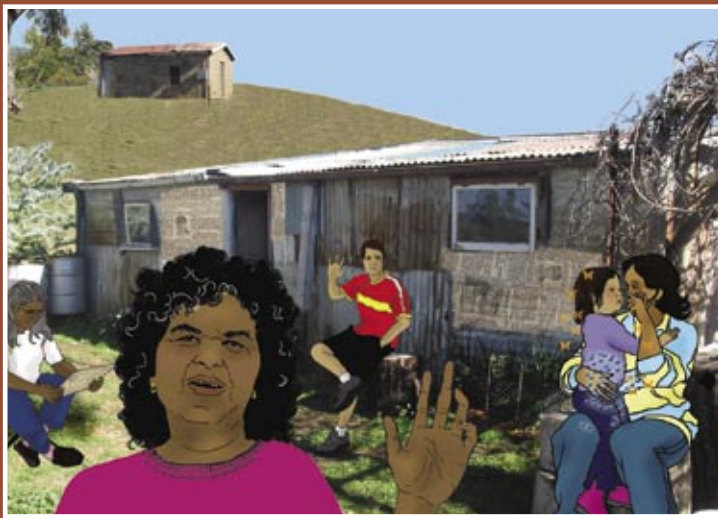


Caring for Place - Caring for Country



Teacher's booklet

Stage 1

Human Society and Its
Environment

Caring for Place – Caring for Country

Teacher's booklet

Stage 1

Human Society and Its Environment

Aboriginal Education and Training Directorate
NSW Department of Education and Training

Caring for Place – Caring for Country: teacher’s booklet
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Locked Bag 53
DARLINGHURST NSW 2010

Caring for Place – Caring for Country: teacher’s booklet is a component of the *Caring for Place – Caring for Country* kit which also comprises a copy of the texts: *Gami’s place* and *The river is big* as well as the audiotape *Gami’s place/Old man Wyndradyne*.

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ISBN: 0731384105

SCIS: 1215783

Introduction

Caring for Place – Caring for Country is a unit of work about relationship to land and place, primary from an Aboriginal perspective, and is designed for teachers of Stage 1 classes.

This teacher's booklet is a component of the *Caring for Place – Caring for Country* kit, which also comprises: a copy of the text *The river is big*, an audiotape of the songs *Gami's place* and *Old man Windradyne* and a copy of the *Aboriginal New South Wales* (1987) language map.

Throughout the unit emphasis is placed on Aboriginal people's kinship to land and language. It is presumed that students have already been exposed to work in Aboriginal studies in Early Stage 1 and that this unit of work would not be the first contact with the Aboriginal community for teachers and students.

The unit is based on Stage 1 outcomes in the K–6 syllabus in *Human Society and Its Environment*. The majority of the indicators included in each topic correspond with those in the syllabus. Teachers are also encouraged to add their own indicators which relate to the outcomes and reflect the individual direction of their students.

The unit consists of **nine topics**, each organised as follows:

1. Topic task
2. Resources required
3. Teaching and learning sequence
4. HSIE outcomes and indicators
5. Additional activities (optional)
6. Teacher's notes (cultural advice)
7. Student/teacher reading material related to topic
8. Student worksheets.

Resources required have been included as a guide to the equipment which should be organised by the class teacher in preparation for each topic of the unit. All worksheets, appendices, reading materials and recordings referred to are provided.

It would be advantageous if any books, kits or audio/visual materials included in the **Recommended** lists at the end of each topic could be purchased or borrowed for use in this unit, because they provide valuable additional resources. Further teacher **Reference** material is listed after each relevant topic, as well as at the back of the teacher's booklet, and it is hoped that as much background reading as possible is completed prior to commencing this unit of study.

Appendices for teachers to photocopy, enlarge, or use as overhead transparencies are located at the rear of the teacher's booklet.

A **Glossary** has been included for teachers to use as a quick reference for clarifying any unfamiliar terms.



The **Teacher notes and background information** section is intended to give the class teacher a basic understanding of the context and purpose of the unit, as well as addressing issues such as consultation and protocol with Aboriginal communities, the Dreaming, the importance of land and Aboriginal languages. These notes are by no means exhaustive, but should provide a solid starting point.

Note: There are Aboriginal Cultural Awareness programs available that teaching staff should attend to ensure a balanced understanding of cultural issues.

Acknowledgements

Many people were involved in the production of *Caring for Place – Caring for Country*.

The NSW Department of Education and Training is grateful to the following people and organisations for their permission to reproduce copyright material:

1. Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Cooperative for the *Gami's place* story and song
2. Aunty Beryl Carmichael for the *Creation story* and *My Land* poems
3. Connie Ah See for *The river is big* and *My Country* stories
4. Primary English Teachers Association and Murray-Darling Basin Commission for *Special Places* poems
5. Elaine Russell for *Gami's place* painting.

For their invaluable assistance, many thanks also to:

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Melinda Vassallo (design artwork for *The river is big*)

Consultation

NSW DET Aboriginal Education and Training Directorate
NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. (NSW AECG)
NSW DET Curriculum K-12 Directorate

Cover image:

Jane Naylor/Melinda Vassallo



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Statements of relationship to Land

I feel with my body, with my blood.
Feeling all these trees, all this country.
When this wind blow you can feel it.
Same for country,
You feel it.
You can look,
But feeling...that make you.

Our story is in the land.
It is written in those sacred places.
My children will look after those places, that's the law.

Dreaming place, you can't change it, no matter who you are.

Big Bill Neidjie,
'Gagadju Elder, Kakadu'
Gagudju Man, JB Books, Australia 2002

I'm a part of every living thing
And every living thing is part of me.
We're all created of this sacred earth
So everything's our sacred family.


Kevin Gilbert,
'Our Sacred Family'
Child's Dreaming: Poetry by Kevin Gilbert,
Hyland House, Melbourne 1992

The land was given to us, it's our home. God gave it to us, he told us
to look after it and that's what we do, look after the land.

Emily Munyungka Austin
'Australia's Indigenous Leaders'
Elders: Wisdom from Australia's Indigenous Leaders,
Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom 2003

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Teacher's notes and background information

NSW Aboriginal Education Policy (1996)

The goals of this policy are comprehensive in order to take account of the complexity of the issues involved, the ways in which they interconnect and the differences among schools and communities. Making progress towards these goals is the responsibility of all personnel within the Department of Education and Training. The goals are:

- Curriculum, teaching and assessment programs will be challenging and culturally appropriate.
- Schools will have a supportive learning environment.
- Aboriginal communities and the Department of Education and Training will become partners in the whole educational process.
- All staff and students of the Department of Education and Training will have knowledge and understanding of and respect for Aboriginal Australia.

Outcomes

The outcomes of the policy are set out in relation to each of the policy goals, indicating priority areas for action to achieve these goals. Against each outcome is a list of performance strategies as guides to action. The list is not exhaustive and schools will need to adapt and, where necessary, devise strategies that are appropriate to their own circumstances.

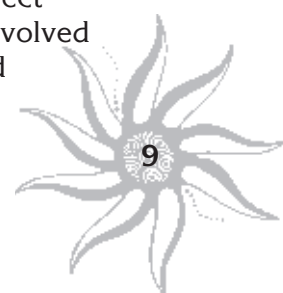


Outcome	Performance strategies: How <i>Caring for Place – Caring for Country</i> supports the <i>NSW Aboriginal Education Policy (1996)</i>
Educational outcomes for Aboriginal students are enhanced so that they are comparable with those of the rest of the school population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving levels of literacy through researching and implementing appropriate methodology and content across key learning areas.
Culturally appropriate teaching strategies and assessment methods are implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance of and provision for Aboriginal English in culturally appropriate teaching and assessment programs. • Incorporation of knowledge from local Aboriginal communities in teaching and learning programs. • Involvement of Aboriginal parents, community and caregivers in the evaluation of educational programs, processes and practices
DET staff demonstrates awareness of all relevant issues affecting Aboriginal students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform DET Stage 1 classroom teachers about Aboriginal history, cultures and languages.
Aboriginal people are empowered to become active partners in the decision making process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of Aboriginal people in the planning, provision and evaluation of educational services. • Participation by school or district representatives of the Department of Education and Training in the local and regional AECGs.
The knowledge held by Aboriginal communities is recognised and valued.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cultural knowledge and expertise of Aboriginal communities is recognised and valued. • Collaboration by DET staff with local Aboriginal communities, especially with Elders, in the development and delivery of cross-cultural awareness programs.
All students participate in Aboriginal studies programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of and provision to schools of curriculum support materials containing Aboriginal content and perspectives complementing existing syllabuses. • Incorporation of Aboriginal content in curriculum programs across other key learning areas.

Consultation and protocol with Aboriginal communities

It is important to consult with Aboriginal communities and organisations to ensure that teaching and curriculum programs are inclusive of Aboriginal people's needs and perspectives. Consulting will provide the basis for a mutually beneficial relationship between the school and local Aboriginal communities. It is important to recognise that each community is different and that protocols of consultation will vary across localities.

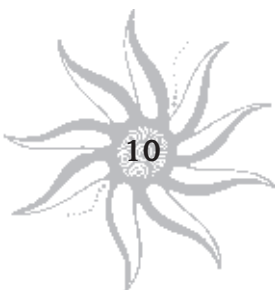
Most Aboriginal communities have rules embedded in their culture. To address these rules teachers will have to consult using the correct protocol. Consultation is a two-way, ongoing process, where all involved learn from each other through negotiation, listening, flexibility and open-mindedness.



To gain the most effective outcomes in the consultation process it is important to:

- develop an understanding of Aboriginality. Aboriginality is about culture, identity, shared experience, world view and family.
- spend time and effort developing positive relationships between the school and the broader Aboriginal community. As you prove yourself to be someone who likes spending time with Aboriginal people, information will be shared with you.
- be introduced to the Aboriginal community by someone from that community or by someone that the community knows and trusts. Be aware that Aboriginal community resources are stretched to the limit. Make sure that you give plenty of notice about visits or meetings.
- be sensitive to events and upheavals in the community, e.g. funerals. Be willing to be flexible and to adapt your program or approaches on advice from the Aboriginal community. Always respond to requests and concerns put forward by the Aboriginal people who are working with or advising you on the program.
- be willing to share your skills and knowledge with Aboriginal people when requested. Recognise and respect Aboriginal people's skills and expertise and always acknowledge the contribution of Aboriginal people to your program.
- be familiar with Aboriginal English and be aware of the significant level of non-verbal communication that occurs in Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal people read body language easily and consider it a valid form of communication. Ensure that your body language is consistent with your intentions and attitudes.
- be aware of the importance of sharing; people are more important than things or systems in Aboriginal culture.
- make sure, when consulting with Elders or receiving stories or knowledge from them, that Elders are acknowledged and paid at a consultant's rate. In Aboriginal communities knowledge is owned and shared only for fair trade and with good reason.
- consult widely, across a range of Aboriginal organisations and communities, and over time. Some NSW towns have up to three or more distinct Aboriginal communities within them.
- organise meetings in places readily accessible to community members. The school is not always a good place. You may want to consider transport and child minding. Best practice is to have the meeting very close to, if not in, the local community.

*Teacher's handbook: BIG MOB BOOKS
for little fullas. Emergent Readers Kit,
© Board of Studies NSW &
NSW Department of School Education, 1997*



The Land and the Dreaming

The most important understanding that students should take from this unit of work concerns the unique relationship that exists on all levels between Aboriginal people and Land. This connection has been the core of Aboriginal existence in Australia from the time of the Dreaming and continues to be the centre of Aboriginal people's lives today; influencing physical, cultural, social, spiritual, and emotional well-being.

The Dreaming involves stories of Spirit Ancestors who created the Land and established rules for Aboriginal society – how it was structured; how the Land was to be used and cared for; and how people should behave and interact within that society. These stories have been passed on from generation to generation through storytelling, music, songs, dance and art. They explain the creation of the universe, the sun, moon and stars, as well as all life on earth. The Spirit Ancestors' powers were founded in sacred Dreaming Places:

The Dreaming of a place is its physical nature, the animal, bird, fish or plant associated with it, the creative power of its Spirit Ancestor, the rituals to maintain its life force, and all the associated Dreamtime stories – both sacred (secret) and outside (public) versions. An Aboriginal person's Dreaming is the place where that person's spirit came from and to which it must return.

Dreamtime is continuous and present, a cycle of life without beginning or end, a parallel and all-inclusive reality. It is something mystic and beyond words – a feeling of the universe, in tune with the rhythm of the land...

Through their totems Aboriginal people were all related to the land. To Aboriginal people the land is not just soil or rock or minerals, but the whole environment – the land, the water, the air and all the life they supported, including woman and man; all the elements, the sun, the moon, the stars and the sky – all related and linked by the Dreamtime. Humans are not separate from their environment, but indivisibly united with it. Aboriginal people are part of the land and it is part of them. When they lost their land they lost themselves...

The land and all forms of life contained within it are regarded as a sacred trust, to be preserved and passed on in a timeless cycle of mutual dependence.

Parbury, N., (1986) *Survival: A history of Aboriginal Affairs New South Wales*, Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Sydney, New South Wales.

Dreaming is a non-Aboriginal word. Each language group has its own word to describe the complexity of *Dreaming*.

Dreaming stories are a part of this complexity. They are a part of the spiritual beliefs and religion that teach and guide all members of the community to an understanding of their society's rules, behaviours, environments and relationships.

Caring for Place – Caring for Country



It is important that Dreaming stories are used properly in the classroom and not misinterpreted as fairy stories or myths. Dreaming stories are the binding force of a continuum between the past, present and future for Aboriginal people. Dreaming stories are multilayered in meaning, and as a child grows and matures, a greater depth of meaning is revealed.

It is important that the Aboriginal children from the school in which you teach know generally about Dreaming stories and, in particular and where possible, know Dreaming stories from their own country.

Teachers should be aware that some Aboriginal students might find it difficult to know their own family history, as it might be difficult – and painful in some cases – to trace the past. Aboriginal children should (if at all possible) know the language group to which they belong. Teachers should encourage all students to value their past and present identity. Students should know the name of, and respect, the language group in which their school is situated.

Teachers should be sensitive to the fact that children's parents and grandparents may belong to the stolen generations and may find their links difficult to trace. Encouragement and community knowledge about family names can help to build a strong individual identity.

Before recording an Aboriginal Dreaming story in any way, permission must be sought from the storyteller and his or her community. Dreaming stories are the intellectual property of the community from which the story originated. Throughout Aboriginal history since invasion, Aboriginal peoples have had their intellectual property stolen from them. This is a very delicate and sensitive area of publication and great pains must be taken to respect the oral culture and the ownership of Dreaming stories.

*Teacher's handbook: BIG MOB BOOKS
for little fullas. Emergent Readers Kit*
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NSW Department of School Education, 1997.

Historical background of Aboriginal languages

Indigenous languages of Australia have been under threat since the invasion in 1788. Aboriginal languages were severely affected by colonialism and racism. Under the general policy of assimilation Aboriginal people were punished for speaking their languages, which were not recognised by non-Aboriginal people. These factors had a devastating effect on the preservation of Aboriginal languages, especially in NSW.

Of the more than 250 different languages and 500 to 600 dialects in Australia before colonisation, about 30 remain in use as a medium [of open/general] communication.





Map of Aboriginal languages and Nations in NSW

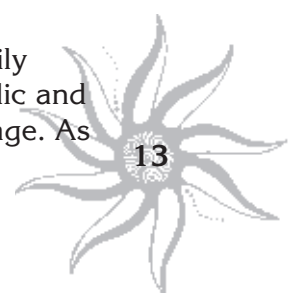
According to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 1994, about 15 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people speak an Indigenous language.

European languages have long traditions transmitted through reading and writing. Indigenous Australian languages have an even longer tradition, but are transmitted orally and by example in everyday activities.

Few English speakers have been prepared to learn Aboriginal languages. 'Pidgin' English was imposed upon Indigenous people, who were then looked down upon for speaking it. Some Aboriginal communities developed very complex creoles, using mostly English words and Indigenous language structures. Some of these are still spoken today.

On many of the Missions and Reserves, Aboriginal people were prevented from speaking their language. English was forced upon the Aboriginal people and became the common language, making Aboriginal languages difficult to maintain.

[Due to these restrictions, many Aboriginal communities and family groups, for fear of retribution stopped using their language in public and adopted English or used Aboriginal English as the primary language. As a result many Aboriginal Languages are now being revitalised.]



Language use in Aboriginal Australia is very much a factor of kinship. The way people speak to others, to whom they speak and the forms of language used are determined by the relationships of the speaker. Aboriginal people have always been multi-lingual and bi-dialectal.

Facts about Aboriginal languages

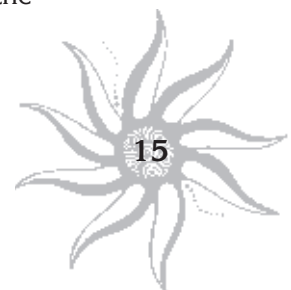
- Many Aboriginal languages are spoken throughout Australia.
- Aboriginal people don't all speak the same Aboriginal language.
- There are more than 70 Aboriginal languages in NSW.
- Aboriginal languages are as complex and rich in vocabulary as any other language.
- Aboriginal languages are alive in many Aboriginal communities, which are at different stages of development in the revival and maintenance of their language.
- Aboriginal communities are actively involved in the processes of revival and maintenance.
- Aboriginal English and Aboriginal languages are closely related. Aboriginal English can contain elements of Aboriginal languages.
- Aboriginal English is a dialect of English governed by its own set of rules.
- There are first and second [Aboriginal] language speakers in NSW.
- Numerous Aboriginal communities have successful language centres involving members of the local Aboriginal community.
- Many Aboriginal people identify themselves by their language group.
- Even if Aboriginal people don't speak their language on a daily basis, it is still important to them.
- Aboriginal languages are extremely important to Aboriginal people, because they reinforce a pride in culture and identity.
- Aboriginal languages are to be approached with sensitivity and respect for community views.
- Aboriginal community groups should be regarded as the owners of their languages, with all the exclusive rights that ownership bestows.

For further information on NSW Aboriginal languages, view the video and read the booklet in the resource *Talkin' language* (see References).



Glossary

Aboriginal	Used as an adjective in reference to the original inhabitants of Australia. The term may be associated with people, points of view, cultures and communities. The term should always commence with a capital when referring to Aboriginal peoples within Australia. ¹
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person	Someone who: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent• identifies himself or herself as an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander, and• is accepted as such by the Indigenous community in which he or she lives. <p>Each requirement must be satisfied. It rejects the purely racial classification of the past and includes contemporary social and cultural factors. The term Aboriginal people is more appropriate than Aborigines; part Aboriginal or half-caste are offensive terms.²</p>
Aboriginality	<i>Aboriginality</i> is much more than a physical manifestation of Aboriginal identity. It includes a combination of cultural heritage, spirituality and an intrinsic link with the land. ³
AECG (NSW)	The NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. (AECG) is a community-based Aboriginal organisation. Its purpose is to ensure social justice for Aboriginal peoples through education and training. The role and mandate of the AECG (NSW) is to provide community-based direction on [Aboriginal] education and training. ¹ Web address: http://www.nswaecg.com.au/
art	Aboriginal arts are many sided and inter-connected. In pre-contact society, visual arts were usually associated with ceremonies which also used storytelling, music and dance. Embedded in the fabric of society, visual arts served educational, religious and social purposes. The vitality and flexibility of Aboriginal culture can be seen in the care and skill with which Aboriginal people used new ways of painting, new colours or media, and new stories in their art, and have used their arts for new purposes. ⁴
bush tucker	Traditional food. Here <i>bush</i> means Aboriginal, but also with some sense of wild, not domesticated. This term is also used in the non-Aboriginal community, though not always with a cultural distinction between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal food, so that damper and billy tea might be included in the non-Aboriginal sense of <i>bush tucker</i> . ⁵
colonisation	A process by which a different system of government is established by one nation over another group of peoples. It involves the colonial power asserting and enforcing its sovereignty, or right to govern according to its own laws, rather than by the laws of the colonised. ⁴



community	Important elements of a community are country, family ties and shared experience. <i>Community</i> is about interrelatedness and belonging, and is central to Aboriginality. Aboriginal people may belong to more than one community. ²
country/place/nation	<i>Country, place</i> and <i>nation</i> are all terms meaning the area of land, river and sea that is the traditional land of each Aboriginal language group or community. ²
creole	A language variety that has developed from a pidgin. When a pidgin is acquired by children as their first language, it rapidly expands in complexity and domains of usage. This process is referred to as <i>creolisation</i> . ⁶
Culture	The accepted and traditionally patterned ways of behaving; common understanding shared by the members of a group or community. Includes land, language, ways of living and working, artistic expression, relationships and identity. ³
(the) Dreaming	<i>The Dreaming</i> has different meanings for different Aboriginal groups. It can be seen as the embodiment of Aboriginal creation which gives meaning to everything; the essence of Aboriginal beliefs about creation, and spiritual and physical existence. It establishes the rules governing relationships between people, the land and all things for Aboriginal peoples. The Dreaming is linked to the past, the present and the future. Where appropriate refer to Aboriginal names for the Dreaming. ¹
Elders	<i>Elders</i> are custodians of knowledge. They are chosen and accepted by their communities and are highly respected. ²
Indigenous peoples	This term is used when referring collectively to the first peoples of the land in international communities. The term Indigenous Australian will be used when speaking about both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands peoples within Australia. The word Aboriginal is preferred by the NSW AECG Inc when referring to Aboriginal people within NSW. ⁷
invasion	The forced takeover of a land and the subjugation of its people. ³
kinship	A key aspect of Aboriginal cultures and values. It includes the importance of all relationships, and of being related to and belonging to land. ²
Land	The term <i>Land</i> is used by Aboriginal people to describe their ecosystems – a sum total of spiritual beliefs, including Dreamings, all living things, including totems, all physical factors – such as sacred sites, water, air and geographical features. ²
land rights	The evolving struggle of Aboriginal people for the absolute legal and moral acknowledgement of prior ownership of this land and recognition of all the accompanying rights and obligations that flow from this association. ⁴
Language Group	Language is linked to particular geographical areas. The term <i>Language Group</i> is often used in preference to the term tribe. ²



NAIDOC week	National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration (NAIDOC) Week (NATSI) had its origins in 1957, commencing as NADOC Day, a day for Australians to focus their attention on Aboriginal communities. The focus was extended in 1975 to a week's celebration of Aboriginal culture and heritage. In 1989 the word <i>Islander</i> was added to form NAIDOC Week. It is now officially known as National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Week or NATSI Week. ¹
Nation	Refer to Country/Place/Nation.
native title	Form of land title which recognises Aboriginal people as rightful owners of the land; Native Title (capitalised) refers to the legislation, whereas native title (lower case) refers to the concept. ²
pidgin	A language which begins as a simplified restricted code resulting from contact between a number of different languages in the absence of bilingualism or a mutually shared language. By definition, a pidgin is nobody's first language. ⁶
Place	Refer to Country/Place/Nation.
Reconciliation	The process of <i>Reconciliation</i> aims to improve relations between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians, through increasing understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, cultures, past dispossession and present disadvantages. When used in this sense, the term should always begin with a capital. ¹
reserves	Areas of land reserved by the crown for Aboriginal people, established in the 19 th century. ²
Song	<i>Song</i> is the central element of performance, and may be performed without associated ritual, dance and body design. When songs are performed correctly, in the appropriate ritual context, they are believed to tap the creative power of the Dreaming. ⁴
Stolen Generations	The term used for the significant number of Aboriginal children who were forcibly removed from their families. While separation of Aboriginal children from their families had taken place from the time of colonisation, the most damaging and extensive removals took place in the twentieth century. The removal of Aboriginal children from their families was government policy in all Australian states. The policy had an extremely damaging legacy on the self-esteem and identity of those who were subjected to it. ¹
terra nullius	A concept in international law meaning 'a territory belonging to no-one' or 'over which no-one claims ownership'. The concept has been used to justify the invasion and colonisation of Australia. ²
totem	A <i>totem</i> is a particular animal or plant which is associated with each person and each clan. Clans are the smaller divisions of the main Nation and have management of an area of land set aside as a sanctuary for the spirit of their totem. The clans are still obliged to preserve the stories and ceremonies related to their totemic species. ⁷



traditional

A term widely used to refer to pre-invasion Aboriginal life, culture and social organisation. The term *traditional* must be used with care as individuals and groups may find this term offensive.²

¹ Board of Studies NSW, (1998) *Human Society and Its Environment K–6 syllabus*. NSW Department of School Education, Sydney, New South Wales.

² Board of Studies NSW, (1999) *Aboriginal Studies Stage 6 syllabus*. NSW Department of School Education, Sydney, New South Wales.

³ Board of Studies NSW, (1998) *New South Wales Aboriginal Languages Interim Framework K–10*. NSW Department of School Education, Sydney, New South Wales.

⁴ Horton, D. (ed), (1994) *The Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, ACT (also available in CD-ROM format).

⁵ Arthur, J.M., (1996) *Aboriginal English*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, Victoria. Board of Studies NSW, (1995)

⁶ Commonwealth Department of Employment Education and Training, (1993) *Australian Indigenous Languages Framework: National Consultation Document*, Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia, Wayville, South Australia.

⁷ Board of Studies NSW (1995) *Towards a New Dreaming ... future directions for land management in Australia*, Clean Up Australia Ltd, Pyrmont, Sydney, New South Wales.

