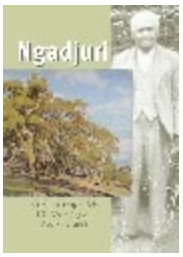

Ngadjuri: Aboriginal people of the Mid North Region of South Australia

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Suggestions for teaching activities

Early years

Early years R-2 Society and environment: Cultures
Key idea: *Children identify and explore patterns in the traditional stories, practices and present day lives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and peoples elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region.* SACSA p 312

Outcome 1.8 At Standard 1, towards the end of Year 2, the student: *Listens to and retells local Aboriginal stories and stories from cultures other than their own, and explains their relevance for Australians.* SACSA p 313

Listen to the Ngadjuri Dreaming stories then **retell** the stories (using Ngadjuri words where possible) through a diorama or drama (using stick puppets, feathered masks or other costumes). Use sand trays to **make** hills and plains and use sticks to make a stick nest rat (*wada*) nest. Discuss the relevance of the stories for Australians.

Imitate the movements of a kangaroo, emu or magpie to create a dance.

Draw a lifesize person shape or **copy** the photo of Nicole, a Ngadjuri girl (page 33), and **label** relevant features using Ngadjuri language. Play 'Simon says …' using Ngadjuri words.

Practise saying Ngadjuri words using the pronunciation guide and **write** the words on labels to reinforce learning. **Adapt** a familiar song or tune to include Ngadjuri words, (eg 'If you're happy and you know it, touch your *tidna* (feet) …', etc).

Draw pictures of animals known to Ngadjuri and **write** their Ngadjuri names if known.

Interact with Ngadjuri descendants. **Display** and **label** their photographs.

Primary years

Primary years 3-5 Society and environment: Cultures
Key idea: *Students enhance their skills in learning from, and communicating and interacting with, groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. They do this to value cultural diversity and play a part in Reconciliation.* . SACSA p 252

Outcome 2.8 At Standard 2, towards the end of Year 4, the student: *Describes the diversity amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures, past and present, and moves for Reconciliation.* SACSA p 253

Compile separate lists of all the words related to birds, lizards, mammals, and fish and **find out** if these species can still be found in Ngadjuri country or if they are extinct or endangered. If they are endangered, find out what strategies are in place for their survival and how schools, communities and individuals can assist.

Consider adopting an Australian endangered bird or animal to protect through publicity or habitat protection. Totems were protected as one would protect a brother or sister. This helped ensure survival of various species. Barney Waria's *gararu* moiety totems were the *wudlaru* (curlew) and *wada* (probably stick nest rat).

Design and **make** costumes or shadow puppets and **perform** the story of Eagle and Crow or another Ngadjuri Dreaming story.

In consultation with Ngadjuri people, **create** an animated video version of one or more stories using elements of children's painting for the illustrations. A Ngadjuri person could be asked to narrate the story. The video *Bobtales* is a good model for such a video. It is available to schools through DECS Tape Services www.tapeservices.sa.edu.au

Refer to the photo of the fish engraving and create a lifesize drawing of it, using the measurements provided.

Research similarities and differences between Ngadjuri and other groups of Aboriginal people and their cultures using resources such as the DECS Ngarrindjeri books, *Growing up at Uluru* (*Kakadu* and in the *Rainforest*) and through the *Burarra Gathering* exhibition at Tandanya and at http://burarra.questacon.edu.au/home.html

Compare a variety of weapons used by a range of Aboriginal people, and describe their differences and uses. The South Australian Museum is an excellent place to do this. Google their webpage.

Design and **create** your own hunting or food gathering tool or string using found materials from your local environment. Evaluate its effectiveness. Using natural resources, **design** and **make** your own musical instrument, (eg tapping sticks for musical percussion), comparing different hardnesses of wood for sound quality.

Identify and **collect** edible grass or acacia seeds from your local environment and grind them to make some flour. **Make** and eat a damper (you could use wheat, millet or oats and maybe add some ground *Acacia pycnantha* (golden wattle), *Acacia victoriae* (elegant wattle) or *Acacia oswaldii* (umbrella wattle) seeds if you lightly roast them first). A permit is required to collect seed from public land.

Describe various ways to preserve and share cultural knowledge. **Celebrate** the richness of Ngadjuri cultural heritage, an invaluable part of Mid North history, through art works and public displays of information.

Propagate indigenous food plants and other plants such as weaving rushes *cyperus gumnocaulis* and find ways to **protect** and **conserve** other flora (eg peppermint gum trees, shrubs, ground covers, kangaroo grass, which fauna such as birds need to survive).

List ways to inform tourists about Aboriginal culture and history. **Share** your ideas with those who can assist positive changes.

Middle years

Middle years 6-9 Society and environment: Cultures
Key idea: *Students develop research and social skills that promote recognition and appreciation of the heritage of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other groups. They develop the capacities to identify and counter prejudice and contribute to Reconciliation.* .SACSA p 314

Outcome 3.8 At Standard 3, towards the end of Year 6, the student: *Learns from rural and urban Aboriginal peoples and other minorities about their histories and present day experiences, and acts to counter prejudice*. .SACSA p 315

Outcome 4.8 At Standard 4, towards the end of Year 8, the student: *Demonstrates critical understanding of their own cultural practices in comparison to the histories, cultures and present day experiences of rural and urban Aboriginal groups, and acts for Reconciliation*. .SACSA p 315

Create individual art works based on a chosen paragraph or so of information from the Ngadjuri book. Base the artwork on the style used by Alan Tucker in his books *Too many Captain Cooks; Homelands and Frontiers*; or *Side by Side.* When artwork is complete, **rewrite** the information in easily understandable words which can be read from a distance. **Display** art work with text as part of a whole class exhibition for an audience and invite the audience to provide feedback on the work.

Analyse reasons why a colonial governor gazetted for continued use of Aboriginal place names. Governor Gawler's wording in the government gazette notice of October 31, 1839, was 'In regard to the minor features of the country to which the natives may have given names, the Governor would take the present opportunity of requesting the assistance of the colonists in discovering and carefully and precisely retaining these in all possible cases as most consistent with property and beauty of appellation…'.
If you live in Ngadjuri country, **research** and **record** remnants of the Ngadjuri traditional environment such as where indigenous grasses, ground covers, shrubs and trees are growing. Many indigenous birds depend on access to such plants.

Highlight as many Ngadjuri place names as you can find on a topographical map of the Mid North.

Explore the possibilities of interpretive signs being displayed to value and acknowledge Ngadjuri heritage. **Discuss** issues associated with undertaking such work. Find out if there are any such signs in place (eg by telephoning local councils).

Discuss the meanings of places named by Ngadjuri and why they might have been important to both Ngadjuri and early European settlers.

Locate other place names, which *may* include Ngadjuri words. Describe how you might find out a possible meaning. Contact the Ngadjuri committee to inform a future edition of this publication, by writing to Ngadjuri Walpa Juri Lands and Heritage Association C/- Vincent Branson, 15 Blencowe Street, Elizabeth Grove SA 5112.

Consider regenerating indigenous plants and fencing off some areas from stock, for example where sedge grass might grow near soakages. Sedge grass is used for traditional basket weaving and mat weaving, a skill which is being revived. Weave a mat or basket (see p. 100)

Compare linguistic features of Ngadjuri language with those of English and another language with which students are familiar, for example:
• relative placement of adjectives and nouns
• pronoun systems
• features and sounds in one language which are not in another, such as words beginning with 'ng'
• bird names which might be onomatopoeic.

Explore how the Dreaming stories 'map' Ngadjuri environment, including landforms, flora and fauna, as well as reinforce traditional law.

Locate relevant information from Ngadjuri Dreaming stories on a map of the Mid North, using a distance scale, north marker, a key and symbols to represent each story.

Find out how Aboriginal story sites, quarries, stone arrangements, campsites, and burial sites are protected under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act*.

Hypothesise possible ways to preserve from vandalism the quartz reef near Yunta and other story sites.

Find out how Aboriginal heritage sites in other areas are protected and issues around this.

Collect common sow thistle (before it has flowered), rub it under running water then simmer gently in stock with or without other vegetables. It has a spinach like taste and consistency.

Research the animals which are no longer found in the Ngadjuri environment. Are they still found elsewhere? Why have they died out? How might Ngadjuri people have responded to this in the early contact years?

Construct a model of a shelter used by the Ngadjuri in the past and compare its insulative qualities against a contemporary tent and/or house. Note that a well designed house should take advantage of the path of the sun through the sky for winter heating and summer cooling by having big windows facing north, not east or west, and having a sufficient overhang to prevent the mid summer noon sun directly hitting the windows.

Create a diagram of your extended family and label each person as they would be related to you using Ngadjuri kinship rules. Label any potential marriage partners according to the rules in this chapter.

Make life size illustrations of rock art engravings using the rule measurements indicated in the photographs, showing 2cm squares.

View the film *Widmakara, rock art of the Olary province*. The film, made by John Forrest, Margaret Nobbs and Chris Nobbs, can be viewed at the Languages, Multicultural and Aboriginal Resources Centre, 255 Torrens Road, West Croydon, tel: 08 8301 4850. The film is an excellent starting point for information about the rock engraving and painting sites in the Mid North.
• What evidence is left of the Ngadjuri occupation of this area?
• What are the petroglyphs and paintings of?
• What might the area have been like before European occupation?
• What animals and plants were in the area which may have been used by the Ngadjuri?

Organise with others to participate in the activity 'Ngadjuri history in South Australia since 1800: an activity for learning' (pages 120-133). **Describe** the feelings of those dispossessed using information from the chapter entitled.
Plan a visit to a rock art site in Ngadjuri country. Some sites are on privately owned land. Permission to visit these is required. The relevant details together with directions to the sites may be obtained by contacting the Chairperson of the Ngadjuri Walpa Juri Lands and Heritage Association, Vincent Branson, 15 Blencowe Street, Elizabeth Grove SA 5112. If you intend visiting please **respect** the significance of these places and treat them accordingly. Leave the place as you found it and take only your rubbish away with you.

In planning to take school or other groups to Ngadjuri rock art sites, discuss and plan details of the trip with participants, making sure they know why they are going, that they know about the antiquity and heritage value of the sites and what they will do when they get there.

Discuss the environment the group will be visiting and the importance of protection of the environment and Aboriginal heritage for the future of all Australians. Find out about the Aboriginal Heritage Act and the reasons for it being part of state and federal law.

Have some activities ready for the group:
• **record** observations of flora and fauna of which the Aboriginal people may have made use
• **take** photos, **make** maps, **collect** information for stories
• **sketch** or **photograph** the terrain
• **record** in writing, photos or drawings signs of European habitation and/or destruction of the environment (eg graffiti on the engravings, spoilage of springs, denudation of grassland, erosion, effects of feral animals)
• **discuss** and **report** on how you think the site could be best protected for future generations.

Research the routes taken by the explorers, Eyre and Frome, through the Mid North, using information from a library about early Australian explorers. Plot their routes on a regional map of the Mid North. *The Atlas of South Australia* (Griffin 1986) is a good starting point.

Try to **imagine** what Ngadjuri people might have observed at abandoned explorers' campsites. What might young adults have thought compared to the elders at that time?

Find out if there are ways that Ngadjuri place names or interpretative signs could help contribute to better understanding in a particular part of Ngadjuri country, remembering that consultation would need to occur at a later stage with the Ngadjuri Walpa Juri Lands and Heritage Association.

Visit a local museum and **evaluate** information about Aboriginal people to consider if information could be brought up to date.

Invite Ngadjuri descendants to speak in schools or at community events or to be involved in excursions to places of cultural significance.

On a map of the Mid North, **identify** all the places mentioned in the chapters about Ngadjuri history, placing a name, date and sentence about what happened at each place on your map.

Read through the primary documents (ie those written by people at the time) and answer the following questions:
• How are Aboriginal people presented?
• How do the station owners see themselves?
• Why would the two groups of people come into contact?

Select a particular incident from the chapter describing history from 1840s – 1850s and describe each person's role and emotions at the time.

Read one of the events discussed in the text. **Imagine** you are a Ngadjuri person and retell the story in your own words and from your perspective.

You work for *The Australian* newspaper and have been sent to the Mid North to write a report concerning one of the incidents which has occurred. **Write** an unbiased account of one of the events.

List valued skills and knowledge that you have learnt from elders and grandparents, or would have if you had the opportunity.

Record your family's stories. Advice is available from the Oral History Unit of the State Library.

Research and **write** up your own family tree with a map showing links to different parts of Australia and the world.

Research how many countries and cultures can you count in your heritage if you go back several generations. **Chart** them on a map of the world.

Travel back to places relevant to your family history or arrange to take some other people to their ancestral places if they would like to and are otherwise unable to. **Make** a photographic and written record of the trip.

Senior years

Senior years 10-12 Society and environment: Cultures
Key idea: *Students research and critically analyse issues affecting their own, as well as other societies' cultures. They do this through listening to speakers, planning and conducting interviews and social surveys, and using other methods of inquiry involving members of particular groups and institutions in society*. .SACSA p 324

Outcome 5.8 At Standard 5, towards the end of Year 10, the student: *Identifies and analyses complex social, cultural and environmental issues and strategies, including self-management and land protection, that are important to local and other Aboriginal peoples today.* .SACSA p 325

Obtain information for overseas or interstate tourists wanting to travel in Ngadjuri country such as maps and tourist brochures, and then **critically analyse** them for authenticity and valuing of Ngadjuri history and culture. Information providers may include Tourism SA and the RAA. **Design and make** a brochure about Ngadjuri heritage in the Mid North which provides accurate, authentic information for a specific audience, based on need shown by market research.

Read the accounts of the Mount Bryan massacre and then:
• **identify** the contradictions between the accounts
• **classify** sources used by the Protector
• **analyse** what the reports tell us about attitudes of the graziers to justice available to Aboriginal people on the frontier.

Europeans have introduced land management practices which have made dramatic changes to the environment that Aboriginal people had sustained for thousands of years. **Consider** the sustainability of current land practices in horticulture, sheep and cattle grazing. Present findings to a relevant audience.

Research and **describe** land management issues and strategies in place to deal with feral animals, introduced weeds (including escaped pasture plants) and rising salt levels. Present findings to a relevant audience.

Summarise what the articles on page 103, taken from one local newspaper in the Mid North, tell us of European attitudes towards the Aboriginal people at the beginning of the 20th century. **Rewrite** one of the articles from what you consider could be a Ngadjuri perspective.

Look into unpublished family histories or anecdotes, for references to Aboriginal people in the Mid North and consider passing on this information to the authors for possible future publications. See details in the Introduction.

Locate on a map, remnant patches of native vegetation including national parks and privately owned native vegetation heritage agreement properties. **List** reasons why it is important to retain these. Consider how governments can encourage more education about the preservation and protection of native vegetation, including traditional food plants and habitats for native birds and animals.