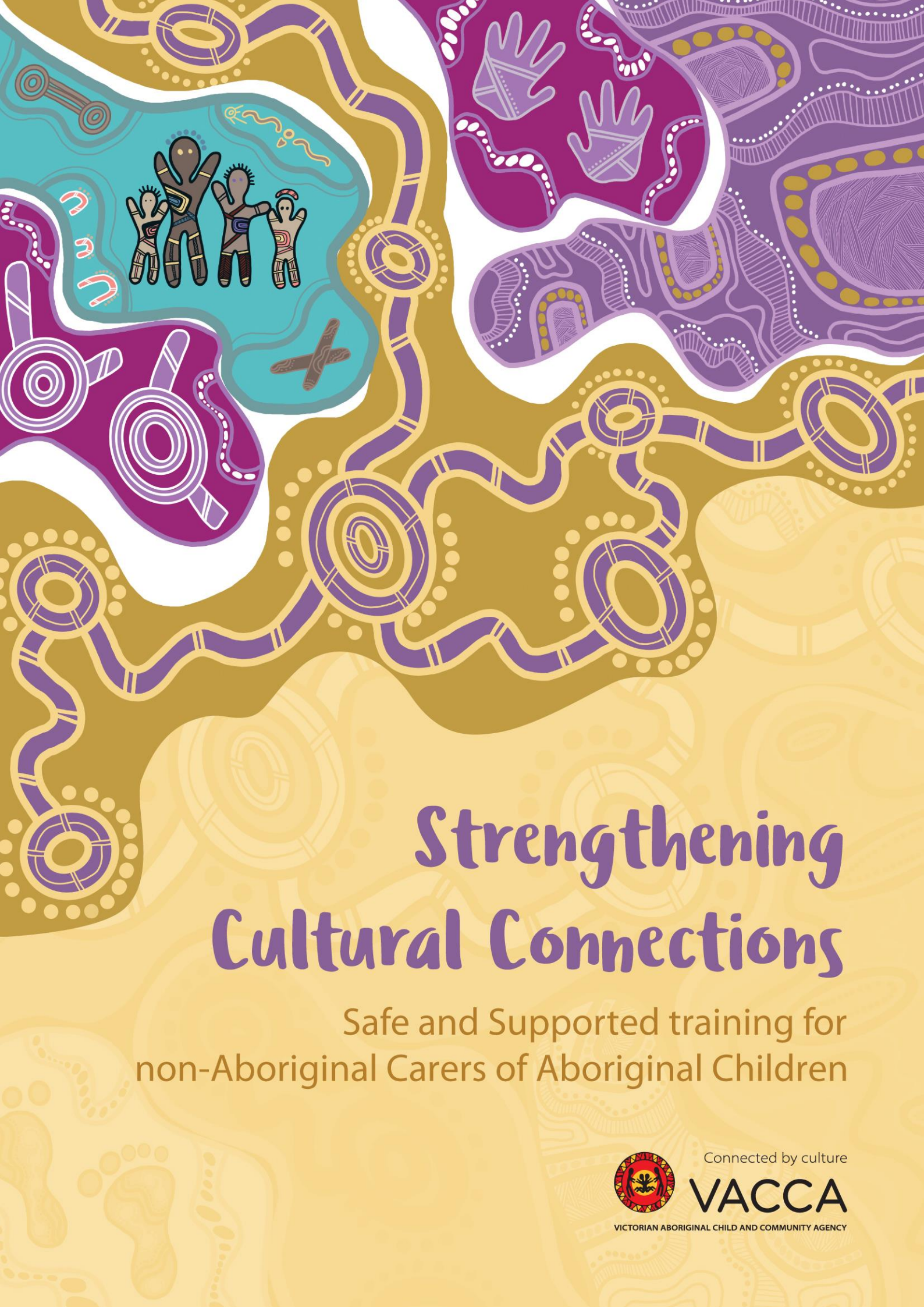




Strengthening Cultural Connections

Safe and Supported training for
non-Aboriginal Carers of Aboriginal Children



Connected by culture

VACCA

VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL CHILD AND COMMUNITY AGENCY

Strengthening Cultural Connections

Safe and Supported Training for Non-Indigenous carers
looking after Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
and young people in Victoria

Participant Workbook





Acknowledgement

The Victorian Aboriginal Child and Community Agency acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

We are committed to Aboriginal self-determination and supporting strong, safe, thriving Aboriginal communities and aim to ensure every individual is treated with dignity, honouring all cultural backgrounds, abilities, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities and spiritual beliefs.

Disclaimer / content trigger warning

This workbook and training may contain potential images, videos and/or recordings of deceased Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander People.

Some content within the workshop contains descriptions, depictions and discussions of various topics that may be triggering to some, including but not limited to, various types of violence, abuse and other topics relative to the Stolen Generations, colonisation and racism.





About the artwork

Artist: **Emma Bamblett** who has connections to Wemba Wemba, Gunditjmara, Ngadjonji and Taungurung.

Emma's artwork reflects the following:



Non-Aboriginal carers journey to learn and support cultural connections for Aboriginal children and young people and



Children's pride and identity in Cultural Connections

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INTRODUCTION QUIZ

TRUE OR FALSE

QUESTION 1

The black on the Aboriginal flag represents the nights sky?

TRUE OR FALSE (CIRCLE)



BLACK-

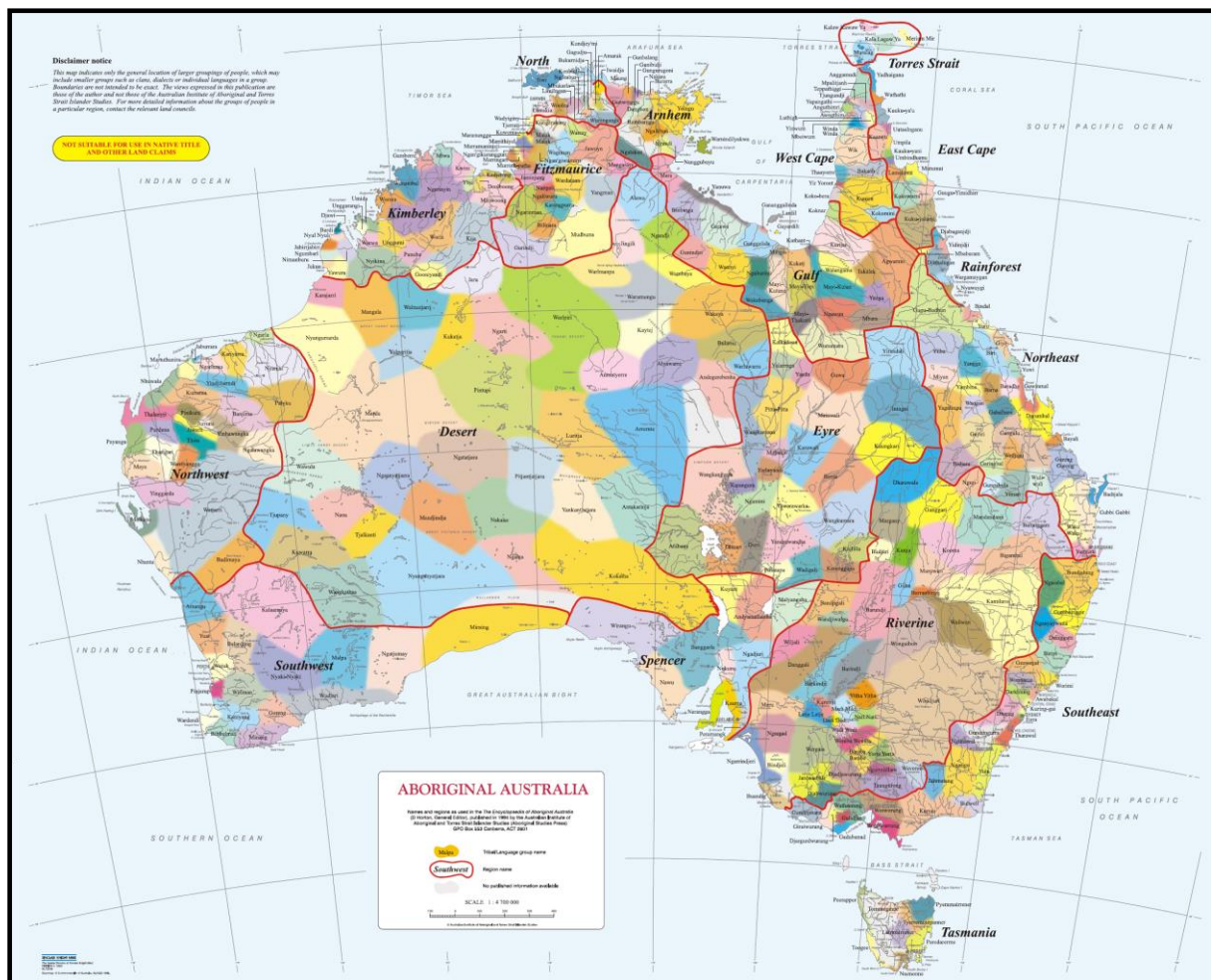
YELLOW-

RED-

QUESTION 2

The Aboriginal map of Australia is often compared to the map of Europe?

TRUE OR FALSE (CIRCLE)



QUESTION 3

The Green on the Torres Strait Islander flag represents the mainland of Australia and Papua New Guinea?

TRUE OR FALSE (CIRCLE)



GREEN-

BLACK-

BLUE-

WHITE-

CENTRAL SYMBOL-

STAR-

QUESTION 4

The Torres Strait Islands consists over 100 islands?

TRUE OR FALSE (CIRCLE)



The Torres Strait is made up of _____ islands, _____ of those are inhabited.

QUESTION 5

When an Aboriginal person chooses to identify as Murri, their mob is likely to be from South Australia?

TRUE OR FALSE (CIRCLE)

NT - _____ (Top End)

_____ (Central)

QLD - _____

NSW - _____

SW WA - _____

S SA - _____

VIC - _____

TAS - _____



Offensive Language

Historically there has been a range of terms used to describe Indigenous Australians, including those that attempted to classify according to percentage and skin colour. These are extremely offensive to Indigenous people and should never be used. Likewise, the nouns Aborigine or Aborigines or abbreviations such as Abo or ATSI should not be used.

Most appreciate collective term: First Nations
Commonly accepted individual identity terms: Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Koorie/Koori/Murri/Palawa/Nunga/Noongar/Yolngu-Anangu Traditional Owners/ Traditional Custodians
Less accepted terms (especially if an individual hasn't stated to be identified by these terms): Indigenous Original Inhabitants First Australians Blak

It's always best to **ASK FIRST.**

QUESTION 6

Any Aboriginal person can deliver a Welcome to Country?

TRUE OR FALSE (CIRCLE)



Welcome to Country & Acknowledgment of Country

A **Welcome to Country** is conducted by an _____ with the _____, of whose country you are on. This is a formal process that should be highly considered for all major events. This can include traditional customs like smoking ceremonies, dances and songlines.

An **Acknowledgement of Country** can be conducted by an _____ or _____. Acknowledging the local Aboriginal people as the Traditional Custodians is a mark of respect.

UNDERSTANDING CULTURE

Module One

Learning Objectives

- Strengthen your ability to define and identify key components of culture
- Learners will understand the processes of cultural development
- Understand the concept of cultural disconnection and its impact.

We want the people who care for us to understand what culture really means and all the things that make it special, like our stories, traditions and way of life.

We hope the people around us will see how culture grows and changes over time, so they can understand why it's so important to us and our family.

We want the people who care for us to learn about their own culture so they can understand the importance of cultural connection so they can help us feel proud of who we are and where we come from.

We need the people around us to know how it feels when we lose touch with our culture and how this can hurt us and our community, so they can help us stay connected.

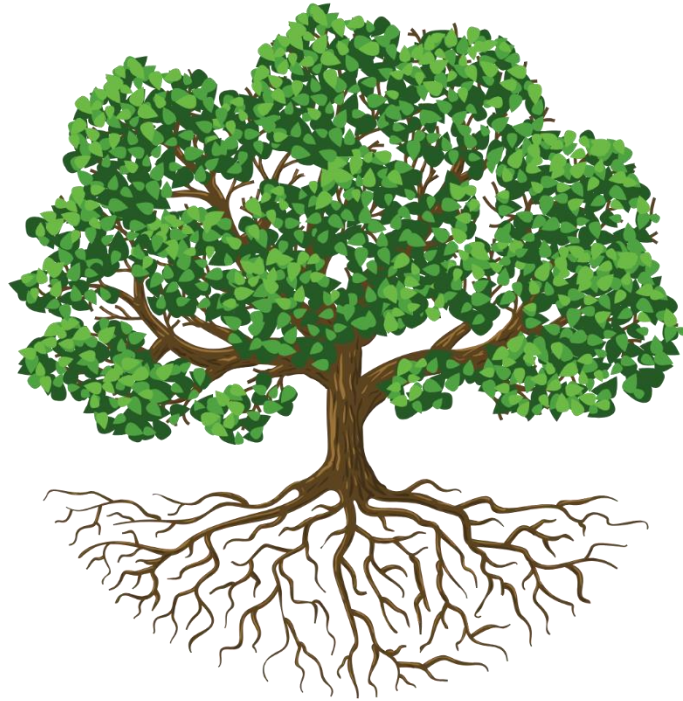
What is culture?

Definition:

Culture is the 'lens' through which we view the world. Culture is the learned and shared knowledge all groups use to guide their behaviour and interpret their experiences. It is our learned values, beliefs and knowledge. It is what we hold dear and special, and informs how things should be done and how we should respond to the environments that we live in.

“Culture is not just an add-on to the best interests of the child... your culture helps define how you attach, how you express emotion, how you learn and how you stay healthy”

Bamblett & Lewis (2008)



Culture is more than what you can see from the outside.
It is more than the colour of your skin, where you were born or what church you attend.

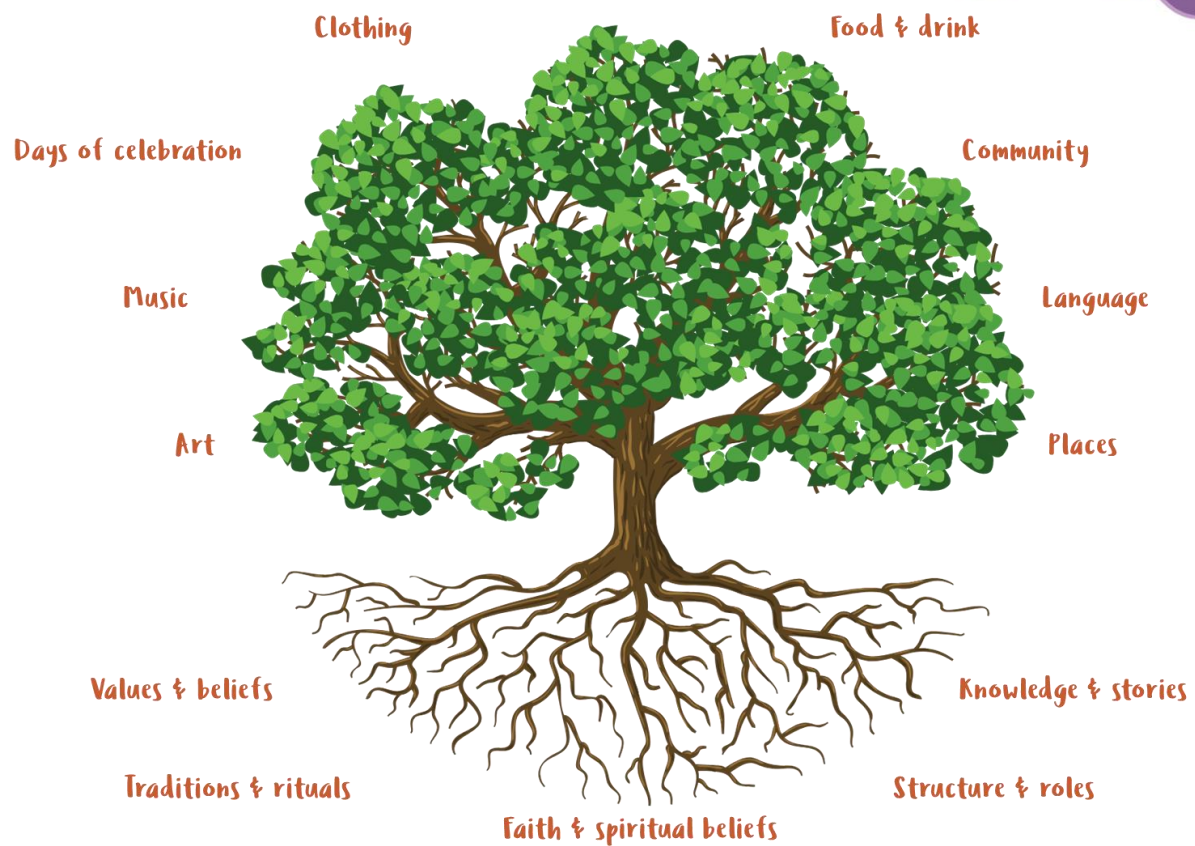
How is culture developed and maintained?

Culture is formed through a complex interplay of various factors, including:

- History and traditions
- Language
- Social Institutions and family structure
- Country and the environment
- Interactions and exchanges with others
- Art and expression
- Social structures and cultural norms
- Technology and resources.

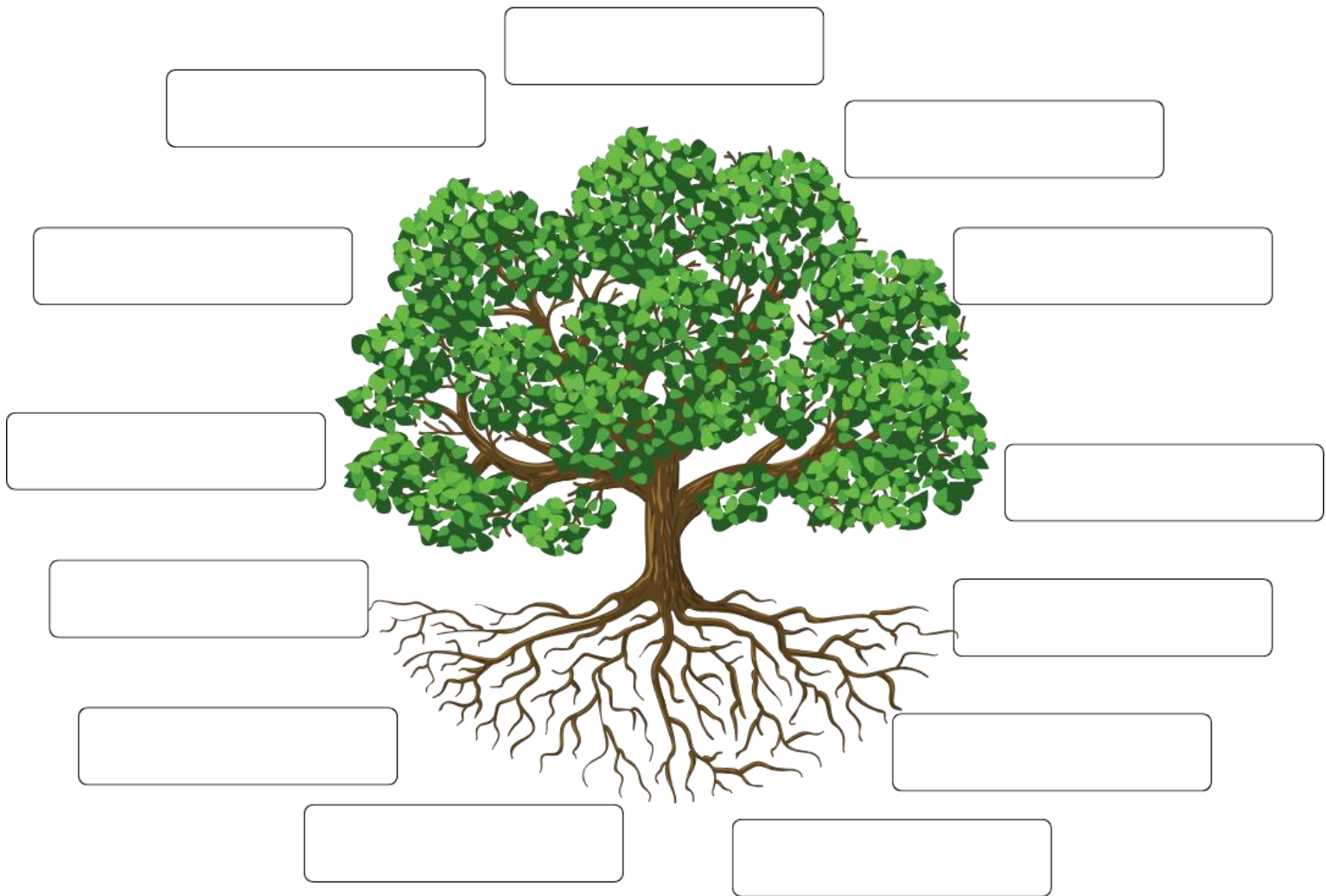


Activity: Exploring our own culture



Activity: Exploring our own culture

Considering the many elements of culture, what are important elements within your own culture. Take a moment to fill out your culture tree (below).



Reflection: Exploring our own culture

Was this activity easy or difficult for you?

Have you taken time to consider your culture in such an in-depth way before today?

Reflection: Disconnection from culture

How did you feel during this activity? How did it feel seeing others not lose a piece of paper/element of their culture?

How did it feel when your cultural element was returned modified?

How would the removal of the cultural element impact on other areas of your life?

How might this be relevant to the history and current experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children? *(Note: we will look at this more in the next module)*



Cultural Safety

Cultural Safety is about building cultural connections and relationships based on mutual trust and respect evidenced within Indigenous cultures and social systems, and stories which are inclusive of languages, family kinships, protocols and obligations.

As foster carers, promoting and providing a culturally safe place for children and young people is an important part of your role.

Here are some strategies for creating a culturally safe environment:

- Promote cultural awareness: Understand differences exist.
- Encourage communication: Open and respectful communication is a key characteristic of promoting cultural safety.
- Practice accountability: Hold people accountable.
- Recognise and avoid stereotypes: Be aware of and avoid stereotypes.
- Engage in dialogue: Be prepared to engage in a two-way dialogue where knowledge is shared about culture.
- Understand culture shock: Be aware of the influence of culture shock.

Space for notes:

Disconnection from culture

The impacts of being disconnected from culture include:

- Identity loss
- Mental health issues
- Social alienation/ sense of belonging
- Loss of traditions
- Cultural assimilation
- Generational loss
- Economic impacts
- Reduced resilience
- Intergenerational trauma.

Space for notes:



Culture is protective

A strong cultural connection can help mitigate the impact of trauma and Out of Home Care. Connection with culture fosters a sense of belonging and purpose.



Reflection: Culture

If you have a child in your care already or in the past, what did you know about their culture?

Why do you think it is important to know about culture as a foster carer?

Reflection: Culture

What did you hear in module 1 which confirmed something you already knew?

How do you feel about what you learnt in module 1?

What challenged you in module 1?

What is one thing you plan to change based on what you learnt to in module 1?

What do you want to learn more about after module 1?



HISTORY OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

Module Two

Learning Objectives

- Support your knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities before colonisation
- Strengthen your understanding of the timeline of history and the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal communities across Australia.
- Build your awareness of important government policies and legislation that had detrimental impacts of Aboriginal peoples, families and communities.

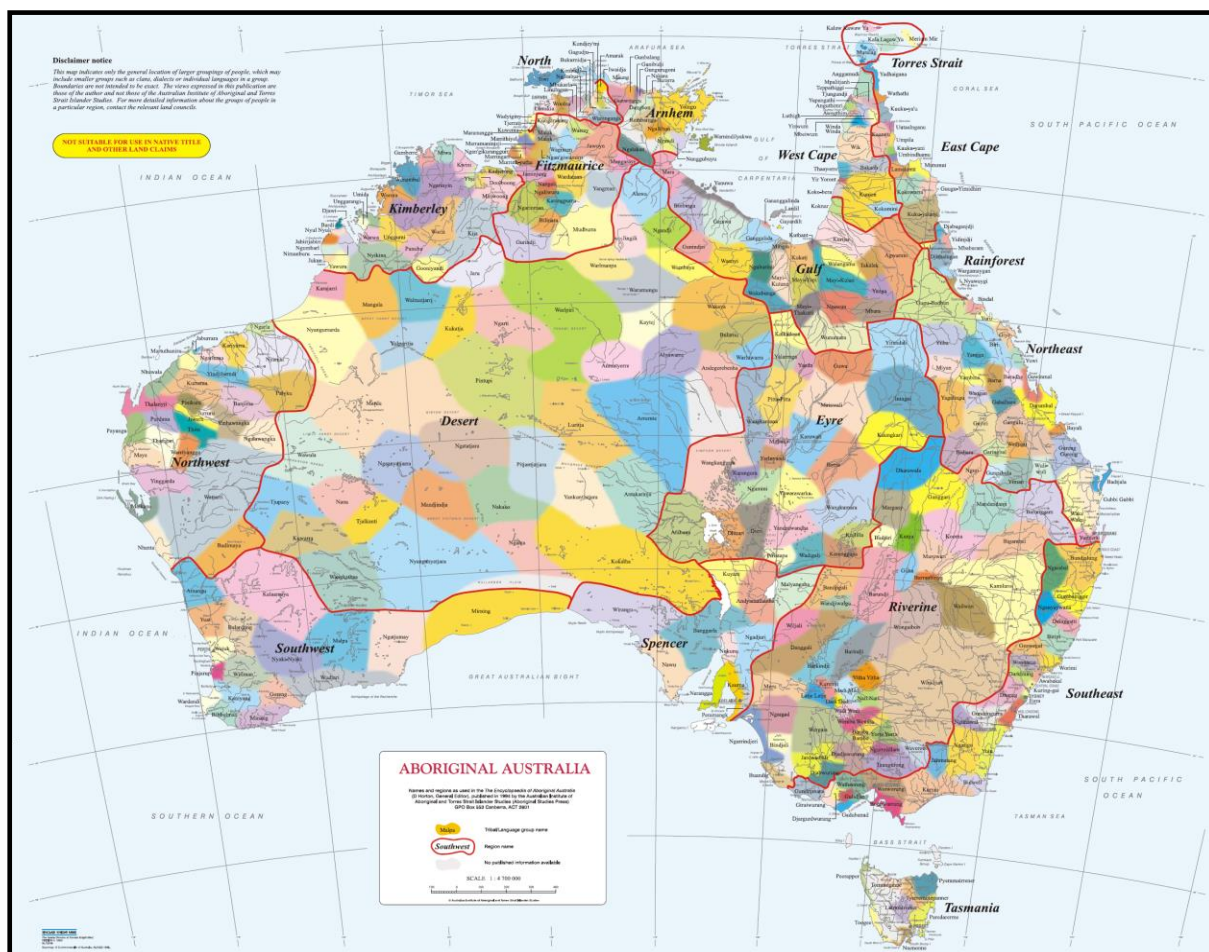
We want the people who care for us to learn about our people and our way of life before everything changed with colonisation, so they understand how rich and strong our culture is.

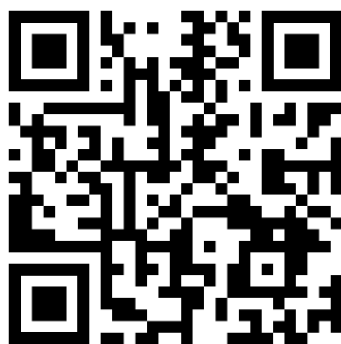
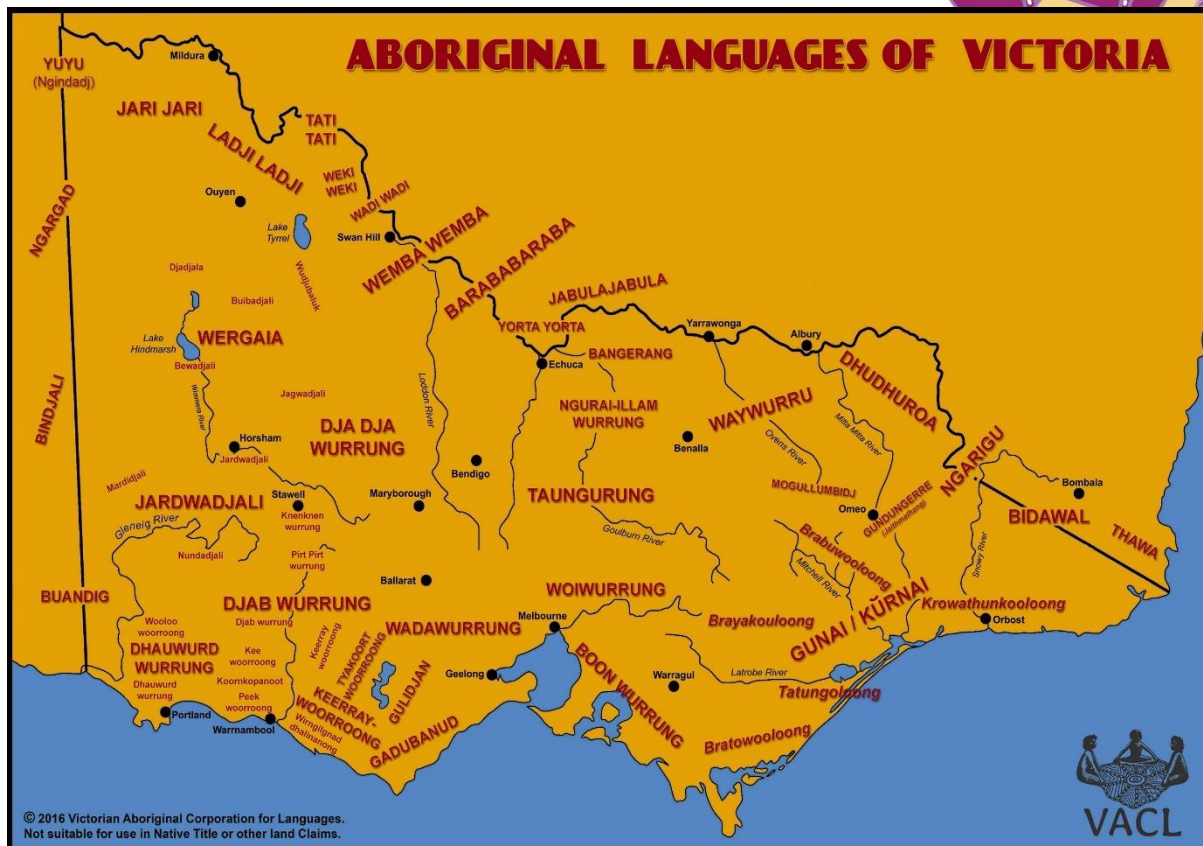
We hope the people around us will understand the history of how things changed when colonisation happened, so they know what our family and our people went through.

We need the people who care for us to see how quickly and deeply colonisation hurt us, so they can help us heal and make sure it doesn't happen again.

We want the people who care for us to know how things like the Protection Act, Assimilation Policy and Native Title hurt our families, so they can understand the struggles we've faced and still face today.

Pre-colonisation





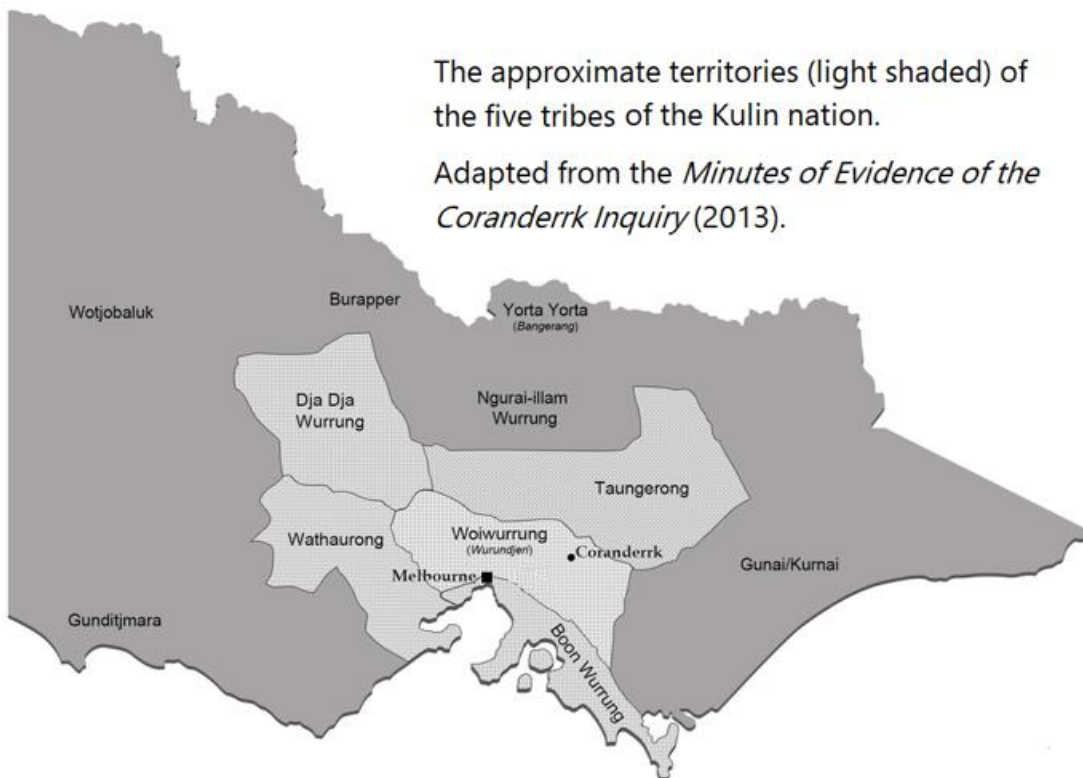
<https://50words.online/languages>

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Kulin Nations

The Kulin Nations consists of five language groups who are the traditional owners and lived in what is known as the Port Phillip region.

- Boonwurrung (Boon-wur-rung)
- Dja Dja Wurrung (Jar-Jar-Wur-rung)
- Taungurung (Tung-ger-rung)
- Wathaurung (Wath-er-rung)
- Woiewurrung (Woy-wur-rung), commonly known as Wurundjeri.



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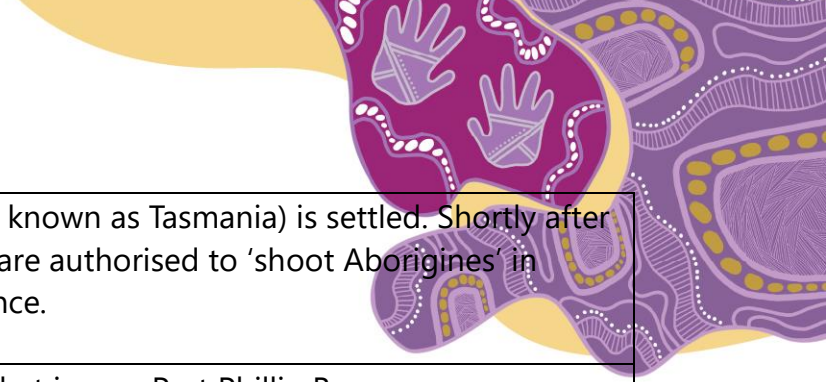
Pre-Colonisation - LORE

PRE COLONISATION – LORE	POST COLONISATION – LAW
Religious sites	Aboriginal people forced onto reserves
Health	Poor health
Management of the land	Loss of control of management of the land
Education	Education disrupted
Economic resources	Loss of economy
Kinship relations	Denial of status
Environmental knowledge	Environmental knowledge lost/ disrupted
Food sources	Forced dependence on introduced food
Language and usage	Conflict
Group responsibility	Loss and disruption of personal and cultural identity
History in the land	History and culture disrupted and destroyed
Spirituality in the land	Spirituality and religious freedom denied

Space for notes:

Colonisation Timeline

65,000+ years ago	Aboriginal people have lived on what we now know as Australia for at least 65,000 years. Mobs lived a harmonious structured lifestyle, with strong knowledge and systems rooted in mother earth, natural elements and all living things. Aboriginal people believe the earth owns us.
+4500 BC	Gunditjmara people build Budj Bim eel trap system.
+1000 AD	Flooding causes Port Phillip Bay to form.
1606	Dutch navigator Willem Janszoon is the first European to set foot on Australian land.
1770	Captain James Cook sails the east Coast of Australia and wrongfully claimed the colony of "New South Wales" for Britain.
1788	First Fleet land in Sydney Cove and claim the land as Crown Land.
1788 - 1934	Frontier Wars – Massacres, wars and instances of resistance beginning from the arrival of colonists. 'Officially' the Wars end as late as 1934, however, many acts of violence and oppression have continued.
1789	A mass epidemic of smallpox breaks out, one of many diseases brought into the country by the invading European ships. The local Aboriginal people do not have resistance to diseases such as smallpox, influenza, syphilis and measles. It is not fully understood how many Aboriginal people die as a result of introduced disease during these early years of colonisation, however it is likely to be in the thousands.
1792	Pemulwuy, an Aboriginal warrior, leads a resistance against the colonists, but the invaders overwhelmed the fighters with more sophisticated weaponry.
1794	The Hawkesbury River (NSW) massacre is the first (recorded) mass killing of Aboriginal people by white colonists.



1802	Van Diemen's Land (now known as Tasmania) is settled. Shortly after (two years later) settlers are authorised to 'shoot Aborigines' in response to their resistance.
1803	A convict ship lands in what is now Port Phillip Bay. Convict, William Buckley, escapes and is taken in by the Wadawurrung people.
1824	Wiradjuri people engage in resistance against colonists including around the Bathurst area. Martial law is proclaimed, and white settlers are 'allowed' to 'fight back' against the Aboriginal resistance.
1820s	Many Aboriginal people die as a result of poisoned water holes and flour, sugar or damper laced with arsenic.
1832	Western Australia was proclaimed.
1834	Victoria's first permanent European settlement is established at Portland Bay by Edward Henty. Before this time, the area had been used by whalers as a base.
1835	Farmer and businessman, John Batman enters Port Phillip. Two treaties are signed with a group of Wurundjeri leaders. These treaties are later declared invalid under European law and Kulin lore. It is believed given John Batman's historical dealings in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) this was an attempt to disadvantage the people of the Kulin Nation.
1836-1853	Several thousand Aboriginal people are killed in widespread massacres across Victoria and throughout Australia.
1836	Major Thomas Mitchell (Surveyor General of NSW) crosses the Murray River into what is now known as Victoria. Major Mitchell recognises the "fertile plains" of the area and a war between the local Aboriginals and colonists ensues.
1836	Five Aboriginal "Protectors" arrived in Melbourne.
1837	The British select committee finds that the treatment of Australian Aboriginals is "very poor". A 'Protector of Aborigines' is recommended to be appointed.

1851	Victoria officially becomes a colony and is separated from the colony of NSW.
1842	Native Police Corps are established in Narre Warren, Victoria. They are made up initially of 25 Aboriginal men this was an alternative way to 'protect' and assimilate Aboriginal people. The Native Police Corps main roles are to: • patrol the bush to find bushrangers or any suspicious person • check the passes of those who appeared to be a prisoner • carry messages out to colonial outposts • assist in searches for those lost in the bush • act as an escort for travellers including prisoners, dignitaries and senior office holders.
1859	Queensland is proclaimed.
1859	Creation of the reserve system in Victoria. Large amounts of land are reserved for Aboriginal people to 'protect' them from European settlers and diseases. Aboriginal people are forced to live, segregated from European settlers. This system forcibly removes Aboriginal people from their traditional lands and places considerable control over Aboriginal people through strict rules.
1863	Impacting upon the colonisation of the Torres Strait Islands – First colonial settlement at Somerset, Cape York. 14 years later this settlement is moved to Port Kennedy on Waiben (Thursday Island) which became the 'capital' of Torres Strait.
1869	"Protection" legislation is introduced in Victoria. The Board for the Protection of Aborigines is established in Victoria.
1870	Impacting upon the colonisation of the Torres Strait Islands – Commercial quantities of Pearl shell are discovered in the Torres Strait Islands.
1871	Impacting upon the colonisation of the Torres Strait Islands – Christian missionaries and teachers arrive to the islands. Initially arriving to Erub (Darnley Island) and opening the first school two years later. Note: Christianity remains strong in the Torres Strait Islander communities and is celebrated in the Coming of the Light ceremony.



1879	Impacting upon the colonisation of the Torres Strait Islands – The Torres Strait Islands are annexed to the Colony of Queensland.
1901	With the six founding states, Australia becomes a Federation. The Constitution includes two sections referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These sections marginalise and exclude Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
1907	In 1907, Australia's first territory was established, the Northern Territory. This was later followed by Australia's two other mainland territories, ACT and Jarvis Bay Territory.
1900's	The creation of policies and legislation that marginalise against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people eventuates including Exemption Certificates, state-based protection acts that brought about the Stolen Generations and Assimilation policies.

Reflection: Colonisation

Share your thoughts?

What did you already know?

What was new information?

Life on the Missions



Major Aboriginal Missions and Reserves in Victoria:

- Ebenezer (1859-1904)
- Coranderrk (1863–1924)
- Lake Tyers (1861–1971)
- Framlingham (1861–1916)
- Ramahyuck (1862–1908)
- Lake Condah (1867 – 1919)
- Cummeragunja (1888 – 1953)

Life on the missions was highly regulated and deeply oppressive for Aboriginal people.

Missionaries and government officials imposed European values and customs, banning many aspects of Aboriginal culture, including traditional ceremonies, languages, and kinship systems.

Aboriginal people were expected to adopt Christianity and European-style education, work, and social norms.



Education and Work: Children were often separated from their families and given a basic education in English, with a focus on preparing them for manual labor or domestic work. Aboriginal men and women were often required to work on the missions, primarily in agriculture, but they received little or no compensation.

Loss of Autonomy: Aboriginal people on missions were denied many basic rights, including the freedom to move, marry without permission, or even decide where to live. The Aboriginal Protection Board and mission managers exerted strict control over their daily lives.

Cultural Suppression: Missions and reserves were designed to suppress Aboriginal cultural practices. Residents were discouraged or prohibited from speaking their languages, practicing traditional religion, or maintaining their cultural connections to the land.

The Stolen Generations: Missions were also a part of the broader policy of removing Aboriginal children from their families, which became a formalised practice in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These children, known as the Stolen Generations, were placed in institutions or with non-Aboriginal families, leading to deep intergenerational trauma.



Space for notes:

Control

With the introduction of the Aborigines Protection Act (1869), Aboriginal people no longer have control over:

- Where they can live
- Where they can work
- Where their earnings are allocated
- Who their children can be cared for and educated by.

Victorian Colonial Government passes legislation to give the government power to:

- Remove Aboriginal women to control the birth rate
- Remove Aboriginal boys as they may be potential threats
- Stop monetary assistance to so called "half-castes" who remained on the reserve
- Power to remove any Aboriginal child and place them away from family and their respective Aboriginal communities resulting in many children being moved hundreds of miles away and never see their family again.

Every aspect of the lives of Aboriginal people is controlled and if they are "mixed blood" Aboriginal people are offered an exemption certificate which can make them an honorary 'white' and means they are not allowed to mix with relatives who are not exempted but can buy land, have a bank account, vote and drink. Aboriginal people who remain on missions do not have this certificate, are not permitted to leave without permission.

Any non-Aboriginal person found moving about or living with Aboriginal people without satisfactory reason is liable to arrest and have three months imprisonment.

Space for notes:



No. 705

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
Aborigines Protection Act 1909-1943, Section 18c.

General Certificate of Exemption

Photograph of



This document entitles the bearer JOSEPH EDWARDS to:

Leave the reservation or mission at which they live -
to go to work.

Additional benefits include:

Walk freely through town without being arrested
 (Note: Curriews apply)
Enter a shop or hotel (You may or may not be served
- at proprietor's discretion)

Special conditions apply. In order to gain this Exemption Certificate, the following must be strictly adhered to:

Speaking in native language - Prohibited
Engaging in dance, rituals, native customs - Prohibited
Associating with fellow indigenous people (including family) - Prohibited

Assimilate into the wider community.
 If all conditions are met with and satisfactorily upheld, you may also be eligible to live in town unsupervised.

Note: Strictly segregated housing areas.

This is your chance to be free of the Aborigines Protection Act and live like a white man.

Dated the 10th day of March, 19 51.

Issued by E. B. Meagher
 Chairman of the Aborigines Welfare Board

Is Joseph Edwards a free man?

How does this make you feel?

What is one condition that stands out to you?

Assimilation and “Breed them out”

Aboriginal people "not of full blood" should be absorbed or assimilated into the wider Australian population.

Aboriginal people have to stop their cultural traditions and give up their values.

Despite these expectations to live like “other” Australians, Aboriginal people do not experience the same rights.



THREE GENERATIONS
(Reading from Right to Left)

1. Half-blood—(Irish-Australian father; full-blood Aboriginal mother).
2. Quadroon Daughter—(Father Australian born of Scottish parents; Mother No. 1).
3. Octaroon Grandson—(Father Australian of Irish descent; Mother No. 2)

Space for notes:

Loss and suppression of culture

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have endured:

- Mass killings and massacres
- Displacement from traditional lands
- Relocation to missions and reserves
- Having every aspect of their lives controlled by European colonisers
- Being denied and persecuted for practicing their cultural traditions
- Removal of children from families.

All of which has contributed to the loss of culture, cultural knowledge, traditions and language

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Stolen Generations

The **Stolen Generations** are any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander who was **separated** from their family, community, traditional culture and traditional country. "**Separated**" can mean a person was **removed** under past Government Acts i.e. Native Welfare Act, Aboriginal Welfare Act, etc. It also includes people who were adopted, fostered or placed in an institution under other government legislation.

(Link Up Victoria)

The Government's narrative of why children were removed:

"In need of care and protection"

"Neglect"

"For better education"

"Failure to conform to discipline or assimilation"

"Orphan"

"Of suitable age of apprenticeships" (12 years of age)

"In need of care and control"

"Unable to locate parents or family"

"For speaking out against authority"

"Likely to be married off to an Aboriginal".

Space for notes:





How were children removed?

Removal through Assimilation Policy

"We had been playing all together, just a happy community and the air was filled with screams because the police came and mothers tried to hide their children and blacken their children's faces and tried to hide them in caves. We three, Essie, Brenda and me together with our three cousins ... the six of us were put on my old truck and taken to Oodnadatta which was hundreds of miles away and then we got there in the darkness.

My mother had to come with us. She had already lost her eldest daughter down to the Children's Hospital because she had infantile paralysis, polio, and now there was the prospect of losing her three other children, all the children she had. I remember that she came in the truck with us curled up in the foetal position. Who can understand that the trauma of knowing that you're going to lose all your children?"

Removal through Holiday Schemes

"Then when I met this lady and she came down and met my mum and dad ... they didn't want me to go with her. But she just sort of said, 'You'll be seeing her. We only want her for a holiday'. And they sort of kept me after that".

Removal for Slavery (Traineeships and Employment)

"When anybody come to pick up a worker they used to line us up and they'd make you flex your muscles. If you were big and strong they'd pick you - like a slave market. I was sent out at 11. I worked there for seven and a half years, never got paid anything, all that time. We used to bring the cattle in ... we didn't get nothing".

Removal through the Dormitory System

"We were locked up at night. All the boys, young girls. Married girls and women what had no husbands and babies, they had one room. Another dormitory was for young girls had no babies. But we was opposite side of that, see? The boys' dormitory. I'm not going to complain about it because, you know, I survived. A lot of kids died. Depression time it was pretty hard".

Above Quotes from Bringing Them Home Report 1997

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Removal of Aboriginal Children



A group of tiny half-caste and quadroon children at the Darwin half-caste home. The Minister for the Interior (Mr Perkins) recently appealed to charitable organisations in Melbourne and Sydney to find homes for the children and rescue them from becoming outcasts".

"I like the little girl in centre of group, but if taken by anyone else, any of the others would do, as long as they are strong".

"The thing that hurts the most to this day is that they didn't care about who they put us with. As long as it looked like they were doing their job, it just didn't matter. They put me with one family and the man of the house used to come down and use me whenever he wanted to. Being raped over and over and there was no one I could turn to. They were supposed to look after me and protect me, but no one ever did".

(Confidential evidence 689, NSW 1960's)

From Bringing Them Home Report 1997



Ongoing effects of the Stolen Generations on Aboriginal families today

Separation from the primary carers

The Inquiry into the Stolen Generations found removal has led to insecurity and lack of self-esteem. People experienced feelings of worthlessness, depression, suicide, delinquency and violence.

Some were imprisoned, abused drugs, found intimacy difficult and lacked trust.

There's still a lot of unresolved issues within me. One of the biggest ones is 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.

Loss of Parenting Skills and Knowledge

The Inquiry found people brought up in institutions or passed around different foster families didn't learn about good parenting, nurturing and attachment.

As a result, their children are at risk of being removed on the grounds of neglect or abuse.

"There's things in my life that I haven't dealt with and I've passed them on to my children. Gone to pieces. Anxiety attacks. I've passed this on to my kids. I know for a fact if you go and knock at their door they run and hide. I look at my son today who had to be taken away because he was going to commit suicide because he can't handle it; he just can't take any more of the anxiety attacks that he and Karen have. I have passed that on to my kids because I haven't dealt with it. How do you deal with it? How do you sit down and go through all those years of abuse?"

Confidential evidence 284, South Australia.

Loss of culture and connection

The Inquiry found all forcibly removed children and their children have had their cultures, languages, heritage and lands stolen.

For those removed, this lack of cultural heritage and knowledge continues through their adult lives and affects their wellbeing and sense of self.

"When me and my little family stood there - my husband and me and my two little children - and all my family was there, there wasn't a word we could say to each other. All the years that you wanted to ask this and ask that, there was no way we could ever regain that. It was like somebody came and stabbed me with a knife. I couldn't communicate with my family because I had no way of communicating with them any longer. Once that language was taken away, we lost a part of that very soul. It meant our culture was gone, our family was gone, everything that was dear to us was gone. When I finally met [my mother] through an

interpreter she said that because my name had been changed, she had heard about the other children but she'd never heard about me.

And every sun, every morning as the sun came up the whole family would wail. They did that for 32 years until they saw me again. Who can imagine what a mother went through?"

Confidential evidence 305 – Fiona

Above Quotes from Bringing Them Home Report 1997

Effects on Individuals

Aboriginality was not positively affirmed

"I got told my Aboriginality when I got whipped and they'd say, "You Abo, you nigger". That was the only time I got told of my Aboriginality"- Confidential evidence 139, Victoria: removed 1967

They were taught to reject their Aboriginality/Aboriginal people

"We were told that our mother was an alcoholic and that she was a prostitute and that 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 have to be very careful. If you were white, you didn't have that dirtiness in you... it was in our breed."

Children weren't told who their siblings, parents or families were

"When I started to get to know my father and he was telling me about his family and who I was related to, my heart nearly stopped because I realised I had slept with first cousins on occasions." (pg. 202 BTH)

Institutionalisation- excessive physical punishments were common

"Dormitory life was like living hell. It was not a life. The only things that sort of came 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."

Above Quotes from Bringing Them Home Report 1997

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Activity

How can knowing this information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and community in terms of history, the Stolen Generations and intergenerational trauma assist you in caring for an Aboriginal child?

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Linking history to today's experiences



Healing Foundation Video on Intergenerational Trauma <https://youtu.be/Y-RaB19D13E>

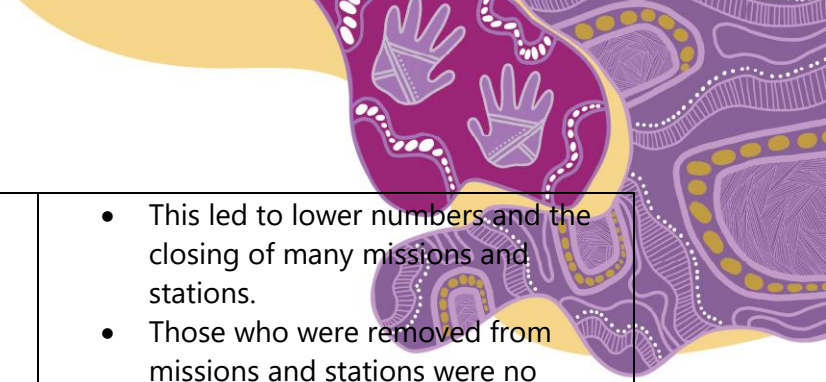
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Laws & Policies

In Victoria, like other parts of Australia, there was a long history of laws and policies that discriminated against Aboriginal people, including the removal of Aboriginal children from their families (now referred to as the Stolen Generations). These laws contributed to the systemic disenfranchisement and control of Aboriginal people.

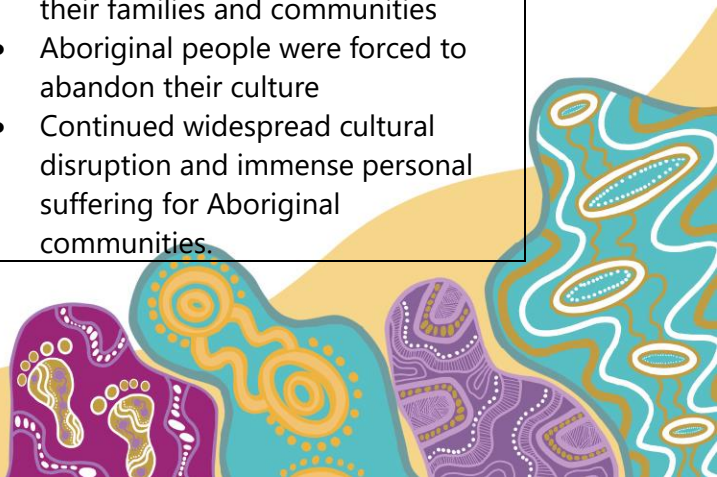
Legislation & Consequence

<i>Aborigines Protection Act 1869</i> Also known as the Act to Provide for the Protection and Management of the Aboriginal Natives of Victoria. This was the first comprehensive law in Victoria, Australia to regulate the lives of Aboriginal people. The act established the Board for the Protection of Aborigines. This Act gave the government extensive control over many aspects of Aboriginal life including: • Residence: Where Aboriginal people could live • Employment: How Aboriginal people could earn a living • Marriage: Who Aboriginal people could marry • Social life: How Aboriginal people could live their social lives • Children: The care, custody, and education of Aboriginal children • Funding: The distribution of government funding and food and supplies.	The consequences of this Act: • It laid the foundation for policies that dehumanised and aimed to eradicate Aboriginal people • Led to the forcible removal of Aboriginal children from their families • Led to Aboriginal people being taught to reject their culture and Aboriginality • Widespread cultural disruption and immense personal suffering for Aboriginal communities.
<i>Aborigines Protection Act 1886</i> Amendment to the Aborigines Protection Act 1869 also known as Half Caste Act. This Act changed the definition of Aboriginal to exclude those who were 'half-caste'.	The consequences of this Act: • Those who were identified as 'half-caste' were forced off missions and stations. • This resulted in families being disconnected.



	• This led to lower numbers and the closing of many missions and stations. • Those who were removed from missions and stations were no longer able to receive any assistance from the Board or the government and were viewed as members of the 'white society' • Many colonists refused to accept 'half-castes' • Continued widespread cultural disruption and immense personal suffering for Aboriginal communities.
<i>Aborigines Act 1910 (Vic)</i> Long title: An Act to extend the powers of the Board for the Protection of the Aborigines This Act abolished the distinction between 'full blood' and 'half-caste' Aboriginal people.	The consequences of this Act: • Previously defined 'half-caste' Aboriginals are able to access to the assistance received by Aboriginals on missions and reserves. • The Act did not stop the removal of children from their families and communities. • Continued widespread cultural disruption and immense personal suffering for Aboriginal communities.
<i>Aborigines Act 1915</i> Repealed the Aborigines Act 1910. The Act states: "All quadroon, octoroon and half-caste lads over 18 on the Board Stations shall leave and shall not be allowed on the Station or reserve again except for brief visits to family at the discretion of the Station manager".	The consequences of this Act: • Protection Boards continue to have power to remove and apprentice Aboriginal children. • Separation of Aboriginal families • Protection Boards continue to have extensive control over Aboriginal people and their lives. • Continued widespread cultural disruption and immense personal suffering for Aboriginal communities.

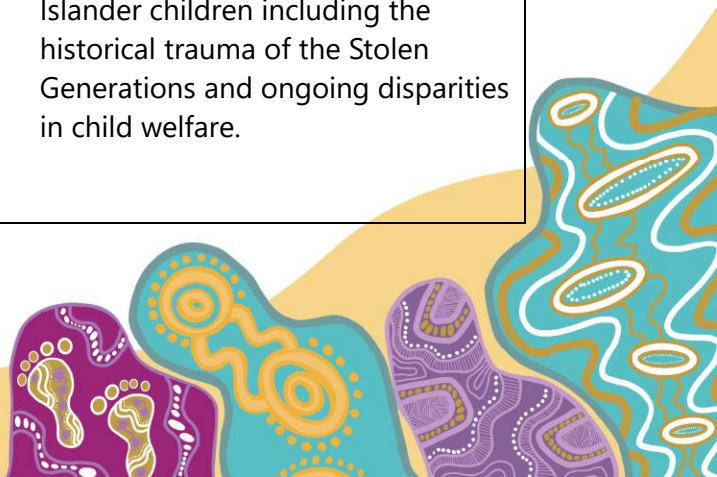
<i>Aborigines Act 1957</i> Established the Aborigines Welfare Board. The Board's function is 'to promote the moral, intellectual and physical welfare of Aborigines (full blood and half-caste) with a view to their assimilation in the general community'. In Victoria the Aborigines Welfare Board operated from 1957 – 1967. The Board had many powers, including: • Prescribing the distribution of money • Providing clothing, medicine, and rations • Managing and regulating Aboriginal reserves • Purchasing, building, or acquiring buildings and land • Granting licenses to occupy land or buildings to Aborigines The Board is able to issue a permit to an Aborigine to reside on reserve. Police can remove people without a permit. Permission of Board required to employ Aborigines. <i>Note: After Aborigines Act 1957, the Board had no specific power in relation to Aboriginal children. Aboriginal children were removed under the Child Welfare Act 1954 and subsequent child welfare legislation.</i>	The consequences of this Act: • Continued control over Aboriginal people and their lives. • Continued widespread cultural disruption and immense personal suffering for Aboriginal communities. • The Board's assimilationist purpose led to Victorian Aboriginal children predominantly being adopted into white families. The Board's official policy was to keep children with families, but records indicate that this policy was not upheld.
In 1937, Federal and State policy of assimilation was introduced. 'Part-Aborigines' were to be assimilated into white society whether they wanted to or not; Aboriginal people not living in a tribe were to be educated and all others were to stay on missions.	The consequences of this policy: • Removal of Aboriginal children from their families and communities • Aboriginal people were forced to abandon their culture • Continued widespread cultural disruption and immense personal suffering for Aboriginal communities.

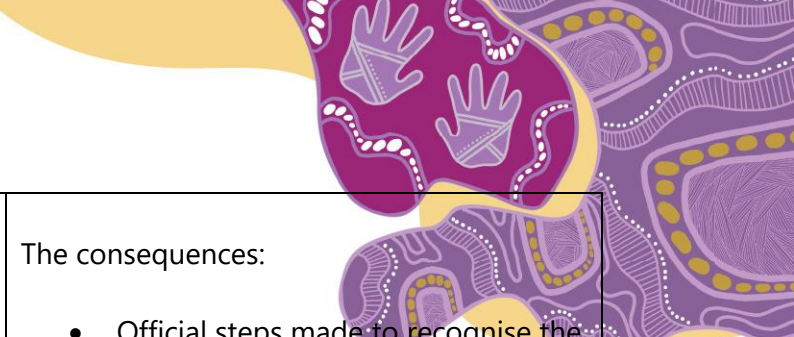




In the 1950s 'assimilation' became a widely accepted goal for all Aboriginal people and was adopted as policy by the Commonwealth and by all State Governments.	
<i>Children's Welfare Act 1954</i> Definitions "<i>in need of care</i>" – replaces the previous definition of "<i>neglected child</i>" and adds to previous definition 'takes part in any public exhibition or performance which is likely to endanger life or limb, is exposed to moral danger or who habitually truants'. Key provisions • Children's Court to determine whether a child or young person is in need of care. • Police can arrest without warrant any child or young person suspected of being in need of care and bring the child before a Children's Court to be committed to the care of the Department. • Director can make a range of placements including institutions, private homes, employment or service etc.	The consequences of this policy: • Aboriginal children continue to be removed from their families and communities.
<i>Aboriginal Affairs Act 1967 (Cth)</i> This Act was the result of the 1967 referendum, which amended the Australian Constitution to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as part of the population and to give the Commonwealth the power to make laws for them. Before the 1967 referendum, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were not recognised as part of the Australian population. They were treated as second-class citizens, and many aspects of their lives were controlled by state governments.	The consequences of this Act: • The Council for Aboriginal Affairs is established. The Council brought Ministers from all states and territories together so they could discuss issues related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and recommend actions to the Australian Government. • The Australian Government established the first Office of Aboriginal Affairs as part of the Prime Minister's department. The first minister is W.C. Wentworth appointed in February 1968

	• Discrimination experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples does not end.
<i>Aboriginal Lands Act (1970)</i> This Act was a law that granted freehold title to the residents of the Framlingham and Lake Tyers Aboriginal communities in Victoria. The Act was created in response to the communities' advocacy for land rights. It was the first act in Victoria to recognise Aboriginal people's right to land in the state. The Act granted ownership of the former mission sites at Framlingham and Lake Tyers to the residents who were present on certain dates. The residents were allocated shares in the Framlingham or Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trusts.	The consequences of this Act: • A step towards self-determination • A step towards official government recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the original custodians of the land. <i>Note: The Act has been reviewed twice, in 2002 and 2012, resulting in minor changes. The Victorian government is currently reviewing the Act to promote Aboriginal self-determination and empower First Peoples.</i>
1981 <i>Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) established</i> SNAICC was formally established in 1981 after the creation of such a body was proposed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at the 'First Aboriginal Child Survival Seminar' held in Melbourne in 1979. The organisation elected its first national executive in 1982 and has received Federal Government funding support from 1983.	The consequences: • Advocacy for better services, policies and practices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children • Improved community empowerment, giving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities a platform to raise concerns for the needs of children • Promotion of culturally appropriate early childhood services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across Australia • Raised awareness of the issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children including the historical trauma of the Stolen Generations and ongoing disparities in child welfare.





<i>Aboriginal Child Placement Principle (1980)</i> The Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs first proposed the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle in 1979 at a conference of the Council of Social Welfare Ministers. The purpose was to recognise the importance of care within family and culture to the best interests of children, as well as to ensure that the actions that resulted in the Stolen Generations are not repeated. Components include both prevention of entry into Out of Home Care and reunification to ensure culturally connected placements and to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities to participate in child protection decision-making. The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle was adopted in 1980 when the Department published <i>Aboriginal Fostering and Adoption - State and Territory Principles, Policies and Practices</i>.	The consequences: • Official steps made to recognise the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children remaining with family, kin and community. • Official steps made to ensuring continued cultural connections for children unable to remain 'at home'. • Attempts to not repeat Stolen Generations.
<i>Children Youth and Families Act 2005</i> The act requires that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children placed in Out of Home Care remain connected to their family and community. In addition, Cultural Support Plans are implemented throughout the Department of Human Services for children and young people in Out of Home Care.	The consequences of this Act: • Official steps made to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children remain connected with family and community if unable to reside safely with family. • Steps made towards self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. • Attempts to not repeat Stolen Generations.

Laws and policies – Today

Modern legislation, policies and procedures continue to impact upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children today. *Not all recommendations from Human Rights Inquiries and Reports have been implemented.*

Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991)

The Royal Commission was established in response to a growing public concern that deaths in custody of Aboriginal people were too common and poorly explained.

The final report, signed on 15 April 1991, made 339 recommendations, mainly concerned with procedures for persons in custody, liaison with Aboriginal groups, police education and improved accessibility to information.

Report Summary can be located here: <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/indigenous-deaths-custody-report-summary>

Bringing them Home Report (1997)

This report highlighted the key findings of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families:

- 535 Indigenous individual and group submissions were received through the inquiry
- 54 recommendations for parliament
- Concluded “indigenous families and communities have endured gross violations of their human rights. These violations continue to affect indigenous people's daily lives. They were an act of genocide, aimed at wiping out indigenous families, communities, and cultures, vital to the precious and inalienable heritage of Australia.”

Report can be located here: <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/projects/bringing-them-home-report-1997>

Closing the Gap Campaign

The Closing the Gap campaign recognises the inequality of the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and Non-Indigenous Australians.

Key Targets Include:

1. Everyone enjoys long and healthy lives
2. Children are born healthy and strong
3. Children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years

- 
4. Children thrive in their early years
 5. Students achieve their full learning potential
 6. Students reach their full potential through further education pathways
 7. Youth are engaged in employment or education
 8. Strong economic participation and development of people and their communities
 9. People can secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need
 10. Adults are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system
 11. Young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system
 12. Children are not overrepresented in the child protection system
 13. Families and households are safe
 14. People enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing
 15. People maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters
 16. Cultures and languages are strong supported and flourishing
 17. People have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives.

Details of the Campaign and updates can be located here:

<https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/>

Voice to Parliament and Uluru Statement from the Heart

The Voice to Parliament would have been a group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, chosen by Aboriginal peoples from around the country, to offer advice to the Government on laws and policies that directly affect them.

Voice to Parliament is a key element of the Uluru Statement from the Heart which can be located: <https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement/view-the-statement/>

Yoorrook Justice Commission

The Yoorrook Justice Commission is the first formal truth-telling process into historical and ongoing injustices experienced by First Peoples in Victoria.

To learn more visit: <https://yoorrookjusticecommission.org.au/>

Victorian Treaty

“Victoria’s Treaty is about putting practical frameworks in place to implement better policies and make sure First People have a say in decisions that impact First Peoples’ lives.” – First Peoples State Relations Victoria

It includes 33 Traditional Owners who represent their communities as part of the First Peoples’ Assembly of Victoria.

To learn more visit: <https://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/treaty>

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Civil Rights Movements/ Fighting for Rights

1859 – Wurundjeri Elders Simon Wonga and Tommy Munnerring petitioned Protector of Aborigines to secure land for the Kulin Nation

1886 – William Barak delegations to Victorian Government over the closure of Coranderrk

1933 – William Cooper petitions the King for Aboriginal Parliamentary Representation

1934 – Aborigines Advancement League

1938 – Day of Mourning

1939 – Cummeragunja Walk Off

1967 – Referendum

1972 – Tent Embassy

1970s – Emergence of Aboriginal community organisations

1987 – Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

1988 – Bicentennial Protest

1992 – Mabo Native Title

1996 – Wik Native Title

1997 – Bringing Them Home Report

2006 – Camp Sovereignty (reestablished in 2024)

Contemporary Activism

2024 - Uncle Robbie Thorpe taking the King to Court for genocide crimes

2024 – Senator Lidia Thorpe’s statement to the King

Space for notes:

Reflection

What did you hear today which confirmed something you already knew?

How do you feel about what you learnt today?

What challenged you today?

What is one thing you plan to change based on what you learnt today?

What do you want to learn more about after today?



IT'S NOT ALL IN THE PAST –CONTEMPORARY ISSUES FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

Module Three

Learning Objectives

- Enhance your appreciation of the foundations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and knowledge systems
- Support your awareness of the practical ways of promoting cultural connections for Aboriginal children and young people
- Strengthen your confidence to engage in and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events and activities as allies

We want the people who care for us to really understand where we come from, including the foundations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and the knowledge of our ancestors, so they can respect who we are.

We need the people around us to understand the hurt that past policies and decisions have caused our family and people, so they can support us in healing and make things better for us today.

We hope the people who care for us will find ways to help us stay connected to our culture, so we can feel proud of who we are and where we come from.

We want the people around us to stand with us, learn about our culture and celebrate with us, so we can all be part of important events and activities together.

What does it mean to be Aboriginal today?

“Being Aboriginal is not the colour of your skin or how broad your nose is. It is a spiritual feeling, an identity you know in your heart. It is a unique feeling that is difficult for a non-Aboriginal to fully understand.”

Linda Burney, “AECG State Rally at Yarra Bay” press release 1990



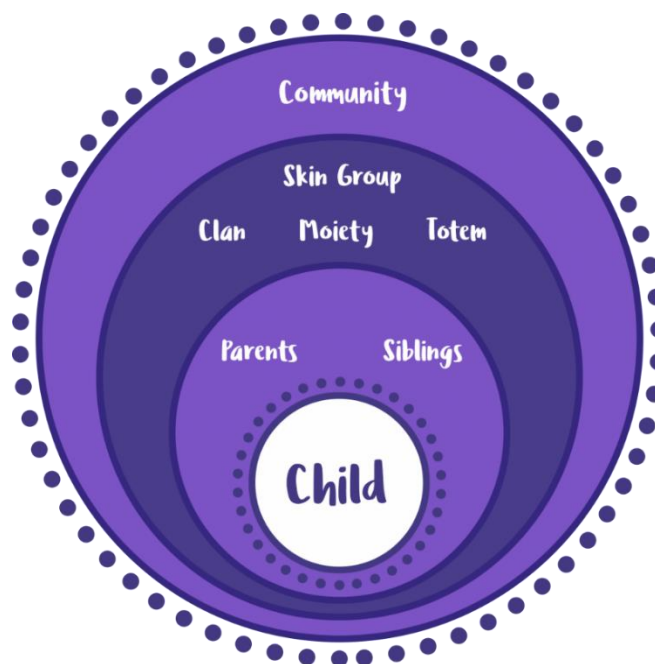
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Kinship Systems

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship systems play a significant role in parenting, maintaining connection and belonging, the continuity of culture and the resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Aboriginal kinship systems are complex and serve as the backbone of social life, determining how people interact with each other, their environment, and the broader community. They provide structure, guide moral behaviour and foster a sense of belonging and continuity.

 Family and Kinship (Reconciliation Australia) <https://youtu.be/mNtPcW4t1PY>



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Kinship Systems - Totems



Aboriginal Kinship Presentation: Totems (The University of Sydney)

<https://youtu.be/vpHG9V2qJiE?si=O1QPLrSB6I1kTT24>

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Online Activity: Your Family

Let's look at your family or kinship network.

Draw a house – this represents where you feel that you most belong. Who's in your house? Who do you feel connected to? How do you feel when you are connected to your family or those most meaningful to you?

Now draw a new house - imagine that you have left your original house and entered this new house. This house is full of new people, with a different culture to your own.

Reflection: Your Family

How does it feel when your links to family are cut?

How might it feel for a child who has these links to family and kin cut?

What if it was your child, your niece, your nephew, your grandchild, who had these links and connections cut?

Activity: Kinship Networks

Let's look at the kinship systems for our case scenarios. Read through the case scenario and consider:

Who is important within the child's kinship system?

Could there be other kin or community members the child could be linked with?

How might you learn about the missing parts of the child's kinship group?

Connection to Community

Belonging is a basic human need. It is based on the quality of relationships and the nature of mutual trust and reciprocity.

Belonging is central to the identity of Aboriginal peoples, and is rooted in their connection to community, land and water, or "Country". This connection is spiritual, cultural, emotional, and ancestral, and is based on the Dreaming.

Community plays an important role in child rearing practices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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Connection to Land and Country

"Country" is a term that encompasses a great deal more than just land:

- Place of belonging
- Spiritual and symbolic
- Cultural practices
- Relationships
- Energy and space
- Values
- Lore, custom, and language
- Material sustenance
- Family.

Aboriginal people consider themselves custodians or caretakers of the land. They believe in a reciprocal relationship with Country, taking only what they can give back. Caring for Country is a responsibility that includes nurturing the biodiversity and ecological balance of Country.

Some ways people can connect to Country include:

- Caring for Country,
- Birthing on Country,
- Spending time on Country, and
- Being buried on Country.

Connection to land and Country



Connection to Country – Why is it important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? (Evolve Communities) <https://youtu.be/GqnXuzny--o>



Who We Are: Country/Place (Reconciliation Australia) <https://youtu.be/scPVu7BASeA>

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Reflection: Community and Country

Think about the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in your care now or in the future...

How will you support the child's connection to Community and Country?

Where might you go for help or assistance?

What more would you like to know and learn?

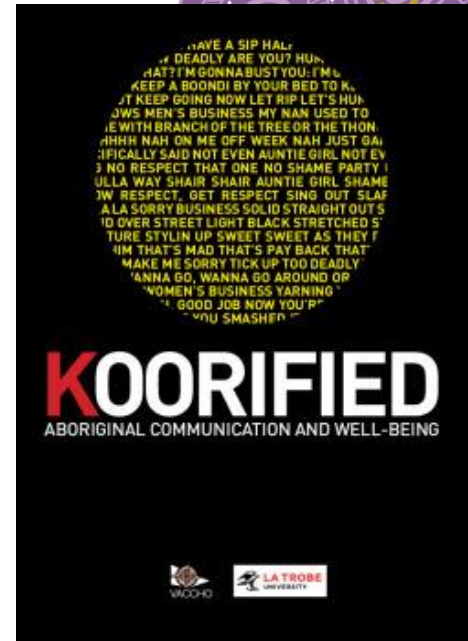
What if the child is not from Victoria?

Connection to language

It is estimated, prior to colonisation, there were over 250 distinct and unique languages and 800 dialects used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout Australia. As a result of colonisation a significant amount of language has been lost, with current estimates of 150 languages being used today.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were often able to speak multiple languages. This allowed for communication with neighbouring mobs for many different reasons, such as:

- Ceremonies
- Trade
- Food
- Marriage
- Conflicts (Land, Lore etc.)



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Koorified Resource:

https://healthinonet.ecu.edu.au/healthinonet/getContent.php?linkid=133022&title=Koorified%3A+Aboriginal+communication+and+well-being&contentid=27222_

The Dreaming

The Dreaming refers to experience and beliefs as an Aboriginal person. There are at least four aspects to Dreaming:

- The beginning of all things
- The way of life and death
- The life and influence of the Ancestors
- Sources of power in life.

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Reflection: Language and Dreamtime

Think about the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in your care now or in the future...

How will you support the child's connection to language and Dreamtime?

Where might you go for help or assistance?

What more would you like to know and learn?

What if the child is not from Victoria?

Aboriginal Knowledge Systems - Healing

Traditional Aboriginal healing is a holistic approach covering mind, body and spirit. Traditionally a range of healing methods and remedies are used including:

- plants and wild herbs
- animal products and oils
- charcoal, mud and clay
- smoking ceremony

Many of these traditional healing methods have been lost through colonisation. A holistic approach remains important and a return to traditional healing methods may be important for some families.

As a carer, linking children with **Aboriginal Health Services** should be a priority as these services will provide culturally aware health services to Aboriginal children.

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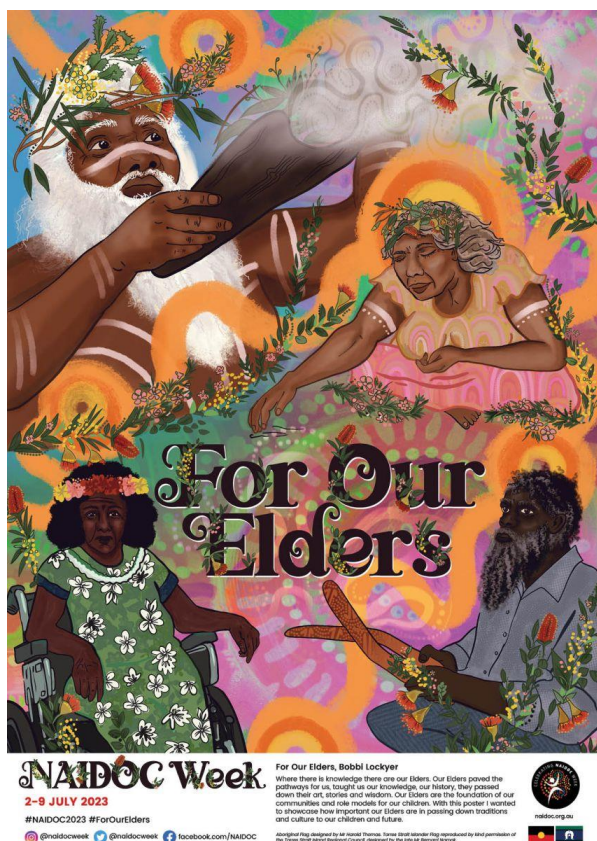
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Aboriginal Knowledge Systems - Elders

In Aboriginal communities today, Elders play a vital role as custodians of cultural knowledge, providing guidance, leadership, and support to their community by passing down traditions, teaching language, resolving conflicts, advocating for community needs and acting as mentors to younger generations, all while upholding deep respect for the land and its values.

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

“Where there is knowledge there are our Elders. Our Elders paved the pathways for us, taught us our knowledge, our history, they passed down their art, stories and wisdom. Our Elders are the foundation of our communities and role models for our children. With this poster I wanted to showcase how important our Elders are in passing down traditions and culture to our children and future.” said Bobbi.

Source: <https://www.naidoc.org.au/2023->

Reflection: Healing and Elders

Think about the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child in your care now or in the future...

How will you support the child's connection to healing and Elders?

Where might you go for help or assistance?

What more would you like to know and learn?

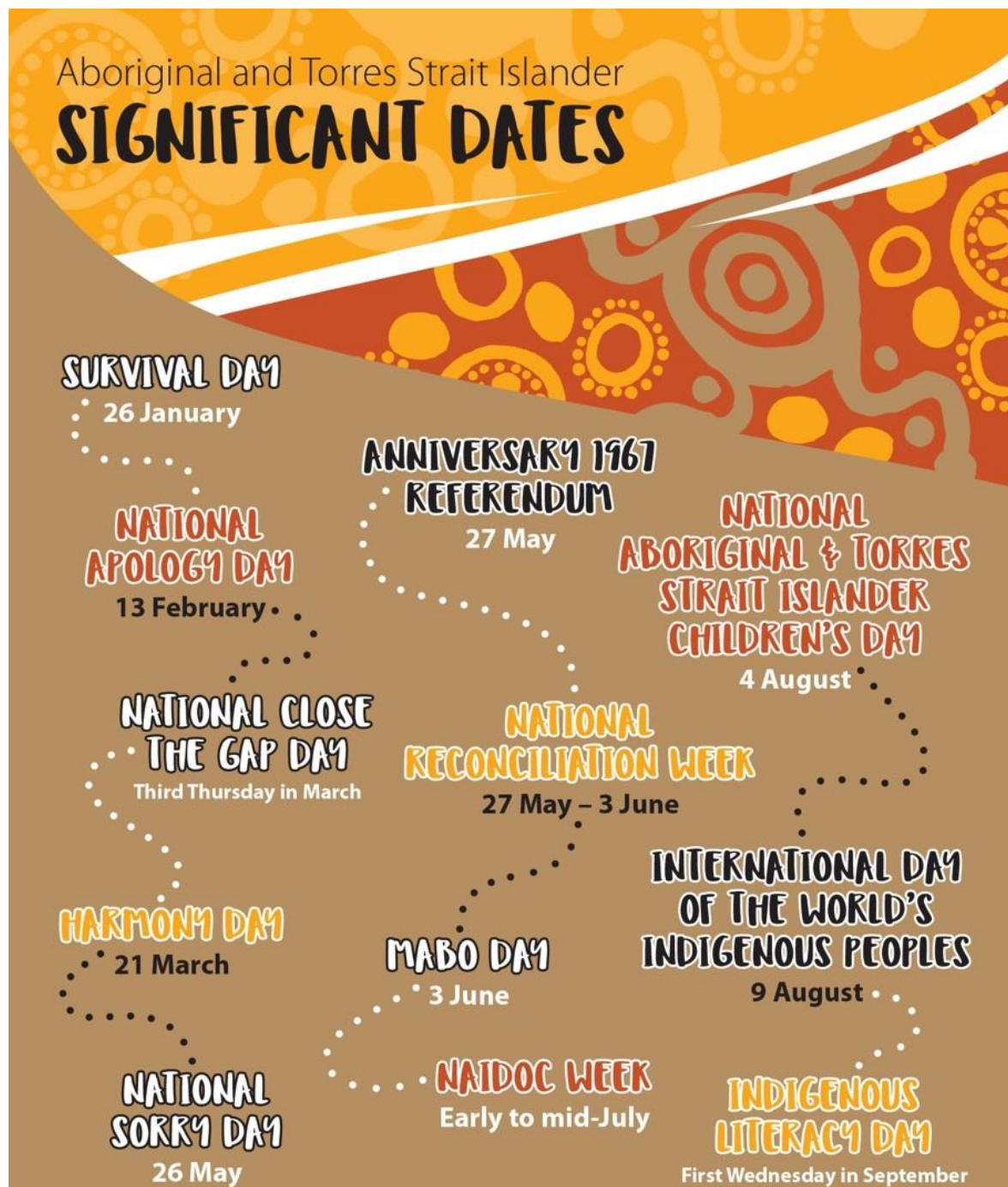
What if the child is not from Victoria?





Dates of Significance

Part of your journey in getting to know and understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their culture is to know about their strengths, resilience and achievements as the First Peoples of this land. It is also about getting to know the significant dates and events that we celebrate as a people.



Activity: Recap

What are some of the key elements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture?

How might these key elements look today?

How might you incorporate and/or support these elements for a child or young person in your care?





Creating a Safe Place for Children



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Practical Ideas

Life Story Work

Attend Aboriginal community services

Participate in NAIDOC and other Aboriginal events

Learn about their mob

Attend cultural camps

Visit areas of significant to the child

Interact and participate in the Aboriginal community

Allow them to be proud of their Aboriginality

Posters and pictures around the house of role models

Aboriginal art

Aboriginal music

Watch documentaries

Visit country

Invite family/ Elders to tell stories

Build relationships with local community

Encourage participation in Aboriginal projects (maybe at school)

Talk about role models

Aboriginal learning materials

Aboriginal books

Aboriginal toys and games

Use appropriate and respectful language always

Be curious

Make time for events – an hour won't be long enough

Support Blak businesses

Watch Aboriginal TV shows and movies (NITV)

Display flags and maps

Understand and be respectful of family and kin





Reflection

What did you hear today which confirmed something you already knew?

How do you feel about what you learnt today?

What challenged you today?

What is one thing you plan to change based on what you learnt today?

What do you want to learn more about after today?

ADVOCACY AND YOUR ROLE AS A CARER

Module Four

Learning Objectives

- Strengthen your understanding of the Child Protection system and your role in navigating this when advocating for the cultural needs of children and young people in their care
- Support your awareness of microaggressions, privilege and discrimination and identify ways to advocate for children and young people who may experience discrimination

We want the people who care for us to understand how the Child Protection system works to protect kids like us, so they can speak up for our needs and make sure we're treated with respect and have our cultural needs met.

We need the people around us to understand microaggressions, privilege and discrimination and we hope they'll know how to stand up for us when we face things like prejudice, bias or discrimination.



Children, Youth and Families Act 2005

Section 10: 3c

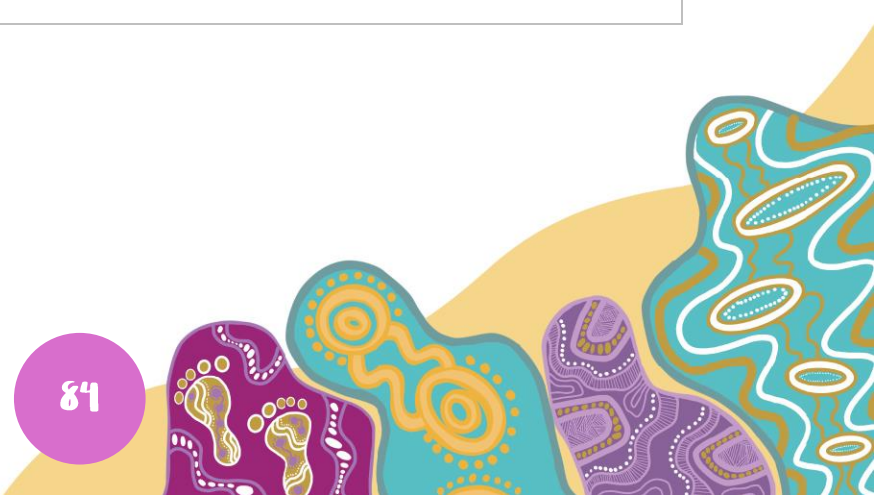
Section 10:3c states: *“The need, in relation to an Aboriginal child, to protect and promote his or her Aboriginal cultural and spiritual identity and development by, wherever possible, maintaining and building their connections to their Aboriginal family and community.”*

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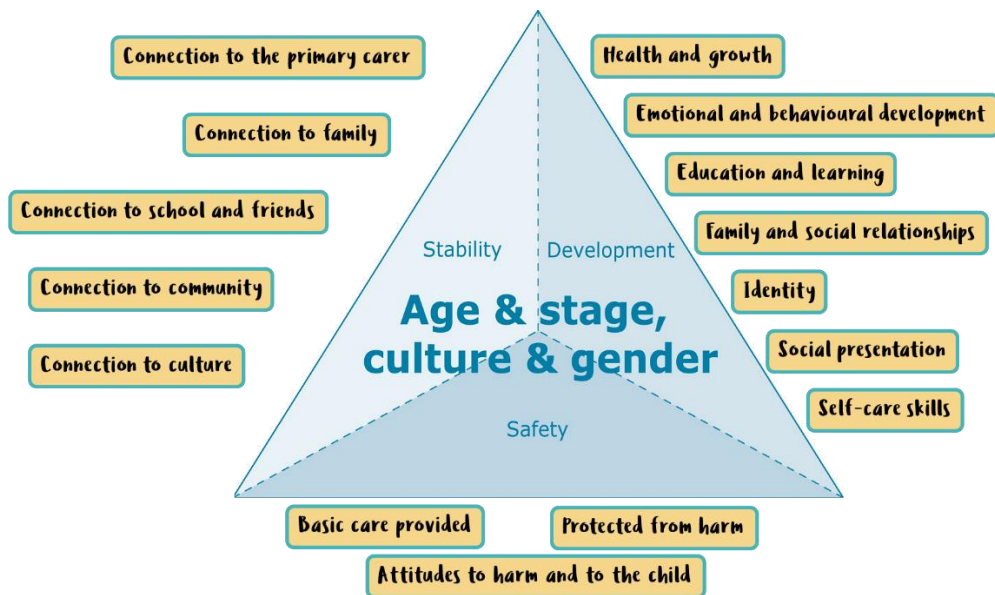
Aboriginal Child Placement Principles

1. Removal of any Aboriginal child from their community and family must be a **last resort**.
2. Decision to remove must include **consultation** with community controlled Aboriginal welfare organisation
 - a) Placement with **extended family or relatives**.
 - b) If not feasible or possible
 - i. Placement with an Aboriginal family from the local community within close geographical proximity
 - ii. After consultation and as a last resort, placement with non-Aboriginal family living in close proximity
 - iii. Any non-Aboriginal placement must ensure maintenance of child's culture and identity through contact with the child's community.

Space for notes:



Best Interest Lens



The Child Youth and Families Act (CYFA) (section 10) states the best interests of a child must always be paramount when making a decision or taking action. In doing so all professionals must work together to provide a consistent focus on the following: Safety, stability and development. Each of these domains need to be viewed through the lens of the age and stage of the child, their culture and their gender. The child's best interests need to be considered holistically and in a culturally competent way at every point of contact within the system.

Ensuring decisions or action taken are in the best interest (meet the best interest principle) there are a number of needs which must always be considered including:

- The need to protect the child from harm
- The need to protect the child's rights
- The need to promote the child's development (taking into account his or her age, stage of development, culture and gender).

These are considerations that must be made by everyone involved in the support for Aboriginal children in care.

To ensure the best interests of each child is understood and supported, we must look at each child's safety, stability and development through the lens of their culture, age, gender and stage of life.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people this will have particular meaning. The following identifies some things to consider when looking

after the safety, stability and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

ELEMENTS OF SAFETY	ELEMENTS OF STABILITY	DEVELOPMENT
Basic care provided <i>Does the home have Aboriginal posters of role models, the flag and other cultural resources?</i> <i>Are different communication styles understood so basic care can be provided?</i> Protected from harm <i>Is the child protected from cultural abuse?</i> <i>Do you need to respond to racism by family or friends?</i> Attitudes to harm and to the child <i>As carers, do you understand the trauma due to past policies?</i> <i>Do you understand cultural abuse is harmful to the child?</i>	Connection to the primary carer <i>Do you understand the role of the child's extended family in growing up Aboriginal children?</i> Connection to family <i>Do you understand connection to family includes extended family and kinship networks?</i> Connection to school and friends <i>Do you understand the importance of Koorie specific pre-school, school and recreation and keeping the child connected to their culture?</i> Connection to community <i>Do you know the community the child identified with and understand the importance of continuity of contact for connection?</i> Connection to culture <i>Do you ensure the child is connected to their culture through participant in community events, ceremonies, visiting Country?</i>	Health and growth <i>Do you understand Aboriginal peoples' holistic approach to health – incorporate mind, body and spirit?</i> <i>Is the child growing up strong in their culture?</i> Emotional and behavioural development <i>Have you understood the impact of racism and cultural abuse on the child's emotional and behavioural development?</i> Education and learning <i>This involves learning about Aboriginal culture and learning from Aboriginal Elders and community leaders.</i> <i>Are Aboriginal learning styles incorporated in the child's education/ learning setting?</i> Family and social relationships <i>Is the child's obligation to family and community understood?</i> <i>Is the child's relationship with their community being maintained?</i> Identity <i>Is the child supported to connect and grow in their cultural identity?</i> <i>Do they know their clan, language, song, music and Country?</i> Social presentation <i>Is the child free to use Koorie English to express themselves in social situations?</i> Self-care skills <i>Does the child understand Aboriginal cultural norms appropriate to age, gender and stage?</i> <i>Are they building resilience against racism and associated bullying or discrimination?</i>





Section 18: Transfer of Aboriginal children to ACCOS from the secretary

When an Aboriginal child is on a protection order, the Department of Health and Human Services makes plans and decisions for the child. Under section 18, the power to make these decisions and plans are transferred to an Aboriginal agency.

Space for notes:

ACCOS in your area: (<https://deadlystory.com/page/service-directory>)

CARE TEAM- Who's Involved?



Space for notes:

Activity: Care Team

Review the case scenarios in your groups. Consider:

Who is in the care team for your child/ young person?

How can they help you in your journey supporting the child in your care?

How might you link with each or relevant members of the care team to support the child in your care?

Racism and Discrimination

Racism is the unfair treatment of people based on their race, colour or perceived ethnicity. It can include:

- Being treated rudely, insulted, or harassed.
- Being stereotyped or discriminated against.
- Having unfair assumptions made about you.
- Being denied services such as housing or employment opportunities.

Racism can be direct, such as insults or systemin or institutional such as systems, practices and policies which deliberated discrimination.



IQ2 Racism Debate: Stan Grant (The Ethics Centre)

<https://youtu.be/uEOssW1rw0I>

Space for notes:

Space for notes:





Microaggressions

A microaggression is a subtle, every day, and often unintentional form of racism or discrimination that can be directed at Aboriginal people:

- **Verbal:** "Don't you go to school for free?" or "You don't pay taxes!"
- **Behavioral:** Avoiding a person of colour, such as a taxi driver not picking someone up.
- **Environmental:** Stereotyping Indigenous students as drunks, addicts, or on welfare.

Microaggressions can be hard to detect by members of the dominant culture and are often easily denied by those committing them. They can have a big impact on mental health, physical health, and social life.

Some examples of other microaggressions include:

- Back-handed compliments, such as "She's gorgeous for a big girl".
- Speaking really slowly when talking to a non-native speaker.
- Questioning whether someone's admittance to a program or job position was to meet diversity objectives.
- Assuming someone's inferiority.
- Being suspicious of a person of colour in your store, workplace, or neighborhood.
- Telling someone they do not look Aboriginal or they are attractive for an Aboriginal person.



If Microaggressions Happened to White People. Decoded. MTV News (MTV Impact) <https://youtu.be/KPRA4g-3yEk>

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Privilege

What is White privilege?

White privilege refers to the advantages white people have over other racial and ethnic groups, including Aboriginal people. These advantages can be conscious or unconscious, and can include:

- Being treated as the racial norm.
- Being given the benefit of the doubt.
- Being less likely to be treated unfairly because of race.
- Having access to power and resources.
- Not having to think about race on a daily basis.



Explaining privilege to children through a race. The School That Tried to End Racism (ABC iView) <https://youtu.be/X9tqaOuGt5A>

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Activity: Racism and Discrimination

Case study: Taleah

Whilst Taleah was playing netball in her community team, an opposition player called Taleah a racist name. Upset by this comment, Taleah left the court and was crying on the bench. Jill and Amara asked her what was wrong, and Taleah told them what the player had said.

Case study: Dylan

Dylan was at the local play center and made friends with two little boys in the ball pit. Dylan's new friends' parents were nervous about their sons playing with an Aboriginal child and quickly removed him from the ball pit. Dylan tried to follow his new friends, but Stacey and David could sense the other parents' discomfort and took Dylan away. Stacey and David aren't concerned by the other parents' behavior because in their words "that's life" and told Dylan to go play by himself.

Case study: Kaitlyn

Kaitlyn started prep at her new school. All the children had to paint their nationalities flag for multicultural day and tell the class their favorite thing from their culture. When Kaitlyn told her teacher she was Aboriginal her teacher looked at Kaitlyn confused, and her teacher said, "What about your other nationalities?". See Kaitlyn has fair skin and blue eyes, all she's ever known is her Aboriginality. When Janey picked Kaitlyn up from school the teacher said to Janey, "Kaitlyn told me today that she's Aboriginal?". Janey responded "Yes, that's correct". The teacher then said, "What percentage is she, she doesn't look Aboriginal?".

Activity: Racism and Discrimination

Consider the case scenarios in your groups.

Can you identify any areas of racism and discrimination for these children and young people?

How might you support the child or young person with these incidents?



Activity and Reflection

Have you ever stood up to someone who was being racist or discriminating?

If you have noticed racism or discrimination and not 'said something' why not?

How would you feel and what might you do if you saw this happening around you?

What could you do if you noticed your child or young person being stereotyped?

Cultural Support Plans

Cultural Support Plans CYF Act 2005 Sect 176

1. The case plan for an Aboriginal Child placed in Out of Home Care must reflect the cultural needs of the child.
2. The secretary must provide a Cultural Plan to each Aboriginal Child.
3. The case plan must:
 - a) Maintain and develop the Child's Aboriginal Identity
 - b) Encourage the child's connection to the child's Aboriginal community
 - c) Encourage the child's contact with the child's Aboriginal family members.

Cultural Support Plans are:

- Owned by the child and subsequently, must be designed for or co-designed with the child.
- Reflective of the stage of the child's journey (individualised).
- Include artwork or pictures the child has completed.
- Age appropriate (example: A 3-year-old's CSP would be very different to a 15-year-old's CSP).
- Use of narratives, symbols, images and metaphors.
- Photographs of their upbringing, visits to country, holidays and outings and significant others.
- The Cultural Support Plan is provided to the child and should be a **living** document.

Cultural Support Plans include:

- **Children/young person's details:** "Who's your mob?" cultural identity, community group the children identify with and Aboriginal tribal/family group.
- **Contacts to support cultural links:** Elder or significant person to provide knowledge and cultural information, children/young person extended family support system.
- **Contact Plan:** Who the child will have contact with, how often and the type of contact.
- **Connecting to community:** Ways the child connects to their community – through sport, cultural events etc.
- **Review and signing of Cultural Plans:** This is to ensure they are being used and are up to date.



Space for notes:

The Child's Voice

What you can ask to help ensure a child's voice be heard:

- Tell me about your culture and family...
- What more would you like to learn about your culture and family?
- Are there family members you would like to meet or spend more time with?
- What cultural activities would you like to participate in?
- What makes you proud to be Aboriginal?
- What more can we do to help you be proud and feel like you belong?

Space for notes:



Activity: Cultural Support Plan

Review the case scenarios in your groups. Consider:

What would be important to have included in the child's cultural support plan?

How might you be able to meet the child's cultural needs?

Where might you be able to get some help, support or assistance?

Connecting to Culture and Community

"Cultural identity is not just an add-on to the best interests of the child. We would all agree that the safety of the child is paramount. No child should live in fear. No child should starve. No child should live in situations of neglect. No child should be abused. But if a child's identity is denied or denigrated, they are not being looked after. Denying cultural identity is detrimental to their attachment needs, their emotional development, their education and their health. Every area which defines a child's best interests has a cultural component. Your culture helps define HOW you attach, HOW you express emotion, HOW you lean and HOW you stay healthy".

Bamblett and Lewis, 2006

Health

Do the activities identified help nurture and support the child or young person while strengthening their cultural identity and connections? For example: Aboriginal health services?

Socialisation activities

Do the activities help nurture and support the child while strengthening their culture identity and connections? For example, is there evidence that the child has had opportunities to socialise with community through sports, art or other cultural programs?

Education

Do the activities identified help nurture and support the child or young person while strengthening their cultural identity and connections? For example: Does the child have a cultural or peer mentor or support from a Koorie Education Support Officer?

Development

Do the activities identified help nurture and support the child or young person while strengthening their cultural identity and connections? For example: Does the child receive behavioural support that incorporates a cultural lens?

Space for notes:





Personal Learning Plan

This is me:

My support agency:

My Learning Journey begins today

(Date)

This is my why:

I live on

I was born on

My local ACCO is

Areas of cultural significance near
where I live are:

To the child/ young person in my care, now or in the future; I promise:

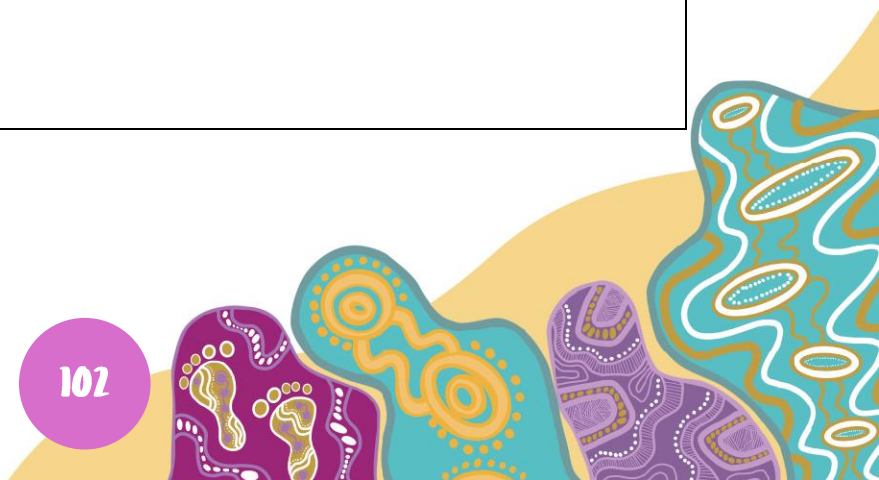
What I want to learn and how

Learning Objectives – What do I want to know?	How will I learn these things?	Timeline – When do I want to do these tasks?

How will I know if I have reached my goals?

Where can I go for support?

My learning journey does not end here. How will I keep learning?





What I've learnt so far

What resources have I found that I will continue to use?

What I have learnt:

I'm going to do my best to keep kids connected to culture by:

Reflection

What did you hear today which confirmed something you already knew?

How do you feel about what you learnt today?

What challenged you today?

What is one thing you plan to change based on what you learnt today?

What do you want to learn more about after today?

Resources

Details	Author	Resource	Description/ Notes
https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child	United Nations	Website	United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf	United Nations	Website	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/charter-children-out-home-care or https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2017-05/Charter-for-children-in-out-of-home.pdf	Victorian Government	Website	Victorian Charter for Children in Out of Home Care
https://antar.org.au/issues/racism/racism-in-australia/	ANTAR	Website	
Killing for Country	David Marr	Book	
Another Day in the Colony	Chelsea Watego	Book	
Black and Blue	Veronica Gorrie	Book	
Always Was, Always Will Be - Young Readers	Aunty Fay Muir and Sue Lawson	Book	
Fight for Liberty and Freedom	John Maynard	Book	
Title Fight	Paul Cleary	Book	
Always Was, Always Will Be	Thomas Mayo	Book	
Black Witness	Amy McQuire	Book	
Jilya	Dr Tracy Westerman	Book	
Lies, Damned Lies	Claire G Coleman	Book	

https://humanrights.gov.au/	Australian Human Rights Commission	Website	
https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/	Victorian Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Commission	Website	
www.indigenoussmhspc.gov.au	AIHW	Website	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare – Indigenous Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Clearinghouse
www.vals.org.au	Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service	Website	
www.reconciliationnsw.org.au	Reconciliation NSW	Website	
www.itstopswithme.humanrights.gov.au	Racism. It Stops With Me	Website	
racismnoway.com.au	Racism No Way	Website	
https://deadlystory.com/	Deadly Story	Website	Deadly Story is a great online portal and resource that aims to support Aboriginal children and young people to grow in their knowledge of who they are, where they belong, where they come from, what they do, what they believe and what symbolises Aboriginal culture to them. It is a great way to learn about family finding, genograms, as well as having educational and employment resources.
https://www.vacca.org/content/Document/Childs_Voice_Booklet.pdf	VACCA	Website	VACCA has redeveloped five tools from the Kids Central Toolkit, Child's Voice, specifically for Aboriginal children, which provides talking tips and guidance for using the tools with Aboriginal children.
https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/keeping-our-kids-safe-cultural-safety-and-national-principles-child-safe-organisations-guide-0	National Office for Child Safety	Website	Keeping Our Kids Safe: Cultural Safety and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Guide).



https://youtu.be/_u12jeClmg?si=zopiRp2ukd2fefgr	Shades of Deadly, Clothing the Gaps	YouTube	
https://youtu.be/Vz18n5p0oVU?si=_eJhpmEdd6Q3o402	SBS: Who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders?	YouTube	
https://youtu.be/DAGBVE3V4s0?si=9M0CrPdyPCNXbsJs	ABC iView: The beautiful connection between people and Country. Back to Nature	YouTube	
https://youtu.be/dHBQhqvFaN4?si=AID6mR5nWglYU9mD	Galambila: Connection to Country	YouTube	
https://www.amnesty.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/How-to-be-a-First-Nations-Ally.pdf https://www.amnesty.org.au/what-does-being-a-first-nations-ally-mean/	Amnesty International	Website	How to be a First Nations Ally.
Tom Tom	Penny van Toorn	Children's Book	A story about a young boy living in a remote community in the Northern Territory.
https://magabala.com.au/	Magabala Books Collection	Books	A range of beautifully illustrated books by Australia's leading Indigenous publishing house.
My Girragundji	David Unaipon	Children's Book	A story about a young boy's journey to understand his cultural heritage.
The Rainbow Serpent	Dick Roughsey	Children's Book	A traditional Aboriginal creation story.
When I Was Little Like You	Sally Morgan	Children's Book	A heartfelt story about family and identity.

Nanna's Day	Jane Jolly	Children's Book	A story about a young girl's day with her Nanna, exploring cultural traditions.
The Binna-Binna Man	Percy Trezise	Children's Book	A story about a mythical figure in Aboriginal culture.
Journey	Alan Blabey	Children's Book	A story about a young boy's adventure and discovery of his cultural roots.
https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/tv-series/first-australians	SBS	TV Series	SBS First Australians Series
The Great Melbourne Tram Race	Jane Messer	Children's Book	A fun and engaging story set in Melbourne, featuring Indigenous characters.
http://www.educationnational.com.au	Education National	Books/Store	
Gathering Bush Tucker; Animals from Land Country	Kiz Costelloe	Children's Book	
Creatures from Sea Country; Let's Learn about the Dreamtime; Birds around the Billabong; Animals around the Billabong;	Mike Ingram	Children's Book	
Let's Learn about the Torres Strait Islands; Let's learn about Bush Tucker	Matthew Ingram	Children's Book	
Wiradjuri Country	Larry Brandy	Book	
Looking after country with fire	Victor and Sandra Steffensen	Book	
Aunty's Wedding	Miranda Tapsell and Joshua Tyler	Book	
Remembering Lionsville; Patterns of Australia; Coming home to country; Why I love Australia; The Art in Country	Bronwyn Bancroft	Book	
Young Dark Emu	Bruce Pascoe	Book	
Welcome Child	Sally Morgan	Book	



Malu Kangaroo	Judith Morecroft and Bronwyn Bancroft	Book	
Our home, Our Heartbeat	Adam Briggs	Children's Book	
Sam's bush journey	Sally Morgan and Ezekiel Kwaymullina	Book	
Come Together. Things Every Aussie Kid Should Know about the First People	Isaiah Firebrace	Children's Book	
www.kooricurriculum.com	Koori Curriculum	Resources / Shop	
My People	Eddie's Lil' Homies	Book	
Somebody's Land: Welcome to Our Country	Adam Goodes and Ellie Laing	Children's Book	
The First Scientists	Corey Tutt	Book	
W is for Wiradjuri; Yalbilinya	Larry Brandy	Book	
Shake a Leg	Jan Ormerod and Boori Monry Pryor	Book	
Emus Under the Bed	Leann J Edwards	Book	
Finding Our Heart	Thomas Mayor	Book	
My Kind	Eddie's Lil' Homies	Book	
www.welcometocountry.com	Welcome to Country	Website/ Store	
yarnstrongsista.com	Yarn Strong Sista	Website/ Store	

Welcome to Country	Aunty Joy Murphy and Lisa Kennedy	Children's Book	
Beware the Argula	Kirsty Burgu	Book	
Big Big Love	Lisa Fuller and Samantha Campbell	Children's Book	
Born to Run	Cathy Freeman	Book	
Ceremony	Adam Goodes and Ellie Laing	Children's Book	
Country	Aunty Fay Muir and Sue Lawson	Book	
Gurril Storm Bird	Trevor Fourmile	Book	
Heroes, Rebels and Innovators. Inspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People from History	Karen Wyld and Jaelyn Biumaiwai	Book	
Koori Princess	Anita Heiss	Children's Book	
Lethal Lizards	Gregg Dreise	Children's Book	
My Deadly Boots	Carl Merrison and Hakea Hustler	Children's Book	
Miimi Marraal, Mother Earth	Melissa Greenwood	Children's Book	
Our Flag, Our People: The Torres Strait Islander Flag	Bernard Namok Jnr and Thomas Mayo	Children's Book	
Open your heart to Country	Jasmine Seymour	Children's Book	



Sky Country	Aunty Patsy Cameron and Lisa Kennedy	Children's Book	
When I was a Little Girl	Kylie Gatjawarrawuy Mununggurr	Book	
Sorry Day	Coral Vass and Dub Leffler	Book	
Sun and Moon	Ella Noah Bancroft and Bronwyn Bancroft	Book	
Super Snake	Gregg Dreise	Book	
Thank You Rain	Sally Morgan and Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr	Book	
The Cockatoo Wars	Helen Milroy	Book	
The Sweetest Eff of All	Helen Milroy	Book	
Wurrtoo: The Wombat who fell in love with the sky	Tylissa Elisara	Book	
Crow and the waterhole	Ambelin Kwaymullina	Book	
The two hearted numbat	Ambelin and Ezekiel Kwaymullina	Book	
Sharing	Aunty Fay Muir and Sue Lawson	Book	
Awesome Emu	Gregg Dreise	Book	
Big Rain Coming	Katrina Fermain	Book	
My Culture and Me	Gregg Dreise	Book	
The Emu Who Ran Through The Sky	Helen Milroy	Book	
Bundjil Creation Story	Carolyn Briggs	Book	

Clever Crow	Nina Lawrence and Bronwyn Bancroft	Book	
Cunning Crow	Gregg Dreise	Book	
Family	Aunty Fay Muir and Sue Lawson	Book	
Baby Business	Jasmine Seymour	Book	
Respect	Aunty Fay Muir and Sue Lawson	Book	
Alfie's Big Wish; Alfie's Search for Destiny	David Hardy	Book	
My Lost Mob	Venetia Tyson	Book	
They Took the Children	David Hollinsworth	Book	
Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association	Aboriginal Bush Nursery - South of Melbourne	Business	
https://deadlystory.com/page/service-directory	VACCA	Website	Aboriginal Services Directory. Including where to find your local ACCO.

Case Scenario: Taleah

Taleah is a 10-year-old girl living in a long-term foster care placement.

Jill and Amara have been together for 16 years and migrated from the United Kingdom (UK) and purchased a house in Northcote. They decided to become foster carers with an Aboriginal Agency after attending a NAIDOC march in Melbourne and talking to a recruitment worker at a stall after the march. They were new foster carers when Taleah was placed in their care at just three weeks of age. Taleah was reunified with her mother and father after a few months and went to live in Gippsland.

When Taleah was 10 years old, she was placed back into Jill and Amara's care as her mother had died from complications with her heart and her father had been imprisoned. Both Jill and Amara had accepted the placement as a long-term idea but were very keen to find out more about Taleah's family in the hopes Taleah could be placed with them instead.

An AFLDM (Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making) meeting was held with two of Taleah's Aunties and her father. None of the family members had capacity to care for Taleah full time and one of her Aunties had care of two of Taleah's older siblings from a previous relationship.

Jill and Amara have fostered seven other Aboriginal children in short term placements and emergency placements with some of the children staying for up to two years. Jill and Amara attended many of the cultural events put on by their ACCO and they developed friendships with two of the Elders who they met at the local sports carnivals.

Jill and Amara have both done training in cultural awareness. They both attended the Treaty Day Out concerts with the children in their care and the Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd (VACSAL) children's sports carnivals.

Jill and Amara were pleased to hear the news Taleah had siblings and set about making contact with her Aunties through their case-manager. At first, one of the Aunties did not want contact which was disappointing, so Jill and Amara were very mindful of how they managed this news for Taleah.

Taleah's family lived in Gippsland, which was a long drive for Jill and Amara, but they drove Taleah down to Gippsland once every four months to stay the weekend and see Taleah's family. After they visited Gippsland the second time, the other Auntie came along to have dinner at the local pub with Taleah, Jill and Amara and they got to hear

stories about Taleah's mother. They set up regular online get togethers for Taleah and her siblings so they could talk once a week.

Taleah was also connected to Community through the local sports club as she had started netball. Taleah became close to some of the Elders as they too had known her family and were friends with her great Aunty when they were kids.

Amara has organised a Return to Country trip. Amara and Jill will take Taleah up to Narrandera in NSW as her father's family and mob are from Wiradjuri country and there will be a festival they can attend at Warangesda which is the old mission where her father's ancestor were born. This did take many months of planning, but Jill, Amara and Taleah are excited to be heading there as Jill and Amara are hoping to learn more about Taleah's family on her father's side.

Case Scenario: Dylan

Dylan is a two-year-old boy and living in a short-term foster care placement.

Stacey and David are non-Aboriginal carers who have three children of their own ranging from five to 18 years of age. Dylan was placed with them as a new baby and is currently on a Family Reunification Order. The Foster Care Agency are working to get Dylan back into his mother's care. Dylan is the first Aboriginal child they have cared for.

Dylan's mum, Kirra, is Aboriginal and her family are from Bindal and Gugu Badhun country where Townsville in Queensland now is. Kirra met her partner, Peter, when she came down to Melbourne to work when she was 22 years old. Kirra came to Melbourne with her three children to get away from a domestically violent relationship.

Dylan's three older siblings were removed three years ago because of domestic violence regularly occurring between Kirra and Peter and they now live with an Aboriginal Kinship Carer, Narelle, in a suburb close to Stacey and David. Narelle knew Kirra when she first came to Melbourne, and they became very close over the years. When Dylan was born Narelle was asked if she could take care of Dylan, but she is an older woman in her 60's with health problems and she is stretched enough with the other three children.

Dylan has family contact with his mum, Kirra, three times a week and then sees his dad, Peter, two times a week on separate visits as his parents cannot be together due to an Intervention Order Kirra has against Peter.



Stacey and David have done some training to become foster carers, but they were never trained in Cultural Awareness and had never thought about caring for an Aboriginal child before. At first, they did not want to take the placement but after a few phone calls they agreed to take Dylan, and they set up their home to make the new baby welcome.

The case-manager has also organised for Dylan to see his siblings once a week with Narelle at her home. Many times, the contact visits have been cancelled as Mum or Dad do not turn up on the day or do not call to confirm the visit. Narelle is always willing to see Dylan as she is considered his Aunty and wants to keep the family close, so Dylan knows who he is and where he is from. Narelle has asked for more visits as Dylan gets older.

Stacey and David soon get very tired of all the cancelled visits and make complaints to the case-manager saying, “Dylan is very unsettled from being picked up by so many different workers and then having to wait for parents that do not turn up.” They also tell the case-manager they do not want him seeing Narelle at her home as they do not understand why he needs to be involved with her or the children as they are from another relationship. They also make complaints the older siblings are too rough with Dylan, and this teaches him to play rough with their children.

Stacey and David tell the case-manager they think Narelle has tried to call them and she has text them asking them if they would like to visit her and meet the other children. Both Stacey and David do not want to do this and tell the worker, “Although we can’t stop Dylan from seeing his siblings. We are not interested in meeting the other kids and don’t want to get involved in family politics.”

Case Scenario: Kaitlyn

Kaitlyn is four years old and living in a kinship care arrangement.

Janey is non-Aboriginal and in her mid-60’s. She has raised three children in a small country town in Victoria during the 80’s and 90’s. Janey currently holds craft sessions with some of the Elders at the local Aboriginal Meeting Place in the nearest regional town.

When Janey was running some craft sessions at the Meeting Place, two of the Elders spoke about a baby related to them who was about to be removed from her mother and needed looking after as no one in the family could do this. Janey was asked whether she would be interested in being a kinship carer for this baby. Janey accepted the placement.

Kaitlyn was placed with Janey at one year of age. A year after being placed in kinship care Kaitlyn's mother, Sharona, left town and had very minimal contact with her family, her community or her child and then contact with her completely stopped. There were rumours she was living somewhere in Northern QLD.

The Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) Kaitlyn was case managed through visited Janey every two weeks and endorsed her Cultural Support Plan which included a genogram showing connections to family in NSW who identified as Biripi and Dharug.

Janey had to stop her craft sessions at the Gathering Place due to her commitments as a carer. This meant her connections to the local Elders became more sporadic and occasional.

When Kaitlyn turned four years old the ACCO worker wanted to come out to visit the home and do an annual review and discuss which school Kaitlyn will attend next year.

During her annual review conversation, Janey was asked what types of things does she do to support Kaitlyn in her cultural connections. Janey stated, "Well I have some Aboriginal print material, and I love sewing so I've made Kaitlyn some dresses with Aboriginal patterns on them, I also made some cushion covers and I get her to paint dots on some of the ceramic statues I have in my studio.....oh and she has one of those Aboriginal teddy bears that the ACCO gave me when she first came to live here".

Janey further explained one of the local Elders comes out to her home, about once every two months and sits, chats and paints with her in the studio when Kaitlyn is at kindergarten.

When asked whether she attends any cultural events with Kaitlyn, Janey explained she is too busy to get out to any and she does not really know of any events on in her area.

Janey said she agrees children should be connected to culture and "Yes", she thinks it is a good thing, but she knows Kaitlyn does not really see any family and she is too little to have to know these things yet.

Space for Notes: