




# The importance of protecting local Indigenous heritage

Key Learning Area	Unit or lesson title and main focus questions	Most appropriate level and suggested number of lessons
 Geography	<b>The importance of protecting local Indigenous heritage</b>	Stage 2-3  4-6 lessons
 History	How is the Sydney Metro Northwest project protecting local Indigenous heritage sites?	
 Creative Arts	This learning experience would be enhanced by an excursion to a local Indigenous site such as Bidjgal Reserve in The Hills Shire.	

## Teacher briefing

Students research the history of The Hills Shire Darug tribe in the importance of Indigenous sites in the area and Indigenous names associated with the North West region of Sydney. Students gain an understanding of local Indigenous groups' connection to North West region communities through individual Indigenous inspired artwork. Students then look at the Sydney Metro Northwest Indigenous Heritage Chapter of the Sydney Metro Northwest *Environmental Impact Statement 2*, explore the importance of protecting Indigenous heritage and how Sydney Metro Northwest is achieving this.

### Requirements for these lessons

- Internet connected interactive whiteboard
- Laptops, computers or iPads with bookmarked sites
- Hard copies of articles (see web links)
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- Small tiles (squares of thick cardboard or styrofoam)
- Paints, paint utensils.

### Assessment

This learning experience provides opportunities to use summative assessment on students' appreciation and understanding of Indigenous heritage and culture. Formative assessment can be undertaken on students' 'North West region of Sydney Aboriginal collage map', Indigenous heritage tiles and their participation in group speeches.

### Key terms and vocabulary

Sydney Metro Northwest, Indigenous, Aboriginal, culture, The Hills Shire, heritage, Indigenous sites, Sydney Metro Northwest *Environmental Impact Statement*.

# Web links



## **The Hills Shire Indigenous History**

[http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au/files/sharedassets/public/ecm-website-documents/page-documents/library/library-e-resources/traditional\\_aboriginal\\_names\\_baulkham\\_hills\\_shire.pdf](http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au/files/sharedassets/public/ecm-website-documents/page-documents/library/library-e-resources/traditional_aboriginal_names_baulkham_hills_shire.pdf)

**Language maps and information about the Aboriginal people of the Sydney Basin also available in Eora: Mapping Aboriginal Sydney 1770, State Library of NSW at**  
<http://www2.sl.nsw.gov.au/archive/events/exhibitions/2006/eora/docs/eora-guide.pdf>

## **A map of Indigenous Nations in Australia**

<http://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aboriginal-australia-map>

A list of suitable sites to bookmark for student research:

## **NSW Government Environment and Heritage website - 'Aboriginal Culture: Places of Significance'**

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/nswcultureheritage/PlacesOfSignificance.htm>

A site explaining the laws protecting Aboriginal sites, types of sites and the areas where Aboriginal sites are found.

<http://www.aboriginalheritage.org/sites/identification>

## **Australian Aboriginal History Timeline**

<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/timeline/searchResults?q=&category=any&yearFrom=1900&yearTo=1969>

## **Link to interview with Darug community member Mr Richard Green**

<https://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au/Library/Library-e-Resources/Hills-Voices-Online/Changing-Shire/Richard-Green>

## **Board of Studies NSW Aboriginal Education site - Indigenous artworks on PowerPoint slides**

<http://ab-ed.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/aboriginal-art/affirmations-of-identity#ppt>

## **Board of Studies NSW Aboriginal Education site - Quote by Indigenous artist Brenda L Croft**

<http://ab-ed.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/aboriginal-art>

## Web links



### **ABC 'Dust Echoes': animated Dreamtime stories**

<http://education.abc.net.au/home#!/digibook/2570774/dust-echoes>

### **Sydney Metro Northwest *Environmental Impact Statement 2*, Chapter 12 Indigenous Heritage**

[https://www.sydneymetro.info/sites/default/files/14\\_Ch\\_12\\_Indigenous\\_Heritage.pdf%3Fext%3D.pdf](https://www.sydneymetro.info/sites/default/files/14_Ch_12_Indigenous_Heritage.pdf%3Fext%3D.pdf)

## Syllabus links

### **Geography K-10**

Stage 2 - The earth's environment - perceptions of environments and protection of environments

(GE2-1) examines features and characteristics of places and environments

(GE2-3) examines differing perceptions about the management of places and environments

(GE2-4) acquires and communicates geographical information using geographical tools for inquiry.

### **History K-10**

Stage 2 - Community and remembrance - the importance of Country and Place to Aboriginal and or/Torres Strait Islander people who belong to the local area and /First contact - the diversity and longevity of Australia's first peoples and ways Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples are connected to Country and Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) and the implications for their daily lives

(HT2-2) describes and explains how significant individuals, groups and events contributed to changes in the local community over time

(HT2-4) describes and explains effects of British colonisation in Australia

(HT2-5) applies skills of historical inquiry and communication.

### **Creative Arts K-6**

(VAS2.1) represents the qualities of experiences and things that are interesting or beautiful by choosing among aspects of subject matter

(VAS3.1) investigates subject matter in an attempt to represent likenesses of things in the world

(VAS2.4) identifies connections between subject matter in artworks and what they refer to, and appreciates the use of particular techniques

(VAS3.4) communicates about the ways in which subject matter is represented in artworks.

## Learning experiences

An excursion to a local Indigenous site such as Bidjgal Reserve in The Hills Shire would enhance this unit. A site visit enables students to explore local Indigenous culture and heritage.

### Step 1 – Introduction

The class takes a closer look at Indigenous heritage by participating in a guided reading activity using The Hills Shire Council article 'Aborigines in the Hills', (see web links). Teacher facilitates a class discussion about the article and information is added to the retrieval chart. Use these questions as a guide to stimulate discussion:

- Why is the land so important to Indigenous people?
- What are Indigenous sites? Why are they important?
- Why is it important to protect Indigenous sites?
- Have you visited any Indigenous sites?

### Step 2 – Indigenous Nations in Australia and Aboriginal Nations of NSW map



Teacher displays Indigenous Nations in Australia map and Aboriginal Nations of NSW map on interactive whiteboard. Students interact with the map and identify the abundance of Indigenous tribes, clans and languages in Australia and in their local area. Suitable information is added to the retrieval chart.

**Figure 9:** The NSW Department of Education and Community Curriculum Support interactive map. The ABC interactive map at <http://gambay.com.au/map> is also an excellent resource for this lesson.

### Step 3 – Video interview



Students watch The Hills Shire Council, 'The Changing Shire: A Darug perspective' interview with local Indigenous man Richard Green from the Boorooberongal clan. (See web links.) Teacher facilitates a discussion about the interview and the local Indigenous heritage and sites mentioned in the interview. Appropriate information from these sources is added to the retrieval chart.

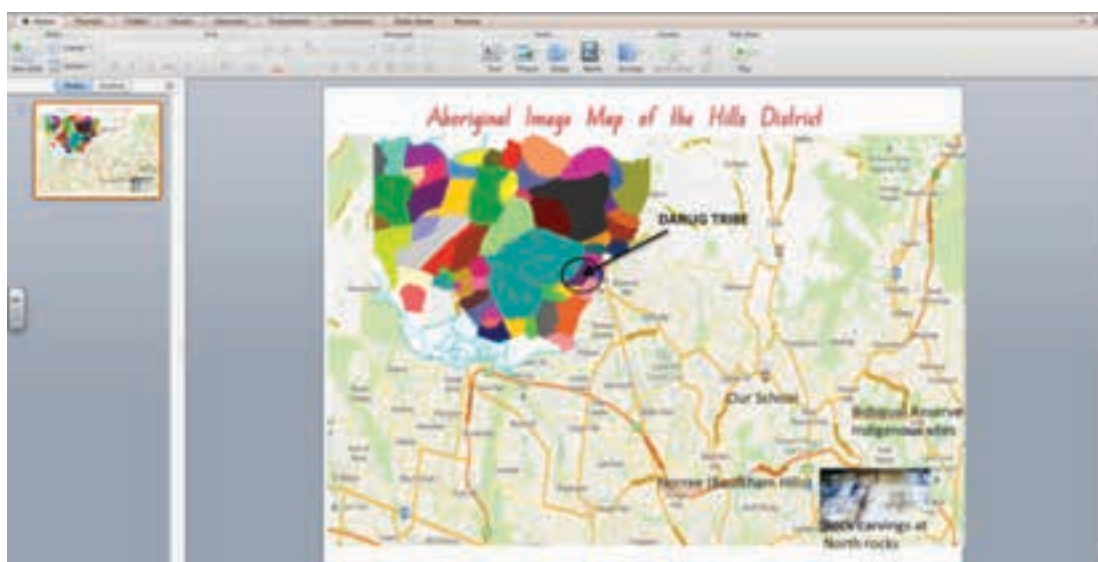
**Figure 10:** Interview on The Hills Shire Council's website, 'The Changing Shire: A Darug perspective' with Richard Green from the Boorooberongal clan, by Frank Heimans for The Hills Shire Council, 24 October 2009.

#### Step 4 – Group activity (two to three students)

Student groups create a 'North West region of Sydney Aboriginal collage map'. Teacher provides groups with a suitable map of the region and a hard copy of The Hills Shire Council article 'Traditional Aboriginal names for the Shire'. Students research local North West region Indigenous heritage and sites (see web links).

Groups use computers, Microsoft PowerPoint, their research, the class retrieval chart, Indigenous Nation maps and The Hills Shire Council paper to identify local names and Indigenous sacred sites in the area, in order to create a 'North West region of Sydney Aboriginal collage map'.

Teacher provides an example (such as the one below) for students to use as inspiration. Students could also add scanned illustrations and photos they have taken around the school, area or on excursions. Indigenous students in the class may also bring substantial knowledge and resources to this activity. Each group presents their 'North West region of Sydney Aboriginal collage map' to the class.



**Figure 11:** It is a good idea for the teacher to make their own map similar to the one above to provide as an example for students.

#### Step 5 – Group activity (two to three students)

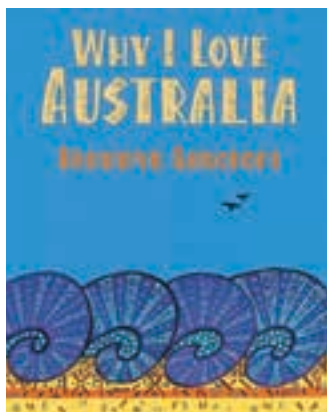
Students interpret the importance of local Indigenous heritage and sites by watching an animated dreamtime story by 'Dust Echoes' (see web links). Teacher provides Brenda Croft's quote below (see web links) to class and asks them to form pairs and spend a few minutes discussing what the quote means for them.

"In Aboriginal languages, there is no single definition for the term 'art'. Aboriginal art is our expression, our culture, our living. An extension of our identity. Not just an item for a wall or living room. Aboriginal art is painting, sculpture, dance, film making, photography, song writing."

**Source:** Brenda L Croft, Aboriginal artist.  
<http://ab-ed.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/aboriginal-art>

Teacher selects pairs of students to report their understandings to the class, and a class mind map is created with the ideas and thoughts.

## Step 6 – Individual activity



Students create a tile collage of local Indigenous history.

Teacher reads *Why I Love Australia* by Bronwyn Bancroft to the class, taking the class on a picture walk through the book and asking students to reflect on the way Bancroft has used Indigenous art to represent her connection to different natural and built environments in Australia. Ask students to provide examples of how Aboriginal art could be used to reflect the students' connection to their local area/environment.

**Figure 12:** *Why I Love Australia*, Bronwyn Bancroft, Little Hare Books, 2010 ISBN 9781921541780. This book is in most school libraries.

Students are provided with small plain tiles or thick squares of cardboard or styrofoam and are asked to use paint to create a tile interpreting the unique local North West region Indigenous heritage.

The tiles are collected and the class creates a large collage with the tiles on the floor. Later, the teacher may choose to display the tiles in a collage on the classroom wall.

Students form a circle around the tiles, and take turns discussing the ideas behind their individual tiles and the importance of local Indigenous heritage.

## Step 7 – Group activity

- Students take a close look at how Sydney Metro Northwest will protect local Indigenous sites and heritage by reading and discussing Chapter 12, Indigenous Heritage, of the Sydney Metro Northwest *Environmental Impact Statement*
- Students form groups of three to five students. Each group reads the material and creates a list of ways in which Sydney Metro Northwest is putting measures in place to protect local Indigenous heritage sites
- Using the lists, groups develop a five minute speech explaining why it is important to protect local Indigenous heritage sites and how this can be achieved. This is a formative assessment opportunity. Students should receive assessment criteria prior to beginning this activity to guide their presentation.

## Step 8 – Reflection: Presenting speeches

- Each group presents a speech to the class. The teacher facilitates discussion reiterating key ideas related to preserving Indigenous heritage for the future using key ideas from the groups' speeches. Each speech should be recorded using iPods, iPads or cameras to enable students to reflect on their performance. The speeches can also be presented to the school during an assembly or uploaded onto the school or class website or blog.

## Teacher references and extension work

### Extension activities

Students take a closer look at the changing nature of their community's travel routes by using the Internet and the school library to find out local Indigenous ceremonial routes. They now compare these to the Sydney Metro Northwest route.

Using the information provided in the previous lesson in this topic, 'A changing demography: Investigating changes to public transport in The Hills Shire', students can create a map demonstrating the changes to travel routes in The Hills Shire over the past 200 years.

### Stage 1 – Stage modifications

This learning experience can be modified for Stage 1 by simplifying the research activities. Examples of modifications:

- Teacher provides maps and print outs of Indigenous names for students to attach
- A class 'North West Sydney Aboriginal collage map' can be created on the interactive whiteboard
- Teacher can omit reading 'Chapter 12, Indigenous Heritage' and instead explain the measures and practices Sydney Metro Northwest is undertaking to protect local Indigenous sites.

### Background on the Darkinung and the Darug

Aboriginal people lived in the local area for many thousands of years before the British arrived. Two main groups, the Darkinung and the Darug (Dharuk) lived in the area now covered by The Hills Shire, the Darkinung in the northern parts and the Darug in the southern parts.

The Darkinung and the Darug people spoke their own languages, which were different from each other and different from the language of the Eora people who lived in inner Sydney. Some Aboriginal place names are still in use today, some slightly altered from the original form, for example Parramatta, Maroota, Cattai, Toongabbie and Yarramundi. Many Aboriginal words from the local area have become part of Australian English, such as koala, wallaby, wombat, boomerang and billabong.

The local area contained a rich variety of environments, each with its range of food resources. There were open grasslands with plenty of emu, wallaby and kangaroo. There were woodland areas with possums, gliders, bandicoots and honey from native bees. There were lagoons, creeks and the Hawkesbury-Nepean River, which the Aboriginal people called Derrubin. These waterways provided fish, eels, crayfish, mussels, ducks and other water birds. Goannas, snakes and lizards, and a variety of birds and bird eggs were also eaten.

Along the creeks and riverbanks were extensive yam beds, an important food source harvested by women using digging sticks. Aboriginal people ate a variety of fruits, including lilli-pillies, figs and native grapes, nuts, berries, ferns and nectar-bearing flowers. While men hunted larger game, fished and trapped birds, the food gathered by women and children, such as smaller mammals, eggs, shellfish and a variety of plant food, provided the bulk of the diet.

In the local area there were rock shelters and caves where Aboriginal people camped and sometimes decorated the walls with artwork. The outline of animals and Dreaming figures were engraved on exposed sandstone platforms. Different types of stone were used to make a range of tools, including river stones for axe heads with ground edges and silcrete and quartzite for sharp points used on spears.

Aboriginal people in the local area lived in small communities, also known as bands, of between 20 to 40 people. They moved from campsite to campsite within their territory according to the seasons. Most known campsites are near a creek or river. For ceremonies and special occasions, several communities or bands would gather together.

Aboriginal band names in and around the local area include Burramattagal (around Parramatta), Bidjigal (around Castle Hill), Burraberongal (around Richmond), Cannemegal, (Parramatta to Prospect), Kurrajong (north-west of Richmond), Mulgoa (near Penrith) and Cabrogal (around Liverpool).

### How did Aboriginal people travel?

Australia's earliest inhabitants travelled long distances on foot. In some areas the Aboriginal people used well defined paths to cross difficult terrain. At the time of the First Fleet, established pathways were noted around Sydney by Surgeon John White. In the far west, explorers Cunningham, Mitchell and Sturt all found well beaten paths, usually along river banks. The ability of Aboriginal people to traverse the country surprised some early observers. Marine Captain Watkin Tench noted:

“Their native hardiness of constitution is great. I saw a woman on the day she was brought to bed, carry her new born infant from Botany Bay to Port Jackson, a distance of six miles: and afterwards lit a fire and dressed fish.”

**Quoted:** Watkin Tench, *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson, New South Wales 1793*.

Aboriginal people also used canoes extensively on both coastal and inland waterways. They had been observed by Abel Tasman in 1642 and were a common sight around Port Jackson in the early days of the Colony. The canoes were made of bark and often included saplings used as crossbracing and ribbing. In October 1818, the explorer John Oxley recorded the following encounter:

“In our route we had disturbed a large party of natives, some of whom were busily employed in preparing bark for a new canoe. There were several canoes on the lake in which they all fled in great confusion; leaving their arms and utensils of every description behind them. One of the canoes were sufficiently large to hold nine men and resembled a boat; of course we left their property untouched.”

**Quoted:** John Oxley *Journal of Two Expeditions into the Interior of New South Wales, 1820*

**Source:** *Going Places – A Bicentennial Pictorial History of Transport in NSW*, Alan Davies, Warren Wickman, Andrew Wilson, NSW Ministry of Transport, 1988.