Jointly developed by World Vision Australia and the Primary English Teaching Association Australia

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Indigenous peoples: Junior Secondary English, Year 8

Ways of being

This unit of work, *Ways of being*, allows students to explore ideas of cultural identity — specifically Aboriginal identity — and belonging, and how these are embedded in language.

Texts used are Aboriginal English resources, Indigenous poetry and rap, the books *My Girragundji* and *The Binna Binna Man* by Meme McDonald and Boori Monty Pryor, and Aboriginal storytelling in a range of media and forms.

Focus

This unit provides opportunities to explore the ideas that:

- Aboriginal English is a valid, expressive and potent statement of Aboriginal identity
- cultural identity is strongly expressed and developed through shared language and stories
- maintaining cultural identity is very important to Indigenous peoples
- Indigenous culture does not have to be seen as either 'traditional' or 'contemporary', that 'old ways' can be expressed in new ways.

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Australian Curriculum: English

The general capabilities emphasised in the unit of work *Ways of being* are literacy, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability and intercultural understanding. This unit addresses the cross-curriculum priority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

The Australian Curriculum: English is built around the three interrelated strands of Language, Literature and Literacy. This unit of work has an emphasis on creative work and the strands of Language and Literature.

Content

Students will be provided opportunities through the activities to engage with aspects of the following content descriptions.

Language **Language variation and change**	Understand the influence and impact that the English language has had on other languages or dialects and how English has been influenced in return (ACELA1540)
Language for interaction	Understand how conventions of speech adopted by communities influence the identities of people in those communities (ACELA1541)
Literature **Literature and context**	Explore the interconnectedness of Country and Place, People, Identity and Culture in texts including those by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors (ACELT1806)
Responding to literature	Discuss aspects of texts, for example their aesthetic and social value, using relevant and appropriate metalanguage (ACELT1803)

Creating literature	Experiment with text structures and language features and their effects in creating literary texts, for example using rhythm, sound effects, monologue, layout, navigation and colour (ACELT1805)
Literacy **Interacting with others**	Identify and discuss main ideas, concepts and points of view in spoken texts to evaluate qualities, for example the strength of an argument or the lyrical power of a poetic rendition (ACELY1719)

NSW 7–10 English syllabus

Syllabus outcomes	Students learn to	Students learn about
OUTCOME 1: A student responds to and composes texts for understanding, interpretation, critical analysis and pleasure	1.1 respond to imaginative, factual and critical texts, including the required range of texts, through wide and close listening, reading and viewing 1.3 compose imaginative, factual and critical texts for different purposes, audiences and contexts 1.9 demonstrate understanding of the complexity of meaning in texts	
OUTCOME 3: A student responds to and composes texts in different technologies	3.2 respond critically and imaginatively to texts in a range of technologies, including video, computers, print and handwriting	

Syllabus outcomes	Students learn to	Students learn about
OUTCOME 4: A student uses and describes language forms and features, and structures of texts appropriate to different purposes, audiences and contexts		4.7 the effectiveness of specific language forms and features and structures of texts for different purposes, audiences and contexts and for specific modes and mediums 4.12 Aboriginal English as a valid and culturally accepted variation of expression
OUTCOME 5: A student makes informed language choices to shape meaning with accuracy, clarity and coherence	5.1 express considered points of view in speech or writing, accurately and coherently and with confidence and fluency in rehearsed, unrehearsed and impromptu situations	5.9 the ways in which purpose, audience and context affect a composer's choices of content, language forms and features and structures of texts
OUTCOME 6: A student draws on information, experience and ideas to imaginatively and interpretively respond to and compose texts	6.3 explore real and imagined (including virtual) worlds through close and wide engagement with texts 6.5 identify the ways characters, situations and concerns in texts connect to students' own experiences, thoughts and feelings	
OUTCOME 8: A student makes connections between and among texts	8.1 Identify, compare and describe the connections between spoken, written and visual texts with similar subject matter, such as a book and its film adaptation or various descriptions of an incident	
OUTCOME 10: A student identifies, considers and appreciates cultural expression in texts	10.1 recognise and consider cultural factors, including cultural background and perspective, when	

Syllabus outcomes	Students learn to	Students learn about
	responding to and composing texts 10.2 identify and explore the ways different cultures, cultural stories and icons, including Australian images and significant Australians, including Aboriginal Australians, are depicted in texts 10.3 identify and describe cultural expressions in texts	

Teaching & learning activities

1. Introduce the unit with the idea that naming something is a powerful event

Note that this unit is written for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Teachers should activate students' background and cultural knowledge and also take into account local cultural sensitivities and adjust the material accordingly.

As a class, view the opening scene of *Barbekueria*[1] to introduce the concept of naming and language and relations between first and settler nations.

Aboriginal languages

Students may have absorbed many Aboriginal words by living in Australia, but have they heard an Aboriginal language spoken? What does it mean to be able to speak in language? Here an elder from the Kimberly (WA) talks about his life and relationship to place, in Karajarri with subtitles (1:25min). View a video in which an elder from the Kimberly (WA) talks about his life and relationship

[1] YouTube video of Barbekueria: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHK308_MTiU.

to place, in Karajarri language, with subtitles, in Language Stories — Mijil Mil Mia.[2]

What does it mean to lose the ability to speak in language? Reviving local Aboriginal languages helps revitalise culture and strengthen Aboriginal identity.

Read the following recounts from interviews with contemporary Aboriginal women.

Rebekah Torrens

I am Rebekah Torrens and I'm from the Bandjalung (Tabulam), Gamillaroi (Tingha) and Yagel nations (near Yamba). I've just finished training as a primary school teacher. I think education is the key to help plant seeds so that young Aboriginal people would know that they can become anything — doctors, pilots, politicians, musicians — anything!

I grew up in a little town in northern NSW called Tabulam. My dad worked on a mine and my mum cleaned houses. 80 per cent of the kids at the school were Koori kids. I grew up with my cousins and I thought my family would go with me into the wider world. There was great security and comfort and safety with my family in that little community.

Every weekend we would all go off hunting for witchety grubs ('jubals') and Mum would make Johnny Cakes (big scones). We'd make a small fire on the sand by the Clarence River and cook up the witchety grubs with a little bit of salt and put them on the Johnny Cakes. They were great! We would also dive for turtles ('bingings') and cook them on the fire too.

Racism in Tabulam meant that the 'black fellas' used to get served last in the shop. Uncle Percy used to tell the story of when the shopkeeper finally got around to serving him. He said, 'OK Percy, now what do you want?' Uncle Percy replied, 'Give me that tin of white paint and I'll tip it over me so I might get served a bit quicker!'

I'm both angry and sad that we have lost much of our Bandjalung language. Until the 1970s, my elders were afraid to pass on the language and speak it openly because they were scared of being taken away from the family. Today, I am trying to learn as much as I can and there are lots who try to keep the language alive. I'd like to be able to teach my grandkids our language.

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[2] YouTube video Language Stories — Mijil Mil Mia: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AvCaX2sfjI.

Evie Willie

My name is Evie Willie. I am 20 years old and come from the Wiradjuri nation. My mum is Aboriginal and my dad is from Vanuatu.

As a young person growing up on an Aboriginal mission settlement about seven kilometres outside Wellington in NSW, I grew up on the Macquarie River in Wiradjuri country and I spent a lot of time with my cousins swimming in the river, swinging off ropes and catching fish. My mum kept me very grounded and was a very stable influence in my life.

However, there were all sorts of negative stereotypes and barriers of 'shame' in my community. A lot of kids in our community felt degraded because they were called names and this just pushed me to prove a point. It doesn't matter what colour your skin is, it doesn't matter what race or ethnic group a person has, all people have the right to be treated with respect.

I had some good leadership opportunities at Wellington High School and so now I'm keen to help young Aboriginal kids realise they are capable and need not follow negative stereotypes. I work in Sydney now and play music and sing.

I'd like Australians to learn about the importance of our land and our ancestors and the history of the country.

I don't know much about my language and I wish I knew it better. It is something I am trying to learn more about. Our people are proud and strong and able to do whatever they want.

Bringing languages back to life

As an independent listening activity, have students listen to the program Holding our Tongues[3], for the stories of three different Aboriginal nations whose languages were declared extinct last century, and are being brought back to life using the colonial historical record.

[3] Link to *Awaye!* page for 'Holding our Tongues', awaiting restoration website for access to audio file of the program … http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/awaye/holding-our-tongues/3671334.

Online dictionaries and language resources, such as *Dharug Dalung*[4], *Dharawal language*[5] and the Sydney Aboriginal Languages and Computing site[6], help to revitalise culture and strengthen Aboriginal identity. Depending on computer availability, students in pairs or groups explore, listen to and pronounce words using the *Dharug Dalung* website.

Other online Aboriginal language dictionaries include the Kamilaroi/Gamilaraay Dictionary[7] (northern NSW) and Wagiman[8] online dictionary (Northern Territory). The Aboriginal Languages of Australia[9] website also has a great number of relevant links.

2. Aboriginal loan words into English

Standard Australian English (SAE) includes many loan words and place names from Australian Aboriginal languages, and Aboriginal English has borrowed and transformed English words, often introducing concepts from Aboriginal cultures to their meaning.

A loan word is a word that has been 'borrowed' from another language and absorbed into English to enrich it. English speakers are so familiar with loan words they often have no idea of their origin. Begin with the word 'tattoo', which came into English in the 18th century from Polynesian 'tatau', to discuss the concept of loanwords and the cultural associations they can carry with them. The practice of illustrating skin was taken to Europe by sailors along with the word (though Europeans also tattooed in ancient times). Polynesian people such as Maoris and Tahitians, and other Indigenous peoples, have long been known for tattooing their bodies. Being of European descent and having tattoos once connoted membership of a tough subculture, or rebellion, but tattooing is now part of popular culture. Tattooing is thus both a traditional Indigenous practice and a contemporary Western practice inherited from Indigenous cultures.

Shared reading (interactive whiteboard) and discussion

Thinking back to the film *Barbekueria*, share-read and discuss the borrowing of the word 'kangaroo'[10] and confusions surrounding it in a short 250-word recount from the Australian National Dictionary Centre.

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[4] Dharug language dictionary: http://www.dharug.dalang.com.au/.
[5] Dharawal language website: http://www.dharawal.dalang.com.au/
[6] Sydney Aboriginal Languages Computing site: http://www.salc.org.au/index.php?option=com_cohttp://www.salc.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=58&Itemid=102ntent&view=category&layout=blog&id=58&Itemid=102
[7] Kamilaroi/Gamilaraay Dictionary: http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVLPages/AborigPages/LANG/GAMDICT/GAMDICTF.HTM.
[8] Wagiman online dictionary: http://sydney.edu.au/arts/linguistics/research/wagiman/dict/dict.html.
[9] Aboriginal Languages of Australia website: http://www.dnathan.com/VL
[10] http://andc.anu.edu.au/resources/for-schools/classroom-topics/aboriginal-borrowings.

Research activities

What words do you think we have in Australian English that we have borrowed from other languages, including Aboriginal languages?

Ask students if they can think of or know of any Aboriginal loan words (below) in Australian English. On the whiteboard, using the word 'goanna' which may also sound Aboriginal but is not, demonstrate how a Google search term of 'etymology' and the research word can obtain good results.

Aboriginal loan words

Aboriginal loan words in Australian English come from many different languages. Mainland Aboriginal languages come from a common ancestral language. It is estimated that 270 Aboriginal languages and 600 Aboriginal dialects (about five languages in Tasmania)[11] existed before 1788. In 2004 only 145 Indigenous languages were still spoken, with 110 of them endangered and only 60 used as a first language. Only 804 people still speak an Aboriginal language in NSW[12] (localise this information to your state or territory).

Invite students to use the web to identify and research what types of words have been borrowed from Aboriginal languages, such as nouns referring to native animals, plants, geological features and places.

Mix up the following list of loan words from their origins. Have students work in small groups to try to correctly match them.

Loan word	Origin
Verandah	Malayalam – India
Cockatoo	Malay
Emu	Portuguese or Arabic
Gong	Malay

[11] S. Fryer-Smith (2002) *Aboriginal Benchbook for Western Australian Courts*, Chapter 2: Aspects of Traditional Aboriginal Australia, 2.3.3 Connection with land, Australian Institute of Judicial Administration, Melbourne: http://www.aija.org.au/online/ICABenchbook/BenchbookChapter2.pdf.

[12] Reference for Aboriginal languages in NSW: http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/language/.

Loan word	Origin
Bamboo	Malay
Tycoon	Japanese
Moccasin	Algonquian — an American Indian language
Chipmunk	Algonquian — an American Indian language
Anorak	Greenlandic Inuit
Wallaby	Dharuk/Darug — an Australian Aboriginal language, NSW
Waratah	Dharuk/Darug — an Australian Aboriginal language, NSW
Koala	Dharuk/Darug — an Australian Aboriginal language, NSW
Budgerigar	Kamileroi — an Australian Aboriginal language, NSW
Galah	Yuwaalaraay — an Australian Aboriginal language, NSW
Kookaburra	Wiradhuri — an Australian Aboriginal language, NSW
Billabong	Wiradhuri — an Australian Aboriginal language, NSW
Jarrah	Nyungar — an Australian Aboriginal language, WA
Numbat	Nyungar — an Australian Aboriginal language, WA
Yakka (hard work)	Yagara — an Australian Aboriginal language, Qld
Bung (broken, dead)	Yagara — an Australian Aboriginal language, Qld

With student input, correctly match the above words. Students may know the Australian Aboriginal words but be unable to match them to their language, and this is a prompt to realise how many different Indigenous languages exist in Australia.

Do students know of names of Aboriginal languages and where they are spoken? Have students use an Indigenous language map[13] to identify five Aboriginal languages, including the language of their own area. Most Aboriginal loan words are from the Darug (Dharuk or Dharug) language around Sydney. Why do students think this is? (Place of first white settlement.) Look at this list of loan words from Darug.

[13] ABC interactive version of Horton's map of Indigenous languages: http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/map/

Loan words from Darug		
bettong (1802)	gibber (1790)	paddymelon (1802)
boobook (1790)	gunyah (1803)	potoroo (1789)
boomerang (1790)	koala (1798)	waddy (1790)
burrawang (1790)	koradji (1793)	wallaby (1798)
corroboree (1790)	kurrajong (1801)	wallaroo (1826)
dingo (1789)	nulla-nulla (1790)	woomera (1793)
geebung (1790)	**Source:** Australian National Dictionary Centre[14]	

William Dawes and Patyegarang

While language lives on in loan words, complexity and world-view is reduced, and recording or reducing language is never an impartial process. Introduce students to the notebooks of William Dawes[15] and the role of 15-year-old Patyegarang in helping keep Darug language alive.

Patyegarang was just 15 when she roamed Sydney with First Fleet officer William Dawes, teaching Dawes Darug while he recorded conversational snatches in his notebooks. Now digitised, the notebooks are a rich resource for Darug language revival.

Students might form pairs to discuss what it would be like to show an older stranger from a foreign culture around their local area so that the person might learn about their language and culture. Imagine then if what they were to relay, in gestures and words, became the only extensive record of that language in existence! Is what Dawes recorded accurate or is it 'kangaroo' and 'Barbekueria'?

Extension activity

As an extension activity, have students look through Dawes's online notebooks[16], not as a dictionary or glossary but as the fragments from conversations of a teenage girl from long ago. Choose a single page and have students write a coherent conversation or description of what is happening

[14] ANDC, as above: http://andc.anu.edu.au/australian-words/vocabulary/borrowings-from-australian-aboriginal-languages.
[15] Dawes's online notebooks: http://www.williamdawes.org/ms/msview.php?image-id=book-b-front-cover.
[16] Dawes's online notebooks: http://www.williamdawes.org/ms/msview.php?image-id=book-b-front-cover.

that justifies this particular record — that fills out the context for the page.

3. Aboriginal English in cultural identity and in fiction

Teacher background

Most Australian Aboriginal people cannot speak Aboriginal languages, and many speak Aboriginal English, of which there are many varieties but also common features. As linguist Diana Eades writes, 'In many subtle ways Aboriginal English is a powerful vehicle for the expression of Aboriginal identity'.[17]

The accent is distinctive. For example, Aboriginal languages did not have an 'h' sound so the 'h' sound is often left off word beginnings.

While Aboriginal languages and links to land may be lost, particularly for urban people, Aboriginal English shows an enduring link to Aboriginal culture — the accents, residual grammatical structures, concepts and words from Aboriginal languages are still in use.

The grammatical structure of Aboriginal languages is often transposed onto English. Aboriginal English is not 'bad English', just a different kind of English with its own grammatical rules. It is a vivid and expressive spoken form; as a colloquial form of English it is not often used in writing.

Activity: listening and reading

Listen to the accents of the Wilcannia Mob, five young boys from far west NSW, in the rap 'Down River'[18]. Also hand out the lyrics to refer to while listening. Notice how the representation of the dropped 'h' accent is not found in the lyrics. This is usually the case in lyrics of songs and transcripts of speech.

Listening, viewing and discussion

View a video in which a woman from the Kimberleys (WA) gives a recount[19] of her childhood in both Aboriginal English and Karajari language. Students may notice how strongly the accent of her Aboriginal language can be heard in her Aboriginal English. Her Aboriginal English is 'heavier' than the boys' 'lighter' Aboriginal English. What is the main grammatical feature of her Aboriginal English?

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[17] Diana Eades, 'Language Varieties: Aboriginal English' (n.d.): http://www.hawaii.edu/satocenter/langnet/definitions/aboriginal.html.
[18] Wilcannia Mob 'Down River' rap: http://downriver.com.au/music-and-video/.
[19] Language Stories: Baby – Karajari language – Wittadong: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPn100Zt-vg.

The vocabulary of Aboriginal English has four types of words:

Type	Examples
Words from Aboriginal languages	migaloo
Old-fashioned English words no longer or little used in standard Australian English, or words with slightly different pronunciations	gammon and with slightly different pronunciations; for example, fellow, pronounced fella, feller, fullah, fulla or balla
Words borrowed into Aboriginal languages from English and completely transformed through very different pronunciations	gubbah, balanda, walypala, wajala
English words with a different meaning in Aboriginal English, often related to an Aboriginal concept	country, shame

Have students share and discuss word meanings. As can be seen from Aboriginal English definitions of 'country' and 'shame' in the *Macquarie Dictionary*, standard Australian English speakers could be confused by Aboriginal English, when meanings are quite different. Use the online *Macquarie Dictionary*[20] to find the Aboriginal English meaning of words (if the school has no subscription, a fortnight's free trial is available, or use copies of the book). Many Aboriginal English words are in the *Macquarie Dictionary* but many are not, as vocabularies are very localised.[21] Students should add the definitions to their Aboriginal English word bank.

Aboriginal English in fiction

My Girragundji and its sequel *The Binna Binna Man* are written in Aboriginal English, usually a spoken language. The books are co-written by Boori Monty Pryor, from the Kunggandji and Birri-gubba people, North Queensland, and Meme McDonald, a Migaloo. The boy narrator is 'yarning up'. He is telling us a story in his colloquial speech of North Queensland Aboriginal English.

The novels have no glossary; first word usage often has the English equivalent beside it, otherwise students might gain from working out the meaning from the context, adding meanings to their own

[20] Macquarie online dictionary: http://www.macquariedictionary.com.au.

[21] Other useful resources with definitions and glossaries are: R. Dixon, W. Ramson and M. Thomas (1990) *Australian Aboriginal Words in English: Their origin and meaning*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne; J.M. Arthur (1996) *Aboriginal English*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne; NSW Department of Community Services, *Working with Aboriginal People and Communities: A practice resource* (.pdf 1.1 MB): http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswr/_assets/main/documents/working_with_aboriginal.pdf; The Aboriginal Languages section of the Creative Spirits website: http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/language/.

word banks, then using The *Binna Binna Man* word bank[22] online to check definitions. Use another research and word bank activity to build understanding of some common cultural concepts in Aboriginal English.

Research and word bank activity

As can be seen from Aboriginal English definitions of 'country' and 'shame' in the Macquarie Dictionary, standard Australian English speakers could be confused by Aboriginal English, when meanings are quite different.

Aboriginal English also contains cultural concepts that can be misunderstood by standard Australian English speakers; for example, calling a cousin 'sis' or 'sister' or 'bro' or 'brother' indicates an Aboriginal concept of family relationships. In most Aboriginal kinship systems, your mother's sisters are also considered a mother to you, your father's brothers are considered a father to you, and their children are considered your siblings. Your cousins are the children of your mother's brother (your uncle) and your father's sister (your aunt), while all community members your own age, including friends, might be referred to as 'cuz' and older community members as 'auntie' or 'uncle'.

Have students look up 'sister', 'cousin sister', 'brother', 'cousin brother', 'cuz', 'auntie' (Aboriginal English spelling of 'aunty') and 'uncle' in the Macquarie Dictionary and record the Aboriginal English definitions and the variations of these words in their word banks.

The Binna Binna Man and *My Girragundji* both feature what might be described as bunyips (but are called 'quinkins' in North Queensland). The bunyip is a creature occurring in various forms and names in storytelling in Aboriginal cultures across Australia.

Writing and discussion

Read about the quinkin in *The Binna Binna Man* (pages 9–10). Using the text, have students write three sentences describing the Binna Binna man.

For example, 'The Binna Binna man is hairy, with long ears that drag along the ground. Before you see him, you'll smell him then hear the rattling of chains. He can heal you, but if you get on the wrong side of him you might die.'

Listening and viewing as background for *The Binna Binna Man*

[22] *The Binna Binna Man* Word Bank: http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/raps/binna04/binnawds.htm.

The National Library of Australia has a Bunyip[23] website (which requires Flash). As a point of discussion, follow links from 'Evidence' (on the first screen, bottom right) to 'Popular Culture' — illustrating how 'the bunyip crosses over into white folklore'.

Next on the Bunyip site, under 'Aboriginal Stories' (on the first screen, bottom left), listen to 'The Bunyee Bunyees' narrated by a woman from the Aboriginal community in Walgett, NSW. The text 'translated' to standard Australian English is on the page, and the difference between them can be a point of discussion.

I, Bunyip[24] is physical theatre for children combining acting, puppetry, visual effects and multimedia. On the website the artistic director, Scott Wright, comments that, 'Even today, the creatures that feature in *I, Bunyip* are feared and revered in Aboriginal communities … [and] … These stories are part of people's lives, the fabric of their communities and their identity.'

View the video clip *I, Bunyip* to discuss it. Did students know there were so many different kinds of 'bunyip' in different Aboriginal cultures? It is argued that stories of bunyips stopped colonial children wandering off into the bush. Do students agree that creatures of European folklore don't suit the Australian landscape quite so well as those from Aboriginal stories?

Reading *The Binna Binna Man*

Have students now begin independently reading *The Binna Binna Man* and making responses in a reading journal, adding to their word bank as they go.

4. Aboriginal stories and connection to country

Dreaming stories are specific to particular places and people. A sense of the Aboriginal concept of 'country' as 'place of belonging' and the relationship of stories to 'country' can be gained from Aboriginal people telling and explaining traditional stories.

Watch 'Talking Country — Kija Story'[25], a creation story told in Kija language and filmed on location at China Wall, near Halls Creek, WA.

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[23] Bunyip website at the National Library of Australia: http://www.nla.gov.au/exhibitions/bunyips/flash-site/index-flash.html.
[24] *I, Bunyip* website, with background and video: http://www.erth.com.au/#/PERFORMANCE/I_BUNYIP.
[25] 'Talking Country — Kija Story': http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Lp4L88XiXY&feature=related.

'Old people' is Aboriginal English for 'ancestors' but also means elderly members of the community; this double meaning captures the widespread Aboriginal concept that the ancestors are still influencing and guiding the living community.

Do students think China Wall looks like (kangaroo) blood and fat mixed together? Having heard the creation story for China Wall, which the elder was told when she was a child, might they feel more connected to it if they visited it?

The Kija elder describes it as 'my story' — what might she mean by 'my story'? Have students go online, using information from the Australian Museum[26] to answer these questions in their own words:

- **What does custodianship of Dreaming stories mean?**
- **Who can listen to secret or sacred stories?**

Watch the news story 'Dreamtime story reaches younger generations'[27] (1:45min) about elders in a community in Arnhem Land who collaborated to make an animated film as a way for young people to connect with traditional stories and language.

The filmmakers make no apology for graphic imagery in the film. Discuss what purpose graphic imagery might serve in telling a traditional story.

Have students listen to two stories from NSW and explanations of the stories. Toonkoo and Ngaardi[28] is told by Warren Foster from Wallaga Lake and the Yuin-Monaro people, and Eaglehawk and Crow[29] is told by Aunty Beryl Carmichael from Ngiyaampaa country, western NSW. Both Warren Foster[30] and Aunty Beryl[31] have an explanation as to why the stories are told.

Yarning circles

Divide the class into gendered groups; get them to sit in a 'yarning circle'. Have males discuss what Yuin-Monaro children would traditionally learn about country and proper behaviour from the story 'Toonkoo and Ngaardi', and females discuss Ngiyaampaa children. Groups then share their ideas with the class.

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[26] Australian Museum information page: http://australianmuseum.net.au/Stories-of-the-Dreaming-General-Information.
[27] ABC news item 'Dreamtime story reaches younger generations': http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-10-23/dreamtime-story-reaches-younger-generations/3596300.
[28] Warren Foster retelling 'Toonkoo and Ngaardi' on the Australian Museum site: http://australianmuseum.net.au/movie/Toonkoo-and-Ngaardi.
[29] Aunty Beryl Carmichael retelling 'Eaglehawk and Crow' on the Australian Museum site: http://australianmuseum.net.au/movie/Eaglehawk-and-Crow.
[30] Warren Foster on why stories are told: http://australianmuseum.net.au/movie/Why-the-stories-are-told.
[31] Aunty Beryl Carmichael on why stories are told: http://australianmuseum.net.au/movie/Why-the-stories-are-told-Aunty-Beryl.

Thinking around the concept of 'country'

As the basis for an individual writing activity, have students choose the 'parental' country to which they feel most connected. Some may only know it through stories, or may not have been there for a long time. Have students write a maximum of one page about the ways they feel connected to this country and responsible for it. What sorts of things would make them feel sorry for their country? For example, if a river they loved was dammed, a beloved old building was destroyed, a favourite bird became extinct, or a war broke out.

Acknowledgment of Country

Introduce the Acknowledgment of Country as a way that all people can show respect for Aboriginal culture and heritage and the ongoing relationship the traditional custodians have with the land.

At the beginning of a meeting or function, a chair or speaker begins by acknowledging that the meeting is taking place in the country of the traditional custodians. Where the name of the traditional custodians is known, it is specifically used. Where it is not known, a general acknowledgment is given.

Examples of Acknowledgment of Country:

Example 1

I would like to show my respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Land, of Elders past and present, on which this meeting takes place.

Example 2

I would like to acknowledge the _____ people who are the traditional custodians of this Land. I would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present of the_____ Nation and extend that respect to other Aboriginals present.

Have students identify the purpose or role of these spoken texts at meetings. What do the phrases 'show my respect' or 'pay my respect' mean? What does it mean for people to 'acknowledge the traditional custodians' or 'acknowledge the Yuin people who are the traditional custodians of this land'? What is the significance of the language of 'Elders past and present'?

Reading *My Girragundji* and *The Binna Binna Man* and the idea of

deep listening

In shared reading, read the section (pages 22–23) in *My Girragundji* about when the frog ('A beautiful little Girragundji') arrives, sent by the boy's ancestors to protect him. Explain that in *The Binna Binna Man*, the frog has died, but his reassuring voice can still be heard if the boy listens hard.

Is there a natural place where students feel they belong or a living creature (such as the boy's girragundji) or plant or element that they connect to? Have them write one or two paragraphs to describe the place, creature or element and their feelings towards it. Students might afterward discuss how they have advanced their concept of 'country'.

Activity: Viewing and listening

Watch the first 3 minutes and 15 seconds of *Who Do You Think You Are?* Catherine Freeman[32]. In 'the zone', the Olympic athlete connects to an inner energy powered partly by a sense of her ancestors. Do students ever have the feeling of an inner, guiding strength? This kind of inner voice is explored in *My Girragundji* and *The Binna Binna Man*.

In shared reading, read the section in *My Girragundji* in which thinking about the gundji (green frog) helps the boy use his anger positively (page 36), and sections in *The Binna Binna Man* in which the boy also needs to hang on to the girragundji's voice because he is grieving and needs inner strength, not just because he is scared of the quinkin (page 13), and where the inner voice tries to guide the boy and keeps him on track (page 56).

In the beginning of *The Binna Binna Man*, we learnt what 'binna' means. Ears. What do you do with ears? — Listen. 'Deep listening', silence and thinking time is of cultural importance in traditional Aboriginal communication. Rather than responding immediately, silence provides a chance for contemplation and should not be interrupted[33].

The Binna Binna man does literally have big ears. Do students think he may be wise? The boy blocks his ears to his inner voice. He stops thinking when he starts drinking; he had made up his mind as a child that he would not touch alcohol (page 60).

Is the Binna Binna man necessarily bad? Have students in individual reading return to the beginning of the novel and re-read pages 9–10. Find the quotation about his good side. 'They reckon the Binna Binna man can be good and heal you and stuff.'

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[32] *Who Do You Think You Are?* SBS TV: http://www.sbs.com.au/shows/whodoyouthinkyouare/episodes/detail/episode/86/season/1.
[33] http://www.hawaii.edu/satocenter/langnet/definitions/aboriginal.html.

Have students think about the link between deep listening, thinking and behaviour in the novel — not to respond to this, but to sit in silence to ponder. In individual reading, have students read the climactic chapter of *The Binna Binna Man* (pages 58–73), carefully considering all the references to voices, listening and blocking out listening and writing down the page numbers for the following references:

Reference to voice	Page
Whose voice does the boy realise the girragundji's is? 'That's her voice, my girragundji, that's me.'	
Where does the boy first start to realise this? 'Even Gundji's voice's gone quiet. Sometimes I wonder if it's me or her. Like me talking to me. Maybe I made her up. I don't know nothing, but. How could I be telling myself what to do?'	

Writing inner voices

The quinkin makes the boy listen to his inner voice: 'Be who you are.' What is the message here? Is the quinkin an ancestor guiding the boy?

For this activity, students must listen hard to their inner voice. What inner reserves have students drawn on when they needed to try really hard? Was there an inner voice or sense of a presence or inspiration from something or someone that pushed them on? Is there any message from family or handed down from ancestors through culture or family that could give inner strength? Students should ponder in silence for five minutes before trying to write down their thoughts.

The search for identity — 'old ways' versus new

On page 65 of *The Binna Binna Man* Shantell says, 'We got to find our own way now. Things are different for us. Them old way's gone.' Is this true?

Popeye, the boy's grandfather, objects to Garth's long hair but agrees it is fine when he is told that the 'young ones' are 'growing their hair to look like the ancestors, the old people'. Read the section on pages 15–16.

The Binna Binna Man ends with the young cousins becoming involved in the old ways. They listen to Popeye Bobby telling Dreaming stories. Discuss the idea that in the end the boy is a young one who will look out for the old ways. (References for this are from the second paragraph on page 85 to the end of the section on page 89 and the last paragraph pages 90–91.)

Texts to follow, including the previously viewed item 'Dreamtime story reaches younger generations', will help focus further discussion of how traditional Aboriginal concepts and stories can be presented in contemporary ways.
Display a quote on the whiteboard from the BBC radio documentary Australian Rap[34].

> ***'A lot of the stuff that was actually being done was from really young kids who were using hip-hop as a vehicle to rap about their own life stories and about their daily lives. Gradually this started to become accepted by Aboriginal elders who were initially very sceptical about hip-hop because they saw it very much as an American form. Once they saw some of the kids performing, they said, 'Hey this is not too far away from Aboriginal storytelling, maybe this is OK.'***

Listen to part of the documentary that the quote comes from (at around the 12-minute mark).

Reflection task: Individual responding, reading and writing

By now students have learnt a lot about the boy in *The Binna Binna Man*. Have students intensively study the novel to provide answers about the boy in *The Binna Binna Man* in response to the following 'Ways of being' questionnaire.

[34] BBC documentary of Australian rap: *Rapping Out Dreamtime Stories: A new outlet for Australian Aboriginal youth*: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b010y30r.

Identity map — ways of being

Where does the boy in *The Binna Binna Man* belong? Who does he belong to?

How does he know that something is real?

List some categories of the things he knows are real in this world.

From the following sets, select the land orientations the boy would feel most comfortable with:

- Saltwater / freshwater
- High ground / low ground
- Hills / plains / ridges / mountains / coast
- Open country / forest
- Wet / dry
- Red soil / black soil
- Sand / dirt / rock
- Warm / cool
- Red meat / white meat
- Fur / feathers / scales / fins
- Wood / rock / earth / wind / fire

Where are his ancestors from and how does he connect with them?

How is he accountable for maintaining relationships with ancestors, people and the environment? (What are his personal consequences for damaging these relationships?)

How will the knowledge he has learned in this life be passed on, and to whom?

What things in his life-world must change, and what things must always stay the same?

Source: 'Ways of Being' section of the 'Your Identity Map' questionnaire from the 8-Ways Wiki space CC BY-NC-SA[35].

[35] http://8ways.wikispaces.com/Aboriginal+Language+and+Pedagogy.

Assessment task — Individual writing

Have students consider their own cultural identity and sense of belonging by completing the 'Ways of being' section of the questionnaire.

Your identity map — Ways of being

Where do you belong? Who do you belong to?

How do you know that something is real?

List some categories of the things you know are real in this world.

From the following sets, select the land orientations you feel most comfortable with:

- Saltwater / freshwater
- High ground / low ground
- Hills / plains / ridges / mountains / coast
- Open country / forest
- Wet / dry
- Red soil / black soil
- Sand / dirt / rock
- Warm / cool
- Red meat / white meat
- Fur / feathers / scales / fins
- Wood / rock / earth / wind / fire

Where are your ancestors from and how do you connect with them?

How are you accountable for maintaining relationships with ancestors, people and the environment? (What are your personal consequences for damaging these relationships?)

How will the knowledge you have learned in this life be passed on, and to whom?

What things in your life-world must change, and what things must always stay the same?

Source: 'Ways of Being' section of the 'Your Identity Map' questionnaire from the 8-Ways Wiki space CC BY-NC-SA

Global citizenship in action

Consider consulting with and involving your local Aboriginal community, perhaps to invite a storyteller into the classroom. Approach your school's Aboriginal Education Officer or the nearest Aboriginal Cultural and Resource Centre for community contacts. Useful publications include *Working With Aboriginal Communities: A guide to Community Consultation and Protocols*[36] (.pdf 1.7 MB). The Black Book Directory[37] has contact details for Indigenous people and cultural organisations working in the arts and media.

World Vision Australia has good ideas on how schools can join in on NAIDOC Week[38]. Reconciliation Australia's Share Our Pride website is also a useful resource, with ideas for participation. Sites2See: Reconciliation[39] has a compilation of resources to get involved.

For the teacher

ABC Indigenous[40] has broadcast and community content. Students can interactively learn about the relationship of the Burarra people to their land and hear Burarra language and Aboriginal English at Burrara Gathering[41]. Read Aboriginal stories from astronomy[42]; find animated Dreamtime stories at Dust Echoes[43], or illustrated stories from the ABC's *awaye*[44]. Read an interview with Aboriginal Storyteller Pauline McLeod[45].

Find key resources on Australian Indigenous cultural heritage[46], or access the Indigenous

[36] *Working with Aboriginal Communities*: http://ab-ed.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/files/working-with-aboriginal-communities.pdf.
[37] The Black Book Directory: http://www.theblackbook.com.au/directory.asp.
[38] World Vision Australia: NAIDOC Week: http://www.worldvision.com.au/Issues/Indigenous_Australia/WhatIsOurResponse/NAIDOCWeek2011.aspx.
[39] Sites2See: Reconciliation: http://lrrpublic.cli.det.nsw.edu.au/lrrSecure/Cli/Download.aspx?resID=8325&v=1&preview=true.
[40] ABC Indigenous website: http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/your_voice/yourstories/default.htm.
[41] Burrara Gathering: http://www.nla.gov.au/exhibitions/bunyips/flash-site/index-flash.html.
[42] Questacon's Aboriginal stories arising from astronomy: http://www.questacon.edu.au/starlab/aboriginal_astronomy.html.
[43] The ABC website Dust Echoes: http://www.abc.net.au/dustechoes/.
[44] 'Sharing our stories' from ABC *awaye*: http://www.abc.net.au/rn/awaye/features/sharingourstories.
[45] Interview with Australian Aboriginal storyteller Pauline McLeod: http://www.australianstorytelling.org.au/txt/mcleod.php.
[46] The Australian Government website for Indigenous cultural heritage: http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/austn-indigenous-cultural-heritage.

Resources[47] section at Aussie Educator for extensive links. Learn more about embedding Aboriginal knowledge and perspectives into classroom practice using the 8ways framework[48].

[47] Aussie Educator Indigenous resources for teachers: http://www.aussieeducator.org.au/resources/teaching/indigenousresources.html.
[48] The 8ways framework for classroom practice: http://8ways.wikispaces.com/.