

# A guide to scaffolding *information reports* with Aboriginal themes



**Aboriginal Education**

Department of Education Tasmania

knowledge | learning | empowerment



Cover artwork:  
'My Island Home' Mosaic by Sarah Self,  
Aboriginal student at Parklands High School.

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# The Australian Curriculum

## The Australian Curriculum – General Capabilities – Literacy

In the *Australian Curriculum*, students become literate as they develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to interpret and use language confidently for learning and communicating in and out of school and for participating effectively in society. Literacy involves students in listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts.

The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA 2008) recognises literacy as an essential skill for students in becoming successful learners and as a foundation for success in all learning areas. Success in any learning area depends on being able to use the significant, identifiable and distinctive literacy that is important for learning and representative of the content of that learning area.

### Literacy across the curriculum

Literacy presents those aspects of the Language and Literacy strands of the English curriculum that should also be applied in all other learning areas. It is not a separate component of the Australian Curriculum and does not contain new content. In some instances in the *Literacy learning continuum*, examples or more explanation are included to show how aspects of the Language and Literacy strands of the English curriculum function in other learning areas.

While much of the explicit teaching of literacy occurs in the English learning area, it is strengthened, made specific and extended in other learning areas as students engage in a range of learning activities with significant literacy demands. These literacy-rich situations are a part of learning in all curriculum areas. Paying attention to the literacy demands of each learning area ensures that students' literacy development is strengthened so that it supports subject-based learning. This means that:

- all teachers are responsible for teaching the subject-specific literacy of their learning area
- all teachers need a clear understanding of the literacy demands and opportunities of their learning area
- literacy appropriate to each learning area can be embedded in the teaching of the content and processes of that learning area.

## The Literacy continuum

Some students move slowly between levels or may remain at one level of the learning continuum throughout their schooling. The Literacy learning continuum enables teachers to plan for the teaching of targeted literacy skills through age-equivalent learning area content.

The Literacy learning continuum will enable learning area teachers to:

- identify the general level of expected language and literacy skills for each year level that they are teaching
- plan how to teach specific language and literacy knowledge and skills essential to students' understanding of learning area content.

The Literacy learning continuum incorporates two overarching processes:

1. Comprehending texts through listening, reading and viewing
2. Composing texts through speaking, writing and creating with the following areas of knowledge applying to both processes:
  - Text knowledge
  - Grammar knowledge
  - Word knowledge
  - Visual knowledge.

These processes and areas of knowledge are used as the organising elements of the Literacy learning continuum. The elements are drawn from the Language and Literacy strands of the Australian Curriculum: English as shown in the table below:

Literacy Continuum	Australian Curriculum: English	
	Language	Literacy
Comprehending texts through listening, reading and viewing	Expressing and developing ideas	Interpreting, analysing, evaluating
Composing texts through speaking, writing and creating	Language for interaction	Interacting with others Creating texts
Text knowledge	Text structure and organisation Concepts of print and screen	Interpreting, analysing, evaluating Creating texts
Grammar knowledge	Expressing and developing ideas Language for interaction	
Word knowledge	Expressing and developing ideas	
Visual knowledge	Expressing and developing ideas	Interpreting, analysing, evaluating Creating texts

This resource demonstrates how a teacher could use a *teaching and learning cycle* to scaffold students through a process of learning to read and write a particular text type (genre) and the appropriate language to use for effective communication. This, coupled with the immersion of Aboriginal content and perspectives, clearly demonstrates how a teacher can support students in their learning by using a more inclusive curriculum. The resources and examples used are a guide. The teacher should use the Literacy learning continuum to adapt the tasks to suit their particular student cohort and subject area.

## Australian Curriculum – Cross-curriculum priorities

Cross-curriculum priorities are addressed through learning areas and are identified wherever they are developed or applied in content descriptions. They are also identified where they offer opportunities to add depth and richness to student learning in content elaborations. They will have a strong but varying presence depending on their relevance to the learning area.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture

Across the Australian Curriculum, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority provides opportunities for all learners to deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the world's oldest continuous living cultures. Students will understand that contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities are strong, resilient, rich and diverse. The knowledge and understanding gained through this priority will enhance the ability of all young people to participate positively in the ongoing development of Australia.

The Australian Curriculum: English values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and perspectives. It articulates relevant aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, literatures and literacies.

All students will develop an awareness and appreciation of, and respect for the literature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples including storytelling traditions (oral narrative) as well as contemporary literature. Students will be taught to develop respectful critical understandings of the social, historical and cultural contexts associated with different uses of language and textual features.

Students will be taught that there are many languages and dialects spoken in Australia including Aboriginal English and Yumplatok (Torres Strait Islander Creole) and that these languages may have different writing systems and oral traditions. These languages can be used to enhance enquiry and understanding of English literacy.

<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/>

# Being Culturally Responsive



Good teachers strive to develop a *culturally responsive pedagogy*. A pedagogy that respects diversity; engages the motivation of all learners; creates a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment; derives teaching practices from principles that cross disciplines and cultures; and promotes justice and equity in society. (Wlodkowsky & Ginsberg, 1995).

In order to develop a culturally responsive pedagogy, teachers must become *culturally competent*.

*Cultural competency* is the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures. Educators who are culturally competent respect multiple ways of knowing, seeing and living, celebrate the benefits of diversity and have an ability to understand and honour differences.

Culturally competent teachers are *culturally aware* and are therefore aware they may be part of a dominant culture and that the curriculum – topics, language, activities, materials, celebrations, displays and interactions with others – is influenced by this dominant culture. Omissions can be just as destructive as stereotypes and inaccurate information.

*Part of providing a supportive learning environment is to acknowledge and value what students bring to the learning situation (their 'funds of knowledge'). This means acknowledging and valuing what students have developed outside of school. However, we cannot just leave the students there. We need to build on their repertoire, enabling them to enter a greater range of contexts by:*

- *explicitly teaching the genres and registers of schooling contexts*
- *making explicit the predictable patterns of texts for different purposes*
- *ensuring that assessments tasks match expected outcomes and objectives*
- *being explicit about assessment task criteria and providing clear feedback.*

*Content and language are interrelated and interdependent. Language constructs knowledge and the ability of students to use language is critical to their success in schooling. (Polias and Dare, 2013)*

This booklet is designed to support the teacher to scaffold Aboriginal students to develop the skills and competencies required to be successful in mainstream schooling and to feel valued – that the curriculum is responsive to their needs and inclusive of their world view. In addition, this resource will support non-Aboriginal students to broaden their understandings; to become culturally aware and eventually culturally competent members of the community.

The content of this booklet does not necessary reflect the views of the Aboriginal community nor individuals within it. It is designed to encourage teachers to examine a range of cultural perspectives in the curriculum and to provide examples of how this may be achieved. Teachers are encouraged to engage with Aboriginal Education Services and the broader Aboriginal community to involve experienced and knowledgeable Aboriginal people in authentic learning experiences for their students where possible.



# Scaffolding learning

## *Developing genres and registers using a teaching and learning cycle*

### Genre

Genres are defined as the patterned, predictable ways in which members of a cultural group use language to achieve particular social purposes. These genres are constituent parts of any cultural group and, therefore, are recognisable by members of the groups. In the cultural context we are concerned with, education, we also have a set of predictable, patterned ways of doing the things we do in our classrooms every day. These ways become so ingrained in us as teachers, they may be taken for granted and, as educators, we need to remember that genres are always learnt and students need to be taught them explicitly. (Polias, 2013)

In our use of oral language, this may mean students need to be clearly taught how to answer questions appropriately in the classroom; how to speak to the Principal as compared with a friend; how to address an assembly; how to participate in debating; and so on.

At the written level, students need to be distinctly taught the purposes, types and schematic structures of the common writing genres as well as how to read (deconstruct) these genres, and how to write (construct) them. The map of the main test genres summarises this information.

### Register

In any situation, the kind of language people choose depends on:

- the subject matter – what is being talked about, what is going on and where is it happening (field)
- roles and relationships – who they are talking to, familiarity, level of expertise (tenor)
- mode of communication – how the language is being used, is it spoken or written and what media forms, if any, are involved (mode).

The kind of language people choose is called the language register.

Knowing the appropriate register to use in different situations is an important part of learning to use English effectively and appropriately.

Register is important for *communicative competence*. Communicative competence is knowing not only words and sentence forms, but also how to use them appropriately in situations within a culture.

# A Teaching and Learning Cycle

The teaching and learning cycle draws on the theory of Vygotsky, who saw language as playing a key role in the interactions taking place between teacher and student.

The metaphor used to capture the way in which a teacher provides particular kinds of support within these interactions is that of 'scaffolding'.

The teaching and learning cycle describes the stages any given unit of work may move through to enable teachers to scaffold students into a particular set of understandings.

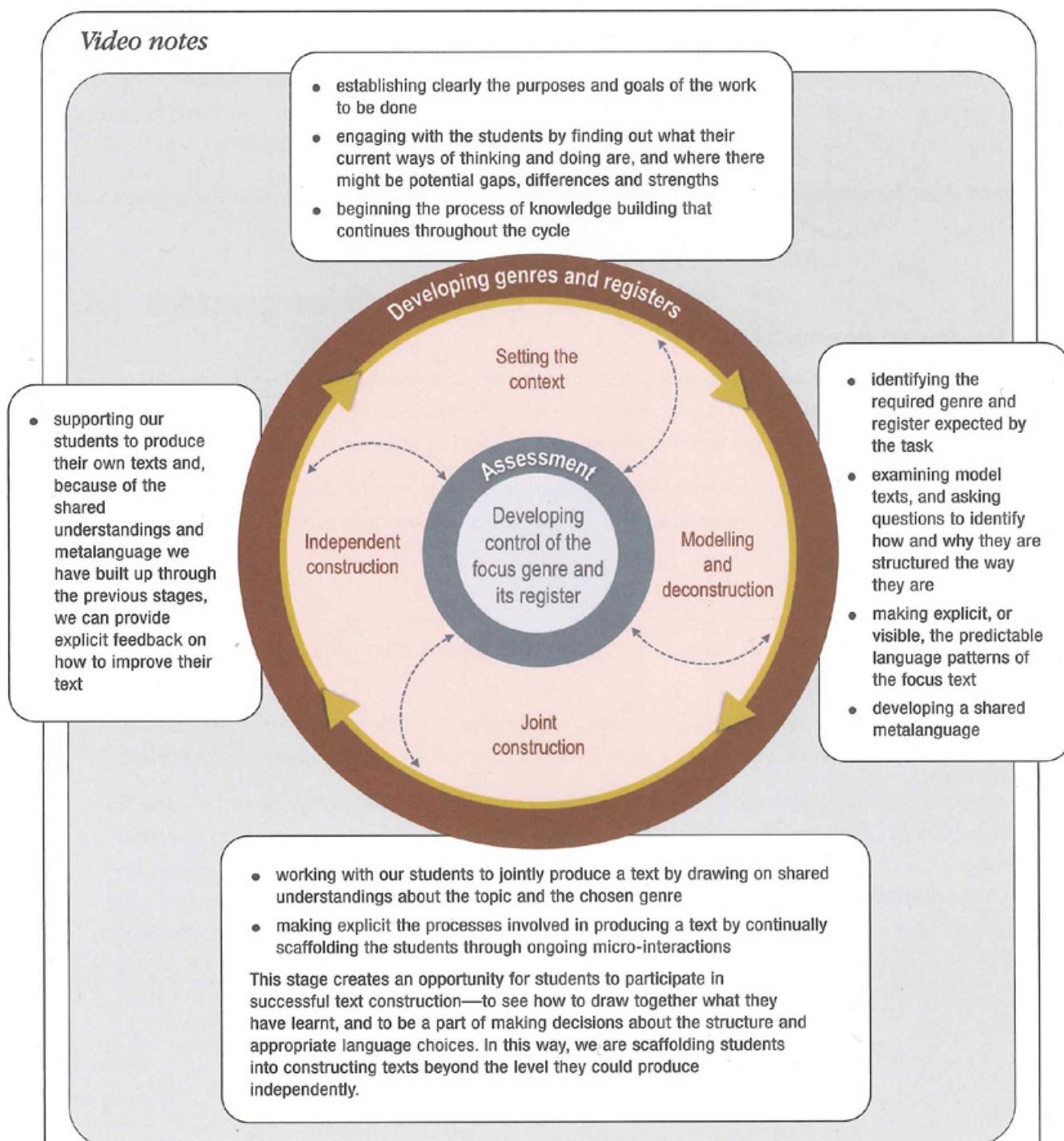
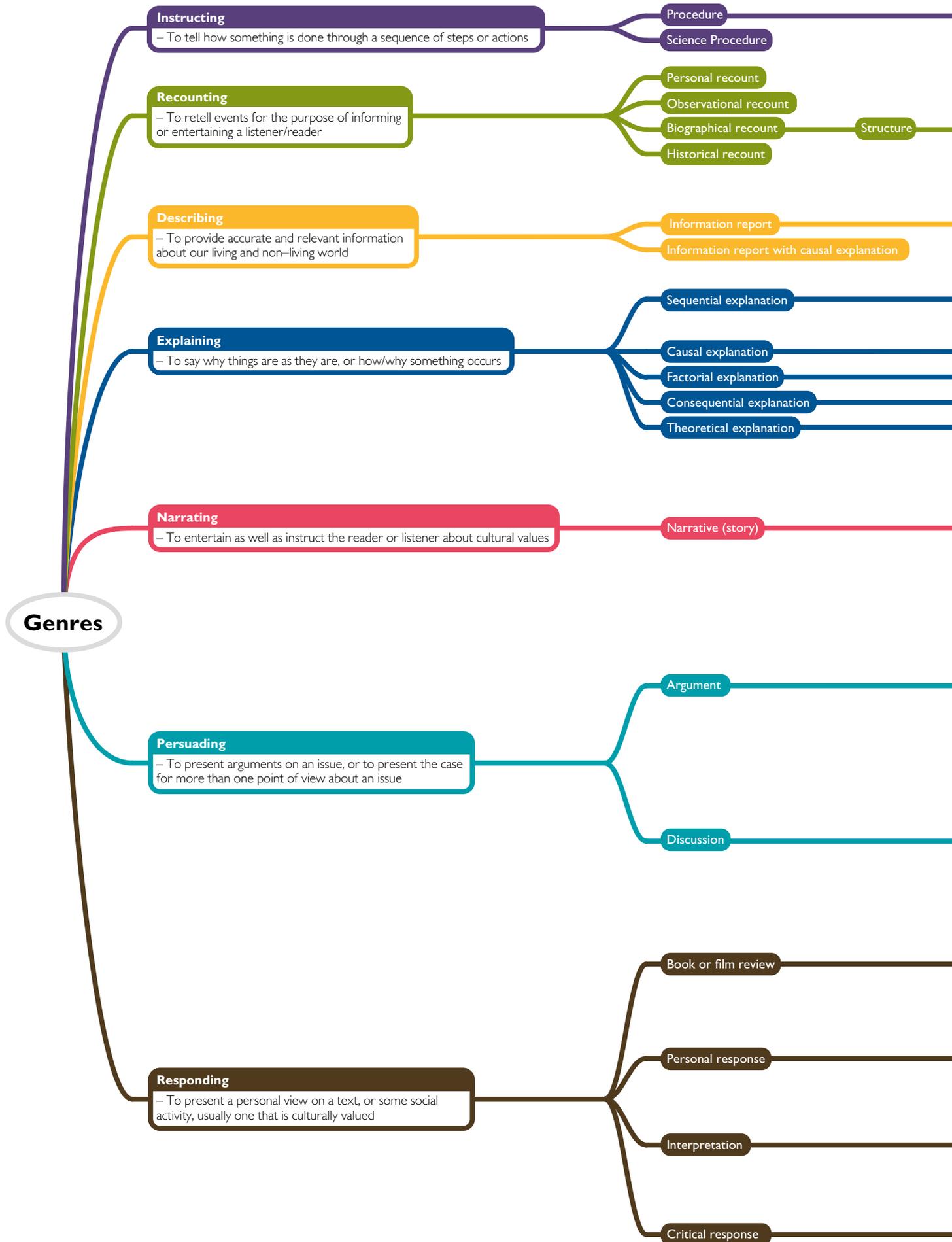


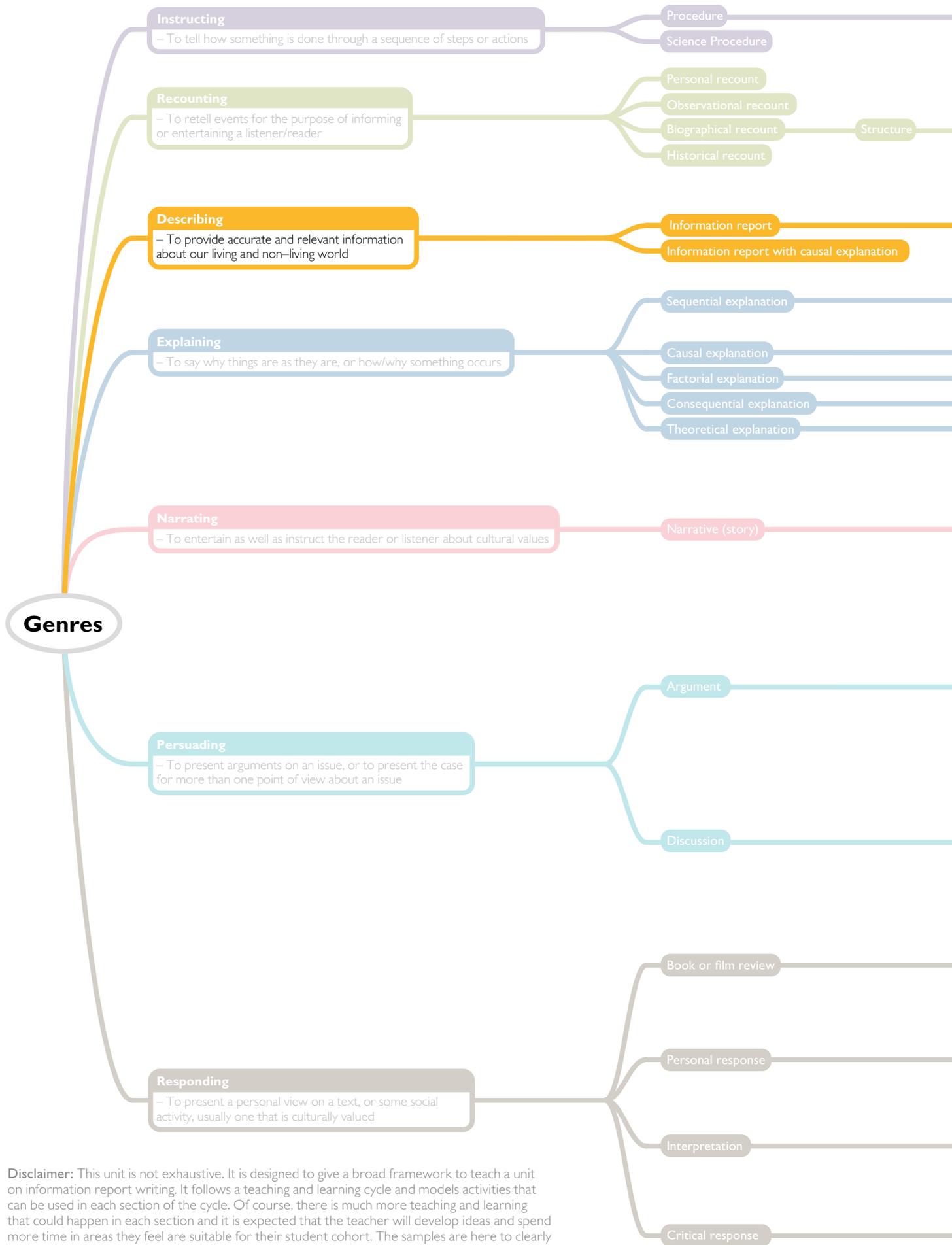
Figure 1: Teaching and learning cycle

(Polias and Dare, 2013)

# A map of the main text genres







**Disclaimer:** This unit is not exhaustive. It is designed to give a broad framework to teach a unit on information report writing. It follows a teaching and learning cycle and models activities that can be used in each section of the cycle. Of course, there is much more teaching and learning that could happen in each section and it is expected that the teacher will develop ideas and spend more time in areas they feel are suitable for their student cohort. The samples are here to clearly show how Aboriginal perspectives and resources can be included in the mainstream curriculum.





# Stage I

## Setting the context

- *establishing, clearly, the purposes and goals of the work to be done*
- *engaging with the students by finding out what their current ways of thinking and doing are, and where there might be potential gaps, differences and strengths*
- *beginning the process of knowledge building that continues throughout the cycle (Polias and Dare 2013)*

## Lesson I

Usually, an *information report* will form part of the literacy component of a broader unit of work. The teaching and learning cycle associated with the *information report* will form a mini-cycle within a larger cycle that is the unit of work.

The teacher will begin by engaging with the students and eliciting knowledge and ideas about an *information report*. Some questions to ask might include:

- Has anyone seen an *information report* before?
- What was it about? What did it include? What were its features?
- What is the purpose of an *information report*?
- Who is the intended audience of an *information report*?
- What sort of information might we include in an *information report*?
- What sort of language features would we see in an *information report*? Emotive or objective?

Hopefully, the teacher will be eliciting answers such as: 'the purpose is to inform'; 'I've seen one on the kookaburra'; 'it has a heading, a description and information about where it lives'; 'they have pictures of what you're talking about'.

In groups, students examine a range of reports from different contexts and in different forms: *websites, factual reading books, television documentaries, text books and pamphlets*.

The groups will answer questions such as:

- Where could this report be found?
- Who is the audience?
- Why would this group of people read this report?

## Discuss answers as a class.

A general discussion to take place about the variety of patterns found in information reports. Most information reports are either scientific (e.g. animals and plants); technical (e.g. different forms of machinery) and sociological, describing aspects of people, their countries and culture. Use the example texts to identify which texts belong to which category and examine the similarities and differences in a broad sense.

Point out the following features:

In general, scientific reports provide factual information about the way the world is. Scientists provide these reports to describe plants and animals. An animal or plant is classified into a group according to criteria. Aspects such as appearance, behaviour, habitat and life cycle would then be described.

Technical reports are written about things such as computers, drills, space shuttles. The reports begin with a general statement and continue with a description about the type of machine, how it is powered, its appearance, important parts and their function and other interesting features.

The third type of information report is a sociological report describing people, their countries and culture. The report would reflect cultural differences such as different patterns of living, homes, work, language and family activities.

Depending on the unit of work the teacher is working on, and in what subject area, will determine which type of information report they will focus on. Examples of the three types are shown in this unit.



## Stage 2

### Modelling and Deconstruction

- identifying the required genre and register expected by the task
- examining model texts, and asking questions to identify how and why they are structured the way they are
- making explicit, or visible, the predictable language patterns of the focus text
- developing a shared metalanguage (Polias and Dare, 2013)

### Lesson 2

- 1) Depending on the purpose of the unit of work, the teacher might choose to examine all three types of information reports (scientific, technological, sociological), or they might choose to focus on one.

#### Scientific

- 2) Introduce the *Scientific Information Report Scaffold* to the class. Have a discussion about the variety of texts that were examined the previous lesson and realise that these texts, despite the different media they use, all follow a similar schematic structure to that shown in the scaffold.
- 3) As a class, examine 'The Life Cycle of a Frog' (see page 21). Discuss this text and point out **the schematic features (use the scaffold to deconstruct the text)**: The title; introduction of the main topic; headings showing the section topics; conclusion giving the summary; photos giving visual details; graphic showing the life cycle; **language features**, such as quotation marks for special words; technical language (*tadpole, gills, mate*); objective (no emotive language); sequence markers (*at first, finally*).
- 4) Now, students can be split into groups and told that they will be asked to identify the schematic features and language features of an information report on a native Tasmanian mammal which they will choose. Students will present their text to the class and point out the features. If access to computers is difficult, the teacher could print off a series of the information reports to choose from.

A good place to get a full set of information reports on all of Tasmania's fauna is on the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIWE) website: <http://dpiuwe.tas.gov.au/wildlife-management/animals-of-tasmania>.

Students can choose an animal; identify the schematic and language features of the text; the teacher (or students) can project the text from the website onto the smart board or wall and present their findings to the class. Here the teacher and the rest of the class will support the presenting group and ensure that the key features are identified. As all of these reports follow the same structure, there will be good repetition and clear understanding.

## Technical

- 2) Introduce the *Technical Information Report Scaffold* to the class. Have a discussion about the variety of texts that were examined the previous lesson and realise that these texts, despite the different media they use, all follow a similar schematic structure to that shown in the scaffold.
- 3) As a class, examine 'The Hand Compass' (see page 22). Discuss this text and point out **the schematic features (use the scaffold to deconstruct the text)**: Title; general statement, description of the parts; function of each part; uses; interesting features; bibliography; **language features**, such as quotation marks for special words; technical language (*needle, housing, degrees*); objective (no emotive language); logical sequence of information.
- 5) Now, students can be split into groups and told that they will be asked to identify the schematic features and language features of an information report on an example of traditional technologies developed by Indigenous people around the world. Students will present their text to the class and point out the features. There is a good opportunity here for some deeper learning and discussion around global issues such as Indigenous peoples connection to the land, how ways of life, climate and geography influence technology.

## Sociological

- 2) Introduce the *Sociological Information Report Scaffold* to the class. Have a discussion about the variety of texts that were examined the previous lesson and realise that these texts, despite the different media they use, all follow a similar schematic structure to that shown in the scaffold.
- 3) As a class, examine country profile for Sudan (see page 23). Discuss this text and point out **the schematic features (use the scaffold to deconstruct the text)**: introduction, information about climate, government, etc. Highlight the objective language and the logical and sequential flow of information.
- 4) Students may choose their own country to research, or given one, and are then asked to present their findings to the class, using the scaffold provided.

Students could access a geography website such as the one below:  
<http://www.geographyiq.com/countries>.

# Scientific Information Report Scaffold

## Introduction

A general opening statement that clearly explains what the report is about. It may include a short description or a definition of the subject.

## Series of paragraphs

Each paragraph describes an aspect of the subject.

Paragraphs begin with a topic sentence.

Elaboration on the topic sentence follows.

Technical language relating to the content is used.

## Concluding paragraph

This finishes off the text and may summarise the information.

## Technical Report Scaffold

Schematic structure	Description	Your text
<b>Title</b>	A general title that refers to a group of things (e.g. 'roller blades').	
<b>General Statement</b>	Describes the type of machine, building, computer, etc. being studied.	
<b>Description of the parts</b>	Describes what it looks like. Words like <i>has</i> , <i>contains</i> , <i>includes</i> feature here.	
<b>Function of each part</b>	Describes how each part or sections works.	
<b>Uses</b>	Describes how, why and when it is used.	
<b>Interesting features</b>	Description of shape, behaviour, colour, function and problems.	
<b>Bibliography</b>	Authors' names (in alphabetical order), titles of books and publishers, internet addresses, etc.	

## Sociological Report Scaffold – country

Name of country	Key features in point form
<b>Introduction</b>	
<b>Location</b> – usually with a picture of a map	
<b>Geographical features</b> – land – e.g. rivers, glaciers, mountain ranges.	
<b>Climate</b> – e.g. tropical/temperate; rainfall	
<b>Plants and animals</b>	
<b>Culture and language</b> – food, clothing, housing, etc.	
<b>Government</b> – democracy, challenges, etc.	
<b>Conclusion</b>	
<b>Visual materials</b> – maps, graphs, flag, etc.	
<b>Bibliography</b>	

\*\* this is a sample, there will be variations in order and information included.

## The Life Cycle of a Frog

### Introduction

Frogs belong to a group of animals called 'amphibians'. Amphibians spend part of their lives in water and part of their lives on land.



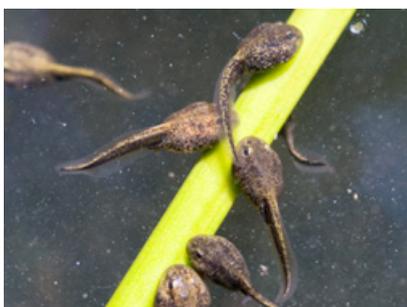
### The Egg Stage

Frogs begin life as an egg. The male and female frogs mate in the water. As the female lays her eggs, the male frog fertilises them. The eggs float as a group in a kind of jelly.



### The Tadpole Stage

From the eggs, tadpoles hatch free and straight away swim in the water. At first, the tadpoles have a roundish body with a tail. They move about by wiggling their tails. Tadpoles breathe through small gills and take oxygen from the water. They feed on algae that grow on water plants. As the tadpole matures, it develops two hind legs. Later, two forelegs appear. During this time, the tadpole's tail begins to shrink, and its lungs develop so it can breathe air.



### The Frog Stage

Finally, when the tadpole's legs and lungs have fully developed, it leaves the water and begins its life on land. The frog needs moisture or its skin dries out, so it always lives in damp areas and regularly returns to the water.

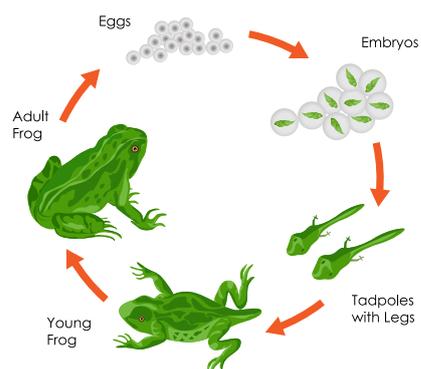


### Conclusion

Male and female frogs return to the water each breeding season to mate. The eggs are laid and fertilised where they hatch, turn into tadpoles and eventually frogs that leave the water for the land.



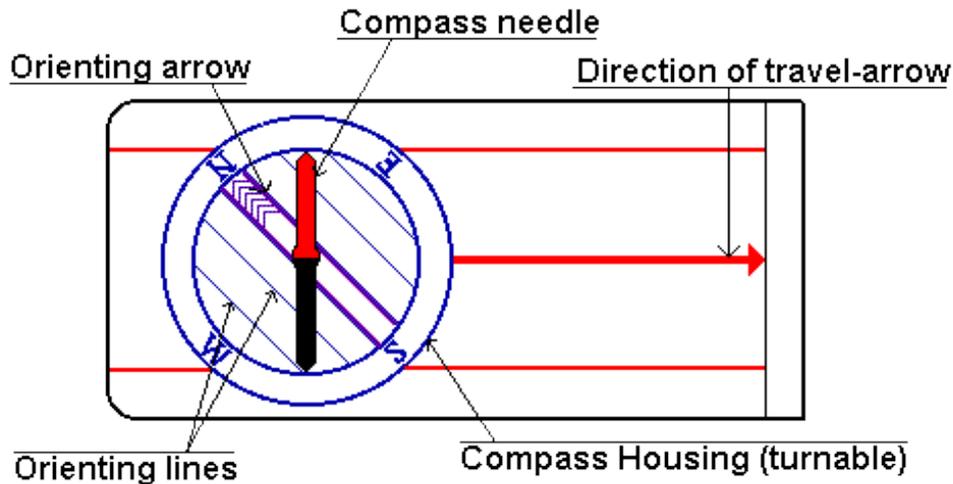
### The stages of a frog's life cycle



## Hand Compass

A hand compass is a term for any compact magnetic compass capable of one-hand use and fitted with a sighting device to record a precise bearing to a given target or to determine a location.

The compass parts include the compass needle; the orienting arrow; the turnable compass housing; orienting lines; and the direction of travel arrow (see diagram below).



The compass needle has a red part and a black part, which may occasionally be white. The red part always points to magnetic north. That is, the north pole of the Earth.

The compass housing has a scale from 0 to 360 degrees and is turnable. This housing also has N for North, S for South, W for West and E for East. It may also have NW for North-West, and so on. If you were setting your course, you would turn this housing to the direction you want to go, for example, South-East, as in the diagram.

The direction of travel arrow points to the direction you want to travel. If you line the compass needle up with the orienting arrow, where the compass housing meets the direction of travel arrow will be the bearing you want to follow.

Compasses are a very useful tool for people who are planning to go bushwalking, hunting, travelling, mountain climbing or really, any outdoor activity. If used properly, they can save people from getting lost, injured, or even from dying.

### Bibliography

<http://www.magazine.ordnancesurveyleisure.co.uk/magazine/tscontent/editorials/outdoor-skills/map-and-navigation-skills/using-a-compass.html>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hand\\_compass](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hand_compass)



# Sudan

## Introduction:

Military regimes favouring Islamic-oriented governments have dominated national politics since independence from the UK in 1956. Sudan was embroiled in two prolonged civil wars during most of the remainder of the 20th century. These conflicts were rooted in northern economic, political, and social domination of largely non-Muslim, non-Arab southern Sudanese. The first civil war ended in 1972 but broke out again in 1983. The second war and famine-related effects resulted in more than four million people displaced and, according to rebel estimates, more than two million deaths over a period of two decades. Peace talks gained momentum in 2002-04 with the signing of several accords. The final North/South Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in January 2005, granted the southern rebels autonomy for six years. After which, a referendum for independence is scheduled to be held. A separate conflict, which broke out in the western region of Darfur in 2003, has displaced nearly two million people and caused an estimated 200,000 to 400,000 deaths. As of late 2006, peacekeeping troops were struggling to stabilise the situation, which has become increasingly regional in scope, and has brought instability to eastern Chad, and Sudanese incursions into the Central African Republic. Sudan also has faced large refugee influxes from neighbouring countries, primarily Ethiopia and Chad. Armed conflict, poor transport infrastructure, and lack of government support have chronically obstructed the provision of humanitarian assistance to affected populations.

<b>Official name:</b>	Republic of the Sudan
<b>Capital:</b>	name: Khartoum geographic coordinates: 15 36 N, 32 32 E time difference: UTC+3 (8 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)
<b>Government type:</b>	Government of National Unity (GNU) – the National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) formed a power-sharing government under the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA); the NCP, which came to power by military coup in 1989
<b>Population:</b>	39,379,358 (July 2007 est.)
<b>Languages:</b>	Arabic (official), Nubian, Ta Bedawie, diverse dialects of Nilotic, Nilo-Hamitic, Sudanic languages, English note: program of ‘Arabization’ in process
<b>Official Currency:</b>	Sudanese Dinar (SDD)
<b>Currency code:</b>	SDD
<b>Area:</b>	total: 2,505,810 sq km land: 2.376 million sq km water: 129,810 sq km
<b>Climate:</b>	tropical in south; arid desert in north; rainy season varies by region (April to November)

## Map of Sudan



Source: Geography IQ [http://www.geographyiq.com/countries/su/Sudan\\_map\\_flag\\_geography.htm](http://www.geographyiq.com/countries/su/Sudan_map_flag_geography.htm)



## Stage 3

### Joint Construction

- *working with our students to jointly produce a text by drawing on shared understandings about the topic and the chosen genre*
- *making explicit the processes involved in producing a text by continually scaffolding the students through ongoing micro-interactions*

*This stage creates an opportunity for students to participate in successful text construction – to see how to draw together what they have learnt, and to be part of making decisions about the structure and appropriate language choices. In this way, we are scaffolding students into constructing text beyond the level they could produce independently (Polias and Dare, 2013).*

### Lesson 3

Depending on the type(s) of information report(s) the teacher is focussing on, the teacher might develop a set of 'cut up' reports (scientific; technological; sociological) for the students to jointly construct. These should be laminated for reuse and kept as sets.

The teacher should jointly construct a sample with the whole class first; then, students can work in small groups to jointly construct their own – one per group from the set. The teacher will move around the room assisting, answering questions and listening to the types of language being used to analyse and construct the text. The teacher will need to prepare sample texts such as those proceeding. It is a good idea to cut out and laminate the texts for reuse.

*nb: Depending on the age of your students, the task can be increased in difficulty, with students being required to compile individual sentences, for example. A range has been shown in the samples provided.*

Students should present their text to the class. The text should be read out in full and the reasons then given for why the text was constructed the way it was and the language features of the text.

*nb: Depending on how much teaching is required around parts of the text, there is an opportunity here to go further and, for example, cut the topic sentences off paragraphs and ask students to match these with the rest of the paragraph and teach more deeply about topic sentences.*

There is, of course, an opportunity to discuss the content of the texts here and for the teacher to expand the learning around this information in any way they see fit. The following are examples of how the teacher might delve into the subject matter more deeply and in a way that is culturally responsive to Aboriginal perspectives and understandings.

### 1) Scientific reports – using Tasmanian/Australian mammals

Once the groups have presented their joint construction to the class, they could choose to study the animal they were given, or select their own from the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIWE) website... <http://dpiwewe.tas.gov.au/wildlife-management/animals-of-tasmania>.

The teacher might also like to expand the selection to Australian mammals. This website may be useful: <http://www.ozanimals.com/australian-mammal-index.html>.

Students could use the information to develop their own information report, but insert a new section: **Significance to Aboriginal Peoples**.

Students could research how their animal is understood and appreciated within the cultures of Aboriginal people (mainland or Tasmanian). There is also an opportunity here to contact Aboriginal Education Services to organise a member of the Aboriginal community, through the Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge (ASK) Program, to come to the school or to take the students on Country to share their skills and knowledge in this area.

### 2) Technical reports – Using Indigenous technologies

Once students have jointly constructed and presented their Indigenous technology information report to the class, there is an opportunity to expand on the learning in this area. It is worthwhile contacting Aboriginal Education Services to organise a member of the Aboriginal community, through the Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge (ASK) Program, to come to the school or to take the students on Country to share their skills and knowledge in this area.

Depending on what parts of the Australian Curriculum are being covered, and under guidance, groups could have an attempt at constructing these pieces of technology and testing them out. They could present a recorded format of their journey through digital media, orally, or in another form, recording the construction, testing and success of their work. Part of the presentation should include a discussion about how the technology would have been used by, or is still used by, Aboriginal people.

### 3) Sociological Reports

*NB: If the information report on Australia contains information in the introduction that may be considered offensive to Aboriginal people. There is a good opportunity here to teach students to be 'discerning' as they examine any text.*

There is an opportunity to deepen the learning with regards to the 'Australia' country report and to consider the perspectives of Aboriginal people about this information. The teacher could project the introductory paragraph onto the board and analyse it with the class. Explain that because reports are written in an objective tone and look very official, we tend to accept their information as fact. The teacher could highlight parts of the text (see below) and discuss why they might be controversial or 'loaded' with western bias.

Aboriginal settlers arrived on the continent from Southeast Asia about 40,000 years before the first Europeans began exploration in the 17th century. No formal territorial claims were made until 1770, when Capt. James COOK took possession in the name of Great Britain. Six colonies were created in the late 18th and 19th centuries; they federated and became the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901. The new country took advantage of its natural resources to rapidly develop agricultural and manufacturing industries and to make a major contribution to the British effort in World Wars I and II. In recent decades, Australia has transformed itself into an internationally competitive, advanced market economy. It boasted one of the OECD's fastest growing economies during the 1990s, a performance due in large part to economic reforms adopted in the 1980s. Long-term concerns include pollution, particularly depletion of the ozone layer, and management and conservation of coastal areas, especially the Great Barrier Reef.

. No formal territorial claims were made until 1770

This is an interesting concept. What does it mean? Who would Indigenous people lodge formal claims with when they were simply living on their land? Does this presume that Britain was the only place that 'formal territorial claim' could be lodged? Most Indigenous peoples were unaware of Britain's existence! The tone is also one of superiority. That is, that European law was and is the only law that the human population should adhere to. This statement is extremely Eurocentric.

Capt. James COOK took possession in the name of Great Britain.

This suggests that Aborigines ceded their land and that there was some sort of formal transfer. Aborigines have never ceded their land.

. The new country

This appears to deny the existence of Aborigines prior to colonisation.

Long-term concerns include

This is a biased perspective. If you were to ask an Aboriginal person, 'long term concerns' might include land rights; social disadvantage; self-determination; deaths in custody; access to parliament; and so on.

Starting on page 29 is a set of information reports that are summarised from the work of Lyndall Ryan *Tasmanian Aborigines: A history since 1803*. These reports describe the existence and movements of the nine Aboriginal nations existing when British invasion occurred in 1803 and would be suited to multiple areas of the Australian Curriculum. These reports could be jointly reconstructed, used with the sociological scaffold, or in a number of other ways. For the broader education of the class, each group could present their 'nation' with a projection of all nine nations on a map of Tasmania and showing the movements and interactions of their nation in relation to the others. Deeper learning and more time could easily be spent here.

## SCIENTIFIC Spotted-tail Quoll



### Description

The spotted-tailed quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus* – or tiger cat as it was once inappropriately known) is the second largest of the world's surviving carnivorous marsupials. Spotted-tailed quolls vary from reddish brown to dark chocolate brown with white spots on the body and tail (unlike eastern quolls which do not have spots on the tail). The species is considerably larger than the eastern quoll, with males measuring up to 130 cm long and 4 kg in weight. Females are significantly smaller than males.



The eyes and ears of the spotted-tailed quoll are comparatively smaller than those of fellow marsupial the eastern quoll. Also, the spotted-tailed quoll is physically strong in appearance, with a thick snout and wide gape.



### Distribution and habitat

The spotted-tailed quoll is also found on the east coast of mainland Australia, but is rare. Two subspecies have been described – a smaller one (*D. m. gracilis*) is found in northern Queensland. *D. m. maculatus* occurs from southern Queensland to Tasmania. The spotted-tailed quoll is now threatened throughout its mainland range.

Spotted-tailed quolls are most common in cool temperate rainforest, wet sclerophyll forest and coastal scrub along the north and west coasts of the state.



### Behaviour and diet

Spotted-tail quolls are largely solitary and nocturnal, although the species does sometimes forage and bask during daylight hours. Spotted-tailed quolls spend a tenth of their time moving with agility above the forest floor on logs or in trees.



The spotted-tailed quoll is a capable hunter that, like the eastern quoll, kills its prey by biting on or behind the head. Prey taken by the spotted-tailed quoll include rats, gliding possums, small or injured wallabies, reptiles and insects. Birds and eggs are also taken from time to time. Carrion is frequently eaten by spotted-tailed quolls and even tip scavenging and beachcombing occur. Large spotted-tailed quolls compete directly with Tasmanian devils for food – one female has even been seen to chase a Tasmanian devil away from a carcase!



### Breeding

Breeding is similar to the eastern quoll. Females breed only once a year unless they fail to find a mate or lose their litter early, at which time they will try to breed again. Breeding occurs in early winter with females giving birth to up to six young after a gestation period of 21 days. After about 10 weeks the young are left in grass-lined dens located in burrows or hollow logs leaving the female free to hunt and forage. If the female needs to move to a different den she carries the young along on her back. Towards the end of November, when the young are 18 to 20 weeks old, they are weaned (stop suckling) and become independent of the female. Sexual maturity is reached at one year.



### Status

The species is fully protected in Tasmania.



## SOCIOLOGICAL Australia

### Introduction

Aboriginal settlers arrived on the continent from Southeast Asia about 40,000 years before the first Europeans began exploration in the 17th century. No formal territorial claims were made until 1770, when Capt. James COOK took possession in the name of Great Britain. Six colonies were created in the late 18th and 19th centuries; they federated and became the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901. The new country took advantage of its natural resources to rapidly develop agricultural and manufacturing industries and to make a major contribution to the British effort in World Wars I and II. In recent decades, Australia has transformed itself into an internationally competitive, advanced market economy. It boasted one of the OECD's fastest growing economies during the 1990s, a performance due in large part to economic reforms adopted in the 1980s. Long-term concerns include pollution, particularly depletion of the ozone layer, and management and conservation of coastal areas, especially the Great Barrier Reef.

<b>Official name:</b>	Commonwealth of Australia
<b>Capital:</b>	name: Canberra geographic coordinates: 35 17 S, 149 13 E time difference: UTC+10 (15 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time) daylight saving time: +1hr; begins last Sunday in October; ends last Sunday in March note: Australia is divided in
<b>Government type:</b>	federal parliamentary democracy
<b>Population:</b>	20,434,176 (July 2007 est.)
<b>Languages:</b>	English 79.1%, Chinese 2.1%, Italian 1.9%, other 11.1%, unspecified 5.8% (2001 Census)
<b>Official Currency:</b>	Australian Dollar (AUD) Current Australian Dollar Exchange Rates Historical Australian Dollar Exchange Rates Chart Australian Dollar Exchange Rates
<b>Currency code:</b>	AUD
<b>Area:</b>	total: 7,686,850 sq km land: 7,617,930 sq km water: 68,920 sq km note: includes Lord Howe Island and Macquarie Island
<b>Climate:</b>	generally arid to semiarid; temperate in south and east; tropical in north

Source: Geography IQ [http://www.geographyiq.com/countries/as/Australia\\_map\\_flag\\_geography.htm](http://www.geographyiq.com/countries/as/Australia_map_flag_geography.htm)

## Tasmanian Nations

No-one knows when Aborigines first came to Tasmania, or Trouwunna as it was known before being named Tasmania. What we do know is that they have been living in this part of Australia for more than 23,000 years.

The Trouwunna people managed their land well. They moved from place to place throughout the year and in this way avoided taking all the resources from any one area. Through their careful use of fire they created grazing land where rainforest or dense scrub normally would have grown. Animals such as wallabies, forester kangaroos and wombats were attracted to these open areas and, with plenty of food available, their numbers increased. As well, plants needed by the Aborigines could flourish. As a result of their good management, food and raw materials for houses, weapons and tools were plentiful. In addition, around rivers, swamps and lakes there was an abundance of birdlife, and the sea provided materials that the Aborigines used for tools and trade, as well as a wide range of food.

There were few dangers in this gentle land of plenty. Sharks and seals sometimes attacked, and snakes occasionally were a problem. Sometimes people were hurt in accidents like being burnt in a fire or struck by lightning. At times there were battles between tribes, during which people were injured or killed. But these were rare. People believed that they could guard against most dangers by obeying tribal rules and following correct religious rituals.

Aborigines' lives were well ordered and satisfying. It was very important for people to be with their family and to take part in group activities, so individuals were rarely alone. The size of families varied but was often as many as 11 or 12 people. This was because grandparents and some of their children and grandchildren usually lived as one family. Most of the time about six or eight closely related families stayed together and formed a band of people. The members of each band were responsible for looking after an area of land that was considered to be their traditional homeland.<sup>1</sup>

Professor Lyndall Ryan in her book: 'Tasmanian Aborigines: A History since 1803'<sup>2</sup> provides the following information. At British invasion in 1803, there may have been up to 100 clans in Trouwunna. Forty-eight have been identified by physical anthropologist Brian Plomley. The average clan contained between 40 and 50 people, therefore, the population of the Tasmanian Aboriginal society is estimated to have been between 3,000 and 10,000 people.

Each clan was associated with a political unit, now known as a 'nation'. Clans who belonged to a nation spoke the same dialect, lived nearby, shared the same cultural traits, usually intermarried, had similar patterns of seasonal movement, met together regularly for economic or other reasons and generally formed an alliance for military or other reasons.

Each nation had clearly defined territory and consisted of all the land owned by its clans. Movement outside the territory and of alien clans inside it, was carefully sanctioned. Such movements usually had reciprocal economic advantages to clans concerned, while trespass was usually a challenge to or punishable by war. Its borders ranged from a very well defined line to a broad transition zone often found between two friendly nations.

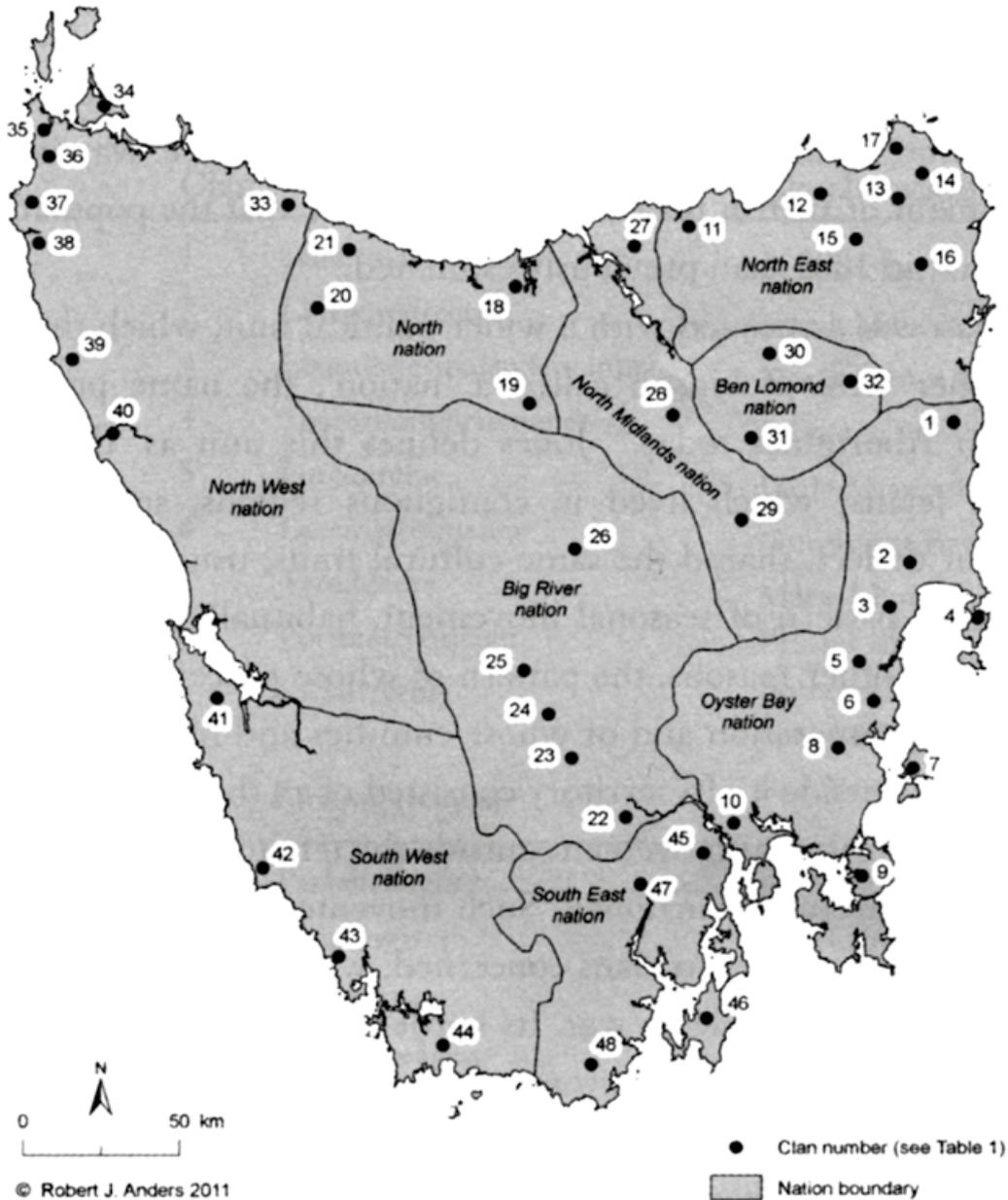
Over more than 40,000 years of history, at the beginning of which they were the most southerly occupants of the globe, the Tasmanian Aborigines appear to have adapted their human behaviour and technology in relation to changing climates and ecologies and, by implication, changing social and cultural strategies. In the period immediately before British invasion they appear to have been physically

<sup>1</sup> The above text was taken from "Living with the Land: Aborigines in Tasmania – Book One: Invasion" published by the Department of Education and The Arts, Tasmania, Australia in 1989.

<sup>2</sup> Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, New South Wales; 2012.

enlarging their ecological universe, not 'dying out'. They were creating productive tracts of out of non-productive vegetation and journeying to islands to the north and south in search of rich sources of food. They knew how to make fire, like all other human population in other parts of the world, and, as in most other hunter-gatherer coastal societies, scale-fish was an important part of their diet.

It appears that in the decade before British invasion in 1803 the population of the nine nations was considerably greater than earlier estimates of 4,000; probably closer to 7,000 and most likely increasing. It was this dynamic society that confronted the British invaders.



**Map 3** Nation boundaries and clans

Ryan, Lyndall, *Tasmanian Aborigines: A history since 1803*, Allen and Unwin, 2012.

Alexander, Alison (Ed.) *The Companion to Tasmanian History*, Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies, 2005.

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG), [http://www.tmag.tas.gov.au/learning\\_and\\_discovery/learning\\_resources/online\\_resources](http://www.tmag.tas.gov.au/learning_and_discovery/learning_resources/online_resources)

## Oyster Bay Nation

The Oyster Bay nation appears to have been the largest in Trouwunna if not in area, then certainly in population. It consisted of at least ten clans producing an estimated population of between 700 and 800. The Oyster Bay nation probably spoke the north eastern Tasmanian language.

The clan was divided into three clearly defined groups according to seasonal patterns of movement in their search for food and the maintenance of ceremonial obligations. The first group consisted of the four clans from St Patrick's Head to Schouten Island; the second comprised four clans from Little Swanport to the Tasman Peninsula; and the third consisted of the two clans from Maria Island and Pittwater. Each winter would find all three groups on the coastal areas of their territories living on shellfish and marine vegetables and hunting small animals until the end of July, when swans and ducks arrived in lagoons and riverine areas to lay their eggs and bring up their young.

In August, most of the clans from the second group moved up the Little Swanport and Prosser rivers to Rushy and Crown lagoons in the Eastern Marshes, where there were birds, kangaroos and wallabies.

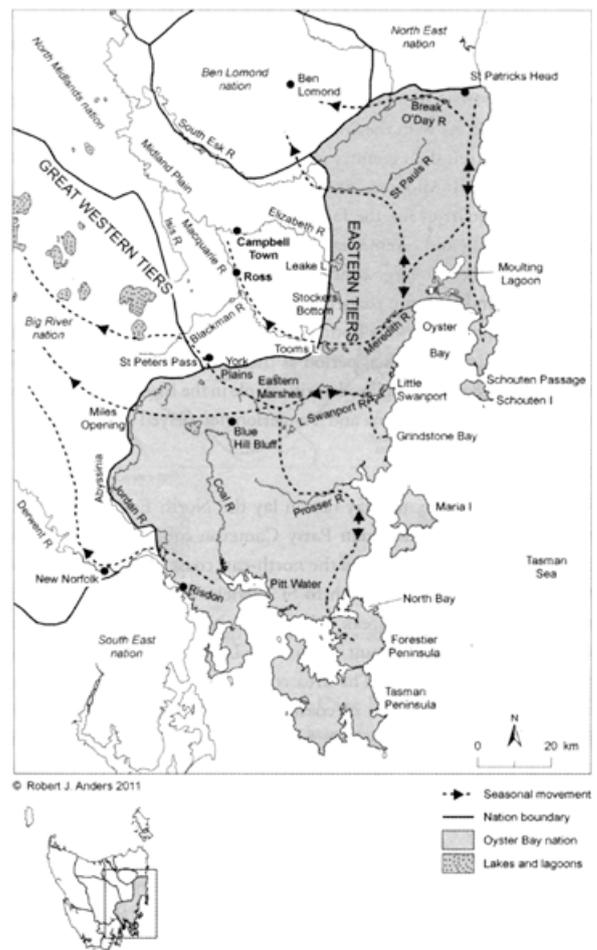
As summer drew near, they moved further west, hunting and firing the bush for game. The Moomairremener, from the third group, near Pittwater moved west up the River Derwent to New Norfolk and then on to the Clyde and Ouse rivers. These were all well-defined routes, usually along territorial borders, designed for 'maximum access and minimum trespass'.

Not all the clans travelled west every spring and summer. The clans from Maria Island and the Tasman Peninsula were more likely to use their watercraft to forage within their own rich resource areas all year round, but did make some visits to other areas for major ceremonial events.

Between August and October, the first group, the northern clans, would congregate at rich food-source areas like Moulting Lagoon and Schouten Island, where there were seasonally heavy concentrations of bird life. At the end of October, they moved inland and often spent part of the summer on the Ben Lomond plateau or along the Meredith River towards Campbell Town. Those that were at the Ben Lomond plateau returned to the east coast at the end of January for sealing and mutton-birding, moving to Stockers Bottom in March to hunt kangaroos, wallabies and possums.

Seasonal visits to the Ben Lomond and North Midlands nations were common. The Midland Plain contained quarries for the fashioning of stone implements as well as important hunting and ceremonial grounds. There are references in literature to large groups of up to 500 Aborigines in the area in spring and autumn. These places lay in the heart of what has become known in the colonial period as the Settled Districts. Several clans from the Oyster Bay nation played a critical role in the Black War; at least two of their chiefs, Mannalargenna and Tongerlongter, played major roles.

All information summarised from Ryan, L. (2012) *Tasmanian Aborigines: A history since 1803*. Allen & Unwin. Crows Nest: NSW.



Map 4 Oyster Bay nation

## North-East Nation

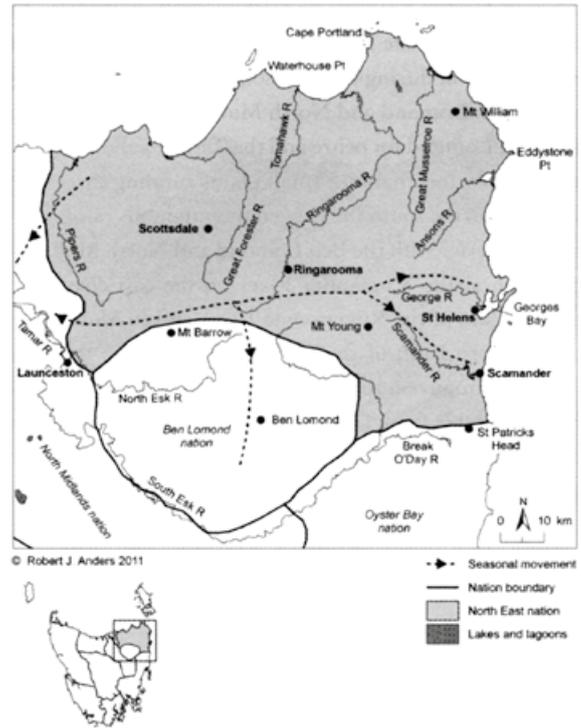
Also known as the Coastal Plains nation, the North-East nation consisted of at least ten clans each comprising fifty to eighty people. Their minimum population is estimated to be between 400 and 500 people.

They appear to have spoken the north-eastern Tasmanian language derived from south-eastern Victoria.

The coastline of the North-East nation and the associated lagoons and estuaries provided abundant seasonal food sources, such as mutton-birds, swans, ducks and seals. From late July to early September the egg season enticed several clans to congregate around these lagoons and estuaries to collect swan and duck eggs. In summer they hunted fur seals and in autumn mutton-birds. On the heaths and plains behind their coast, which they kept open and clear by firing, the men hunted kangaroos, wallabies and emus, and the women hunted possums and other small mammals. The north east coast and its immediate hinterland were capable of supporting a high Aboriginal population during most seasons of the year, including summer visits from the Ben Lomond and North Midlands nations. In return, some clans visited Ben Lomond for ochre and the Tamar Valley. They also used well-marked tracks and chains of small plains running east-west near the southern border. Within the wet forested country inland from Scamander River and across to the Tamar River, the Pyemmairrenerpairrener clan lived on wombats, possums, echidnas and vegetable food: ferns, roots and fungi of various types.

Of all the nations in Aboriginal Tasmania, the North-East or Coastal Plains nation travelled least. A mild climate and abundant resources on both the coast and hinterland gave them insularity comparable only to the South-East nation. However, they had regular summer visits from clans from the Ben Lomond and North Midlands nations.

All information summarised from Ryan, L. (2012) *Tasmanian Aborigines: A history since 1803*. Allen & Unwin. Crows Nest: NSW.



Map 5 North East nation

## North Nation

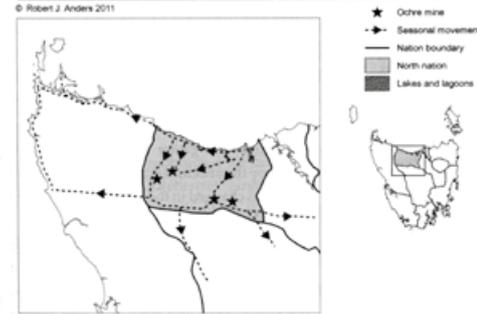
The North nation consisted of four known clans, which are likely to have spoken at least three languages: the north-eastern, north western and central Tasmanian languages. The population is estimated to have been between 200 to 300 people, however, more recent estimates suggest that the population was closer to 600.

The North nation 'owned' the ochre mines at Mount Vandyke, Mount Housetop, Gog range and St Valentines Peak, which form the most important sources of ochre in Trouwunna (Tasmania). To access them, it is believed the Aborigines maintained a system of well-defined tracks which they kept open by firing and that all the nearby nations visited the mines on a seasonal basis to hold important ceremonies. In summer the clans kept the inland plains open by firestick farming, so they could hunt wallabies, wombats, possums and emus and gather a variety of vegetable foods. But it seems they did not occupy the area in winter because of the cold conditions and heavy falls of snow. This changed in the colonial period, when they foraged in the Surrey Hills and the upper reaches of the Forth River.

In early spring, between August and September, the North nation people would meet other clans at Port Sorell and at the mouths of the north-east rivers to collect shellfish and the eggs of swans, duck and other waterbirds. To the west the clans from the Surrey Hills and Emu Bay paid regular visits to the coast along the Norfolk Range track. They could make the journey from Chilton in the Surrey Hills to Cape Grim in the country of the North-West nation in forty-eight hours, usually in summer, possibly to take advantage of the sealing season. They made excursions to Robbins Island, also in the country of the North-West nation, where, in addition to food, they collected shells for making necklaces. In return, some of the clans from the North-West nation obtained ochre from their visitors as well as rights to visit the inland plains and ochre mines.

To the south-east, some of the clans had access to the high plateau country belonging to the Big River nation, travelling there along the Cradle Mountain or Great Lake 'roads'. In return they permitted some of the Big River clans to visit the ochre mines at Mount Vandyke and Mount Housetop. It has been suggested that the lack of a definite pattern of seasonal movement to the North nation's eastern border indicates that relations between the clans of the North and North Midlands nations were cool or even hostile. But, it is pointed out that the intense warfare between settlers and Aborigines in the region during the colonial period, leading to the probable disappearance of an entire clan at Westbury, suggests a more complex story. What is clear is that the clans of the North nation had an important localised source of ochre with which to bargain for reciprocal arrangements from clans from neighbouring nations. One of the best known members of the North nation was Walyer, the remarkable female chief who came from St Valentines Peak.

All information summarised from Ryan, L. (2012) *Tasmanian Aborigines: A history since 1803*. Allen & Unwin. Crows Nest: NSW.



Map 6 North nation

## Big River Nation

The Big River nation occupied the largest territory in Trouwunna (Tasmania) largely consisting of mountain plateau country. Although the Big River people had no coastline, they had several lakes, including the Great Lake, the largest fresh water lake in Australia. This provided plenty of bird life.

It is believed the Big River nation comprised of at least seven or eight clans and their population is estimated to have been between 400 and 500 people, but more recent estimates believe this to be higher. It is likely that they spoke the central Tasmanian language.

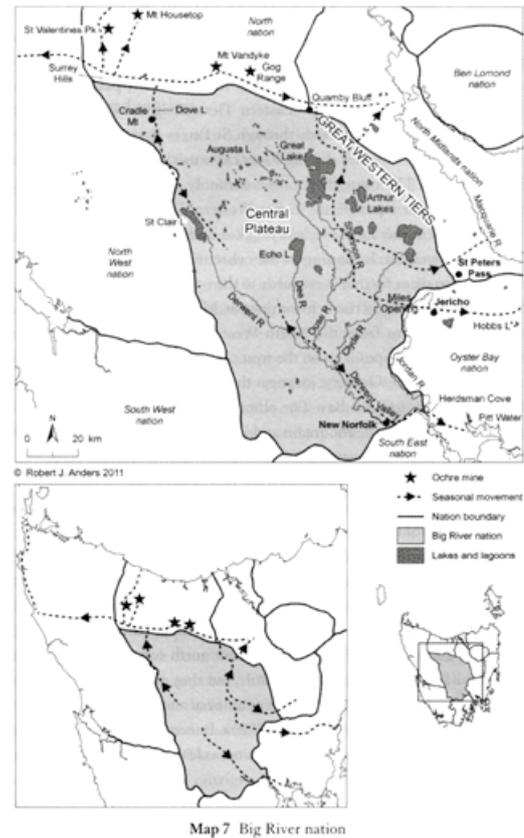
Within their country, the clans appear to have camped along lake shores. All of these places were rich in bird and fresh-water marine life and opened out onto kangaroo hunting grounds.

Outside their country, to the east, clans from the Big River nation enjoyed amicable and co-operative arrangements with some clans from the Oyster Bay nation: they foraged together in each other's territory and regularly used three seasonal routes. To the north some of the Big River clans used two routes leading out of their country. The clans also went further westwards to the open plains at the Surrey and Hampshire hills and to the ochre mines at Mount Husetop, where they sometimes met clans from the North-West nation. Some Big River clans even went as far as Cape Grim on the west coast, a distance of 240km from Great Lake.

The ochre mines and the northern roads formed part of the southern border of the North nation, with whom some of the Big River clans seem to have had amicable relations. They allowed some clans from the North nation into their country as far as the Ouse Valley, while some of them could have gone as far as Pitt Water. To the north-east, relations with the North Midlands nation were often hostile, but they appear to have allowed some clans seasonal access to the high country around the northern part of the Great Lake and the Great Western Tiers. It seems they had little contact with the South West nation even though on a clear day in the high country they could see its smoke.

The Big River nation was the only nation to have regular access to both the east and west coasts and to have contact with clans from six of the other nations. It was also among the few Aboriginal nations in Australia to have gained its living in a highland and sub-alpine zone. The story of its resilience under pressure from colonial invaders forms a critical part of the Lyndall Ryan's book.

All information summarised from Ryan, L. (2012) *Tasmanian Aborigines: A history since 1803*. Allen & Unwin. Crows Nest: NSW.



Map 7 Big River nation

## North Midlands Nation

The North Midlands nation occupied coastal, river and inland country. This region forms the driest in Tasmania, particularly in the Campbell Town area of the Midland Plain, which before British invasion comprised eucalyptus woodland.

It is likely that the North Midlands nation consisted of at least five clans and the population is estimated to have been between 300 and 400 people. The North Midlands was among the first nations to experience British invasion in northern Tasmania in 1804, and at least 300 were probably killed outright by the settlers between 1820 and 1830, suggesting that the population was much higher than estimated.

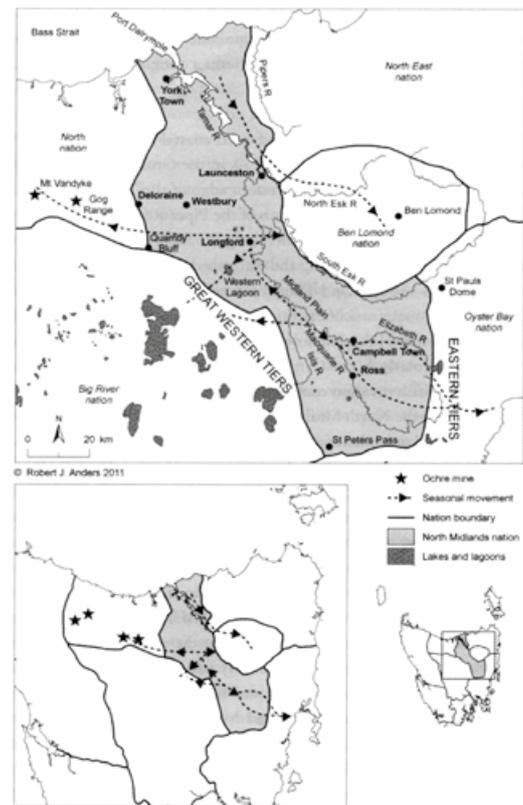
The North Midlands nation had extensive relations, not always harmonious, with the North, North-East, Big River, Ben Lomond and Oyster Bay nations for the largest kangaroo hunting grounds on the island lay in the heart of their country at Campbell Town, Norfolk Plains and Launceston together with the incredibly rich marine and bird life along the Tamar River. Spring and summer concentrations of large numbers of Aborigines in all these areas have been reported. In winter, the Stoney Creek clan had foraging rights among the clans at North Oyster Bay and then in spring returned to its own country for extensive kangaroo hunting. It spent the summer in the Great Western Tiers, sometimes moving along the road to Mount Vandyke for ochre. In autumn the clan returned again to the Campbell Town area for kangaroo and perhaps for an exchange of ochre with Ben Lomond and Oyster Bay people. One of the Stoney Creek chiefs, Umarrah, became well known to the colonists and played a critical part in the 1830 Black War.

The Panninher clan spend the winter in the low reaches of the west bank of the Tamar, where it gathered shell fish and swan eggs. In spring it returned to the kangaroo hunting grounds in its own country. In the summer the clan visited the Great Western Tiers, for where it could use the 'ochre road' to Mount Vandyke, and returned to its own country in the autumn. It had extensive relations with clans from the North and Big River nations, the former visiting the Norfolk Plains area to hunt and to catch birds in the marsh area west of the Liffey River.

The Leterremairrener clan spent its winter in its own territory along the east bank of the Tamar as far as the coast, moving east in spring and up to the Ben Lomond Tier in summer, then returning to its own country at the end of January to await the mutton-bird season. Clan members met to exchange necklaces for ochre with the Panninher and the Ben Lomond nation and hunted extensively in the country of the North-East nation.

All three known clans in the North Midlands nation appear to have engaged in seasonal movements in more diverse ways than other nations. Their existence depended on sustained relations with neighbouring nations and on the full exploitation of seasonal resources.

All information summarised from Ryan, L. (2012) *Tasmanian Aborigines: A history since 1803*. Allen & Unwin. Crows Nest: NSW. Allen & Unwin. Crows Nest: NSW.



Map 8 North Midlands nation

## Ben Lomond Nation

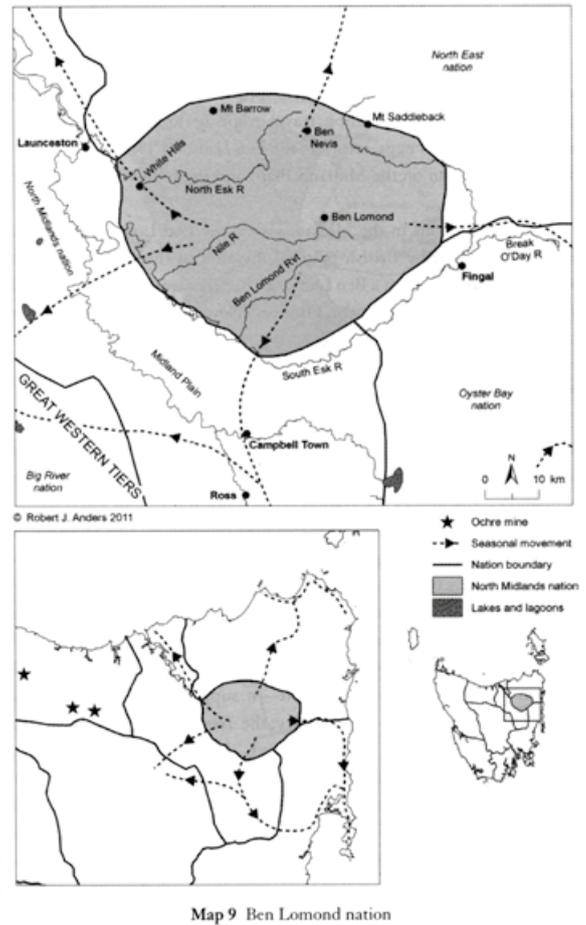
The Ben Lomond nation's territory did not have any coastline except by seasonal access. Ben Lomond mountain dominated the region. Most of the area was open forest with savannah woodlands and open plains but the north of the border was dominated by rainforest.

The Ben Lomond nation probably consisted of four clans reaching a minimum population of somewhere between 150 and 200 people. They appear to have spoken the central and north-eastern Tasmanian languages and probably had friendly relations with the North Oyster Bay clans and the North-East and North Midlands nations.

One of the Ben Lomond clans had foraging rights at North Oyster Bay at Moulting Lagoon between August and October, moved to the North Midlands country at Stockers Bottom in November, and then retired to the Ben Lomond plateau for the summer. Sometimes, the same clan went with some clans of the North Midlands nation to visit clans from the Big River nation for hostile purposes. In January it was also known to visit the east coast for seals and mutton-birds, returning to the Midland Plain in autumn and then the coast for the winter. Another clan spent the winter on the north coast with some clans from the North-East nation, retiring to the hinterland for kangaroos in spring and returning to its own country in the summer. In autumn at least one of the Ben Lomond clans visited coastal sites in the country of the North-East nation such as Cape Portland, Waterhouse Point, and Eddystone Point for mutton-birds and seals. A third clan wintered with the Port Dalrymple clan on the Tamar coast, congregating at the Lower South Esk River in spring and autumn and spending the summer on the Ben Lomond Plateau. Thus, the Ben Lomond nation had access to the east and north coasts, the Midland Plain and the Great Western Tiers. Its own country was a popular summer resort.

Like other nations in the Midlands area, the Ben Lomond nation was virtually destroyed by British pastoral invasion in the 1820s. Walter George Arthur, the son of a Ben Lomond chief, became an important leader of the Aboriginal community on Flinders Island in the 1840s and at Oyster Cove in the 1850s.

All information summarised from Ryan, L. (2012) *Tasmanian Aborigines: A history since 1803*. Allen & Unwin. Crows Nest: NSW.



Map 9 Ben Lomond nation

## North-West Nation

The North-West nation occupied the north coast and all the islands including Robbins and Hunter islands from Table Cape to Cape Grim and down the west coast to Macquarie Harbour. As one of the largest nations in Trouwunna (Tasmania) it supported at least eight clans with a minimum population of between 400 and 600 people. More recent research suggests a much higher population. It appears that they spoke the north-western Tasmanian language.

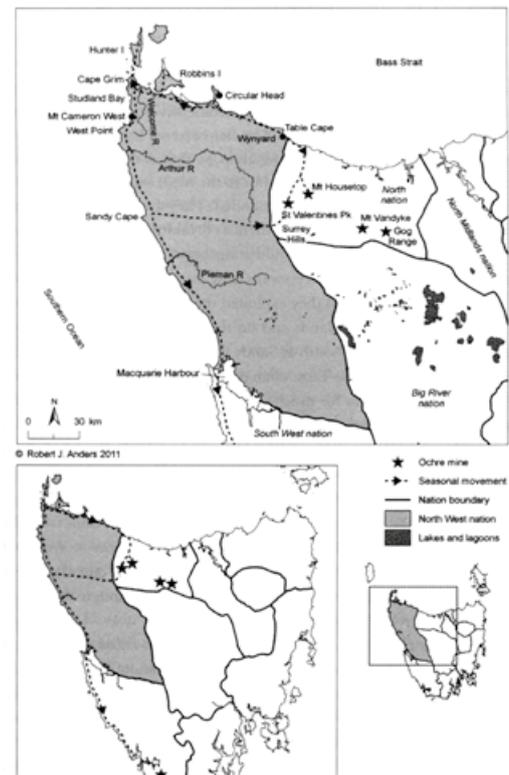
The North-West clans moved seasonally up and down the coast, travelling along well-marked footpaths or roads to gain easy access through swampy country covered with dense scrub. The Peerapper clan West Point used to forage inland from Mount Cameron West in the swampy tea-tree and scrub country around the Welcome River and from there visit Robbins Island and Circular Head. The clans erected beehive-shaped huts in strategic locations close to foraging areas, so that as they travelled along the coast they could move from one hut to the next, occupying old huts or building new ones as the occasion demanded. They dug and

kept tidy small wells and placed abalone shells near them as drinking vessels for travellers. Every September several clans would congregate at the mouths of rivers near the coastal lagoons, where swans and ducks laid their eggs. From October to the end of March they exploited the vast mutton-bird rookeries on the Hunter Group of islands and on the rocky stacks and were often joined by clans from as far south as Sandy Cape. Since these rookeries were the most extensive near the Tasmanian mainland, they were able to sustain an Aboriginal population for much longer than those near Cape Portland and at various places on the east coast and at Bruny Island. In early and mid-summer the North-West clans exploited the elephant sealing grounds from Sandy Cape north to Mount Cameron West. In summer the Sandy Cape and the Pieman River clans crossed Macquarie Harbour by canoe to forage on the south-west coast as far south as Port Davey. In turn, clans from the South-West nation made visits in summer to Mount Cameron West and even as far as Cape Grim. The Robbins Island and West Point clans were known to have visited the South-West nation, and, although they knew each other well, relations were not always friendly.

All the clans from Circular Head to Sandy Cape travelled regularly into the high inland country belonging to the North nation to collect ochre. These inland excursions were carefully sanctioned and often required the Noeteeler clan from the North nation to accompany them. Unaccompanied visits frequently led to political hostility. In return for the use of this prized resource, the coastal clans acted as host to clans from the North nations when they visited Robbins Island for mutton-birds, sealing, and shells to make necklaces. Political relations, however, were not always amicable. The Tommeginer clan from Table Cape exploited its position in its political relations both with the other North-West clans and with the North nation.

In the Black War of the 1830s, at least two chiefs from the North-West nation, Heedeek and Wyne, played a critical role in resisting the forced removal of their clans from their own country.

All information summarised from Ryan, L. (2012) *Tasmanian Aborigines: A history since 1803*. Allen & Unwin. Crows Nest: NSW.



Map 10 North West nation

## South-West Nation

The area of the South-West nation supported at least four clans. With each clan comprising between fifty and seventy people, the population was estimated to be between 200 and 300 people. More recent estimates indicate an even higher population. They appear to have spoken the southern and north western Tasmanian languages.

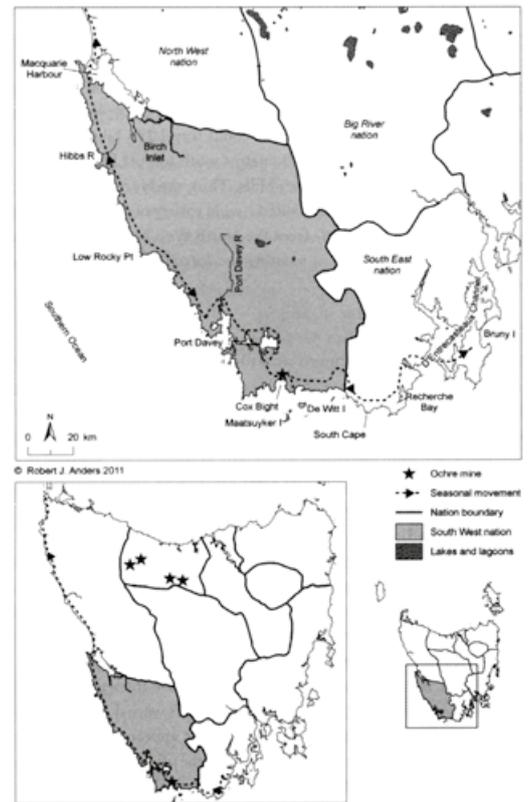
The South West nation's economy was focused on the seashore and the coastal plain immediately behind it. Its major foods were shellfish, crayfish, seals, wombats and macropods. Vegetable foods appear to have been less abundant and perhaps not as important in the diet as they were elsewhere in Trouwunna (Tasmania). Like the North-West clans, the South-West people lived in 'villages' of beehive-shaped huts situated close to fresh water and food-collecting areas. Their seasonal movements were mostly parallel to the coast along well-defined footpaths where they had numerous huts; they constructed canoes to cross rivers and harbours. During the winter they tended to stay in their local residences, where they lived on shellfish until the eggging season in late August.

Then they moved towards Macquarie Harbour or Port Davey and obtained ochre at Cox Bight. Outside their country, the South-West clans had access north across Macquarie Harbour and east along the south coast past South-East Cape to the D'Entrecasteaux Channel in the country of the South-East nation. They may have used some inland routes that led to Big River country.

The South-West nation had close relations with clans from the North-West nation and often visited Mount Cameron West and Cape Grim during the sealing and mutton-birding seasons. To the east they used canoes to visit the Maatsuyker and De Witt islands during summer to hunt seals and would sometimes meet the Lyluequonny clan from the South-East nation. In winter they occasionally visited the Nuenonne clan of the South East nation at Bruny Island.

Like their counterparts from the North-West and South-East nations, the South-West clans were dependent on the coastal regions for basic food sources. Their ability to travel the whole extent of the west coast and to the D'Entrecasteaux Channel in the south-east suggests their need for food sources as well as ceremonial obligations. The presence of ochre at Cox Bight allowed them to take it to the clans from the South-East nation in return for foraging in their area. One of the South-West nation's chiefs, Towterror, led the resistance to the removal from its country in the 1830s, and his daughter Mathinna was taken into Lieutenant-Governor Franklin's household in the late 1830s.

All information summarised from Ryan, L. (2012) *Tasmanian Aborigines: A history since 1803*. Allen & Unwin. Crows Nest: NSW.



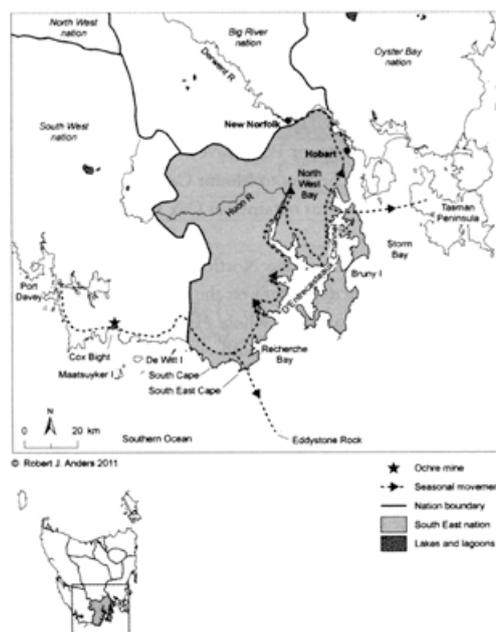
Map 11 South West nation

## South-East Nation

The South-East nation contained at least seven known clans, each consisting of between seventy or eighty people, who probably spoke the southern Tasmanian language. The clans operated in large groups along a coastline rich in shellfish, with ready access to birds, kangaroos and wallabies. In winter the South East clans concentrated along the coastline for shellfish; in November they congregated at North Bruny Island for mutton-birds and in the summer at Recherche Bay to hunt seals, seabirds, kangaroos and possums, to gather shellfish and a variety of marine and terrestrial vegetable food and to conduct shallow-water scale fishing at night with lighted torches. As the most maritime people in Trouwunna (Tasmania), they used their bark canoes in the sheltered D'Entrecasteaux Channel in all seasons. They made frequent short voyages between Bruny

Island and the Tasmanian mainland, including journeys up the River Derwent and across the southern straits of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel to Recherche Bay and South East Cape. Woorady, chief of the Neunonne clan on Bruny Island, told George Augustus Robinson, the Government-appointed Protector of Aborigines (p230), that men from his clan made journeys to the Tasman Peninsula, sometimes directly across the Storm Bay passage by canoe, to visit the Pydairrerne clan from the Oyster Bay nation, to acquire women. They also used their canoes to make summer visits to the Maatsuyker and De Witt islands to hunt seals, and they may have used them to make similar visits to Eddystone Rock, 25 kilometres off South-East Cape. At the Maatsuyker Islands they sometimes met the Needwonnee clan from Cox Bight and the Ninene from Port Davey. In inclement weather they constructed semicircular bark huts or windbreaks, which differed from the more permanent beehive-shaped huts made by the South-West people. Truganini, who became the best known Aboriginal woman in colonial Tasmania, was born in 1812 at Recherche Bay, where her father, Mangerner, was the chief of the Lyluequonny clan.

All information summarised from Ryan, L. (2012) *Tasmanian Aborigines: A history since 1803*. Allen & Unwin. Crows Nest: NSW.

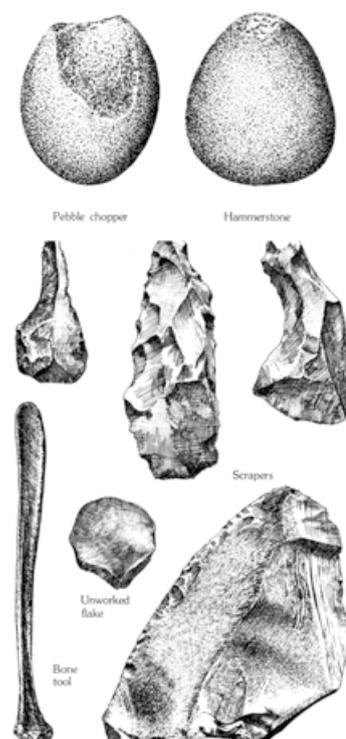


Map 12 South East nation

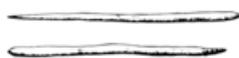
## TECHNICAL

## The Tasmanian Toolkit

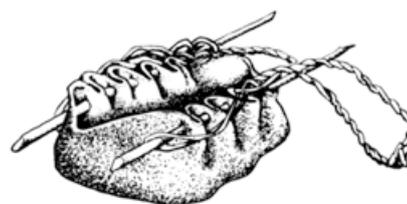
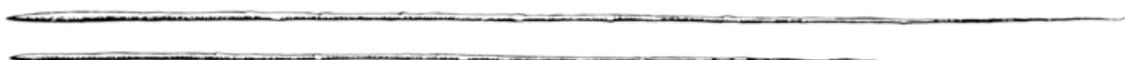
The Tasmanian Aborigines made tools and containers from wood, bone, stone, seaweed, bark, grass and sinew or tendons. Many of their tools were made, used, then discarded after use rather than kept. Many of these throwaways were clever adaptations that allowed the Aborigines to move easily from one place to another without being weighed down by possessions. They made a variety of stone tools which could be used for chopping, scraping, cutting and grinding; skin preparation and woodworking; as well as much of the collecting and preparing of food, were done with stone tools. Most of these were made from flakes driven off a core of stone with another rock. Others were simple rounded stones, either unmodified or with flakes stuck off to form a cutting edge. All these stone tools were simple but efficient. Bone tools with rounded, flattened ends have been found in middens. Their use is unknown.



Clubs



Spears



Water carrier made of sticks, vegetable fibre string and the broad leaf of the bull kelp.

Spears and clubs were made of *Leptospermum* or *Melaleuca* wood. The spears were from 2.4 to 5.4 m long and about 1 or 2 cm thick, tapering back from a robust point. They were passed through a fire to make them pliable and straighten the shafts, which were then rubbed with charcoal and fat. They caused death up to 60-70 m. The clubs were stong sticks about 60cm long and 2 to 3 cm in diameter: one end was bluntly pointed, the other roughened as a grip. They were either thrown, or held in the hand to strike a blow.

Small stones were also thrown as weapons. Men from the French expeditions in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century were wounded by showers of these stones.

The women used a short stick flattened at one end to prize shellfish off the rocks and a longer one to dig up roots and tubers. They also used baskets to carry what they collected.

Baskets were made from different kinds of vegetable fibre, including juncus reed, by women. The reeds were placed over a slow fire to make them pliable. They were then twisted into threads and woven into globular shapes. These are very similar to baskets made by Aboriginal women in Victoria. They were used for carrying personal items and for collecting food such as shellfish. The basket was suspended around the neck while diving. These baskets were highly prized.

(adapted from Clarke, Julia. *The People of Tasmania*)



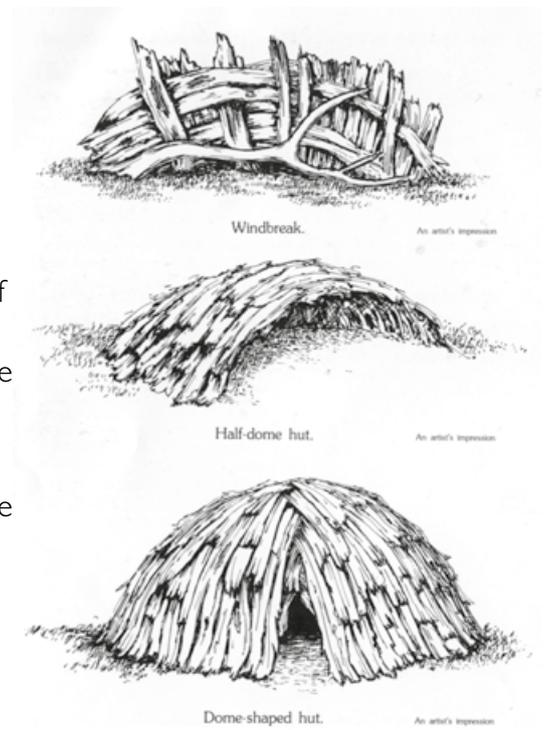
## Tasmanian Shelter

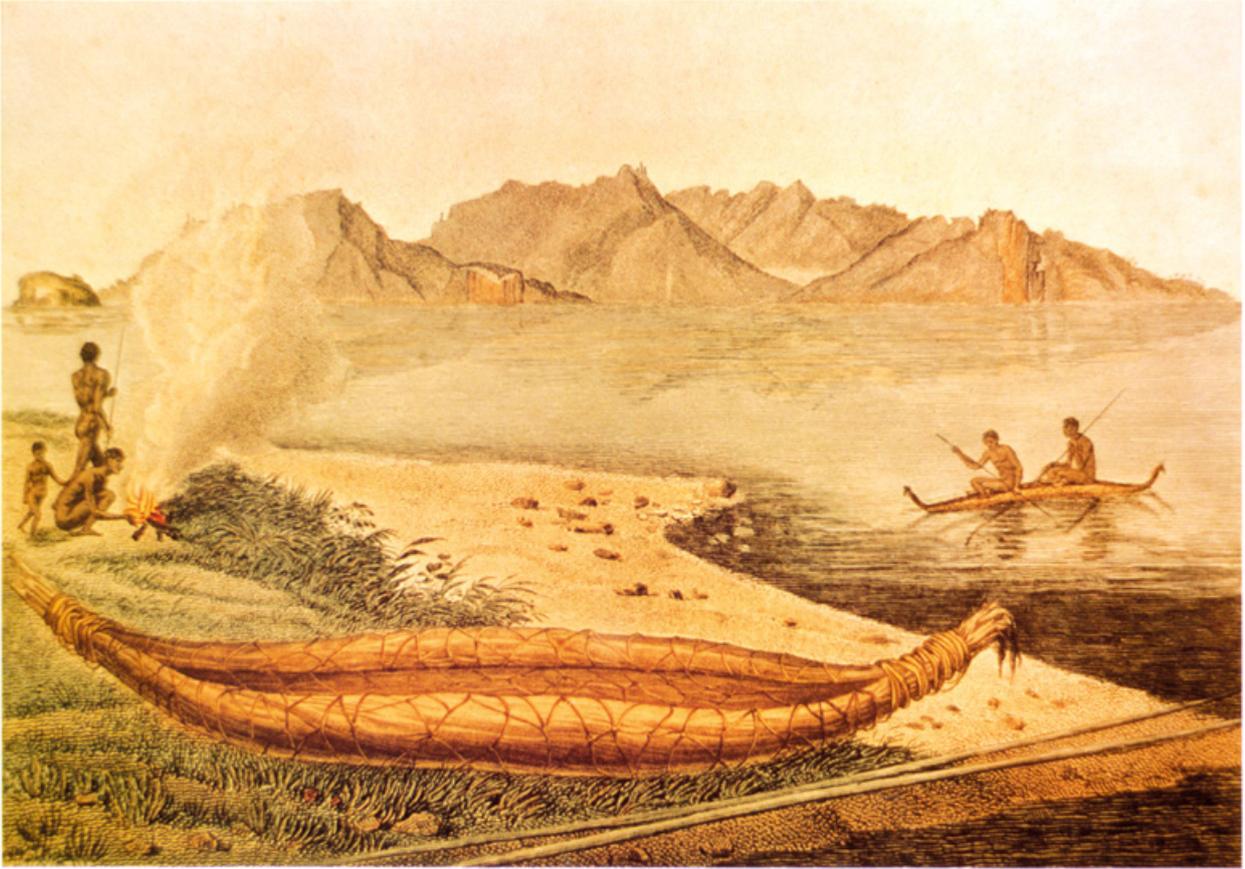
The people who lived in western Tasmania and around the Great Lakes built substantial dome-like huts to protect them from the chill winds and rain. Both ends of flexible branches were pushed into the ground and this framework was thatched with grass or bark. They could hold up to 15 people. The inside of these huts was lined with the feathers of magpies, cockatoos, crows and other birds. They were warm and comfortable dwellings. Villages of seven or eight huts were found by early explorers. People lived in these villages almost all year round.

In the north-east and east, the climate was milder. People here built windbreaks made of branches interwoven with bark. These were usually built to shelter one family, though they could be as large as 11m long and shelter 30-40 people.

A half-dome hut made of bark and pliable branches was seen on Bruny Island.

(adapted from Clarke, Julia. *The People of Tasmania*)





The Museum of Natural History, Le Havre, France

## Bark Canoes

Bark canoes were sighted by early observers all around the Tasmanian coast except for the north-east. Aboriginal people journeyed to offshore islands up to 25km from the mainland, often across stormy and dangerous passages such as between Hunter Island and Woolnorth. Such trips were made at particular times of the year to gather food which was seasonally plentiful, such as seals in summer and muttonbirds in summer and autumn.

Each canoe was made of three rolls of bark or reeds. Each bundle was tied separately and then all three were tied together with reeds or grass. The head and stern rose high out of the water. Fire was carried on a bed of clay at one end. The craft was propelled either by a stick, used as a pole or paddle, or by a person swimming alongside. Up to seven people could travel on such a craft.

A full sized canoe measured up to 3m long, 90cm broad and 65cm high, tapering to 30cm thick at each end.

(adapted from Clarke, Julia. *The People of Tasmania*)



The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG) has worked with members of the Aboriginal community to rediscover the techniques used to construct bark canoes. A full size canoe, together with information, can be found at the ningennah tunapry exhibit at TMAG.

# Brewarrina Aboriginal Fish Traps (Baiaime's Ngunnhu)

New South Wales



## Overview

Long before Europeans came to Australia, Aboriginal communities were applying advanced knowledge of engineering, physics, water ecology and animal migration to catch large numbers of fish in traps.

The Ngunnhu was, and continues to be, a significant meeting place to Aboriginal people with connections to the area. The Brewarrina fish traps continue to be visible in the Darling River today and were included in the National Heritage List on 3 June 2005.

## More information

The Brewarrina Aboriginal Fish Traps is tangible evidence of the sophisticated understanding of Aboriginal people of engineering, physics, the land and its natural resources.

## The story of the Ngunnhu

The story of the Brewarrina Aboriginal Fish Traps, known as the Ngunnhu to the local Ngemba people, tells how an ancestral creation being designed and created an important fishing venture that supported many Aboriginal communities in the Brewarrina region in north-west New South Wales.

According to Aboriginal history, the Ngemba people were facing famine after a major drought had dried the river. Baiame designed a gift for them - an intricate series of fish traps in the dry riverbed - and then cast his net over the river. Baiame then showed the old men of the Ngemba how to call the rain using dance and song. Days of rain followed and the river flooded, bringing with it thousands of fish. The old men rushed to block the entry of the stone traps, herding fish through the pens.

## Accessing and managing the traps

Over time, the Ngemba people studied fish migration in relation to season and river flows to apply innovative new methods of working the fish traps more efficiently and to ensure that the river was not overfished.

Baiame decreed that, while the Ngemba people were to be custodians of the fishery, maintenance and use of the traps should be shared with other tribes in the area, including the Morowari, Paarkinji, Weilwan, Barabinja, Ualarai and Kamilaroi.

He allocated particular traps to each family group and made them responsible under Aboriginal law for their use and maintenance. Neighbouring tribes were invited to the fish traps to join corroborees, initiation ceremonies, and meetings for trade and barter.

The Ngunnhu was, and continues to be, a significant meeting place to Aboriginal people with connections to the area.



# National Heritage Places – Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape

Victoria



## Overview

Sacred to the Gunditjmara people, the Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape at Lake Condah in Victoria's south-west is home to the remains of potentially one of Australia's largest aquaculture systems. Dating back thousands of years, the area shows evidence of a large, settled Aboriginal community systematically farming and smoking eels for food and trade.

Tours are available of the Lake Condah area, and visitors can see eel and fish traps, and the only remaining permanent houses built by an Indigenous community in Australia.

The Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape was included in the National Heritage List on 20 July 2004

## More information

For thousands of years the Gunditjmara people flourished through their ingenious methods of channelling water flows and systematically harvesting eels to ensure a year-round supply. Here the Gunditjmara lived in permanent settlements, dispelling the myth that Australia's Indigenous people were all nomadic.

This complex enterprise took place in a landscape carved by natural forces and full of meaning to the Gunditjmara people.

## Local Aboriginal creation stories

More than 30,000 years ago the Gunditjmara witnessed Budj Bim, an important creation being, reveal himself in the landscape. Budj Bim (known today as Mount Eccles) is the source of the Tyrendarra lava flow that, as it flowed to the sea, changed the drainage pattern in this part of western Victoria, creating large wetlands.

## Ancient engineering

The Gunditjmara people developed this landscape by digging channels to bring water and young eels from Darlots Creek to low lying areas. They created ponds and wetlands linked by channels containing weirs. Woven baskets were placed in the weirs to harvest mature eels.

## Gunditjmara society

These engineered wetlands provided the economic basis for the development of a settled society with villages of stone huts, built using stones from the lava flow. Early European accounts of Gunditjmara record that they were ruled by hereditary chiefs.

## Europeans arrive

When Europeans started to settle the area in the 1830s, conflict ensued. Gunditjmara fought for their land during the Eumerella wars, which lasted more than 20 years until the 1860s. When this conflict drew to an end many Aboriginal people were displaced and the Victorian government began to develop reserves to house them.

Some Aboriginal people refused to move from their ancestral land and eventually the government agreed to build a mission at Lake Condah, close to some of the eel traps and within sight of Budj Bim.

The mission was destroyed in the 1950s but the Gunditjmara continued to live in the area and protect their heritage.

## Gunditjmara management rights

The mission lands were returned to the Gunditjmara in 1987. The Gunditjmara manage the Indigenous heritage values of the Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape through the Windamara Aboriginal Corporation and other Aboriginal organisations. A large part of the area is the Mount Eccles National Park, managed by Parks Victoria.



*Traditional eel trap*

(<http://museumvictoria.com.au/about/mv-blog/jun-2011/budj-bim-rangers>)

## Lesson 4

### Topic sentences and paragraphs

This is what may be referred to as a mini-cycle in the teaching and learning cycle. When teaching about topic sentences and paragraphs, the teacher will need to guide the students through setting the context, deconstructing paragraphs, jointly constructing paragraphs and then independently constructing paragraphs.

It is a good idea to reuse the texts with which the students are already familiar. A sample has been provided below. Here the teacher could work through the paragraphs and deconstruct them. The next process would be to jointly construct some paragraphs that have been cut up. Finally, students could construct their own.

Students need to know:

- In an information report, the text is divided into paragraphs. Each paragraph has a main idea. All the sentences in the paragraph should be about the main idea.
- Each paragraph begins with a topic sentence. This sentence tells the reader what the paragraph is going to be about.

Ask the students to identify the topic sentence and features of the paragraphs below:

- 1) Bark canoes were sighted by early observers all around the Tasmanian coast except for the north-east. Aboriginal people journeyed to offshore islands up to 25km from the mainland, often across stormy and dangerous passages such as between Hunter Island and Woolnorth. Such trips were made at particular times of the year to gather food which was seasonally plentiful, such as seals in summer and muttonbirds in summer and autumn.
- 2) The people who lived in western Tasmania and around the Great Lakes built substantial dome-like huts to protect them from the chill winds and rain. Both ends of flexible branches were pushed into the ground and this framework was thatched with grass or bark. They could hold up to 15 people. The inside of these huts was lined with the feathers of magpies, cockatoos, crows and other birds. They were warm and comfortable dwellings. Villages of seven or eight huts were found by early explorers. People lived in these villages almost all year round.

Key:

Topic sentence

Supporting sentences

Ending sentence

- Build on this and ask students to select paragraphs for their peers to deconstruct.
- Ask students to jointly construct their own paragraphs with these features. Present to the class.



## Stage 4

### *Independent Construction*

- *Supporting our students to produce their own texts and, because of the shared understandings and metalanguage we have built up through the previous stages, we can provide explicit feedback on how to improve their text*

*(Polias and Dare, 2013)*

The subject matter in this stage, as in all stages, will be strongly linked to the Australian Curriculum and the areas being covered. During this stage, students are supported to independently produce their own text. This is an opportunity for the class to learn more about a particular subject. The teacher may decide to work on a topic as a whole class. For example, the teacher might like to focus on a particular animal. An animal very important to the Tasmanian Aborigines is the Short-Tailed Shearwater, also known as the Mutton-Bird or the Moonbird. At this stage, the teacher and the students could use a variety of resources from Aboriginal Education Services (AES) and other places (eg TMAG) to deepen the learning.

Resources available from AES include:

- Mutton-birds – DVD
- The Big Dog Connection
- Mutton-bird readers
- Mutton-bird puzzles.

In addition, AES may be able to support the teacher and students by facilitating a Tasmanian Aborigine, knowledgeable and skilled in 'birding' and knowing about the life-cycle, seasonal variations and migratory patterns of the mutton bird, to come to the school to provide further information.

AES may also be able to support an excursion to a mutton bird rookery, led by a Tasmanian Aborigine. This way, students get first-hand experience of what 'birding' is like, what mutton birds smell like, perhaps feel like, sound like, and perhaps taste like! They will learn about the deep connection Tasmanian Aborigines have to Country and the plants and animals that live in it. It will assist students, as they learn to control this genre, to use a graphic organiser to create their own information report.

- Encourage students to think of their audience when writing.
- Focus on writing in sentences, paragraphing and structuring thoughts together in clear and precise ways.
- Encourage your students to think of ways to enhance their writing through word choice.
- Encourage the use of technical language.

Revisit the schematic structure and encourage the use of a graphic organiser.

Set the context and complete and discuss the brainstorming graphic organiser with respect to the muttonbird.

Students will need to be taught how to create a bibliography.

### **Bibliography**

- Books are listed in alphabetical order, by the author's last name. They mention the title of the book, when the book was published and who published it.
- Websites are listed by name and address, along with the date the site was visited.

Ryan, Lyndall, *Tasmanian Aborigines: A history since 1803*, Allen and Unwin, 2012.

Alexander, Alison (Ed.) *The Companion to Tasmanian History*, Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies, 2005.

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG), [http://www.tmag.tas.gov.au/learning\\_and\\_discovery/learning\\_resources/online\\_resources](http://www.tmag.tas.gov.au/learning_and_discovery/learning_resources/online_resources) (date: eg 31/3/2015)



# Outline for an Animal Report

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## General statement

What kind of animal? How many different types are there? What other creature(s) is it related to?

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## Describe its appearance

What does it look like? How big is it? Does it have fur/feathers? How large does it grow? Does it have a mouth/beak?

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## Describe its habitat

Where does it live? Does it have a burrow? Is it cold?

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## Describe its behaviour

What food does it eat? What preys on it? How does it mate and reproduce? How does it rear its young? How does it spend its time?

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## Other interesting facts

Is the population increasing or decreasing? How is the animal viewed by the local Indigenous population? What is being done or can be done to protect it?

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## Illustrations, diagrams or maps

List author, title, publisher and date of resources used.

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This booklet is designed to assist you to develop your own unit of work. If you would like further assistance or more information on ways to scaffold various writing genres, texts such as Targeting Text and Achieve! are available from the Aboriginal Education Services Library.

If you would like more information on the teaching and learning cycle and moving students along the register continuum from more spoken to more written English, Literacy for Learning is a course offered by Aboriginal Education Services or through Unlocking the World (<http://www.unlockingtheworld.com>)

## References

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(Maps used with permission. Thanks to Robert Anders)

<http://www.grammar-monster.com/>

<http://www.nkschool.lincs.sch.uk/Students/documents/PersuasiveWriting.ppt>







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**Aboriginal Education**  
Department of Education Tasmania  
knowledge | learning | empowerment

