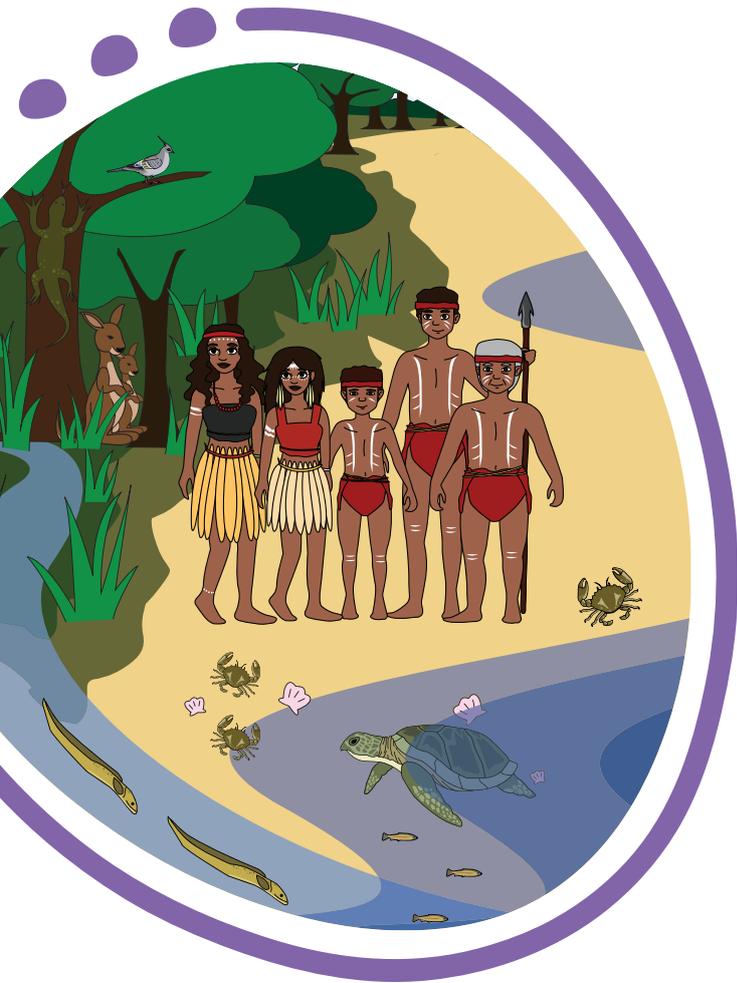


ILLAWARRA

FLY





Traditional Custodians

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the oldest surviving culture on earth. They have been living on this continent for thousands of years in many different and distinct groups, each with their own customs, language and laws.

They are the 'Traditional Custodians of Country', which means they have rights and responsibilities to care for Australia's land, sea and sky, and to protect Aboriginal culture, knowledge and stories.

Each area is looked after by a different language group and it is important to respect the unbroken connection between Traditional Custodians and the Country they live on and care for. One of the ways we do this is by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land.

Illawarra Fly is located on Dharawal Country. This area is now known as Knights Hill in New South Wales, Australia.

Dharawal Country is the land south of Botany Bay, extending as far south as the Nowra area, and across to the Georges River in Sydney's west.

Who are the Traditional Custodians of the area in which you live?

Acknowledgment of Country

Illawarra Fly acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land we are on, the Dharawal People. We pay respect to Elders, past, present and emerging and recognise the important role they have in Australian society.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia and the ongoing connection they share with Country and culture.

We respect the continuing commitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to caring for Country and are committed to learning from and incorporating traditional knowledge in our work.

This resource has been developed by Wingaru Education in partnership with Dr. Jodi Edwards, with thanks to Aunty Leanne King and Aunty Tricia Wallace.

Illawarra Fly Treetop Adventure sits on Country up high up on the Illawarra escarpment, between two important trade routes of cultural and historical significance. For thousands of years, the Dharawal and Gandangara peoples have used these walking tracks to attend ceremonies, to travel to other Country, and to trade food, tools, and ochre.

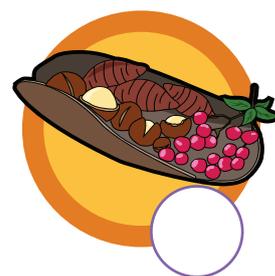
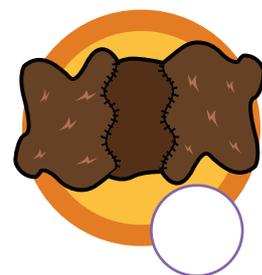
Trade routes were innately important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with clans moving across Country with purpose, to engage with each other and exchange items they needed but could not find locally - things like food, ochres and materials used to make tools such as rocks, stones and wood.



Track Record

Many of today's roads follow tracks used by First Nations people - these routes were used to travel all over the continent, and unusual artefacts found in places they don't naturally occur show that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people traded across vast distances for thousands of years. Bailer shells from tropical Cape York have been found in Alice Springs, and we know that ochre from the desert was used on the coastline. That's deadly!

Match the traded item to the picture



A

Wood

B

Tools

C

Ochres

D

Rocks

E

Animal Skins

F

Food

Dharawal Country

Illawarra Fly is located on Dharawal Country. Which is now known as Knights Hill in New South Wales, Australia.

Dharawal Country is the area south of Botany Bay, extending as far south as the Nowra area, and across to the Georges River in Sydney's west.



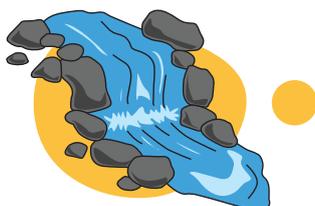
Draw a line to match the Dharawal words to English shadows.



Nandawanjing



Water



Ngadjung



Friends



Dhangang



Hello



Mudjingaal



Fire



Ganbi



Food

Say What?!

Nagangbi Mudjingaal!
In Dharawal language that means hello friends!



Nagangbi



See ya later



Reading the Skies

Aboriginal people have a deep understanding of climate, weather and the stars. Dharawal seasons are marked by changes in the weather, plant cycles and animal migrations, and patterns in the stars. When Tea Trees flower, for example, it means there will soon be plenty of fish to catch; when the Lilli Pilli fruit starts to fall from the trees, it's time to move to a warmer place.

Sustainable Life

Part of looking after Country includes looking after the animals and plants that share the land. Aboriginal clans made sure that there were always enough fauna left by only taking (at most) a third of the meat or eggs available. They would leave a third for other predators, and a third so that animals could continue to breed. The same principle was used for plants so there was enough food for the animals and to maintain a healthy environment to support all of Country, not just the clan there at the time.



Singing the Water Song

The Dharawal use lots of ways to locate water, sharing stories about finding water and caring for the rivers and streams as part of songlines and Dreaming stories passed down over thousands of years.

I ♥ You! Caring for Country

Aboriginal people consider themselves to be part of Country and have always had a spiritual connection with the land. Looking after Country is very important to them.

VERY SPECIAL TREES

Trees hold immense significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and play an important role in cultural, spiritual and daily life. Some are considered sacred sites, a place for ceremonies, and a connection to the Dreaming.

Material for Tools

Many trees would have been used as shelter, and the bark and wood they produce used to build homes, tools and weapons like these:

Coolamon



Woomera



Boomerang



Canoe

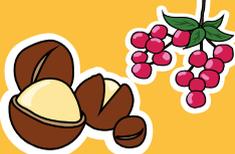


Bush Medicine and Food



Eucalyptus trees make a useful black/red gum called 'Kino' which contains tannin. This can be used to treat burns, cuts, coughs, colds and upset stomachs.

The juice from young bracken ferns was used on insect bites and the shoots were used to reduce a fever or in a steam bath to help with pain.



Fruits, nuts, seeds and nectar were an important part of the traditional diet.

Navigation

Trees were a way of navigating the way through Country, they were reference points that could indicate water nearby, or an important cultural site.

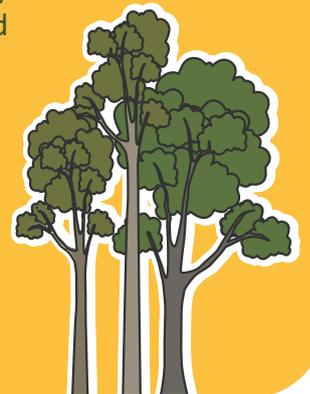
Knowledge about trees is shared in Dreaming stories to pass lore and cultural knowledge down through generations of First Nations people.

Protection

The Dharawal People cared for, and sustainably managed the forests you are now in. They protected the natural ecosystem by selective harvesting, taking only the bark, seeds or wood they needed at that time, allowing the tree to regenerate.

Cultural burning was used to manage the landscape. Controlled fires were lit to reduce the risk of much bigger, out-of-control bushfires, which would have decimated the forest.

This also helped to promote the growth of certain trees that rely on burning to re-seed themselves.

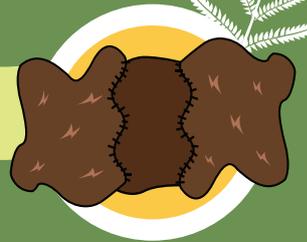
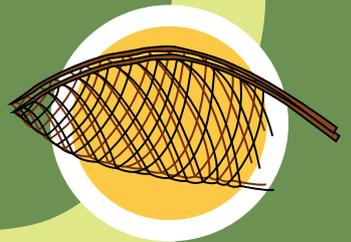


Scar trees are considered sacred

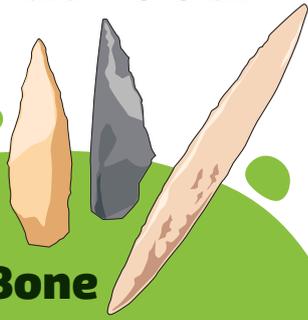
These 'scars' are from where bark has been removed from a tree to create canoes, containers or for shelter; carefully removed using special tools, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people focused on not harming the tree or the forest around it. Today, scar trees form an important link to the First Nations history; they show us how the land was used, where clans were moving to and from, and the important role trees played in Aboriginal Australian culture. Look out for them as you are moving around!

Helpful Trees

For rainforest mobs, trees play a really important part of everyday life. Can you help Kiara cross the forest using the items trees provide to help her?



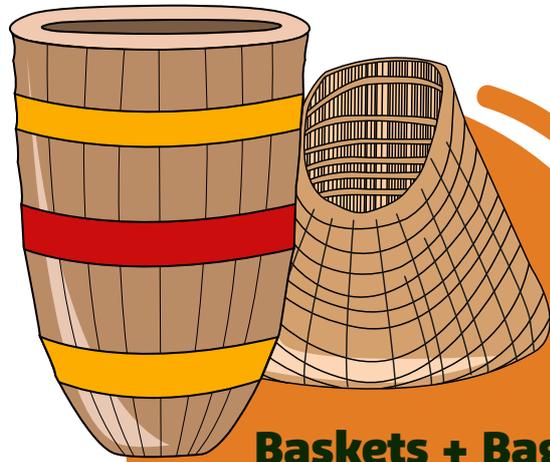
Aboriginal Tools



Stone + Bone

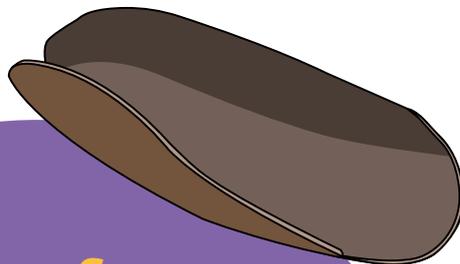
Imagine carving a piece of wood using a piece of bone – tricky, huh?

Aboriginal people used heaps of clever tools made out of wood, stone, reeds, grasses and animal bones in their day-to-day lives, all harvested from the natural environment. They were important things to trade, too, with different language groups swapping tools or natural resources like flint.



Baskets + Bags

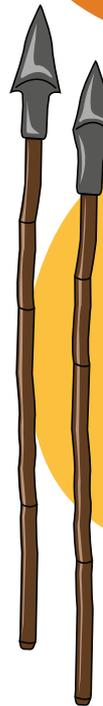
Woven from a range of natural fibres like reeds, tree bark and long grasses, baskets and bags were used to carry food, tools and natural resources. Weaving techniques have been passed down through generations and are still used today – that's like time travel!



Coolamon + Canoes

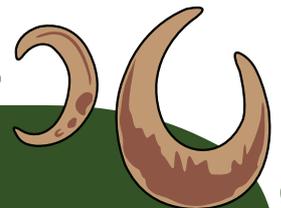
Carved from wood, coolamons were used to carry things, including food, water and... babies! They can be any size and shape but were generally long and oval which made them useful for digging and scooping as well.

Canoes and rafts were super important for Dharawal clans as they travelled far and wide along the coastline and up freshwater rivers and creeks. Canoes were carved from trees and logs, then shaped, while rafts were made of bark, reeds and grasses bundled together.



Spears

A spear is a pole weapon usually made from wood and featuring a pointed head. The spearhead was made from a variety of naturally found materials including wood, bone, rock and flint.



Fishhooks

Usually made from shell, fishhooks could also be made from wood, bird talons and bone. They were carved by women, who ground and smoothed the hooks using grinding tools.

Nets + Traps

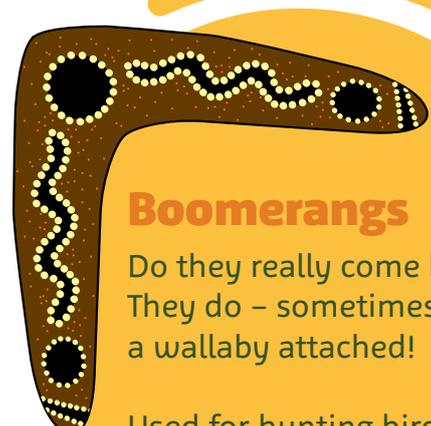
Woven from natural grasses and plants, nets and traps were used to gather fish, eels and other seafood. What was used depended on what grasses and fibres grew in the area.



Boomerangs

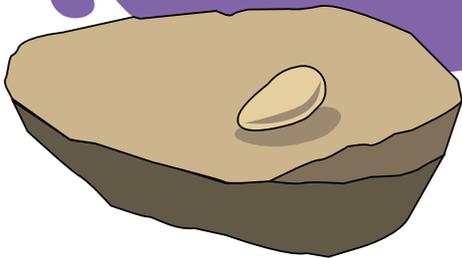
Do they really come back? They do – sometimes with a wallaby attached!

Used for hunting birds and animals like emus, kangaroos and other marsupials, the boomerang was an effective hunting tool, thrown to pull down an animal as it was moving, sometimes up to 100 metres away. Carved from wood, there are many types of boomerang, each used for a different purpose.



Grindstones

Used to grind seeds into flour, crush bones and plants, grind ochre and resin, and sharpen tools, grindstones were made from two stones – a larger lower platform that held the item being ground and a smaller stone used to do the grinding.



Mobile Shopping

There were no shops back then, so Aboriginal People had to trade with each other to get what they needed. Clans shared resources with neighbouring mobs but also with people further away: shells, for example, have been found in the centre of Australia, miles from the ocean, and records show that people from China visited Australia from 592 BC to 1432 AD – that's up to 2,300 years before Captain Cook visited!



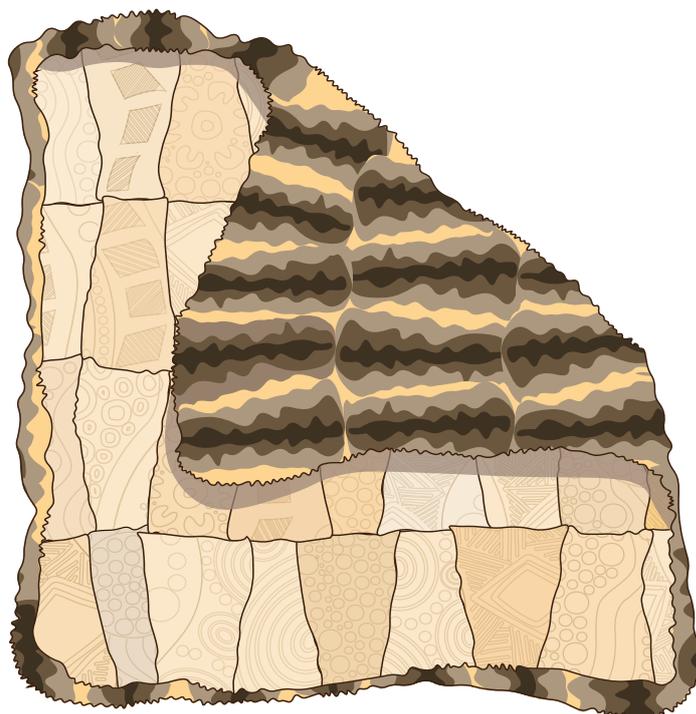
Sharing the Treetops

Living in the trees of the forest, ringtail and brushtail possums share this Country, and are important part of Dharawal Dreaming and culture. Possums create ball-shaped nests in thickets or undergrowth out of sticks they have gathered, and are nocturnal, sleeping during the day and hunting for leaves, fruit, insects and fungi on the ground and in the trees at nighttime.

The relationship between people and possums is long and detailed. For thousands of years, First Nations people hunted possums for their meat, and used their fur to make cloaks to keep them warm.

Skins were used to wrap newborn babies in as they were born into the world. As children grew, the birth cloak would be extended with new skins added to the garment when needed. Importantly, possum-skin cloaks were used as maps, too, with significant symbols etched into the garment using sharp animal bones dipped in ochre and wattle, or by burning the skin, so a child would know their totems and their Country. If they were ever lost, this personal story would help them find their way home.

Skins were also used to carry children, stretched tight as drum skins for ceremonies, and to wrap people for burial ceremonies. Today, possum-skin cloaks are sometimes worn by First Nations leaders at special events, and the symbols etched inside show Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, survival and history.



The Dharawal people share this land with the rich flora and fauna of the natural world. In First Nations culture, the relationship between plants, animals and people is deeply interconnected and all part of one identity, with the wellbeing of people directly linked to the wellbeing of the whole ecosystem.

Add the English name to the Dharawal name for each of the animals in the boxes below

- Black Cockatoo**
- Kookaburra**
- Lyrebird**
- Red Belly Black Snake**
- Wombat**
- Kangaroo**
- Ringtail Possum**
- Rock Wallaby**



Ngaoroa



Gugara



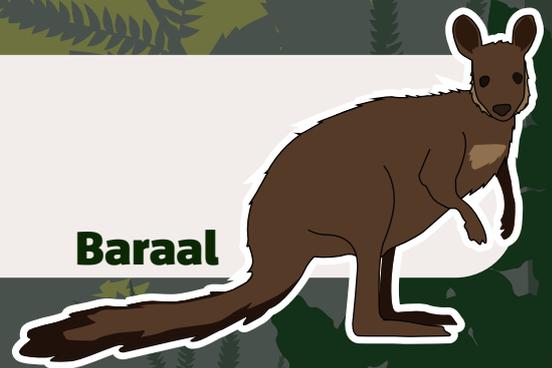
Gulung



Warrabinjundagari



Dharambang



Baraal



Djawula



Buru

Sharing Stories

Aboriginal People share a special connection with the animals that live on Country with them. They are seen as not just a food source but as an important part of Aboriginal spirituality and culture.

Because of this special relationship, animals are part of Aboriginal stories. Storytelling is used to share knowledge between Aboriginal People – how to get somewhere; what not to do; where the fishing is good; and other cultural knowledge. Every mob has their own stories that feature animals that are significant to the area.



How the Waratah Got its Colour

The wonga pigeon and her mate lived in the rainforest and would spend their time gathering food on the forest floor. High above the tree tops lived the hawk who hunted anything that flew above the forest, so the wonga pigeon and her mate had a rule never to fly above the trees and to always stay in sight of one another for safety.

One day when Wonga and her mate were out looking for food they got separated. Wonga called out to her mate but there was no reply. She began searching for them, and after searching around the lower branches of the forest, she decided to fly above the trees in the hope she would be able to see her mate below.

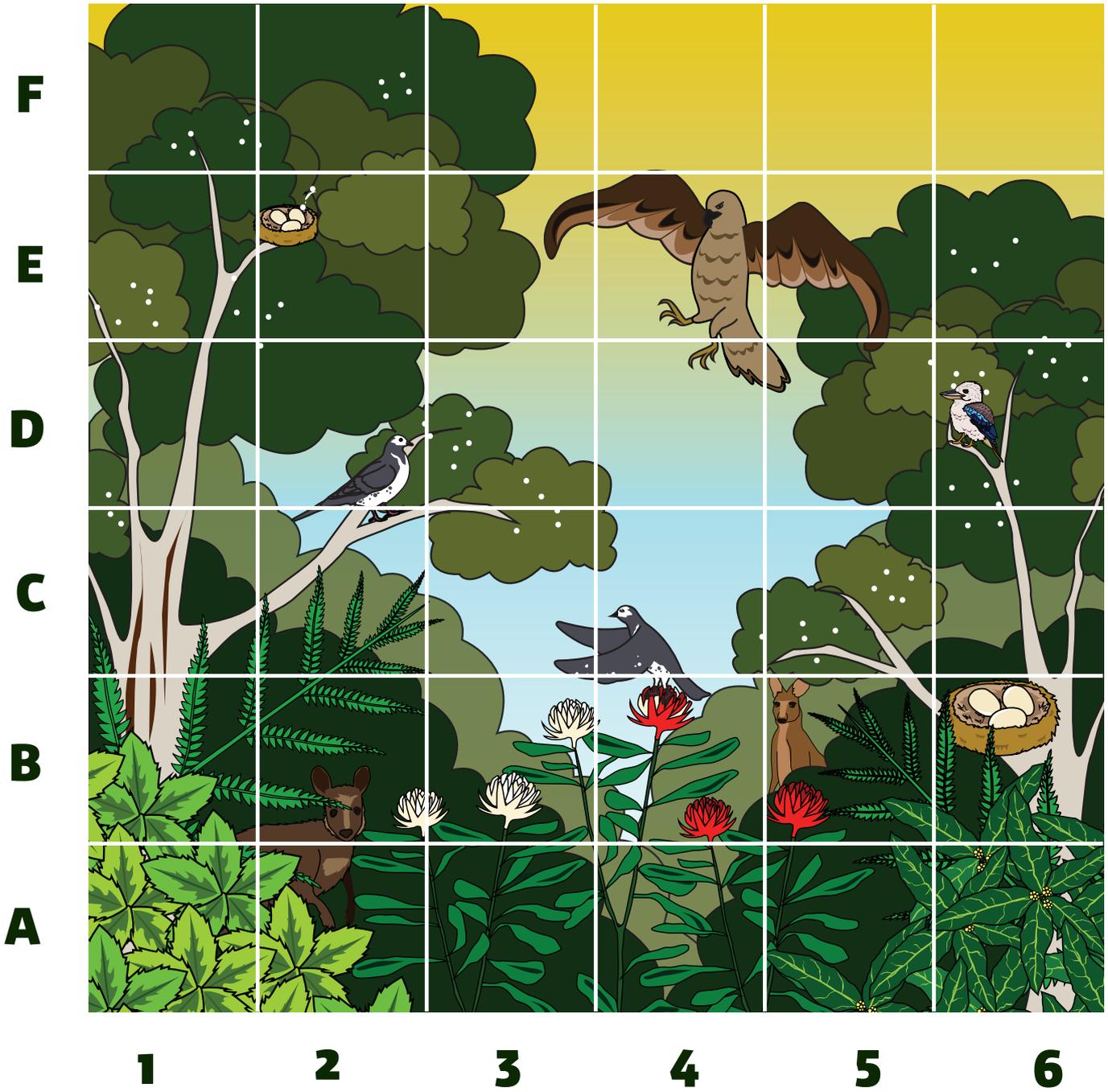
As Wonga flew above the tree tops, Hawk spotted her and quickly caught her, his strong talons cutting her breast open. Wonga desperately tore herself free from Hawk and plunged downwards towards the forest below.

“The story of the wonga pigeon teaches us about strength, about healing and regeneration, and about the enduring love between wonga pigeons, who mate for life.”

Dr Jodi Edwards, Dharawal Woman.

As Wonga flew into the tops of the trees her blood dripped into the forest below, landing on a white waratah far below, colouring it deep red. Despite being injured, Wonga continued to search for her mate, jumping from waratah to waratah in search of him, staining each flower with her blood.

Today, look down from the tree tops for the red and white waratahs, and as you meander through the forest paths look and listen for the Wonga Wonga pigeons who live here.



Use the map to answer the questions

Which squares have birds nests?

Where is the gugara?

What animal is located in B5? (Write the Dharawal name)

What is the location of the red waratahs?

How many squares have wings in them?

How many squares are there in each row?

Totems

Totems are another example of the special relationship between Aboriginal People and Country. They are natural objects, plants and animals that Aboriginal people have a special connection to, and are inherited and passed down through the generations. Totems define peoples' roles and responsibilities, as well as their relationships with each other and Creation.

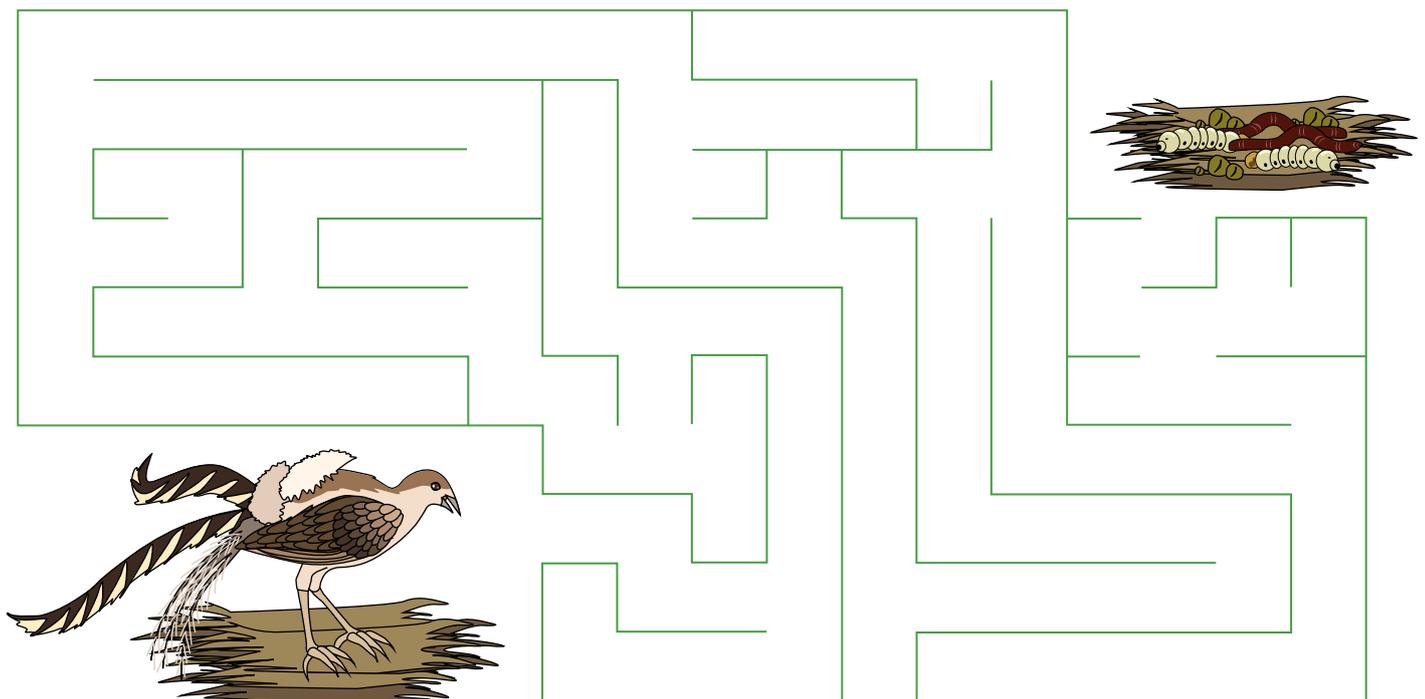
Totems ensure that everyone plays a part in caring for Country and looking after the environment. People never eat their totem, and they have a responsibility to make sure the species is healthy and continues to survive.

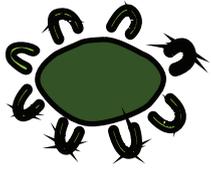
One of the Dharawal totems is the lyrebird or 'djawula' in Dharawal language. Lyrebirds are known to be expert mimics, and the males are recognisable by their long lyre-shaped tails, which they use to spectacular effect during courtship.



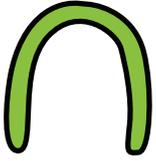
During the day the djawula forage for insects, spiders, worms and seeds by scratching through leaves on the forest floor with strong claws, and at night, they roost in the trees, safe from predators.

Help the djawula scratch its way to the tasty food waiting at the other end of the forest.

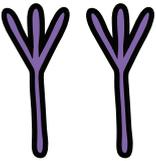




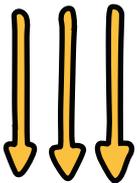
**People
Sitting**



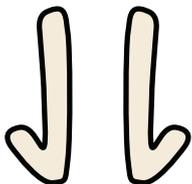
Person



**Emu
Tracks**



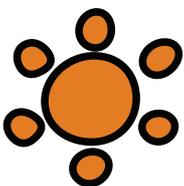
Spears



**Kangaroo
Tracks**



**Campsite/
Waterhole**



Sun

Symbols

Symbols are used widely in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, to communicate stories and information, with important history and meaning embedded in each symbol. Developed from a time before 'writing' was a thing, symbols told the stories of Creation, and they connected mobs of First Nations people with a shared language and way of understanding each other across many thousands of dialects.

Symbols were a part of sand stories, and used on marker stones and in paintings. They were used in ceremonial body paint, too, and on message sticks.

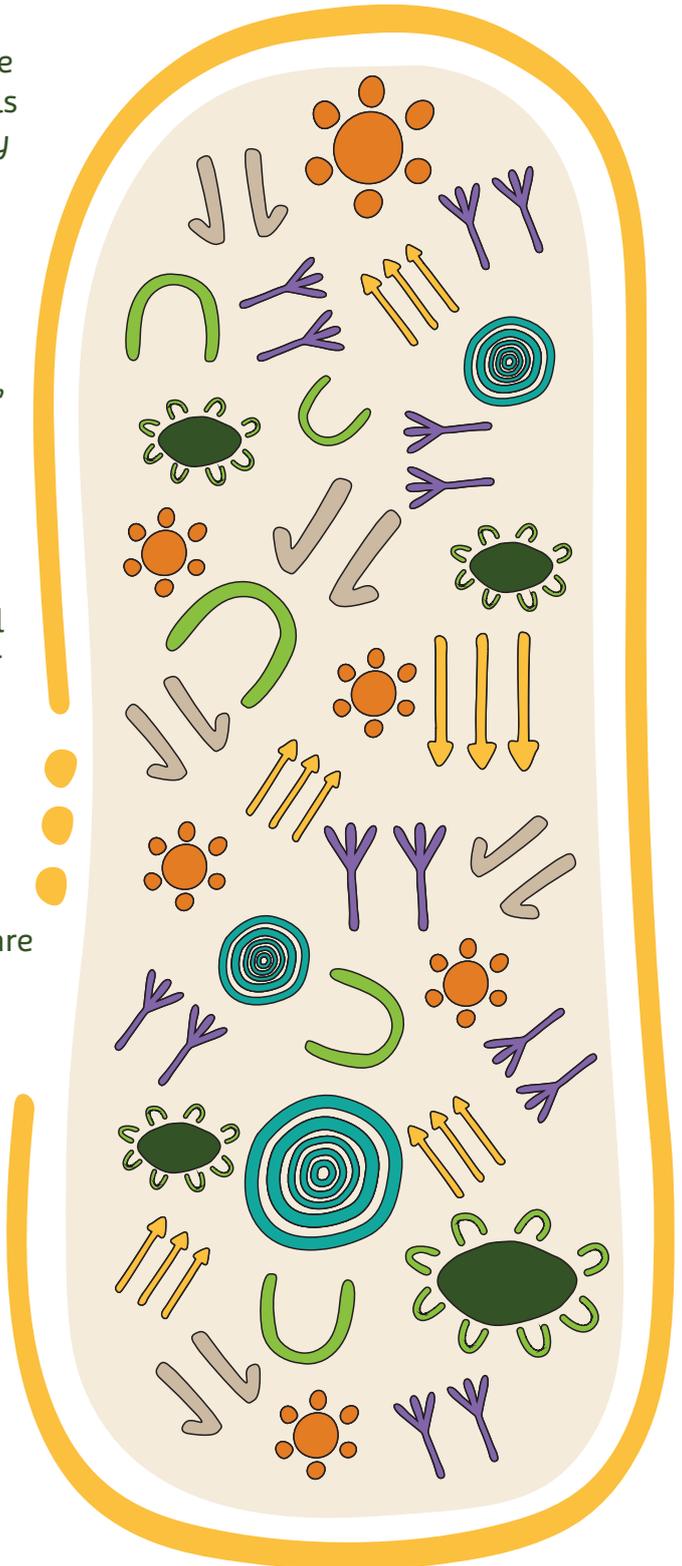
Imagine the importance of a symbol that depicts a safe place to camp for the night, or waterhole when you have been travelling all day? What about if symbols showed where to hunt for food – possum, kangaroo and emu tracks, for example – or that there were honey ants nearby? Mmmm, delicious tucker! Symbols are used to 'talk' of sacred places, too, and of journeys between Country.

The symbols used in possum-skin cloaks were a marker of a person's story, detailing their Country, their totems, and their connection to their family and clan, but they also ensure that First Nations culture is preserved and honoured.

Today, symbols provide the foundation for contemporary Aboriginal art and dot painting.

Fast Food?

circle the symbols
that helped find
food below:





About the Artist

Bitja (Dixon Patten) is a proud Gonnai, Gunditjmara, Dhudhuroa and Yorta Yorta man with blood connections to Wiradjuri, Yuin, Wemba Wemba, Wadi Wadi, Monaro and Djab Wurrung.

He is an artist, designer, mentor, influencer and a strong community advocate.

About the Artwork

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People exist in harmony with the land, and the environments they live in are central to their Dreaming stories, songlines and wellbeing.

The central motif in this work represents a meeting place where Merlin staff and the community come together. The 'u' shape symbols represent people sitting, sharing and learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture(s). The ripples depict the positive influence that takes place when we connect with people and our environments: we care more, we share more and we grow. Growth is depicted by the gum leaves, which are also used in smoking and cleansing ceremonies.

The pathways with feet depict Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples walking their own paths, coming together in Reconciliation. The other pathways represent our diversity as people, and the different backgrounds and experiences we have, and they intersect and connect through our shared history and the fact that we all call Australia home. They also represent opportunities, which are borne of working together.

The larger feet and smaller feet represent Eldership and the role that our Elders have in taking the lead in teaching and guiding us.

The stones represent healing and wellbeing.