



Australian
Human Rights
Commission



BRINGING THEM HOME

.....
Educational Resource • 2017



YEAR 9

.....
History

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Zoe Betar and Alex Shain (Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning, Reconciliation Australia), Kate Cameron (History Teachers Association of Australia), Renee Cawthorne (Australian Museum), Terry Chenery (Link-Up (NSW)), Paul Gray (Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat), Peter Lewis (SNAICC), Peter Nolan (Australian Government Department of Education and Training), Lyndall Ley Osborne and Narelle Rivers (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies), Robert Parkes (School of Education, University of Newcastle) and Richard Weston (Healing Foundation).

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YEAR 9: HISTORY

Key Learning Areas	History
Year Group	Year 9
Student Age Range	14–15 year olds
Resources/Props	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australian Human Rights Commission’s interactive Bringing them Home website• Note-paper or notebooks and pens for students• Butcher’s paper and markers• Access to internet enabled devices or reference materials• Laptop and projector/screen for viewing online videos
Language/vocabulary	A glossary of key terms can be found on page 14.



The artwork used throughout this resource was created by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artist Riki Salam of We Are 27 Creative. The artwork on the front cover is called 'The Healing Journey'. To learn more please visit '[About the Artwork](#)' on the [Bringing them Home](#) website.

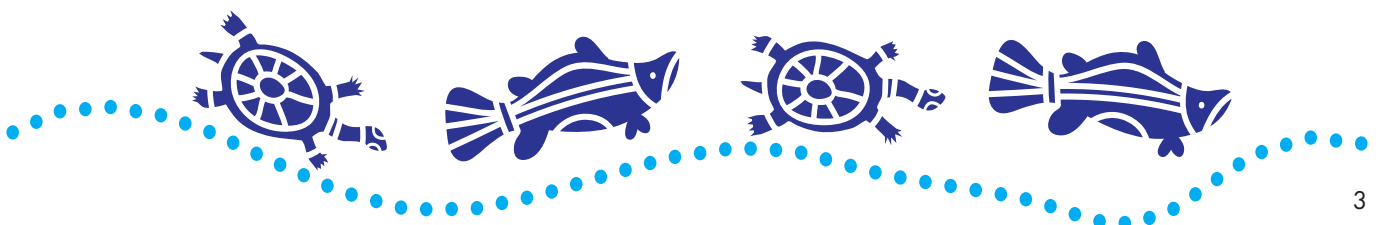
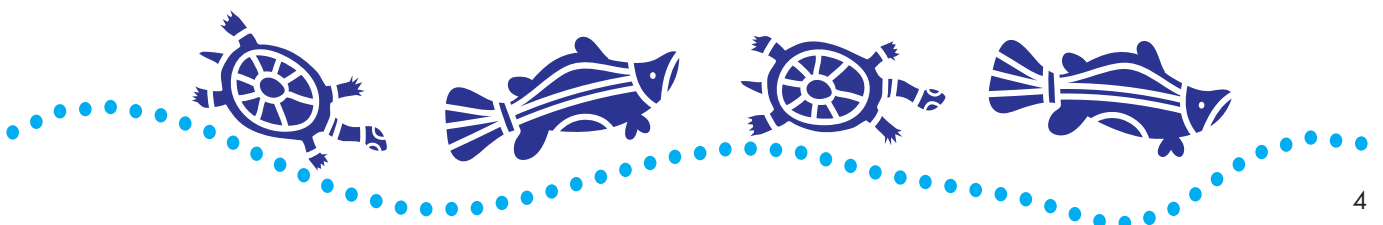




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USING THIS RESOURCE

The following icons are used throughout the resource to indicate a particular type of content or activity:



The eagle icon indicates a **note for teachers**.



The goanna icon indicates an **activity for students to complete individually**.



The freshwater turtle icon indicates **background information for teachers**. In some cases, teachers may wish to share this content with students.



The dugong icon indicates an **activity to be completed in pairs**.



The spirit ancestors icon indicates recommended **resources for additional learning**. In some cases it may be helpful to incorporate these resources into your teaching.



The emu icon indicates an **activity to be completed in small groups**.



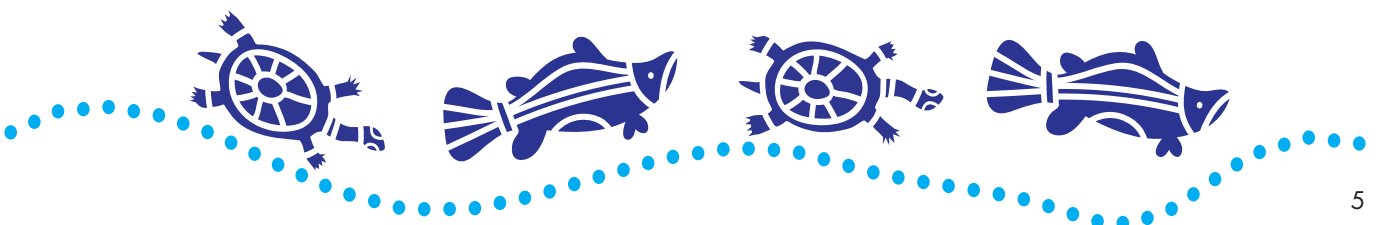
The seedpod icon indicates recommended **additional learning or extension activities**.



The kangaroo icon indicates an **activity for the entire class** to complete together.



The fish icon indicates an opportunity to **involve the school** in your class's learning.





TEACHING ABOUT THE STOLEN GENERATIONS

Narragunnawali
Reconciliation in Schools
and Early Learning



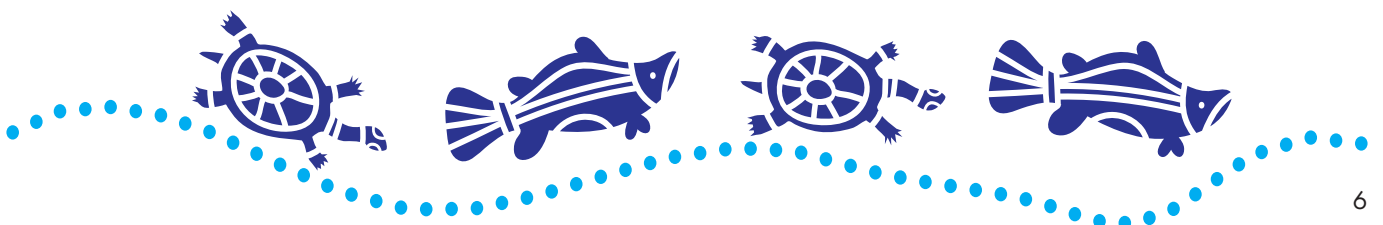
.....
Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning is a Reconciliation Australia program that support schools and early learning services in Australia to develop environments that foster a higher level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions.

Narragunnawali has developed the following guidelines to support and assist teachers in teaching about the Stolen Generations in a respectful and appropriate way.

As with all resources, teachers are encouraged to read and view the learning resources and all the supporting material prior to showing them to students. The content in the *Bringing them Home* resources addresses some significant themes and it is important for teachers to feel comfortable with the content before introducing it in the classroom.

- Talk, if possible, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff, families and/or community members before using these learning resources. This resource discusses the Stolen Generations and themes that may be sensitive for students and teachers, and particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Considering and pre-empting possible responses is very important. Because of the often distinct, place-based nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identities and community relationships, it can also be significant to explore the concept of connecting to Country from your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community perspective.

- Set classroom ground rules: Due to the sensitive nature of the content around the Stolen Generations, setting classroom ground rules with your students before teaching this material is an important step in creating a safe space and helping develop mutual respect and understanding between the members of your classroom community.





Examples of Classroom Ground Rules

Be respectful: Each person has their own beliefs and values.

Value diversity: Each person has their own world views, experiences and opinions.

Listen politely: Each person has a right to contribute without pressure or intimidation.

Act with honour and courage: Be brave in sharing experiences, ideas and opinions.

Appreciate privacy: Each person has the right to uphold their privacy.

Act responsibly: Share feedback with thoughtful consideration and a positive attitude towards others.

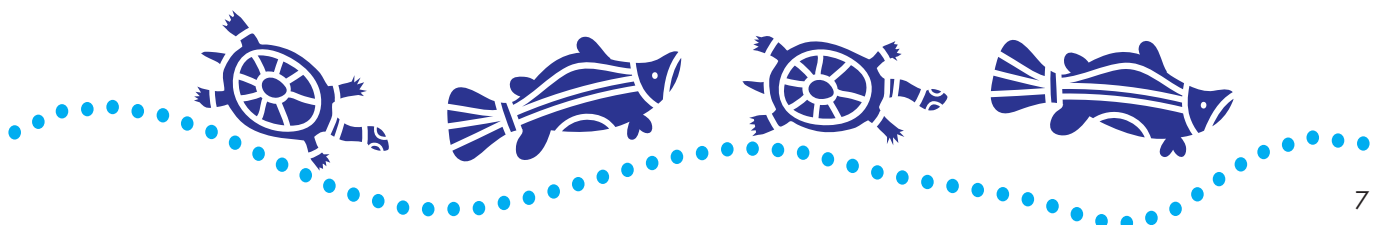


Other ideas for consideration:

- Encourage students to frame discussion comments as their own (as in “I think”) and avoid forceful language (such as “you should”). Also encourage students to draw on evidence from their viewing, and from further critical research, in shaping their responses—engaging with diverse perspectives, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, is key to formulating strong understandings and responses and avoids potentially traumatic experiences by not including speculative and assumption-based activities.
- When responding to others in classroom discussion or within the associated activities, encourage students to challenge *ideas* rather than people.
- Allow adequate time at the end of each viewing session for students to debrief the content, for discussion and associated activities.
- Valuing individual beliefs and values does not mean that discrimination should be tolerated. If a student says something that is racist, it is important to speak up and let them know that racism is unacceptable. The [Racism. It Stops with Me](#) campaign has some suggestions for responding to racism. The teaching resources [Take a stand against racism](#) and [Tackling racism in Australia](#) also provide guidance for teachers as well as suggestions for learning activities.

Further guidance around fostering safe and respectful learning environments is available from Reconciliation Australia’s *Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning* online platform. The following resources may be particularly helpful:

- [Cultural Safety and Respect in the Classroom](#)
- [Guide to Using Respectful and Inclusive Language and Terminology](#)





TEACHING AND LEARNING SEQUENCES OVERVIEW

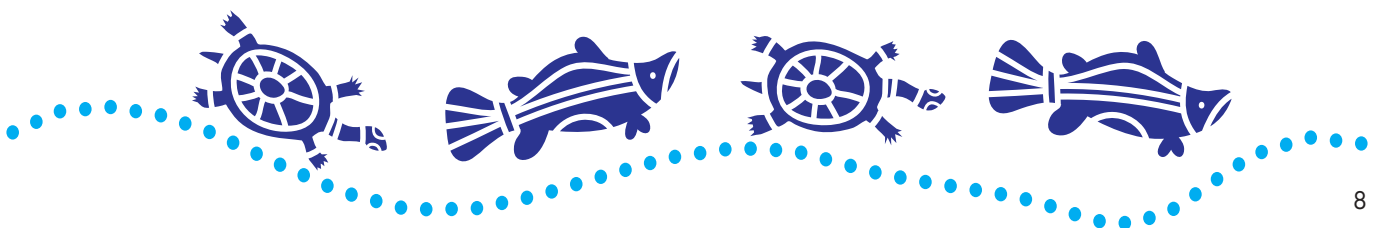
Lesson Overview

Through these teaching and learning sequences students will further their understanding of the impacts of British colonisation and colonial expansion on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and practices. They will investigate a variety of government policies enacted to govern Indigenous Australians. In particular, students will explore the frameworks and justifications used to forcibly remove Aboriginal and Torres Strait children from their families and develop an understanding of some of the common experiences shared by members of the Stolen Generations.

Aim: Upon completion of these lessons, students will be able to communicate the short-term and long-term impacts of colonisation and subsequent policies on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities.

Australian Curriculum Links

Australian Curriculum Content Description	
Year 9 History	
Key concepts <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence• Continuity and change• Cause and effect• Perspectives• Empathy• Significance• Contestability	Inquiry questions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What were the changing features of the movements of people from 1750 to 1918?• How did new ideas and technological developments contribute to change in this period?• What was the origin, development, significance and long-term impact of imperialism in this period?
Depth Study: Making a nation	
The extension of settlement, including the effects of contact (intended and unintended) between European settlers in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACDSEH020)	
<i>Elaborations</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• explaining the effects of contact (for example, the massacres of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; their killing of sheep; the spread of European diseases) and categorising these effects as either intended or unintended	



Australian Curriculum Content Description

- investigating the forcible removal of children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in the late nineteenth century/early twentieth century (leading to the Stolen Generations), such as the motivations for the removal of children, the practices and laws that were in place, and experiences of separation.

Historical Skills

Chronology, terms and concepts

- Use historical terms and concepts (ACHHS165)

Historical questions and research

- Identify and select different kinds of questions about the past to inform historical inquiry (ACHHS166)
- Evaluate and enhance these questions (ACHHS167)
- Identify and locate relevant sources, using ICT and other methods (ACHHS168)

Analysis and use of sources

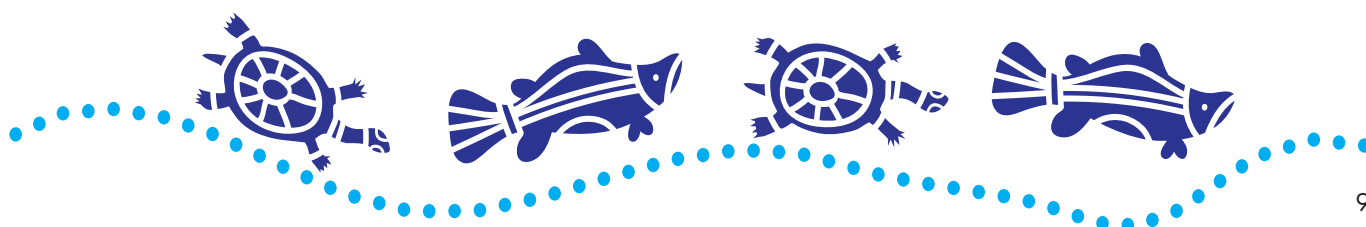
- Identify the origin, purpose and context of primary and secondary sources (ACHHS169)
- Process and synthesise information from a range of sources for use as evidence in an historical argument (ACHHS170)
- Evaluate the reliability and usefulness of primary and secondary sources (ACHHS171)

Perspectives and interpretations

- Identify and analyse the perspectives of people from the past (ACHHS172)
- Identify and analyse different historical interpretations (including their own) (ACHHS173)

Explanation and communication

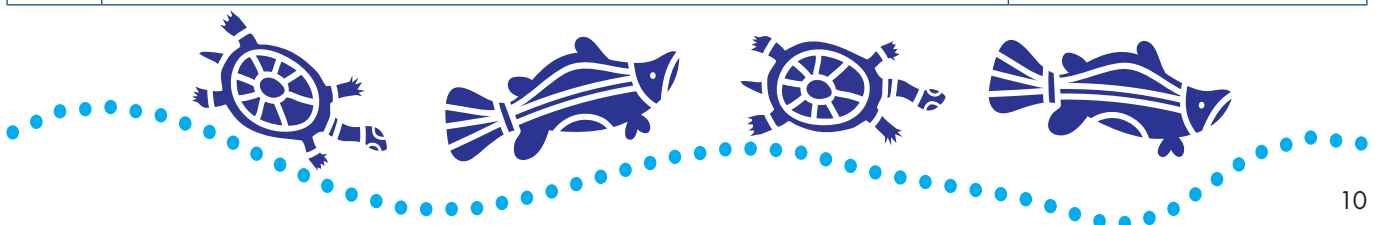
- Develop texts, particularly descriptions and discussions that use evidence from a range of sources that are referenced (ACHHS174)
- Select and use a range of communication forms (oral, graphic, written) and digital technologies (ACHHS175)





RECOMMENDED LESSON SEQUENCING

Lesson Overview		Suggested time allocated
Introduction		
1.	Defining key terms Students define the key terms and concepts used throughout the lessons.	40 minutes
Sequence 1: Effects of Contact		
<p><i>Curriculum Links:</i> The extension of settlement, including the effects of contact (intended and unintended) between European settlers in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACDSEH020)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaboration: explaining the effects of contact (for example, the massacres of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; their killing of sheep; the spread of European diseases) and categorising these effects as either intended or unintended 		
1.	Source study: Michael Adams engraving Students examine and discuss an 18th century artwork depicting an Aboriginal woman and British colonists.	10 minutes
2.	Source study: <i>The Cry for the Dead</i> Students read and respond to a passage from Judith Wright's book <i>The Cry for the Dead</i> .	22 minutes
3.	Cause and Effect Students consider the short-term and long-term effects of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	60 minutes + additional research time + presentation time
4.	Myall Creek Massacre Students develop a timeline or profiles in order to learn more about the Myall Creek Massacre.	60 minutes
5.	Significance of the Myall Creek Massacre Students reflect on why the Myall Creek Massacre was such a significant event in Australian history.	60 minutes + additional research/writing time
6.	Attacks on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples Students research and present a news story on an attack on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	60 minutes + additional research time + presentation time

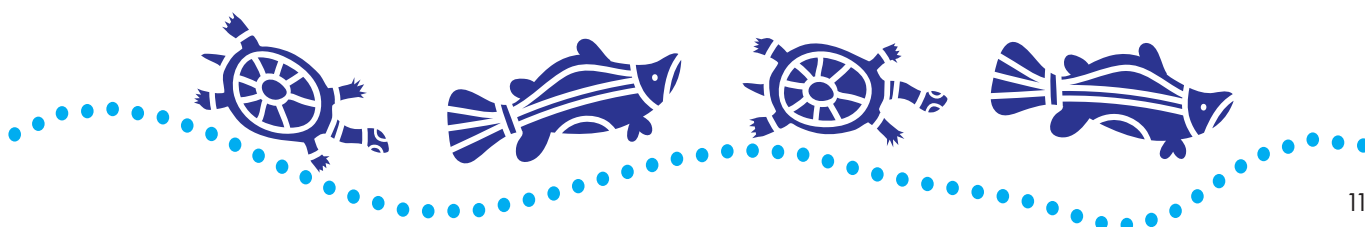


Sequence 2: The Stolen Generations

Curriculum Links: The extension of settlement, including the effects of contact (intended and unintended) between European settlers in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACDSEH020)

- Elaboration: investigating the forcible removal of children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in the late nineteenth century/early twentieth century (leading to the Stolen Generations), such as the motivations for the removal of children, the practices and laws that were in place, and experiences of separation.

1.	<p>Legal Frameworks for removal</p> <p>Students research the legislation used by governments to forcibly remove Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.</p>	60 minutes
2.	<p>Justifying removal</p> <p>Students consider governments' justifications for removing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.</p>	30 minutes + additional research/writing time
3.	<p>Experiences of stolen children</p> <p>Students construct a mind map to gain a better understanding of some of the common experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were removed from their families.</p>	60 minutes
4.	<p>Voices of the Stolen Generations</p> <p>Students develop a presentation about one member of the Stolen Generations.</p>	60 minutes + additional research time + presentation time
5.	<p>Long-term effects</p> <p>Students work in pairs learn more about the long-term impacts of forced removal on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities.</p>	60 minutes
6.	<p>Intergenerational trauma</p> <p>Students consider the intergenerational impacts of forcibly removing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.</p>	30 minutes





INTRODUCTION



Before the beginning of each of these lessons, make sure that you let your class know that some of what they will be learning about might make them feel sad or angry. Let students know that they can come and talk to you about how they are feeling. A list of organisations that may also be able to provide support online or over the phone can be found [here](#).



Teachers who are unfamiliar with the policies and practices leading to the Stolen Generations, may find it helpful to read through the **'Australia: A National Overview'** factsheet prior to teaching this material. The factsheet provides a brief background to the policies and practices that authorised the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

Overview

In this series of lessons, students will be learning more about the Stolen Generations—the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were forcibly removed from their families by the Australian Government and its colonial predecessors.



Introduction: Defining key terms

Suggested timing:

- 5 minutes to introduce activity
- 15 minutes to develop glossary
- 20 minutes for classroom discussion of key terms



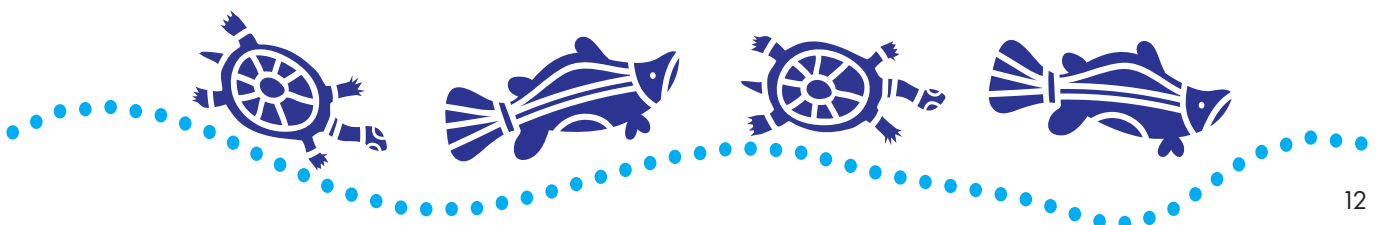
Required resources:

- Butcher's paper and markers for scribe
- Note-paper/notebooks and pens for students



In order for students to be able to comprehend the various components of this topic it is essential that students develop an understanding of the key terms and concepts. The purpose of this is to build a foundation of metalanguage which students can utilise throughout the topic. This will ensure that ALL students understand the meaning of specific terms which are used throughout the lessons.

- Let students know that over a series of lessons, they will be learning more about the Stolen Generations.
- Inform students that they will be working in pairs to develop their own glossary of key terms and concepts that will be used throughout the lessons.

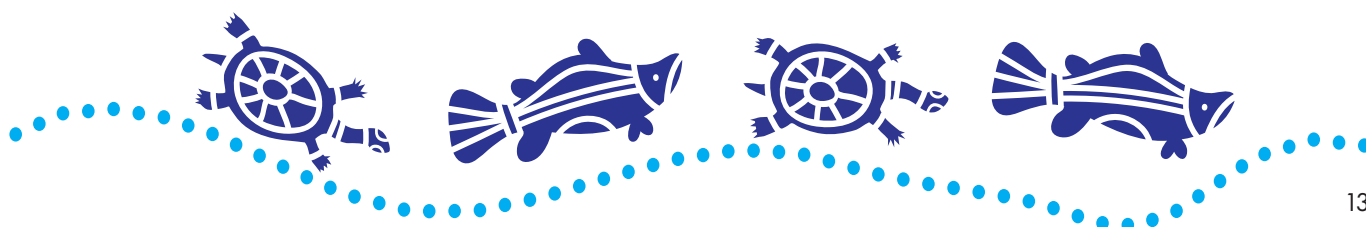


- Let students know that they can decide the format that they would like their glossary to take (for example, a series of wordbank cards, a word map, a poster, a one-page glossary etc).
- Provide students with a list of key terms (next page) to include in their glossary and tell them to make sure that there is space for them to add any additional terms that they come across throughout the lessons. Let them know that they have 15 minutes to work in pairs to produce their glossary. At this stage, students should not undertake any research. Their definitions should be based on what they know already. Let students know that if they are unsure of the meaning of a particular term, they should leave that space blank. They will be able to fill it in later.
- After 15 minutes, ask the class to come back together and facilitate a discussion about the meaning of the key terms and come up with a mutually agreed upon glossary. Ask one student to volunteer as a scribe and write each term and its definition on a sheet of butcher's paper. The rest of the class should write these definitions on their own personal glossary. If the class is stuck on any terms, help them to come up with a definition. Once the glossary is complete, stick it to the wall for the remainder of the lessons. Let students know that if there are any other terms they come across during these lessons that they do not understand, they can add them to the class glossary. At the beginning of each lesson, check to see if the glossary needs to be updated.



Courtesy University of WA Berndt Museum of Anthropology.

“Maids of the Mission”, Forrest River, WA, undated.



Example Glossary of Key Terms

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: The original inhabitants of Australia.

Aboriginal peoples: The original inhabitants of mainland Australia (Tasmania included). At the time of European arrival, it is estimated that there were 500+ unique languages and dialects across the country.

Assimilation: The process of one group being absorbed by another. Under the Assimilation Policy, the Australian Government sought to assimilate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into 'white Australia' by trying to make them 'look' and act 'white'.

Bringing them Home: The name given to the final report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families. The *Bringing them Home* report was produced by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (now called the Australian Human Rights Commission) and tabled in the Australian Parliament on 26 May 1997.

Citizen: A person who is a member of a political community, such as a state or a nation, that grants certain rights and privileges to its citizens and in return expects them to fulfil certain duties, such as to obey the law.

Citizenship: The status, with its rights and responsibilities, of being a citizen of a country.

Colonisation: The process of taking control of and settling another land/territory.

Colonist: An individual involved in the colonisation process. This includes both those who chose to come to the new colony and those who were forced to do so (i.e. convicts).

Colony: Land/territory that is taken over and controlled by another country, and settled by people from that country.

Legislation: The laws of a country or jurisdiction, as passed by Parliament.

'Full-blood': A historical term previously used to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have no non-Indigenous ancestry. This term is considered very offensive and should no longer be used.

'Half-caste': A historical term previously used to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who had one Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander parent, and one non-Indigenous (usually 'white' or European parent). This term is considered very offensive and should no longer be used.

'Quadroon': A historical term previously used to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who had one quarter Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ancestry. This term is considered very offensive and should no longer be used.

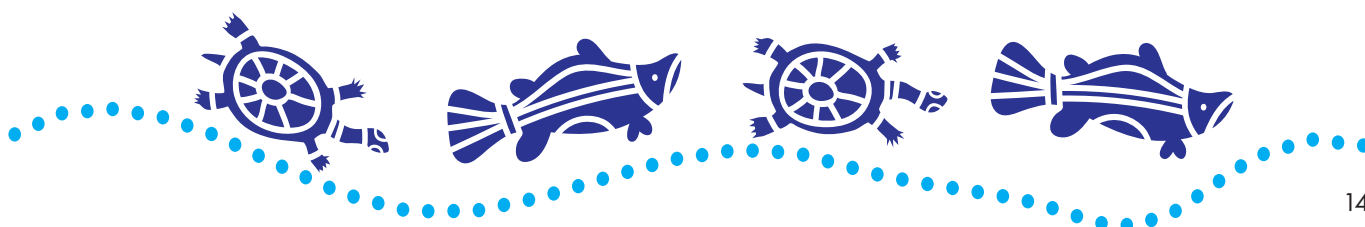
Stolen Generations: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were forcibly removed from their families and communities as children.

Torres Strait Islander people: The original inhabitants of the Torres Strait Islands.



Teachers might find it helpful to view [Narragunnawali's Terminology Guide](#) for guidance around definitions and the appropriate use of language and terminology when discussing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and contributions.

Some state and territory Departments of Education have also produced terminology guides.





SEQUENCE 1: EFFECTS OF CONTACT



The following is a combination of information and associated learning activities that will take students through the topic. It is important to spend time on the key concepts as these establish the students' ability to develop a contextual understanding of various aspects of the topic. This should assist them to be able to identify the effect that such elements had on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Key Concept: Colonisation

A colony is a land/territory that is taken over and controlled by another country and settled by people from that country. For example, from 1788 to 1900, Australia was part of a series British of colonies.

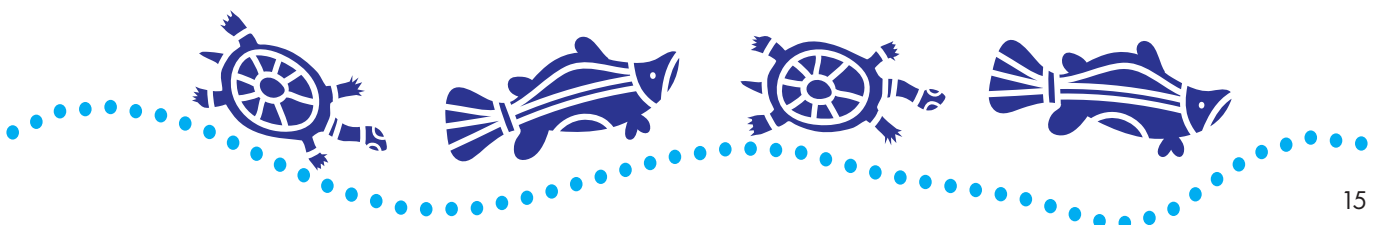
When a country colonises another territory, they usually introduce their own:

- System of Government
- Legal system
- Religion(s)
- Institutions such as schools and hospitals
- Agricultural system

Generally, there were three main reasons why countries sought to colonise other lands:

- Economic—some colonies were rich in natural resources such as gold. Many also had goods that could be traded. Industrialisation meant that many developed countries were now manufacturing products. The colonies provided access to raw materials, new economic markets and trade routes which colonisers hoped would lead to fortune.
- Power—the more colonies a country had, the more power and influence they had in global affairs.
- Religious—the colonising nations were predominantly Christian and felt that it was their Christian duty to spread the word of God. They believed that they must save the Indigenous people of the colonies from their own non-Christian religions and belief systems.

Most European countries, including Great Britain, shared similar attitudes and sentiments towards the places that they colonised, and the people who were already living there. The colonising powers often did not recognise or acknowledge that the territories that they took over were already complex societies with their own laws, religions and cultures. The ongoing legacy of these attitudes continues to be felt today.



For example, the colonisers tended to consider that:

- In many cases, the history of the territory that was colonised 'began' when the Europeans arrived. For example the history of Australia began in 1788. (This was not the case in some colonies, such as India, which already had a substantial written historical record)
- Because the landscape of the territory that was colonised bore little or no resemblance to their own, they felt that its inhabitants were 'backward' and that the land was not being used to its full potential. In Australia, the British colonisers did not recognise the Indigenous people's relationship to land as 'ownership.'
- Christianity was the only true religion and therefore those who did not worship the Christian God needed to be educated in the Christian faith.



It is estimated that there were over 500 different Aboriginal nations living in Australia when the British arrived. In 1996 the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies released a map of Australia that attempted to show the approximate territory of Australia's Indigenous language and nation groups. The AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia can be viewed [here](#).

Case Study: The experiences of the Eora and Darug (Dharug¹) people

You may like to provide students with an overview of the experiences of initial contact with Europeans on the Indigenous peoples living in your local area. Alternatively, students could be set a research task to find out more about the local Traditional Owners and the impacts of colonisation on the local area.

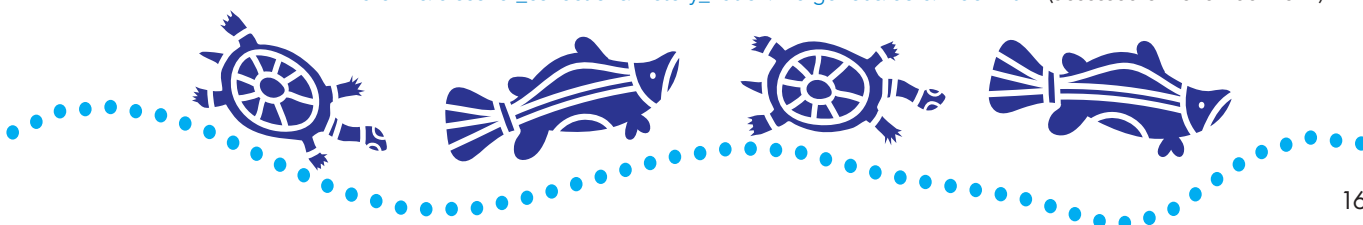


Though the experiences of each Aboriginal nation varied, for most, the arrival of Europeans had devastating impacts. The following is an examination of the experiences of the Eora and Darug peoples, who were among the first to come into contact with the British colonisers.

When the British settlers arrived in 1788, they established their first colony at Sydney Cove, on the land of the Eora Nation. The Eora Nation is made up of 29 different clan groups who lived around the coastal areas of what we now call Sydney.² The Eora called the new arrivals 'Bèerewalgal', which means 'people of the clouds'.³



- 1 Many names identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their languages have variant spellings or alternative names. Both Darug and Dharug are commonly used. For the remainder of this resource, the spelling Darug will be used.
- 2 Anita Heiss and Melodie-Jane Gibson, 'Aboriginal people and place' Sydney Barani (online). At <http://www.sydneybarani.com.au/sites/aboriginal-people-and-place/> (accessed 6 November 2017).
- 3 State Library of New South Wales, 'Eora: Aboriginal Sydney' (online). At http://www2.sl.nsw.gov.au/archive/discover_collections/history_nation/indigenous/eora/index.html (accessed 6 November 2017).





To learn more about the Eora Nation, visit the City of Sydney's website [Sydney Barani](#) and the State Library of NSW's website [Eora—Mapping Aboriginal Sydney 1770–1850](#).

The arrival of white-skinned strangers was confusing for the Eora. Who were these new people unloading supplies onto their land? They were shocked when the Europeans attacked them and by what they did to the land. The newcomers:

- felled trees
- cleared the ground
- dug holes in the soil
- marked out land allotments
- pitched foreign canvas structures on the land
- brought new species of animals such as sheep and cattle, and kept them in pens
- prevented the Eora from visiting their sacred sites

The meeting of these two different peoples, each with a different language and culture, made communication challenging and often led to misunderstandings. Differing core values, which were the foundation of their respective societies and cultures, were also a cause of conflict. The Eora people valued spirituality, continuity and their connection with the land, animals and water. Meanwhile, the Europeans pursued wealth and material possessions and valued what they considered progress and change. This included a belief in the superiority of Christianity and the desire to convert 'non-believers'.

The Myth of *Terra Nullius*



Captain Cook's 'Secret Instructions' from the British Admiralty (i.e. the Royal Navy), carried with him on his voyage, instructed him 'with the Consent of the Natives to take possession of Convenient Situations in the Country in the Name of the King of Great Britain'.

Photographs of the original 'Secret Instructions' can be viewed on the Museum of Australian Democracy's website '[Founding Docs](#)'. A transcript of the instructions is also available.



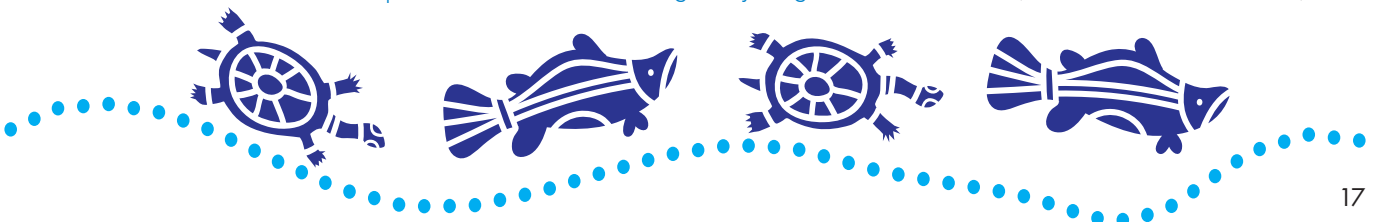
Despite these instructions to take possession of the land 'with the consent of the natives', and Captain Cook and others' clear descriptions that people were living on the land, the colonisers claimed the new territory under the doctrine of *Terra Nullius* ('land belonging to no one' or 'land without owners').⁴ This meant that the land was not recognised as being owned by anyone. According to *Terra Nullius*, the indigenous inhabitants of a country could only claim sovereignty over the land if their labour and practice of agriculture had utilised it and altered the landscape by constructing buildings and towns.

Therefore, if the land was either uninhabited or inhabited by a society who did not use it according to these 'accepted' criteria, it could be freely taken.

For an overview of the concept of recognition of land ownership, see Chapter 2 of the Australian Law Reform Commission's report '[Connection to Country: Review of the Native Title Act 1993 \(Cth\)](#)'.



⁴ Australian Museum, 'Glossary of Indigenous Australia Terms', (16 February 2017) Australian Museum. At <https://australianmuseum.net.au/glossary-indigenous-australia-terms> (accessed 14 November 2017).

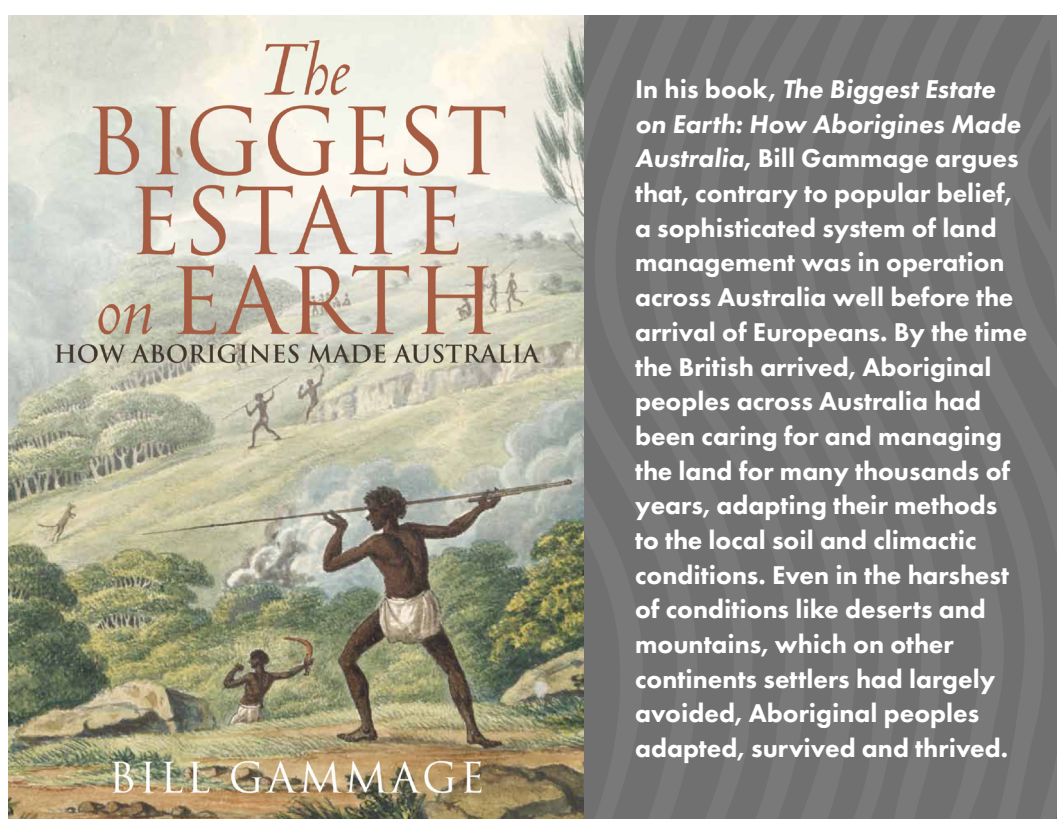


The British claimed that the Indigenous peoples of Australia:

- were few in numbers
- did not wear any clothes
- did not show any evidence of tilling the soil
- failed to construct any buildings
- had no observable forms of government

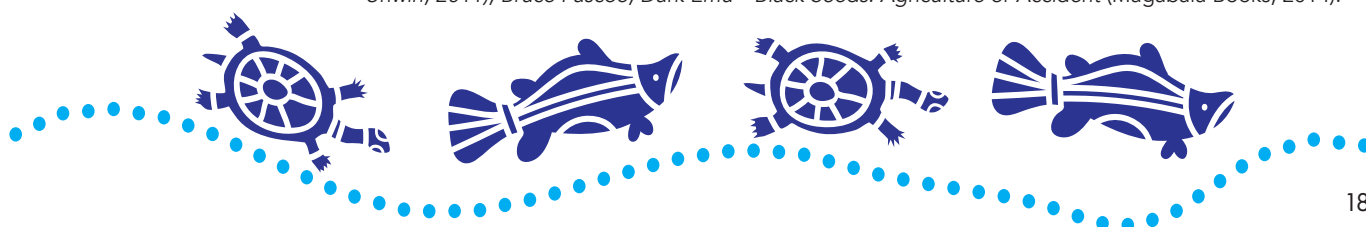
The British used these claims to justify taking possession of Australia. Unlike in North America and New Zealand, no treaties were ever negotiated with the Aboriginal peoples of Australia. The colonisers did not recognise that there was a political hierarchy or leader with whom they could negotiate.⁵ We now know that these claims were not true. There is evidence, including from the diaries of early settlers and explorers, that Aboriginal people across Australia engaged in farming, had established systems of government and land management and in some areas lived in villages comprising multiple buildings.⁶

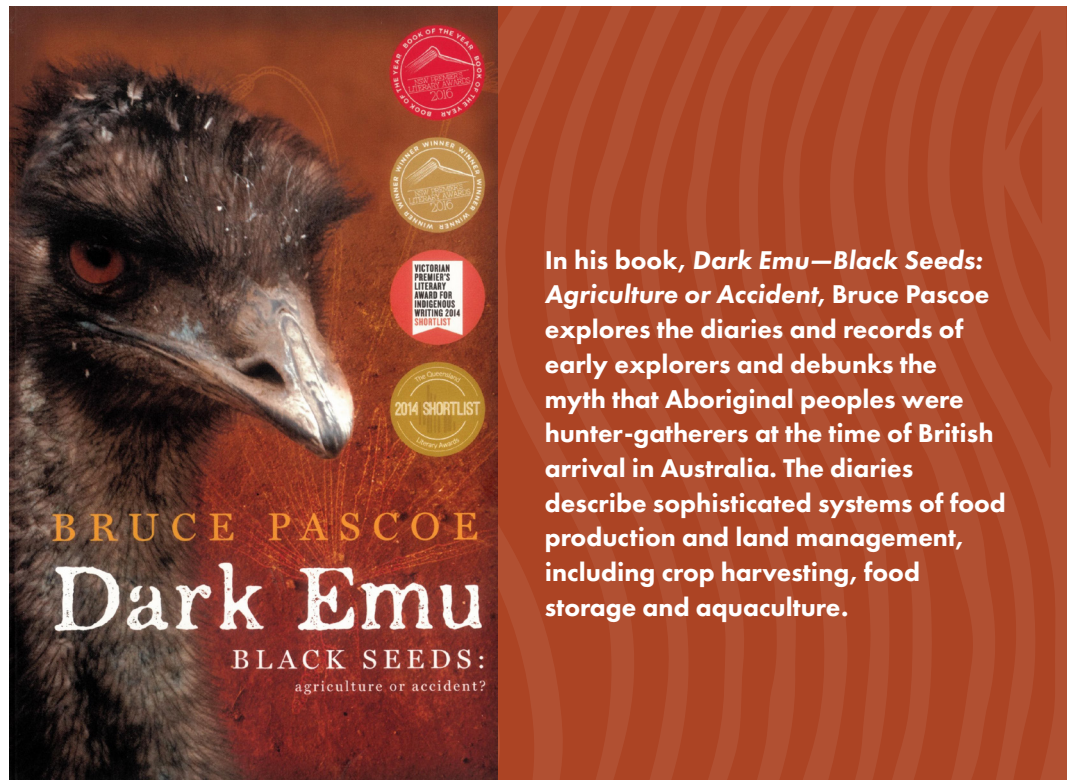
The British reliance on *Terra Nullius* has had long-term and lasting impacts on the relationship between Aboriginal people, the colonisers and their descendants.



5 Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 'Terra nullius and sovereignty' Briefing paper. At <http://www5.austlii.edu.au/au/orgs/car/docrec/policy/brief/terran.htm> (viewed 6 November 2017).

6 See for example: Bill Gammage, *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia* (Allen & Unwin, 2011); Bruce Pascoe, *Dark Emu—Black Seeds: Agriculture or Accident* (Magabala Books, 2014).





Consequences of Colonisation

The sudden arrival of one thousand 'Bèerewalgal' had serious consequences for the Eora people and their land. The newcomers failed to recognise and acknowledge the traditional land boundaries which had been in place for thousands of years, and were unaware of how to manage the delicately balanced ecosystem. This resulted in a significant burden on the limited resources of the Eora nation. Other Aboriginal nations were similarly affected as the colonists spread throughout Australia.

It did not take long for the Eora to feel the impacts of the colonists' changes to the land. Within a few months of the arrival of the British, the Eora were experiencing hunger, hardship and disease and were forced back into the territories of other communities.⁷ This marked the beginning of the frontier wars, which had devastating effects on Aboriginal peoples.

European diseases including smallpox were introduced to Australia by the colonisers.⁸ However, unlike Europeans, the Eora had no immunity to these diseases. Smallpox spread rapidly and with catastrophic effects. In 1789, smallpox decimated the Aboriginal populations of Port Jackson, Botany Bay and Broken Bay.⁹ It is estimated that in a period of just over 12 months, more than half of the Eora people had died.¹⁰

7 Aboriginal Heritage Office, 'Aboriginal History' (online). At <http://www.aboriginalheritage.org/history/history/> (accessed 15 November 2017).

8 Aboriginal Heritage Office, 'Aboriginal History' (online). At <http://www.aboriginalheritage.org/history/history/> (accessed 15 November 2017).

9 Australian Museum, 'Indigenous Australia Timeline—1500 to 1900' (online). At <https://australianmuseum.net.au/indigenous-australia-timeline-1500-to-1900> (accessed 6 November 2017).

10 Anita Heiss and Melodie-Jane Gibson, 'Aboriginal people and place' Sydney Barani (online). At <http://www.sydneybarani.com.au/sites/aboriginal-people-and-place> (accessed 6 November 2017).





Activity 1: Source study: Michael Adams engraving

Suggested timing:

10 minutes

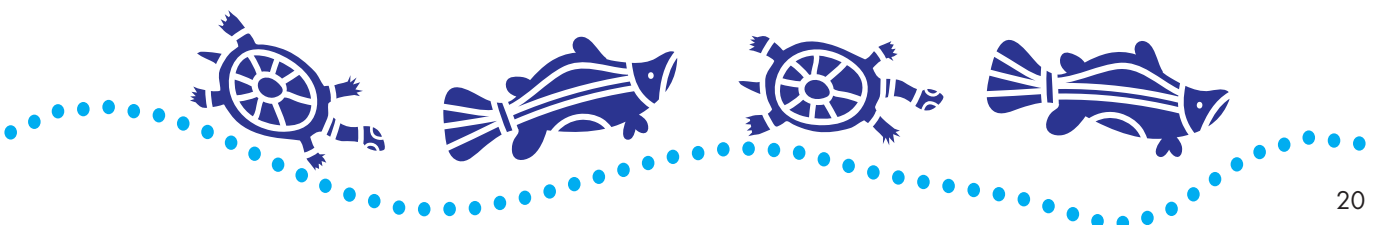
Required resources:

Projector/screen to show image or printed copies of image for each student



Source: Michael Adams, Engraving—Captains Hunter, Collins & Johnston with Governor Phillip, Surgeon White &c. visiting a distressed female native of New South Wales at a hut near Port Jackson (London: Alexr. Hogg, 1793). Available at: 2017 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-135775134> (viewed 20 September 2017).

- Show students the Michael Adams engraving.
- Facilitate a class discussion about the image. If students need further guidance, you might ask:
 - What is happening in the image?
 - Why do you think that the woman might be 'distressed'?
 - What are the power dynamics depicted in this image?





Activity 2: Source study: The Cry for the Dead

Suggested timing:

- 2 minutes to introduce activity
- 10 minutes for individual written response
- 10 minutes for class discussion

Required resources:

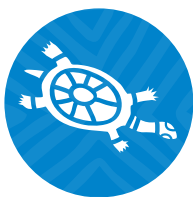
Projector/screen to show quotation or printed copies for each student
Note-paper/notebooks and pens for students

- Explain to students that Judith Wright was an Australian poet, writer, environmentalist and campaigner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land rights.
- Show students the Judith Wright quote by displaying it on a screen, or providing each student with a printed copy.

It was the loss of the land which was worst... The land itself was now disfigured and desecrated, studded with huts, crossed by tracks and fences, eaten thin by strange animals, dirtied and spoiled, and guarded from its owners by irresistible and terrifying weapons. The all-embracing net of life and spirit which had held land, and people, and all things together was in tatters. The sustaining ceremonies could not be held, men and women could not visit their own birthplaces or carry out their duties to the spirits ...

(Judith Wright, *The Cry for the Dead* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1981) 27.)

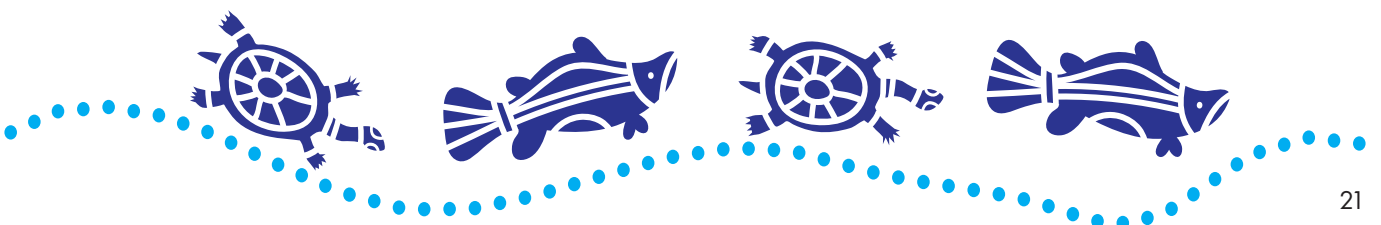
- Let students know that they have 10 minutes to compose a written response discussing the impact of colonisation on the land, and the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, based on the quotation.
- Once students have completed their written responses, ask students to volunteer to share their thoughts and facilitate a class discussion around the quotation.



The Colony Expands

The colonists made use of the natural resources available in the newfound colony, paying little attention to the system of resource management developed by the local Aboriginal people over thousands of years. As a result of over-exploitation of these resources, the fish and animal supplies dwindled and the vegetables were soon eaten out or taken over by introduced European species. As these resources declined, the colonists began to hunt and fish on lands beyond the first settlement. This rapid expansion soon reached the foot of the Blue Mountains, the land of the Darug people.

For thousands of years, the Darug people had lived by the lagoons and creeks of the Hawkesbury and Nepean Rivers and on the vast open grasslands of the nearby plains. When the colonists cleared this area for farming, housing and industry, they also destroyed or drove away much of the Darug people's traditional food sources.



In 1813, the colonists crossed the Blue Mountains and encountered a very different landscape from the overcrowded plains of Sydney.¹¹ Their quest for more and more pastoral land pushed the frontier of European colonisation into North-Western NSW where they soon moved onto the lands of the Kamilaroi, Muruwari and Wailwan peoples.

The British government continued to allocate Aboriginal land to settlers and pastoral companies in order to fuel the highly profitable sheep farming and wool industries.

By 1824, the Kamilaroi people of northern NSW and southern Queensland realised that the colonists intended to:

- claim the land
- stop Aboriginal people from accessing waterholes and traditional hunting grounds
- show no consideration for Aboriginal sacred sites or traditional Lore
- prevent Aboriginal people from accessing sacred ceremonial and burial sites¹²



Activity 3: Cause and Effect

Suggested timing:

60 minutes for students to begin to research and develop their presentation
Additional research/preparation time (in class or as homework)

Required resources:

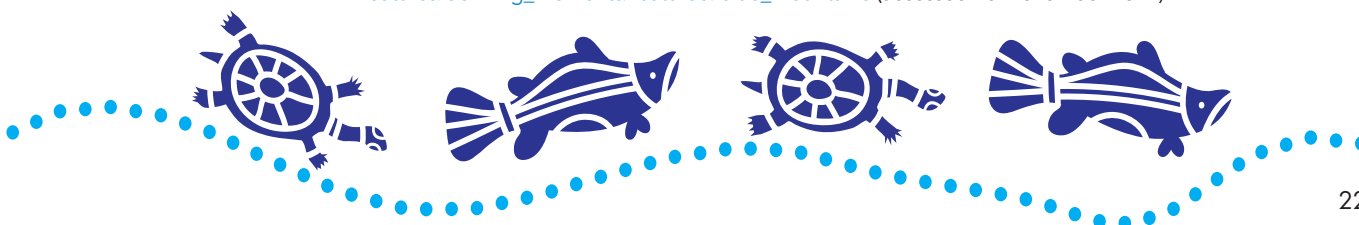
Note-paper/notebooks and pens for students

- Based on the background content, and the Australia: A National Overview factsheet, provide students with an introduction to the effects that colonisation had on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



11 National Museum of Australia, 'Blue Mountains Crossing' (online). At http://www.nma.gov.au/online_features/defining_moments/featured/blue_mountains (accessed 15 November 2017).

12 National Museum of Australia, 'Blue Mountains Crossing' (online). At http://www.nma.gov.au/online_features/defining_moments/featured/blue_mountains (accessed 15 November 2017).



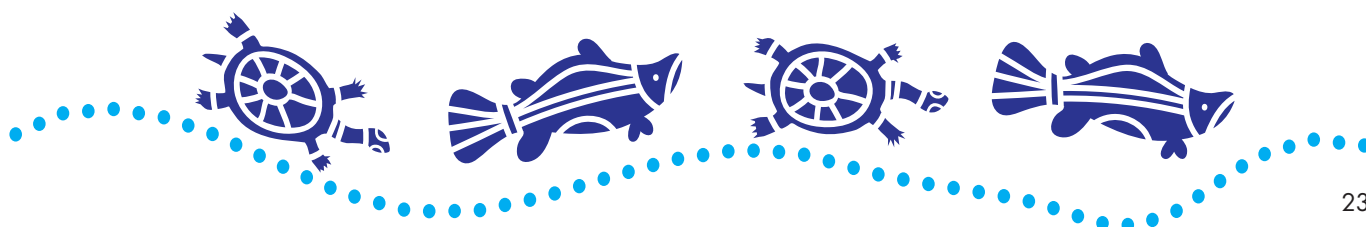
- Ask students independently, or in small groups, to explore in more detail the short-term and long-term impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Ensure that students are provided with sufficient time to conduct their research and remind them to consider which sources they use.
- Inform students that they will be presenting their findings to the class and that they may choose their presentation method (e.g. an oral presentation, video, poster, mind map etc).
- Once students have been given sufficient time to complete their projects, they should present them to the class.

If students need guidance on where to start, you may like to provide them with copies of the chart below.

Research and Referencing

Remind students that when conducting research, it is important to consider the following when selecting sources:

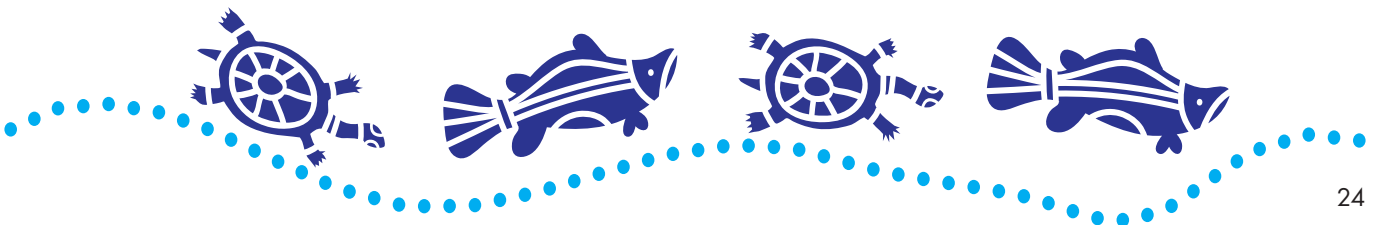
- **Currency**—When was the source published? Is the content still relevant or is it out of date? If it is an older source, what is the view of today's commentators about its accuracy and reliability?
- **Reliability**—Is the source appropriately referenced? Is the content based on fact or opinion?
- **Authority**—Who is the creator or author of the content? What are their credentials? What is their interest in the content? Can you identify any bias?
- **Purpose**—Does the author seem to be pushing one side of an argument? Are they trying to sell you something? Are there any advertisements associated with the content?
- **Referencing**—Keep track of which resources you are using as you go along and make sure that you always cite your sources! And remember—referencing is not only for direct quotes. Even if you are paraphrasing what a resource says, you still need to cite it as the source of the information.





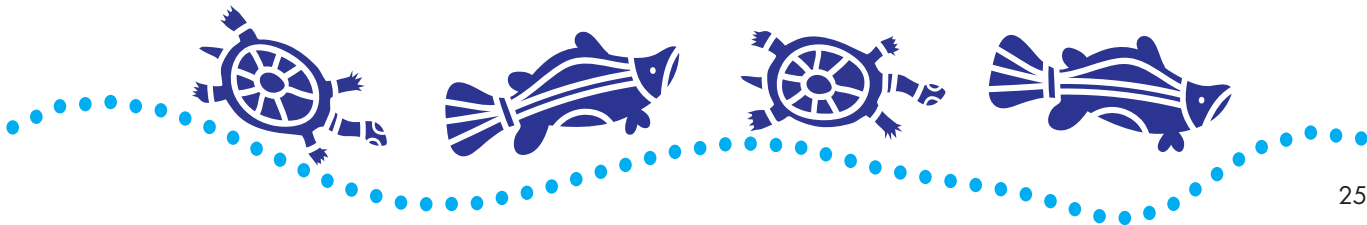
STUDENT WORKSHEET: IMPACTS OF COLONISATION

Aspect of Colonisation	Short-term impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Long-term impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
Introduced diseases		
Violence		
Use of natural resources		





Aspect of Colonisation	Short-term impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Long-term impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
Fencing off areas of land		
Death of Elders		
Forced relocation		





The Myall Creek Massacre case study contains information that students and teachers may find distressing. It is important for teachers to read the case study before sharing the content with students. We recommend that you advise the class of the sensitive nature of the information prior to exploring this case study in depth. In particular, ensure that cultural safety is followed with respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students that may be present in the classroom. For further guidance, refer to:

- 'Teaching About the Stolen Generations' guide
- Narragunnawali's 'Cultural Safety and Respect in the Classroom' resource



Case Study: Myall Creek Massacre

Provide students with a brief overview of the Myall Creek Massacre by reading aloud the passage below.

By the 1830s, frontier violence towards Aboriginal peoples was widespread. Despite British law being very clear that the murder of Aboriginal people was punishable by death, the killing of Aboriginal people by colonists had become a regular occurrence. The Myall Creek Massacre is among the most infamous of these murders.¹³



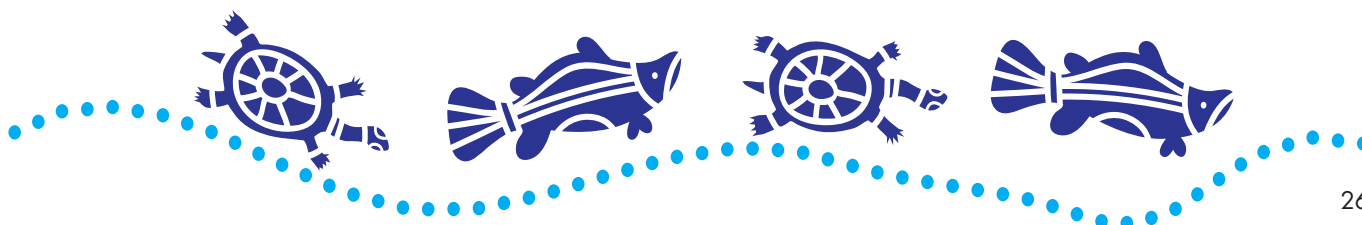
Myall Creek today. Photograph by Catherine Jeffery

In June 1838, at least 28 Wirrayaraay people were murdered at Myall Creek Station in central New South Wales.¹⁴ The Wirrayaraay people had been peacefully living and working on the station before they were killed by a group of convicts and former convicts. In November, a jury of 12 settlers found all 11 defendants not guilty of murder. The public was overwhelmingly supportive of this finding. However, the Attorney-General was dissatisfied and a few weeks later, a second jury found 7 of the defendants guilty. They were sentenced to public execution. The remaining 4 defendants were to be tried at a later date but the key witness, Wirrayaraay man Yintayintin, mysteriously disappeared, and they were freed in early 1839.¹⁵

13 National Museum of Australia, 'Myall Creek Massacre'. At http://www.nma.gov.au/online_features/defining_moments/featured/myall-creek-massacre (accessed 22 September 2017).

14 National Museum of Australia, 'Myall Creek Massacre' At http://www.nma.gov.au/online_features/defining_moments/featured/myall-creek-massacre (accessed 22 September 2017).

15 National Museum of Australia, 'Myall Creek Massacre'. At http://www.nma.gov.au/online_features/defining_moments/featured/myall-creek-massacre (accessed 22 September 2017).





Activity 4: Myall Creek Massacre

Suggested timing:

30 minutes for students to develop their timeline of key events or profiles of key individuals

30 minutes to develop final class timeline

Required resources:

Note-paper/notebooks and pens for students

Butcher's paper and markers for class timeline

- Provide students with a brief overview of the Myall Creek Massacre by reading aloud the Myall Creek Massacre case study on the previous page.
- Divide the class in half.
- Ask half of the class to work independently to construct a timeline of the key events relating to the Myall Creek Massacre and the subsequent trials.
- Ask the other half of the class to work independently to create brief profiles of some of the main people involved in the event.
- Once students have completed their timelines and profiles, work together as a class to create a single timeline that everyone agrees upon, incorporating profiles of key people in the appropriate places.



Activity 5: Significance of the Myall Creek Massacre

Suggested timing:

30 minutes for students to begin conducting research

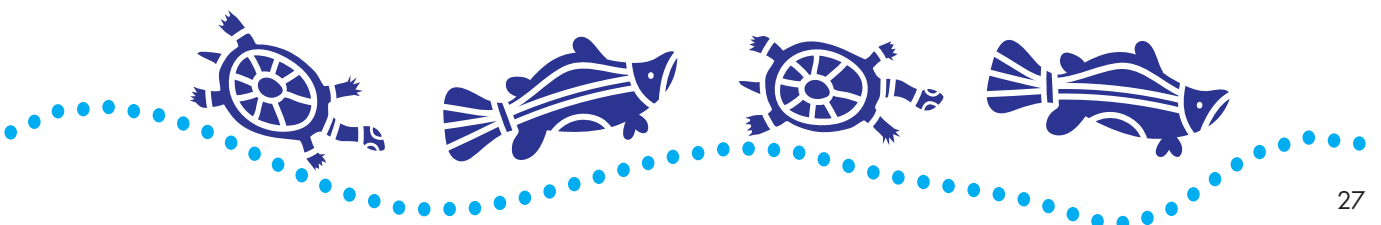
Additional research/writing time (in class or as homework)

30 minutes for class discussion

Required resources:

Note-paper/notebooks and pens for students

- Ask students to write a response to the following statement:
The Myall Creek Massacre was not the only massacre of Aboriginal people during this period. Why is this particular massacre considered to be so important in Australian history? If students need additional guidance, you may like to distribute the ALARM matrix that appears on the following page.
- Ensure that students have enough time to complete their responses, then facilitate a class discussion about the ongoing significance of the Myall Creek Massacre. In particular, ensure that students are aware of the significance of the murderers being brought to trial as well as the public's reaction to the trial.

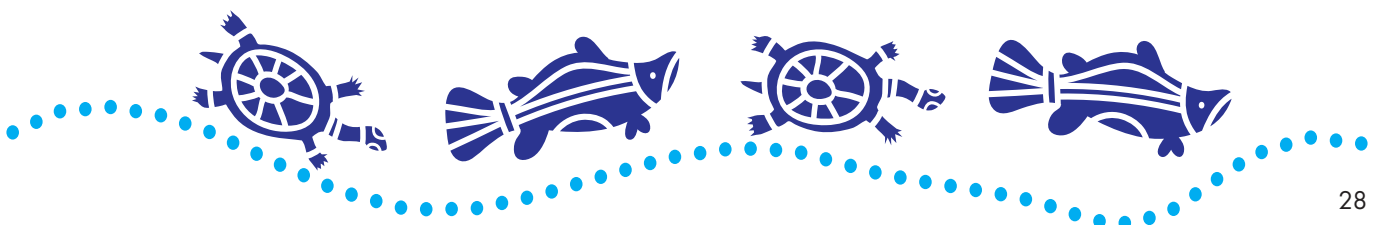




STUDENT WORKSHEET: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MYALL CREEK MASSACRE ALARM MATRIX

Name and Define	Describe	Explain	Analyse	Evaluate
Think about WHAT	Think about WHAT	Think about WHY	Think about HOW	Think about HOW WELL/IMPORTANCE
What happened during the massacre? Where and when did it happen?	Describe the key elements of the massacre, including key events and the key people involved.	<p>Why was this event so significant? Why did it garner so much public attention and scrutiny?</p> <p>What was different about this massacre compared to other violent attacks occurring around the same time?</p> <p>Use specific examples.</p>	<p>How did the massacre and the subsequent trial influence the legal system of the colony?</p> <p>Use specific examples.</p>	<p>Were there long-term impacts as a result of the changes to the legal system?</p> <p>How were subsequent attacks against Aboriginal people viewed by the public and dealt with by the legal system?</p>

Source: Adapted from 'A Learning and Responding Matrix' (ALARM) concept, originally developed by NSW teacher Max Woods.





Activity 6: Attacks on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

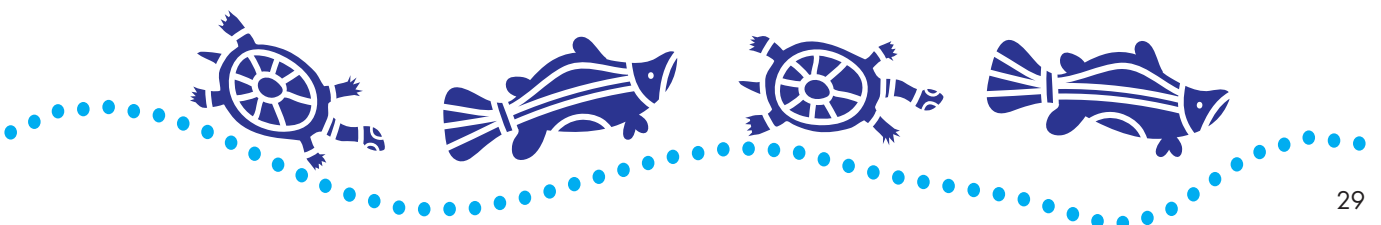
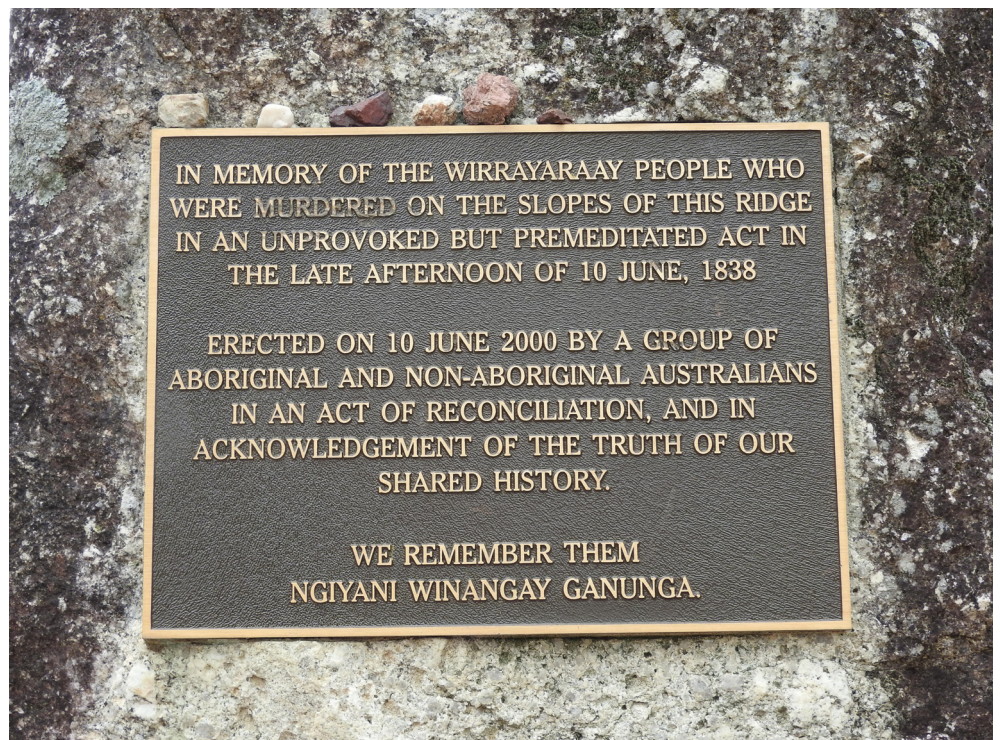
Suggested timing:

60 minutes for students to begin to research and develop their news story
Additional research/preparation time (in class or as homework)

Required resources:

Note-paper/notebooks and pens for students

- Ask students to form groups of 3 to 4 students. Alternatively, you may prefer to assign students to groups.
- Inform students that each group is to produce a news story about a particular case of early colonial violence towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Each group may choose how to present their story (e.g. as a written article, a live radio story or a pre-recorded television news story etc). The news story should discuss the key events leading up to the violence, as well as the attack itself, and any after effects. If possible, they should include comments on the public's reaction to the violence. Students should use quotes from historical sources throughout their news story.
- As students are working, circulate around the room and check-in with each group to make sure that a number of different events are being researched. Provide guidance where necessary.
- Once students have been given sufficient time to complete their news stories, they should present them to the class.





SEQUENCE 2: THE STOLEN GENERATIONS



The following is a combination of information and associated learning activities that will take students through the topic. It is important to spend time on the key concepts as these establish the students' ability to develop a contextual understanding of various aspects of the topic. This should assist them to be able to identify the effect that such elements had on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Key Concept: the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the late 19th century and early 20th century

From the earliest days of colonisation in Australia, there have been attempts to coerce and control Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through their children.

Throughout this section it is necessary in the interests of historical accuracy to quote the language of the times. Terms including 'full blood', 'half caste', 'quadroon' and 'octoroon' were and are very offensive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It should be made clear to students that these terms should no longer be used.



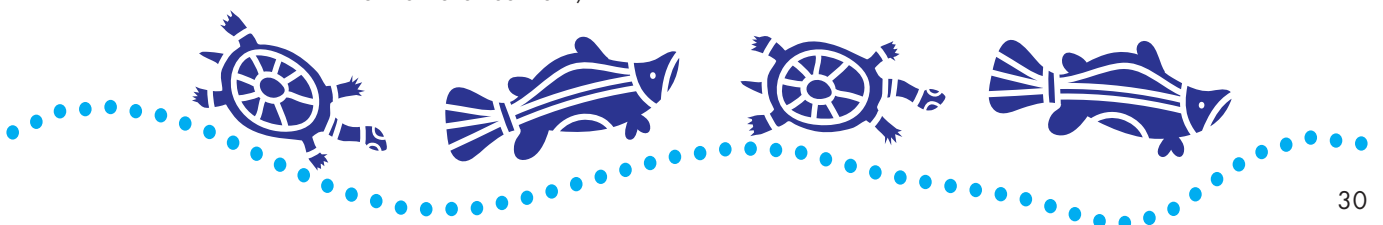
The Native Institution was just the first of many schools and institutions around the country that was established to 'educate', 'train', 'civilise' and 'Christianise' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and to help them blend into colonial society.¹⁶

The Native Institution was established in Parramatta in 1814 by Governor Macquarie as a school for Eora and Darug children. Children were forcibly removed from their families and placed in the Native Institution.

They were not allowed to return home to their families. A core element of the Native Institution was that the children were not permitted to engage in any aspect of their traditional cultural practices. They were forbidden from speaking their own language, singing cultural songs or performing cultural ceremonies. This dislocation from language and culture led to a growing gap in cultural knowledge and confusion among children about their place in their community. Learn more about 'The Native Institution' by watching this [short SBS clip](#).



¹⁶ Black Town Native Institution Project, 'History' (online). At <http://www.bniproject.com/history/> (accessed on 15 November 2017).



Teachers, missionaries and government officials saw the minds of the Aboriginal children as a virtual blackboard upon which European ways of life could be etched. Removing children from their families and communities was viewed as a proactive intervention aimed at 'civilising' children before they learned the Aboriginal way of life.

The *Victorian Control Board* was established in 1860, ostensibly to protect the interests of Aboriginal peoples. It was the first colonial authority of its kind to be established in Australia. In 1869 the Control Board was replaced by the *Board for the Protection of Aborigines*.¹⁷ The new board had significant powers relating to Aboriginal children:

- the Governor could order the removal of a child to a training school
- children from rural areas could be sent to live in dormitories
- from 1886, Aboriginal children could be apprenticed from the age of 13
- parents and family members had to apply for permission to visit their children

Other colonies soon followed: the NSW *Aborigines Protection Board* in 1883, *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* (Qld) in 1907 and the 1905 *Aborigines Act* (WA). The WA *Aborigines Act* made the Chief Protector of Aborigines the legal guardian of 'half-caste' and Aboriginal children under the age of 16. The removal of children from their families was justified in the following way:

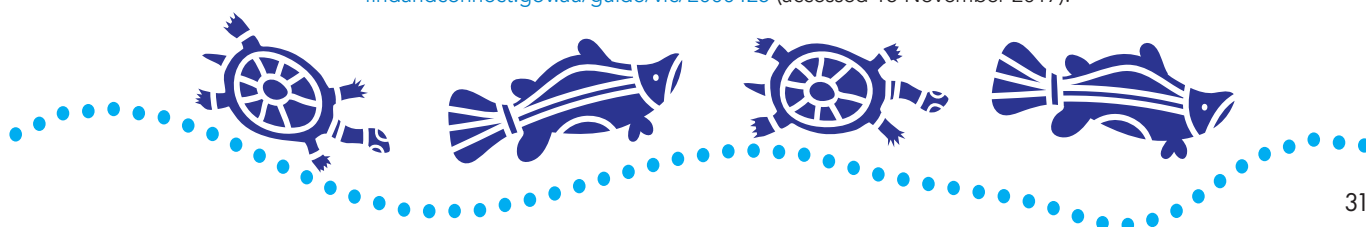
I would not hesitate for one moment to separate any half-caste from its mother, no matter how frantic her momentary grief might be at the time. They soon forget their offspring.
(Travelling Inspector James Isdell)

Children are removed from the evil influence of the aboriginal camp with its lack of moral training and its risk of serious organic infectious disease. They are properly fed, clothed and educated as white children, they are subjected to constant medical supervision and in receipt of domestic and vocational training. (Chief Protector Cook)

Source: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Bringing them Home: A guide to the findings and recommendations into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families* (1997).

Likewise the *Aborigines Act* (SA) appointed the Chief Protector as legal guardian of every Aboriginal and 'half-caste' child under the age of 21. They also had control over the child's place of residence. In 1939 the *Aboriginal Ordinance* (Cth) established the Chief Protector as the legal guardian of every 'half-caste' and Aboriginal child under the age of 18 in the Northern Territory.

17 Find and Connect, 'Central Board for the Protection of Aborigines (1869–1900)' (online). At <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/vic/E000425> (accessed 15 November 2017).





Activity 1: Legal Frameworks for Removal

Suggested timing:

45 minutes to create chart

15 minutes for discussion

OPTIONAL additional time for presentations



Required resources:

Butcher's paper and markers for each group

- Ask students to work in small groups to construct a chart outlining the legal frameworks used by colonial, state and Commonwealth authorities to forcibly remove Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families. The chart should include:
 - The name of the legislation
 - The year it came into force and the year it was superseded
 - The jurisdiction it applied to
 - A brief summary of the legislation, including its core components

If students need assistance finding this information, you may like to direct them to Part 2 of the *Bringing them Home* report ('[Tracing the History](#)') or the 'Legal Frameworks' section of the *Bringing them Home* [interactive map](#). Other useful resources include: the '[To remove and protect](#)' section of the [AIATSIS website](#) and the [Find and Connect website](#).

- Once students have completed their charts, facilitate a class discussion about the similarities and differences in legal frameworks between jurisdictions.

Instead of everyone researching the laws of all jurisdictions, you may like to ask each group to focus on the legislation in a different state/territory. In this case, it would be useful for each group to give a brief presentation or for students to have the opportunity to review the work of other groups before coming together as a class to discuss the similarities and differences between jurisdictions.

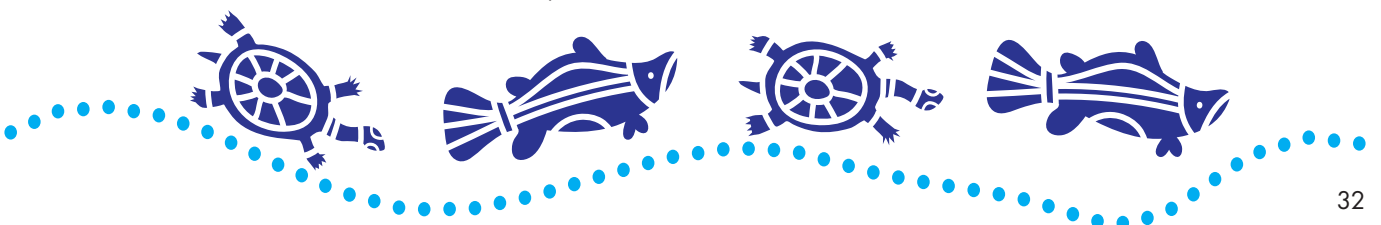


Key concept: *Bringing them Home*

In 1995, the then Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (now called the Australian Human Rights Commission) was asked by the Australian Government to conduct a National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families.

The Inquiry was established in response to increasing concerns among Indigenous agencies and communities that the Australian practice of separating Indigenous children from their families had never been formally examined. This meant that the long-term effects of those separation policies and practices on Indigenous children, their families and communities had never been investigated or even acknowledged.

The Inquiry was given a limited budget and it relied on voluntary witnesses to come forward and tell their stories. It was not set up as a Royal Commission, which would have had more extensive powers.



Who did the Inquiry talk to?

The Inquiry took evidence in public and private sittings from many different people including:

- Indigenous people
- government and church representatives
- former mission staff
- foster and adoptive parents
- doctors and health professionals
- academics
- police

The President of the then Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (now called the Australian Human Rights Commission), Sir Ronald Wilson and the then Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Professor Mick Dodson, conducted most of the hearings. They were assisted by 13 Co-Commissioners, by members of an Indigenous Advisory Council and a range of experts in international law, Indigenous rights, health and juvenile justice. A total of 777 people and organisations provided evidence or submissions; 535 Indigenous people gave evidence or submissions about their experiences of separation from their families and communities.

That is not to say that individual Australians who had no part in what was done in the past should feel or acknowledge personal guilt. It is simply to assert our identity as a nation and the basic fact that national shame, as well as national pride, can and should exist in relation to past acts and omissions, at least when done in the name of the community or with the authority of the government.

Former Australian Governor-General, Sir William Deane, August 1996, quoted in Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Bringing them Home: National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* (1997) 3.

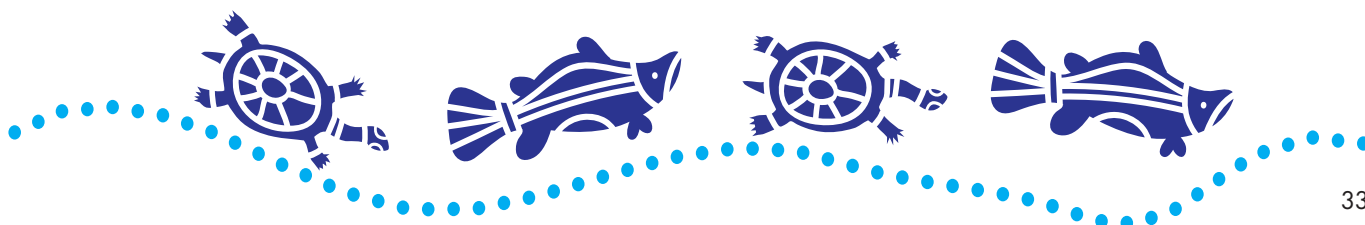
Where did the Inquiry travel to?

The Inquiry visited every state and territory capital and most regions of Australia, from Cape Barren in the south to the Torres Strait and the Kimberley in the north. Limited resources meant the Inquiry could not travel to every centre.

What was the scope of the Inquiry?

The Inquiry had four 'terms of reference'. This means that the Government asked the Commission to look specifically at four areas of key concern and to report back to the government on their findings. The basic terms of reference for the Inquiry were to find out:

- a) What were the laws, policies and practices that resulted in the removal of children in the past, and what effect did they have?*
- b) Were the (then) current laws and practices (related to services available) adequate enough to help people whom had been affected by removal in the past?*
- c) What factors were important to consider when thinking about compensation for people who had been removed?*
- d) Whether the (then) current laws and policies around removal needed to be changed.*



The Inquiry was careful not to be seen to be 'raking over the past' for its own sake. It was careful to evaluate past actions in light of the legal values that prevailed at the time rather than through the lens of current views. The Inquiry submitted its report to the federal Parliament in April 1997.

It never goes away. Just 'cause we're not walking around on crutches or with bandages or plasters on our legs and arms doesn't mean we're not hurting ... I suspect I'll carry these sorts of wounds 'til the day I die. I'd just like it not to be so intense, that's all.

(Confidential evidence 580, Queensland in Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Bringing them Home: National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* (1997).)

The final report

In 1997, the Commission handed down its landmark report called *Bringing them Home*. The report was a detailed national summary of the history of separations. It expressed difficulty in being able to come up with a definite figure for the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children separated from their families, but did estimate that between one in three and one in ten Indigenous children were separated from their families and communities between 1910 and 1970. This figure does not account for separations before 1910.

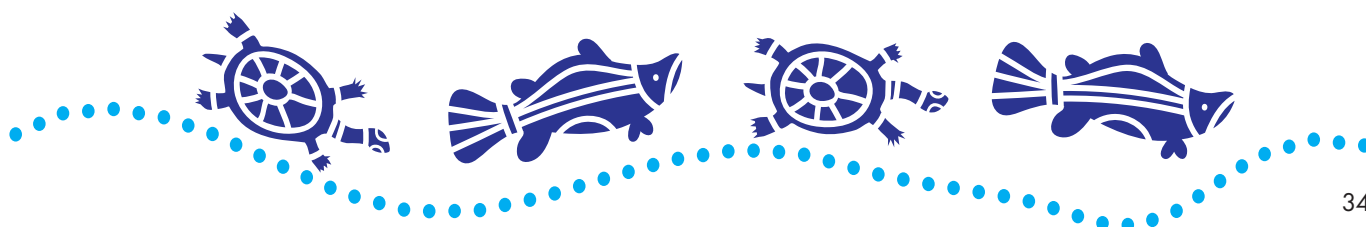
The worst part is, we didn't know we had a family.

(Confidential evidence 436—John, New South Wales in Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Bringing them Home: National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* (1997).)

Most importantly, it found that most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families had been affected, in one or more generations, by government policies and laws requiring the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

The report concluded, 'It was difficult to capture the complexity of effects for each person. For the majority of witnesses to the Inquiry, the effects have been multiple, continuing and profoundly disabling'. A summary of the findings of the report relating to how the children who were separated from their families fared showed:

- institutional conditions were often very harsh
- education was often very basic
- excessive physical punishments were common
- the children were at risk of sexual abuse
- some found happiness in their new home or institution
- people who were separated from their families are not better off*
- loss of heritage
- the effects on those left behind
- the effects of separation still resonate today



* A 1994 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey found that Indigenous people who were separated from their families in childhood are twice as likely to assess their health status as poor or only fair (29%) compared with people who were not removed (15.4%). The ABS survey found that people who have been separated from their families are less educated, less likely to be employed and received significantly lower incomes than people who were raised in their communities. However, they are twice as likely to have been arrested more than once in the past five years, with one in five separated people having this experience.

A mother's got a heart for her children and for them to be taken away, no-one can ever know the heartache.

(Confidential evidence 305—Fiona, South Australia in Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Bringing them Home: National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* (1997).)

Recommendations of the report

The report contained 54 recommendations which can be grouped under the following headings:

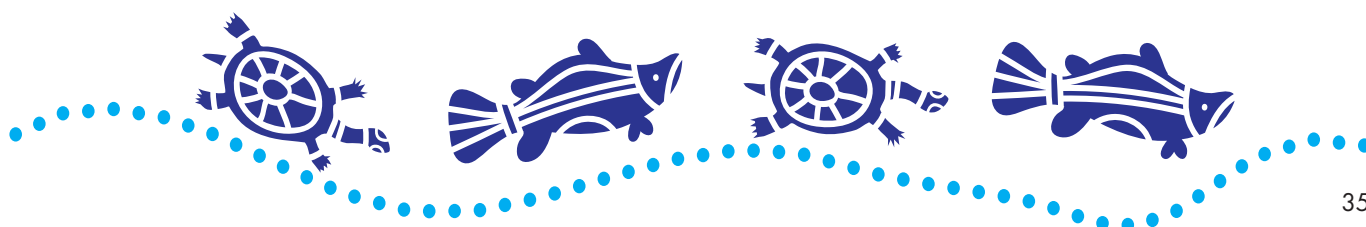
- Acknowledgement and apology—from parliaments, police forces and the churches who were involved
- Guarantees against repetition—by the provision of education, training, and instituting self-determination principles
- Restitution—by way of counselling services, assistance in maintaining records, language, culture and history centres
- Rehabilitation—e.g mental health programs, parenting services
- Monetary compensation—where a National Compensation Fund would operate
- Implementation—a monitoring and audit process of the recommendations of the report

To read the entire *Bringing them Home* report visit: <http://bth.humanrights.gov.au/report>

To read all of the personal stories printed in the report visit: <http://bth.humanrights.gov.au/our-stories/written-testimonies>

To view the full extent of the report's recommendations visit: <http://bth.humanrights.gov.au/the-report/report-recommendations>

Further information on government and non-government responses, actions and events since the report was released can be found at: <http://bth.humanrights.gov.au/significance/historical-context-the-stolen-generations>





Activity 2: Justifying Removal

Suggested timing:

30 minutes to compose written response
Additional research/writing time if necessary

Required resources:

Note-paper/notebooks and pens for students
Access to the *Bringing them Home* report for each student (available in hard copy or online)

- Provide students with a brief overview of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families and the findings of the *Bringing them Home* report.
- Ask students to compose an independent written response to the following statement:

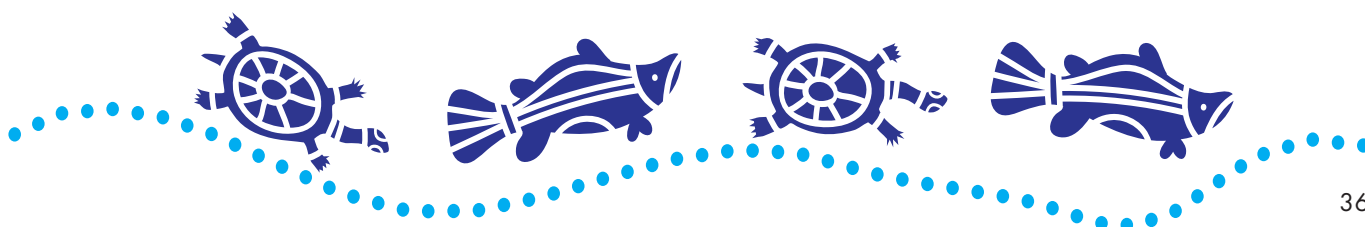
Explain the impact that increasing government intervention had on Aboriginal children and their parents, families and communities. How did governments justify the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families? You should use both contemporary and historical sources in constructing your response, including personal and institutional testimonies and historical accounts from the *Bringing them Home* report.

Key concept: Experiences of removal

Children who were removed from their families could be put into an institution or mission dormitory, fostered or adopted. Many children were fostered or adopted after spending time in a children's home. Many spent time in more than one institution or foster family. Later many were sent out to work. Some moved from institution or foster family to detention centre or psychiatric hospital. More than half (56%) the people who gave evidence to the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families had experienced multiple placements following their removal.

The following information describes some of the common experiences of children who were institutionalised or fostered. It is based on the findings of the *Bringing them Home* report and includes testimonies heard by the Inquiry and published in the report.. This information was originally published in the *Bringing them Home* Community Guide. The Community Guide can be viewed [here](#).

The following section includes descriptions of physical and sexual abuse, mistreatment and neglect. It contains excerpts of personal testimonies from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were removed from their families as children. Many people may find this content distressing and upsetting. Teachers will need to decide whether they feel that this content is appropriate for their students. It is important that before students learn more about children's experiences of being removed, you remind them that you are available to support them if they need your assistance. There is information about support organisations available on [this webpage](#). It may also be helpful to re-read the 'Teaching About the Stolen Generations' factsheet.



Children were discouraged from family contact

The Inquiry found 'assimilation' was rigorously pursued by most authorities and by non-Indigenous foster and adoptive families. In particular, children and their families were discouraged or prevented from contacting each other.

One of the girls was doing Matron's office, and there was all these letters that the girls had written back to the parents and family—the answers were all in the garbage bin. And they were wondering why we didn't write. That was one way they stopped us keeping in contact with our families. Then they had the hide to turn around and say, 'They don't love you. They don't care about you.'

(Confidential evidence 450, New South Wales)

When my mum passed away I went to her funeral, which is stupid because I'm allowed to go see her at her funeral but couldn't have that when she requested me. They wouldn't let me have her.

(Confidential evidence 139, Victoria)

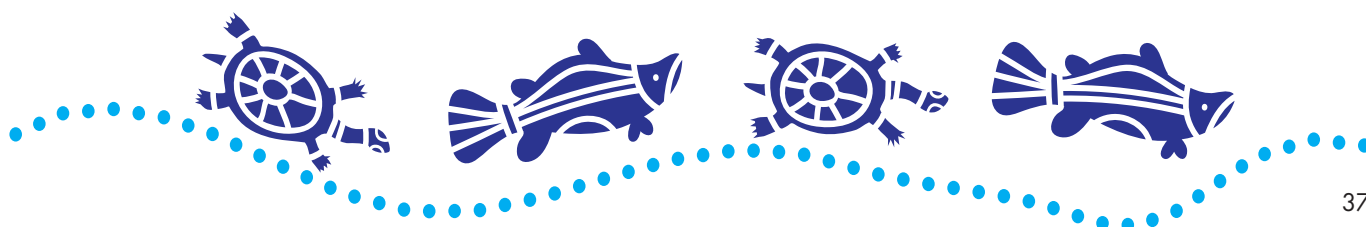
The Inquiry found that many children were told they were unwanted, rejected or their parents were dead, when this was not true.

I remember this woman saying to me, 'Your mother's dead, you've got no mother now. That's why you're here with us.' Then about two years after that my mother and my mother's sister came to The Bungalow but they weren't allowed to visit us because they were black.

(Confidential evidence 544, Northern Territory)

We were transferred to the State Children's Orphanage in 1958. Olive [aged 6 weeks] was taken elsewhere—Mr L telling me several days later that she was admitted to hospital where she died from meningitis. In 1984, assisted by Link Up (Qld), my sister Judy discovered that Olive had not died but rather had been fostered. Her name was changed.

(Confidential submissions 191—Penny, Queensland)



They were taught to reject their Indigeneity

The Inquiry found many witnesses were taught to feel contempt for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Those who knew their own heritage transferred that contempt to themselves.

We were told that our mother was an alcoholic and that she was a prostitute and she didn't care about us. They used to warn us that when we got older we'd have to watch it because we'd turn into sluts and alcoholics, so we had to be very careful. If you were white you didn't have that dirtiness in you ... It was in our breed, in us to be like that.

(Confidential evidence 529, New South Wales)

I didn't know any Aboriginal people at all, none at all. I was placed in a white family and I was just—I was white. I never knew, I never accepted myself to being a black person until—I don't know if you ever really do accept yourself as being ... How can you be proud of being Aboriginal after all the humiliation and the anger and the hatred you have? It's unbelievable how much you can hold inside.

(Confidential evidence 152, Victoria)

Institutional conditions were very harsh

The Inquiry found that the conditions of missions, government institutions and children's homes were often very poor. Resources were insufficient to improve them, or keep children properly clothed, fed and sheltered.

There was no food, nothing. We was all huddled up in a room like a little puppy dog on the floor. Sometimes at night we'd cry with hunger. We had to scrounge in the town dump, eating old bread, smashing tomato sauce bottles, licking them. Half of the time the food we got was from the rubbish dump.

(Confidential evidence 549, Northern Territory)

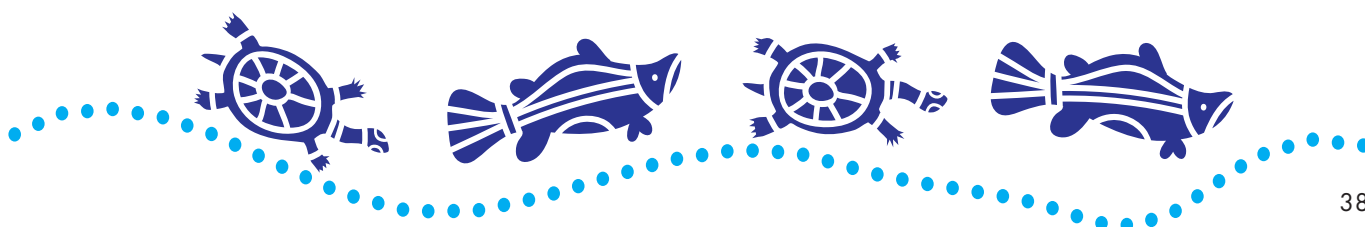
Institutional regimes were often very strict, with severe punishments for breaking the rules.

Education was often very basic

The Inquiry found that the education provided in Indigenous children's institutions was essentially a preparation for menial labour. However, the promise of a good education was often the inducement for parents to relinquish their children to the authorities.

I don't know who decided to educate the Aboriginal people but the standard was low in those mission areas. I started school at the age of eight at grade one, no pre-school. I attended school for six years, the sixth year we attended grade 4, then after that we left school, probably 14 years old.

(Confidential submission 129, Queensland)



I wanted to be a nurse, only to be told that I was nothing but an immoral black lubra, and I was only fit to work on cattle and sheep properties.

(Confidential submission 109, Queensland)

Many never received wages

The Inquiry found that children placed in work by the authorities were not entitled or trusted to receive their wages. These were supposed to be held in trust, but many never received the money that was rightfully theirs.

We never, ever got our wages. It was banked for us. And when we were 21 we were supposed to get this money. We never got any of that money ever. And that's what I wonder: where could that money have went? Or why didn't we get it?

(Confidential evidence 11, Queensland)

Excessive physical punishments were common

Many witnesses told the Inquiry of being physically assaulted and brutally punished in placements. These children were most at risk of this treatment in foster or adoptive families. Almost a quarter (23.4%) of witnesses to the Inquiry who were fostered or adopted reported being assaulted there. One in six children who were institutionalised reported physical assault and punishments.

WA Chief Protector, A.O. Neville, found it necessary to ban 'degrading and injurious punishments and the practice of holding inmates up to ridicule, such as dressing them in old sacks or shaving girls' heads'. A NSW superintendent was told 'that on no account must he tie a boy up to a fence or tree, that such instruments as lengths of hosepipe or a stockwhip must not be used, that no dietary punishments shall be inflicted'.

Dormitory life was like living in hell. It was not a life. The only things that sort of come out of it was how to work, how to be clean, you know and hygiene. That sort of thing. But we got a lot of bashings.

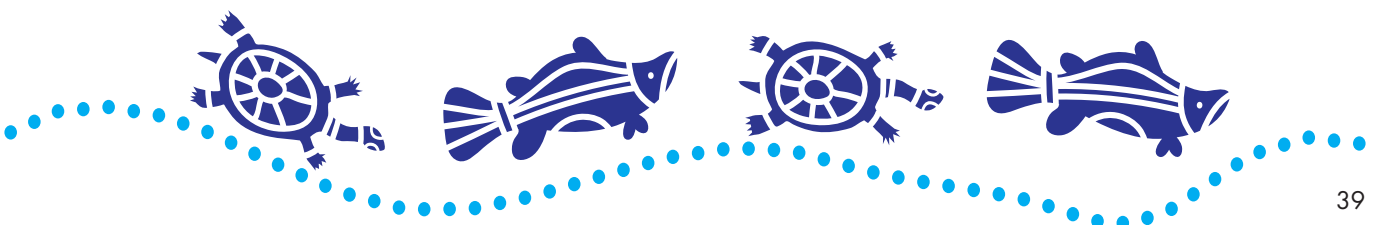
(Confidential evidence 109, Queensland)

The children were at risk of sexual abuse

Sexual abuse was reported to the Inquiry by one in five people who were fostered and one in ten people who were institutionalised. One in ten alleged they were sexually abused in a work placement organised by the Protection Board or institution.

There was tampering with the boys ... the people who would come in to work with the children, they would grab the boys' penises, play around with them and kiss them and things like this. These were the things that were done ... It was seen to be the white man's way of lookin' after you. It never happened with an Aboriginal.

(Confidential evidence 340, Western Australia)



I ran away because my foster father used to tamper with me and I'd just had enough. I went to the police but they didn't believe me. So she [foster mother] just thought I was a wild child and she put me in one of those hostels and none of them believed me—I was the liar. So I've never talked about it to anyone. I don't go about telling lies, especially big lies like that.

(Confidential evidence 214, Victoria)

Authorities failed to care for and protect the children

The Inquiry found that welfare officials failed in their duty to protect Indigenous wards from these abuses, often in the very placements they had organised.

My sister saw our welfare officer when she was grown up and he told her that he'd always thought our [foster] house was abnormal. He thought us kids were abnormal. He thought we were like robots, we had to look at her before we said anything. When an officer comes along they're supposed to talk to you on your own. Our foster mother insisted that she had to be in the room because they could sexually assault us while she was out of the room, so she wasn't going to allow it. Being the minister's wife, they agreed that she was allowed to sit there. So we never had the chance to complain. Welfare never gave us a chance.

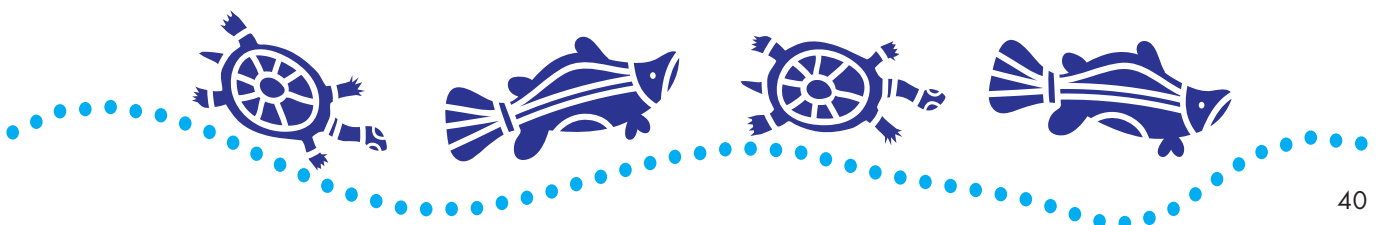
(Confidential evidence 529, New South Wales)

Some found happiness

Some witnesses to the Inquiry spoke of finding affection and happiness in their adoptive family or, more rarely, in a children's home. The Inquiry found that the bonds permitted in these more enlightened placements went some way to overcoming the many other damaging effects for Indigenous children.

We were all happy together, us kids. We had two very wonderful old ladies that looked after us. It [Colebrook, South Australia] wasn't like an institution really. It was just a big happy family. Y'know they gave us good teaching, they encouraged us to be no different to anybody else.

(Confidential evidence 178, South Australia)





Activity 3: Experiences of Stolen Children

Suggested timing:

30 minutes to view video
30 minutes for class discussion

Required resources:

Projector and screen for viewing video, with internet access
Butcher's paper and markers

Provide students with an overview of the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children removed from their families by showing them the Australian Human Rights Commission's video: '[Bringing them home: separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families](#)'

If you feel that it is appropriate for your class, you may also like to share some of the information in the 'Key concept: Experiences of removal' section on the previous pages.

Facilitate a class discussion about some of the common experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were removed from their families. Note down the key points on a sheet of butcher's paper and ask students to do the same in their notebooks.



Activity 4: Voices of the Stolen Generations

Suggested timing:

30 minutes for students to begin their research and start writing their article
30 minutes for class discussion
Additional research/writing time if necessary

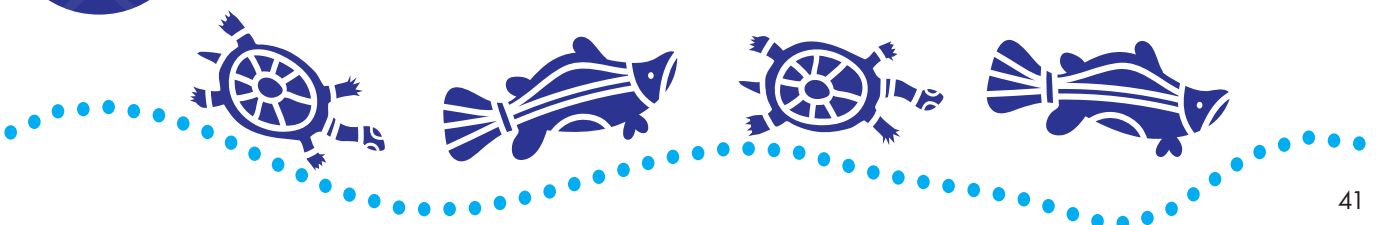
Required resources:

Note-paper/notebooks and pens for students

- Let students know that they will now be working independently to conduct their own research to learn more about the Stolen Generations. They are to write a magazine article about the Stolen Generations, with a focus on profiling the life experiences of one individual person. Students should use quotes from this person in their article. The article should include information about the person's experiences of being removed from their family as a child, as well information about their life as an adult.
- If students need assistance in starting their research, you may like to point them in the direction of the following websites: [Bringing them Home](#), [Stolen Generations Testimonies](#), [The Healing Foundation](#), [Bringing them Home Oral History Project](#).
- Once students have completed their articles, facilitate a class discussion about what students have learned. You might like to invite students to read their articles aloud, or share a story about the person they chose to learn more about with the class.



Why not collect all of the students' articles and create a book that can be shared with others at the school? It could be left in a public space like the school library.





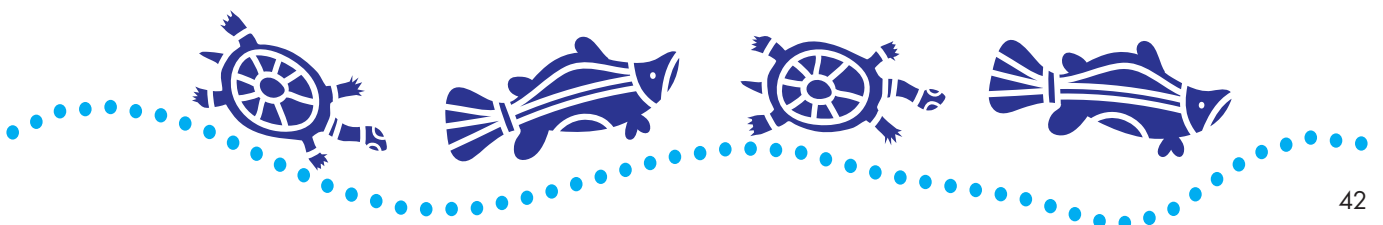
STUDENT WORKSHEET: VOICES OF THE STOLEN GENERATIONS ALARM MATRIX

Name and Define	Describe	Explain	Analyse	Evaluate
Think about WHO/WHAT	Think about WHAT	Think about WHY	Think about HOW	Think about HOW WELL/IMPORTANCE
<p>Who are the Stolen Generations?</p> <p>Introduce the member of the Stolen Generations that you have chosen to profile.</p>	<p>What was life like for children removed from their families?</p> <p>In this section make sure to include quotes from members of the Stolen Generations talking about their experiences.</p> <p>Extension question: What was life like for families and communities after children were removed?</p>	<p>Why were children removed from their families?</p>	<p>How did these experiences affect children, families and communities? What were the short-term impacts for children who were removed from their families?</p> <p>You should also include quotes here.</p>	<p>What were the long-term impacts for children who were removed from their families? What have been the long-term impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities?</p>

Source: Adapted from 'A Learning and Responding Matrix' (ALARM) concept, originally developed by NSW teacher Max Woods.

Useful resources

- Australian Human Rights Commission, [Bringing them Home](#) website
- [Stolen Generations Testimonies](#) website
- The Healing Foundation, [Telling our Stories—Our Stolen Generations](#) videos
- National Library of Australia, [Bringing them Home Oral History Project](#)





Key concept: Long-term effects

The following information is based on the findings of the *Bringing them Home* report.

The effects of forced removal on Aboriginal and Torres Strait individuals, families and communities are many and varied. The National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families found, based on testimonies given to the Inquiry and from independent research, that there were a number of common long-term effects, including:

- Separation from primary carer
- Mental and physical health problems
- Behavioural problems and trouble with the law
- Undermined parenting skills
- Loss of cultural heritage
- Broken families and communities
- Racism

It is important to keep in mind that the removal policies affected generations of Indigenous people. Even Indigenous children who were not removed have been affected in some way, either as a community member or child of a parent who was removed.

Separation from primary carer

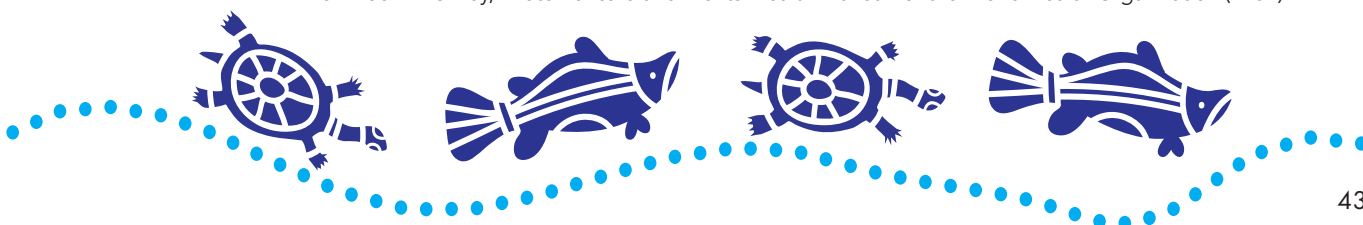
The quality of a person's future social relationships are significantly affected by the relationships they formed as a child. As early as 1951, research showed that separation from a primary carer, especially when followed by placement in an institution, was connected to a variety of psychiatric disorders in adulthood.¹⁸

Separation from a primary carer also means cutting off a child's main source of attachment and love. Psychological evidence shows that attachment of this kind is important to a child's development, helping them to:

- Achieve full intellectual potential
- Develop a cultural identity
- Sort out perceptions
- Appreciate and value the importance of family
- Think logically
- Develop a conscience
- Become self-reliant
- Cope with stress and frustration
- Handle fear and worry
- Develop future relationships

Evidence submitted to the Inquiry revealed that many Indigenous children were removed when they were less than 10 years old. Between one-half and two-thirds of those who were forcibly removed were taken in infancy (before the age of five years).

18 John Bowlby, 'Maternal care and mental health' *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* (1951).



The vast majority of these children were removed to institutions. These homes, missions or stations were usually run by a manager and small set of staff. Often faced with overcrowding, the staff could do little to provide the kind of care necessary for a child's development. Quite simply, the role of primary carer was usually never replaced after they were removed.

Some children were also moved between institutions, or from institutions to foster homes and then back to institutions. This lack of stable accommodation also prevented new attachments and relationships being formed.

Overall, the removals did not only result in the child's separation from their primary carer. Children were removed from these bonds to poor quality child care and a set of ever-changing 'carers' and institutions.

These experiences were carried by removed children into their adulthood. Mental health problems, continued trauma and difficulty establishing close relationships are just some long-term effects of removal.

There's still a lot of unresolved issues within me. One of the biggest ones is that I cannot really love anyone no more. I'm sick of being hurt. Every time I used to get close to anyone they were just taken away from me. The other fact is, if I did meet someone, I don't want to have children, cos I'm frightened the welfare system would come back and take my children.

(Confidential evidence 528, New South Wales)

Mental and physical health

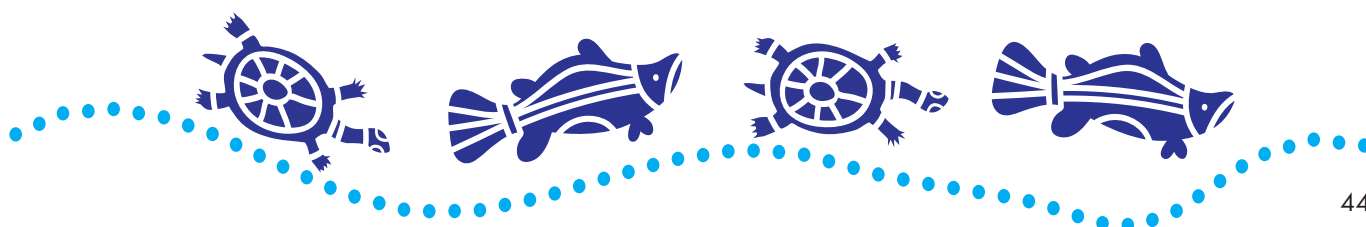
Separation from parents at a young age had quite immediate effects on the mental and physical wellbeing of those Indigenous children who were removed. As these children grew older, these effects proved more long term.

Evidence to the Inquiry clearly established that the childhood experience of forced removal and institutionalisation made those people much more likely to suffer emotional distress than others in the Indigenous community. Mental and physical illness was an effect of the whole experience, of which the separation from parents was just the first step.

Generally speaking, those removed continued to experience self-destructive behaviour, an intensity of addictions, heart disease and diabetes, and psychological problems. These effects were carried into their adult lives.

Many health organisations reported to the National Inquiry, commenting on the traumatic effects of the removals and institutionalisation. In their submission to the Inquiry, the Sydney Aboriginal Mental Health Unit reported: 'This tragic experience, across several generations, has resulted in incalculable trauma, depression and major mental health problems for Aboriginals'.

This was heightened in cases where physical and sexual abuse occurred.



The duration of separation and constant relocations caused an ‘emotional numbing’. Where abuse occurs regularly over a significant period of time, children learn to blunt their emotions and stop outwardly responding to abuse. Often that develops into a pattern in adult life that is difficult to overcome and affects relationships with others.

Drug and alcohol use

Many Indigenous people reported using drugs and/or alcohol in an attempt to numb or escape from the ongoing experience of pain and trauma.

I drank to take the pain, the misery out of my life.

(Confidential evidence 553, Northern Territory)

The *Bringing them Home* report pointed to Psychiatrist Judith Herman’s work on trauma, in which she has commented on the ‘similar numbing effects’ of both alcohol and narcotics and noted that traumatised people are at a higher risk of abusing drugs and alcohol.¹⁹

I got into heaps of trouble with the Police—drugs and alcohol. I could get my hands on it and escape and release my frustration.

(Confidential submission 154, Victoria)

Behavioural problems and trouble with the law

For young Indigenous people, a common response to being in an institution was to turn to crime. This was particularly the case for young males.

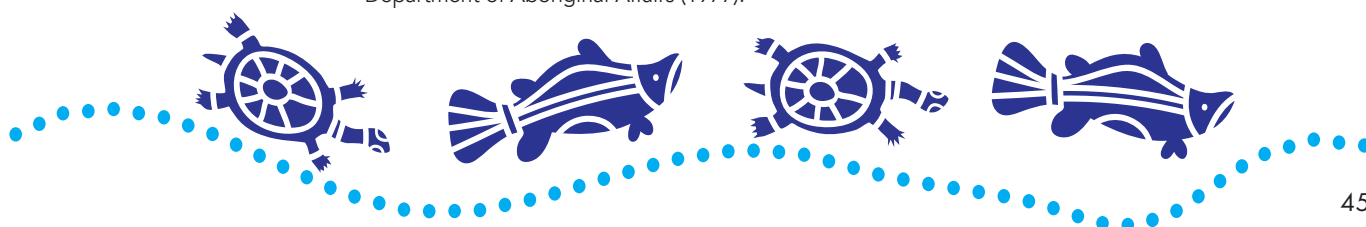
Much of the evidence to the Inquiry suggested strong links between the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the crime statistics and the removal of Indigenous children from their families.

In the 1970s, Dr Elizabeth Sommerland surveyed Aboriginal Legal Services across Australia. The survey revealed that a large majority of clients seeking legal aid for criminal offences have also had a history of being in institutions or non-Indigenous foster care.²⁰

Other surveys have produced similar results, such as a survey held in 1982 by the Australian Law Reform Commission. In Victoria, 90 percent of all the clients seeking legal aid from the Aboriginal Legal Service had been in placement at some stage. In NSW, this figure was 90–95 percent, with most being raised in non-Indigenous foster care.

19 Judith Herman, *Trauma and recovery: the aftermath of violence— from domestic abuse to political terror* (BasicBooks, 1992) 44.

20 Elizabeth Sommerlad, ‘Aboriginal juveniles in custody: report arising from a National Symposium on the Care & Treatment of Aboriginal Juveniles in State Corrective Institutions’, in association with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (1977).



For many Indigenous children, criminality was an immediate response to being removed from their families and relocated to an institution. Again, many carried this pattern of criminality and rebellion against non-Indigenous society into their adult lives. This would mean that institutionalisation also continued, albeit in the criminal justice system rather than the child welfare system.

And every time you come back in it doesn't bother you because you're used to it and you see the same faces. It's like you never left, you know, in the end.

(Confidential evidence 204, Victoria)

Undermined parenting skills

Another major long-term effect is that those children who were removed experience difficulties in raising their own children. Quite simply, these children were denied role models for parenting.

I had no-one to guide me through life, no-one to tell me how to be a good mother.

(Confidential evidence 504—Carol, Western Australia)

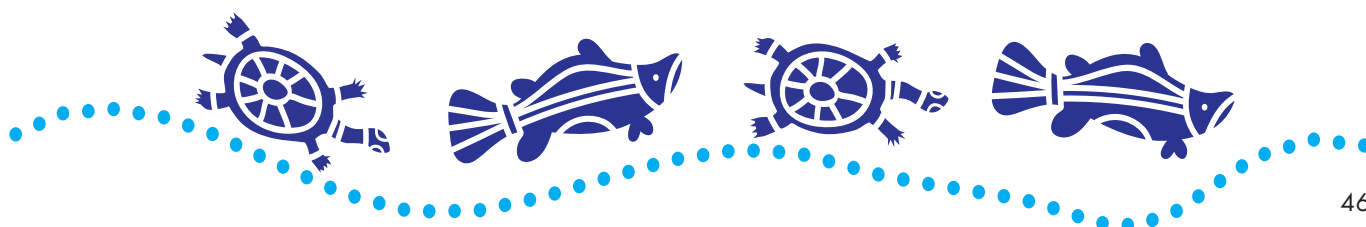
Psychological studies report on the problems people who were institutionalised as children face in raising their own children as adults. Consider this in light of removals and institutionalisation that would often occur across generations in just one family.

Most forcibly removed children were denied the experience of being parented or at least cared for by a person to whom they were attached. This is the very experience people rely on to become effective and successful parents themselves. Institutions, missions or abusive foster homes are not places where people can develop an idea of what parenting involves.

That's another thing that we find hard is giving our children love. Because we never had it. So we don't know how to tell our kids that we love them. All we do is protect them. I can't even cuddle my kids 'cause I never ever got cuddled. The only time was when I was getting raped and that's not what you'd call a cuddle, is it?

(Confidential evidence 689, New South Wales)

During the period of removals, many removed Indigenous women were having children quite young. Often, they would leave an institution to work as a domestic servant for a non-Indigenous family, only to return to the institution pregnant. So, many young Indigenous women experienced child-rearing for the first time while they were still experiencing the process of removal.



This set in motion a cycle of removal—the children of a removed child would then be removed. By the stage the discriminatory laws were changed and replaced by welfare laws common to all, Indigenous children were still being removed. These laws required that the child be in a state of ‘neglect’. In a large number of situations, the neglectful environment arose precisely because the parenting skills were undermined.

A majority of Indigenous parents removed as children feared their own children being taken away. Sometimes this would mean they were unwilling to take their children to doctors, school or welfare officers for fear the same thing would happen, as happened to them.

On the other hand, the experience of removal sometimes strengthened their parenting skills. These are people who are conscious of how mistreatment and neglect impacted on their development and seek to protect their children from similar abuses. In other words, they viewed their relationship with their children as even more special, taking it less for granted.

I have a problem with smacking kids. I won't smack them ... I remember hating [my foster mother] so I never want the kids to hate me. I try to be perfect.

(Confidential evidence 529, New South Wales)

Loss of cultural heritage

One principal effect of the removal policies was the severe erosion of cultural links. This was of course the aim of these policies. The children were to be:

prevented from acquiring the habits and customs of the Aborigines (South Australian Protector of Aborigines in 1909)

merged into the present civilisation and become worthy citizens

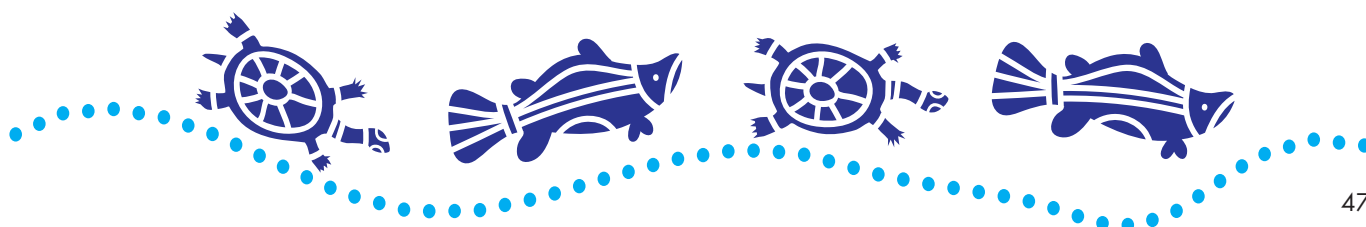
(NSW Colonial Secretary in 1915)

The intention and result of the removals was to prevent Indigenous children from cultivating a sense of Indigenous cultural identity while they were developing their own personal identity.

When we left Port Augusta, when they took us away, we could only talk Aboriginal. We only knew one language and when we went down there, well we had to communicate somehow. Anyway, when I come back I couldn't even speak my own language. And that really bugged my identity up. It took me 40 odd years before I became a man in my own people's eyes, through Aboriginal law. Whereas I should've went through that when I was about 12 years of age.

(Confidential evidence 179, South Australia)

In a child's early years, both family and culture are important in developing their personal identity and sense of self. Family and culture also strengthen a person's sense of belonging and personal history.



For those Indigenous children who were removed, family and culture were replaced by institutions and non-Indigenous homes—a culture both artificial and alien to them.

For many of those removed, this lack of cultural heritage and knowledge continued through their adult lives as they grew up in a non-Indigenous culture. Some were even denied knowledge of their Aboriginality. Finding this out many years later would change their lives dramatically.

As mentioned, the aim of these policies was to assimilate Indigenous children into non-Indigenous society so they could ‘become worthy citizens’. As many of the submissions and histories show, the reality was that those removed could not assimilate into non-Indigenous society. They faced continued discrimination.

Many witnesses to the Inquiry spoke of their strong sense of not belonging either in the Indigenous community or in the non-Indigenous community.

I felt like a stranger in Ernabella, a stranger in my father’s people. We had no identity with the land, no identity with a certain people. I’ve decided in the last 10, 11 years to, y’know, I went through the law. I’ve been learning culture and learning everything that goes with it because I felt, growing up, that I wasn’t really a blackfella. You hear whitefellas tell you you’re a blackfella. But blackfellas tell you you’re a whitefella. So, you’re caught in a half-caste world.

(Confidential evidence 289, South Australia)

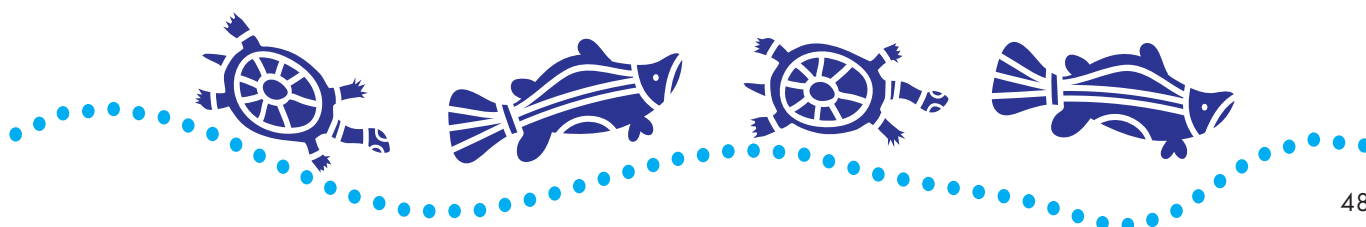
While Indigenous cultures were not destroyed by these policies, and continue to exist, they were profoundly changed as a result.

For Indigenous communities, this has had a major practical impact on their ability to claim native title.

Broken families and communities

The trauma of forcible removal of children affected the parents and other relatives left behind as well as the children taken. Evidence put before the Inquiry clearly established that families and whole communities suffered grievously upon the forcible removal of their children.

The Inquiry drew on psychological research into the effects of child adoption on the parents and other family members. The research found the effects to be similar to those where the child has died. For example, evidence suggested that Indigenous men lost their purpose in relation to their families and communities. Often their individual responses to that loss took them away from their families: on drinking binges, ending up in hospitals following accidents or assaults, in a gaol or lock-up, or prematurely dead.



The interesting thing was that he was such a great provider ... He was a great provider and had a great name and a great reputation. Now, when this intrusion occurred it had a devastating impact upon him and upon all those values that he believed in and that he put in place in his life which included us, and so therefore I think the effect upon Dad was so devastating. And when that destruction occurred, which was the destruction of his own personal private family which included us, it had a very strong devastating effect on him, so much so that he never ever recovered from the trauma that occurred ...

(Confidential evidence 265, Victoria)

However, the effects went beyond the family members and had a significant impact on Indigenous communities.

Parenting roles, nurturing and socialising responsibilities are widely shared in Indigenous societies.

Relatives beyond that of the immediate family have nurturing responsibilities and emotional ties with children as they grow up. When the children were taken, many people in addition to the biological parents were bereft of their role and purpose in connection with those children.

Often, communities would not just lose children, but also entire families. Some Indigenous families would exile themselves, leaving their community, out of a fear that their children would be taken away if they stayed.

But there was an even greater impact on communities. When a child was forcibly removed, the community's chance to maintain itself in that child was lost. A community's continued existence depends, amongst other things, on reproduction. A society's future lies in its children.

In North America, where similar policies of removal were in place, a Congressional Inquiry found that the removal of children had a severe impact on Indigenous communities in the United States, threatening their existence.

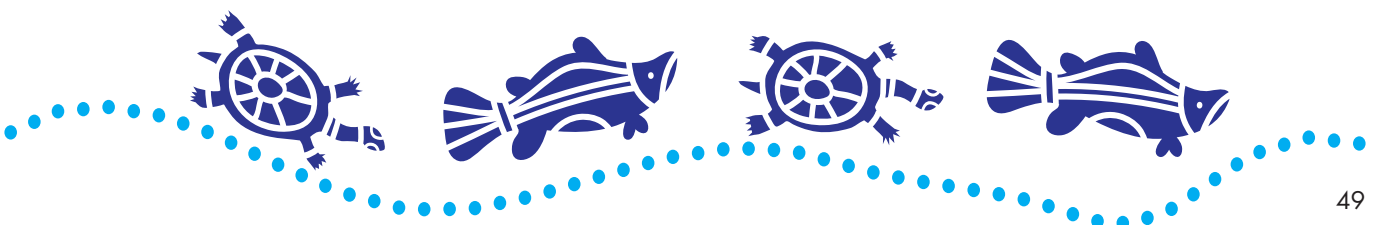
[Children are] core elements of the present and future of the community. The removal of these children creates a sense of death and loss in the community, and the community dies too ... there's a sense of hopelessness that becomes part of the experience for that family, that community ...

(Lynne Datnow, Victorian Koori Kids Mental Health Network, evidence 135)

Racism

Those Indigenous children who were placed in institutions faced a hazard over and above that experienced by non-Indigenous children who were institutionalised. This was the continual condemnation and attack upon their Aboriginality and that of their families.

Many witnesses to the Inquiry spoke of an uncertainty of how to feel about their Indigenous heritage, some even feeling negative about it.



At the core of these policies was a value judgement based on race. They imposed European culture as a positive in preference to Indigenous culture, which was over and again presented as a negative.

Some Indigenous children would come to internalise this racism. In other words, they would judge themselves according to these standards.

'Your family don't care about you anymore, they wouldn't have given you away. They don't love you. All they are, are just dirty, drunken blacks.' You heard this daily ... When I come out of the home and come to Redfern here looking for the girls, you see a Koori bloke coming towards you, you cross the street, you run for your life, you're terrified.

(Confidential evidence 8, NSW)



Activity 5: Long-term effects

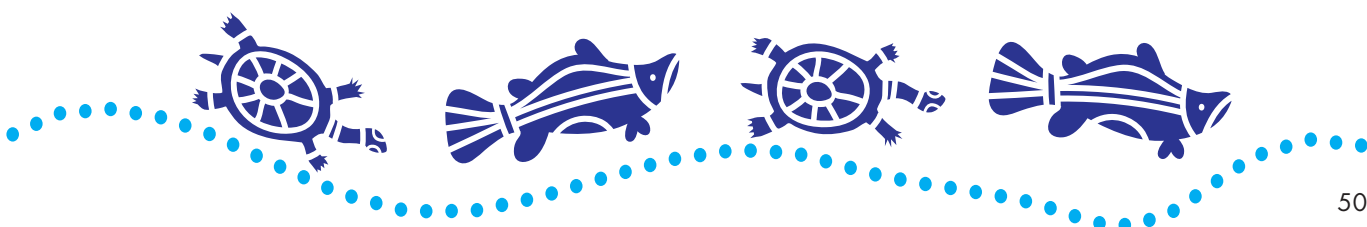
Suggested timing:

30 minutes for students to conduct research
30 minutes for presentations and class discussion

Required resources:

Note-paper/notebooks and pens for students
Butcher's paper and markers

- Let students know that in this activity they will be working in pairs to learn more about the long-term effects of policies of forced removal, and how they continue to impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities today.
- Inform students that the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families identified seven common long-term effects of forced removal:
 - separation from primary carer
 - mental and physical health problems
 - delinquency and behavioural problems
 - undermined parenting skills
 - loss of cultural heritage
 - broken families and communities
 - racism
- Assign each pair two of these long-term effects and ask students to conduct research to learn more about them. If students need further direction, you could distribute copies of the 'Key concept: Long-term effects' pages to each pair to get them started. Let students know that they have 30 minutes and remind them to take notes as they are conducting their research.
- While students are conducting their research, write each of the long-term effects in the list above on the centre of a separate sheet of butcher's paper and post the papers around the classroom.



- After 30 minutes, bring the class back together and ask pairs to locate a sheet of butcher's paper that matches one of the effects they researched. Ensure that the groups now gathered around the sheets of paper are roughly the same size. If necessary, ask some pairs to switch to the sheet of paper matching their other long-term effect.
- Let students know that they now have 5 minutes to work together in these groups to discuss and write down some of the key points they discovered from their research. After 5 minutes, ask students to locate the sheet of paper that matches the second effect that they researched and ask them to again work together to discuss and write down some key points. They should try to add points to the sheet of paper that have not already been written down by the first group. Let students know that after 5 minutes, each group will be presenting the information to the rest of the class.
- After each group has given a brief presentation informing their classmates of what they have learned, facilitate a class discussion about the long-term effects of forced removal. You could ask students to comment on some of the quotes from the 'Key concept: Long-term effects' section as part of the discussion.



Key concept: Intergenerational trauma

The trauma experienced by individuals can also affect future generations. This is particularly well-documented in post-war communities and referred to as intergenerational trauma. The National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families found that intergenerational trauma clearly affects the Stolen Generations as well:

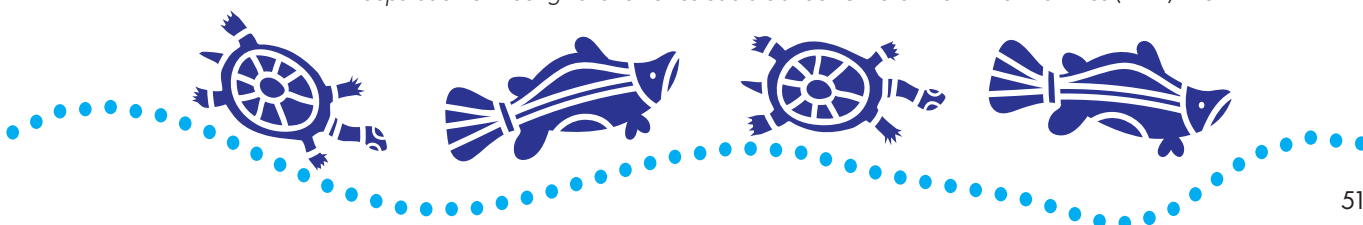
'The Inquiry received evidence that unresolved grief and trauma are also inherited by subsequent generations. Parents "convey anxiety and distress" to their children'.²¹

We are still learning about just how significant this intergenerational trauma is for the descendants of the Stolen Generations. Organisations such as the [Healing Foundation](#) are conducting research to try and better understand the nature and effects of intergenerational trauma for Indigenous communities.



The [Healing Foundation](#) is a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation that partners with communities to address the ongoing trauma caused by actions like the forced removal of children from their families. They work with communities to create a place of safety, providing an environment for Stolen Generations members and their families to speak for themselves, tell their own stories and be in charge of their own healing. The Healing Foundation is also leading the way in research in to Indigenous healing. They support locally-run projects, training and education, research and commemorations.

21 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Bringing them Home: National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* (1997) 228.





Activity 6: Intergenerational Trauma

Suggested timing:

30 minutes

Additional research/writing time (in class or as homework)

Required resources:

Note-paper/notebooks and pens for students



- Begin the activity by introducing students to the concept of intergenerational trauma. Ask students if they know what intergenerational trauma means. They may be able to work it out from their knowledge of the two separate words.
- Provide students with a brief overview of intergenerational trauma by reading aloud the 'Key concept: Intergenerational trauma' passage above.
- Let students know that they are now to compose a written response to the following statement:

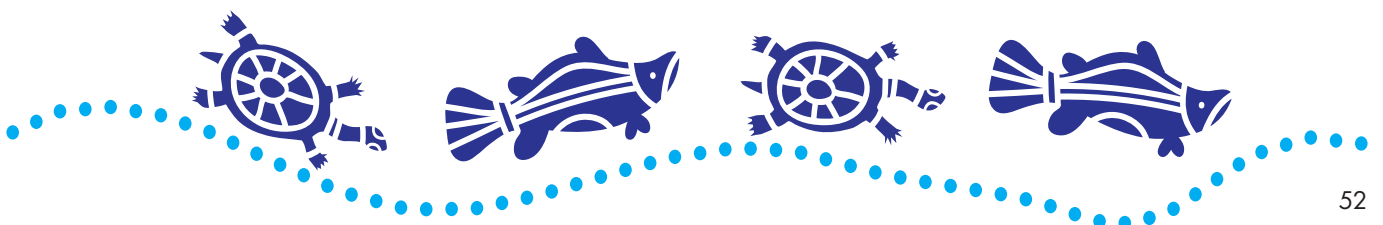
What are the impacts of the intergenerational trauma caused by forced removal policies on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities today?

To this day I believe my Mum and Dad died of a broken heart.
To find my family was a burden lifted off my shoulders.
I love my brothers and sisters.
It gives me great sorrow my mum and dad never got to
He would make you feel at ease and so funny.
find my sister as me and I never met them.
Gee, just remember me, I love her outgoing personality.
My older sister told me mum and dad never gave up
Grace was so glad she met her brothers and sisters
Looking for their two stolen children.
Before she passed on.
They passed on not knowing us.

Us Taken-Away Kids
'Commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Bringing them home report'

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
www.humanrightsc.gov.au

To commemorate the 10th anniversary of the publication of the *Bringing them Home* report, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission invited Indigenous peoples across Australia to tell us their experiences of removal, their thoughts ten years on from the Inquiry and their hopes for the future. The poetry, stories and artwork featured in *Us Taken-Away Kids* are the fruits of this invitation.





STUDENT WORKSHEET: INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

Compose a written response to the following statement:

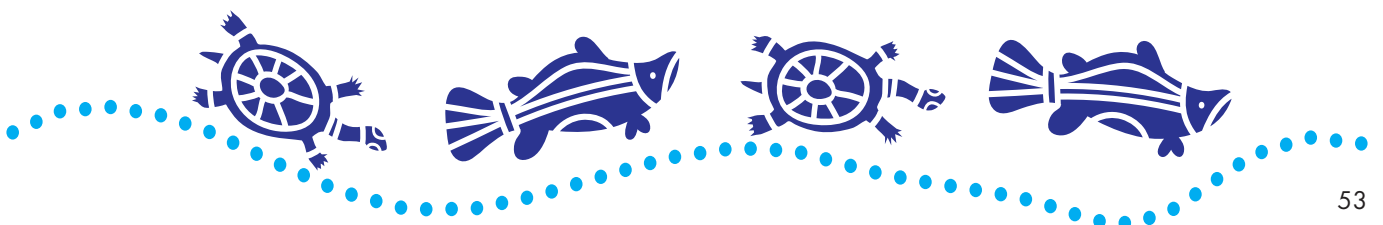
What are the impacts of the intergenerational trauma caused by forced removal policies on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities today?

Make sure that your response is well-researched and correctly referenced.

ALARM matrix

Name and Define	Describe	Explain	Analyse	Evaluate
Think about WHO/WHAT	Think about WHAT	Think about WHY	Think about HOW	Think about HOW WELL/IMPORTANCE
What is intergenerational trauma? Who does it affect?	What are some of the specific effects of intergenerational trauma (e.g. impacts on mental and physical health, parenting etc.)	Why are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing intergenerational trauma?	How does intergenerational trauma affect members of the Stolen Generations and their descendants (including individuals, families and communities)? Use specific examples/quotes in this section.	What impact does this have on healing and reconciliation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

Source: Adapted from 'A Learning and Responding Matrix' (ALARM) concept, originally developed by NSW teacher Max Woods.



Research and Referencing

When conducting research, it is important to consider the following when selecting sources:

- **Currency**—When was the source published? Is the content still relevant or is it out of date? If it is an older source, what is the view of today's commentators about its accuracy and reliability?
- **Reliability**—Is the source appropriately referenced? Is the content based on fact or opinion?
- **Authority**—Who is the creator or author of the content? What are their credentials? What is their interest in the content? Can you identify any bias?
- **Purpose**—Does the author seem to be pushing one side of an argument? Are they trying to sell you something? Are there any advertisements associated with the content?
- **Referencing**—Keep track of which resources you are using as you go along and make sure that you always cite your sources! And remember—referencing is not only for direct quotes. Even if you are paraphrasing what a resource says, you still need to cite it as the source of the information.

Children at school on Mornington Island, 1950

Source: Courtesy
of the State Library
of Queensland and
the community of
Mornington Island.

