

The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Launch Party → Origins

Video Transcript

Anita Haley

00:00:03

It all started with a little conversation didn't it, in that office that day?

Interviewer

00:00:07

Tell us about that.

Anita Haley

00:00:08

Nindarra came to my office and said I've got this idea about a stringy bark canoe.

00:00:14

And we sort of talked it through and then it went from that to I wonder if we could use NAIDOC Week to launch that canoe and then with the whole of community let's get Council on board let's make it an open invitation let's not celebrate NAIDOC Week as a school at school let's take our school into the community and lead it.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Launch Party → Choosing the Tree

Video Transcript

Craig Everett

00:00:07

From St Helens we've come up the northeast coast a little bit further.

00:00:11

We're literally just in the bush here where there's lots of good stringy bark.

00:00:16

We tried to go down a little bit closer to St Helens but because of the logging and everything that obviously happened in the last few years they took all the decent sized stringy barks out.

00:00:28

So there's only smaller ones left and we can't touch them because once you take too much bark off em the insects will actually get in and kill them.

00:00:36

So if we take more than half that's like ring-barking him and he'll end up dying.

00:00:42

For the future it actually leaves sort of like an identification tag that that tree's been used for culture.

00:00:52

So that's really important to be able to pass on to the little ones and the next generation to show how to do it right for them to have that understanding on working with it and not working against it so we're not hurting the environment.

00:01:05

So it's like really important for them to be able to understand that I think as kids and as adults as well.

The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Launch Party → Harvesting the Bark

Video Transcript

Craig Everett

00:00:04

So you can see that one there that's got his bark off him.

00:00:09

That's the one that actually took him off.

00:00:10

There's a couple other ones round here that - even this big one here is OK to grab but because of the area around it when you strip the bark off you've got to be able to walk away from the tree and there just wasn't enough space there for us to be able to do it properly and safe.

00:00:26

So we actually went for a walk up on top of there and he's real clean around the top and not only that like really important his bark was really really straight.

00:00:40

Once we found her like this and realized this space was quite good for her this was the first piece we took out.

00:00:48

And it took three of us to actually pull that bark off, to be able to get it up to that first section where she's come off.

00:00:54

And then we've done exactly the same process on this next piece.

00:01:01

So this was the first cut we made here on the outside.

00:01:05

And then we do one cut along the bottom and then another cut up on this side just so we can actually get that whole piece off at once because otherwise it will keep running.

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And if it keeps running it's a lot more harder work to be able to work him off and actually pull him off.

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So we make sure that we only, at most, a foot and a half sort of thing and then do the same process for the next step and it just makes it a lot easier for us to be able to work with the tree and not ruin the material that we're taking off her as well.

00:01:33

Because once we actually un-peel that whole piece she'll come straight off and with us walking backwards and pulling him off and then you've got to whip it to be able to get that top bit to be able to break because it sticks on it pretty well.

00:01:48

This one here we knew that she was going to get good lengths because of where them branches were coming out up there.

00:01:54

Making sure you have that full understanding of the process makes the process a lot easier to be able to do once you have that bit of knowledge.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Launch Party → Rope-making

Video Transcript

Craig Everett

00:00:01

One thing that I've come to a realisation of is like our culture is not secret it's sacred.

00:00:08

So that's very important to have that understanding.

00:00:10

A lot of people try to take ownership on knowledge and that, whereas, literally every single Aboriginal person has the right to their culture.

00:00:17

And every single Aboriginal person with knowledge it's their right to actually pass it on not hold it and keep it.

00:00:24

This is actually what we'll actually make the rope out of.

00:00:27

And it's just a process of actually twining the rope together.

00:00:34

This is the actual rope that we'll use to be able to actually tie the bark canoe barrels and actually strap the canoe up properly.

00:00:42

To be able to make sure that it's not going to fall apart.

00:00:46

So even just in them quick couple of seconds like that's the rope that we'll actually make out of the bark and that's very very strong.

00:00:58

It doesn't, she won't break.

00:01:00

This is actually the layer, just underneath this top layer, and that's because the very top bit - let's just see how that's a little bit too brittle and it won't come off in straps.

00:01:09

Where this piece underneath will actually come off in good straps.

00:01:13

See the difference even how that comes off?

00:01:17

So and then right underneath it, like on the inside of it, where this bit here sits, that's that stuff there which is this.

00:01:25

And that's what we actually use as straps to be able to put the barrels together before we use a rope to be able to connect the three barrels.

The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Launch Party → Gathering Cork Reed

Video Transcript

Craig Everett

00:00:01

We're just a little bit further away from where we were just at the stringy bark.

00:00:06

And this is actually the cork reed here.

00:00:10

Notice how it's not real thick.

00:00:12

So if we actually take this one here out we'll probably end up damaging the root and it won't actually grow back properly.

00:00:18

Whereas if you can see just over here a little bit further it's a lot thicker and they are the ones that we'll take because they are really healthy and that way we're not going to damage the plant so that way she can come back and go back to be able to make more.

00:00:32

Normally what we'll do, we'll actually fold that back like that and then we'll cut that about there pretty much where they are sticking off up here.

00:00:41

So that way it's still got the system on it and that'll just reshoot.

00:00:46

Whereas obviously if I pull that whole thing out I'm taking the roots of the plant and everything and that's going to stop that from regenerating and regrowing.

00:00:54

If I actually pull that outside bit off you see them fibres that are coming in there now that's actually a cork fibre.

00:01:03

So the whole reeds are full of that and that's what actually makes it float.

00:01:11

Very simple materials and it's a very simple process even but it's knowing the process and knowing how to gather the materials right so that way we can keep doing it and not only that, like I say, we let the plants and let the trees to be able to keep growing so we can actually keep going back for future generations for them to be able to do it with.

The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Launch Party → Making Barrels

Video Transcript

Nindarra Wheatley

00:00:04

When we first brought the bark in they came in in the morning and we dropped it off at the door of my room there.

00:00:11

We came in and there were like 50 children just piled around this pile of bark.

00:00:15

All they wanted to do was jump on it but they knew they shouldn't.

00:00:17

But they were engaged from the second that we dropped it off.

Craig Everett

00:00:22

Tell him how we got to sit it Jake -

Jake

00:00:22

upside down, flip it over

Craig Everett

00:00:22

- Good job!

Nindarra Wheatley

00:00:28

First thing I noticed was that we had a massive lack of male mentors within our community because they were all boys and they all just gravitated towards Craig straight away.

00:00:37

They just wanted to be near him, and see him, and see what he was doing.

00:00:41

It was pretty special actually to watch.

00:00:43

He's amazing with the students.

00:00:45

He's unreal.

00:00:46

There's one student that we have here, he is Aboriginal but he doesn't normally sit in the classroom very well.

00:00:53

Craig came in last week and sat with them and then they got to ask Craig all their questions and he just sat there right in the front of his feet and just in awe of him it was so cool.

00:01:04

Craig's just managed to capture all of their attention straight away and ...

00:01:04

it was really special.

00:01:10

It was great.

00:01:11

But yeah it's something that the boys really have enjoyed.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Launch Party → Living Culture

Video Transcript

Nindarra Wheatley

00:00:02

I've got an older group of girls that are coming down today as well to help us finish making the tons of rope that we need to make.

00:00:07

I was like please come and give me a hand, they were like, yeah no worries.

00:00:11

So they'll come down and do that.

00:00:13

The girls seem to be able to do the rope a little bit - they pick it up a little bit easier than the boys do.

00:00:19

The boys are good with picking up the stuff and carrying it out and doing all that sort of stuff.

00:00:24

But the girls with the finer work I've noticed they're there.

00:00:27

They pick that up really quite easily.

00:00:29

So it's just something that they can do.

00:00:32

It's really important, these kind of projects, because you get to see students in a completely different way, and teachers, and your whole school.

00:00:40

And it shows that we are a living culture.

00:00:42

It shows that it's not something that happened 250 odd years ago and it's never happened ever again.

00:00:50

It shows that we're actually living our culture every single day.

00:00:54

And so it's not something that you read in a history book.

00:00:57

It's actually being done.

The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Launch Party → Assembly

Video Transcript

Craig Everett

00:00:00

Last time when I was here I actually ended up with food poisoning in the hospital and unfortunately I didn't get to be here for the day.

00:00:06

I pretty much only done one of the barrels.

00:00:10

The other two barrels were already done when I come back today.

00:00:13

And the girls and Nindarra have done have done such a great job with them.

00:00:16

One barrel I didn't have to touch up at all.

00:00:18

One of the other barrels I just had to fix up a little bit.

00:00:21

I'm just going to be putting the three barrels together and actually finish roping and twining them together and so that way it will actually be a finished product today.

00:00:31

That other rope is actually too good to use for the barrel.

00:00:36

So we are just using a little bit of materials that we have at hand.

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Which once again also displays our culture being a living culture not a stagnant culture.

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So it's about adapting to what we've got.

00:00:50

And what we can use.

00:00:53

The girls done quite a good job and there's quite a bit extra rope as well that they put together too.

00:00:59

You know just a couple of days of that knowledge being passed on to them and how much they take in and then they actually see the end product you can't tell the difference between my rope and their rope.

00:01:08

They've done a really really good job of it.

The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Launch Party → Finishing

Video Transcript

Craig Everett

00:00:03

So I want a piece just with a bit of a bow in it for the actual back of the canoe just so that way it doesn't sink down into the water it actually sits up a bit especially when the waves come up around it.

00:00:15

Hardwood's best and it's all hardwood through here.

00:00:18

That'll do the trick, that'll work perfect.

00:00:24

We have our main piece of wood in the front.

00:00:29

And that's so the canoe doesn't nose dive into the water and it doesn't flood all over the top so that will actually make it break through the waves and actually float a lot better.

Interviewer

00:00:41

It's not that light is it?

Craig Everett

00:00:41

That's what I said bro, she's got a bit of weight in her.

00:00:54

And then once we've got that in there and the three barrels strapped together they actually use the rope that we've made out of the stringy bark to actually twine it all together real nice and tight and to make sure that we haven't got no major holes in the front of the boat because obviously the water would just flow all the way through and then once you've got that piece done we go down to the back and we're doing exactly the same repeat process with the back of it and then it's ready to be able to be put into the water and we'll be able to go for a row on it.

00:01:26

How are we going to get to Big Dog if you don't start rowing?

The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Launch Party → Ceremony

Video Transcript

Craig Everett

00:00:04

Speaking on behalf of my boys it's just so empowering to be able to demonstrate our culture in front of people.

00:00:10

But to be able to share it with the whole school and then have the community coming together.

00:00:14

It's such a powerful moment and that's that whole idea of moving forward and that together as one I think, which is really important.

Nindarra Wheatley

00:00:20

The building of this canoe has been such a wonderful and rewarding experience and one that I have been so fortunate to be able to share with so many of you.

Craig Everett

00:00:31

Nindarra, she's amazing.

00:00:33

Just the work she does at the school let alone involving the community and making sure that they are part of it and making sure they have an understanding of what actually is going on.

00:00:41

It's not just a production where people get to look at it she actually tells them the importance of it and gets the understanding there so.

00:00:48

First of all I'd like to give a big big thanks to Nindarra, to Todd, to all the brother boys, and sister girls that have come out.

00:01:06

We actually had like elders from the community not just younger ones like a lot of elders come up and say how important it was and like saying their thanks so for them to be able to come out with that I think it shows how important our culture is and also how important it is for us to be sharing our culture as well.

The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Launch Party → Launch

Video Transcript

Craig Everett

00:00:01

Thank you all very much.

00:00:02

Now if we can have the bearers of the canoe to be able to come down and put him in the water and then me and my son Achilles will jump on him.

00:00:33

Achilles he really loved it because he's the one who got to jump on the back of the canoe with me and Hades got a little bit upset because he didn't get the go for a ride on the canoe but maybe the next one he can jump on.

00:00:45

They love sharing their culture and they really do love who they are as young Aboriginal men which makes me such a proud father.

00:00:56

The only thing that I can see now is it might cause them a little bit of conflict for what they do next year because this has sort of set a benchmark for them so they can't drop below that no more so to stay above that they've got some pretty big shoes to fill but I reckon they'll be able to do it.

00:01:10

It is such a good school such a good community the way they are doing things.

00:01:15

For this to be their first major thing in the community as well which shows how far the community has come from years ago in accepting Aboriginal culture, and people as well.

00:01:27

It started moving a little bit once we got out on the water and it started rocking a little bit and I thought no stay still boy just in case it had a little bit of a roll with it but once we got in our right spots...

00:01:36

They had done a really good job with it, all the kids and teachers and all that really really good at what they've done.

00:01:43

They're awesome.

00:01:44

I'm very proud of them.

Anita Haley

00:01:49

00:01:53

They've been involved in the process so they own the event.

It's their celebration.

Nindarra Wheatley

00:01:55

They feel like that's their canoe, and they should because they worked really hard for it and with it.

Anita Haley

00:02:02

People that live in our community, that we don't see a lot of on school grounds, who've turned up today and who have made beautiful comments and are really appreciative of today and connected with today in their way.

00:02:14

So I think that was really important, and it just all started with a little conversation in that office that day.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Tried and True → Toolkit

Video Transcript

David Gough

00:00:03

We had our churches, our religions, our beliefs, with creation spirit, and who we are.

00:00:11

We lived in villages that supported each other.

00:00:15

We moved around in our areas following the food.

00:00:18

We came back.

00:00:20

Where we are here is basically on a living site.

00:00:26

You couldn't go to a shop and buy the meat, you couldn't go to Coles, like you do with your mum and get a plastic bag and get your shopping and carry it all home.

00:00:37

You couldn't go to a hardware shop and buy a saw or a knife.

00:00:42

So everything that you needed you had to make.

00:00:45

You even had to make the tools to make what you needed.

00:00:52

So Bear Grylls and these guys walk off in the bush with a backpack and they've got certain things in there that they know they need to take in the bush to survive, to do what I just said: make a shelter, make a fire, collect water - all those things - tools.

00:01:08

So we had our toolkits and those toolkits have those same things.

00:01:15

So in my toolkit might be a sharpened bone, some stone tools, a piece of ochre, an eye tooth, some sinew, some flint stones, some dry material, some special sorts of funguses and things that we'd use for tinder.

00:01:30

A whole heap of things.

00:01:33

That's our toolkit.

The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Tried and True → Living Site

Video Transcript

David Gough

00:00:06

I look around this area and just down here, where the creeks run down into the ocean, we've got a huge band of tea tree, so it's a huge resource for us.

00:00:17

You go and cut the tea tree, that's how we will dig a depression out, a hollow in the ground, we use the tea tree and we'll bend that over and make a hut.

00:00:26

We can also use the ti tree for making spears for hunting and where we've got the creek we've got an abundance of food.

00:00:33

So we get ducks and swans and freshwater crayfish.

00:00:37

We're not going to go and build a hut right on it because at night you get cold wind blowing down through the creek, and you get every insect wanting to bite you and you also get the animals' pathways coming down for them to get a drink.

00:00:50

So we just move up around into higher ground into a shaded sort of area, which is basically where the caravan park is today, and we'll build our hut.

00:00:59

It is a living site.

00:01:01

Wherever there's a caravan park on the river and the ocean they're built on our old living sites.

00:01:07

The same use for thousands of years.

00:01:09

A great place of family and gathering and celebration.

00:01:12

So yeah, that's what I like to teach.

00:01:14

I like to talk about who we are and our right on our country, you know.

00:01:18

And for people to understand and respect that.

The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Tried and True → Cultural Resources

Video Transcript

David Gough

00:00:02

Along the rivers and the creeks, like I said about building huts, we get tea tree, and we also get dogwood.

00:00:09

To me it's almost more vegetable-like and it's more flexible and straight and I'm enjoying working with dogwood.

00:00:16

So it's one of our traditional materials for making spears.

00:00:20

So I've just harvested a few just to go through and show you what I do with it.

00:00:26

We've got quarry sites all over our country with different sorts of rocks, so when I talk about if we want to make something we've got to make the tool to make it, these are some that I've been working on.

00:00:39

A bit of hornfels there, my finger fits in that nicely and I've got that curve.

00:00:43

So I can rub that curve and it's quite sharp.

00:00:50

See how I'm shaving it?

00:00:50

See how it's real green like vegetable material?

00:00:53

So it's not too bad.

00:00:55

I can use a bigger piece like that for taking off where the small branches are.

00:01:10

You see all these knots where the side shoots were, so in shaving it I'm really removing that, ok, because this is going to slide through my hand when I'm finished with this.

00:01:27

I'm sure it will help a lot of us, practising our traditional ways, and that comes when you're working our natural fibres and our bush and the things around us - it actually - it fills the gap of who we are.



Video Transcript

David Gough

00:00:02

When you're looking at this spear it's thick at the end, comes up thinner at this end.

00:00:07

So this end that I've got in the fire is going to be the pointy end.

00:00:13

So it's the weight of the spear, so when it's thrown it it's going to come down because that's the heavy part.

00:00:18

So I'm going to burn the end of this spear down, I'm going to catch it on fire, and I'm going to burn it down.

00:00:24

It's going to take a little bit because it's green wood.

00:00:27

Then I'm going to start rubbing it on the rocks and I'm going to make it into a point.

00:00:34

The other thing is when you're working a spear in the fire like this, you're going to look at the spear and if you have got bends in it you'll heat the spear up in the fire where it's bowed, and then you'll put pressure on it, and you let it cool down.

00:00:48

And that's how you straighten the spears.

00:00:50

And you're working your spears.

00:00:53

Through my learning in making them they're always changing.

00:00:56

If I don't use them, if I put them down and leave them, I can go back to it and it's started to bow again, because it's not part of me.

00:01:05

So if I'm walking around, I'm carrying my spears and I'm using them and I'm working it still, straightening it all the time, and I'm working my spears.

00:01:15

This is a short spear really compared to some of our traditional spears.

00:01:18

Some of them are 13ft long, and I reckon a lot of our spears got a bit shorter during that conflict time.

00:01:27 Shorter spears will throw a shorter distance and they're easier to get through the bush.

00:01:32 The longer ones get more of a flick to them through the air, so if you're out on an area like this, like you see javelins, they'll travel a bit further.

00:01:44 But it's all about, I'm learning how to throw them.

00:01:47 Sometimes when I'm throwing them, and you'll go "wow that went around".

00:01:50 It's not just a straight throw, it's actually the way that the front of them are kind of hooking in.

00:01:57 So there's a whole lot more that I've still got to learn and while I'm doing that I can teach it.

00:02:03 So you start to look at that.

00:02:06 You see how it's getting more narrow down there like that?

00:02:10 Everything we had was made from natural materials, so what was hidden from our people, because they didn't want the white people to see it, was still hidden, and it went back to country.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Tried and True → Spear Sharpening

Video Transcript

David Gough

00:00:05

We're starting to get a point on the spear there, see?

00:00:09

We've got rocks around our country that have got grooves in them.

00:00:14

I wonder what they're from?

00:00:21

Once I've rubbed this nice and smooth, I'll rub ochre into it, and while I'm shaving it sometimes in doing that I cut myself.

00:00:33

And I'm thinking about the hunt, how I'm going to throw it, how I'm really proud of what I'm making.

00:00:39

So my blood, my intention, my ochre from my country is in my spear.

00:00:45

So I become one with the spear.

00:00:47

One of my biggest passions is making spears and relearning that craft.

00:00:52

It's part of my DNA, it's part of who I am.

00:00:58

As you start working the materials it's just like switching it on.

00:01:07

And I know that that's just not with me, that's with all of us.

00:01:10

You grow up hearing these things, like: I've got a bit of Aborigine in me.

00:01:14

And yeah, that's because that's what they've been told: they've got a bit.

00:01:18

Well hang on, I want to get those ones that have got a bit, teach them their culture, show them who they really are.

00:01:25

And that bit will be actually: no, I'm Aboriginal, this is who I am.

00:01:29

Get them proud, put their shoulders back, and then a pathway forwards.

00:01:32

I'm not saying that they're going to walk around and learn to hunt and be me.

00:01:37

They could be sharers of knowledge, they can be tour guides in the national parks.

00:01:43

There's careers for them.

00:01:45

If not, at least they know who they are and where they come from, and then they're at least proud, and then they can walk strong and learn a path for this world today.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Tried and True → Waddy

Video Transcript

David Gough

00:00:07

This here is a waddy, a club.

00:00:11

That's a club we use for finishing off an animal quickly.

00:00:16

We don't want animals hurting and in pain, so if you do spear a wallaby around here, or say you're spearing it, you've got to get to it quick and finish it.

00:00:30

Because that spear, if that comes out, that animal will bolt off in the bush for a few kilometres then it will lie down and die.

00:00:38

What it's done though, it's run, pumped all its adrenaline and all its meat's tough.

00:00:42

Plus you've hurt it and injured it.

00:00:44

Out of respect for the animal you want to be very quick.

00:00:48

So this is a waddy, they're all different.

00:00:54

You'll recognise this by these nuts that grow on it.

00:00:58

So it's a sheoak, also a casuarina.

00:01:01

I've just dug around the root of this, I've chopped some of these roots that give it a good hold into the ground.

00:01:12

And then what I've done is I've pushed this whole tree over, and I'm going to use this to cut through here with a stone axe, and then shave this down and then hack at this root.

00:01:29

And I'm going to burn it, and heat it, and harden it in the fire, and I'm going to end up with a waddy.

The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Tried and True → Throwing Stick

Video Transcript

David Gough

00:00:00

This other thing I have here is a throwing stick.

00:00:06

It's a *lugrana*.

00:00:08

We didn't have boomerangs here.

00:00:10

We were separated from the mainland for at least 12, 14,000 years, a couple of times through history there, through Ice Age.

00:00:19

So we are our own culture here, 12,000 years of our own culture and as far as I can tell, cause there's three of these in the museum that I've looked at and analysed, tried to work out, and how they throw them...

00:00:33

There's probably journals and people saying, oh he carried this.

00:00:33

bungana mannalargenna was at expert at throwing the stick.

00:00:40

So the ones in the museum and I look at them and they're notched on this end.

00:00:45

So they'd be...

00:00:46

How did they do that?

00:00:47

Stone tools and chipping away, notching it, gives you a handle, pointed at this end.

00:00:53

So when you're walking around the lakes and you get there and the ducks start to go off, you'll throw this and you'll throw it up like that so it whirls through the air.

00:01:05

People would say in the diaries, it whirls, it's a whirring sound.

00:01:09

Same with the boomerang and you've got to knock the birds out of the sky, just like the young boys would throw rocks and hit birds.

00:01:18

But also if you've got some [roof] of small wallabies around the areas as well, you'll throw it down that way and it whirls through the ground and you can knock the legs out, so he's an expert at throwing a *lugrana*.

00:01:32

Now in doing a bit of my own research on these, I realise that this wood is ideal for making these out of it.

00:01:41

So my ancestors, through trial and error of different materials, had an understanding that this is the best for the job because when you heat it up it releases resins and then when they go hard, it almost forms like a polymer and it makes it really, really hard.

00:02:01

So this is why I'm choosing this to make a drumstick out of and also make a [waddy] out of it.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Tried and True → Animal Resources

Video Transcript

David Gough

00:00:01

So we weren't just killing animals for the fun of killing animals, we killed what we were going to eat.

00:00:05

We looked after the animals, made sure we're not killing the females and babies for the purpose and we use the skins for the inside of our huts as well, lining the floors of our huts with skins, and wearing them.

00:00:16

Like I said as well as making skin bags to carry babies, possum skin was stitched up into bags as well.

00:00:25

Ok, well this is sinew that I've drawn out of the tail out of these rufous wallabies.

00:00:32

And this is what we'd use, and if I wet that it becomes really pliable, I can tie it in knots and it's really, really strong.

00:00:39

It's almost like fishing line.

00:00:41

So we can stitch skins together with it.

00:00:43

There's a whole heap of things we can do with it.

00:00:46

It's one of the main fibres, materials, that we use for tying things and stitching things together.

00:00:52

This comes out of the tail, so if I've got a bigger kangaroo I can get longer lengths of it.

00:00:57

So some of my ancestors wore lengths of this around their neck and it's just carrying a resource around that you can use for tying.

The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Tried and True → Fire Stick

Video Transcript

David Gough

00:00:01

So we can use sinew for things and we can also make rope and string out of our native plants.

00:00:08

This plant is also a food source as well.

00:00:10

So I can use that string in making what I like to make, a *luwaree*, a fire stick.

00:00:27

It's something that we've been making forever, it does a lot of things.

00:00:33

It makes fire, makes smoke, it's like I talk about burning country, when we move on.

00:00:39

truwanna, lutruwita, our country is very, very cold and damp.

00:00:42

So when you do get fire going you do want to keep it going and you want to be able to carry it as a torch and as a tool.

00:00:52

Country is imprinted with us, it's also imprinted with good and bad.

00:00:58

So in healing, warding off bad spirit and the intention that I make this for where I'm going, and what I'm doing with it, depends on what I'm putting into it.

00:01:07

And I'll give you a bit of an example of some of this native grass that I'm putting through here.

00:01:17

I'm going to put a bit of wattle through it.

00:01:21

Wattle wards off bad spirit and also helps you sleep.

00:01:33

Break some of that up - some broken up banksia.

00:01:38

There's also some funguses that I'll put in here, but I'm not putting it in this one.

00:01:42

There's a lot of different things for different reasons.

00:01:48 If I really roll this real tight it's going to burn slower, and I do want to manage the way this burns.

00:01:56 I can make them on country for a part of country that I want to heal, I want to cleanse.

00:02:01 So I've been to areas on our country with elders that are sites that have had very bad things happen, and I'll make it out of things on that site to cleanse that part of country.

00:02:13 When I light these up and carry them I'm managing it.

00:02:17 So I can have flame, I can tap it down have smoke.

00:02:19 I can walk like that and smoke and cleanse country.

00:02:22 I can hold it up in the wind and get flame again, or I can blow on it and get flame.

00:02:27 So if you imagine walking into a cave, you can light it up, you can see.

00:02:33 I come from here and I return to it, and it is true.

00:02:38 I'm always going to be here, and I always have been.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Tried and True → Wind and Fire

Video Transcript

David Gough

00:00:02

They wrote in journals when they tried to research our families and said that we didn't know how to make fire.

00:00:07

We had to wait for lightening strikes and carry it around.

00:00:10

How bizarre is that?

00:00:12

Through two ice ages we didn't know how to make fire.

00:00:14

I mean, all Aboriginal people all over the world have made fire.

00:00:17

So I'll ask the kids questions along the lines of those sort of things, and get them thinking about friction, and about percussion, and about methods of making fire.

00:00:29

I'm getting better at shooting sparks.

00:00:31

It's something I've got to improve on and work on - my fire making skills.

00:00:38

My great chief, *bungana*, was known as a man of wind and fire, so that's another reason why it's very important that I relearn and do this.

00:00:47

He would hold a *luwaree* up and change the weather and hundreds of people would watch that.

00:00:56

It's a very important part of who I am to be able to connect back with that.

The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Sea People → Innate Knowledge

Video Transcript

Aunty Verna

00:00:05

It was a very good experience and it was many years ago.

00:00:08

It was with my cousin, as kids, she'd put us in the car and we wouldn't know where we'd end up and this day she just fiddled around with the kelp and said "come on, I'll show you".

00:00:20

And so we sat down and we made the kelp basket, the water carrier, and we packed it with sand and I carried it home and – but she's passed away now, but she was a very talented Aboriginal woman.

00:00:36

She had the ability and the talent to drag from somewhere, at the back of her mind, "this is how they did it, Verna".

00:00:48

We've lost maybe a small part of our culture, but the majority of it, I think it's been asleep somewhere and in the back of our mind, when you get together a group of women or a group of men, a word that your grandmother passed on or an aunty or uncle, that comes and then by the time those 12 women put it all together, wow, you know, because it comes back and then you've got the culture, you've got the women sitting together, you've got the talk, the laughter and it can do nothing but bring out the best in you and your piece, regardless of what you're working on.



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Video Transcript

Aunty Verna

00:00:04

My people were sea people and so therefore, I think, this coming from the sea, I have an infinity with it and I love the – I love to smell it.

00:00:17

I've even licked it, you know, just to get the taste.

00:00:19

It's part of an Aboriginal, your being, you know, because you know the ancestors walked this land.

00:00:31

It's quite a thrill because you're really on your own ancestral ground and so therefore I think it – well, for me, I mean it makes me happy, it fills my heart and I think – yeah, you know, and so you have more of a go because it's important to you because you may never get back to that area.

00:00:53

It makes me whole, if you like.

00:00:55

I think it makes me who I am, it's all connected and it goes right through my body, down through my feet and out onto the land, which is ours.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Sea People → Harvesting

Video Transcript

Aunty Verna

00:00:06

You need a sharp knife, and I usually bring the old bread knife.

00:00:11

I find that's really good for cutting.

00:00:16

I try to cut the biggest pieces that I can find or the widest part in a leaf, if you like to call it a leaf, and then when I get home or if I want to do it at the beach, I know that out of this but I'm going to get one and I'm going to get a smaller one out of this.

00:00:35

So this odd shaped piece I'm going to get two beautiful kelp baskets.

00:00:42

And then when you start to work it, well then you wipe it dry so that you can hang onto it better and then you start moulding it into your shapes and it's just amazing.

00:00:56

And then when you've finished your basket, that is not how it's going to be, so if you've got a basket that's say six inches high and eight inches long, by the time it dries you might have something that's five inches long and four inches high.

00:01:14

And sometimes they will behave themselves and curl nicely at the top and other times it sort of waves a bit or a bit sticks out and...

00:01:21

when you put it to dry you keep looking at it, but then you go back and it's twisted completely out of shape, so what I do with that, I just take it, I re-wet it and start again, but I only re-wet it once because it gets too slimy.

00:01:40

And if it doesn't work the second time I just throw it away.

The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Sea People → Experimentation

Video Transcript

Aunty Verna

00:00:07

For Leonie and I, it was trial and error.

00:00:09

We would come down, we'd find the place and because we were all beginners, we'd take the whole lot of it and we'd put it in a garbage bag and by the time we got 50 yards up the road, the bag would be broken, our backs would be broken.

00:00:25

We finally learnt, we cut off at the spot what we don't need.

00:00:32

It's just beautiful stuff, I believe you can cook kelp, we've tried it with a bit of butter and garlic, it wasn't very nice!

00:00:44

It's amazing what you can do with it and people get a one track mind, "kelp water carrier, kelp water carrier" and so they make it but it's versatile, as I said, for making all this other stuff and my sister used to like the kelp with the holes in it, the natural holes and she'd say "I'll make a water carrier out of this" and I'd say "but you put the water in and the water would run out of it, you know"?

00:01:11

And she'd say "yes, but it's today, you know".

00:01:14

If you enjoy what you're working with you forget what you're doing, you just get engrossed in the kelp and you forget about your worries and if you're with a group of women, you're all laughing and talking and it's just really good therapy.



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Video Transcript

Aunty Verna

00:00:07

They say it's women's business and then there's men's business.

00:00:11

And while I agree, I have grandchildren, but they're nearly all boys.

00:00:18

And so how am I going to show that family, because there are no girls?

00:00:27

And so I have asked a group of women when we were together how they felt about it because I had shown the grandson how to make these water carriers, and why I had shown them, and they agreed that they felt that it was quite all right, because we have to retain it.

00:00:44

We can't sort of let it slip back and go to sleep again and if we don't have the girls, I really don't mind the men knowing how to do it, it's important and there's some really great basket weavers, men, in other Aboriginal communities and that is a must.

00:01:04

I don't care what practice it is, the elders need to pass it on and that's how it goes.

00:01:10

And then I suppose, maybe it doesn't have to be the elders, as long as it's instilled in our young fellas and we continue to make it and that way our ancestors are not forgotten.

00:01:24

We make them proud and they can look back and in acknowledgment of what has been passed down and feel proud that they had this object.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Sea People → Contemporary Practice

Video Transcript

Aunty Verna

00:00:03

I was lucky enough to have my sister and we went everywhere together, so between her and I our output was unbelievable.

00:00:15

A lot of people would say “What is it?”

00:00:15

and when it dries they think it's leather and we made a lampshade, it was Leonie's idea, and it had big holes, natural holes in the kelp, and when the light went on, you can hold it up, I don't know – can you see it's green?

00:00:34

But the light - ah, it was truly remarkable!

00:00:38

And we've made large bodies, you know, like stick figures?

00:00:42

I've made a doll.

00:00:45

Sometimes our imagination really went haywire and some of our ideas didn't work out, they were atrocious, but we had a go at it.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Fibres → Sea People → Connecting with Culture

Video Transcript

Aunty Verna

00:00:01

Sometimes – and I’m talking about, say a young person that’s just had a few problems - they don’t know their background but they know they’re Aboriginal and so you get them to do something like this and maybe it’s just to make this little piece of string.

00:00:20

Sometimes that tiny piece of string will click and it connects to that person’s heart, that child’s heart, and it’s like they’ve jumped the fence.

00:00:34

All of a sudden they have this feeling.

00:00:39

Yes they know where they’re going – something’s happened “I feel different but why do I feel different?”

00:00:44

So that’s when, if they’re with a group of elders, you go and you talk about it and you can really see them, they walk away and they’ve got a smile on their face.

00:00:54

It’s for the first time they feel as if they belong, it makes you feel good because you’ve done something for this one child.

00:01:01

So one child at a time, one step at a time, I’ll be happy.



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