



FOR OUR ELDERS

2-9 JULY 2023

SBS acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and pays respect to Elders past and present.

This resource was developed on the lands of the Cammeraygal people, and the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation.

Information in this resource was correct at time of publication.

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Title: SBS Learn NAIDOC Week 2023 Teacher Resource

ISBN: 978-0-6487076-6-0 (e-book)

Published in June 2023.

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Cover page artwork: *For Our Elders* by Jeremy Worrall. © NITV.
Read his artist statement on page 5.

The SBS Learn team would like to thank Kyarna Cruse, resource designer John Fear and the thousands of educators who will use this resource. We also extend our thanks to the First Nations peoples of Australia who, since time immemorial, have cared for and nurtured Country so that today we may benefit from the life Country sustains.

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Shelley Ware. © NITV. Photographer: Mel Steer.

Shelley Ware

Yankunytjatjara and Wirangu woman

Shelley has been a classroom, specialist reading, and art teacher in primary schools for 25 years, based in Melbourne/Naarm. She has her own education consultancy to help educate teachers and inspire them to confidently embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures into everyday curriculum. Shelley is an ambassador for *The Indigenous Literacy Foundation's Create Initiative program*, mentoring children from remote communities to write and publish their own books and incorporate their local Indigenous language. An ambassador for the *Jean Hailes Foundation for Women's Health Week*, she sits on the boards of Indigenous education foundation *Opening The Doors* and the *Victorian Institute of Sport*. She serves as the chairperson on Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) advisory committees for *Banyule City Council* and *Carlton Football Club*. Shelley loves to give back to the community through her passion for helping people — particularly children — to be the best they can. She is a member of the all-female sports podcast *Outer Sanctum* and writes a regular AFL column for the *Koori Mail*.



About the front cover artist

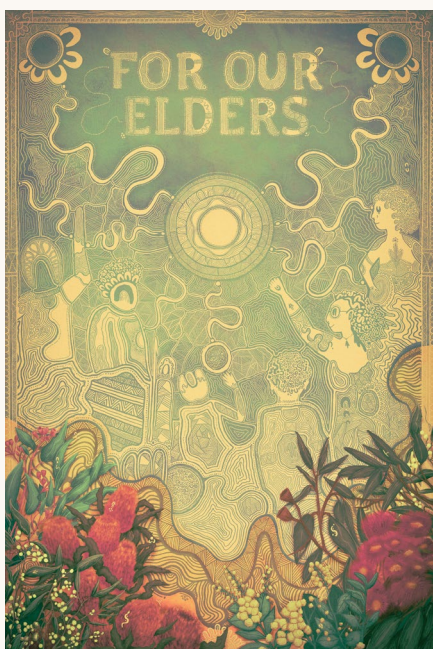
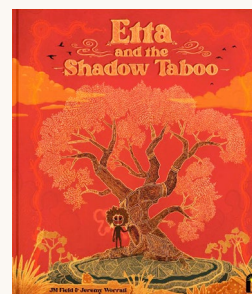


Image: supplied.

Jeremy Worrall (Wright)

Ngarabal/Gomeroii man

Jeremy was born in Sydney. His family is from the Tenterfield area, Emmaville, Strathbogie Station (NSW). Jeremy works in multimedia with a focus on digital painting and animation, having spent his career bringing his cultural knowledge to canvas, and watching it intersect with the modern world he grew up in. Jeremy's goal is to be a part of maintaining, protecting and creating culture. He hopes to one day create art pieces as a full-time passion and to share his skills with the younger generation. Jeremy has created a children's book called "*Etta and the Shadow Taboo*" with JM Field (Hardie Grant, 2023) which has just launched ahead of this year's NAIDOC Week. If you would like to see more of Jeremy's work, visit his Instagram: @lord_jorrall



For Our Elders by Jeremy Worrall © NITV

This artwork is a dedication to my Elders, my Uncles who teach me lore, my Aunties and Mother who teach me stories and painting, and my Grandmother, the Matriarch of my family who watches over us. She is with the wind and in the soil, in the flowers and in the birds, she is a koala, a waratah, a blue gum, my Mother's Mum and her Mother's Daughter.

The flowers represent mine and their ancestors; eternally a part of Country giving life and moving within the circle of it. The top linework are those who are physically with us today, leading the charge, pushing us forward and holding us close. They keep us honest, brave, and alive. They contribute and maintain our Culture and family traditions.

Our traditions are represented in the middle of the work, an incomplete circle which grows a ring with every story learnt, every story written. It is their lives and mine and overtime it will be completed. The yellow in between is our shared stories, Songlines and Culture that we live by.

Nhundu wanhtharra

Guugu Yimithirr for *how are you?*

We greet one person like this. The direct translation is *You how*, as we place meaning at the end of sentences.

Lillian Bowen OAM

*Guugu Yimithirr maami Lillian Bowen OAM,
wanhu thagaalngan-gu wawu dagaathi
bithagurr Hopevalengan binaal gurranu guugu
thanaan-gamugu, gurra galmba binaal gurrallal
wanhtharra nhinganu nganaa minha, mayi
warragurr gun-gunngan maaninu.*

Guugu Yimithirr teacher OAM Lillian Bowen set her heart from a very long time to teach the children of Hopevale their very own language (mother tongue), also to teach them what meat and food to gather from the bush.

Lillian Bowen is mother (Aunty) of SBS Director of Indigenous Content Tanya Denning-Orman.





Rhoda Roberts AO © SBS 2022.

A proud Widjabul Wia-bal woman from the Bundjalung Nation, actor, director and arts executive Rhoda Roberts AO is also SBS's inaugural Elder in Residence. SBS's Elder in Residence program recognises the integral role Elders fulfill within First Nations communities.

Elders are beloved in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Guides, carers, knowledge-holders, nurturers, Elders also work closely with Cultural custodians, holders of knowledge, ceremony and story.

Declaring this year's National NAIDOC Week theme **For Our Elders** is itself an act of love. This theme gives First Nations communities another platform to be vocal in our adoration for our Elders and their unique role in carrying forward the oldest living culture on the planet.

For Our Elders is also a call to all Australians to deepen their understanding of what it means to be a First Nations Elder. This is an opportunity to respectfully connect with Elders, learn treasured stories and appreciate legacies of activism and advocacy.

Teachers – use this resource carefully and consciously as you facilitate learning experiences drawing on wisdom shared by so many Elders, community members and knowledge-holders.

Young people – this theme is a gift for you. Listen and learn with your hearts open, and relish having this resource in your classrooms.

Happy National NAIDOC Week 2023.



Rhoda Roberts AO

Widjabul Wia-bal woman from the Bundjalung Nation,
SBS's inaugural Elder in Residence.



Guidance for using this resource



SBS wishes to advise members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities this resource may contain images, voices and names of deceased persons and could cause distress.

Bungle Bungles, Gija and Jaru Country, Going Places with Ernie Dingo. © NITV.

Key notes for educators:

- The terms Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, First Nations and Indigenous are used respectfully and interchangeably throughout this document when referring to First Nations peoples of Australia. These terms are used to respectfully encompass the diversity of cultures, identities, and preferences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- While many older people are highly regarded in society, Elders holds a specific and distinct meaning for First Nations peoples. In this resource, Elders is capitalised when referring to First Nations peoples as a mark of respect for their unique role in their community. A lowercase e is used for elders when referring to non-Indigenous older people.
- When inviting Elders into your school community, ask how they would like to be addressed by non-Indigenous people. They may prefer to be called Ms or Mr rather than "Aunty" or "Uncle".
- When using the Reading sections for each Year group, try to engage with books and language from the Country you are on.

Teachers – this is your NAIDOC Week 2023 teacher resource. It is a resource for all Australian schools. It will help embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, knowledges and histories in your teaching and learning. Though NAIDOC Week is celebrated for one week each year, the teaching

and learning opportunities in this resource are applicable year-round. SBS strongly recommends schools connect with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, Traditional Owners, Elders, Land Councils, and other Indigenous community organisations. There is a list on [**SBS Learn**](#) to help you. It is worth noting NAIDOC Week is one of the busiest calendar events for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and that your respectful, timely communication with organisations and people is crucial.

Building meaningful relationships with local First Nations community members is essential. First Nations community members should be supported (and remunerated) for their time and sharing their knowledges. It is important the relationship is mutually beneficial for both the school community and the First Nations community, but you should also be mindful that someone may not feel comfortable with what is being asked of them by the school.

The teacher's role

The teacher does not always need to be the knowledge-holder when it comes to First Nations knowledges. In fact, the teacher's role is to facilitate the lesson using the content provided by First Nations peoples.

Here are some key points:

- If this is a new way of running a learning opportunity, it might feel strange to begin with, but stick with it!
- Having your students drive the learning is a powerful way to engage students and let them demonstrate their knowledge.

- The teacher's role is also to make sure that everyone is respectful to each other, and that everyone who wants to contribute constructively can be heard.

Where possible, invite Traditional Owners, Elders and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to talk about the NAIDOC Week theme. This gives students the opportunity to understand the concept, value, and power of Oral traditions. It also provides students with multiple perspectives on this topic. There are also classroom protocol guides when teaching, noted below.

Classroom protocols

Before you start, please read the SBS Learn *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols Guide for Teachers*. In this, authors Jarin Baigent and Shiralee Lawson (with guidance from Auntie Norma Ingram) take teachers through essential steps to a safe, respectful learning environment for

all students. Align these with existing school policies and practices to bolster mutual respect, equity of dialogue and empathic communication amongst your students. Schools should also liaise with their state or territory education department to see if they can contact an Aboriginal educator on staff.



It is essential to carefully consider the integrity of references used in class. Prompt students to examine the sources of their prior learning and to seek new knowledge through reputable sources. Triangulate information using trusted sites such as *AIATSIS*, *Reconciliation Australia*, *Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education*, and *NITV/SBS*.



AIATSIS



NITV



SBS



Content protocols

Explore Aboriginal ways of learning and working, such as interconnectivity and holistic thinking (rather than considering concepts in isolation). The diagram describes how the context of the learner and the substance of what is being learnt are interconnected.

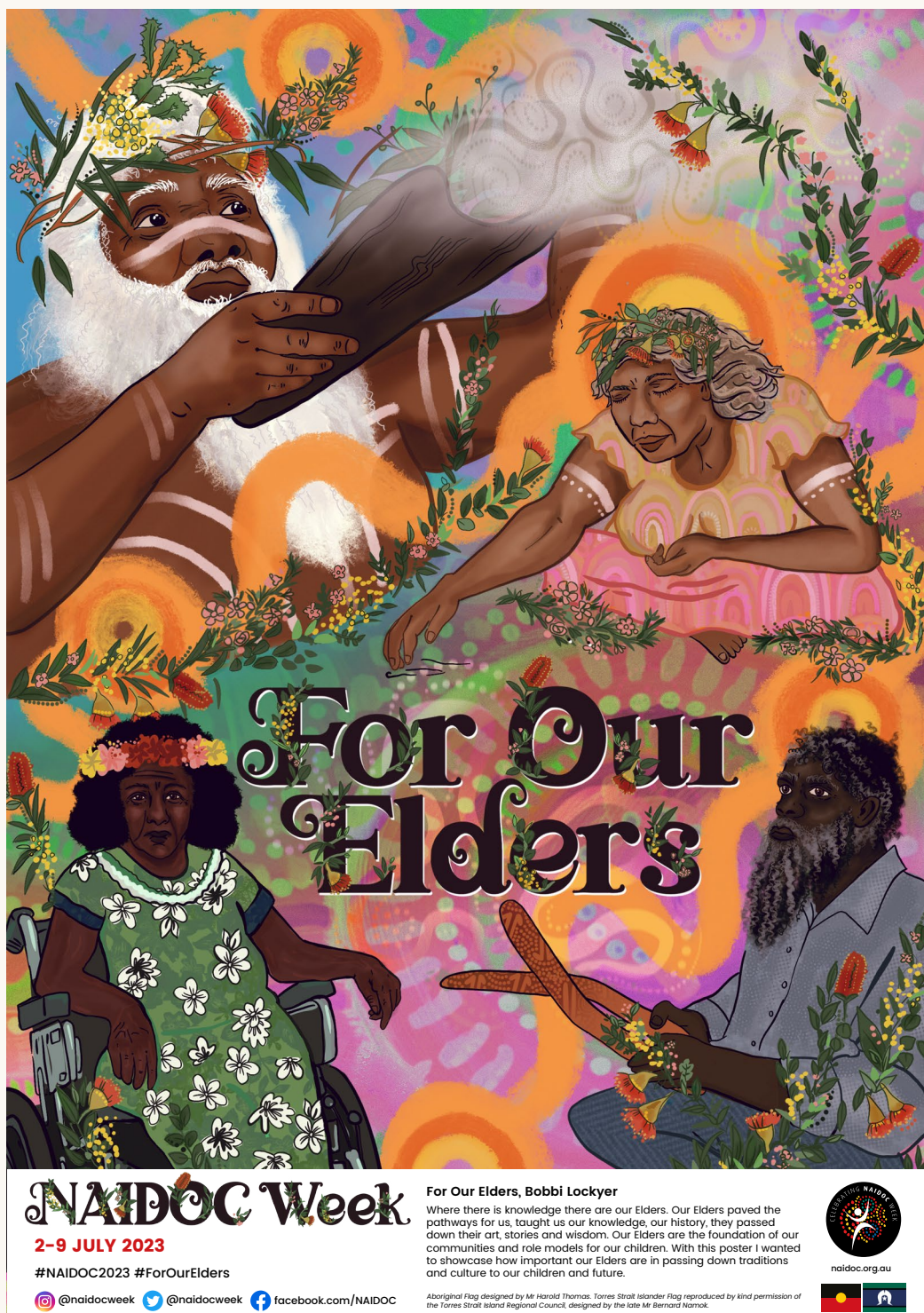
Diagram: A Model of Social and Emotional Wellbeing

This diagram is from Chapter 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing (Gee et al) in the book *Working Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice (2nd Ed)*. It is republished here with permission. © Gee, Dudgeon, Schultz, Hart and Kelly, 2013.



Consider organising a professional development session through a First Nations provider to help embed cultural competence. Check out page 36 for helpful ways to get this going. Investing in this professional development can help embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, histories, and cultures year-round, and build confidence in teaching staff.

2023 National NAIDOC Week Poster



Bobbi Lockyer, a proud Ngarluma, Kariyarra, Nyulnyul and Yawuru artist, born and based on Kariyarra Country in Port Hedland, is the winner of the prestigious National NAIDOC Week Poster Competition for 2023 with her entry, **For Our Elders**.

"Where there is knowledge there are our Elders. Our Elders paved the pathways for us, taught us our knowledge, our history, they passed down their art, stories and wisdom. Our Elders are the foundation of

our communities and role models for our children. With this poster I wanted to showcase how important our Elders are in passing down traditions and culture to our children and future." said Bobbi.

To learn more about Bobbi Lockyer and her artwork [visit her website](#).

Official posters are available on the [NAIDOC Week website](#).

Early Childhood



A book reading yarning circle with Stirling Sharpe, Our Yarning Advisory Group member, and Dr Julie Owen, Our Yarning Cultural Advisor © Library For All.



Jarjums is a word which usually means "children" and is used by several Aboriginal languages including Bundjalung from the north-eastern part of New South Wales.

NITV Jarjums artwork. © NITV. Artwork: Pitjantjatjara Artist Nicole Rupert and NITV Jarjums.

We know many early childhood educators use this resource to plan their NAIDOC Week celebrations, so here are some suggestions for younger learners:

- Contact your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to connect with Elders who can visit your school and run sessions relating to each year's NAIDOC theme.
- Educators can ask Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents for sound foundation readers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in their care.
- There are lots of picture books in this resource that early childhood learners will enjoy.
- Dedicate a daily session to watching television programs from National Indigenous Television (NITV, part of the SBS family). For example, you can watch selected episodes below to celebrate NAIDOC and this year's theme **For Our Elders**.

Whole school activity ideas:

- Start a NAIDOC Committee to create plans for the whole school events.
- Invite a First Nations community member to speak at the whole school assembly about this year's NAIDOC theme **For Our Elders**.
- In what ways can each class embed the theme **For Our Elders** in the classroom to celebrate the importance of First Nations peoples?
- How else could you celebrate NAIDOC 2023: **For Our Elders**?
- How will you and the school community celebrate First Nations perspectives beyond NAIDOC Week?

Activities

Watch Award-winning animation **Little J & Big Cuz** each day for the duration of NAIDOC Week (and beyond – there are three seasons so far). Episodes are 12-minutes long and translated into Aboriginal languages Pitjantjatjara, Arrernte, Wiradjuri, Yawuru, palawa kani, Ngukurr Kriol, Kunwinjku, Noongar, Torres Strait Creole, Warlpiri and Djambarrpuyngu.

S3 Ep 4 Parade: *The kids worry that the NAIDOC beach parade will be a disaster if they're unable to march to the same beat.*

Questions: How does the class celebrate NAIDOC Week? How could your class celebrate NAIDOC Week?



Little J & Big Cuz. © Ned Lander Media.



Little J & Big Cuz. © Ned Lander Media.

S3 Ep 11 Treasure Hunters: *Little J and Levi come across some treasure, but Big Cuz may have lost Nanna's treasure forever and the others can't find it.*

Questions: What is something special to you? Is it someone or something? Why is it so special?

S1 Ep 4 Right under your nose: *A beach day leads to a hunt for special items before it grows dark with Nanna joining the boys on the adventure.*

Question: What do Little J and Big Cuz learn from Nanna?

S1 Ep 5 Goanna ate my homework: *Little J tries to hunt for bush tucker and confuses himself when he follows his own tracks, leading him to become lost in the bush.*

Questions: What is bush tucker? What animals does Little J see when tracking? What bush tucker does Little J collect?

S1 Ep 6 Big plans: *Little J decides to make up his own adventures when the other kids won't let him play with them. He has the whole backyard and his imagination to rely on, so, of course, nothing can go wrong.*

Questions: What does Nanna tell Little J to do when no one will play with him? What does Little J learn?

For more ideas or resources on "Little J & Big Cuz" [click here](#).

Aussie Bush Tales are stories based on Aussie Gumnuts children's e-books. The episodes are nine-minutes long and explore a group of Indigenous children from the Australian bush.

S1 Ep 3: Go Bungarra Go: *The boys are sent to catch a Bungarra for the Elder Moort when he becomes hungry. Instead, they stumble upon a camel who is stuck.*

Questions: What animals could you see? Why couldn't the boys catch the Bungarra? Who was old and wise?

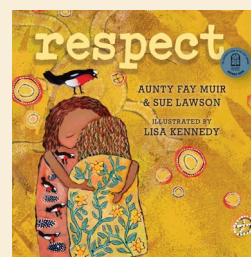
Waabiny time means "playing time" in Noongar culture. The 26-minute-long episodes explore learning and language in Australia for young kids.

S1 Ep 10: Celebrate: *The Waabiny Time band shows how much fun it can be to celebrate; Kylie explains the importance of NAIDOC Week and shows some of the many families celebrating the occasion.*

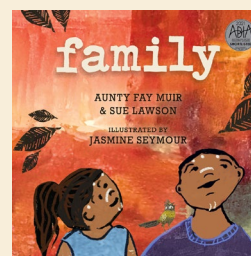
Activity: What new words did you learn? Write them down and say them together. Were they in English or Noongar?



Reading



Respect
by Fay Stewart-Muir and Sue Lawson (Magabala Books, 2020)



Family
by Fay Stewart-Muir and Sue Lawson (Magabala Books, 2020)



Let us know how your little ones go with their NAIDOC learning! Send us an email and tell us what you've been up to: sbslearn@sbs.com.au



Useful resources

Koori Curriculum resource page including Show and Tell videos with Wiradjuri woman and early childhood educator Jessica Staines.

Primary

Foundation to Year 6



Concept Image (Vivienne Robertson) based on original painting Tui by Ngalia artist Dolly Walker ©

First Nations Elders in Australia are highly regarded and respected people, many of whom have earned recognition as local Custodians of their ancestral lands. With this honour they may pass on knowledge, culture, language, lived experiences, wisdom and beliefs to the next generations. It is important to understand the local protocols of First Nations peoples so you can be respectful of Elders and follow protocols when interacting with them. It is also important to understand not every older person in First Nations communities becomes an Elder.



“

Being an Elder holds a lot of responsibility, not only for myself, but for all the people of Tiwi on both the Bathurst and Melville Islands, home of the Tiwi People. An Elder is a knowledge-holder of culture, language and history and it is a big responsibility. I perform ceremonies and dances for people who have passed to help them go back to Country. I also do Smoking Ceremonies to cleanse homes and welcome people to the islands, so our spirit ancestors know who they are and they are safe on their travels. An Elder has to be a good role model to their community and to all citizens and have a sense of humility to think of others' wellbeing above their own, to always put others first. I feel contentment and proud to be an Elder for my people.

”

Pirrawayingi Puruntatameri – Tiwi Elder

Elder Pirrawayingi Puruntatameri. © ABC. Photographer: Tristan Hooft.

Key questions

- What does it mean to be a First Nations Elder?
- What makes someone a First Nations Elder?
- Are all older people Elders?
- Do you know any Elders?
- How might an elder in your community differ from one in a First Nation's community?
- Do you have local Elders who are connected to your school?



Activities

Understanding what makes a person a First Nation's Elder is very important. Sit in a yarning circle and ask your students: What is an Elder? What makes someone an Elder? Do you know any Elders? Your students may have some very insightful conversations, or they may just be learning this for the first time: help the conversation along with information from this webpage on Aboriginal Eldership.

Show students photos of First Nations Elders from your local community, or of Elders of national significance, and talk about their stories sharing why they are such important people. There are many different First Nations Elders photographs throughout this **For Our Elders** resource to show your students if required. Guide them to understand what makes a First Nation Elder and why they are important. Create a class book about their thoughts and reflections on these wonderful Elders.

Who are the First Nations Elders in your local community? If you need help use the AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia to help you learn what Country your school is on. Invite local Elders to your classroom or school to talk about this year's NAIDOC theme **For Our Elders** and what it means to them. Make sure you look after them, they are precious to communities, and when you build a strong relationship, they will become precious to your school too. You may even like to have a special morning tea for them as well.

Knowledges and cultures are intentionally pluralised to reflect the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations, Places, languages, traditions and peoples.

Read Our Dreaming by Gunai author Kirli Saunders OAM and Dub Leffler (Scholastic Australia, 2022) a stunning story about protecting Mother Earth told through the eyes of a mother and baby echidna. This story pays tribute to the knowledges Elders pass on to us while keeping our Dreaming

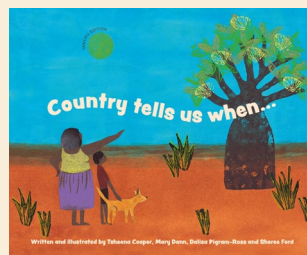
alive. Gundungurra/Gandanguurra language is intertwined in the story for your students to learn with a pronunciation guide at the back of the book. Invite a local Elder or respected community member to share one of the local First Nations Dreaming stories. If this is not possible, sit in a yarning circle and ask your students what they learnt and felt while listening to Our Dreaming. Create a display in your class in any art medium to reflect what your class felt and learnt from your Elder's visit or reading time.



Reading

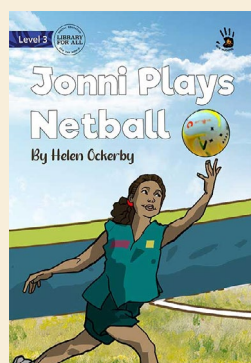
Main Abija My Grandad by Karen Rogers (Allen and Unwin Children's, 2021) is a book of memories from the author's childhood. She was raised by her Grandad who kept her strong in connection to her Country and culture. Now as a grandmother, Auntie Karen passes down this knowledge to her family. Written in Northern Territory Kriol and English, it is a beautiful celebration of their relationship and how culture is passed down to future generations. Use the QR code at the back of the book to listen to Auntie Karen reading this book in Northern Territory Kriol and English. Do the students have a special grandparent or older person they have learnt something from and will pass onto the next generations too? Create a special tribute wall showcasing these learnings they cherish. For First Nations Elders, use a capital E as a mark of respect for this specific meaning and role.

Elders has specific meaning to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is not only about age.



Country Tells Us When... Yawuru Edition written and illustrated by Tsheena Cooper, Mary Dann, Dalisa Pigram-Ross and Sheree Ford (Pan Macmillan Australia, 2023) is a beautiful

book where an Elder teaches the next generation knowledges and cultures as she walks through the six seasons of the Yawuru people. Research or invite an Elder in to teach your students the First Nations seasons of your local First Nations peoples. Create your own class book about what students have learnt or your own First Nations season calendar to share with others.



Jonni Plays Netball by Bardi/Noongar author Helen Ockerby (Library For All, 2022) is a story about Jonni who plays in a netball carnival in Derby. The team doesn't win and Jonni calls her Poppa to talk through her feelings, exploring the importance of connection and kinship for First Nations peoples. Sit in a yarning circle and yarn about who students talk to when they need share their feelings and how this person helps them feel better.



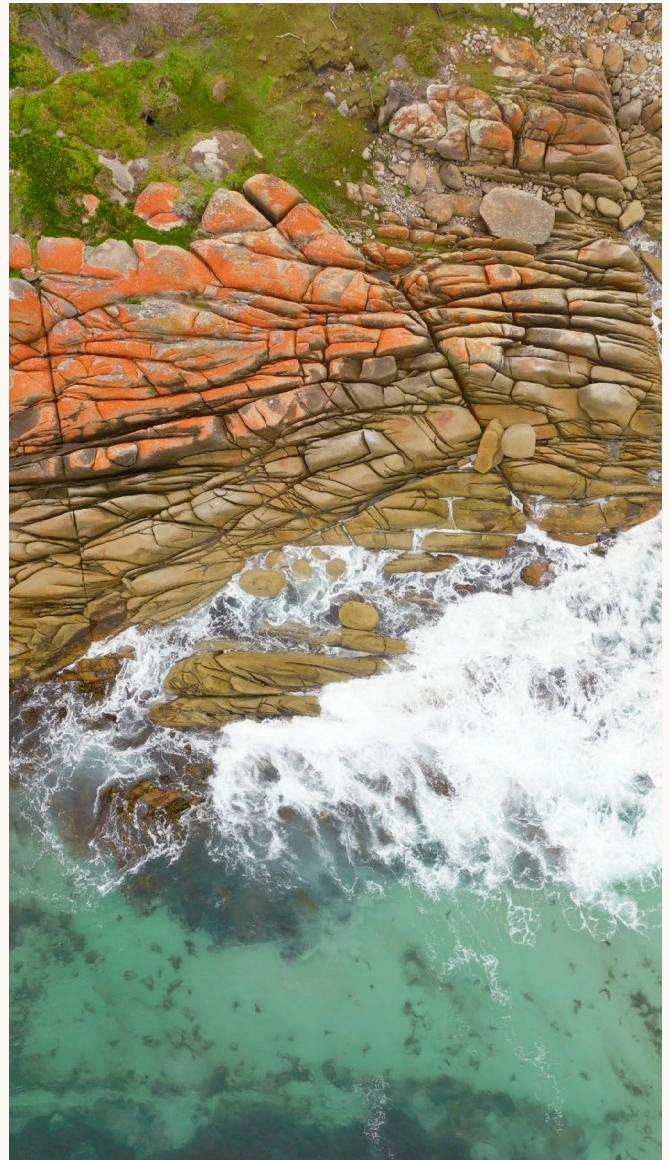
Extension activities

Your students may have a precious Elder or older person in their family or community they would like to discuss with the class. Ask students to bring a photo of them and share their story with the class about why they are important to them. As a class you may even be fortunate to have one of these special people offer to come to the class and share their story or pass on a cultural activity with the students. While Elders have specific community and cultural roles in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, it is still crucial for young people to connect with and celebrate their elders from their own networks.

In year groups, create a whole-school collaborative art or visual piece on your school fence that says, "**For Our Elders.**" This is a way of recognising the Elders in your community you have never met but want to acknowledge. Contact your local newspaper and ask them to write a story about your National NAIDOC Week fence display so the Elders in your community know they are respected, and you are grateful for them.

Reading

G is for gugunyal: A Dhurga alphabet book:
by Leanne Brooke (Aboriginal Studies Press, 2022)



Country of the palawa people. Going Places with Ernie Dingo. © NITV.



Useful resources

Websites

- [ACECQA | Engaging with Aboriginal Communities – Where do we start?](#)
- [AIATSIS | Our Land, Our Stories](#)
- [CSIRO | About the Indigenous seasonal calendars](#)
- [Emerging Minds Podcast | Using Elders' wisdom to guide your practice](#)
- [Kirli Saunders | Resources for teachers](#)
- [Main Abija – My Grandad: a new bilingual book from Ngukurr released today!](#)
- [SBS NITV Radio | MAIN ABIJA – MY GRANDAD book out now](#)
- [SBS NITV | What role does an Elder have in Indigenous Communities?](#)
- [SNAICC | Basket weaving activity sheet](#)
- [Wingaru | Dreaming Stories as a Teaching Tool](#)

First Nations peoples take pride in showing respect towards their Elders. Often, Elders are called "Aunty" or "Uncle" as a sign of respect. Elders are keepers of knowledges and wisdom that is passed on to the next generations. Elders are critical to thriving First Nations communities and hold a prominent place within communities. Elders can be trailblazers, nurturers, teachers, leaders and precious loved ones. It is important to show respect to Elders from past generations as their legacies and stories still contribute to society today.

“

I never thought about becoming an Elder, it just happened, I was chosen after some significant losses in my family, it happened through cultural lore. It's a huge responsibility that comes with a lot of accountability and often without a lot of support. It's important to respect Elders as they take on this role to look after community, culture and passing on our stories, as they are always working hard for our next generations. Elders deserve to be respected for taking on this important role in keeping their people strong in culture.

”

Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin AO
– Wurundjeri Elder

Elder Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin. © Getty Images.
Photographer: Daniel Pockett – CA.



Key questions

- What is respect?
- How do you show respect to elders?
- Why is it important for First Nations peoples to respect their Elders?
- What have you been taught about showing respect to other people, including older people?
- Why should all Australians respect First Nations Elders?



Activities

As a class, start the day appreciating and respecting the Country where your students live, learn and play. Sit out on Country with your students and talk about why it's important to respect Country and Elders past and present who have cared for the Lands, Skies and Waterways.

Students can enjoy Country by observing the sounds, smells and sensations when being outside. Acknowledging Country is an important way to respect and honour Traditional Custodians. Students can write their own Acknowledgement of Country which can be different every day. As students become more comfortable, they will be able to share an Acknowledgement of Country from the heart.

Ask your students what respecting First Nations Elders means to their family. They can write down their own understanding of how respecting First Nations Elders might look, and talk to their family/ carer about what it means in the community. Ask their parents/carers to write this down in a short paragraph, so the children can bring it into school to share with the class. Then make a poster placing a drawing or painting that represents the words written by both student and parents/carers. People who walk into your classroom can learn why and how Elders are respected in your community. You may even choose to share some on your school website or in your school newsletter.

Schools should liaise with their state or territory education department to see if they can contact an Aboriginal educator on staff. Or, contact a local First Nations organisation and arrange to visit some Elders (or for Elders to visit your school). As a class you could prepare a song in your local language to sing to them or sing one of the many songs that are throughout this NAIDOC **For Our Elders** resource. Take some time to sit and yarn about each other's lives together and get to know each other, or you may even share some food together. Use the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols Guide and discuss with the class the importance of respectful conversations and behaviours. After this visit draw or paint a card or picture for the Elders. Send it to them to say thank you for sharing their time and stories with you.

Boon Wurrung Elder N'arweet Dr Carolyn Briggs AM shared a story Barraeemal Story (Balnarring Pre-School, 2020) with the Balnarring Pre-School



community and together they created a book. Read the picture book to your class and be inspired by this collaboration to

create a picture book of your own. Ask the local Elder that visits your school in celebration of this year's NAIDOC theme **For Our Elders** about creating a picture book based on the stories they have shared with you.

Teacher note: Make sure you discuss whether the collaboration of the picture book is culturally appropriate with the local Elder. Teachers should also ask Elders how they would like to be addressed by non-Indigenous people as they may prefer to be called Ms or Mr, rather than "Aunty" or "Uncle".

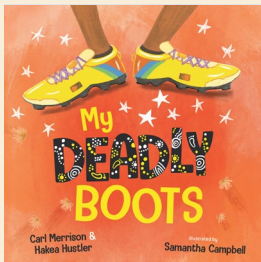


Reading



Read the book Tudei en longtaim (Now and Then) by Stella Raymond (Pan Macmillan Australia, 2021) to your students, a book written in Northern Territory

Kriol and English. To help you with the correct pronunciation, use the QR code on the back of the book. Learn some Northern Territory Kriol with your students and follow along with author Stella, as she compares how life is lived now to how her Elders lived. A common misconception is that First Nations cultural practices only existed in the past. In this book, Stella points out many traditions still practised today, sometimes just in a different way. She pays respect to her Elders who have taught her some of the traditional ways she continues to practise. Ask your students to share different cultural customs they know their elders or ancestors practised but are slightly different today. If they are unsure, students should go home and ask their parents/carers to share with them. These can be discussed in a yarning circle the next day.



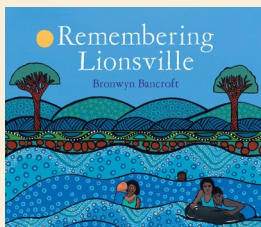
Many of us know what it is like to save up for something expensive, an item that makes us feel special and deadly. *My Deadly Boots* by Jaru/Kija man Carl Merrison, and Hakea Hustler and

Samantha Campbell (Hachette Australia, 2022) shows us even though things make us feel deadly, they aren't what make us deadly.

The word "deadly" is used by First Nations peoples as a term of praise and respect. If something is deadly, it's cool or impressive.

The wisdom shared by the main character's grandfather is that his identity is more than what we wear. This book also explores some of the stereotypes people have about First Nations peoples and is a perfect way to get into a conversation about self-checking our own perception of stereotypes. Read

My Deadly Boots and ask students to share the lessons learnt from the story in a yarning circle. What makes the students feel "deadly"?



Read Bundjalung author Dr Bronwyn Bancroft's book *Remembering Lionsville* (Allen and Unwin Children's, 2016) as she reflects on life growing up sitting around a red cedar table

listening to the old people's stories and oral history of her people. This story encourages us to write down stories of Elders and of older people in our lives, and to take pride in their life story. Encourage your students to capture a story in a drawing, voice memo or written story they can share with the class about a special older person from their life. Create a display for others to learn their stories too.

Extension activities

Read through the following article *Connecting to culture: here's what happened when Elders gifted totemic species to school kids* where students from Carlton North Public School planted an Indigenous garden with the guidance of Wurundjeri Elder Uncle Dave Wandin. He gifted his totemic species the matted flax-lily (*Dianella amoena*) to the students, so they



Aaron Fa'aoso in Strait to the Plate S2. NITV © NITV. Photographer: Nicholas Beaney.

could create the correct environment for the plant to flourish and grow. While learning and connecting to First Nations cultures, they also play a part in conserving our precious biodiversity and how to use the plants to eat and drink! Discuss with your class what they learnt from the article and how as individuals,

a class, and school community they can respect Country and the knowledges of Elders.

Food is an important part of First Nations cultures; it connects community and generations. Traditions around food are passed down from Elders to the next generation to keep these a part of everyday life. Share these Torres Strait Islander recipes from *SBS Food* with your families or even cook a dish with your class.

These recipes may not be appropriate for every area. Teachers are encouraged to speak with local Elders or First Nations community members for a recipe they might like to share with the class to make it more personal and localised.



Useful resources

Websites

- [AIATSIS | Languages alive](#)
- [Australian National Botanic Gardens | Aboriginal Plant Use](#)
- [NITV Radio | New generations work to keep Indigenous languages alive](#)
- [Reconciliation Australia | Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country](#)
- [Respect.gov.au | Resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples](#)
- [SBS Food | Mabou Mabou cookbook by Nornie Bero: How to cook with Indigenous ingredients at home](#)
- [Sustainable Gardening Australia | Indigenous Plants](#)
- [The Conversation | The terrifying power of stereotypes – and how to deal with them](#)



It is important for First Nations peoples to listen to their Elders. Elders play a crucial role in guiding present generations by sharing their knowledges and drawing from the past. Their knowledge and guidance is instrumental in helping to break through barriers and fostering new opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The wisdom of Elders is a source of strength for First Nations peoples, and it is vital to listen deeply to be able to apply that wisdom in everyday life. It is important to acknowledge that different Traditional Custodian groups may have varying protocols around engaging and being able to listen to Elders. Elders are generous with sharing knowledges and wisdom when the time is right for them to pass it on. Everyone can take the time to learn and understand cultural protocols as a mark of respect **For Our Elders**.

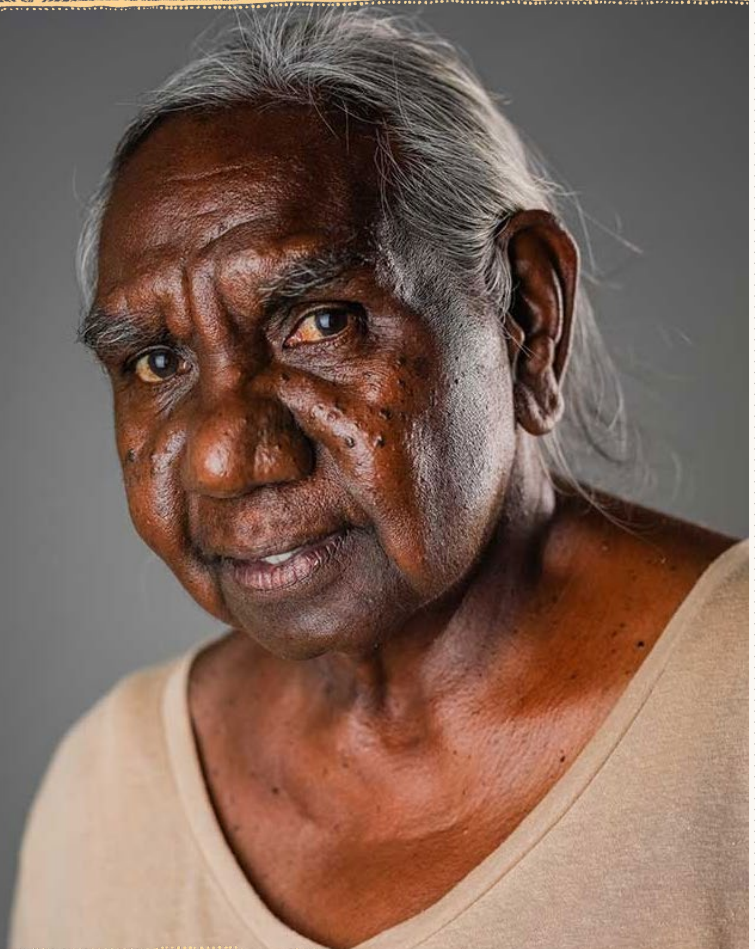
“

It's an important theme this year and it's important for Elders to be acknowledged, as we pass on the knowledge, to the children and our people today, that was passed on to us by our Elders. We instil in our children who they are and where they come from. We walk in two worlds and reconciliation is important, as we want to start walking together. We are here for your people too and we want to learn from each other and who each other are for a better future for our children.

”

Dr Aunty Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr Baumann AM – Nauiyu Elder

Elder Dr Aunty Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr Baumann AM
© National Australia Day Council/Salty Dingo.



Key questions

- Why is it important for First Nations peoples to listen to their Elders?
- Are there any cultural protocols in your local area you need to know about when talking to an Elder?
- How would you learn these protocols – who would you ask?
- How can we share Elders' knowledges and wisdom?



Activities

Dadirri can be translated to deep inner listening and quiet still awareness. Listen to Country and the words of Elder Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr Baumann from Nauiya (Daly River) as she shares her knowledges of dadirri. Play the video of [*Dadirri*](#) and ask your class to close their eyes or bow their heads as they listen. As a class, ask your students to share how they felt during and after practising dadirri. Ask your students what they learnt by listening to Dr Miriam-Rose and why it is important to listen to Elders. You may choose to start or end your lessons with dadirri and make it a regular practice in your class.

Explore the [*Australian Museum Sydney Elders Exhibition*](#) which includes a range of photographed portraits of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders. Ask the students to bring in a photo of an important First Nations Elder in their life or an elder in the community they admire to create their own photographic Elders Exhibit for the local community. If possible, invite some of the respected Elders along so they can see how they are valued and respected by your school community.

Read through the [*article*](#), then listen and watch the music video [*Yiyili Mawoolie*](#) with your class. It's a reinvention of a song written for and dedicated to all Gooniyandi people past and present by local Elders in the 1980s. This song and video clip highlight the importance of keeping language and culture strong. Guidance from Elders for the next generations can help languages and cultures be preserved and flourish, supported and celebrated by all Australians. Discuss with your class why a project like this is so important to communities and Australia.

Enjoy this [*Dreaming Story*](#) with your class where senior Aboriginal man Paul Teerman of the Darug Nation shares a Dreaming Story passed to him by a *Yellamundie* or storyteller. The story is about the Crow and Magpie, how they came to be and the role they play in everyday life. In a [*yarning circle*](#) explain the message from Elders for the children. How can students use these lessons moving forward? Create a poster of these lessons to display in your class.

Watch this [*video*](#) of Tasmanian Elder Auntie Lola Greeno sharing her legacy of pakana knowledge and how she passes this on to the next generations. She shares how to collect shells and use them to make necklaces and how to weave baskets out of kelp. Discuss why they think it is important for First Nations Elders to

pass on knowledge for the next generations. Ask students if they have any traditional cultural practices (from the culture they identify with) that they can bring in to share with the class.

Teacher note: In the opening of the video the term "Aborigines" is used. While this term has often been replaced with "First Nations peoples" or "Indigenous", it is sometimes the preferred term for people in Tasmania. (Source: Authors' note in *Tongerlongeter – First Nations Leader and Tasmanian War Hero* by Henry Reynolds and Nicholas Clements, NewSouth Publishing, 2022). This is an important reminder to ask First Nations peoples how they prefer to be acknowledged as it can differ.

Many First Nations peoples of Tasmania do not capitalise any words in palawa kani, Tasmanian Aboriginal language, intentionally. A site that will tell you more is [*wukalina Walk*](#).



School Nature Challenge: Native cranberries and native currants, lutrawita.
© Trish Hodge, nita Education.

Have students participate in [*SBS Learn's School Nature Challenge*](#), a classroom activity to explore and learn about Country through the observation of lands, waterways and sky, inspired by lutruwita (Tasmania) where SBS's *Alone Australia* series was filmed. The Challenge takes students onto Country where their school is located to complete observation activities for a chance to be featured on SBS Australia Instagram.

How to get involved:

Step 1 - Record ONE natural soundscape

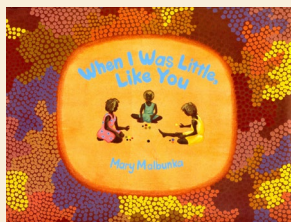
Step 2 - Photograph TWO native plants (bonus: if you can find a native animal, include that in your challenge entry)

Step 3 - Did you know the _____ [insert plant or animal name] is important to First Nations peoples of Australia because _____

Step 4 - Name the Country your school is located and label the plant or animal in your recording and photographs.

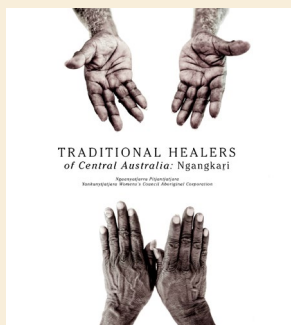


Reading



When I was Little, Like You by Mary Malbunka (Allen and Unwin Children's, 2005) is a story of what life was like when Mary was little living on the Papunya Mission.

Her family moved there to learn and share their own culture. Mary beautifully describes the importance of passing down culture to the next generation while also interweaving Luritja language throughout the book for children to learn. Share this book with your class and ask your students to share stories and experiences where culture has been shared to them from an elder in their community. Ask their grandparents or a family friend to share with them what life was like when they were little so they can share these stories with the class.



Share the unique stories and images of the *Traditional Healers of Central Australia: Ngangkari* by Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council Aboriginal Corporation (Magabala Books,

2013). Ngangkari are traditional healers of the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara lands of Central Australia. In a yarning circle with students, discuss the wisdom that is shared and their thoughts on the stories of traditional healers. How does it differ from what students know of Western medicine?



Dean Widders & Bangarra dancers in Araatika: Rise Up! © EQ Media Group. Photographer: Sean Izzard.



Extension activities

Documenting and preserving First Nations stories is imperative for the next generations. For many years it was forbidden by law for First Nation peoples to practice cultures and share stories. Your class can be a part of preserving and sharing First Nations stories in an appropriate, meaningful and lasting way. Invite local Elders into your classroom to share local stories with your students. With the Elders' permission, create digital stories together to share with your school and wider community. Here are some *examples* for inspiration to get you excited and motivated.

During eating time and breaks in lessons sit your class down to listen to the stories *ReTold: A retelling of stories and songs from the Torres Strait* shared by Elders and respected community members through the State Library of Queensland. Discuss the messages in the stories and choose your favourite to create a class book to share throughout the year.



Useful resources

Websites

- [AITSL | Dreaming stories](#)
- [Care for Kids | How to celebrate Indigenous languages in your centre](#)
- [Miriam Rose Foundation | Dadirri](#)
- [NPY Women's Council | Ngangkari – Traditional Healers](#)
- [Ronnie Summers and choir sing | Songline of the Moonbirds](#)
- [Sharing Stories Foundation](#)
- [The Australian Museum | Tasmanian Aboriginal shell necklaces: A significant cultural practice](#)
- [Working with Indigenous Australians | The Dreaming](#)

First Nations peoples have advocated for communities and resisted colonisation throughout the years. They have used many different forms of activism to bring attention to injustices they have suffered under past government policies. Many forms of activism are quiet and behind closed doors, or some are loud for everyone to see and hear. Elders guide future generations not only through activism and advocacy, but in how they live and walk through the world. Past struggles of Elders help First Nations peoples move forward today as they share their lived experiences. Elders' guidance, care and love sets the course for First Nations peoples to follow and continue this legacy.

“

We are directed and guided by our Elders, for thousands and thousands of years, we have told and heard stories that have been passed down. These stories share our Creation, lived experiences, how the stars guide us, what rules to live by and how to be a good person. There are many lessons to be learnt through our stories and going into schools to share them with children is an honour for me, so these children can understand our ways and take these stories home to live by in their future.

”

Major Lancelot Sumner AM
(Uncle Moogy) – Senior Elder
Ngarrindjeri people

Elder Major Moogy Sumner. © [Change Media](#).
Photographer: Johanis Lyons-Reid.



Key questions

- What is advocacy and activism?
- Why do Elders advocate for the next generation?
- Why is listening to lived experiences important?

*Go to page 8 under "Key notes for educators" to better understand the difference between Elders/elders.



Activities

Watch this short documentary *The Torres Strait: Swallowed by the Sea* about Yessie Mosby, a Torres Strait Community Leader and his young son Genia Mosby on how climate change is affecting their home (published in 2022). They are guided by their ancestors and Elders to raise awareness and fight against rising sea levels which is slowly submerging the islands. They provide an urgent call for what needs to happen, taking their message to Sydney Fashion Week. Discuss with your class the interaction with Yessie Mosby and the Elders in influencing his and his son's advocacy in fighting for their peoples' home. Investigate where the Torres Strait Islander people are today in this fight to save their islands and what your class can do to help them.

Explore the interactive *Mapping of Aboriginal Melbourne* created with the guidance of Elders and Staff from the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation. Explore the "Resistance and Activism" theme together and allow time for your students to explore the other themes and timelines as well. Using the information, create a map display on your classroom wall for others to learn about "Resistance and Activism" in Victoria from Aboriginal people.

First Nations peoples have been protesting and advocating for equity and equality for their people using many different forms of activism since colonisation. Explore these *activists* from the National Archives of Australia, like Aboriginal activist and barrister Pat O'Shane AM and Aboriginal artist Jimmy Pike. Then create a list of the different ways you can advocate for yourself and others. Discuss the different ways activists raise attention and which you think are the most effective – and why. For example: Do you think raising awareness about climate change by throwing food at famous paintings in art galleries is effective? As a class discuss why they think Elders advocate so strongly for the next generation. Ask your students to write an opinion piece expressing their thoughts.

Born from the pain of Ngalia Elders in Western Australia about the "gaping mining holes" left all over Country, Reclaim the Void has a vision to create a huge contemporary artwork made out of thousands of handmade rugs. The rugs,



Denmark Senior High students (Menang/Bibbulman Noongar Boodja / WA) taking part in the 'Reclaim the Void' project. © Denmark Senior High School.

woven from discarded fabric, will be stitched together and the final artwork, based on an original painting by Ngalia artist Dolly Walker, will be laid on Country affected by mining. As a class create a rug together, or each student can create one with their family and send to the *project*. Students can be a part of healing this Country and raising awareness of the damage mining has and continues to cause. Students could also research an issue in their local area and come up with some practical solutions on how they can come together and create an imaginative solution. They could also discuss the power of art and symbolism in relation to Country. To learn more, read the NITV *article*: These Elders are healing their mining-affected Country in the most incredible way.

► ClickView

Watch *Where the Green Ants Dream* (on ClickView) based partly on the Milirrpum v Nabalco Pty Ltd (Gove Land Rights) case about First Nations land rights on Yolŋu Country (Gove Peninsula) Arnhem Land, Northern Territory. Ask your students to share their thoughts on why they think this movie was not well received in Australia when it was made in 1984 but was received well overseas. Students should journal their responses to this story of Elders fighting against mining companies and why they advocated to preserve their land and Dreaming Country.



Reading

Read *Bidhi Galing: Big Rain* by award-winning author, academic and Wiradyuri woman, Professor Anita Heiss AM (Simon Schuster Australia, 2023), a story that celebrates the heroes of the Great Floods of Gundagai in 1852. The story is told through the eyes of a young Wiradyuri girl Wagadhaany, who shares the knowledge and strength of her Elders and connection to family, Country and Culture. Discuss in a yarning circle how the devastation of the floods could have been avoided using the knowledge

Wiradyuri (also spelled Wiradjuri) is an Aboriginal Nation and Language of central and western NSW.

of Wiradyuri Elders. Further explore how Wiradyuri men Yarri and Jacky Jacky have been celebrated for their bravery and honour for the people of Gundagai. How can you pay tribute to them as a class?

Teacher note: Considering the large number of floods we have experienced in Australia recently please consider your individual cohort's needs.

Elder Aunty Oodgeroo Noonuccal (1920-1993) of the Noonuccal people of Minjerribah (Stradbroke Island) was an Aboriginal rights activist, a world-acclaimed poet, veteran, environmentalist and educator who was also known as Kath Walker. Read, watch and learn about Aunty Oodgeroo and listen to her read some of her poetry in this *Deadly Story*. Study her acclaimed and revered collection of poems *My People* (5th Edition, John Wiley & Sons Australia, 2020) that gave voice to the plea for justice for Aboriginal peoples in the

1960s and 1970s. Complete a poet study and be inspired by Aunty Oodgeroo to write your own poetry about the plights of First Nations peoples today.

The United Nations General Assembly have declared the time between 2022-2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages. *Bittangabee Tribe: An Aboriginal story from Coastal New South Wales* by Beryl Cruse, Rebecca Kirby, Liddy Stewart and Steven Thomas (Aboriginal Studies Press, 2009) shares stories in language with an English translation and QR codes for you to listen to each story. With old and new stories, they have been translated and illustrated by language teams across the Northern Territory to celebrate Aboriginal cultures, languages and knowledges. It is vital to keep and share stories Elders pass on, so take some time to listen, share and celebrate together as a class. Sit in a yarning circle and discuss what you have learnt from each story.



Extension activities

Changing the Australian Constitution to adapt with a changing and growing country is not new in Australia. As a class, explore past referendums and changes made to include First Nations peoples through the *National Archives of Australia*. Later this year Australians will vote in a referendum regarding a First Nations Voice to Parliament and constitutional recognition. Have you informed yourself and your class about the different positions people have about whether they will vote yes, or no? It is important for young people to understand the upcoming referendum and the potential impacts of the different possible outcomes. It is also important students have access to reputable sources of trusted information, for example the SBS referendum portal:

[SBS Voice referendum portal](#)

[SBS News | Indigenous Voice to Parliament referendum: How it will work](#)

[The Guardian | Voice referendum: who's behind the yes and no campaigns and how do they plan to convince Australia? | Indigenous voice to parliament](#)



Useful resources

Websites:

- [ABC News | Eden Aboriginal language program takes students out of the classroom and on country](#)
- [AIATSIS | The 1938 Day of Mourning](#)
- [Amnesty International Australia | 9 powerful social change movements you need to know about](#)
- [Australian Geographic | How Aboriginal activism brought about change](#)
- [National Archives of Australia | Notable First Australians](#)
- [National Archives of Australia | The 1967 referendum](#)

- [National Museum of Australia | Australia's Defining Moments Digital Classroom | Gundagai floods](#)
- [SBS News | Timeline: Indigenous rights movement](#)
- [SBS NITV | Filmmaker Rachel Perkins reveals the truth of The Australian Wars – the battles fought on home soil](#)
- [SBS NITV | Truth-telling inquiry expands to hear experiences of racism and injustice](#)
- [SBS Voice Referendum portal](#)
- [Uluru Statement from the Heart](#)



NITV's Barrumbi Kids stars Nick Bonson and Caitlin Hordern. © Ambience Entertainment & Tamarind Tree Pictures.

Secondary

Year 7 to 10



First Nations peoples draw strength from their Elders' experience, wisdom, tenacity and strength which have carried their people forward. First Nations cultures survive because of Elders and Ancestors keeping them alive, even though there were times when it was illegal to practise culture, spirituality, language, lore and ceremonies. It is ingrained in First Nations peoples to care for Elders and show them the greatest respect for what they carry in their minds and hearts, and for what they do for their people every day. Elders play such an important role in communities and families, so First Nations peoples listen to them with open hearts and gratitude, for the love they continue to show everyone. First Nations peoples treat this exchange of knowledges with gentleness and gratitude as Elders pass this forward to next generations and into everyday life, for a better future for their people.

“

We are a gerontocracy which means we are governed by our old people. Our Elders and old people form the backbone of who we are today. We often talk about standing on the shoulders of giants, well those Elders and old people are those giants and we honour them and pay our respects to them wherever they are.

”

Pat Anderson AO – Alywarre Elder

Elder Pat Anderson AO. © National Australia Day Council/
Salty Dingo.



Key questions

- How can all communities draw strength from celebrating First Nations cultures, experiences and knowledges?
- What can you take forward into your everyday lives from Elders?
- Why is it important to take care of Elders?



Activities

Watch the [video](#) of Dharawal Elder Dr Shayne Williams recounting the arrival of Captain Cook in Australia 250 years ago from stories passed down from generation to generation. Discuss the video with your class and ask your students to reflect on Shayne's last words "The encounter at the time was a shared event... so we have a shared history, we have a shared present and therefore we have a shared future as well." Ask them to write a reflection on what they would like to see as a shared future and how this might look.

For many First Nations peoples, it is ingrained from a young age to care for their Elders, both when they are well and when they need extra help to be safe and well. As a class watch the video of Keedon Peachey a Wiradjuri/ Malygnapa man *A Day in the Life of a Carer*. In pairs, list Keedon's characteristics and values, and what you learnt from him. Discuss how these characteristics and values are reflected in you and in your community.

Watch and listen to the *Sydney Elders Continuing Aboriginal Stories* by the NSW State Library. Four elders beautifully share their lived

experiences, culture and lives as Aboriginal people living on Gai-mariagal, Bidjigal, Gadigal and Dharug Country. Ask your students why it is important to listen to lived experiences and what they gained from listening to the Sydney Elders stories. Ask them to write a reflective poem about what they learnt from one or all the Elders.

Gai-mariagal can also be spelled Cammeraygal, and refers to parts of northern Sydney, mostly near Warrang (Sydney Harbour).

Watch *The Land Owns Us* where Yankunytjatjara Elder Bob Randall talks about living on the land as people of the land, and their connection and responsibility to Country. What do you think people today could learn from Elder Bob Randall and other First Nations peoples' perspectives on how "the land owns them"? How does this make students think about their connection to lands? Sit in a [yarning circle](#) and discuss this as a class.

Allow your students time to explore the South Australian Museum website dedicated to *Aboriginal Heritage and Repatriation*. All over Australia, First Nations peoples are advocating for stolen artefacts and ancestral remains to be returned to Country. They want these artefacts and remains to be treated with the respect and

honour they deserve. As a class sit in a yarning circle and ask students to discuss their thoughts and feelings about the repatriation process and what they think should be happening. What role can they play in this process? What do they think should/should not happen and why? Make sure they cite reputable evidence for their opinions.

Sign up to the free 30-minute Zoom session designed for schools on *NAIDOC Portraits: For Our Elders* by the National Portrait Gallery. The program celebrates the achievements of Elders and tells the stories of their lives through the visual communication of art.



Reading

Read stories from around Australia, *Elders: Wisdom from Australia's Indigenous Leaders* by Peter McConchie (Cambridge University Press, 2003). The stories are from 17 clans and tribal leaders who share their wisdom on traditional and contemporary ways of living. They speak of healing, the land, hunting, gathering, family, law and lore, spirit, the sea, Ceremony and song. Start your lesson in a yarning circle and read the wisdom of one of the Elders to your students and discuss. Once you have finished the Elder's teachings and stories, ask your students to write a reflective piece about the Elders' stories they heard. Repeat this process for each Elder.



Read *Homecoming* as a class, written by Noongar and Yawuru writer Dr Elfie Shiosaki (Magabala Books, 2021). Showcasing the stories of four generations of women, her ancestors and Elders, with their own voice, *Homecoming* is a collection of poetry, prose and historical colonial archives that

honours these remarkable Noongar women. It also highlights the undeniable love for their children, those present and those taken, Country, and kin and the oppression they faced. Create a digital book inspired by the writing style of Elfie Shiosaki of students' reflections of the stories shared in *Homecoming*.



Murli la: Songs and Stories of the Tiwi Islands is a book written by The Ngarukuruwala Women's Group with Dr Genevieve Campbell (Hardie Grant Explore, 2023). The group is made up of Elders and women from the Tiwi Islands who celebrate the culture of the islands

through song and storytelling. As Elders and mentors, the Ngarukuruwala Women's Group draw on the old ways of Tiwi song traditions to help young people connect with their language and cultural identity. Enjoy the stories and songs together as a class. Talk about what you have learnt together from the Elders that you could take forward with you in your own life. Take the teachings and further explore the Tiwi Islands culture and history with your class.

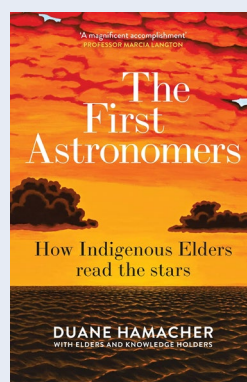


Extension activities

Basket weaving is a tradition that has been passed down from Elders for generations. Weaving was used to make carriers, fish traps, bags, baskets and many more items. Watch this [video](#) with Djabugay Elder Rhonda Brim about the importance of passing down skills and culture through traditional basket weaving. Discuss the video with your class. Take some time together to make a basket using local Indigenous plants or raffia while learning some of the history together.

Watch the [Weaving Workshop](#) or [Weaving Tutorial](#) – Tjanpi Desert Weavers (which includes a PDF with step-by-step instructions) to help you teach your students. Or invite a local First Nations weaver in to pass on the skills to your class. Classroom tip: Practise before you teach the class and have some parent/carer helpers come along who have already learnt how to make a coil basket, so they can help your students too.

Read *The First Astronomers: How the Indigenous Elders read the stars* by Duane Hamacher, which explores Elders and knowledge-holders (Allen and Unwin, 2022). Be guided by six First Nations Elders as they take you on a journey across space and time to reveal the wisdom of the first



astronomers. Break your class into 10 groups and give them a chapter each to study. Ask them to prepare a two-minute presentation to share with the class on the wisdom they have learnt from the Elders from their selected chapter.



Useful resources

Websites

- [New SBS Learn resource | Living Black: For Our Elders](#)
- [Aboriginal Culture | Aboriginal Women's bags, baskets and containers](#)
- [ACARA | Understand how Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages work](#)
- [AIATSIS | Languages alive](#)
- [Amnesty International Australia | Five amazing Aboriginal women who shaped history](#)
- [Australian Arts Review | Elfie Shiosaki: Homecoming](#)
- [Australian Institute of Family Studies | Strengths of Australian Aboriginal cultural practices in family life and child rearing](#)
- [BookWidgets | 10 Fun digital book creator tools and lesson ideas for students](#)
- [First Languages Australia | Resources](#)
- [National Museum of Australia | Repatriation](#)
- [SBS Movies | Explore Indigenous history and stories with these movies at SBS On Demand](#)
- [The First Astronomers](#)

Reading

Through Old Eyes: Poems by Uncle Wes Marne (Blackbooks, 2022)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders can lead conversations and decision-making in matters that most affect First Nations communities in Australia. Knowledges held by Elders have been passed down since time immemorial – more than 65,000 years of the oldest continuous culture on Earth. Together as a diverse nation of Nations we can successfully listen to and learn from Elders who deeply understand their communities and peoples. “Nothing about us – without us” is a phrase many First Nations peoples use to remind people of the importance of community-led guidance, advice and decision making.

“

They are our future; we take motivation and pride from their initiatives they are developing and driving and especially how we now celebrate their successes.

Through the kinship system they give us strength. They are our reason for our resilience and the reason we get up out of bed.

”

Merv Donovan - Gumbaynggirr Elder

Elder Merv Donovan. © TAFE NSW.



Key questions

- What does “Nothing about us – without us” mean?
- How will you celebrate For Our Elders?
- How can all Australians pay homage to past Elders?
- What makes First Nations Elders important to communities?



Activities

Share the series *Keeping Culture: Utilising Koori Elders wisdom and knowledge in Education* with your class. This is a project by the University of NSW (UNSW) of 10 short videos of five female and five male Koori Elders sharing their oral histories. They talk about a diverse range of topics including self-determination, environmental activism, academia, arts and more. After watching the videos on Aunty Zona, Aunty Sue, Aunty Norma and Uncle Ralph, Uncle Bud and Uncle Jimmy, ask your students what they think "nothing about us – without us" means. What stories from the First Nations Elders made students realise the importance of First Nations peoples being involved in their own decision-making and self-determination for First Nations peoples? Then, have your students write a letter of appreciation to an Elder they connected with through the series and express gratitude for the knowledges shared. Send the letters to the UNSW so they can be forwarded to the Elders.

Respecting and remembering the stories of First Nations Elders who have passed to the Dreamtime is very important to First Nations peoples. In the past twelve months many significant Elders, who have in many ways and spaces forged a better future for next generations, have been lost. Research and pay your respects to Elders who have passed in your local community and across this continent. Here are some Elders we have lost in the past twelve months who have left a lasting impact on our nation.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, please be aware this next section contains the names and images of deceased peoples. Teachers, you have a responsibility to understand protocols around this and to be flexible to meet the needs of your whole class cohort.



Yunupingu at Garma 2019 © Peter Eve, Yothu Yindi Foundation.

Clan Leader Yunupingu campaigned for all First Nations peoples' rights. Visit the Yothu Yindi Foundation site [Vale Yunupingu](#) and as a class write a tribute to Yunupingu sharing your thoughts on this fierce Elder.

Gunditjmara/Bundjalung Elder Uncle Archie Roach AC was a storyteller who gave a voice to the Stolen Generations through his song *Took the Children Away*. Uncle Archie believed in the power of the Arts to help with healing. Listen to the song and as you listen paint your emotions. Write a book together of the story of Uncle Archie to share with others using your paintings as the illustrations.

Uncle Jack Charles was a stage and screen actor, and activist for all First Nations peoples. Watch one of the great storytellers, Uncle Jack's TEDx Talk *Mentoring Indigenous Inmates* and how his life experiences have led to him mentoring First Nations inmates. Research the current situation of overrepresentation of First Nations peoples in jail and write a one-minute monologue about your reflections of Uncle Jack's important work with First Nation inmates.

► ClickView

Watch on ClickView Season 1 Episode 7 of *First Australians – We Are No Longer Shadows*, which focuses on Torres Strait Elder Eddie Koiki Mabo, who fought Australian Law to recognise his peoples' ownership of Murray Island. Look at his work for First Nations land rights leading to the legal landmark Mabo Case which overturned the idea of *terra nullius* or "land belonging to no-one." Watch and discuss as a class the impact one man had through his activism and advocacy for this people. Inspire your students to create a short one-minute documentary-style digital presentation about another Elder and their impact on future generations.

Read through the South Australian Native Title services article *Old People Welcomed Home To Kurna Country* to learn more about Elders whose remains were taken away from their Country and how they have been repatriated and honoured.

► ClickView

Note this documentary is classified M for mature audiences. It is 1 hour 22 minutes in duration. Watch on ClickView *After the Apology* where four Aboriginal Grandmothers and Elders of

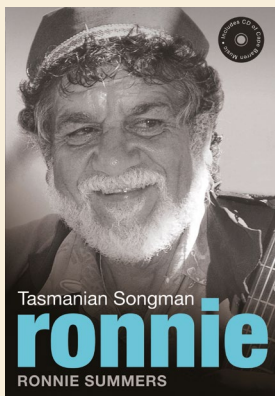


their community plead to be involved in the care of their children in Out of Home Care and in the removal of children. You can see the definition of “nothing about us – without us” in action. Ask your students to write a poetry reflection or song that shares their feelings on watching *After the Apology*.



Reading

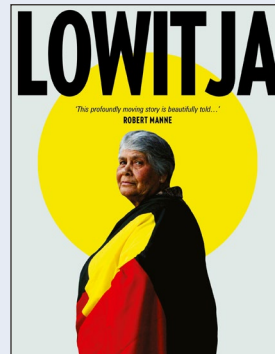
Listen to the audio book or read *The Dreaming Path, Indigenous Thinking to Change Your life* by Paul Callaghan with Uncle Paul Gordon (Bloomsbury, 2022) who shares the ancient wisdom of First Nations peoples through exercises, conversations, Dreaming Stories and key messages. Practise some exercises with your class to improve their well-being, even sharing these daily with your class.



Elder Ronnie Summers is a descendant of the Trawl-wool-way and palawa people. Ronnie is a proud descendant of Mannalargenna, warrior, chief and freedom fighter of the Trawl-wool-way people. Read his story as a class or take extracts from the book he wrote with Helen Gee

called *Ronnie: Tasmanian Songman* (Magabala Books, 2009). Included in the book is a disc of his songs, including one where he tells the story of the moonbird. Share the songs with your students and the stories and knowledges within them. Write a song together about the life of Ronnie Summers and what he taught us through his music. Students could also research a local First Nations musician and their music. This research should be shared with the class to create a discussion about traditional and contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and cultures. Highlight how both exist and are vital to the continuing of culture.

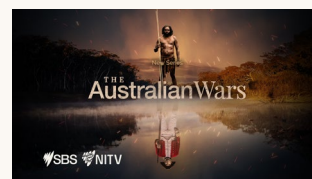
Extension activities



Read about the Yankunjatjara Elder *Lowitja: The Authorised Biography of Lowitja O'Donoghue* by Stuart Rintoul (Allen & Unwin, 2020), a powerful and unrelenting advocate for First Nations peoples. She has been a part of many significant events

that have changed the course of history for First Nations peoples. She was recognised as a National Living Treasure in 1998 by the National Trust of Australia for her knowledges and skills. She is still contributing to her people today through the Lowitja O'Donoghue Foundation. Watch the [video interview](#) of Elder Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue AC CBA DSG as she shares her life story and work to date, including her role in the Native Title Act in 1993. Take note of the last minute in the clip where she is asked to reflect on whether she holds resentment towards the white community. Ask your students to write a letter to Lowitja O'Donoghue about the impact her story has had on them today.

Listen to the CAN Community Arts Network podcast series *Ni! Means listen* by Noongar man Phil Walley-Stack as he yarns with Elders and allows them to share their stories in their own voice. Phil creates a space for conversations about racism, the Stolen Generations, discrimination, family and many serious topics. Listen to the podcasts on your chosen platform before sharing with your class to find what suits your cohort. Create a response podcast to the Ni! Means Listen series. As a class ask, students to share their emotions and connections to the Elders' stories they heard.



Check out the SBS Learn resource *Understanding the Frontier Wars*, written by Culture is Life, based on Blackfella Films' three-part series *The Australian Wars*, which highlights the resistance of First Nations Elders and ancestors to protect their people against colonisation.



Useful resources

Websites

- [AIATSIS | About native title](#)
- [ClickView | Who Do You Think You Are? Season 12 Episode 5 Uncle Jack Charles](#)
- [Humanrights.gov.au | About Bringing Them Home | Bringing Them Home](#)
- [Lowitja Institute | Lowitja O'Donoghue Foundation](#)
- [NAIDOC | Lowitja O'Donoghue](#)
- [National Archives of Australia | Aboriginal activist and Australian of the Year Lowitja O'Donoghue](#)
- [National Archives of Australia | First Australians' land rights](#)
- [National Archives of Australia | History](#)
- [SBS News | Filmmaker Rachel Perkins reveals the truth of The Australian Wars – the battles fought on home soil](#)
- [SBS News | Today marks the 30th | anniversary of Mabo Day. Here's what it is and why it matters](#)
- [SBS News | Tributes for pioneering Aboriginal singer, storyteller, activist Archie Roach](#)
- [SBS NITV | Indigenous cultural protocols: what the media needs to do when depicting deceased persons](#)
- [SBS NITV | Yunupingu remembered for his 'fierce leadership and kindness' as emotional tributes flow](#)
- [UNSW Newsroom | A good yarn: Koori Elders talk about culture, Country and history](#)



Legendary journalist Karla Grant interviews Elders from across the continent in brand new SBS Learn resource, *Living Black: For Our Elders*. This resource includes interactive worksheets in three languages!

Karla Grant, host of *Living Black*. © NITV.

Teacher professional learning

Teacher learning is an effective way to build staff confidence and competence around embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across curricula. Here is a sample of course providers, to get you started:

- Supply Nation has a listing of professional learning providers: use the business directory to search for First Nations cultural competence providers: [Supplynation.org.au](https://supplynation.org.au)
- BlackCard: theblackcard.com.au
- Australians Together: australiansaltogether.org.au
- Narragunnawali: narragunnawali.org.au
- Share Our Pride: shareourpride.org.au

Dadirri

Learn about *Dadirri* – deep listening
– to help students to self-reflect.

Kinship Module

This *module*, developed by Associate Professor Lynette Riley, promotes cross-cultural understanding by explaining the intricacies of the Aboriginal Kinship system.

SBS Learn teacher resources

Head to SBS Learn for resources and classroom-ready clips connected to documentaries, online interactives, dramas, multilingual content and news and current affairs. sbs.com.au/learn.

Further resources

For up-to-date links for this resource, head to [SBS Learn](https://www.sbs.com.au/learn).

Useful teacher resources:

Australian Curriculum: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures: [Glossary](#).

Websites

ClickView | [Grace Beside Me](#)

Common Ground | [For Our Elders resource](#)

Our Yarning | [Free digital library](#)

Wingaru | [NAIDOC Challenge](#)

Reading

Clever Man: The Life of Paddy Compass Namadbara by Big Bill Neidjie (Aboriginal Studies Press, 2020)

Elephants in the Bush and other Yamatji Yarns by Clarrie Cameron (Magabala Books, 2013)

Etta and the Shadow Taboo by JM Field and Jeremy Worrall (Hardie Grant Children's Publishing, 2023)

Tell Me Why by Robyn Templeton and Sarah Jackson (Magabala Books, 2004)

Wilam: A Birrarung Story by Lisa Kennedy (Walker Books Australia, 2019)

