations in life...

A further Commission report in 1935 by H.D. Moseley showed however that government stations provided poor equipment, inadequate educational and hospital facilities, and harsh punishments. The government stations seemed to be having little success with any of their aims.

REFERENCE: N.S.W. Parliamentary Select Committee Report (1980)
NO MORE BOOMERANG: Kath Walker

No more boomerang
No more spear;
Now all civilized -
Colour bar and beer.

No more corroboree,
Gay dance and din.
Now we got movies,
And pay to go in.

No more sharing
What the hunter brings.
Now we work for money,
Then pay it back for things.

Now we track bosses
To catch a few bob,
Now we go walkabout
On bus to the job.

One time naked,
Who never knew shame;
Now we put clothes on
To hide what's name.

No more gunya,
Now bungalow,
Paid by hire purchase
In twenty year or so.

Lay down the stone axe,
Take up the steel,
And work like a nigger
For a white man meal.

No more firesticks
That made the whites scoff.
Now all electric,
And no better off.

Bunyip he finish,
Now got instead
White fella Bunyip,
Call him Red.

Abstract picture now -
What they coming at?
Cripes, in our caves we
Did better than that.

Black hunted wallaby,
White hunt dollar;
White fella witch-doctor
Wear dog-collar.

No more message-stick;
Lubras and lads
Got television now,
Mostly ads.

Lay down the woomera,
Lay down the waddy.
Now we got atom-bomb,
End everybody.

- What are Kath Walker's feelings about the black and white contact?
- What values have the Aboriginal people lost?
- What values has white society forced upon the aboriginal people?
These reveal changes in attitudes of Aborigines and whites in the Newcastle Hunter region - ask students to identify the changes and explore the reasons.

May 1804

GOVERNOR KING TO LIEUTENANT MENZIES
24th May 1804

Six Natives of your neighbourhood having come here soon after you settled, they now return with Bongaru in the Resource, I have directed them to be Victualled for Six Days and given them a Jacket, Cap, Blanket, and 4 lbs. of Tobacco each, the latter Article is sent to you to divide among them. I hope the Observations those People have made here will when they arrive with their Friends be of use, and am much gratified to learn that you continue on such good footing with them, to encourage which I am sure you will omit no means in your Power.

I do not think it would be advisable to let more than One or two Strange Natives come up at a time.

July 1804 - Reply:

LIEUTENANT MENZIES TO GOVERNOR KING
Kings Town, 1st July, 1804

We always have been and still continue on the most friendly terms with the numerous Natives here, to preserve which I have directed the Storekeeper to victual Bungaree. He is the most intelligent of that race I have as yet seen and should a mis-understanding unfortunately take place he will be sure to reconcile them; and I have given strict directions to the crews of all vessels going up the river to treat them in a friendly manner, as I know they have frequently been very ill used by some who are neither guided by principal or humanity.

November 1804

LIEUTENANT MENZIES TO GOVERNOR KING
Kings Town, New Castle, 5th November, 1804.

Herewith I have the Honor to enclose Your Excellency the Monthly Returns by which you will perceive that there remains at full Ration only one weeks flour and Spirits. I therefore on Saturday last reduced the proportion of Flour from Ten to six pounds and by next Saturday if a supply is not received must reduce it to four.

One of the Sawyers belonging to Underwood and Cable has been severely beat by a party of Natives up Paterson's River whom they had very imprudently suffered to get possession of their Arms but I am happy to say he is in a fair way of Recovery.

I understand that Mr. Brown whom I furnished with Arms and ammunition for his protection has likewise been attacked up the North branch.

From these circumstances I have thought it more prudent to furnish Millers Boats with Cedar at the stipulated prices than allow them to procure it themselves.

It now becomes absolutely necessary that two or three trusty men should be sent for the purpose of taking charge of our Boats going for Cedar as I am necessarily obliged to put Arms in their hands for their protection and Your Excellency is well aware of the Characters here.

A well-built Stone Wharf is nearly completed Length one hundred and eighty six feet, Breadth thirteen feet Depth of Water at high Water Eight feet Two inches and at low water two feet.

I have, Sc.,
C.A.F.N. MENZIES, Commandt. N.Dt.

Trouble with the cedar-getters.
September, 1826

GOVERNOR DARLING TO UNDER SECRETARY HAY.
(Despatch marked "Private," per ship Woodman.)

Paramatta, Govt. House,
11th Sept., 1826.

My dear Sir,

I think it right to apprise you that the Natives have lately committed some acts of outrage on Hunter's River, and that I have in consequence ordered a detachment of Troops to proceed and punish their aggressions. They have put two Stock keepers of Mr. Lethbridge's to death, and speared two others, and not long since murdered an overseer of Mr. Bowman's, and also speared one or two of his Stockmen. The latter event appears to have been occasioned by the circumstance of one of their Tribe, who had been taken up for some offence, having been confined for a day or two on Mr. Bowman's Farm, which it is supposed had induced them to think that Mr. Bowman's People had been concerned in apprehending their Comrade. Previously to committing the outrage at Mr. Lethbridge's, they had been at Mr. Ogilvie's, who lives in that neighbour-hood, but was absent from Home at the time. On their presenting themselves, Mrs. Ogilvie, who appears to have acted with much judgment and spirit on the occasion, immediately went out and talked with them, their numbers being as she supposed above 200; she then gave them some Maize and a little Tobacco, and they left the premises without being guilty of any irregularity. They then proceeded to Mr. Lethbridge's, where, I presume, not being managed with the same skill, they fell on the Overseer and Stockmen, killed and speared four Men, as I have already stated, and plundered the People's Huts.

You will be aware by my former Correspondence that I have always considered that the Natives have been aggrieved by the Stock Men, which, I am satisfied, has alone prevented a good understanding being established with them.

Relations with settlers deteriorating.

N.B Governor Darling believes the Aborigines have been provoked.

October 1826

GOVERNOR DARLING TO EARL BATHURST.
(Despatch marked "Separate," per brig Fairfield; acknowledged by Earth Bathurst, 20th March, 1827.)

My Lord,

I have the honor to acquaint your Lordship, in reference to my Dispatch of this date, No. 75, communicating the particulars of certain outrages, which had been committed in the District of Hunter's River, that a report having reached me that a Native, who was apprehended by the Mounted Police, as having been concerned in the proceedings above alluded to, had been shot, while in custody, I immediately gave orders that the matter should be investigated by the Magistrates of the District. This order, after some delay occasioned by the absence of Lieutenant Lowe, the officer commanding the Mounted Police, was acted on; and the accompanying Report was received; but, as the Native in question was not one of the three mentioned in this Report, it appeared advisable to bring the subject of his death under the consideration of the Executive Council, together with the other events, which had taken place. The Council, which met yesterday for the purpose, agreed with me in opinion that the order for an enquiry into the circumstances of the death of the Native alluded to, should be repeated; and the necessary communication will immediately be made to the Magistrates.

It is my intention, as soon as their report has been received, to bring it forward with the other cases detailed in the Enclosure, herewith transmitted, so that the Council may have an opportunity of judging of the whole proceeding. There can be no doubt of the criminality of the Natives, who have been implicated in these recent outrages; but, though prompt measures in dealing with such people may be the most efficacious, still it is impossible to subscribe to the massacre of prisoners in cold blood as a measure of justifiable policy. I trust, however, that the Report will prove to be unfounded, and I shall not fail to put your Lordship in possession of the result by the first opportunity.

I have, &c.,

R.A. DARLING.
Mounted Police involved in a Kangaroo Court but authorities find it impossible to convict him.

This was frequently the case that white courts would not convict a white settler for a crime against an Aborigine.

1841

The Final Report of the Mission to the Aborigines,
Lake Macquarie, New South Wales, 1841.

To the Honorable The Colonial Secretary, E. Deas Thomson, Esqre.,
etc., etc., etc.
Ebenezer, Lake Macquarie.

SIR,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of date May 17th last, in which His Excellency the Governor's pleasure respecting the Mission is thus expressed:

"Colonial Secretary's Office,
Sydney, 17th May, 1841.

I am directed by Sir George Gipps to inform you that, having had under consideration the annual reports made by you during the last few years, and especially the report for the year 1840, it appears to His Excellency that no further advantage is likely to accrue to the Aborigines from your continued residence at Lake Macquarie, and that the Governor cannot accede to the proposal made by you that you should remove to Newcastle, and still continue to receive a Salary from Government. His Excellency is reluctantly forced to acquaint you that the engagement, entered into with you by the Government in the year 1831, will be considered at an end with the expiration of the present year.

"I have, &c.,
E. Deas Thomson."

"The Reverent L. E. Threlkeld, Lake Macquarie."

In submitting to this decision, it is impossible not to feel considerable disappointment to the expectations formerly hoped to be realized in the conversion of some, at least of the Aborigines in this part of the Colony, and not to express concern that so many years of constant attention appear to have been fruitlessly expended. It is, however, perfectly apparent that the termination of the mission has arisen solely from the Aborigines becoming extinct in these districts, and the very few that remain elsewhere are so scattered, that it is impossible to congregate them for instruction, and, when seen in the Towns, they are generally unfit to engage in profitable conversation. The thousands of Aborigines, if ever they did exist in these parts, decreased to hundreds, the hundreds have lessened to Tens, and the tens will dwindle to units before a very few years will have passed away.

By this time Aborigines in Newcastle area had become virtually extinct - one way of solving the problem.
5.3 CONSEQUENCES

DISEASE

Almost from the beginning of European settlement/invasion, sickness was to prove more lethal than bullets in reducing Aboriginal numbers. Refer to "Baal Belhora" for statistics. The researcher considered 1/3 of the population was reduced by direct massacre.

Tench, April 1789:

An extraordinary calamity was now observed among the natives... bodies of the Indians in all coves and inlets of the harbour... On inspection it appears... similar to those occasioned by the small pox were thickly spread on the bodies.

*When the Sky Fell*, p.72.

Bradley, who had made the voyage with Hunter, May 1789

From the great number of dead natives found in every part of the Harbour it appears that the small pox had made dreadful havoc among them.

*When the Sky Fell*, p.73

(No evidence that this existed in Australia before the advent of Europeans. No bush medicine for new diseases - hence the devastating effects.)

Among the diseases which the English most certainly introduced was venereal disease. Captain Collins, 1791:

The venereal disease also got among them, but I fear our people have to answer for that.

*Colonial Australian*, 1788-1840, p.40

Contrast with strict moral code of the Aborigines. Bush medicine was developed, but the impact was too great for it to cope with it.

Other diseases introduced by the Europeans created disaster. The Rev. Threlkeld reported:

In the past year, death has under the form of influenza made sad havoc amongst the Aboriginal Tribes.

*Gunson*, p.99

Clothing and blankets compounded the effect of chills.

The Rev. Threlkeld's final report in 1841 illustrates the European impact on the Aborigines in the Lake Merooquarie Area.

It is... perfectly apparent that the termination of the mission has arisen solely from the Aborigines becoming extinct in these districts and the very few that remain elsewhere are so scattered that it is impossible to congregate them for instruction and when seen in the towns they are generally unfit to engage in profitable conversation. The thousands of Aborigines... decreased to hundreds have lessened to tens and the tens will dwindle to units before a very few years will have passed away.

*Historical Records of Australia*, Series 1.
ALCOHOL

King has the dubious distinction of offering the first liquor to the Aborigines. He and a boat crew had travelled several miles up an inlet on the 20th January, 1788, looking for water, and made contact with some Aborigines. King reported:

I gave two of them a glass of wine, which they no sooner tasted than they spit it out....

When the Sky Fell, Whitley, p.43

Bennelong soon learned to make the most of life in the settlement. He took to European food at once and was the first of his people to immediately show a fondness for spirits. Tench says that he "would drink the strongest liquors with eager marks of delight and enjoyment".

Bennelong's welcome among the Europeans decreased as his addiction to rum took effect.

Bennelong had become morose and truculent. Whenever he was invited to an officers house he would drink himself into a state of intoxication where he was easily aroused to savage violence.

When the Sky Fell, Whitley, p.143

Aboriginal men helpless to maintain themselves and their families in the traditional way, traded their wives favours. They would hire themselves to tavern proprietors to clean out the brandy and rum casks. The first washed contained a flavour of spirits and was given to the Aborigines as payment.

As the missionary L.E. Threlkeld points out, their addiction to liquor was in no way out of character with the general mores of the settlement.

Rum, as the strongest inducement that could be offered to the aborigines to make them work.

It was indeed a Rum-national-education to reform criminals by Rum and stripes. The Aborigines became adept scholars.... Drunkenness seemed to be considered by the aborigines as a sort of accomplishment.

Paper of L.E. Threlkeld, Gunson, p.53

Governor Macquarie proclaimed "Port Regulations and Orders in 1810"

The natives of this territory are to be treated in every respect as Europeans ... and no spirits, wine, beer or other intoxicating liquor is to be sold or given from on board any vessel to a native.

When the Sky Fell, p.191

Despite these regulations the flow of liquor to the Aborigines continued unchecked.

In Sydney Town, a Sunday sport for young and old was to give the Aborigines liquor, then encourage them to fight. A report in the Sydney Gazette reveals the helplessness of the blacks in the face of such cruel provocation.

Some boys ... began to torment some aborigines who were a little intoxicated. They began by throwing dirt, then moved onto stones. If the natives had retaliated, they would have been prosecuted for assault.

When the Sky Fell, p.212

Rev. Threlkeld had established a very deep relationship with Biraban at his mission at Probart. This state ofship was lost as the following extract shows.

Despite the strong attractions far more strong than my study possesses at the lake.

1836, 6th Report, p.133

My recent casual Aborigine is the most intemperate in Drink.

1837, 7th Report, p.136.

His general conduct is to be deplored with regard to drunkenness.

1838, 8th Report, p.150.
ABORIGINAL RESISTANCE

In the official texts, the dispossession of the Australian Aboriginal people by British colonialism is mentioned only in passing. The heroic resistance of the Australian Aborigines against this colonialism is rarely mentioned at all.

When the battle for control of Australia was on in earnest, the Aborigines were a vital part of the history books. For as long as the Aborigines could not be ignored in real life, they held an important place in the accounts of European expansion. By the time academic history started to be written here, early this century, the Aborigine's physical resistance had been broken in the southern part of the continent. And so Aborigines were put aside, treated as curiosities, or, at least, as nothing more than a natural impediment like fire, flood and drought, which the heroic squatters had to overcome.

The Black Resistance, Robinson and York (Author Notes)

Colonialism in Australia however, was more compressed than, for example, that in America. Here the colonial process was completed in one hundred years; it took much longer in America. The major reason for this difference was to be found in the more advanced level of capitalism in Britain by the late eighteenth century, America being colonized from the sixteenth. By the time of Australia's colonization, British manufacturers (the textile industry especially) were eager for new markets and new sources of raw materials; and colonial authorities in Australia were soon to realize the potential of the land for sheep farming. Many explorers ventured into the hinterland to report on the suitability of the land for grazing.

It was the urgency of the quick supply of capitalist markets with colonial raw materials which necessitated the methodical dispossession of the Aborigines. Thus unlike in America the colonial authorities did not have the time to dispossess the Aborigines with 'legal' treaties hence recognizing indigenous land ownership. Robinson and York, p.2

Both the Australian Aborigines and the New Zealand Maoris exerted a similar degree of resistance against British colonialism. However, the relationship between each one's different mode of economy and the common colonialists' economic designs produced dissimilar status for Maori and Aborigine. Indigenous New Zealanders were concentrated economically in villages, and did not present the kind of impediment to colonial land exploitation that the Aborigines posed. The British therefore conceded a Treaty comprising of formal land rights with them. Robinson and York, p.6

The numerical and technical inferiority of the Aborigine viz-a-viz their colonial enemy made guerrilla warfare the most effective weapon they could employ.

Aboriginal tribes inflicted some bitter defeats on their colonial oppressor, and effectively held back frontier settlement in many areas. Naturally enough, the immediate enemies of the Aborigines were the squatters who encroached on their tribal land. Standard tactics of the Aborigines were to hit at the economic source of the squatter's existence - his livestock and shepherds. Robinson and York, p.4

After the first two or three years resistance in the immediate Sydney area had centred for a long while on two men - Pemulwuy and his son, Tulumbery. Judging from the upheavals they and their handful of followers caused, a general Aboriginal uprising - had such an event been possible - might have been a serious impediment to the expansion of settlement. Pemulwuy was the warrior who had speared Phillip's gamekeeper, John McFarrie, in December 1790, thus provoking the first punitive expedition. For years afterward he waged a personal guerrilla campaign against the whites.

When the Sky Fell, p.164
The Gazette gives clear evidence that resistance is not general but confined to individuals. It mentions that several other attacks had been made, all by groups of two or three men, and all involving Tedbury. The Gazette warns settlers against disturbing the main body of the Aborigines who 'if not exasperated by ill treatment, would no doubt as they have frequently done before, betray into our hands, and avowedly assist us in apprehending (the) few miscreants'.

When the Sky Fell, p.168

If any Aborigine at the time had possessed a national rather than a tribal consciousness of his country, he might have seen the white invasion as a kind of human cancer, unravelling as it did the complicated skein of Dreamtime beliefs and overwhelming the culture and way of life of the original inhabitants. But the Aborigine's world was centred in his own clan and tribe and at this level the process of contact was comparatively brief, although stark in its brutality.

When the Sky Fell, p.214

Macquarie was essentially a paternalist. He seemed to like the Aborigine quite genuinely and wish to help them, provided they remained peaceful and inoffensive. Where they resisted the advance of settlement, however, he soon put aside his humanitarian principles and assumed the ruthless guise of the soldier. Thus the choice he presented them with was clear: they could accept the place he offered them within the settlement, in which case they would be rewarded with feasts and blankets, or they could fight for their land, which meant punitive expeditions, outlawry and, very often, death for the resisters.

In March 1816 Macquarie reported to London that Aborigines had killed five settlers along the Nepean and forced many others to abandon their farms in the first serious outbreak of fighting for some years. The Governor's reaction was violent, both in words and deeds. He accused the Aborigine of 'atrocious Conduct', and proposed 'exemplary and Severe Punishments', intended to 'Strike them with Terror'.

Macquarie despatched a military expedition lasting twenty three days to hostile areas in the Nepean, Hawkesbury and Grose Rivers, with orders to seize all Aboriginal men, women and children met with from Sydney onwards. Any who resisted were to be shot and their bodies hung from trees in conspicuous places. Most of the Aborigines retreated deeper into the bush as the soldiers approached, but in one encounter near Appin fourteen were killed and five captured, some of the dead being women and children who rushed in despair over precipices.

The shooting must have been fairly indiscriminate. In a proclamation issued on 4 May 1816 the Governor conceded that 'some few innocent Men, Women and Children may have fallen in these conflicts', but described this as an 'unavoidable Result' and hoped 'it will eventually strike Terror amongst the Surviving Tribes.'

When the Sky Fell, p.196

The missionary the Rev. Threlkeld reported:

There were many European stockholders who had suffered severely from depredation of the Aborigines and consequently were infuriated against the blacks. One of the largest holders of sheep in the colony openly told a public meeting in Bathurst that the best way to deal with the Aborigines would be to shoot them all and manure the ground with carcases. Women and children, he contended, should especially be killed so as to exterminate the race.

Soon after this declaration martial law was proclaimed and during an official expedition police drove a crowd of people into a swamp and rode around and round them, shooting, until all were dead. "Forty five heads were
collected and boiled down for the sake of the skulls. My informant, a magistrate, Threlkeld said, "saw the skulls packed to accompany the commanding officer on his voyage shortly afterwards taken to England".

The missionary instanced another case where an Aborigine caught stealing corn had been hung by the neck from the branch of a tree, a corn cob stuffed in his mouth, and the body left to rot as 'a scarecrow... to keep them away from his standing corn'. An officer returning from a punitive expedition had boasted that it was fine sport, 'for it was only to draw his pistols from the holster, and he dropped the blacks down like partridges.'

Gunson, p.49

No sooner had resistance in Bathurst been checked than a new area, the Hunter River, became ablaze with Aboriginal people's warfare. Lessons learnt from the Bathurst struggle were communicated to the Hunter River Aborigines from the Mulgee tribesmen.

Robinson and York, p.11

Governor Darling approached the Hunter Valley 'problem' cautiously. His reply to the request, dated 5 September 1826, made the following comments: The 'Natives' were fewer proportionally to the settlers in numbers. Settlers should not manifest fear to the Aborigines. They should band together for mutual defence. The majority of the signatories reside in Sydney.

These snide comments having been made, His Excellency set about the despatch of a detachment of mounted troops from Newcastle to the trouble spot.

Before the arrival of the troop detachment the Aborigines had wisely disappeared. Their brief reappearance, resulting in one European death, expedited the arrival of the army. Commanding Officer Foley left a few men as guards on remote farms and then set about to hunt down his elusive enemy. An audacious attack on John Forbe's station brought the mounted police also on the scene. One militant named Billy was escorted to Newcastle gaol.

Showing no fear of His Majesty's soldiers, Aborigines made more attacks on the person and properties of settlers. Bowman's fencers were attacked and Leth Bridge's station suffered two deaths, with one wounded. Mounted police replied by shooting Aborigines in a skirmish. Threats consisting of exemption from dispersal guaranteed by the delivery up of Aboriginal fighters were made to the Aborigines by Foley and his subordinate Lieutenant De la Condamine. With the normal excuse 'prisoners shot while escaping from custody', cold-blooded murder was committed against Aborigines. Lieutenant Nathaniel Love of the Fortieth Regiment was responsible for the hanging up of an Aboriginal corpse on a fence rail as a warning to other Aborigines.

Such crude racist acts of terrorism were to have little effect on the Hunter Aborigines - they were still struggling ten years later in 1836.

Robinson and York, p.12

The diemard habits of colonialism being what they were, plus the typical underestimation of the sagacity of the people in whose country they were transgressing led to death in a number of parties. The Aboriginal spear and boomerang found their mark in Oxley's expedition in 1818, Cunningham's 1835, Eyre's 1841, Gilbert's 1843, Kennedy's 1848, and Giles' 1873.

Robinson and York, p.2
No arbitrary date can be formulated, but nonetheless it is clear that at some stage in their struggle, the character of their fight became essentially one of holding on to their remaining land. Given that the European was there to stay, the task at hand, the Aborigine reasoned, was to limit his expansion to certain localities, and to ensure his activities did not wantonly despoil their livelihood or restrict their access to waterholes. Of course humanity or reasonableness was anathema to colonialism which unremittingly seized all in its path regardless of the aspirations of the Aboriginal people. Thus bitter conflict ensued. But the point remains that the Aborigines persevered in their efforts to make the colonialists understand that a compromise situation was the most satisfactory arrangement for all concerned.

When interviewed, in 1804 on the Hunter River about the cause of so-called tension with the settlers, Aborigines replied that 'they did not like to be driven from the few places that were left on the banks of the rivers where alone they could procure food ... if they went across white man's ground the settlers fired upon them ... they wanted to retain some places on the lower part of the river'.

In an even more striking manner, Aborigines from the Bandjalang Tribe of the Clarence River district, some thirty six years later militantly laid down their position to squatter E.D. Ogilvie who translated thus:

Begone! And take your horses; Why do you come hither among the mountains to disturb us? Return to your horses in the valley, you have the river and the open country, and you ought to be content; leave the mountains to the black people.

What could be more reasonable than this entreaty? The fact that the Clarence River area was in conflict for at least another fifteen years shows that the proposition of the Aboriginal tribespeople fell upon the deaf ears of the invading squatters.

Robinson and York, p.123

freewheels presents ....

RED EARTH

by Richard Tulloch
EUROPEAN BRUTALITY

It is more than likely that the truth will never be known as to what extent Europeans used brutal methods, particularly in reprisal activity, against Aborigines in early colonial days when tribal disintegration first manifested itself.

It is not easy to get an accurate picture of the horrifying aspects of some events, such as massacres, since reporting by Europeans generally tended to have bias. This was especially so by members of the military and police forces, for such persons had to justify harsh action taken against Aborigines, often innocent and defenceless. Soldiers, particularly, could not discriminate in their application of so-called justice against Aborigines: their attitude was based on experience gained with dealing with hardened convicts, who themselves perpetrated inhuman deeds against Aborigines, especially in the degrading acquisition of girls and young women for immoral purposes.

Although Aborigines were officially proclaimed as British subjects, they were never afforded the legal and civil blanket protection promised by Government authorities at home and abroad. There were always strong undertones of political hypocrisy, added to which was the open and arrogant defiance of wealthy and powerful land-owning interests who wanted their holdings disposed of the "blacks" as quickly as possible.

Thus it should be historically reasonable to assert that more massacres and diabolical slaying took place than has been officially and otherwise recorded.

The Aborigines found it almost impossible to obtain legal justice. Courts decreed that an Aborigine was not capable of swearing an oath; thus the evidence of reliable and expert witnesses could not be presented at courts and hearings conducted by magistrates and similar officers. Few people took up the cause of Aborigines during this dark legal period of colonial history. Even missionaries were inclined to favour their own race when deciding the guilt of conflicting parties. But there were some exceptions, outstanding of whom was Rev. L.E. Threlkeld, pioneering missionary, of Lake Macquarie, whose contribution to humanity and learning is now, at long last, being slowly recognised. No better understanding of atrocities committed against Aborigines, particularly in the Hunter region, can be obtained than by reading his life's history - though a man of deep religious convictions, he had a belief in common justice rare in his time.

He was often in public conflict with the authorities in his defence of the Aboriginal people; he was one of the few men engaged on Christian field work to devote much time to study and languages and philosophy of the Aborigines. He did more than preach on their behalf; as records show, he visited jail after jail in the Hunter region and Sydney to aid Aboriginal prisoners. He was aided by his friend and culture teacher, Biraban, elder of the Awabakal Tribe for 20 years or so - a great scholar of his own people and who served Threlkeld faithfully and well. Biraban did not hesitate to inform Threlkeld of what was happening to his people. Likewise, Threlkeld showed courage to take up such cases with the authorities. The Awabakal people developed a respect for the missionary at a time when peaceful relationships between white and black was replaced with hostility, which soon was to lead to warfare.

So, when examining European crime against Aborigines, some facets should not be overlooked:

1. The spear was no answer to the musket.
2. Soldiers and police had an ingrained stance to regard Aborigines as a "wild" object of eventual extermination.
3. Aborigines themselves committed many atrocities, but rarely was a complete and impartial report available as to the reason why this happened.
4. The legal system offered almost no justice to Aborigines, who as beings were treated by many of the white population on the same low level as animals were treated, particularly the story of Montgomery Martin obtaining bodies of deceased Aborigines with local authority; certainly no Aboriginal would have been allowed to exhume a white body for anthropological purposes.

So when examining European crime against Aborigines, some facets should not be overlooked:
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Background Notes:

1828: After Myall Creek massacre...Saxe Bannister, N.S.W. Attorney-General for the Colony, reported:

One of the richer settlers at Bathurst, William Cox, had declared at a public meeting that the best use which could be made of the black fellows was to manure the ground with their carcasses.

Lt Richard Sadleir, in a memorandum on July 21, 1828, to the Governor, Sir Richard Bourke, reported..."This was but one of the many atrocities perpetrated on Aborigines." Note: Sadleir was actively associated with the Anglican Church and undertook at least one survey on how Aborigines were faring in the colony.

Rev. L.E. Threlkeld:

His Reminiscences 1825-26... He added, referring to Cox,"that many recommended likewise that the Women and Children should especially shot as the most certain method of getting rid of the race."

He recorded:

Shortly after this declaration, martial law was proclaimed and sad was the havoc made on tribes at Bathurst. A large number were driven into a swamp, and mounted police rode round and round and shot them off indiscriminately until they were all destroyed. When one of the police inquired of the officer if a return should be made of the killed, wounded there were none, all were destroyed - Men women and children, was the reply; there was no necessity for a return. But forty-five heads were collected and boiled down for the sake of the skulls. My informant, a Magistrate, saw the skulls packed for exportation in a case at Bathurst ready for shipment to accompany the Command Officer on his voyage shortly afterwards taken to England.

Nor were other districts exempt from such atrocious acts of cruelty. Not far from Newcastle, a settler saw a black stealing his growing corn in the open day. He caught the culprit, hung him by the neck on the limb of a tree, stuffed a cob of corn into his mouth, and left the body to putrify as a scare-crow for the Aborigines to keep them away from his corn. My black tutor (Biraban) saw the suspended body and informed me of the circumstances. No wonder the blacks were horribly afraid and most cordially hated the white population, and yet they discriminated very quickly those who were disposed to act kindly towards the Aborigines.

The conduct of the convicts towards Aborigines tended much likewise to keep up the hostile feeling. Many times it was necessary (for him) to interfere in order to protect the blacks against the personal violence of the prisoners. Sometimes their daughters and often their wives were decoyed away, or, as I have witnessed, would have been taken by violence but for timely assistance.

Again:

One case was made known to me as follows -- A Black, who was supposed to have committed a murder up the country, was taken and brought down at night to the new jail at Wallis' Plains, now called Naitland, a distance of upwards of 40 miles. The next morning he was brought out, tied to two saplings and the officers commanded the soldiers to shoot him. One fired at him, the ball hit him in the back of the neck, the black turned round his head and looked at the soldier who had fired. The next fired and the bullet cut along the jaw and broke the bone. The black turning round his head again, another soldier stepped up, fired and blew his head to pieces. They then buried the carcarse close to Government House, whence the body was afterwards privately buried to prevent evidence of the fact of a murder having taken place when an inquiry was instituted by the authorities. The case having been brought before the British Parliament caused inquiry, but little could be done, save that Officer Lowe was removed from the colony.

Lt Lowe was commended by a number of magistrates in a letter written on the incident.
About the same time, horse police brought down two blacks roped together; because of the very heavy rain they took shelter on my verandah. The sergeant informed me that he had had another black, but in consequence of that black biting the rope and running away, that just as he descended down the bank of the river he shot him dead through the head.

Another case was reported to me thus: When a shepherd was wounded by a spear at a certain station (in the valley), a black, one of the tribe, was taken and brought to the shepherd's hut. A rope was borrowed, tied around the black's neck, and he was marched nearly a mile to a suitable tree; he was then ordered to climb it and crawl to the extremity of a bough. When he had done this, he was commanded to tie the rope tight to the branch, the end being fast around his neck. This he did, and sat crouched and trembling on the tree. Then one fired at him, wounded him; another fired and wounded him; a volley was then discharged which knocked him and left him suspended by the neck.

Numerous cases of similar description occurred about this time, all calculated to drive Aborigines to madness...

Threlkeld Journal: June 3, 1825

By invitation, he attended the funeral of a female. After describing the burial, a woman begged him not to disclose the site. The Aborigines were afraid a white man would take her head away. He assured them the site would remain secret. He mentioned the fear arose from the sale of Maori heads in Sydney.

His comment in a circular addressed to the London Missionary Society on October 26, 1828:

It may be said, with truth, respecting the Aborigines of this land—treat them as savages, and they will act as savages; treat them as men and they will act as men.

We view the conduct of Charactus, heading the Aboriginal Britons and opposing the invading Romans with applause; and Boadicea, Queen of an Aboriginal tribe, with her eighty thousand English slaughtered by insatiable conquerors, with sympathy. But the Aborigines of Australia, who have no combined numbers, no political power to render themselves respected, or rather feared by the invaders of their country, are driven, indirectly, from their districts as other wild beasts of the deserts without sympathy, when the civilized hand cultivates their soil.

The existence, as a people, and means of existence, of the Aborigines of New South Wales, have become translated into the hands of His Majesty of Great Britain, who could in Parliament prevent their speedy extinction and induce them to become protectors to the emigrants by appropriating a moiety of the quit rents and sales of their former hunting and fishing districts, from which they are dispossessed by the British Crown, to the purpose of rationing the tribes....

Threlkeld Annual Report: December 31, 1840:

Threlkeld discusses a case of aggression reported to him by an Awabakal man and his wife, who was seized while moving from the Lake to Newcastle. He commented:

I had no means of assisting him, Aborigines at present being British subjects but not allowed to give evidence in any court of justice, the royal assent not having arrived to a bill passed by the Executive Council authorizing their evidence in criminal cases without an oath. A West Indian, assisted by a European ticket-of-leave man, forcibly took the young woman from the Lake Awabakal Aboriginal; but another European, who witnessed the crime swore he had seen no assault. Neither the assaulted Aboriginal woman nor her man could be put in the witness box to give evidence, because of the present anomalous state of the British law, and the magistrate at Newcastle had to dismiss the case.
Soon afterwards, the colony received advice of the "royal disallowance of the Act to allow Aborigines of New South Wales to be received as competent witnesses in criminal cases." He added:

Christian laws will hang the Aborigines for violence done to Christians, but Christian laws will not protect them from the aggressions of nominal Christians because Aborigines must give evidence only upon oath. This precludes helpless people from protection; the law treats them not as men but as the beasts .... For a good man will speak the truth without an oath while the most solemn oath will not bind a wicked one.

Threlkeld to William Ellis, November 6 1838:

We can reckon 500 Aborigines have been slaughtered within 15 to 18 months, whilst only 15 whites have been killed in the past six years.... This year a party of 26 blacks working at a station were warned by the overseer to leave because stockmen were after them. The stockmen arrived, ripped open the bellies of the blacks, killed the woman and took children by the legs and dashed their brains out against the trees. They made a triangular log fire to burn the bodies. They reserved two little girls about 7 years of age for lascivious purposes, and because they were too small for them they cut them with knives. I have incorporated this account with my examination before a Committee on the Aboriginal Question before Council, which will end in words, I fear without advantage.

Note: Threlkeld mentions other atrocities in his detailed memoranda of the late 1830s. In a letter to W.W. Burton, February 8 1839, he wrote:

The destruction of 80 blacks by Sergeant Temple is perfectly distinct to the number mentioned as destroyed by Major Hunn, although I thought they were the same until Rev. Mr Wilton and many others informed me to the contrary....

From History of Austral-Asia, Comprising New South Wales, Van Diemen's Island, Swan River, South Australia, by R. Montgomery Martin F.S.S. 1839 (2nd edition)

Chapter VI:

Desirous of ascertaining the osteological [bone] measurement of this extraordinary race of human beings, I procured, after considerable difficulty, a male and a female body. The first was that of a native called, I think, Black Tommy, who was hanged for murder in Sydney in 1827. The circumstances connected with this man's execution were in my mind very singular, and deserve publicity. From the statement previously made to me, I believed the prisoner to be innocent; and I therefore attended at his trial, to aid in the defence of a man who knew not a word of our language, and owed no obedience to our laws. The evidence elicited at the trial was to the following effect -

'Two shepherds were seeing their master's flocks, at a distance from Bathurst, and when evening came returned each to his respective hut. On the following day, a dog, belonging to one of the shepherds, came running to the other, and leaping up caught the shepherd by the collar, who beat the animal away; the dog with great anxiety again caught the man by the coat and endeavored to pull him towards his master's hut, and by his exertions at last induced the shepherd to follow him. On arriving at the hut belonging to the master of the dog, it was found to be on fire, and on entering it the body of the shepherd was seen stretched on the floor, the face resting on the soles and base of the skull separated from the upper parts of the head. As military expeditions had been recently out against the blacks, another instantly was set on foot; a party of soldiers was detached on the brow of a mountain and fired the moment the first saw the mounted officers. They were deceived prima facie evidence of their guilt, and one man of the party said a chief, after seeing his wife, children, and friends, gave always noticed himself to be taken.
The circumstantial evidence of his running away was supposed to have been strengthened by his having been recently seen at the shepherd's hut with a party of natives, bartering with the Europeans. This was the only evidence against him; the arguments I adduced to be in his favour were chiefly anatomical: there was no mark of a blow of the skull or body of the deceased; the natives were not possessed of any instrument which could have cut the occipital bone in the manner it was done in the skull of the deceased shepherd, and which had evidently been caused by the action of the fire, loosening the sutures and bursting the bones asunder; moreover, the bite might have been accidental in a bark-cup. The poor native was picked in the dock, he smiled at the scene around, the meaning of which he could not in the slightest degree comprehend (none of the Sydney blacks speaking his language), the forms of trial were gone through, and he was executed.

I applied to the sheriff for the body, dissected it, and prepared a skeleton therefrom, which I took to India. The female I obtained with great difficulty. She was an old woman long known about Sydney. Hearing of her death and burial in the forest, about 25 miles from my residence, I went thither, and aided by some stock-keepers, found the grave - a slightly elevated and nearly circular tumulus (mound). The body was buried six feet deep, wrapped in several sheaves of bark, the inner one being of a fine silvery texture. Several things the deceased possessed in life, together with her favourite dog, were buried with her - all apparently for use in another world. I brought the old woman home in my cabriolet, and her skeleton also is in India. The skull was full of indentations, as if a tin vessel had been struck by a hammer; they were quite diaphanous (transparent), and were caused by blows of waddies (hard sticks) when she was young and made love to by her intended spouse, such being the most approved manner of proceeding to choose a wife. I regret much not having brought the skull with me to England (it was given to the Asiatic Society's Museum in Calcutta); as I could not myself have believed it possible to make such extraordinary indentations to the human skull without fracturing it, except, indeed, before the infant be born.
5.4 NOTABLE ABORIGINES

Introduction

The following examples of Australian Aborigines are chosen for this region because they were local people who in their own unique ways related to the Europeans last country in different ways. They demonstrate qualities of intelligence, strength of character and determination, five virtues recognised by all people. Note that there is a mixture of names, Aboriginal and/or non-Aboriginal. All would have had traditional names, but, because it was more convenient for the people of non-Aboriginal origin to pronounce names they were more familiar with, they persisted in using non-Aboriginal titles. Hence the dual names.

**Biraban (bee-re-bahn) meaning Eaglehawk**

Biraban was born at Bahtahbah (Belmont). As a child he was taken to Sydney to act as personal servant to an officer of the Sydney Barracks. He was given the English name of Johnny McGill and was taught to speak English fluently. McGill was taken to Port Macquarie in 1821 where he worked as a bush constable before returning to his Lake Macquarie tribe.

Biraban first met Rev. Threlkeld at Bahtahbah about 1826. Biraban having been initiated through 14 different ceremonies was a leader of the Awabakals. Through his influence on the tribe and his knowledge of English he became a companion and interpreter for Threlkeld.

Threlkeld used his association with Biraban to make a full translation of the Awabakal language. Biraban's skills and influence were used to create a better understanding between the Europeans and the Aborigines of the whole colony. Biraban died about 1850.

Source: Threlkeld, Annual Reports

**Jackey Jackey (GAIMARRA)**

A member of a tribe from near Muswellbrook. He was selected as a guide for the Kennedy Expedition to Cape York Peninsula. He proved a valuable member of the party because of his hard work, wisdom and superb bush skills. Kennedy chose him to accompany him on the final dash from Weymouth Bay. The party were trapped in mangroves and swamps and all were killed except for Jackey Jackey. He escaped and with heroic effort reached the waiting supply ship. Captain Beckford Simpson praised Jackey for his efforts to find Kennedy's body and any survivors. Jackey was rewarded for his skill and devotion to Kennedy by a brass breast plate, and a government pension.

By 1850 Jackey was back with his tribe. On an overland journey from Albury he was accidentally killed when he fell into a campfire. He was a victim of a fondness for white man's alcoholic drink.

A timber getting party had "given offence" to the natives around Karuah where a white timber getter had been speared and died. The natives had been fired at and some were wounded.

The native who appeared to have the greatest influence was Dawly who had been wounded in the thigh by a musket ball. He was a ferocious and determined character resolved to retaliate upon his white enemies wherever he found them.

Dawly was rather tall and well built and about thirty years of age. He had thick knotted hair hanging like a mop nearly to his shoulders, a black bushy beard and an apron covering his wound on his dusty copper-coloured skin which gave him an air of fierceness and anger.

Source: Dawson, pp.262-5.

Here is an instance of local resistance to the overtures by the Europeans. Despite the efforts of reconciliation by Robert Dawson in the Port Stephens district, he was unsuccessful with Dawly because of the experience he had already had with the timber getting parties. (See Contact History.)

OLD MARGARET

The last survivor of the Awabakal, she is now living in her slab-hut on a piece of land near Lake Macquarie Heads and supports herself by her own industry. She had the advantage of early training in an English house in the district; she is respectable and respected.... She was born at Waiyong, near the Hawkesbury River, and is now about 65 years of age. (1892)

Source: An Australian Language as Spoken by the Awabakal, by L.E. Threlkeld, ed. John Fraser, Sydney, 1892.

ACTIVITY:

The above statement is a local example of unfounded assumptions and conjecturing statements. She was not the last of the Awabakal but one of the last to live in the traditional manner of her people. There were descendants who continued to live in the area but who had lost touch with their ancestry so it is difficult to trace them. (See Belmont Lake Macquarie 1826-1974 by W.S. Parkes, Chapter 2, pp.44-46.)

Try to find out what people believed about TRUGANINI in Tasmania as being the "last" of the Tasmanian Aborigines. There are newspapers who aired the controversy on the occasion of the centenary of her death. See how relevant it is to also here in Lake Macquarie in regard to Old Margaret.
An anthropologist, Donald Thomson, studied the Aboriginals problems and made the following observations to the Commonwealth Government.

The real issue at the present time seems to be a decision as to whether the system in the past, of permitting the almost unregulated disorganisation and disintegration of native culture is to be permitted either in the same, or in some modified form, or whether the Government is prepared to face the alternative, which is a real attempt to save the remaining natives. This will admittedly require definite and even drastic measures.

It is not difficult to prove by a review of the facts that the end of the system of the past can only be decay and ultimate extinction. It is admitted that the second policy requires strong measures, and that neither this, nor any one policy will meet with universal approval.

An unbiased review of the history of white contact with, and influence upon, the aboriginals over the past 150 years leaves no room for doubt that it is unfavourable to the natives. The conclusion is inevitable that they suffered everywhere at first disorganization of their social order, degradation and ultimate decay. Government institutions, missionary, educational and other endeavours to help and to uplift these people have not been able to arrest the decline.

Preliminary Recommendations.

I recommend therefore that the Commonwealth Government adopts as its initial policy the following essential measures, which can later be elaborated and extended.

(1) That the remnant of native tribes in Federal Territory not yet disorganized or detribalized by prolonged contact with alien culture be absolutely segregated, and that it be the policy of the Government to preserve intact their social organization, their social and political institutions, and their culture in its entirety.

(2) That the native reserve Arnhem Land be created an inviolable reserve for the native inhabitants, and that steps be taken at once to establish and maintain the absolute integrity of this reserve.

(3) That similar steps be taken to render inviolable any other reserves in which the native population remains undetribalized.

(4) That legislation, similar to that obtaining in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea for the protection of the native populations be imposed, and for the punishment of offenders against the established policy of the Government.

(5) That steps be taken to remove the anomaly by which watering depots have been established on the native reserve for the convenience of pearling vessels (known to be manned chiefly by aliens whose presence is inimical to the welfare of the native population); that this authority be rescinded and that these depots be abandoned.

Why did Thomson want a reserve in Arnhem Land for Aborigines? What did he think would happen if the reserve were not created?
The Act provides that the Board shall, subject to the direction of the Minister, be the authority for the protection and care of aborigines under the Act, and shall exercise general supervision and care over all the aborigines, and over all matters affecting the interests and welfare of aborigines and protect them against injustice, imposition and fraud. Its principle powers and functions may be summarised as follows:

1. With the consent of the Minister, to apportion, distribute and apply as may seem fitting, any moneys voted by Parliament, and any other funds in its possession or control for the relief of aborigines.

2. To distribute blankets, clothing and relief to aborigines.

3. To provide for the custody, maintenance and education of the children of aborigines.

4. To manage and regulate the use of reserves set apart for the use of aborigines.

5. It may appoint the managers of stations and such other officers as may be necessary.

6. It may appoint local committees consisting of not more than seven or less than three persons to act in conjunction with the Board and also officers to be called guardians of aborigines. It may also dispense with these persons and bodies.

7. It may remove from reserves any aborigine or other person guilty of misconduct, or who, in the opinion of the Board, should be earning a living away from the reserve.

8. It may apply to a Police or Stipendiary Magistrate for an order directing any Aborigine who, in the opinion of the Board, is living in undesirable conditions, to remove to a reserve or place controlled by the Board, or if he is only temporarily resident in this State to return to the State from whence he came.

9. Only with its consent can an aborigine be removed or caused to be removed from New South Wales to any place outside the State. Before giving its consent the Board may require that a bond be entered into.

10. It may fix such terms and conditions as it deems to be desirable for the employment of infant aborigines and may collect and institute proceedings for the recovery of any wages payable. In the event of a child so apprenticed refusing to go to the employment, the Board may remove him to some home or institution for the purpose of being trained. If of the opinion that the moral or physical well-being of the child is likely to be impaired by continuance of the apprenticeship, the Board may, after due inquiry, cancel the indentures. It may also lay a complaint if of the opinion that the employer is not complying with the conditions of the indenture, or is unfit to have further control of the apprentice.

11. It may assume full control and custody of the child of any aborigine if, after due inquiry, it is satisfied that such a course is in the interest of the moral or physical welfare of the child.

12. If of the opinion that any aborigine is not receiving fair and proper treatment: is not being paid a reasonable wage; or that his moral or physical well-being is likely to be impaired by the continuance of his employment, the Board may terminate same and remove the aborigine concerned to such reserve, home or other place as it may direct.
(13) It may require an employer to pay the wages of any aborigine to some officer on its behalf where it appears to the Board that such arrangement is in the best interests of the aborigine.

(14) It may institute all actions and other proceedings against any person for the recovery of wages due to an aborigine.

(15) It may cause any aborigines who are camped or are about to camp within or near any reserve, town or township to remove to such distance from the reserve, town or township as it may direct.

(16) It may authorise the medical examination of any aborigine and may have him removed to and kept in a public hospital or institution for appropriate treatment, or to undergo such treatment as and where provided.

(17) It may institute action to recover the cost of maintenance of an aboriginal child from its near relatives.

(18) It may inspect or authorise the inspection of any station or reserve on which aborigines are located, and any buildings, or any other matter or thing thereon.

(19) It may institute proceedings for a penalty in respect of offences against the Act and Regulations.

Which duties do you think would benefit Aborigines?

Did government control and action affect:
- death rate, especially of infants
- health
- legal, social, economic discrimination?

13 JULY 1938. CITIZEN RIGHTS OF ABORIGINES

(ibid., "Report and Recommendations of the Public Service Board of New South Wales", No.13, p.758)

A report by a select committee into the administration of the New South Wales Protection Board.

It has been said from time to time that Aboriginals should be given full citizen rights. Briefly as far as can be seen at present, the majority of Aborigines, as defined by the Act, have all citizen rights except the following:

(a) They cannot exercise franchise at Federal elections.

(b) They are prohibited from obtaining liquor.

(c) If Aboriginal blood predominates they cannot receive maternity allowance or old-age or invalid pension from the Commonwealth Government. (Incidentally any Aboriginal, if resident on the stations, as already stated, is not eligible to receive the old-age or invalid pension.)

(d) Residents on stations have been debarred from receiving relief work provided by the Government of this State.

(e) Family endowments payments are in general, made to Aboriginals by means of orders for goods instead of in cash.

(f) Certain restrictions may be imposed on Aboriginals in accordance with the provisions of the Act.
Generally speaking the restrictions imposed by the present law of this State are in the interests of the Aborigines, and at the present time the Public Service Board's inquiries indicate that in general the opinion is that they should not be lifted, even though there are numerous Aborigines who might with justification be placed on an equal footing with the general community.

The general opinion of those most competent to speak appears to be however that their education has not yet reached the stage where the restrictions can be lifted as a general policy, without harmful effects on the majority.

In 1951 a meeting of Commonwealth and State ministers agreed that the future policy should be to direct all Aborigines towards full citizenship. In 1961 adult Aborigines were given the right to vote if they wished.

12 JULY 1963. THE POLICY OF ASSIMILATION

The Statement of Policy issued by a conference of Commonwealth and State ministers about Aboriginal welfare, in which the ministers spell out "The Meaning of the Policy of Assimilation".

Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers held in Darwin, on 11th and 12th July, 1963, on Aboriginal Welfare.

STATEMENT OF POLICY
The Meaning of the Policy of Assimilation.

The policy of assimilation means that all Aborigines and part-Aborigines will attain the same manner of living as other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes and loyalties as other Australians.

Methods of Advancing the Policy

(1) Extension, where applicable, of Government settlement work to encourage nomadic and semi-nomadic Aborigines to adopt a more settled way of life and to make health services, better standards of housing and nutrition, schooling, vocational training and occupation available to them and their children, to enable their progressive advancement.

(2) Provision of health services including particularly child welfare services.

(3) Provision of education at all levels, to the greatest extent possible, in the same education institutions as are available to other Australians and, in addition where necessary, in special primary and pre-schools for Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal children.

(4) Continual improvement in housing and hygiene standards on Government settlements, missions, rural properties, and in towns and assistance towards provision of and training in the use of improved housing facilities particularly in town areas.

(5) Vocational training (including apprenticeships) and employment, particularly in ways which will assist Aborigines and part-Aborigines to make a contribution to the advancement of their own people - teaching assistants, nursing and medical assistants, patrol officers, welfare officers etc.

(6) Encouragement of social and sporting activity both among Aborigines and part-Aborigines and participation by them in general community activity.

(7) Extension of welfare work, particularly to assist those people living in or near towns to adjust themselves to the life of the community.
(8) Welfare services provided for other members of the community to be available to Aborigines and part-Aborigines (child, family and social welfare services).

(9) The further removal of restrictive or protective legislation.

(10) Positive steps to ensure awareness in the community that implementation of the policy of assimilation is possible only if Aborigines and part-Aborigines are accepted into the community and that the community plays its full part.

(11) Further research into special problems associated with the Aboriginal welfare programme.

It is recognised that some of these methods may not be applicable in every State of the Commonwealth and that methods may vary from State to State.

*How does this policy of assimilation contrast with Thompson's ideas of 1937?*
*What are the advantages and disadvantages of the idea?*
*How do you think Aborigines would feel about it?*
*How did this Aborigine below feel?*
*What did he object to?*

27 JANUARY 1969. AN ABORIGINE ATTACKS WHITE ATTITUDES
(The Koorier, Vol.1, No.5, 1969)

The Aborigine writer warns the white Australian of the Aborigines' intense feelings of hatred and repression, and at the same time calls fellow black men to take pride in the Aboriginal race.

MODE OF MIRRIGAN

My point today is the purpose of my controversial (I hope) articles to date, and it is a three pronged attack.

Firstly I am hoping to create an awareness of the Koorie as a race. This seems to the average gub a silly point.

Why try and create tension and racial strife where there is none, in comparison to America and England?

To this I say there is much to be learnt for you, the white overlord. The tight spring-loaded tension is here among the Koories. The only thing that the gub can thank his lucky stars for, is that he managed throughout his rule to suppress the Koorie to such a bitter extent, that he killed the blackman's individuality as a race, dignity, national pride and unity, but hear me out and recognize the fact, as has been proved throughout even the white man's history, that with the return of dignity and national pride comes the burning desire to be free and this spells trouble.

Secondly, I hope to shake up the "integrated" black-white man into making him feel his guilt in turning his back on his less fortunate brethren, who through their own uneducated resources are striving to hang onto what is theirs by birthright. I would trade one native for six "integrateds", who have smothered their ancestors with the white blanket. You know who I mean, so if the cap fits ....

*The local Aboriginal term for themselves.*
*A non-Aborigine.*
The third point is simply this. For the gubs who feel antagonism towards me and hate me I say thank you, for at least in showing your hate towards me, you honour me by not hiding behind apathy.

The problems are far from finished here. It leaves questions like:

Do Aborigines want to be assimilated in white society?
Do they want to remain separate?
Can there be a degree of both where Aboriginal culture is preserved?
Have the attitudes and problems outlined in this brief history changed in this day?
Are Aborigines still being trodden down and ignored over land right questions - land which has been taken from them through history by governments and for which they have received no compensation?
Do Aborigines now have the rights that white Australians have?

ACTIVITY:

1) Research through newspapers for the Aborigines' attitudes and reactions to their situation in the modern society today, especially in the Newcastle-Hunter Region.

2) Start a newspaper clipping file of matters relating to the Aborigines in the Hunter Region. Maintain it and monitor developments.

3) Lodge your file as a valuable resource in your library for future research.

**Aboriginal land rights**

*From Mr P.W. Trevillien*

WHY do people try to divide Australians according to their cultural or racial backgrounds?

Mr G. Mulholland (Letters, 3/11/82) is trying to apply pressure on governments to implement policies that discriminate between races that is, giving land rights to one section of the Australian community and denying the same rights and privileges to other Australians. It would appear that if Mr Mulholland, and others with similar opinions, would try for a policy of integration and not segregation of the races, then Australia would achieve social harmony.

As a born and bred Australian, I feel that racial equality can be achieved only if we are all treated equally and not given extra benefits, as now happens, just because a person happens to be born of black parentage.

Why should one section of the community be given hand-outs over and above what other members of that community are entitled to?

I feel that a person loses his self-respect by accepting these hand-outs, giving rise to feelings of inequality.

P.W. TREVILLEN
Waratah St, Kambah.

**Aboriginal land rights**

*From Mr G. Mulholland*

THK white race, which has helped reduce the aboriginal people to less than one third of their original number, are still trying to complete the destruction of that race by social, economic and political means.

Lately we have evidence from the Northern Territory, where the white community was demonstrating against land rights being granted to Aborigines.

The time has now arrived for all Australians to put pressure on the Federal Government to grant land rights immediately.

G. MULHOLLAND
Beaumont St, Hamilton.
Cardiff High School students (from left) Glenn Welsh, Ralph Rogers and David Nolan with some works done as part of the Aboriginal studies in their art course.

ABORIGINES OF THE HUNTER REGION

I.S.B.N. 0-7240-8127-5

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
HUNTER REGION

HUNTER SOCIAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION
MINISTRY FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS
NEW SOUTH WALES
Aboriginal society has survived 200 years of invasion, destruction, and paternalism.

For two centuries, Aboriginal mothers watched their children die, not just from illness but for want of food. Children have seen their kin-men die violently; many have been dragged screaming from their families. Adults have gazed despairingly into fires while they contemplated the extinction of their clans. Mature and wise men have wept as they resolved not to hand on to their sons the secrets of life and manhood which had been passed previously in a tradition which may have stretched unbroken over 20,000 years. And, inescapable, there has been the need at every turn to take the white man into account.¹

This has left its scars.

Today, the citizens of New South Wales live on Aboriginal land in affluence, whilst the Aborigines live in poverty. Aboriginal children die because of this. Elderly Aborigines are a rarity. Their unemployment rate is high, their health and educational standards low.²

TASK: Find evidence to support the above statements, e.g.
- Infant mortality rate for Aboriginal children in New South Wales;
- Rate of unemployment for Aboriginal people in New South Wales.

The belief and practice of "smoothing the pillow of the dying race" is no longer relative. Today the conservative estimate of the total Aboriginal population is 200,000. The Aboriginal population of New South Wales is at least 50,000. The Aboriginal birthrate is booming and although partly offset by the high infant mortality rates the rates of natural increase of the Aboriginal population far outstretches that of the non-Aboriginal population. Thus the Aboriginal race is surviving, but also is re-asserting its dignity, its right to its cultural heritage and its power to declare the terms for future co-existence with the non-Aboriginal community.

Arising from the oppression are people such as Senator Neville Bonner, Sir Pastor Douglas Nichols, Charles Perkins, his nephew Neville Perkins, Ms Pat O'Shane and the so-called radicals such as Denis Walker and Gary Foley. Along with many others they have helped to re-assert Aboriginal independence.

TASK: Write a page each on any three of the above Aborigines describing their background and achievements.

Aboriginal society today is a very complex one and it is often very misleading to generalise about it. We should be aware that it can vary between states, within states and even within urban areas. The common bond is Aboriginality. A classification of contemporary Aboriginal society is as follows:

1) Traditional/Semi Traditional - usually in remote areas e.g. Northern Territory.
2) Rural/Semi Traditional - usually in rural areas well away from towns. The people may be involved in cattle-stations etc. Their isolation has helped the retention of a large part of traditional culture.
3) Reserve Dwellers - living on the reserves or missions imposed when the traditional land was taken. In New South Wales these reserves have recently been returned to the Aborigines via Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983.
4) Fringe Dwellers - living outside towns and cities generally in improvised shelters and sometimes along river banks etc.
5) Urban Aborigines - living in the towns and cities. A contradiction to the assimilation policy for these people are involved in re-assertion of their identity and the fight to improve the lot of all Aboriginal people.

¹ Let's End the Slander, Office of the Commissioner for Community Relations, p.11, 1979.
² Maurice Keane, M.P. Chairman - Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly Upon Aborigines 1979-80 in Foreword to the Recommendations.
The above classification is very loose, e.g., a reserve dweller in New South Wales would vary greatly from one in the Northern Territory because of the size and population of the reserve - thus contact with non-Aborigines would vary. Similarly the reserve dwellers in Queensland have few liberties and are oppressed by the Queensland and Torres Strait Island Act of 1974.

**TASK:** What are some of the restrictions placed on Queensland Aborigines under this Act?

Misinterpretation of this classification is displayed by the fact that "Urban Aborigines" are re-adopting aspects of traditional culture and also many argue that although they are living in the urban community they are often "fringe dwellers" in fact within the total society. Also, most Aborigines, regardless of the classifications above, still retain aspects of their traditional culture.

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**Symbolism of the Aboriginal Flag**

- Black for the skin of the Aborigine.
- Yellow for the sun - the giver of life.
- Red for the spilt blood.
6.2 GROWTH OF ABORIGINAL IDENTITY

Until after the 1967 Referendum which gave the Commonwealth Government the right to over-ride the states in matters regarding Aborigines, legislation in different states determined who was Aboriginal and who wasn't. These rulings had nothing to do with how people of Aboriginal descent saw themselves but were based on how the non-Aboriginal population wished to class them. The Referendum provided a need for a uniform definition of who was Aboriginal. This definition was made in accordance to the wishes of Aboriginal people. A show of "self-determination". Distinct from the earlier official government policies of integration and assimilation.

DEFINITION: "An Aborigine is any person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, who identifies as being an Aborigine, and who is accepted by his community as being an Aborigine".

The result was a realisation of identity to many persons of Aboriginal descent who up till this point were being denied by Government policy and were also being pressured by a non-Aboriginal population which couldn't accept that persons of mixed descent may desire to identify themselves as Aborigines. After all wasn't it thought that non-Aboriginal society and culture were superior?

TASK: Find the official figures of the Aboriginal of 1967 and that of 1979. Given the normal growth rate of the population what can you assume about the great increase in numbers?

Identity is part of the re-assertion of the Aboriginal people and is highlighted by the setting up of agencies such as the Aboriginal Legal Service, Aboriginal Medical Service, Aboriginal Housing Companies, Black Theatre and Aboriginal and Islander Dance Theatre. These are all organisations that have emerged from Aboriginal society during the 1970s to fill a vacuum. A vacuum that exists because non-Aboriginal agencies cannot fulfill the needs of Aborigines. This has been illustrated by the incredible suffering and appalling conditions encountered by Aboriginal people throughout 200 years of subservience. And these conditions still exist today as a legacy of that period, although the Aboriginal organisations have helped improve the overall lot.

TASK: Since the setting up of the Burri Aboriginal Medical Centre in Kempsey there has been a remarkable drop in the proportion of the Aboriginal population hospitalised. Can you obtain information to support this claim? (Contact the Awabakal Newcastle Co-operative, 69-1765.)

Further re-assertion of identity is illustrated by the "out-stationing" movement in the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia tribal areas.

Here we find an increasing number of Aboriginal communities moving off the reserves and returning to their tribal grounds to carry out their lifestyles as they see fit. This often means a strengthening of the traditional ways, a re-assertion of traditional culture. It may include a program of traditional religion taught along with Christian religion. It includes bi-lingual education - traditional language as well as English. It is certainly the reverse of the period when Aborigines had no say and were forced to leave their homelands and to live on reserves; when they were forced to give up their own tongue and to learn English; when they were forced to adopt the Christian religion at the expense of their own; when their children were taken from them if they happened to have a white father.
The following song is part of contemporary Aboriginal culture. What does it say about "assimilation" policy?

How would you feel if you were:
(a) the preacher
(b) the mother
(c) the child

**BROWN SKIN BABY** *(this on accompanying tape)*

As a young preacher, I used to ride
My quiet pony 'round the country-side
In a native camp, I'll never forget
A young black mother, her cheeks all wet.

**CHORUS:**

Yowie, yowie my brown-skin baby they take him away.

Between her sobs, I heard her say
Police bin takin my baby away
To white man boss my baby I had
Why he let them take baby away.

**CHORUS:**

Yowie, etc.

To a children's home our baby came
With new clothes on and a new name
Day and night he would always say
Mummy, Mummy why they take me away

**CHORUS:**

Yowie, etc.

The child grew up, and had to go
From the mission home, that he loved so
To find his mummy, he tried in vain
Upon this earth, they never met again

**CHORUS:**

Yowie, etc.

Apart from the 1967 Referendum, which led for the first time to full citizenship rights for Aborigines, perhaps the next single most important factor in leading a "new nationalism" and strengthening of identity amongst Aborigines, during the past 20 years, was the setting up of the "Tent Embassy" on the lawns of Parliament House, Canberra, in 1972. Here a small number of Aborigines, later to be joined by hundreds, brought the plight of their people before the eyes of the world and at the same time strengthened the "black nationalism" amongst Kooris.

This feeling is illustrated by the Aboriginal band No Fixed Address in their song, "Fight for Your Rights".

I am
A Black, Black Man
And I need to be recognised
In this wretched world
For we are getting brainwashed
And people forgetting
'Bout our rights
So all you Black people
You gotta
Fight for your rights
Etc.
6.3 FAMILY LIFE

All aspects of contemporary Aboriginal society from Traditional through to Urban display a strong kinship tie. Although the formal relationships have been broken down outside of Traditional areas due to the dispossession of tribal lands and the subsequent forced removal of Aboriginal people onto reserves outside of their traditional areas the ties still exist. Inter-marriage between tribal groups is more prevalent than traditionally because of the reserve situation which saw people from these other areas thrust together. Further, the breakdown of the stricter codes of traditional Aboriginal lore has led to a greater mobility of Aboriginal people. Nonetheless kinship ties are still important - the events of the past 200 years has perhaps only "spread the net further".

In contrast to a lot of non-Aboriginal societies the extended Aboriginal family includes your parents cousins who are respected as Aunty and Uncle. Your "2nd", "3rd" and "4th" cousins are still your cousins. You thus have obligations to your cousins and your cousins' children. These obligations may be in the way of looking after these relatives in times of need. Similarly you have a dependence on them. The traditional way of sharing has been broken down but most Aboriginal people know that the family kinship ties can provide security when needed, i.e. friendship, food and shelter.

To some extent the suppression of the past 200 years has created a further extension of kinship. This may apply often in the urban situation where Aborigines come together for security. Thus an Aborigine without any real contacts in a large city such as Sydney will head for Redfern/Chippendale area as soon as he arrives, for here he knows he will meet his own people. He knows he will get support from an Aboriginal community which exists within the wider society.

The reverse may also apply where we see Aboriginal people ostracising themselves from the wider Aboriginal community. This is usually for historical reasons. The belief that to obtain a decent standard of living etc. you have to "become white". It is indeed a hangover from the "assimilation" process: a psychological scar.

Aboriginal people in this position will generally suffer discrimination from both the Black and the White community - especially if they are too dark - "the assimilated Aborigines are the group you never hear anything about. They are usually fair in complexion. Aborigines are not likely to be readily assimilated if they are too dark."

TASK: Charles Perkins attacked Yvonne Goolagong in the press after her Wimbledon Tennis Cup win for being "too white" i.e. for not publicly supporting her people. Do you think this was a warranted attack?

1. K.J. Gilbert "Because a White Man Will Never Do It", p.129.
6.4 ABORIGINES IN THE COMMUNITY

Most Aboriginal groups in the community are characterised by individuals who may often be labelled by "white" society as leaders. Often these are the more articulate, often young aborigines, who have some understanding of the system and the self confidence to stand up to it in order to gain concessions for their people. These are the Charles Perkins, the Kevin Gilberights, and the Pat O'Shanes. They are leading the fight for justice, so it seems.

**CARTOON:** Dept. of A. Affairs

**WE MUST EDUCATE ABORIGINES SO THAT THEY CAN USE THE SYSTEM (ASSIMILATION)**

SIR, WE HAVE EDUCATED THE ABORIGINES AND NOW THEY WANT TO CHANGE THE SYSTEM (SELF-DETERMINATION)

STOP THE EDUCATION!
But in the background, at the grass-roots level, are the lesser known who are beginning to re-assert themselves - the elders. Some in New South Wales, particularly on the North Coast, are initiated men. Some of the elder women are daughters of initiates. They provide the backbone to the everyday life - the rearing of children, the settling of disputes. Along with the Elder men they will provide future thrust. They will use the knowledge of the white system and skills of the younger, articulate blacks. As in traditional society they are the real leaders. A good example is found on the South Coast of New South Wales where elders such as Ted Thomas, Percy Mumber and Jack Campbell have made large gains for their communities in recent years. Similarly, a Council of Elders is beginning to re-assert itself in Kempsey.*

Apart from those Aborigines who are actively involved in the Aboriginal struggle for justice, many other Aborigines have become well known in the wider community. Normally these have been in the area of sport: people such as Tony Mundine, Hector Thompson, Yvonne Goolagong, Larry Corowa and Arthur Beetson. Others such as Bob Bellear and Pat O'Shane are recognised as being the first Aboriginal barrists in New South Wales. At present there are more than 40 Aborigines who are trained teachers working in New South Wales in teaching or related fields. There are many Aborigines managing hostels for Aboriginal students. Other Aborigines are employed as social workers, liaison officers or health workers. Some, such as Paul Coe, have helped found the Aboriginal Legan Service and continued with its running. Similarly Aboriginal housing companies have emerged.

Nonetheless the overall figures are depressing and an epitome of 200 years of oppression - up to 90% of Aborigines are unemployed and on unemployment benefits or pensions. Thus in general Aborigines in the community are at the lower end of the economic/social status spectrum and are the most inadequately educated, the least healthy, the worst housed and the most discriminated against.

"Consistently each year the largest single group of complaints of racial discrimination has originated with Aboriginal Australians".

- Hon. A.J. Grassby in (Introduction to) Let's End the Slander.

**TASK: Why do you think the largest number of complaints of racial discrimination originate with Aborigines?**

*There are other community groups and committees. Contact the Awabakal Co-op for details. (69-1765)

**Footnote** - Jack Campbell died July 1983.
6.5 ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY OF THE LOWER HUNTER VALLEY

The Newcastle Lower Hunter Area boasts an Aboriginal population upwards of 2,000 people. Typically of an urban area its population is quite complex. Its people often have their roots in other areas and range from people who are traditionally orientated to those who aspire assimilation. The traditionally orientated are usually elderly people who have moved to the area close to their relatives, whilst those aspiring to assimilation are more likely to be people who have had little contact with their own people for many years. Included in this group would be children of mixed marriages whose lives follow that of their white parent (most often a father) who would prefer to deny them their Aboriginal heritage — after all the “white-road” is most often “rosier”. This group would also include people who as children had been brought up by white foster parents and have lost all contact with their people — this was done effectively through the policies of the Aboriginal Welfare Board and more recently Youth and Community Service which deny Aboriginal parents knowledge of, and access to, their children — “in the interest of the children”. (See Ministry publication.)

With the white invasion of the area for the exploitation of timber, coal and pastoral leases the traditional people (Awabakal, Worimi, Wonorua, Darkinung) were intimidated quite early in the piece. So we saw the arrival of missioners to “smooth the dying pillow”. Somewhat fortunately Rev. Threlkeld had more compassion and foresight than many of his contemporaries and although he could not preserve the traditional people as such he was able to have aspects of the culture preserved by his recording of the Awabakal language. To achieve this he relied heavily on Biraban — an outstanding linguist in most people’s terms: he spoke a reported six languages including English. Undoubtedly without him Threlkeld could not have achieved such a remarkable record.

Although the traditional people “passed on” the Aboriginal population of the area is now larger than it has been at any other time this century and is increasing.

These people may be the children/grandchildren of Aborigines who moved to the area from other areas or have moved here themselves. These people therefore have roots in areas as far away as Queensland, Bourke, Walgett, Moree, Lismore, Kempsey, Taree, Sydney and Nowra. Yet they form a community in the Newcastle/Lower Hunter area.

Geographically they are scattered throughout the area. Generally we find a few families in each suburb. More often than not these suburbs are “Housing Commission” areas such as Rutherford, Tenambit, Windale, Toronto or the “lower middle-class” suburbs of Islington, Wickham and Carrington. It is very unlikely that you will find Aboriginal families in the “upper-class” suburbs such as Singleton Heights, Bolwarra, or Ellenmore Vale.

**TASK:** Why do you think that “It’s very unlikely that you will find Aboriginal families in the ‘upper-class’ suburbs?”

Although an Aboriginal Reserve was established near Singleton during the 19th century it has long been resumed so that today the only Aboriginal Reserve is found near Karuah. It is owned by the Aboriginal Lands Trust which was established during the 1970s by the New South Wales government and is a statutory body. Its nine members are elected by Aboriginal voting and they are all Aborigines. The biggest “blot” on this attempt by the New South Wales government to display a degree of “self-determination” is that the Aboriginal Land Trust can be dissolved at any time by the Minister for Health and Community Service. Further its only source of funding is government grants and it therefore depends on the “whims” of the government for its continued existence. This is hardly a chance for self-determination — can you afford to bite the hand that feeds you?

The Awabakal Newcastle Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd was set up by Aborigines and white supporters in 1974 to provide support and a focal point for the ever-increasing Aboriginal population of this region. It provides a welfare service and is involved in social, sporting and cultural activities. These include sponsoring and support for Aboriginal football.

**Footnote** — Aboriginal Lands Trust was abolished under the Land Rights Act 1983.
team, Aboriginal cricket teams and Aboriginal basketball teams — all which have met with a great deal of success in the Newcastle competitions. Its cultural programs include Awabakal Language and Culture courses, visits to and protection of sacred sites, and visits from traditional Elders.

The gains made by the Awabakal Co-operative have been very small — considering the needs of the community and the Co-operative's desire to try and meet these needs by building houses, a medical centre, a pre-school, a cultural centre and a social club. But as has been the case throughout Australia for the past 200 years each small gain by the Aboriginal community has only come through a lot of hard fighting by the Aborigines and their supporters against what could be said at best an apathetic non-Aboriginal community.

N.B. The following extracts from Newcastle papers illustrate the lengths
that the Awabakal Co-operative has had to go to obtain small
concessions from the government.

Why was the action taken?
Do you think the Aborigines were right in this action?

NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS — AWABAKAL TENT

TRIBUNE 30/7/80

Aboriginal Co-operative demands protest for funds

by Donald Dinnen

NEWCASTLE: The Aboriginal Affairs Department last week offered to increase funding to the local Awabakal Aboriginal Co-operative, following a protest in Civic Park opposite the Town Hall.

The money offered by the department was to be subtracted from the grant to another Aboriginal charitable Aborigines and will remain unspent.

The increase was not substantial enough to cover the costs of the Co-operative's operations. It was agreed that the Co-operative's funding would continue at the current level.

The Co-operative had proposed plans which included setting up a permanent cultural centre, a medical service, a pre-school, and an Aboriginal housing authority.

In the absence of a permanent funding agreement, the Co-operative had to rely on a number of ad hoc arrangements to keep its operations running. These arrangements were not sufficient to cover the operational costs of the Co-operative.

In the absence of a permanent funding agreement, the Co-operative had to rely on a number of ad hoc arrangements to keep its operations running. These arrangements were not sufficient to cover the operational costs of the Co-operative.

Sub-human condition

The federal government has virtually destroyed the hopes of the 32 Aboriginal people in the Newcastle area. For example, the N. Co-operative had plans to house human beings, but under government policy only the

New Workers Act, passed in 1969, now requires that all new workers be given the opportunity to receive the same training as those who had previously been employed. So, the N. Co-operative has to be scrapped.

John Smith: “It is not until 50 per cent of Aboriginal workers have been trained, and only then, that Aboriginal workers will be fair and equal.”

The 320,000 NSW New Workers Act, passed in 1969, now requires that all new workers be given the opportunity to receive the same training as those who had previously been employed. So, the N. Co-operative has to be scrapped.

Frank Smith of the NSW Aboriginal Co-operative said: “The new law has been a disaster for Aboriginal workers. It is a form of discrimination against us and it is unfair. The Co-operative has to be scrapped.”
The only other fully Aboriginal organisation in this region is the New South Wales Aboriginal Legal Service Ltd, which has an office in the same premises. They work together, with the legal aid offices handling all matters concerning the legal aid service. The Aboriginal Legal Service was set up because of the disproportionately large number of Aboriginals coming before the courts and being institutionalised.
The following song depicts the plight of Aborigines in relation to the law imposed and carried out by whites.

**PRISON'S NOTHIN' SPECIAL**

(-accompanying tape)

Come listen all you Nungas*
Come listen to my tale
Of our poor down-trodden brothers
A'rotting there in gaol
They've committed no real crime
Apart from being black
Some don't know why they're in there
And they'll probably go back.

CHORUS:

But prison's nothin' special
To any Nunga I know
Cause the white-man makes it prison
Most everywhere we go.

The White-man's way is hard to follow
When you're used to tribal law
And so before you know it
The cops have got you for sure
And then from just the one arrest
Seven convictions can be got
So the poor down-trodden Nungas
Are sent to gaol to rot.

CHORUS:

We'd really like to find out
Just how to apply for bail
But then we cannot raise it
So it's back again to gaol
That's where my story started
And probably will end
So don't be too down-hearted
At least we don't pretend.

CHORUS:

*Nunga - an Aboriginal word for an Aborigine.
Today we find many Aboriginal communities beginning to assert themselves towards a degree of self-determination. Unfortunately the degree of self-determination is limited by government-funding, and this will remain the case until Aboriginal communities have an economic base. This economic base can be provided through Land Rights.

The way that the Aboriginal communities are asserting themselves is by forming into registered organisations which are able, by law, to obtain money directly from the government. Such organisations are companies and co-operative societies. This has only come about since the Department of Aboriginal Affairs was set up after the 1967 Referendum and coincides with the abolition of the Aboriginal Welfare Boards which took away almost all initiative from the Aboriginal people living on reserves, since it brought people up on the "hand-out mentality" e.g. distribution of blankets, decisions made by the Welfare Board etc. In contrast the Department of Aboriginal Affairs espouses a "self-management" policy. Unfortunately for the Aboriginal communities it is little more than a written statement - The Department of Aboriginal Affairs releases funds to the community organisations under very strict conditions, often relating to what the Department of Aboriginal Affairs thinks the Aboriginal communities should have, rather than for what the communities think they should have. It's basically an "enlightened paternalism". Better perhaps than the earlier policies of "extermination" and "assimilation" but falling well short of Aboriginal desires for "self-determination".

Coinciding with the forming of Aboriginal community groups into registered bodies is the ever increasing strengthening of cultural ties. This is often reflected in the registered names of the organisations which often are "tribal" names e.g. Ngaku Co-op Ltd at Kempsey, Djanggadi Tribal Elders near Kempsey, Awabakal Co-op at Newcastle.

These Aboriginal community-based organisations carry out many functions that the Aborigines see as important in their development e.g. housing programs, health programs, cultural programs. They have only actually become registered bodies (companies, co-ops) so that they are eligible for government funding.

ABORIGINAL PRE-SCHOOLS

One of the best examples of a pre-school owned, set-up and run by Aborigines is the Murawine Pre-school in Redfern. It provides Aboriginal children with the opportunity of a pre-school education in an environment conducive to learning, an environment that supports and reinforces their Aboriginality. The children, all Aboriginal, are taught by teachers and teachers assistants who are Aborigines.

Most of the resources used, e.g. readers etc. are based on Aboriginal families in the area; the room decorations etc. include Aboriginal art and artifacts. The child is encouraged to develop a pride in his Aboriginality, a pride that will support him throughout his lifetime.
ABORIGINAL HEALTH/MEDICAL CENTRES

Aboriginal Medical Centres are another example of self-determination through Aborigines setting up their own organisations to meet their needs. Such centres can be found throughout Australia, from Alice Springs to Kempsey to Sydney and reflect the belief by Aborigines that the white system doesn't adequately meet their needs.

These centres engage Aboriginal staff but as there are still no Aborigines who are qualified as doctors they therefore employ non-Aboriginal doctors. However the control of the centres and programmes is in the hands of Aborigines.

TASK: 1. What are the current health statistics of the Australian Aboriginal community? How do they compare with the non-Aboriginal community?
       2. Can you illustrate the health position of the Lower Hunter Aboriginal population?
       3. What is the National Aboriginal and Islander Health Organisation (NAIHO)? How does it operate and what are its objectives?

ABORIGINAL HOUSING COMPANIES

During the past ten years a number of Aboriginal community groups have formed themselves into incorporated Housing Companies. These organisations have assumed responsibility for Aboriginal housing in their areas. These responsibilities include building, renting and maintaining these homes. Such organisations include the Redfern Housing Company in Sydney and the Nga Ku Housing Company at Kempsey.

TASK: 1. Find out how Aboriginal Housing Companies operate.
       2. What advantages do they give to the Aboriginal community?
       3. What other forms of housing are available to the Aboriginal community e.g. Housing Commission.

ABORIGINAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The Aboriginal Development Commission is a statutory body set up by the Commonwealth Government under the Aboriginal Development Act 1980. It has a singular aim - to advance the economic and social well-being of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. It is an organisation presided over by 10 Commissioners who are all Aboriginal appointees. Given the aim as stated above the Commission has the following broad functions:

1. Acquiring land for Aboriginal communities and groups.
2. Lending money to Aboriginals for housing and other purposes.
3. Lending and granting money to Aboriginals for business enterprises.

It has also taken over the Housing Grants In Aid Programme from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

The setting up of the Aboriginal Development Commission was seen as a further step by the Government to advance Aboriginal self-management.

TASK: 1. Who is the present chairman of the Aboriginal Development Commission?
       2. Outline three projects which the Aboriginal Development Commission have been engaged in.
6.7 AWABAKAL NEWCASTLE ABORIGINAL CO-OP LTD

The Awabakal Newcastle Aboriginal Co-op Ltd has its roots extending to 1974 when a small group of Newcastle Aborigines and some non-Aboriginal supporters met to take steps to provide help for the fast-growing Aboriginal population of the area. A population at that time of about 1,000, which was experiencing hardship in finding employment, housing and social outlets. A population which generally had its roots in areas as far away as Moree and Lismore. An Aboriginal people which was geographically outside of its kinship ties and therefore being forced to adapt to an environment which to an extent was new and also often hostile (because of discrimination). Most of these people had moved to Newcastle to escape the deplorable conditions "back home" on the reserves at Brewarrina, Burnt Bridge and Purlfeet.

Amongst the small group of Aboriginal founders of the Co-op were Bill and Robert Smith, who had set up a successful company which still trades under the name of Smith's General Contractors. They were supported by, among others, George Griffiths (who was a member of the Aboriginal Lands Trust, and Aboriginal Advisory Council until its dissolution in 1983) and Kevin Gilbert who came down from Taree to help in the formative stage.

**TASK:**
- What is Smith's General Contractors? How many people does it employ?
- What was the amount of the original capital invested in the company?
- What is the Aboriginal Lands Trust?
- What is the Aboriginal Advisory Council?
- Who elects their members? (contact Awabakal Newcastle Co-op, 69.1785)

The Co-op was formed and embarked on a welfare program of support for the Aboriginal community. However, it was not until it was in the stages of being registered as a Community Advancement Co-operative Society in 1976 that it received government funding.

It was decided to register as a Co-operative Society rather than a Company since the philosophy of co-operative societies (the desire to help each other) was more in line with traditional Aboriginal way of life (companies appear to be highly competitive and inspired by the "profit motive").

The charter of the Awabakal Co-op was deliberately made very broad to include all aspects that the Aboriginal community see as part of community development. It therefore includes the ability to build or acquire and manage housing, health centre, welfare, legal service, educational facilities (including pre-schools), cultural, social and sporting activities.

However, the idealism of the Co-op's charter has never been realised because of lack of government support. For the period 1976-83 the Co-op has made submissions to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to obtain funding for a large number of projects including those above. The only funding it had been able to attract was for limited welfare, cultural and sporting activities. This has been a continual denying of funds to meet the needs of Newcastle Aborigines for improved housing, health, employment, education and cultural activities. It illustrates the continuing frustration that Aborigines have in their battle for survival as a people.

Here the current Newcastle-Lower Hunter Aboriginal population of 3,000 or 1,000 has only the following gains:

- A social welfare service provided by a Field Officer and a Secretary.
- Cultural Activities including Awabakal Language Course, Cultural Camps and visits to traditional sites.
- Sporting activities including Woman's Basketball teams, Men's Cricket teams, the associated Newcastle All-Blacks Football Club.
- Sporting events including performances by Traditional Dances and other National Aboriginal Day Sports Carnival, National Aboriginal Four Day, Children's Christmas Party and discos etc.
- A Community Legal Section - an area office of the New South Wales Aboriginal Legal Service which works in conjunction with Awabakal.
(f) "Awabakal Voices": a 1 hour per week programme on radio station 2NUR-FM. The programme is on Aboriginal issues, music, culture, politics and sport, as well as progress reports on activities of the Awabakal Co-operative.

(g) The protection of traditional sites through private surveys for such agencies as the Housing Commission of New South Wales. The Co-op carries out its survey of areas of proposed development to determine exact location of traditional sites and then makes recommendations to the authorities to ensure their protection. A good example was the Awabakal Survey of the proposed Kerrabee Dam area. The Co-op located several hundred traditional sites and the dam proposal was subsequently abandoned by the New South Wales Government - although it cannot be exactly determined as to how significant the Co-op's findings were to effect the Government's decision.

In April 1983 the Awabakal Newcastle Aboriginal Co-op Ltd took possession of by lease, the former Wickham Infants School building. It plans to establish in this building:

1. an Aboriginal Health Centre;
2. an Aboriginal Resources Centre and "Keeping-Place";
3. a Home-work/Study Centre;
4. Administrative Offices for Awabakal Co-op;
5. Administrative Offices for Aboriginal Legal Service.

TASK: 1. Describe the Awabakal Aboriginal Health Centre - its function and the types of programmes it operates.
2. What is an Aboriginal Resources Centre and "Keeping-Place"?
3. What services does the Homework/Study Centre provide and why would there be a need for these services?
3,000 to 4,000 people from many different areas. People whose descendents were forced off tribal lands and moved onto reserves. Although in some cases "reconciliant" farmers allowed small family groups to stay on the "new farmland", these Aboriginal people of the Newcastle area are scattered throughout a great number of suburbs and small towns, around Newcastle, the Lake, Port Stephens and the Lower Hunter towns. A large proportion are living in the housing commission areas such as Windale, Toronto, Raymond Terrace and Tamambit.

Others are living in private accommodation under leasing arrangements, with very few living in their own homes or buying. Threlkeld's mission stations have long since disappeared and the only reserve in the area is Karuah - 25 miles north of Newcastle along the Pacific Highway.

What proportion of the Aboriginal population in this area lives in
(a) Housing Commission homes
(b) Private (leasing) homes
(c) Own/Buying their homes?

Because they come from so many different tribal areas there are many differences amongst the Aboriginal people of this region. Some are more traditionally orientated than others - they have descended from people who were more isolated from white contact that those living originally in the Sydney/Newcastle areas. Thus they have more traditional emphasis in their lives - they will periodically eat "bush-tucker" e.g. pippis, wallaby, porcupine, or goanna. They may still speak their own language in private e.g. Gumbainggar (amongst the people from the Nambucca Heads area). And they will certainly respect traditional law and culture in its application to their every day life in the city. (The last full-scale initiations on the coast of New South Wales took place some forty years ago - some of the older people now living in this region were involved.)

Others will be descendents of people who were moved onto reserves over 100 years ago. Some of these would have passed through a transition phase and would have adopted most aspects of the white culture. Thus their children, the adults of the past and present generation would be more articulate and knowledgeable about the white system. These are the people who we find are more prominent in the Aboriginal organisations e.g. Kevin Anderson, the past president of the Awabakal Co-op. However the guiding lights within most organisations are still the old people - who have experience and wisdom acquired over many years.

Yet another group exists. These are basically "assimilated" Aborigines who have learnt how to cope with the white society (by turning a blind eye and deaf ear to the everyday discrimination etc?) and are quite happy with their lot. Most likely they have a white spouse and bringing their children up, hoping that they will not have to face the same problems and choices that their parents did. Unfortunately they will. The whole situation will not improve much within the next 30 years given that the current programs in health, employment, housing, education and culture are all grossly under-funded. Two examples to illustrate this point are Purfleet and Burnt Bridge. In each of these communities the current needs for housing will be met (at current rates) in 20 years time. However, since half the Aboriginal population today is 15 years or under, things in 20 years time will be no better than today - there is no improvement in housing. Without good housing you cannot sustain good health, acquire a good education and hence good employment. It is therefore a vicious cycle.

Vicious Cycle of Poverty

"The only answer is to give them back their Land Rights and let them...." Because a White Man Will Never Do It.
The Land Rights movement is quite recent and comes with the re-assertion of Aboriginal identity. The feeling amongst most Aboriginal communities is that Land Rights is the only answer in the quest for self determination.

What is "Land Rights"?

At the moment there is no single definition of Land Rights for Aborigines, even though many Land Rights movements have emerged during the 1970s.

The issue is further clouded by different interpretations by the government in the Northern Territory, S.A. and N.S.W. which have passed Land Rights Bills in their respective states.

In August 1980 a "Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly Upon Aborigines" released its 1st Report to the Parliament of New South Wales, on Aboriginal Land Rights. It gave a further interpretation of Land Rights and how they should be implemented.

For more than 40,000 years Australian Aborigines lived in harmony with the fragile environment of their Island. Their complex rules of behaviour and intimate personal relationship with the land protected and nurtured them for two thousand generations. Then the Americans won their War of Independence and thus began a sequence of events that were to be disastrous for the original Australians.

Deprived of their transatlantic prison, the British turned their thoughts to the Pacific. Cook's dramatic discovery was debased as a penal colony and 40,000 years of Aboriginal occupancy and ownership retreated before the combined onslaught of white greed and expediency.

The white colonialists took the Aboriginal's land without acknowledgement and without treaties or compensation.

The people who had lived for thousands of years along the shores of the beautiful coastline almost vanished - wiped out by murder, disease and above all by the loss of their beloved, sacred land. The Aborigines of the mountains and the western plains fared little better. They too became victims of the process of genocide of which the Tasmanian Aborigines were the most horrific example.

Today, the citizens of New South Wales live on Aboriginal land in affluence, whilst the Aborigines live in poverty. Aboriginal children die because of this. Elderly Aborigines are a rarity. Their housing is often sub-standard and overcrowded. Their unemployment rate is high, their health and educational standards low.

Small wonder then, that the Aborigines of New South Wales are today demanding justice, compensation and acknowledgement.

Nearly two hundred years later the citizens of New South Wales have a unique opportunity to right a terrible wrong. The first State to dispossess the Aborigines of their land can be the first to repay a debt nearly two hundred years overdue.

White acknowledgement of black land rights may be the essential ingredient needed to break the vicious circle of poverty. With the support of people of good-will and humanity, justice for the Aboriginal people of this State can become a reality in our time."

Maurice Keane, M.P.: Forward to "1980 Parliament of New South Wales Aboriginal Land Rights and Sacred and Significant Sites".

**DISK:** Do you think the above Forward is a good summary of the Aboriginal/White Australian history? Why or why not?

The Committee stresses that recognition to Aboriginal right to land be based on prior ownership, tradition, needs and compensation. It is on these four points that the Aboriginal community feel strongly about Land Rights.

"Because a White Man'll Never Do It" - Kevin J. Gilbert, Angus and Robertson, 1973.

*Although an issue for over 150 years.*
Forms of Land rights have been granted to other peoples conquered by the British e.g. the Indians of U.S.A. and Canada, and the Maoris of New Zealand.

No such treaties have been signed between the Aboriginal people and the Australian (or British) Governments. But today, more than ever before the issue has gained prominence. A non-Aboriginal committee has been formed on the National level to press for the signing of a Treaty and its recognition of Aboriginal Land Rights. Its members include such prominent Australians as Mr H. Coombs a former Governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia and top advisor to governments regarding Aboriginal Affairs.

Similarly the National Aboriginal Conference has pressed the Australian government to acknowledge a "Treaty of Commitment" (Makarrata) which would guarantee Aboriginal Land Rights and compensation.

(See Addenda for copy of Makarrata proposal)

Given these initiatives the Land Rights issue will become increasingly the most important single concern regarding the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal people. It can provide the answer to the vicious cycle of poverty and appears as the one humane act which can help overcome the deprivations suffered continuously by the Aboriginal people for the pass 200 years.

Awabakal Newcastle Aboriginal Co-op Ltd - The Land Rights

ISSUE: The Awabakal were amongst the first traditional people forced off their land and were the first to be restricted to reserves. Today to the 2,000-2,500 Aborigines of the local area Land Rights is as important as it is to traditional people still on their own lands. It can provide the control needed to protect sacred and significant sites, and it can provide an economic base to start towards self-determination. The Co-op, recognising the intricacies of the Land Rights question and a subsequent treaty, formulated the following submission on Land Rights which suggests steps which should be taken in pursuing the issue.

Submission on Land Rights to the New South Wales Parliamentary Select Committee Upon Aborigines

The New South Wales Government should follow the following submission in providing Land Rights to the rightful owners of New South Wales.

Land Rights
(1) A freeze on the sale, and/or lease, and/or transfer of ownership of all crown lands in New South Wales until the land rights issue is resolved in a manner satisfactory to New South Wales Aborigines.
(2) A freeze on all mining and/or "development" on lands which may possess significant Aboriginal sites until the land rights issue is resolved in a manner satisfactory to the New South Wales Aborigines. These lands are to be determined by an all-aboriginal investigative committee comprising New South Wales elders, local Aboriginal identities and procuring advisory services of non-Aborigines as needed e.g. Parks and Wildlife Officers.
(3) The provision of funds to enable the setting up and operating of a New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council and subsidiary regional Land Councils to formulate the claims and determine the basis of land holding for Aborigines in New South Wales. The funds would have to be adequate to allow the Councils access to solicitors, barristers and other personnel as they see fit to employ. Funding should be guaranteed indefinitely. The formation of the Land Councils could be carried out by a group comprising the existing New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, the NSW Aboriginal Advisory Council, NSW N.R.C. representatives, the NSW Aboriginal barristers, the Aborigines advisory to the NSW Parliamentary Select Committee and the Aboriginal elders in New South Wales.
(4) Following the setting up of the regional and state Land Councils and after sufficient time has elapsed to enable a state-wide policy to be formulated by the councils working in co-operation with their communities (the time be referred to the Councils) the implementation of this policy on Land Rights should be initiated.
The importance of Land Rights to present and future generations of Australia is such that it is an issue that can only be settled properly after a great deal of research and discussion by all parties concerned, to requote Mr Maurice Keane, M.P.: "Nearly 200 years later the citizens of New South Wales have a unique opportunity to right a terrible wrong."

Land Rights will provide the economic basis for self-determined growth for the Aboriginal community in Newcastle as well as throughout Australia. It will restore control of traditional and sacred sites to the true guardians and will enable cultural programs such as have been undertaken by the Awabaka Newcastle Aboriginal Co-op to be expanded. In short, it provides the real answer to the survival of Aboriginal identity.

M.S.W. ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS ACT, 1983

This Act, which passed through Parliament during the Autumn session 1983, did so amidst strong opposition from the Aboriginal community.

The opposition stemmed from the belief that the Act is insufficient in its objective of providing Land Rights for Aborigines in New South Wales. The Act recognised "prior ownership" of the land by Aborigines but fell well short of the "Keane Committee's" recommendation to grant Land Rights on the basis of "prior ownership, tradition, needs and compensation".

Basically the Act only hands over the former Aboriginal Reserves (as held by the Aboriginal Lands Trust of New South Wales at March 1983), which only amounts to some 4,400 hectares.

Additionally it allows Aborigines, through Land Councils set up under the Act, to claim unused Crown Land. However these claims will be heard in a special court and then rulings will only favour Aborigines if the government (at whatever level) determines that it has no future use for such lands.

The Act does not allow Aboriginal claims to any "private land", irregardless of such lands having sacred sites etc. on them.

Also the Act provides Aborigines with only limited mineral rights on what under the Act becomes Aboriginal land - rights to coal, petroleum, gold and silver are reserved to the Crown.

Further there is no real provision to enable Aborigines to legally gather "bush-tucker" - there are no hunting, fishing and gathering rights. These rights are not even provided on the so-called Aboriginal lands, yet alone on the land still alienated from the Aboriginal people.

The Act provides for a compensation payment of 7½% of the Land Tax collected by the New South Wales Government over the next 14 years. It is estimated that this will amount to about $300 million. The Act stipulates that this compensation payment shall be used to pay for the administration costs of the Land Councils set up under the Act and also to enable the purchase of additional lands and then setting up of economic enterprises. The Aboriginal community in voicing its opposition to this point has stressed that $300 million is hardly compensation for the theft of land, destruction of culture and the atrocities committed continually to Aborigines of this state throughout the past 200 years.

At the same time as the Land Rights Act passed through Parliament the New South Wales Government introduced a subsequent Act which was designed to legalise the up till then illegal revocation of Aboriginal Reserves during the period 1916 to 1983. This illegal revocation, under its own legal system, occurred as subsequent governments since World War 1 resumed land that had been previously "Reserved for Aborigines". This happened as governments found uses for these lands and in order to resume it often moved the Aborigines from these lands to other reserves. In all, some 10,000 hectares were illegally severed during this period. For the Government to turn around and legislate
Aboriginal Land Rights Legislation

THE NSW government proposes to give land rights to Aborigines aimed at providing some redress for two centuries of dispossession and neglect inflicted on Aborigines.

The NSW Attorney General and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Frank Walker, said "The government believes land rights will provide the necessary foundations upon which NSW Aboriginal people can rebuild their shattered culture, leading to restoration of the dignity and pride which should rightfully be theirs."

"Only through ownership of land", he said, "can the proper economic bases be provided to promote self-determination for Aborigines."

Support for land rights for Aborigines has been far-reaching. The land legislation reflecting modern thinking on land rights was introduced by the Commonwealth government in 1975. Virtually all parties and governments in Australia are pledged to introduce land rights.

International organisations, major churches, the trade union movement and the business community have also indicated their support for the legitimate demands of the Aboriginal people for land, and compensation for dispossession where land claims are not granted.

There is considerable evidence to support the benefits of land rights in Australia and the entire community. The reports of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Peoples, gathered together research which demonstrated the close link between land rights and significant improvements in welfare, health and housing, and a decline in alcoholism.

The major features of the proposed legislation are:

- The NSW government will allocate about $11 million per year to buy land for Aborigines. This amount is equal to 7% of the NSW government's land tax revenue. It will be set aside each year for 20 years to provide a fund enabling Aboriginal communities to acquire and develop land and to meet administrative costs.
- All title to land now held by the NSW Aboriginal Lands Trust (430 ha) is to be transferred to Local Aboriginal Land Councils.
- All Aborigines living within a particular geographical area will be members of a Council. Councils will be responsible for the management, use, control and development of lands and community enterprises.
- Claims by Aborigines to Crown land will be granted only if the land claimed is not lawfully held or occupied, has not been granted or likely to be needed for essential public purposes. Any disputes will be resolved by the Land and Environment Court.
- There will be no right to claim private lands. Aboriginal Land Councils will have the right to purchase private lands on the open market using funds provided by the Act.
- Aboriginal Land Councils will receive freehold title to all lands transferred to them. To ensure the land remains with Aborigines, should the land be sold, mortgaged or transferred, although it may be leased.
- Title to Aboriginal lands will include the right to all minerals except gold, silver, coal and petroleum. Aboriginal Councils will have absolute right to refuse permission for exploitation and mining of their land for other minerals. Where approval is given to mining the parties will negotiate the payment of royalties.
- The Bill will not affect existing mineral rights.
- Annual rates and charges will be payable for services provided on Aboriginal land. Land will not be permitted to be sold for non-payment of rates or charges.
- The Pastoral Protection Board or other controlling authorities may arrange access for stock with Aboriginal Land Councils until claim forming part of a Travelling Stock Reserve.
- Local Aboriginal Land Councils will have the right to negotiate agreements to permit access on public and private lands for the purposes of hunting, fishing and gathering.

To assist the community to discuss the issues a Green Paper has been released containing the draft legislation and an explanation of the proposals. Copies of the Green Paper are available from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, 47 Macquarie Street, Sydney.

Facts on Health

For an Aboriginal in rural NSW, average life expectancy is 52 years, 20 years less than a non-Aboriginal. Most of their land has severely undermined the health and morals of a once healthy and proud people with more than 40,000 years of living in a harsh environment.

A five-year project of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs will spend $550 million on providing clean water, sewerage and electricity to Aborigines throughout Australia.

Direct spending on Aboriginal health services in 1981-82 was $21.8 million, one quarter of which went to medical services controlled by Aboriginal communities.

More information about Aboriginal health can be found in a health education pamphlet "Aboriginal Health and Lifestyle" published by the Australian Medical Association in 1982. Free copies may be obtained from the AIA, 37 Anondel Street, Glebe, NSW 2037.

"Genocide" by U7 Mob
(accompanying tape)
ABORIGINES OF THE HUNTER REGION
1. PREAMBLE

The N.S.W. Department of Education has established Aboriginal Education as one of its curriculum development priorities for 1984. Aboriginal Education is concerned with:

- programmes that will enable all students to develop a better understanding and appreciation of Aborigines, the indigenous people of Australia, their culture, and
- programmes that will assist the development and learning of Aboriginal students.

2. RATIONALE

2.1 There is a need for all students to have some understanding and appreciation of the various cultures within our multicultural society, particularly the culture of the first Australians, the Aborigines.

2.2 There is a need to provide Aboriginal students with the opportunities to develop the skills necessary to participate effectively in the present day Australian society.

2.3 It is N.S.W. Government Policy that the advancement of Aboriginal communities and better appreciation of Aboriginal culture and society both be given URGENT PRIORITY.

3. THE BROAD AIMS OF THIS ABORIGINAL EDUCATION POLICY

The aims of Aboriginal education are to develop programmes that

3.1 - will assist students and staff to develop a positive attitude towards Aborigines;

3.2 - will provide opportunities for all students and staff to gain an understanding and appreciation of Aborigines and their culture both past and present;

3.3 - will contain, in areas of investigating, communicating and expressing, where possible, an Aboriginal perspective;

3.4 - will assist Aboriginal students in developing a sense of identity and self esteem (Aboriginality);

3.5 - will provide opportunities for Aboriginal students to develop competency in all the skills of living in our community;

3.6 - will encourage Aboriginal students and their parents to adopt a positive attitude towards the school as a means of gaining knowledge and skills needed for effective participation in Australian society.

4. THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

4.1 To be aware that Aboriginal people are the indigenous people of Australia.

4.2 To provide a knowledge of Aboriginal history, lore, languages, crafts, dancing and music.

4.3 To eliminate commonly held adverse concepts.

4.4 To work towards ending discrimination and intolerance.

4.5 To consider Australian history from the Aboriginal point of view.

4.6 To develop the self esteem of the Aboriginal child in the school situation.
4.7 To involve Aboriginal members of the community as resource people.

4.8 To assist the Aboriginal child in developing a pride in himself/herself as a part of the continuum of Aboriginal history and culture.

5. HOW CAN THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY BE ACHIEVED: IMPLEMENTATION:

The Policy can be implemented in a variety of ways:

5.1 through separate study by investigating:
   (a) Traditional Culture (Pre-European contact)
       *Ref KIT pp57-98.
   (b) Transitional Culture (1788-Contemporary)
       *Ref KIT pp99-130.
   (c) Contemporary Culture (Present lifestyles)
       *Ref KIT pp131-150

5.2 through a multidisciplinary approach3 e.g. Aboriginal Art, Cooking, Music etc.

5.3 through an Aboriginal perspective injected into the curriculum. This refers to the infusion into the curriculum of a general sensitivity to, and awareness of, Aboriginal culture and society, either in the form of an Aboriginal viewpoint or the infusion of Aboriginal content.

5.4 through the sensitive efforts of teachers who have Aboriginal students in their classes.

5.5 through maintaining contact with Aboriginal parents and encouraging them to participate in school activities.

6. RESOURCES

The achievement of the aims of this Policy rests largely on the attitude and skills of the teacher and the resources used. Teachers should ensure that resources used by their students do not reinforce the negative stereotypes of Aboriginal people that have dominated, and are still present in many publications. The support document on resources, is a useful guide. A special reference in the Hunter Region is the Kit "ABORIGINALS OF THE HUNTER REGION"

7. EVALUATION

Evaluation is an ongoing process and should take place at all levels of implementation.

The Policy as a whole should be evaluated progressively.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Memorandum to Principals 84-009 (S183).
2. R.J. Mulock, Minister for Education. "Aboriginal Education Policy".
4. There is a good range of resources listed in Hunter Region Kit.
5. There is a series of support documents available.
   1. Aboriginal Education Policy.
   2. Guidelines for Teaching Aboriginal Studies.
   3. Aboriginal Australians: A Preliminary Chronology.
   4. The Effects of Culture Contact on Aboriginal Australia.
   5. Strategies for Teaching Aboriginal Children.
   6. Resources in Aboriginal Studies.
**IMPLEMENTATION:** Example of study through Traditional, Transitional and Contemporary Cultures. Refer to 5.1 of policy.

- **AUSTRALIAN HISTORY - An Alternative Approach**

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<th><strong>KEY TERMS</strong></th>
<th><strong>SUGGESTED CONTENT AND ACTIVITIES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In the beginning</strong></td>
<td>Dreaming</td>
<td>Read and discuss creation stories from the Dreaming, ref. p. 7. Lore p. 54.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>creation</td>
<td>Explore the idea of myths as history, using myths which refer to historical events such as active volcanoes and the changing coast line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>myth</td>
<td>Emphasise importance of the Dreaming as embodiment of history, law and religion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ancestors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>According to the scientists</strong></td>
<td>Theory</td>
<td>Look at scientific theories and evidence concerning:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>evidence</td>
<td>the land pp. 9-14, activities p. 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>continent</td>
<td>the animals pp. 3-6; effects of Culture Contact, pp. 5-7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>extinct</td>
<td>arrival of people in Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>migration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupation and Adaptation</strong></td>
<td>occupation</td>
<td>Stress the long term and extensive occupation of Australia by Aboriginal people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>territory</td>
<td>Regional studies demonstrating the diversity of different groups, e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>environment</td>
<td>Compare coastal people with one other group in areas such as:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>adaptation</td>
<td>- environment-WORIMI pp. 18-36 Activities pp. 50-56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>diversity</td>
<td>- food-AWABAKAL pp. 37-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- gathering and hunting methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- tools and weapons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ceremonies/art/legends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visitors to Australia</strong></td>
<td>motive</td>
<td>* The Macassans, their contact with the influence on Aboriginal culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>commerce</td>
<td>** The Europeans, their motives and attitudes (good opportunity for document study).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>materialism</td>
<td>Able groups could discuss 'Great chain of being' and 'Noble Savage' concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two different societies</strong></td>
<td>cultivation</td>
<td>*Effect of Culture Contact p. 9; Aboriginal Australia - a preliminary chronology p. 3; **pp. 99-111.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>property</td>
<td>Refer to index for Aboriginal society study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>status</td>
<td>Traditional Aboriginal society, pp. 57-93.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>urban</td>
<td>Traditional Tribal Organisation: pp. 16, 17, 21, 23, 41, 57, 53, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 72, 75, 76, 81, 89, 94, 105, 107, 135-137, 142, 143.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>industrial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>national</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- land ownership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- land management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- crime and punishment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- social welfare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IMPLEMENTATION: Example of Multidisciplinary Approach. Refer to 5.2 of Policy.

THEME: "WATER" (Workshop Group)

FOCUS QUESTION: How did water influence Aboriginal lifestyle?
The group suggests degree of difficulty of activities should be decided by the ability of your class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum Area</th>
<th>Suggested Recording Methods</th>
<th>Suggested Content/Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NATURAL SCIENCE</td>
<td>Skills, Projects, Models, Mapping, Diorama, Research, Reports, Graphs</td>
<td>Coastal, inland rivers, lakes, billabongs, warrambools, seas - research. What foods came from water? Food sources: WORIMI p.22, AWABAKAL p.39. How has emphasis on water usage changed today? crops/fishing/industrial Signs traditional people used to point to water - methods of conservation. Why were Aboriginal people able to find water where non-Aboriginals couldn't? What skills did Aboriginal people develop around warrambools? - tracking, snares, nets, fishing traps, e.g. Brewarrina - lines, hooks, bark canoes, fish spears. Did Aboriginal people carry water when travelling? HUNTING, FISHING, FOOD, IMPLEMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL SCIENCE</td>
<td>Listing, Labelling, Interpreting</td>
<td>Did Aboriginal people help/hinder explorers in finding water? - see index. Use of water today - pleasure, food, transport. Compare Murray River - 40,000 to 80,000 years of Aboriginal usage with results of only 200 years of non-Aboriginal use. MUNGO EXCAVATION p.9. Aboriginal children's games - mud slides, swimming, learning to catch water born foods. Visit to nearest dam or water conservation centre. Recreation - see index.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANGUAGE</td>
<td>Writing legends, Poems, Reports</td>
<td>Listing Aboriginal words for rivers, towns, waterholes. Language - see index. Meanings of these. What do we learn from myths and legends? Look at legends and Dreamtime stories featuring water - e.g. Molok (other names given) The Thirsty Frog. Stories of origin of Narran Lakes (Langloh-Parker collection). Writing reports, stories, poems. Lore - see index, esp. pp.84-87.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATED ARTS</td>
<td>Writing music.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Area</td>
<td>Suggested Recording</td>
<td>Suggested Content/Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSIC DANCE</td>
<td>Composition of dance</td>
<td>Did Aborigines perform rain dances? Compose dance about origin of nearest body of water to your school. Listen to tapes of Aboriginal music. Compose music, perform at Assemblies. The Hunter.Sirocco.Demonstration Tape (Musica Viva Programme)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONSERVATION</td>
<td>Experiments with water conservation - record results.</td>
<td>How was lifestyle dictated by availability of water? How were roles and responsibilities decided? What methods were used to trap water?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESOURCES:**

- "Aboriginal Bark Canoes"
- "Aboriginal Fisheries of the Barwon" - Peter Dargin
- "The Aboriginal Way of Life" - John Ferry
- "Kamilaroi"
- "Our People" series - Methuen
- Film from National Parks and Wildlife.
- Slide Sets
- Selected Dreamtime Stories
- "Aboriginal Fisheries of the Barwon" - Peter Dargin
- "Our People" series - Methuen
- National Parks and Wildlife
- Film - Dreaming Today
- Wild Food - Cribb
- Wild Medicine
### IMPLEMENTATION: Example of infusion of Aboriginal Perspective into existing curriculum. Refer to 5.3 of policy.

AN ADAPTATION OF THE HUNTER REGION CORE CONTENT CURRICULUM - MATRIX OF THE UPPER HUNTER WHOLE SCHOOL PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PEOPLE OF THE UPPER HUNTER</th>
<th>ORGANISING OURSELVES</th>
<th>CULTURE AND HERITAGE</th>
<th>MYSELF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K Where does my family get its food? Food (index)</td>
<td>What do people in my home do?</td>
<td>What are the special days in our family?</td>
<td>Who am I? pp.133-134 Aboriginaly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A study of the roles played by people in the home and the school.</td>
<td>Initiation p.77 (Index)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ceremonies (Index)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 What kind of homes do we have? Why? Trad. Dwellings (Index)</td>
<td>Who helps us and why?</td>
<td>What signifies my country?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A study of homes in the town - materials used, etc.</td>
<td>A study of essential services provided in the town</td>
<td>A study of Australiana - Flora, fauna, Flag, anthem, places of interest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 What is my environment like?</td>
<td>Why do we have rules? Annandale</td>
<td>Who were the first Australians? How do my friends and I grow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A study of the town or village.</td>
<td>A study of family rules, Handout</td>
<td>A study of the local Aboriginal and change?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 What are our needs and how do we satisfy them?</td>
<td>How and why are communities organised? Tribal Organisation (Index)</td>
<td>What is Australia like?</td>
<td>How do I interact with those around me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting Fishing (Index)</td>
<td>A study of people's basic needs. The Local Community</td>
<td>A study of the physical environment, states and population distribution</td>
<td>Who are my friends?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A study of people's basic needs. The Local Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What does the river mean to us? The Hunter Valley.</td>
<td>What importance have rivers played in the establishment of communities in Australia? Major River Systems of NSW.</td>
<td>How did our nation begin?</td>
<td>What makes a good citizen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A study of the First White settlers. Study Abor. Pre-History-creation myths</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 What are our primary industries and why do we have them? Hunter-Gatherers, p.16,17</td>
<td>How are decisions made in my community? Tribal Structure p.57</td>
<td>Who are some famous Australians and why are they famous?</td>
<td>How are beliefs and values determined?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A study of the Local Council and how it operates.</td>
<td>Include Aboriginals</td>
<td>Include Aboriginal beliefs/values</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AN ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVE IN THE CURRICULUM

In the Primary School

One of the aims of Aboriginal Education stated in Support Document No.1 is "to ensure that the school curriculum contains an Aboriginal perspective" (2.5).

A problem facing teachers at this stage is that support material for adding an Aboriginal perspective to the various secondary subjects is available in only some subjects e.g. Science. It is still in the writing stage for other subjects.

This document outlines some ideas for adding an Aboriginal perspective and includes extracts from other documents offering suggestions. These documents provide much more guidance than is offered in this summary. Teachers would be well advised to look more closely at the documents related to their particular subject areas.

ENGLISH:

"Aims of Teaching Aboriginal Studies in English.

The aims statement of "developing the utmost personal competence (of students) in the use of their language" and the concepts of activity, relevance and the value of starting from the personal language and experience of the individual would allow for the introduction of an Aboriginal studies perspective in English lessons.

It would be important for teachers to be made aware of the need for doing this. Aboriginal English is a viable and relevant form of communication. However, Aboriginal people accept that skills in standard English are necessary for participation in the wider Australian society.

These syllabus aims are not only compatible with the aims of the Aboriginal Education Policy; they are positive and supportive of it."


NOTE: Aboriginal Language tape now being prepared for "Aborigines of the Hunter Region" Kit.

Areas where an Aboriginal perspective can be incorporated - some ideas.

Drama:
- mime, role-play, drama related to contemporary as well as traditional situations.

Writing:
- creative writing, symbolic communication (signs).

Language:
- place names, street names, oral story telling, language structure, oral language, body language.

Literature:
- Dreamtime stories, Aboriginal poets and authors. See also an "Aboriginal Art and Literature Unit" by Lindsay Freeman.

MATHEMATICS:

This is an area where the way to add an Aboriginal perspective does not appear to be obvious. However, the Aboriginal Education Unit is preparing a support document in this area.

An Aboriginal perspective could be incorporated into Primary Science programs by working towards the achievement of the following broad objectives relating to this major objective:

1. to be aware that different cultures have different perceptions of the environment;
2. to understand that these cultures in consequence use their environments differently.
More specifically Science programs could be devised to ensure that students -
a) gain an understanding of the development of Australia and its people;
b) investigate methods used to chronicle Aboriginal history;
c) explore different ways of describing the environment;
d) investigate the relationship between people and their environment;
e) understand the role of religion as a major influence in looking at the environment.

In the Music Syllabus, the areas of performance, creative activities and listening would seem to be appropriate areas of musical activity to which an Aboriginal perspective could be added.

"A list of possible topics which is not prescriptive or exhaustive to be taught in Music includes:
- music in everyday life
- music for dancing
- non-western music
- Australian music
- music of the countryside
- music of primitive communities (a misleading description to be replaced)
- music of the sea
- contemporary pop music
- music for ceremonial occasions.

All of these topics could benefit from an emphasis on Aboriginal music. Some other suggestions are -
- traditional rhythms
- Contemporary Aboriginal country-western; use of modern instruments, modification of "rock" e.g. Aboriginal bands such as Country Outcasts, No Fixed Address and Us Mob.
- instrument characteristics - tone, patterns on the instruments, materials used in construction, qualities of hard timber
- making instruments:
  * Didgeridoo - the long cardboard tubes inside rolls of fabric can be painted to make didgeridoo.
  * Clapping sticks of different lengths; old broom handles cut to size and decorated make pleasant sounding tap sticks or clapping sticks.
  * Use of boomerangs.
  * Rattles (Cape York, Torres Strait Islands)
  * Drums (Cape York, Torres Strait Islands)
- Aboriginal musicians - Harold Blair (Opera) and Jimmy Little (Country).
- develop music and movement related to animal studies;
- music - traditional forms and contemporary forms;
- study why music is important in traditional and contemporary society;
- songs from particular areas; students make up own songs about events in their school lives;
- Kodaly exercises for rhythm - use sticks for instruments;
- making instruments - the use and development of instruments (rocks, shells, sticks)
- tribal songs and singing games (e.g. "Songs of Torres Strait Aboriginal Artists Agency)."

(Extract from - Draft Materials - Bathurst 2/83)
"Some suggestions for incorporating an Aboriginal perspective in P.E. and Health are as follows:

**Traditional and Contemporary Sports**

* Spear throwing: accuracy, balance, grip control, distance, aim, strength - body weight in comparison with distance thrown - person height as opposed to distance.

* Ball throwing: class could use a ball made from natural fibres or materials available. Aiming skills.

* Football: - using real or simulated animal skins, natural fibres; - using commercially available footballs, playing code games. - A variation on a game: kick ball to rebound off a tree or post and score when it lands in a particular, predetermined spot.

* Running - sprint and long distance, chasings.

* Wrestling - to develop strength, stamina and skills.

* Boomerang throwing - returning type and to hit an object (hunting) type.

* Boxing.

* Tennis

* "Knuckles" - bones or pebbles

Use Aboriginal music as background to movement and games.

* Breath control - didgeridoo - running, swimming - all breath control skills involved in all physical activities. Oxygen into the body - air warm going in (in through the nose out through the mouth).

Most of the traditional Aboriginal games were to prepare children for the activities of later life.

* Dance Rhythm - interpretation of movement. Study dances. Corroborees and their meanings: they were part of particular religious or other significant events of the day.

* Movement - using space - movement of various levels e.g. imitation of hunting, stalking etc.

Obstacle course activities to develop endurance, fitness and flexibility.

Group physical tasks to develop group cohesion and identity e.g. getting an object out of a tree and then putting it back designed as a task no individual could do alone, and a co-operative task to cross a space using a given number of logs.

**HEALTH**

"Balanced diet: Aboriginal traditional food are high fibre and low fat. They are healthier than highly processed, refined foods. The implications of refined foods for ill health. Avoid the stereotype that all contemporary Aboriginal people suffer from ill-health.

Bush medicine in comparison to western medicine.

Study traditional health. Then change of health with culture contact. e.g. An Aboriginal person in a tribal situation consuming bush tucker being put on a reserve and living on refined flour johnny cakes and sugar.
Introduce Aboriginal Health Workers to discuss social issues such as alcoholism (which is a problem throughout Australian society) to avoid stereotyping Aboriginal people."

(Extract from - Draft materials - Bathurst 2/83)

CRAFT:

In both Technics and Home Science there is a deficiency in support materials at this stage. Some suggestions are:

- Make weapons/tools using only native materials.
- Examine 'balance' of spears, woomera, boomerang.
- Methods of 'finishing' tools e.g. spears, so no splinters spoil thrower's aim.
- Make string bags, nets, etc.
- Look at ways contemporary Aboriginal people have adapted modern materials for use in traditional tools - e.g. steel wire for prongs in fishing spears, glass as spearpoints.
STRATEGIES: SOCIAL STUDIES

A SUGGESTED PROCEDURE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

This process can also be applied to other subject areas.

A SUGGESTED PROCEDURE FOR ADDING AN ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVE TO YOUR SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES PLAN.

A. Acquaint your staff and community with the INVESTIGATING SOCIAL STUDIES (K-6) CURRICULUM POLICY STATEMENT
   ABORIGINAL EDUCATION POLICY and
   GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING ABORIGINAL STUDIES
   Schools which have Aboriginal students should take special note of the support document: STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING ABORIGINAL CHILDREN.

B. Critically examine your current Social Studies School Plan to identify those units in the compulsory core which
   1. study a specific Aboriginal cultural group;
   2. include an Aboriginal perspective;
   3. offer scope for adding an Aboriginal perspective.

C. Refer back to:
   1. The Aims of Aboriginal Education 2.1.1 to 2.1.6
      (Aboriginal Education Policy, p.2).
   2. Considerations for the School 3.3.1 to 3.3.4.6
      (Aboriginal Education Policy, p.4).
   3. Content Guidelines for Aboriginal Studies
      (Guidelines for Teaching Aboriginal Studies, p.16).

D. List:
   1. Aims, Considerations and Content which are already provided for in your compulsory core.
   2. Aims, Considerations and Content which could be covered by using suitable resources, additional contributing questions or a change in the wording of the focus question.

E. Identify:
   Units NOT in the core which, if added to the core, could contribute to the achievement of the Aims of Aboriginal Education.

F. As a staff and community, decide on those alterations and/or additions which could be made to your school plan.

REMEMBER:

* This is a K-12 policy.

* Many Infants and Primary children do not have the maturity to form valid generalisations using content samples from which they are removed in time and space.

* The use of stimulating resources and strategies at appropriate times will achieve more positive results than the presentation of content in a didactic manner.

The following pages show how steps B, D, E and F could be applied to a sample school plan.
ADDING AN ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVE TO A WHOLE SCHOOL PLAN

STEP B

1. Units in the core which study a specific Aboriginal cultural group -
   None

2. Units in the core which include an Aboriginal perspective -
   Year 4: How and why did the Europeans settle in Australia?
   (see expanded unit outlines).

3. Units in the core which offer scope for adding an Aboriginal perspective -
   Kindergarten: Who am I?
   Year 1: What are my senses?
   Year 2: None
   Year 3: What do I need?
       How was Australia discovered by Europeans?
       (Change in wording suggested).
   Year 4: How do we express ourselves?
   Year 5: How am I changing?
       How has life changed in Australia since the first
       white settlement?
   Year 6: What do I value and why?
       What is government and how has it developed in Australia
       since 1788?

STEP D

1. Aims, Considerations and Content provided for in the core -
   None

2. Aims, Considerations and Content which could be covered by using
   suitable resources, additional contributing questions or a change in the
   wording of the focus question.
   a) Aims of Aboriginal Education*
      2.1 develop in Aboriginal children an enhanced sense of personal worth
         through the acceptance and appreciation not only of their specific
         Aboriginal identity but also of their role in the wider Australian
         community.
         The Personal Core offers scope to contribute to the achievement of
         this aim.
      2.2 provide classroom opportunities for all children to examine,
         compare and clarify the values, attitudes and beliefs that they
         have assumed about their own culture and about other cultures
         and
      2.3 encourage in all children acceptance of the rights of different
         people to hold different values, attitudes and beliefs.
         The Year 6 Unit "What do I value?" offers scope for providing these
         opportunities.
      2.4 provide, for Aboriginal children, opportunities to gain a know­
         ledge of how Australian society and other societies function.
         Not provided in core but could be incorporated in optional units.

* Aboriginal Education Policy, p.2.
2.5 ensure that the school curriculum contains an Aboriginal perspective.

. This is the purpose of this exercise.

2.6 encourage in all children the development of knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal heritage and cultures.

. Not provided for in present core but could be achieved through optional units.

2.7 to 2.13 These aims are not specific to Social Studies but outline general curriculum considerations.

b) Considerations for the School*

3.3.3 In presenting the history of this nation, the identification and examination of Aboriginal participation and contribution would be a significant development in enhancing an Aboriginal relevance to the school curriculum.

. The Historical Core offers scope for this consideration.

c) Content Guidelines for Aboriginal Studies

. The present core does not examine traditional Aboriginal society.

. Transitional society is studied only from the European viewpoint. The use of suitable resources and contributing questions would provide for the examination of transitional society both the European and Aboriginal viewpoints.

. Contemporary society is not studied in the core but could be added as perspectives to the Personal units.

STEP E

. The environmental unit for Year 6, "People of the Western Desert" could be added to the compulsory core to satisfy:

Aim 2.6
Consideration 3.3.4.6
Content: Traditional Society*

* Aboriginal Education Policy, p.4.

1 Guidelines for Teaching Aboriginal Studies, pp.16 and 17.

2 Aboriginal Education Policy, p.2.

3 Aboriginal Education Policy, p.4.

4 Guidelines for Teaching Aboriginal Studies, p.16.
ABORIGINAL EDUCATION POLICY

(Draft - Prepared by P. Carson, Irrawang High).

1. PREAMBLE

The N.S.W. Department of Education has established Aboriginal Education as one of its curriculum development priorities for 1984.1. Aboriginal Education is concerned with:

- programs that will enable all students to develop a better understanding and appreciation of Aborigines and their culture, and
- programs that will assist the development and learning of Aboriginal students.

2. Rationale - What is the Basis of Aboriginal Education?

2.1 There is a need for all students to have some understanding and appreciation of the various cultures within our multicultural society, particularly the culture of the first Australians, the Aborigines.

2.2 There is a need to provide the Aboriginal students at this school with the opportunities to develop the skills needed to participate effectively in present day Australian society.

2.3 It is N.S.W. Government Policy that the advancement of Aboriginal communities and better appreciation of aboriginal culture and society both be given urgent priority. 2.

3. The Broad Aims of this Aboriginal Education Policy.

The aims of Aboriginal education at Irrawang High School are to develop programs that:

3.1 will assist students to develop a positive attitude towards Aborigines;

3.2 will provide opportunities for all students to gain an understanding and appreciation of Aborigines and their culture both past and present;

3.3 will contain, where possible, an Aboriginal perspective;

3.4 will assist Aboriginal students in developing a sense of identity and self-esteem;

3.5 will provide opportunities for Aboriginal students to develop competency in all living skills;
3.6 will encourage Aboriginal students, and their parents, to adopt a positive attitude towards the school as a means of gaining the knowledge and skills needed for effective participation in Australian society.

4. The Specific Objectives.

The specific objectives of this Policy are set out in the various programs, e.g., the Aboriginal Studies Program.

5. How Can the Aims and Objectives of this Policy be Achieved? - Implementation.

The Policy can be implemented in a variety of ways:

5.1 through a separate study e.g., a one Semester course in Year 8;

5.2 through an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approach e.g., as in Year 7 Social Science in the "Family" Unit;

5.3 through an Aboriginal perspective injected into the curriculum; This refers to the infusion into the curriculum of a general sensitivity to, and awareness of, Aboriginal culture and society either, in the form of an Aboriginal viewpoint or, the infusion of Aboriginal content. This can occur in subjects as varied as Home Science and English.

5.4 through the sensitive efforts of teachers who have Aboriginal students in their classes;

5.5 through the interest and actions of a teacher who is prepared to take a personal interest in the welfare of Aboriginal students;

5.6 through maintaining contact with Aboriginal parents and encouraging them to participate in school activities.

6. Resources.

The achievement of the aims of this Policy rests largely on the attitude and skills of the teacher and the resources used.

Teachers should ensure that resources used by their students do not reinforce the negative stereotypes of Aboriginal people that have dominated, and are still present in, many publications.

4. The support document 5 on resources, is a useful guide.
7. **Evaluation**

Evaluation is an ongoing process and should take place at all levels of implementation.

The Policy as a whole should be evaluated as the need arises or at least biennially.

**References and Notes**

1. Memorandum to Principals 84-009 (S183)
2. R. J. Mulock, Minister for Education. "Aboriginal Education Policy".
4. There is a good range of resources in the School Library.
5. There is a series of support documents available:

   1. Aboriginal Education Policy.
   2. Guidelines for Teaching Aboriginal Studies.
   3. Aboriginal Australians: A Preliminary Chronology.
   4. The Effects of Culture Contact on Aboriginal Australia.
   5. Strategies for Teaching Aboriginal Children.
   6. Resources in Aboriginal Studies.
Problems to Consider and Solve (Do you see these as your problems?)

1. Basic lack of information or knowledge of where to seek information. This leads to a reluctance to introduce the subject.

2. Lack of people with expertise who have time available to them to assist those seeking help.

3. A strong response was pressing for Inservice courses to equip us with the information needed for us to confidently begin Aboriginal Studies in respective faculties.

4. There is a lack of resource material and of people to produce such material. It was suggested that we interested people may help by developing some resource and then present it for approval and/or polishing to the few people with expertise: these could then be circulated to schools - (will need to be co-ordinated to avoid overlap) - even a small kit on just a small area of studies would benefit.

Some Solutions:

1. The "Aborigines of the Hunter Region" Kit provides a lot of local detailed information which may be used in teaching concepts. Some sensitivity is needed on the part of the teacher/s who teach this subject area.

2. If the need for more support is thought necessary pressure for resources and personnel should be channelled through the Department in the usual way.

3. If as has been indicated, the need for Inservices to familiarise teachers with basis of understanding for teaching Aboriginal Studies. An assistant's position to help the present consultant, Boris Sokoloff, is being processed at the present time (6/84). It will be this person's job to follow up the implementation of our Draft Policy and help those who require support.

4. It is hoped that as programmes are developed in the various schools they will be sent in, checked, approved and then circulated. If time is available, small kits based on units could be developed.

Problems of individual Faculties and some sharing of information on how these were handled in various schools.

LANGUAGE: Great diversity in Aboriginal culture - suggested - confine language study of local language only (Awabakal/Worimi). Problem again in that most of the Aboriginal people in this area are from widely diversified backgrounds and origins.

- Need for an Aboriginal Dictionary (Awabakal/Worimi) for this area. Because of diversity comparative study of languages may be a technique to pursue.

HOME SCIENCE: Suggested areas of study:

1. Aboriginal Culture and Family Life; Family Role.
3. Collecting and cooking bush tucker.

N.B. Speaker in Aboriginal nutrition -
ART: Suggested means of implementation:

Begin with Myths and Legends around the World, then relate to Aboriginal Art; students write own Myth and illustrate it (as an Aborigine) - make own paint brushes, paints, use bark etc.

SOCIAL SCIENCES: It has been found that it is essential to introduce some basic Aboriginal Studies (even if only in a minor way) in Year 7 so that the idea is planted early (less resistance to building on it later) - this is appropriate in most schools as all students are seen in Year 7. More difficult issues are left to later years, e.g. Land Rights.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. An interdisciplinary introduction to Aboriginal Studies is beneficial in many ways. It is therefore suggested:

i. Read "Aborigines of the Hunter Region" Kit - perhaps make notes where content relates to individual faculties or any other issue important at your school.

ii. Contact Person to be decided upon (for faculties/schools) - volunteer list - these people to meet together and consult to avoid overlap. Each school will need to mould their own to suit individual needs/situations. Programmes could be circulated to help others.

iii. Syllabus - very broad - room is there for wide interpretation.

iv. "Integration" is the theme - difficult to lock courses together - content needs to be written into programme. Overcome problems of disinterested or prejudiced teachers by integrated team teaching.
STRATEGIES SPECIFIC TO HIGH SCHOOL FACULTIES

HISTORY

Introduction

The History Department in a High School may be able to offer an Aboriginal perspective at various levels, depending on school organisation.

1. Incidental references made in course of lessons to link any topic with relevant Aboriginal experiences.

2. Year 7. Social Studies style.
   e.g. a) Family - Aunt, European, Aboriginal traditional idea and contemporary.
   b) What it is to be an Australian - contemporary focus.
      i) Racial groups.
      ii) Beliefs - Aboriginal origins.
      iii) Customs.
      iv) Values, e.g. non-competitiveness.

3. Units of Work in Junior History.
   a) Year 9 Pre-contact - e.g. Lake Mungo, Swansea Heads, Birubi Point
      Contact with Whites
      Aboriginal resistance
      Implementation of Government Policy
      The local situation e.g. Threlkeld, Awabakals.

      The aims of this are (i) to empathise with people in the past;
      (ii) to ask questions when confronted with problems;
      (iii) understand how change occurs in human affairs.

   b) Year 10 - Modern World Study - the historical origin of a contemporary event.
      i) Land Rights - the scene in the 1980s p.147 Kit.
         (ref. Mat Charlesworth book)
         Sacred sites, reserves, problem of mining.
         White attitude to Land Rights - historical/legal issues.
         Awabakal Co-operative p.144.

4. Semester elective: Aboriginal Studies (Field Studies Focus)
   Problem: liaison with all school departments?

5. School based course (School Certificate Board)

6. H.S.C. Level i) General Studies
   ii) Culture and Society
1. Using the Kit

* Helpful to have multiple copies of picture studies and questions so that whole class or large groups can use them. Photostating can achieve this.

* A total Unit study - Aborigines of the Local Area.
  Kit is especially useful for study of tribal groups - Worimi - Awabakal.

* In an integrated study strands based on disciplines can be separated
  e.g. Geography - maps and place names (mapping skills)
  History - Pre-European stage - "Women of the Sun"
  - Contact stage
  - Contemporary
  Commerce - Material Culture - satisfaction of basics
  - Contact - introduced competitive/ownership
  - Difference conception
  - Land Rights - current issues
  - Resource use - conservation vs exploitation
  Social Science - Social Organisation - traditional
  - contemporary - problems
  - solutions

2. Kit + Other Resources (Social Sciences Syllabuses)

Geography: Possibly a Unit of Study: Geography of the Aborigines
  Interaction of the people and the land.

  1) Traditional
     (a) Location - tribal groups spatial arrangements.
     (b) Landforms - sacred nature, boundaries.
     (c) Climate - response to different climatic conditions
        (clothing and shelter)
     (d) Vegetation - use made of vegetation
        (housing, canoes, weapons)
     (e) Fauna - use of fauna for food and clothing.
     (f) Land use - methods used.
     (g) Culture - grouping, organisation, movements.

     Much of this information can be extracted from sections of the publication
     (Hunter Region Kit) but much wider interpretation possible.

Commerce: Unit of Study:
  Alternative economic system - a method of satisfying wants and
  needs involving co-operative behaviour.
  Methods of obtaining food
  *division of labour
  clothing *exchange
  shelter *values (usefulness)

  Could be a case study of one tribe or possibly comparisons of a number
  of tribal groups e.g. coastal, inland, northern, Tasmania.

Social Science - emphasis on the features (cannot be studied without
  reference to the environment)
  a) The tribal organisation
  b) Kinship
  c) Roles of the different groups e.g. men and women
  d) Initiation
  e) Lore, myths, dreamtime
  f) Death and burial
  g) Contemporary - features relating to Aborigines
  h) Change
  i) Conflict - land rights
  j) Cultural Resurgence etc.
INDUSTRIAL ARTS — TECHNICS

1. To provide a knowledge of materials used, past and present, to produce articles along traditional lines using both traditional Aboriginal methods and modern methods.

2. To produce an article for practical end/or ornamental ends.

3. Correlation and co-operation with other faculties e.g. Science, Art, Music, Home Science in areas associated with the production of an article.

Some Suggestions Are:

1. Make weapons/tools using only natural materials.

2. Examine "balance" of spears, woomera and boomerang.

3. Methods of finishing tools e.g. as in polishing of spears to remove splinters.

4. Fishing implements (hooks, nets, etc.)

5. Look at the ways contemporary Aboriginal people have adapted modern materials for use in traditional tools, e.g. steel prongs for fishing spears.

N.B. It is felt that these aims and suggestions be incorporated into existing programmes, preferably in Years 7 and 8 and not be treated as a special study.

Resource Material:


   Natural Materials Used for Articles of Material Culture by the Worimi and Awabakal.

   Page 35 Weapons e.g. spears, throwing sticks, shield, boomerang

   Page 48 Implements e.g. Digging stick, containers, fishing tackle, fish hook file, needles, combs, scraper.

   Shelter/Transport Dwellings, canoes, paddles.

   Apparel/Decoration Rugs/cloaks, belts, headbands

   Ceremonial Bull-roarer, ceremonial stories, burial (bark)

   Page 75 Implements used in tames of training for later life.

References

Wurley and Woomera, Aboriginal Life and Craft (Collins)

Australian Aboriginal Stone Implements, P.D. McCarthy (Australian Museum)

Australian Aborigines, Norman B. Tindale, Beryl George (Lloyd O'Neil)

Aboriginal Artifacts, Tim McCourt (Rigby)
ART: References in the Hunter Region Kit

Page 49 Awabakal Ceremonial Decoration
77-81 Ceremony
78 Colour
79 Sites
82 Bora Ground
84-87 Lore
91-92 Death and Burial
96-97 Significant Sites

List of possible topics which is not prescriptive or exhaustive to be taught in ART includes:

i) Bark painting
ii) Rock art
iii) Wood carving
iv) Adaptation of modern materials
v) Mixing paints in the traditional way
vi) Design e.g. patterns suitable for weapons and tools
vii) Form follows function - multipurpose tools e.g. coolamin
viii) Spinning string - netting, baskets
ix) Storytelling - painting
x) Illustrate legends
xi) Study the work of Aboriginal artists
xii) Didjeridoo: from a cardboard roll - decorate
xiii) Art makes useful objects decorative
xiv) Art can be functional e.g. baskets
xv) Art records historical events and society
xvi) Art shows tradition and beliefs - Dreamtime
xvii) Art tells stories
xviii) Art takes a variety of forms - painting
- scripture
- body decoration
xx) Symbols (non-verbal): symbols as art forms
xxi) Art for sale e.g. the tourist trade (seniors)

Sample programme involving animals, myths and legends:

1. Draw Australian animals while teacher reads myths and legends to the class.

2. Study Australian Aboriginal Bark Paintings.

3. Select an animal that the child thinks is appropriate to their personality and develop a totem.

4. Write a myth from ideas gained from studying Aboriginal art.

5. Silk Screen Printing of animals. (Don't mention Aboriginal Art at this stage but the influence of the past week was very evident.)

6. Clay animals.
TEXTILES AND DESIGN

Contact People:
Louise Campbell - Gateshead High School
Fay Nelson - Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Centre
Marion Symonds, Aboriginal Health Unit, Sydney.
Margaret Hughes - Community Art Centre. Ph. 23222.
Works in with Awabakal Co-Op.
C.A.E. Mount Lawler, Perth - Aboriginal Studies.
N.C.A.E., incorporated into Multicultural Studies.
New England University - Aborigine Studies
Aboriginal Co-Op College Sydney (Glebe)

Integration into Syllabus Areas: Junior Textiles

1. Design e.g. design of the Pitjinjir people based on various factors.
2. Colour reasons for use of particular dyes and colours in the batik of the Pitjinjir people.
3. Needles from shells, thread and sinews.
4. Pitjinjir tree string.
5. Fibres p.45 (Kit) p.28..use of shells to prepare bark.
Use of other fibres in various culture groups e.g. use of tree roots.
6. Weaving techniques - preparation of the fibre (similar to that of flax).
7. Spinning - spinning on the hip as a method of construction.
8. Printmaking - batik
   - block prints
   - dyeing
   - embroidery
9. Designs used in ceremonial situations - indicative of clan status, totem, e.g. body painting.
Discussion of various designs indicative of various culture groups.
Significance of various colours - yellow = sun.
10. Creative Arts and Textiles. History and cultural works depict cultural impressions. Drawings as a basis for discussion. Many books have photos of designs, batiks, wood carvings etc. Use these as a stimulus material for design and embroidery.
11. Manufacture of textile products. Aboriginal textiles using the new technology e.g. use of gum when painting to aid in adhesion and drying time;
   use of chemical dyes in batik.

Senior Textiles

Communication - symbols used
   - ceremonies - instructions painted onto participants and in the immediate environment through placement of stones, visitors etc. Elders positioning (status) for commencement of ceremony.

Design - depth study could be relevant. Whatever is undertaken, it is particular to tribes, areas, etc.
HOME SCIENCE

References in the Kit.

Note: Depth studies could be particularly relevant
e.g. Social Organisation
   Management of - family
   - environment
   - food
   - the social group
   - looking at each group as individualistic - not a broad outline of
the Aboriginal Cultures.

Page references from the Kit

18 Worimi: Food sources and preparation
31 Dwellings
37 Awabakal Food sources
47 Apparel (Awabakal) Shelter
50/4 Economic Life Questionnaire
55 Activities
72-74 Women's Roles Division of Labour
88-89 Illness and remedies
112 Nutrition and disease
113 Alcohol
131/2 Contemporary Aboriginal Society
135 Family Life
143 Aboriginal Health and Medical Centres/Housing Comparison
144/5 Awabakal Co-operative
146 The People of this area.

Additional Areas of Integration

1. Family relationships - extended family support structures
2. Concept of housing
3. Family roles and responsibilities
4. Birth and childhood
5. Child rearing practices
6. Birth control
7. Dietary practices
8. Nutrition - Aboriginal Health Worker (Health Commission - Zelma Moran)

N.B. National Aboriginal Week - contact Awabakal Co-op. for details.
How did the Aboriginal people interact with their environment?
Land was the most important possession of the Aboriginal, mainly because it included the abodes of the pre-existent spirits of the group. Even so, the land did not belong to him but to his group, clan or tribe. The hills and valleys and plains, streams, water-holes, trees, animals, roots, birds, grubs and ants were all the possession of many people who were tied together by the fact that they had inherited them from remote times, and shared them not only with their first ancestors, but with all the people who preceded them and who would follow in the days to come.

This tribal ownership of land and its products was a perpetual inheritance. It was unthinkable that it could be sold, exchanged, or transferred. There would have been no point in such an exchange because the people belonged to the land just as much as the land belonged to them. Attacks on other groups were not made to take their land, because it had no spiritual or totemic significance to the attacking group.
**FOCUS QUESTION:** How did the Aboriginal people interact with their environment?  
**Area:** Environmental  
**Level:** Year 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributing Questions</th>
<th>Children should be able to</th>
<th>Make following Generalisations.</th>
<th>Develop following Skills.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What foods did the Aboriginal people obtain from their environment?</td>
<td>natural resources harvesting cultivation seasonal</td>
<td>Aboriginals obtained seasonal foods environment offered them. Aboriginal people moved at times to follow seasonal foods</td>
<td>Research Report Classify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What medicines did the Aboriginal people obtain from their environment?</td>
<td>antidote</td>
<td>Aboriginal people obtained many medicines from their environment</td>
<td>Research Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do Aboriginal people feel about their environment?</td>
<td>respect love</td>
<td>Aboriginal people have a deep feeling of love for their land and environment. Aboriginal people have a special respect for their environment.</td>
<td>Discussion Questioning Photographing Labelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do/did Aboriginal people treat their environment?</td>
<td>interaction balance ecology</td>
<td>Aboriginal people took only what they needed from their environment. Aboriginal people interacted with their environment, rather than trying to control or dominate it.</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The Land

- *see background notes.*
### Acquisition of Information

1. Children use resources to research and find what food Aboriginal people obtained
   - from sea
   - from plants
   - other

2. Children report, list foods, group.

3. Children report how foods prepared for eating.

4. Children make a display of food sources - pictures, plants etc.

5. Children prepare and eat some foods - eg, grind seeds for flour
   - make damper
   - make lillipilli jam

### Transformation & Organisation

1. Children research to find which plants used for medicines.

2. Children report, list foods, what they were used for, and how used.

3. Make a collection of plants - display with appropriate information.

### Application & Communication

1. Aboriginal resource person invited to speak to children about - environment - food
   - medicines - feelings toward land and environment and how they treat it.

2. Children question and discuss with resource person.

3. Photograph parts of environment from - information researched and information from resource person.

4. Children display photos, pictures and label/caption appropriately - Hopefully capturing feelings from discussions.

1. Recall discussion with Aboriginal resource person.
   - Revise information from research and displays.

2. Answer contributing question in written form/illustration/poster.

3. Display work from 2.
WHAT CAN WE LEARN ABOUT
ABORIGINAL PEOPLE FROM THEIR
ART AND LITERATURE?

Lindsay Freeman
FOCUS QUESTION: What can we learn about Aboriginal people from their art and literature?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributing Questions</th>
<th>Children should be able to</th>
<th>Make following Generalisations.</th>
<th>Develop following Skills</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Literature</strong></td>
<td>Dreaming, history, beliefs</td>
<td>Aboriginal people have different language/s</td>
<td>talking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why are stories so important to the Aboriginal people?</td>
<td>lore</td>
<td>Much of their literature is oral (lore, personal experience, teaching)</td>
<td>listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do we learn about their beliefs, history from their literature?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stories are important as a source of relationship with the environment</td>
<td>categorising</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

They:-

- Relate own personal experiences in oral and written forms.
- Convey information
- Convey beliefs and culture
- Are a form of self expression.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acquisition of Information</th>
<th>Transformation &amp; Organisation</th>
<th>Application &amp; Communication</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using local maps to find</td>
<td>Finding meanings of as many</td>
<td>Mapping names with meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aboriginal place names</td>
<td>as possible</td>
<td>Learning Aboriginal words</td>
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<td>Information sheets of</td>
<td>Group selection of groups of</td>
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<td>local language</td>
<td>words for learning</td>
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<td>Listening to a wide</td>
<td>Looking at similarities/</td>
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<td>variety of material on a</td>
<td>differences of various</td>
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<tr>
<td>daily basis</td>
<td>stories, poems etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- lore</td>
<td>Talking about materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>- personal accounts</td>
<td>Why was it written or passed</td>
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<td>- poetry</td>
<td>on by story telling?</td>
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<td>Reading to level in these</td>
<td>What does it tell us about</td>
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<td>areas</td>
<td>the Aboriginal people?</td>
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<td>Listening to Aboriginal</td>
<td>Group story telling.</td>
<td>Story telling to Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>resource person</td>
<td>Selecting stories for class</td>
<td>Other Classes etc.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Dreaming/beliefs</td>
<td>Groups list literature/stories</td>
<td>Writing for various</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>read or listened to.</td>
<td>purposes</td>
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<td>- Own experiences</td>
<td>Children select examples of</td>
<td>- personal experiences of</td>
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<td></td>
<td>own writing and discuss</td>
<td>own</td>
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<td></td>
<td>which types of stories they</td>
<td>- to explain a natural</td>
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<td></td>
<td>haven't written about.</td>
<td>feature/occurrence etc.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- express feelings.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
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<tr>
<td>Places names of N.S.W.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- A.W. Reed.</td>
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<td>Reading 360</td>
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<td>Song of Stradbroke</td>
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<td>e.g.</td>
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<td>My Uncle Jimmy</td>
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<td>Stradbroke</td>
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<td>- K. Walker</td>
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<tr>
<td>How the Sun was Made</td>
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<td>Wombats Possums &amp; Puddings</td>
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<td>Aboriginal Stories of</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>- A.W. Reed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stradbroke Dreamtime</td>
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<tr>
<td>- K. Walker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Legends</td>
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<tr>
<td>- E. Bennett.</td>
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</table>
### TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acquisition of Information</th>
<th>Transformation &amp; Organisation</th>
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<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Literature</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Wall Chart listing  
information for recall/  
later discussion  
WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT FROM  
ABORIGINAL LITERATURE/  
ART  
Dreamtime History Present  
Day

ART LITERATURE & (DANCE) CAN BE CARRIED OUT AT SAME TIME
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributing Questions</th>
<th>Children should be able to</th>
<th>Make following Generalisations.</th>
<th>Develop following Skills</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Art</td>
<td>• Explore and develop following concepts and values.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why is art important to Aboriginal people?</td>
<td>Craft</td>
<td>Art is one way of making useful objects decorative. e.g. musical instruments, tools and weapons</td>
<td>observing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bark) painting</td>
<td>It can be functional e.g. baskets, nets.</td>
<td>talking</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Rock) painting</td>
<td>It records historical events</td>
<td>drawing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Utensils</td>
<td>It shows traditional beliefs and portrays Dreamtime</td>
<td>painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>It shows stories e.g. carvings, bark paintings, sand painting.</td>
<td>carving</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td></td>
<td>designing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ochres</td>
<td>It is a form of expression</td>
<td>reading</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>listening</td>
</tr>
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</table>
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<tr>
<td>2. Art</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Observing types of</td>
<td>Talking about what</td>
<td>Doing own art work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal art.</td>
<td>Aboriginal art</td>
<td>- Basket making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>paintings show/leave out</td>
<td>- Weaving nets</td>
<td>Aboriginal Artefacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talking about the</td>
<td>- Tools weapons etc.</td>
<td>- Tom McCourt etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>purposes of the art</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reading and listening how</td>
<td>Bark painting</td>
<td>Aboriginal artifacts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>art was carried out</td>
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<td>for Resource Centre.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>traditionally</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- colours/application</td>
<td>Depicting a Dreamtime</td>
<td>Prehistoric Art of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- location of sites</td>
<td>story in modern style</td>
<td>- Dacre Stubbs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- skills etc.</td>
<td>Make a painting of own</td>
<td>People of the Western Desert Kit.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>experiences using symbols</td>
<td>Dreamtime Stories with illustrations</td>
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<td>e.g. The playground</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Make a pictorial recording</td>
<td>Mr Sandman Bring Me a Dream</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of an event in your life.</td>
<td>- Papunya Tula Artists</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Adding information to</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wall Chart on literature</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion of contributing</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>questions.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Visit sites - (carvings)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visit galleries/museums</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use books, prints etc. to</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>show variety of arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>- traditional and non</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>traditional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Show symbols used in art</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use an Aboriginal resource</td>
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<td>person with a knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>of art/craft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observe crafts/arts</td>
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<td>being completed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compile own symbols list</td>
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<td>or record those used by</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aboriginal people.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN DIFFERENT CULTURES COME INTO CONTACT?

Michelle Morales
FOCUS QUESTION: What Happens when Different Cultures come into Contact?

AREA: Personal/Social/Environment  LEVEL: Years 5/6  Michele Morales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributing Questions</th>
<th>Children should be able to:</th>
<th>Make following Generalisations</th>
<th>Develop following Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do we mean by Culture?</td>
<td>culture beliefs respect values celebrations education traditions attitudes customs</td>
<td>A culture is a blending together of many aspects of a community's life</td>
<td>Discussion listing interviewing/questioning hypothesizing researching observing creative writing essay writing comparing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What different cultures do we have in Australia?</td>
<td>differences similarities multicultural interaction migration tolerance respect assimilation customs stereotypes</td>
<td>Australia is made up of many cultures interacting and living side by side. These cultures may be different but no-one is necessarily better than another. It is unfair to label people as stereotypes.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CASE STUDY 1
AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINALS

- What was the Aboriginal culture like before the first settlers came? traditions, customs, roles, tribes, migration, legends

- What influence did the First Settlement have on the Australian aborigines? conflict, change, adaptation, interaction, tolerance, racism

- Aborigines have lived in Australia for many thousands of years. There is vast/rich amount of evidence to support this. They lived a varied and rich cultural life in the traditional way.

- When white man came the aborigines were faced with many traumatic changes. Conflict occurred from misunderstandings and suspicion on both sides.
**FOCUS QUESTION:** What happens when different cultures come into contact? continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributing Questions</th>
<th>Children should be able to:</th>
<th>Make following Generalisations</th>
<th>Develop following Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do contemporary aborigines live?</td>
<td>Explore, develop following concepts and values.</td>
<td>Contemporary aborigines live in many different ways—some traditional, some on reserves and some urban. There are still difficulties and conflicts arising, again from misunderstandings and suspicions on both sides.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OTHER CASE STUDIES**

2. **MIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA**

   How have people from overseas changed/influenced Australian culture?

3. **OUR MODERN AUSTRALIAN CULTURE**

   What is Australian Culture? (city life/country life)
The Australian Aborigines

1. Pupils listen to question, "What is a Culture?"
2. Pupils answer question by compiling a chart with things that make up a culture.
3. Pupils interview parents/grandparents/friends, as to the special culture things they have.
4. Pupils hypothesize about cultures. "Are they the same everywhere?"
5. Pupils discuss other cultures they know to exist.
6. Pupils find pictures/stories/traditions to present to class about other cultures.
7. Pupils talk about the history of Australia and the cultural changes that have occurred.
8. Pupils make a time line of Australian history.
9. Pupils research into the life of different aboriginal groups before the European coming to Australian.
   Reading "Amuck Bay: An Aboriginal Fishing Community" - for an account of the local area and "The Our People Series" - Methuen.
10. Displaying this information to relate to others.
11. Children discuss life, before the coming of Europeans for the aboriginal, especially in the local area.
12. Children write a story about being an aboriginal or a First Fleeter and their feeling when they first came across each other.
14. Children compare their stories and attitudes and feelings in them to those that were seen in the video.
15. Children writing poetry to put the feelings (from the video) that they got from the treatment of the aboriginals in those early years.
16. Children listen to the poem "Oration" by Kath Walker.
17. What is the message of the poem - talk about it?
18. Children look up more of Kath Walker's poetry.
20. How does the film "fit" the poem?
21. Children look up other historical books to determine early treatment of aborigines with regards to trying to completely take over their lives.
TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

The Australian Aborigines continued.

23. Children list problems the aboriginals faced in the film.
24. Children discuss ways that Aborigines are trying to overcome some of their problems.
   (Refer Oz Box Kit - Aborigines then and now - Looking forward card).
25. Children invite an aboriginal guest speaker to talk to them.
26. Children listen to the guest, ask questions they have previously prepared to ask them.
27. Children display/communicate their thoughts through any media they like. eg essay, artwork, project etc.
Year 8

ABORIGINAL STUDIES - Time: 20 weeks

COURSE MODEL - designed by Peter Carson - IRAWANG HIGH SCHOOL
- could be used as a model for a specific course or,
- could be used as a linking framework for a cross curriculum course.

INTRODUCTION AND ASSESSMENT
Preparatory Phase (1 week)
Focus Question - What do we know about Aboriginal Society today?
Visitors from the Aboriginal Community.
Pre-course assessment and assessing needs.

Cross Curriculum Perspectives

UNIT 3 "Aboriginal Society Today"
Contemporary Phase (3 weeks)
Focus Question How are Aborigines coping with contemporary Australian society?
Numbers, location, communities, Present day Social situations
Social issues problems
Personalities

UNIT 1 "Living with Nature" Traditional Phase (10 weeks).
A. Australian Pre-history "B.C."
Focus Question What do we know of the first Australians?
B. TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL SOCIETY
Focus Question What kind of society did Aborigines create in Aust? Want satisfaction, technology, Social organisation, ceremonies, Art, Music, Crafts, Lang., Lore.

UNIT 2 "Conflict and Change"
Transitional Phase - (5 weeks)
Focus Question: What has happened to Aboriginal Society?
European settlement - policies and attitudes.
Effect on population, lifestyle and culture.
Policies adopted towards Aborigines.

Further information is available from the Aboriginal Education Consultant: Adamstown Professional Services Centre.