



Environment,  
Climate Change & Water  
National Parks & Wildlife Service



# ABORIGINAL HERITAGE OF MOSMAN TEACHER'S KIT





## **Acknowledgements**

Adapted from material prepared by the Aboriginal Heritage Office and Australian Museum Business Studies by the Harbour Area North Office of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) NSW

DECCW also acknowledges the contribution of Mosman Council and the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust in the preparation of this teacher's resource.

## **Further information**

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**Slide 1****Introduction**

The Aboriginal Heritage Office is a partnership of the following Councils and State Government bodies:

- Ku-ring-gai
- Lane Cove
- Manly
- North Sydney
- Pittwater
- Ryde
- Warringah
- Willoughby
- NSW Heritage Office
- Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 2**

# The Aboriginal Heritage of Mosman

This teacher's kit has been funded by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Sydney Harbour Federation Trust and Mosman Council. It has been produced for teachers who are teaching in the Mosman LGA.



Australian Government  
Sydney Harbour Federation Trust



Mosman  
COUNCIL

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 3**

## How many languages do you know?

- Name 5 European languages
- Name 5 Asian languages
- Name 5 Aboriginal languages

**1. HOW MANY LANGUAGES DO YOU KNOW?**

The aim of this slide is to illustrate the lack of knowledge of Indigenous languages rather than going into detail with the answers. This aim also applies for slides 6 and 7.

Ask the children to name 5 European, Asian and Aboriginal languages.

Possible Aboriginal languages of NSW:

- |                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| • Guringal      | • Wodi Wodi  |
| • Coastal Darug | • Worimi     |
| • Bundjalung    | • Karenggapa |
| • Dunghutti     | • Ngiyampaa  |
| • Darkinjang    | • Paakantyi  |
| • Wiradjuri     |              |

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 4**

# Culture

What is culture?

**2. CULTURE**

The aim of this slide is to compare our idea of culture with what culture means to Aboriginal people. This will help students gain some insight into what Aboriginal culture is today. As a class discuss what culture means and provide your own definition.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 5**

## Indigenous culture

**Definition:**

Your family, Country and traditions/customs make you who you are. Culture is based on who you are, the importance of family, the importance of Country and the carrying on of traditions passed down by your ancestors.

The aim of this slide is to compare our idea of culture with what culture means to Aboriginal people. This will help students gain some insight into what Aboriginal culture is today. As a class discuss what culture means and provide your own definition.

**Teacher's Notes**

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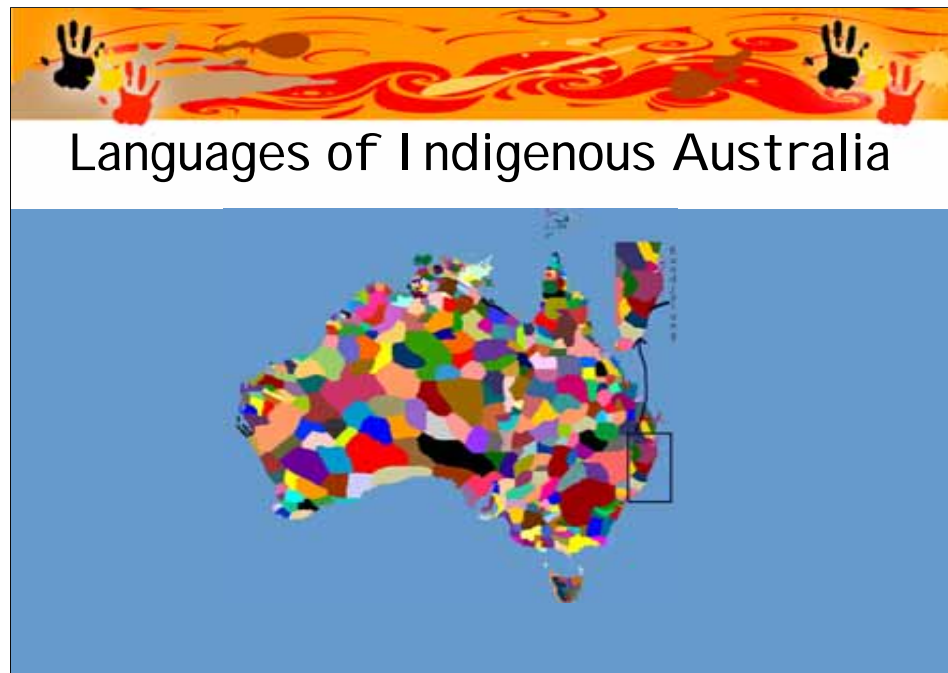
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## Slide 6



### 3. LANGUAGES, TRIBES AND CLANS

#### Languages

Emphasise the fact that we know more about 'western' or 'European' culture than our own Indigenous cultures.

#### Teacher's Notes

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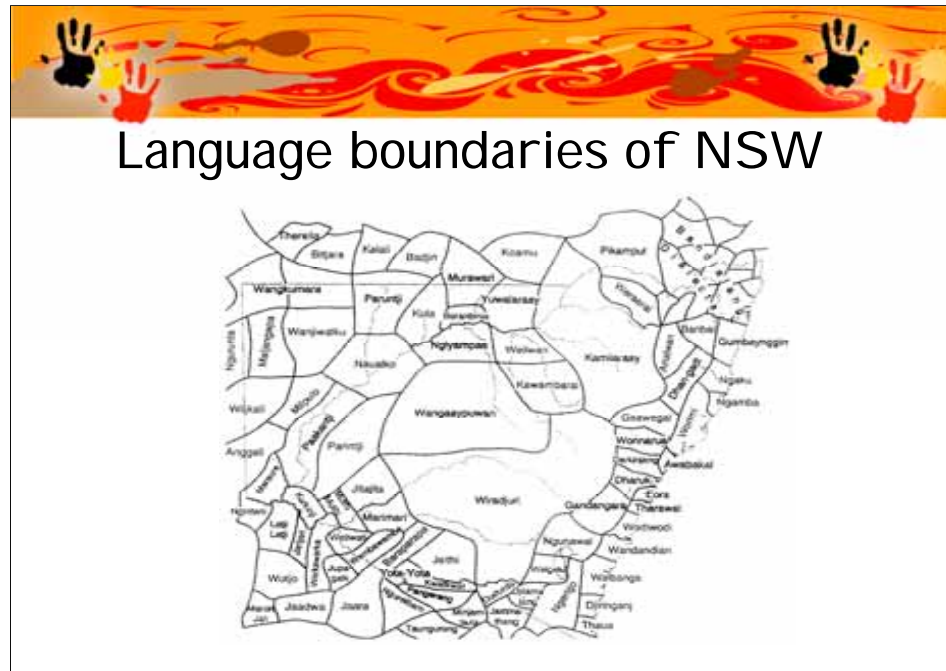
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**Slide 7**

The importance of this slide is to show the students the language nation boundaries of NSW. The aim is to start focusing on our 'local' area; so we start with NSW and lead into the Guringal Nation.

**Teacher's Notes**

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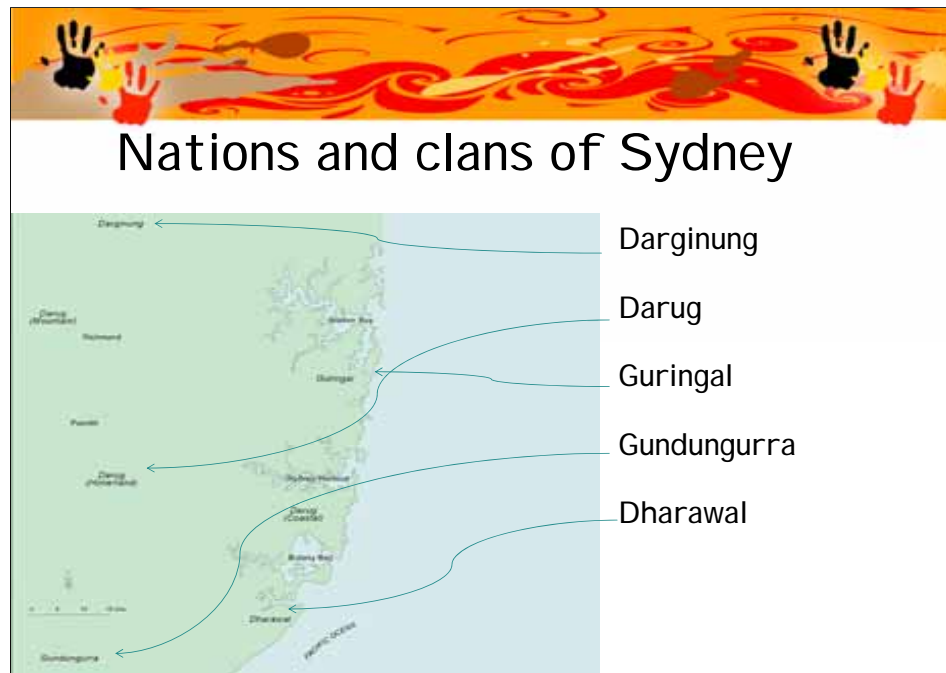
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**Slide 8****Nations and clans**

A clan is an 'extended family' consisting of mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, aunties, uncles, grandparents and cousins.

A nation, formally known as a tribe is made up of different clans, e.g. the Camaraigal, Garigal and Borogegal clans are part of the Guringal Language Nation (tribe).

**Teacher's Notes**

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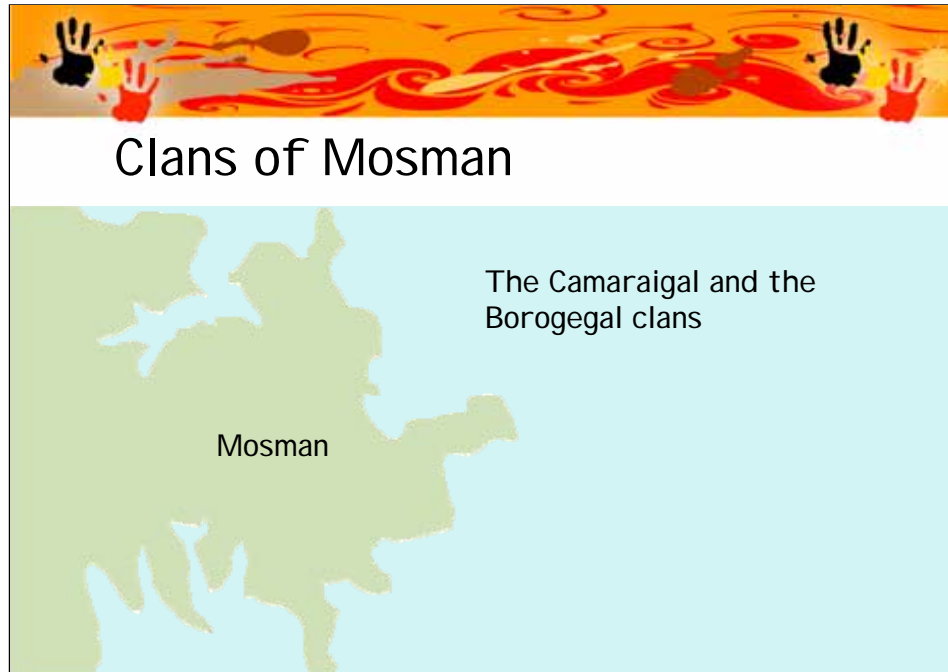
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**Slide 9****Mosman**

This slide shows the students their local area of Mosman in relation to where it is located on the lower North Shore. The Aboriginal clans that occupied Mosman were the Camaraigal and Borogegal.

**Teacher's Notes**

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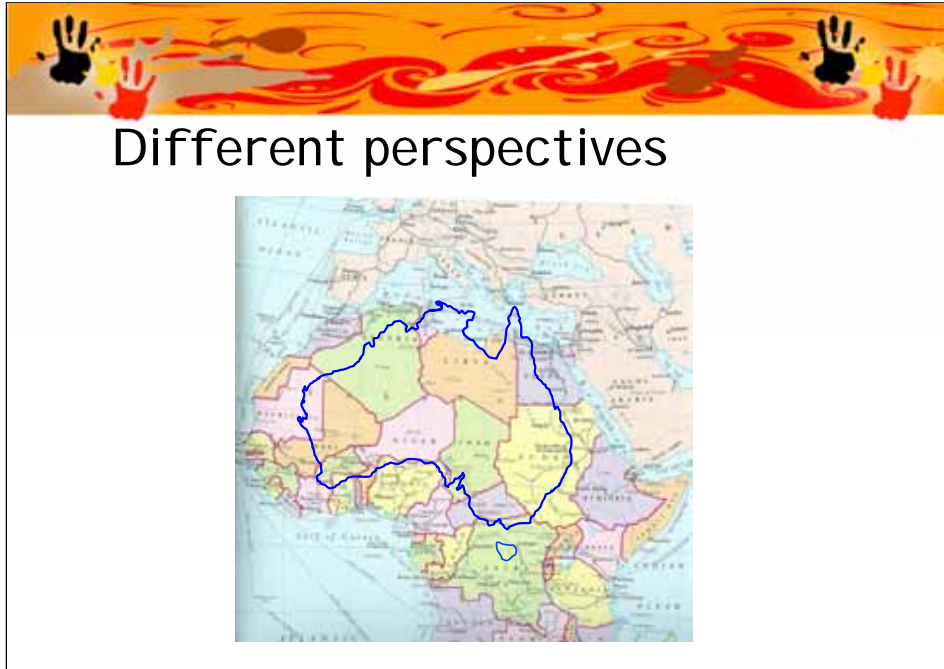
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**Slide 10**

Different perspectives

The slide features a decorative header with a red and orange background and black and red handprints. Below the header, the text "Different perspectives" is displayed. Underneath the text is a map of Australia with a blue outline of Africa superimposed on it, illustrating the comparison of Australia's climate and geography to Africa.

**4. DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES****Different perspectives**

The aim of this slide is to engage the students in thinking about how Australia's climate and geography is more similar to Africa, yet Australia's customs, agriculture and water use are derived from British methods and customs.

Another approach is to look at how Aboriginal Australia (like Africa and Europe) was comprised of different nations with different languages and often different customs and beliefs.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 11**

## A short history of Mosman

- What was Mosman like?
- How did Aboriginal people live?
- The Guringal people – Camaraigal and Borogegal clans

## 5. PRE-SETTLEMENT

### A short history of Mosman

This slide is primarily a brief overview of what Mosman was like prior to European settlement and how Aboriginal people lived. Not much detail is needed. Have a short discussion on the questions.

Ask students to think about the fact that there would have been much more wildlife, there wouldn't have been any houses and the Aboriginal people would have lived off the land.

### Teacher's Notes

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**Slide 12**



**6. BUSH FOODS**

**Bush foods**

The aim of these slides is to introduce bush foods and their uses.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 13**

## Traditional uses but... potentially dangerous

- Dye/colours
- Fruit/berries
- Medicines
- Plant foods
- Tools/fibre/hardware
- Potentially dangerous/poisonous

**Traditional uses**

These are just some of the traditional uses of certain plants in the northern Sydney area, including Mosman. Each use is colour coded for the following slides to show what the plant was used for.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 14**

## Year-round Sydney foods

Angophora	Flame tree	Native yam
Bangalay	Gahnia	Orchids and lillies
Bracken fern	Grass tree	Paper bark
Burrawang	Grey ironbark	Plantain/lamb's tongue
Cabbage tree	Gymea lily	Red bloodwood
Casuarina	Inkweed	Scribbly gum
Coral fern	Kurrajong	Tree fern
Cunjevoi	Lomandra	Wattle
Fig tree	Mangroves	Yellow wood sorrel
	Native cherry	

### Year-round plants

The aim of this slide is to give students an idea of how many Sydney bush foods are year-round plants.

### Teacher's Notes

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**Slide 15**


## Seasonal foods

Autumn	Winter	Spring	Summer
Brown pine	Banksia	Coastal bearded heath	Apple berry
Lillypilly	Cranberry heath	Devils twine	Blackberries
Native grapes		Geebung	Dianella
Native millet		Native flax	Kangaroo apple
Water vine		Pigweed	Mountain devil
		Sarsaparilla	Onion grass
		Sour currant-bush	Pigface
		Styphelia	Wombat berry
		Waratah	
		Yam daisy	

**Seasonal foods**

The purpose of this slide is to give the students an indication of how many seasonal bush foods there are in Northern Sydney.

**Teacher's Notes**


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**Slide 16**

## Burrawang or cycad (*Macrozamia communis*)



- The seed is known to be a food source.
- It is extremely toxic and must be leached of poison before use.
- It can be used to make cakes and flour.
- DEFINITELY NOT to be eaten in its raw form!

G. Eldershaw, NPWS

**Burrawang**

Aboriginal people perfected a way of removing the toxins out of burrawang seeds by washing them in streams for up to several weeks.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 17**

## Dianella (*Dianella caerulea*)



- Also known as snake whistle, the leaves can be used to make a high pitched whistle.
- Bright blue berry juice can be used as a purple dye or to colour white pipe clay for decoration.
- Berries can be eaten and are considered a delicacy.

**Dianella**

The plant 'snake whistle' gets its name from the sound that is made by blowing through the bottom of the stem. Dianella berry juice can be used to dye white pipe clay for decoration and is considered a favourite food eaten by Aborigines.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 18**

## Grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea*)



- The flower stalk can be used as a spear shaft.
- The resin can be used as a glue.
- The flower nectar is used as a sweetener.

Steve Smith Mosman Council

**Grass tree**

Xanthorrhoea (aka grass tree) has numerous uses.

The flower stalk can be used to make practice spear shafts. The spears are lightweight and perfect for target practice and developing hand-eye coordination.

The resin within the plant can be used as glue for things such as spearheads, barbs and woomeras (spear throwers).

The flower produces sweet nectar that Aboriginal people suck. They squeeze the nectar out and add it to water, which makes a sweet drink. It may also be added to cakes and bread to sweeten them.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 19**

## Native sarsaparilla (*Smilax*)



Brian Walters

- The new leaves are sucked to ease sore throats.
- The leaves and stems are made into a cure-all tonic.

**Native sarsaparilla**

Smilax is a medicinal plant that the Aboriginal people use to cure many sicknesses. It is still being used by some Aboriginal people today to cure the following:

- colds
- coughs
- sore throats
- bronchitis
- arthritis
- rheumatism
- diabetes

Dried leaves can be boiled to make a cure-all tonic. The new leaves are sucked to help a sore throat.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 20**

## Wattle (*Acacia*)



- The green seeds are eaten like peas after roasting the green pods on a fire.
- The hard ripe seeds are made into damper or a paste.
- The seeds are very high in protein and sometimes high in fat.

North Sydney Council

**Wattle**

Some species of acacia are seen as 'bad wattle' and aren't used by Aborigines. But most wattle is 'good wattle' and used for food.

Most acacia seeds are a great source of food due to their abundance. The seeds can be made into flour to make damper, crushed to make a thick paste (which was usually flavoured with crushed ants/honey ants), or they can be roasted over fires and eaten like peas.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 21**

## Things to remember

If you're not sure, then

**DON'T EAT IT!**

(Many plants are poisonous)

**Remember ...**

Be sure to remind the children not to eat anything in the bush unless they are with someone who DEFINITELY knows the area and is educated in bush foods. MANY plants look edible, but they could be poisonous.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 22**

## Settlement or invasion?

- How did the European invasion affect the Boregegal and Camaraigal people?
- Do you think the arrival of the British was an invasion or settlement?

## 7. HISTORY

### Settlement or invasion?

The aim of this slide is for the children to brainstorm the concepts of settlement and invasion. There are no wrong answers in this exercise, but the main effect Europeans had on the clans was the introduction of disease and the dispossession of their lands.

Ask the children to name some of the diseases introduced by the Europeans.

These may include:

- influenza
- smallpox

**This theme continues/leads into the next slide.**

### Teacher's Notes

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**Slide 23**


## First sightings in Mosman

On a point of land in the lower part of the harbour between \_\_\_\_\_ and Bradleys Point we saw several of the Natives on the upper part of the rocks, who made great noise and \_\_\_\_\_ to us to come on shore; there being a great \_\_\_\_\_ we could not land at the Point we wished, which they observing, pointed to the best place to \_\_\_\_\_ and came down unarmed to meet us. We of course landed \_\_\_\_\_, taking care that arms were ready for a moments notice. Having some angles to measure from this point, two of the \_\_\_\_\_ went to the outer part of the rocks for that purpose, the others remained with the \_\_\_\_\_ who were all much disposed to good humour and pleased with us. On our landing we \_\_\_\_\_ some women at the place the men came down from; they would not come near us, but peered from behind rocks and trees. When the \_\_\_\_\_ set off, the men began \_\_\_\_\_ and laughing and when we were far enough off to bring the place the women were at in sight, they held their arms extended over their \_\_\_\_\_, got on their legs and danced till we were some \_\_\_\_\_, then followed us upon the rocks as far as the boats went along that \_\_\_\_\_ (in Cobley 1962:40).

natives      unarmed      officers      land      surf      Middle Head

shore      distance      dancing      observed      heads      boats      waved

*Slides 23-24***First encounter in Mosman**

The first observation of the Aboriginal people of the Mosman area was an encounter between Captain Hunter, Lieutenant Bradley and Henry Waterhouse on 28 January 1788.

As a class, ask the students to put the words in the right places in the paragraph.

**Teacher's Notes**


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**Slide 24**

## First sightings in Mosman

On a point of land in the lower part of the harbour between [Middle Head](#) and Bradleys Point we saw several of the Natives on the upper part of the rocks, who made great noise and [waved](#) to us to come on shore; there being a great [surf](#) we could not land at the Point we wished, which they observing, pointed to the best place to [land](#) and came down unarmed to meet us. We of course landed [unarmed](#), taking care that arms were ready for a moments notice. Having some angles to measure from this point, two of the [officers](#) went to the outer part of the rocks for that purpose, the others remained with the [natives](#) who were all much disposed to good humour and pleased with us. On our landing we [observed](#) some women at the place the men came down from; they would not come near us, but peered from behind rocks and trees. When the [boats](#) set off, the men began [dancing](#) and laughing and when we were far enough off to bring the place the women were at in sight, they held their arms extended over their [heads](#), got on their legs and danced till we were some [distance](#), then followed us upon the rocks as far as the boats went along that [shore](#) (in Cobley 1962:40).

### Teacher's Notes

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## Slide 25

What has survived in Mosman?

Steve Smith, Mosman Council

## 8. SITES

### What has survived in Mosman?

This slide's purpose is to lead into the next subject 'sites'. Ask the children the following question: 'What has survived since invasion/settlement?' Once again there are no wrong answers. Responses may include archaeological sites and Aboriginal people.

### Teacher's Notes

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**Slide 26**

## 3 main types of occupation sites

1. Rock shelters
2. Middens
3. Open camp sites

### Three main types of sites

The purpose of this slide is to name the three main types of occupation sites. There is no need to go into detail here, for it will be covered in slides to come.

- rock shelters
- middens
- open camp sites

### Teacher's Notes

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**Slide 27**

## Rock shelters



Did you know?

- The Sydney area is home to one of the largest rock art galleries in the world.
- Over 1000 Aboriginal sites have been recorded in Northern Sydney.

AMBS 2005

**Rock shelters**

Ask the students the following question: 'What do you think a rock shelter is?'

A rock shelter is a rock overhang, usually in a cliff line, mostly found with evidence of human occupation such as stone tools, shell, bone, charcoal and paintings/drawings.

With archaeological deposits in outcrops of rocks such as sandstone or granite, overhangs may form cave-type shelters. Ashes from fires, sediments and material fallen from the roof accumulate in the protected shelter. Fireplaces, discarded tools and food remains become part of the deposit. Archaeologists can excavate these deposits in order to study the pattern of Aboriginal life. Their scientific value when undisturbed is high.

Ask the children the following question: 'What would you expect to find in rock shelters?'

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 28****Shelters with art**

Ask the students what they think the stencils depict, and how they think the stencils were made.

The stencils are of hands and fish and were produced by mixing ochre in the mouth into a wet paste then spraying it over their hand.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 29**



**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 30****Middens**

Middens are shell mounds built up over hundreds of years as a result of countless meals of shellfish. They are found along ocean coasts, estuaries, rivers and inland lakes, and primarily contain mature specimens of edible shellfish species.

They may also contain pieces of clay, bird, fish bones, animal teeth and bones, campfire charcoal, stone flakes and the remains of stone tools. Less commonly found in middens are remains from human burials.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 31****Open camp sites**

These sites are mostly surface and associated sub-surface scatters of stone artefacts, sometimes with fireplaces. They exist throughout the landscape and are the most common site type in rural areas. While found in all environmental locations, larger and denser sites tend to be found on river banks and lower slopes facing water courses, as well as ridgelines and other areas that offer movement routes.

There aren't any known open camp sites in the Mosman or North Shore areas.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 32****Open sites**

Each flag on this slide represents a stone tool/stone flake found. The purpose of this slide is to show the students how large an open site can actually be. Once again there are no known open sites (of this size) on Sydney's North Shore.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 33**

## Artefacts



AMBS 2005

**Artefacts**

An artefact is an object pertaining to the past occupation by Aboriginal people of any part of Australia.

It is important that artefacts are not removed from where they are found.

The artefacts on this slide were found in the Mosman Local Government Area in a deposit in a rock shelter.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 34**

## Rock engravings



Engraving of an eel at Beauty Point Public School

Rock engravings were made by tapping holes in the shape of the figure being engraved. They would then join the holes up, like a large dot-to-dot to make the outline/engraving.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 35**

## Vandalism and its effects



AMBS 2005

**Vandalism and its effects**

It is against the law under section 90 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* to knowingly destroy, damage, vandalise or take anything from an 'Aboriginal relic'. Under the Act an Aboriginal relic is classified as 'any material evidence of the Indigenous occupation of New South Wales'.

Vandalising or desecrating Aboriginal sites ruins it for everyone else. Vandalising a site can cause irreversible damage to the site and the site can be lost forever.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 36**

## Quiz

- What is the Aboriginal name for Middle Harbour?
- To see a rock engraving, is midday or afternoon best?
- What is the most common type of site found in Mosman?

## 9. QUIZ

### Quiz/Answers

Warringah

It is better to see rock engravings in the afternoon due to the casting of shadows over the site, which brings out the engraving.

Shelters with middens are the most common sites found in Mosman.

### Teacher's Notes

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**Slide 37**

## Which is older?

- Sites older than 10,000 years
- Sea level changes



The map of Australia displays various Aboriginal sites marked with symbols corresponding to their age. A legend in the bottom left corner indicates: a circle for '10-15,000 years BP', a triangle for '15-30,000 years BP', a square for 'greater than 30,000 years', and a shaded area for '200m sea level'. The map shows a high density of sites across the continent, particularly in the southern and eastern regions.

**10. COMPARING AGES****Which is older?**

The point of this slide is to show the students that some Aboriginal sites are thousands of years older than archaeological sites anywhere in the world. Some middens in Sydney have been dated as being over 6000 years old whereas the pyramids of Giza are approximately 4500 years old.

**Teacher's Notes**

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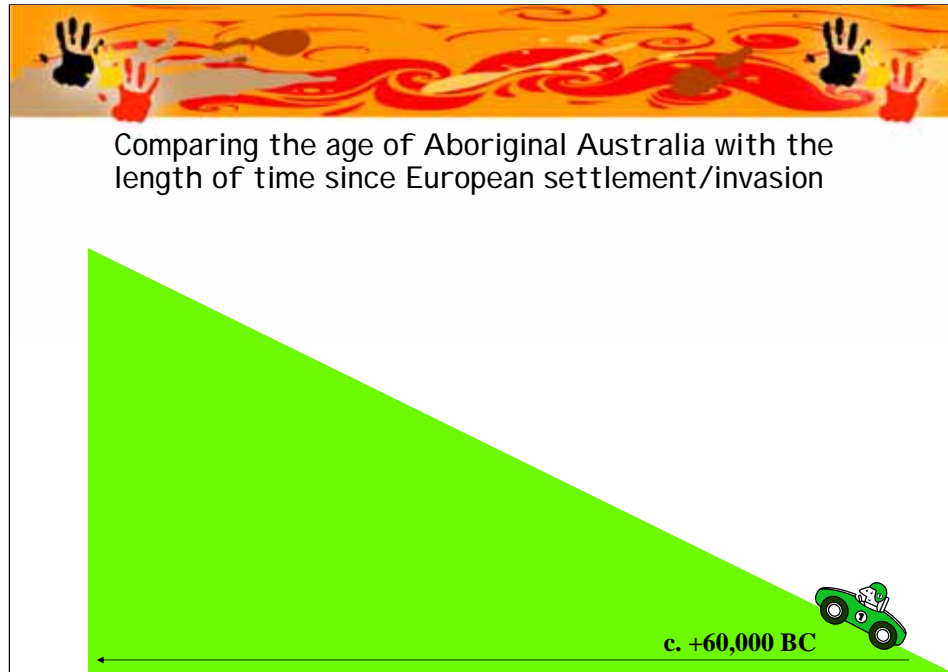
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**Slide 38***Slides 38-40***Length of time since European settlement/invasion vs the age of Aboriginal Australia**

The aim of these slides is to give an approximate scope of how much older Aboriginal culture is than European Australian culture. The slide was not measured, but is an estimate of years to centimetres. There is no need to go into detail other than Aboriginal culture is approx 60,000 years old, whereas Australian culture after European settlement/invasion is only just over 220 years old.

**Teacher's Notes**

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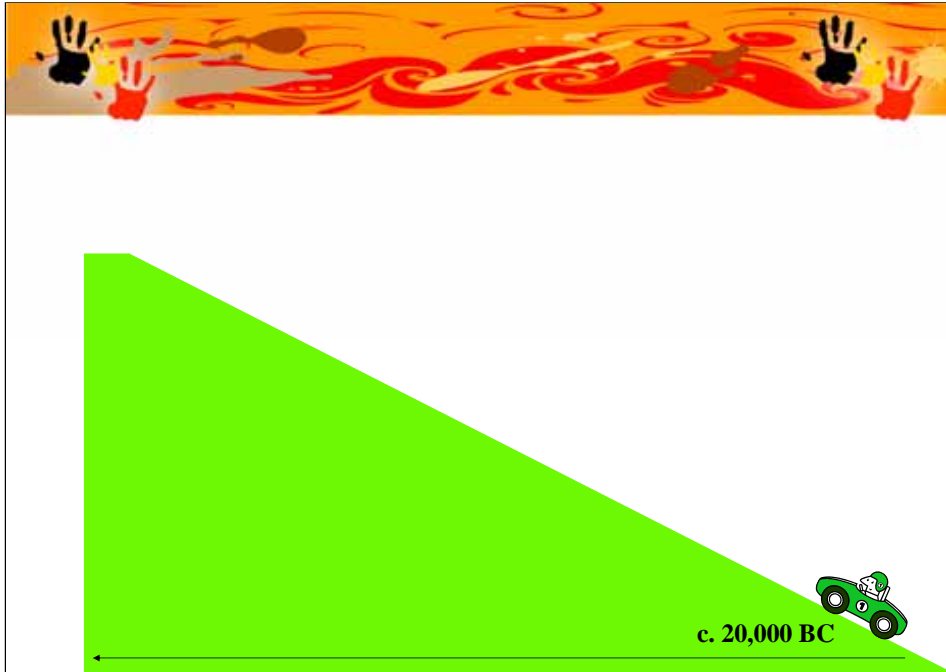
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## Slide 39



### Teacher's Notes

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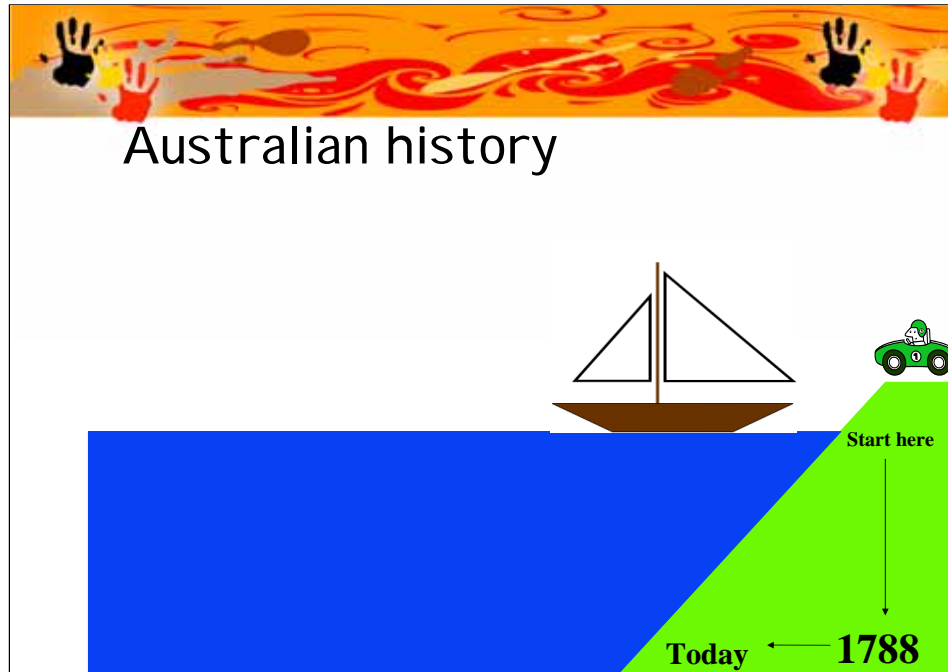
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## Slide 40



### Teacher's Notes

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**Slide 41**

## Importance of the Law

- National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 and Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- Protection for ALL Aboriginal objects and Aboriginal Places

**11. LAW****Importance of the Law**

Section 90 of the NPW Act provides statutory protection for ALL Aboriginal relics (any material evidence of the Indigenous occupation of NSW) while section 84 protects Aboriginal Places (areas of cultural significance to the Aboriginal community).

The EP&A Act established the framework for Aboriginal heritage values to be formally assessed in land-use planning and development consent processes. This means environmental impacts are interpreted in NSW in the broadest sense and include impacts on cultural heritage and on Aboriginal heritage specifically. There are three main parts:

Part 3 which governs the preparation of planning instruments

Part 4 which relates to the development assessment process

Part 5 which relates to activity approvals by government (determining) authorities.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 42**

## Reduce your impact



AMBS 2005

**12. PROTECTION OF SITES****Reduce your impact**

Ask the students: 'What can you do to reduce your impact on Aboriginal sites?' Again there are no wrong answers, but here are some possible answers:

Take off your shoes while walking around/over engravings because shoes can scuff and erode the engravings over time.

Never walk on an engraving.

Pick up any rubbish near or around sites.

Report any vandalism of sites to NPWS.

Don't take or destroy anything from an archaeological site: it is against the law.

**Teacher's Notes**

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**Slide 43**

## Helping maintain history for you and Aboriginal sites

- You, your family and friends can give a helping hand to keep a site clear of rubbish.
- Take time to enjoy the site.
- Most importantly remember you're helping maintain the history and heritage of the world's oldest surviving culture.

**Teacher's Notes**

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## What does it mean to be Aboriginal?

- Aboriginality is not defined by appearance but by culture, family, community and connection to country.
- Aboriginal culture is dynamic and progressive.

### 13. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ABORIGINAL?

The purpose of this slide is to help students understand that to be Aboriginal a person does not have to be dark skinned.

Ask students to collect some newspaper clippings or images that show the diversity in appearance of Aboriginal Australians.

As an extension exercise students could be encouraged to trace their heritage.

#### Teacher's Notes

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