



Aboriginal Perspectives in Environmental Education: An Ongoing Journey

Brewongle Environmental Education Centre

Longneck Lagoon Environmental Education Centre



UWS Regional Centre of Expertise
Sustainable Development
Greater Western Sydney
Compiled by Susan Price

1. Introduction

People, Culture, Identity, Country, Place.

This resource has been compiled for teachers in Western Sydney who are beginning their journey to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives into their classroom practice and whole of school framework. The Environmental Education Centres at Brewongle and Longneck Lagoon have already taken the first steps along the path and their experience is documented here. Their journey is an ongoing quest to be authentic and non tokenistic, to show respect for the identity of the First Peoples of Australia and to gratefully accept knowledge of this place and of the culture that has been powerfully woven together to sustain Country over thousands of years.

“When teaching about Aboriginal issues it is important that you do not rely solely on texts, which in many cases provide only a national overview of Aboriginal history and culture. Wherever possible, focus your study on local community experiences. Concrete local examples have more meaning for students and at the same time demonstrate the diversity of experiences of Aboriginal people and communities throughout NSW.”

Working with Aboriginal Communities - A Guide to Community Consultation and Protocols (Rev.Ed.2008)

Brewongle Environmental Education Centre (BEEC) has a long history and association with the Darug people and has developed many programs in consultation with the community that directly address Aboriginal histories and cultures as well as content that has been incorporated into sustainable and environmental programs. Longneck Lagoon Environmental Education Centre (LLEEC) has embedded Aboriginal content and perspectives into current programs and is growing links with the local community. A short history of Indigenous engagement at both EECs portrays the evolving journey and how content has been included in various programs.

Included in this resource are protocols, curriculum links, how to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for schools, Indigenous contacts, organisations, various online web resources and most importantly Mark Edwards’ story of how Brewongle has established a long lasting and ongoing ‘both ways’ relationship with community members. It has been designed to cater specifically for connections in Western Sydney and the Country and People of the Darug Nation. This being said it is hoped that this resource will also provide ideas and a springboard for developing Indigenous community relationships in other areas.



2. Protocols

The NSW Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards has published documents that provide ideas and practical approaches to establishing links with Aboriginal community members. The two most useful materials are *Working with Aboriginal Communities: A Guide to Community Consultation and Protocols (Revised 2008)* and *The journey's just begun: Enhancing schools' capacity to partner Aboriginal communities to improve student learning – Facilitator handbook and DVD*.

Below are listed some of the basic protocols when building relationships with the local Aboriginal community from *Working with Aboriginal Communities: A Guide to Community Consultation and Protocols (Revised 2008 p10-12)*. Both Brewongle EEC and Longneck Lagoon EEC have used these as guiding principles in communicating with the local community. Individuals and schools should be willing to give time, energy and resources to the local community. Any interaction should involve both ways learning not just taking. It should also be noted that many of the Aboriginal peoples living in Sydney come from a wide diaspora of First Nations across New South Wales and Australia.

Aboriginal people from a local community will be able to provide assistance in finding out about the specific protocols to be considered. However, the following are generally agreed in communities across NSW.

- *Introductory protocols are important. Be prepared to spend time sharing personal background information about yourself and the purpose of your visit.*
- *Be patient when asking questions. Look, listen and learn, as it may take time for some community people to become involved. Some people may work towards giving their opinions by initially talking about other issues or stories.*
- *Do not expect every Aboriginal person (including students in the school) to know about or want to talk publicly about Aboriginal cultures, families, histories or issues.*
- *Some Aboriginal people might not openly express an opinion. They may choose to talk indirectly about an issue if they do not agree with the previous speaker. Not all Aboriginal people will share the same opinions and feelings. All opinions should be acknowledged and valued.*
- *Remember that different families may have different values and cultural beliefs, even if they are from the same community.*
- *In some communities, direct eye contact may be expected and accepted because of your teaching role. In others, however, it may be considered offensive. The use of direct eye contact differs from community to community, and from individual to individual. Protocols will need to be determined for specific cases. Contact your departmental or diocesan workers or the local AECG for advice.*
- *The use of silence should not be misunderstood. It may mean that people do not want to express an opinion at that point in time, or that they are listening and reflecting about what has been said. It is important that this silence is respected and not interrupted unnecessarily. Silence is not a chance to take a break or leave the room, but rather an opportunity to contemplate what is being spoken about.*
- *There are different types of knowledge – for example, spiritual knowledge and scientific knowledge – and these may conflict. One should be sensitive to these differences when talking to an Aboriginal person about issues and experiences.*

- *Do not force a point of view. Aboriginal people and communities have knowledge that may differ from yours. Remember you are there to seek their knowledge and opinions.*
- *Use language that respects the integrity and beliefs of the person or group with whom you are meeting. Avoid jargon and do not use acronyms.*
- *Be prepared to accept that some questions may remain unanswered – for example, sacred/secret knowledge or knowledge from people who have not grown up with their cultural ties.*
- *Family obligations and funerals affect many people in an Aboriginal community and may impact on previous obligations made to a school. Immediate and extended family obligations will always take first priority.*
- *Deaths affect not just one family but a whole community. Refer to systemic Aboriginal support personnel as to the local protocols regarding speaking the name of a person who has passed away, and showing their photograph.*
- *Remember that different families have different values and cultural beliefs, even if they are from the same community.*
- *Consult with a variety of community people. It is important not to stereotype Aboriginal people, and seeking a range of opinions from within the local community allows schools to develop a better understanding of the community.*

The use of protocols has been put into practice at the EECs in the following ways. Both EECs attend meetings of the local AECG Da Murrytoola building and maintaining relationships with the Aboriginal community of the Hawkesbury region. At each of the EECs there is an understanding that working with the local Aboriginal community will take time and personal effort. This reflects not only the nature and the importance of *relationship* but also the importance of sustaining them over long periods of time. To this effect Principals and staff have made personal relationships with community members that are fostered outside of the school environment.

It is also understood that while the EECs wish to share in the knowledge that our local community retains about sustainable practice they will not push for more than is willingly shared. A great deal of the Aboriginal knowledge that “is” shared is that which is taught to children, which is no more or less than core teaching practice at each centre.



Wurrigal
Darug for Goanna

photo: Akos Lumtizer Used with permission

3. Integrating Priorities and Environmental Education Policy

At Brewongle EEC and Longneck Lagoon EEC programs have been designed to integrate curriculum outcomes, including literacy and numeracy, to provide a holistic approach to Environmental Education. In regards to Aboriginal perspectives and sustainability the programs have been aligned with the Organising Ideas of the National Cross Curriculum Priorities while also meeting the aims of the NSW Environmental Education Policy.

3.1 ACARA – Cross Curriculum Priority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are strong, rich and diverse. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Identity is central to this priority and is intrinsically linked to living, learning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, deep knowledge traditions and holistic world view.

A conceptual framework based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' unique sense of identity has been developed as a structural tool for the embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures within interconnected aspects of Country/Place, People and Culture. Embracing elements enhances all areas of the curriculum.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priority provides opportunities for all learners to deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the world's oldest continuous living cultures. This knowledge and understanding will enrich their ability to participate positively in the ongoing development of Australia.

Organising Ideas

Code	Organising ideas
<i>Country/Place</i>	
OI.1	Australia has two distinct Indigenous groups, Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
OI.2	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities maintain a special connection to and responsibility for Country/Place throughout all of Australia.
OI.3	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have unique belief systems and are spiritually connected to the land, sea, sky and waterways.
<i>Culture</i>	
OI.4	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies have many Language Groups.
OI.5	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' ways of life are uniquely expressed through ways of being, knowing, thinking and doing.
OI.6	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have lived in Australia for tens of thousands of years and experiences can be viewed through historical, social and political lenses.
<i>People</i>	
OI.7	The broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies encompass a diversity of nations across Australia.
OI.8	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have sophisticated family and kinship structures.
OI.9	Australia acknowledges the significant contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people locally and globally.

Source: <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/crosscurriculumpriorities/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-histories-and-cultures>

3.2 ACARA – Cross Curriculum Priority Sustainability



Sustainability addresses the ongoing capacity of Earth to maintain all life.

Sustainable patterns of living meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Actions to improve sustainability are both individual and collective endeavours shared across local and global communities. They necessitate a renewed and balanced approach to the way humans interact with each other and the environment.

Education for sustainability develops the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary for people to act in ways that contribute to more sustainable patterns of living. It enables individuals and communities to reflect on ways of interpreting and engaging with the world. Sustainability education is futures-oriented, focusing on protecting environments and creating a more ecologically and socially just world through informed action. Actions that support more sustainable patterns of living require consideration of environmental, social, cultural and economic systems and their interdependence.

Organising Ideas

Code	Organising ideas
<i>Systems</i>	
Ol.1	The biosphere is a dynamic system providing conditions that sustain life on Earth.
Ol.2	All life forms, including human life, are connected through ecosystems on which they depend for their wellbeing and survival.
Ol.3	Sustainable patterns of living rely on the interdependence of healthy social, economic and ecological systems.
<i>World Views</i>	
Ol.4	World views that recognise the dependence of living things on healthy ecosystems, and value diversity and social justice are essential for achieving sustainability.
Ol.5	World views are formed by experiences at personal, local, national and global levels, and are linked to individual and community actions for sustainability.
<i>Futures</i>	
Ol.6	The sustainability of ecological, social and economic systems is achieved through informed individual and community action that values local and global equity and fairness across generations into the future.
Ol.7	Actions for a more sustainable future reflect values of care, respect and responsibility, and require us to explore and understand environments.
Ol.8	Designing action for sustainability requires an evaluation of past practices, the assessment of scientific and technological developments, and balanced judgments based on projected future economic, social and environmental impacts.
Ol.9	Sustainable futures result from actions designed to preserve and/or restore the quality and uniqueness of environments.

Source: <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/CrossCurriculumPriorities/Sustainability>

3.3 NSW Environmental Education Policy

The NSW Environmental Education Policy is supported by two documents, Environmental Education Policy for Schools Guidelines (2001) and Implementing Environmental Education Policy in your school (2001).

These documents state that environmental education should be approached using cross-curriculum strategies that can link into a variety of perspectives including Aboriginal content giving the example of investigating the cultural heritage implications when studying environmental management.

Implementing Environmental Education Policy in your school (2001) concentrates on the importance of bio-diversity through ecosystem management, aesthetics and Aboriginal cultural understanding of the environment as well as the ethical use of resources and related economic consequences. This aligns with many of the Australian National Cross Curriculum Priority objectives of Sustainability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures.

4. The Brewongle Journey

4.1 Brewongle EEC Background

Brewongle is a Darug Aboriginal word that we think is derived from the local Boorooberongal clan of the Darug people. The Boorooberongal of the Windsor/Richmond area cared for this country of plenty for thousands of years. This is a land of mighty rivers, lagoons, giant blue gums, forests and verdant plains. It is a rich country with the rugged Blue Mountains to the west, Cumberland Plain to the south and endless sandstone ridges and rainforest gullies to the north. It is a land of kangaroo, possum and koala, of eels, ducks and fish, of goanna, sea eagles and black cockatoos.

We acknowledge and pay tribute to the giants of sustainability, The Darug people.

4.2 Aboriginal Education at Brewongle EEC

Aboriginal Education is a unique experience for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. Aboriginal students are provided with an opportunity for cultural affirmation and positive educational experiences while non-Aboriginal students are able to 'walk together, learn together' with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. The Centre has been conducting leading Aboriginal Education programs since its establishment in 1979. Teachers and students are encouraged to be active citizens for Reconciliation.



Brewongle EEC programs K-Tertiary follows 3 themes:
Learning, Teaching, Leading.

Learning

Key Concepts

- ❖ Australia has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history
- ❖ Western Sydney is home to the Darug Nation who have and have had an intricate knowledge of their local place and the environments it contained for 22000 years or more
- ❖ Darug culture is connected to Country
- ❖ Aspects of culture were and are passed down through dance, songs, stories & the meaning of symbols & art.

Students will develop knowledge and understandings about:

- ❖ the impact of people on environments, histories and cultures values and attitudes relating to:
 - an appreciation of their cultural heritage
 - the dynamic nature of Aboriginal cultures
 - the importance of social justice and equity



Teaching

Key Objectives

- ❖ improving the educational outcomes of indigenous and non-indigenous students
- ❖ building increased knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal Australia for all staff and students
- ❖ strengthening collaborative decision making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Leading

Key Objectives

- ❖ Foster intellectual, social and moral development of learning communities to think critically about the historical and contemporary experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- ❖ Aboriginal Cultural Education through professional learning and career development experiences for all staff in partnership with NSW DEC Aboriginal Education Team and the local Aboriginal community
- ❖ Develop deep understanding of the concepts of social justice and shared histories to enable learning communities to be active and informed citizens.

4.3 An Interview with Mark Edwards: Principal Brewongle Environmental Education Centre

Were there any Darug/Darkinjung Community links before your arrival at the centre?

I have been at the Centre since 2001. There was already an Aboriginal education program in place. It was initiated by previous staff (Jenny Dibley Teacher In Charge and Rick Flemming, Teacher) sometime in the late 1990's. At this time several 'Mother Earth' camps were developed and delivered; Uncle Wes Marne was one community member involved. The first community member to regularly assist teaching staff was Bundeluk (Ian Watson), a Darug man Jenny met by chance in a shop. Bundeluk was working in Windsor. Bundeluk then worked for the Centre for the next 10 years and received an award from the DEC for his services to education circa 2010.

How did you personally go about establishing links?

On my appointment in 2001 the centre approached the DEC Aboriginal Education Team for funding and was successful for several years. This funding ranged from \$5000 to \$10000 annually and was used to employ Bundeluk and other community members to assist in the delivery of our cultural education program. This kept the costs down for visiting schools and in 1 year the Centre provided its cultural program to approx. 2500 students.

Bundeluk and I met with the DEC Aboriginal Education team in early the 2000's to initiate discussion regarding closing the gap for Aboriginal students, refining the existing program and developing new teaching activities to include Darug language and bush resources (foods, medicines and tools).

In the early 2000's Bundeluk and the Centre;

- Visited many high schools to deliver hands on Food Technology Stage 5 classes
- Lectured to School of Education students at UWS
- Delivered workshops at Aboriginal Studies Teacher conferences
- Delivered in-school cultural programs to over 4000 students and teachers

The outcome of the above actions was that Brewongle developed a reputation as a leader in the provision of Aboriginal Education in Western Sydney, with strong links to community.

How did you approach people initially?

I approached people with respect and dignity. My personal approach is that of a learner, and to seek reciprocal and collaborative relationships with the express aim of improving student outcomes. If the meetings were held at the Centre they would be outdoors in a yarning circle, weather permitting. Developing relationships was relatively easy as we were supporting community with improving student outcomes using the motto – ‘identity is strength’. Brewongle is a unique venue and/or vehicle supporting and showcasing reconciliation in our communities.

How have you grown associations personally?

Brewongle has over the past 15 years explicitly integrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture into teaching and learning programs. This integration of cultural themes were noted and increasingly respected by community members as a result of informal student, parent and teacher feedback/discussions amongst the community. Our work with the community has led to strong and positive relations with educators and artists as well as DEC personnel.

- Bundeluk - the Centre's main mentor and cultural advisor until his retirement. A Darug plant use specialist. He became a personal friend and he spent many a night at our dinner table. We went on bush walks to consolidate our shared passion for native plants.
- Aunty Edna Watson – cultural advice, conducts Welcome to Country
- Chris Tobin – cultural advisor 2004 to the present
- Erin Wilkins – Darug nation, educator and advisor 2010 - present
- Flinn Donovan – Gumbainggir nation, cultural presenter
- Tracie Harris – Wiradjuri nation – cultural presenter
- James Stephens – Wiradjuri nation – cultural presenter/advisor, boomerang and other indigenous sports supplier
- Uncle Wes Marne – Storyteller – worked with Uncle for several years and assisted the Centre into his Eighties.
- Uncle Greg Simms – carving workshop with students
- Uncle Al Watson – makes artefacts for the centre.

What has underlined your drive to be inclusive of Aboriginal perspectives apart from the guidelines provided?

Aboriginal Education has been a personal interest and passion since I was at university in the mid 80's and has continued throughout my teaching career. I worked with NPWS as a guide in Kuringai Chase National Park and underwent training in the rock engravings of this park as part of the role. This unique experience further ignited the passion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in my work as a teacher in schools in Western Sydney. Centre staff also hold this passion and are continually seeking new ways to engage, motivate and inspire students and teachers who visit the centre.

Anything else that might be relevant to the journey of Brewongle.

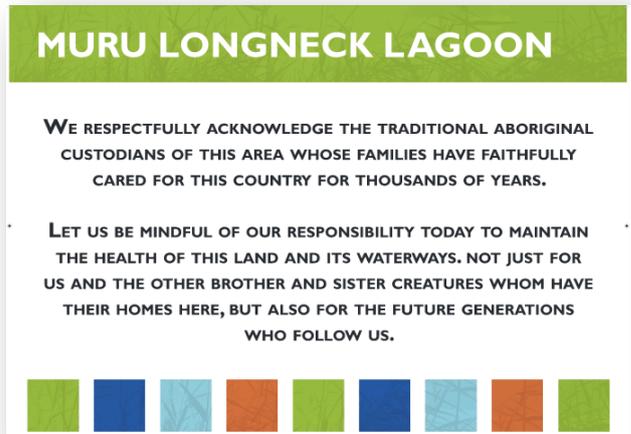
Cultural programs at the Centre provide a good reference point to engage with and celebrate the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is a privilege to work with so many talented and passionate community members, learning from their perspectives, which enable our learning communities to participate in the ongoing development of a just and equitable Australian society that genuinely reconciles with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

5. The Longneck Lagoon Journey

5.1 Longneck Lagoon EEC Background

The Cattai clan of the Darug people occupied the area around Cattai Creek and later the area named Pitt Town. Today much of Cattai land is under the guardianship of National Parks at both Scheyville and Cattai set up to protect Cumberland Plain vegetation. Longneck Lagoon is located within this territory and is part of Scheyville National Park. Longneck Lagoon was a major seasonal source of food for the Cattai Clan with eels being caught by placing hollow logs into the lagoon into which they were trapped. Within 100 metres of Longneck Creek seventeen sites have been found with Aboriginal artefacts. A kilometre north of the Lagoon lays Derubbin (the Darug name for the Hawkesbury-Nepean River meaning 'wide deep water'). Along the banks of the river grew yams the major source of harvested food for the Aboriginal people of the region. This was a land of plenty, of kangaroo, eels, fish, goanna, yams and ducks.

We reflect on, recognise and respect the sustainable practices of the harvesters of yams, the Cattai people of the Darug.



5.2 Aboriginal Education at Longneck Lagoon EEC

Longneck Lagoon EEC is at the very beginning of the journey to formalise an approach to Indigenous engagement and the development of connections. Currently the Principal and staff are regularly attending Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) meetings and developing connections with the local community.

Over the last decade a small number of programs have been presented at Longneck Lagoon EEC run in conjunction with local schools Aboriginal Education Officers and students from Windsor and Richmond High Schools with the support of the AECG and Uncle Greg Simms.



In 2014 an Aboriginal (Darug) interpretative trail was installed around the EEC. The information was gathered from a number of primary and secondary sources in consultation with Chris Tobin. The knowledge provided by the trail is used as stimulus for discussion with students about the Darug and how the local people cared for country. This gives the EEC staff an opportunity to affirm positive cultural and educational experiences for Aboriginal students and give non-Aboriginal students an understanding of alternate ways of knowing and being.

6. Community Contacts



Brewongle EEC Aboriginal Education Team

L-R Chris Tobin-Darug, James Stephens- Wiradjuri, Tracie Harris-Wiradjuri,
Erin Wilkins-Darug, Flinn Donovan-Gumbainggir

James Stephens

An Indigenous Experience

ph: 02 9673 1520 mob: 0457 770 305

Flinn Donovan

A Didgeridoo Experience

email: fdade@live.com

ph: 02 47318984 mob: 0452 480 040

Tracie Harris

Koolyangarra Aboriginal Child and Family Centre

email: tracie@nepeancommunity.org.au

ph: 02 4729 3907 mob: 0437 440 466

Erin Wilkins

Aboriginal Cultural Educator

Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre

email: ewilco1978@gmail.com

mob: 0417 218 722

Chris Tobin

7. Resources



8.1 Environmental Education Centres

Brewongle Environmental Education Centre

Longneck Lagoon Environmental Education Centre

DEC Environmental Education Centres

8.2 Indigenous Ecological Knowledge Clickable Downloads

Bush tucker plant list

Plant use in South East Australia

Bush Food Garden Design with Species List

8.3 Policy Documents Clickable Downloads

AET Policy Cultural Education

National Aboriginal & TI Education Action Plan 2010-14

AET Policy An Introductory Guide

8.4 Teaching and Learning Clickable Downloads from Brewongle EEC

Presentation – Shirley Gilbert UWS

Aboriginal Nations of the Sydney Basin

Schools Reconciliation Challenge e-Kit 2012

Traditional Indigenous Games

William Dawes Notebook of Aboriginal Language (6 MB)

Aboriginal Education K-12 Vol 1 (23 MB)

Aboriginal Education K-12 Vol 2 (8 MB)

How the Kookaburra got its laugh story as told by Uncle Wes Marne (Darug Elder)

8.5 Web Resources

General

Reconciliation Australia	http://shareourpride.reconciliation.org.au/sections/first-australians/
Henry Parkes Equity Resource Centre – a fantastic array of resources for DEC staff only	http://equityresourcelibrary.det.nsw.edu.au/liberty/libraryHome.do
NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc	http://www.aecg.nsw.edu.au/
NSW DEC Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy 2009-2012	https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/strat_direction/aetstrat0912.pdf
Aboriginal Human Resource Development Plan 2009-2011	https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/strat_direction/ahrdplan0911.pdf
What Works – Improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal students	http://whatworks.edu.au/dbAction.do?cmd=homePage
Connecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with Australian Government policies and programs	http://www.indigenous.gov.au/
Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre	http://murumittigar.com.au/index.php
Speak soft, speak sure: an Internet unit about the acceptance of difference	http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/speak/index.htm
Yarramundi Kids	http://gracieproductions.com.au/yarramundi-kids.htm http://www.tvcatchupastralia.com/sbs-one/yarramundi-kids
First Footprints – an ABC documentary	http://www.abc.net.au/tv/firstfootprints/
Jacinta Tobin & Sandra Lee Welcome to Country	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6d_14wD-FsM
Reclamation Process of Dharug in Sydney Using Song – Richard Green	http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/6924/1/RAL-chapter-15.pdf
Dark Emu	https://www.magabala.com/books/culture-and-history/dark-emu.html
The Biggest Estate on Earth	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sko-YDIULKY

Language

The Notebooks of William Dawes The Aboriginal Language of Sydney	http://www.williamdawes.org/sydneylanguage.html
ABC splash – Learning Dharug language	http://splash.abc.net.au/media/-/m/152066/learning-dharug-aboriginal-language-of-sydney
Orana Circle Time – Western Sydney Playgroup website with some links to resources and some songs in Aboriginal languages	https://oranaplaygroup.wordpress.com/2014/01/24/advance-australia-fair/
Dharug Dalang	dharug.dalang.com.au

English

TropFest Shortlisted Film 2014 - Spirit Stone	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tucCH_JeKXg
My Place For Teachers – resources around the book by Nadia Wheatley and the TV series	http://www.myplace.edu.au/home.html
The Secret River	http://kategrenville.com/The_Secret_River
BlackWords	http://www.austlit.edu.au/specialistDatasets/BlackWords http://www.austlit.edu.au/images/TeachingWithBlackWords.pdf

History

A History of Aboriginal Sydney	http://www.historyofaboriginalsydney.edu.au/
A Shared History – Teaching Aboriginal perspectives in the NSW Human Society & Its Environment K-6 syllabus	http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/shared/index.htm
Incidents between Aboriginal people in NSW and the British colonisers 1770-1792	http://k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/go/hsie/background-sheets/british-colonisers-1770-1792
Incidents between Aboriginal people in NSW and the British colonisers 1792-1809	http://k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/go/hsie/background-sheets/british-colonisers-1792-1809#1795
Incidents between Aboriginal people in NSW and the British colonisers 1810-1822	http://k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/go/hsie/background-sheets/british-colonisers-1810-1822

Science

Royal Botanic Gardens teaching resources – useful plant ecology and indigenous uses	http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/education/Resources
Indigenous Astronomy – Stories From the Sky	http://www.sbs.com.au/programs/first-contact/article/2014/11/14/stories-sky-indigenous-astronomy
Bureau of Meteorology Indigenous Weather Knowledge	http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/?ref=fr
Living Knowledge – Indigenous Knowledge in Science Education	http://livingknowledge.anu.edu.au/
Wilderquest – units of work coming soon	http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/wilderquest-learning
ABC Splash – Bush Tucker	http://splash.abc.net.au/topic/-/t/494500/bush-tucker
ABC Splash – Indigenous Perspectives on Sustainability	http://splash.abc.net.au/media/-/m/525907/indigenous-perspective-on-sustainability

8. Sample Content for the classroom

When exploring the content in the new Australian Curriculum there are many areas, which lend themselves to easy integration of Aboriginal perspectives, Sustainability and Environmental Education. Some examples are shown in the table below, however be willing to research and develop your own knowledge. Both Brewongle and Longneck Lagoon EECs are willing to act as a guide and reference source for schools in the Western Sydney region preparing units and lessons with Indigenous content.

Stage	Sample Content	Curriculum Content Areas	Organising Ideas ATSI Histories and cultures	Organising Ideas Sustainability
Foundation	<p>Learning to count in Darug (or research your local language)</p> <p>1- one - wargul 2- two – bulla 3- three – bulla wargul 4- four – bulla bulla 5- five – bulla bulla wargul Many - dyarralang</p> <p>Taking this new knowledge to the playground, find insects and count insects using Darug language. Discuss the location of the insects and what helps them survive ie. hiding in the environment (camouflage), building an insect home or community etc.</p>	<p>Maths ACMNA002 Mae-1WN</p>	01.4	01.2
Stage 1	<p>Australian Animals & Plants</p> <p>Identifying which plants and animals are Australian and local to the school's place. Discuss Aboriginal names and uses including sustainable use (using what was needed, not hunting animals in breeding season etc). For example:</p> <p>Darug name: Budjur Common name: Paperbark Tree Aboriginals used the bark for babies nappies, band-aids and sometimes baskets known as coolamon. Nectar from flowers was used to flavour water much like a cordial.</p> <p>Darug name: Wadanguli Comon name: Wattle Tree Seed</p>	<p>Science ACSSU017 ST1-10LW ST1-11LW</p>	<p>01.2 01.4 01.5</p>	<p>01.2 01.4 01.5</p>

	<p>Pods were roasted for eating or made into a paste. The sappy gum that is sometimes seen on the side of the trees was used as a snack food or food for children. Don't try it some types could make you feel ill.</p> <p>Resource: Aboriginal Plant Use Resource: Darug Dalang Language Tool</p> <p>Cherribit - Red-bellied Black Snake Bungu - Possum Gunggung – Frog Contact your local EEC for more information.</p>			
Stage 2	<p>Seasons</p> <p>Compare and contrast the 4 seasons of the northern hemisphere with Aboriginal knowledge.</p> <p>Explore the seasons of the Sydney Region as discussed by Dharawal Elder Aunty Fran Bodkin in the book – “D'harawal: Seasons and Climatic Cycles” Resource: The Lost Seasons Resource: Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Seasonal Calenders Resource: ATSI Seasonal Calenders</p> <p>Elaborate by examining differences between Dharawal and Darug nations and locate them on a map of Sydney. Resource: Aboriginal Sydney Resource: Map of Major Language Groups Sydney</p>	<p>Science ACSHE035 History ACHHK060</p>	<p>01.2 01.3 01.4 01.5 01.7</p>	<p>01.1 01.2 01.7</p>
Stage 3	<p>Environmental Art – Indigenous Perspectives</p> <p>Discussion of Indigenous Western Desert Symbols and how many different Aboriginal Nations have adopted them.</p> <p>Discuss how the symbols are related to place and the mapping of environmental features through story lines of how to get from one place to another.</p> <p>Design and make a story line of a place the students know in their local environment.</p> <p>In groups of 4 make an e-book or iMovie of the artworks with story voice over.</p> <p>Resource: National Indigenous Art Resource: Song Lines Resource: Aboriginal Symbols</p>	<p>Art ACAVAM114 History ACHHK060 ACHHS069 Geography ACHGK033 ACHGS040</p>	<p>01.1 01.2 01.3 01.6 01.7</p>	<p>01.2 01.4 01.7</p>

<p>Stage 4</p>	<p>Water in the World – Aboriginal Fish Traps</p> <p>David Collins called attention to the way in which the Hawkesbury Aborigines came each April in the 1790s <i>‘to the lagoons, where they subsist on eels which they procure by laying hollow pieces of timber into the water, into which the eels creep, and are easily taken’</i> Collins D, in. B.H. Fletcher, 1975, 462-3.</p> <p>Comparison of modern and traditional methods of fishing. Consider sustainability of Indigenous methods verses modern aquaculture and bulk fishing.</p> <p>Investigate how to make an eel trap in a traditional manner. Test eel traps if time and resources allow.</p> <p>Resource: pg 13 & 14 Woven Eel traps Resource: The Biggest Estate on Earth Resource: Secret of the Stones Resource: Brewarrina Fish Traps Video</p>	<p>Geography ACHGK041 ACHGK065</p>	<p>01.3 01.5 01.6</p>	<p>01.2 01.7 01.8</p>
<p>Stage 5</p>	<p>Cumberland Plain Ecosystem before 1788</p> <p>Use a range of stimulus – photographs of Cumberland Plain vegetation, maps, walking visit to sites in-school or local.</p> <p>Investigate and research vegetation and animals located in Cumberland Plain woodland prior to 1788. Assess habitats using biodiversity scale in order to determine habitat suitability today. Investigate & evaluate Aboriginal sustainability methods and discuss abundance and distribution prior to 1788 and compare to today.</p> <p>Resource: The Biggest Estate on Earth Resource: Dark Emu</p>	<p>Science ACSSU176</p>	<p>01.5 01.6</p>	<p>01.4 01.7</p>
<p>Stage 6</p>	<p>Ecosystems at Risk</p> <p>Evaluation of Traditional and Contemporary Management Strategies. These are generalised resources that can be applied to local ecosystems. Resource: Aboriginal Plant Use Resource: The Biggest Estate on Earth Resource: Dark Emu Resource: Secret of the Stones</p>	<p>Geography H5 H6</p>	<p>01.2 01.3 01.5 01.6 01.9</p>	<p>01.7 01.9</p>

9. Reconciliation Action Plans

9.1 What is a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)?

Lots of organisations pursue goals of greater equity and closing the gap of Indigenous disadvantage. A Reconciliation Action Plan is an outline for individual organisations, schools and other institutions to practically and actively address this inequality. School Reconciliation Action Plans provide a school based, school specific model that address relationships, respect and opportunities in the classroom, community and around the school. The Reconciliation Australia website has an online process that guides teachers (should they want to use this method) through the steps of creating a plan and registering their plan.

9.2 NSW Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZECs) RAP

Brewongle EEC and Longneck Lagoon EEC belong to an education community consisting of all the NSW Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZECs). Together they have committed to a collaborative RAP. With the permission of the EZEC working group the journey of drafting a RAP is mapped out below. This is not the completed document; the completed document will be available on all Environmental Education Centres and Zoo Education Centres websites late 2015.

Introduction

NSW Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZECs) are proud custodians of traditional Country including significant sites across NSW and encompass the traditional lands of a broad diversity of Aboriginal communities.

We acknowledge elders, past and present, and respect the continuing cultural authority and traditions and believe that we can all walk together to a better future.

EZECs recognise the rich contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures make to the diversity of the Australian community. We are committed to advancing reconciliation and ensuring the First Peoples of this nation are valued. Furthermore, it is our responsibility as Australians to have a cultural understanding of Australia's traditional heritage.

Our vision for reconciliation

NSW Environmental and Zoo Education Centres' (EZECs) vision for reconciliation is an integrated approach. All EZECs develop and deliver sustainability and environmental education programs according to NSW syllabus for the Australian Curriculum. EZEC programs embed the key cross-curricular priority area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

All EZECs provide valuable opportunities for students to understand that contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are strong, resilient, rich and diverse. EZEC programs emphasise the relationships people have with place and their interconnection with the land, water and sky.

EZECs effectively integrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' use of the land, governed by a holistic, spiritually based connection to Country and Place, with the continuing influence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on Australian places.

EZECs build on students' current understanding and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture and encourage an appreciation of the reconciliation process in hand with a strong anti-discrimination policy. EZECs will continue to engage and form links and partnerships with local Elders, Traditional owners and Local Land Councils, NSW AECG, Education and Engagement Officers from DEC, including other key stakeholders in order to promote ongoing understanding of Aboriginal culture.

Reconciliation is important to the EZEC network to build national awareness and significance of Indigenous custodianship of the land. As part of the reconciliation journey, EZECs have a responsibility to facilitate learning within the context of traditional and contemporary Indigenous cultures as a foundation stone of contemporary Australian society by developing appropriate programs for schools and the broader community.

Our Business

Our vision

To support NSW Public Schools to integrate sustainability education into all aspects of NSW school operations, curriculum, teaching and learning, physical surroundings and relationships with the local community.

Our beliefs

NSW Department of Education and Communities Environmental and Zoo Education Centres provide authentic contexts for exploring, investigating and understanding values, concepts and systems in the natural and made environments. We equip students to design solutions to identified sustainability problems.

Key Strategies

- Partner with schools, tertiary institutions, community, business and agencies to create new and significant learning for Aboriginal students
- Partner with AECG in implementing Connecting to Country for focus schools
- Work with focus schools in implementing strategies for Aboriginal students
- Provide opportunities for all students to engage with Aboriginal culture
- Enable professional learning for cultural awareness and teaching effectiveness.

Our RAP

Our RAP working group is made up of the NSW EZEC Aboriginal Portfolio team, including both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff. It has been developed in consultation with . . . (we can add names as people have input).

External Aboriginal stakeholders are also integral to the working group with representatives from communities across the state. EZECs Aboriginal Portfolio RAP team has also worked closely with Reconciliation Australia to develop our RAP.

Whilst the EZEC network has a solid framework of Indigenous initiatives and achievements to date, our RAP will publicly formalise our commitment to Indigenous Australians.

By working in partnership with traditional owners, other stakeholders and Reconciliation Australia, the plan aims to broaden our dedication across the network to share Aboriginal culture with our students, teachers and staff. Completing the RAP has enabled us to analyse our existing commitments and look for new opportunities to support the three fundamental principles: Relationships, Respect and Opportunities.

Relationships

It is critical that schools are places where Aboriginal students feel a sense of belonging. EZECs do not have permanent student enrolments and based on EZEC location, each has a varying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Making connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities has some challenges that other schools with permanent enrolments may not experience (specifically that EZECs do not usually have long term connections with ATSI family members/groups). This situation does not diminish EZECs vision for reconciliation however, but rather emphasises the importance of making meaningful, lasting connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in general. EZEC will work with other DEC staff such as Aboriginal Education Consultants, Engagement Officers, Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers, non-DEC staff such as NSW AECG, Community Elders, Traditional landholders and students themselves to close the gap for Aboriginal students.

Equality is one of the democratic values that underpin the NSW public school system. All students are equally entitled to the conditions most likely to lead to successful experience and completion of schooling. For this to be achieved it is necessary, on the grounds of fairness or equity, to take account of the fact that all students are unique, and that their differences must be taken into account when designing education programs. Our RAP provides a framework for taking up this challenge. The focus of our RAP will be the delivery of quality teaching and learning programs for ALL students, with strong links to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cross Curriculum Priority.

All students need to be educated about the injustices of the past and how they as the future generation can right the wrongs and work towards improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' present and future outcomes in life.

NSW EZECs also have a vision to be proactive about the visibility of our own Aboriginal heritage in our local area. Creating awareness and celebrating the Aboriginal heritage of our respective places is bridging the gulf between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and nonindigenous people and the past with the present. This is about building and fostering relationships and working towards our vision for reconciliation.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	DELIVERABLES (measurable target/s)
1.1 RAP Working Group develops, implements and monitors actions in the RAP	The EZEC Aboriginal Education Portfolio team	March 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rap Working Group established. • Rap Working Group membership comprises both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff and external stakeholders • Regular meetings to develop RAP for launch • EZEC RAP available on EZEC website, all EEC & zoo websites and Reconciliation Australia websites • Bi-annual RAP Working Group meetings to monitor progress and report back to Aboriginal Portfolio Team and Reconciliation Australia.
1.2 Continue to build and strengthen existing relationships with each EZECs local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community	All staff across EZEC Network	Ongoing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members actively engaged in the development and delivery of cultural programs • Community invited to events • Meet regularly around key issues and as projects arise • Regular attendance at community meetings and gatherings, eg: AECG • Staff empowered to open new and extend existing relationships through-out the year • Identify and develop opportunities that flow from these relationships.
1.3 Develop database of Key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and championing external organisations	Aboriginal Education Portfolio members	Dec 2015	Make database available on google drive. Database details areas of speciality for each stakeholder and external organisation. Database regularly updated.
1.4 Strengthen and grow EZEC Indigenous Education programs working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander networks and community	All staff across EZEC Network	Ongoing	Successful continuation and increased participation in existing programs. Identification and launch of new programs.

Respect

EZEC's foster cultural respect, recognition and support as an essential part of forming effective partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Through our programs we equip students with education and EZEC respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and encourages students and society to embrace the principals of cultural inclusivity. We are particularly aware and sensitive to this aspect of the RAP as EZECs work with students from a large geographic area of the country.

Through lessons and programs delivered, EZECs aim to build Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competencies and demonstrate the care that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have had for their lands in all settings in order to build and maintain relationships and continually improve outcomes for all students. (DEC Policy).

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	DELIVERABLES (measurable target/s)
1.1 Promote and share cultural learning events and celebrations that are significant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	EZEC staff	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are flown all year round • Traditional owners conduct Welcome to Country as per local protocol wherever possible, at all formal gatherings such as EZEC annual conference and other formal events • Acknowledgement of Country at commencement of daily programs involving students • Traditional owners are consulted and engaged on issues of cultural significance • Centres recognise and celebrate NAIDOC and National Reconciliation Week • Display Apology to stolen generations and the centres commitment to reconciliation in a prominent position • Welcome Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders to EZEC sites • EZECs display appropriate cultural icons, maps of indigenous Australia and a range of other visual information.
2.2 Inclusion of cultural awareness and training for all centre staff	EZEC staff	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight Ways training opportunities provided for all Centre staff statewide • The Australian Curriculum Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cross curriculum priority will be included in centre programs.
2.3 Implementing DEC Aboriginal Policies and Across Curriculum Priorities	EZEC Principals and staff	Dec 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully implement the NSW Aboriginal Education and Training Policy (see below) • Develop and facilitate specialist programs dealing with ATSI histories and culture. These programs will be implemented with schools that attend

			<p>EZEC sites, within schools when visiting, at sites of local importance as well as online</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and facilitate teacher professional learning opportunities based around the cross curricular priority area of ATSI histories and culture with ATSI officers • Develop ATSI histories and culture teaching and learning programs to be incorporated across the curriculum • Support specialist Aboriginal Education programs such as those for community of schools groups or selected individual Aboriginal students • Implementation reported on in 2015 Annual School Reports.
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Opportunities

The operations, nature and location of NSW EZECs provide a unique context and opportunity to interact and connect with members of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, DEC consultants, AECG and Aboriginal Students. NSW EZECs will promote the appreciation of and learning about Aboriginal history and cultures and where possible promote the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander officers (2% DEC wide).

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	DELIVERABLES (measurable target/s)
1.1 EZECs provide opportunities to employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and staff where appropriate and possible.	DEC officers and EZEC staff.	Dec 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EZEC sites match DEC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment percentiles.
3.2 EZECs develop and facilitate specialist programs dealing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presenters where possible	EZEC staff	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs developed and delivered to schools.

Tracking Progress and Reporting

Reconciliation Action Plan to be reviewed annually and submitted to Reconciliation Australia using the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire. Our achievements will be reported in our Annual School Reports, EZEC website and individual Environmental Education and Zoo Education Centre websites.