

YARNUPINGS

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE OFFICE NEWSLETTER ISSUE #1 MARCH 2023



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ABORIGINAL HERITAGE OFFICE NEWSLETTER

ISSUE #1 APRIL 2023

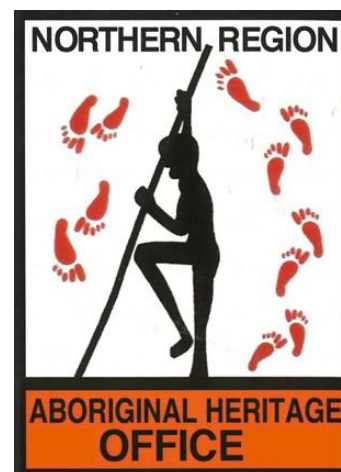
Welcome to the first issue of Yarnupings for 2023

We are excited to announce that our Freshwater Museum and Keeping Place is back open to the public on Wednesdays and other week days by appointment.

This issue will have the first of two new reoccurring articles. The Language Corner and The Bush Binge will have new information in them every newsletter. Both having different content and their own style. There will be something for everyone.

Karen has started with Part 1 of her Pollination—Importance to Country series. This is highlighting the impact pollinators have and just how important they really are.

Please enjoy the first edition of Yarnupings for 2023.



The AHO Team— Phil, Karen, Susan, Kyle and Dave.

In this issue...

- Our Museum is open 2
- Picture of serenity 3
- The Language Corner 4
- The Voice comes in parts 5
- National Volunteer week 7
- Bush Binge 8
- Pollination—Importance to Country9
- Yarn Up with Kazan Brown 13
- Easter Recipe 15
- WINGARU Egg Baskets..... 16
- Language from the Earth 17
- Stop and Breathe 18

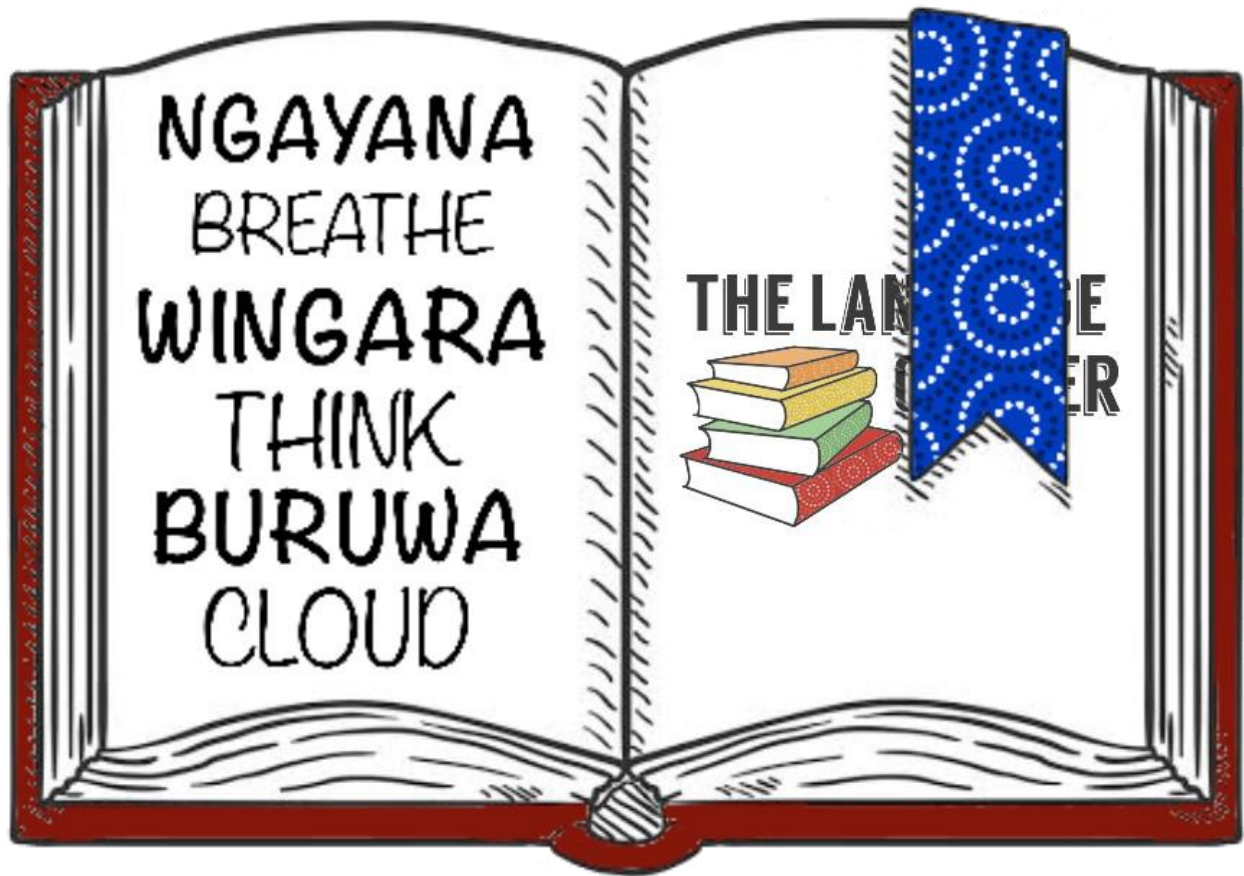
We Are Back

OUR MUSEUM
IS BACK OPEN
WEDNESDAYS 9am – 3pm





The Sydney Language

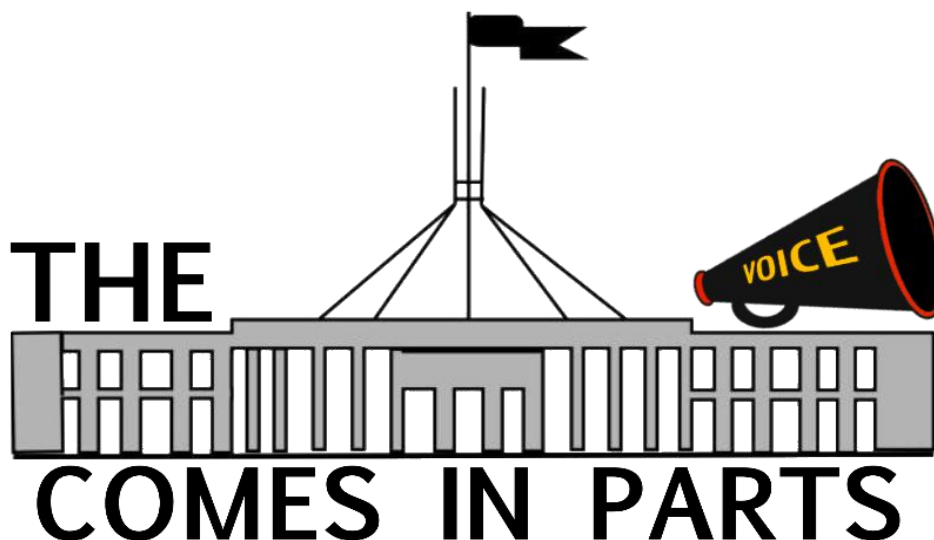


For the very first issue of The Language Corner for 2023, we have decided to bring you three words from the Sydney Language. The Sydney Language is not as solid as other languages from around Australia with the loss of knowledge and destruction in Sydney being so large and rapid. The Language has been put together from various journals, recounts and history by Jakelyn Troy.

Ngayana — Breathe

Wingara — Think

Buruwa — Cloud



There are a lot of voices about the Voice and one might say it's hard to see the Voice for the voices!
We thought stepping back and looking at some of the main structural parts of the process might help.

1. The Constitution

This is an important founding document for Australia, coming into effect on 1st January 1901. The Constitution was drafted during the 1890s at conventions attended by representatives from each Colony. The Constitution was then put to a vote by the people of the Colonies. It was approved by the British Parliament and Queen Victoria.

It was drafted, written and adopted by those entitled to vote at the time. This was mostly just men (except women had the vote in South Australia). First Nations peoples weren't citizens and mostly weren't entitled. The White Australia policy, officially the *Immigration Restriction Act*, was one of the first pieces of legislation under the new Constitution. The new Attorney-General, Alfred Deakin, a collaborator on the Constitution, said in 1901 that it entailed:

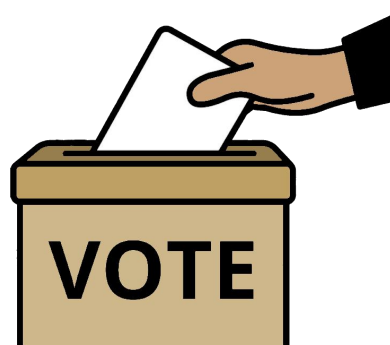
the prohibition of all alien coloured immigration, and more, it means at the earliest time, by reasonable and just means, the deportation or reduction of the number of aliens now in our midst.

The two things go hand in hand, and are the necessary complement of a single policy – the policy of securing a 'white Australia'.

The Constitution has been changed eight times since 1901. 122 years ago there were about 3.8 million people (not including Indigenous people, who weren't counted).

2. The Voters

That's those of us older than 18 and enrolled to vote. There are just over 17 million people enrolled voters from a total population of 26 million people. Around 29% of Australians were born overseas. Nearly 50% of us have at least one parent born overseas. About 97% of us aren't Indigenous.



The Voice Comes In Parts

3. The Parliament

It is the Federal Parliament that makes decisions about whether to seek a Referendum to amend the Constitution. It is made up of elected members who represent the entire Australian populace, although only a subset (as above) are eligible to vote for the MPs. Parliament has 151 House of Representatives seats and 76 Senate seats. Currently Indigenous members make up 3 House of Reps and 8 Senate seats. MPs represent all voters in their electorates. They also are beholden to their parties.

If the Referendum is passed, the actual make-up of the Voice will be enacted by Parliament. If it is not passed, Parliament will continue to make decisions relating to Indigenous people as usual.

The Gist

We are being asked to make a choice and vote Yes or No. Perhaps the context is as important as the content? The Constitution was built to be amended but has rarely been so. The voters are increasingly diverse and the Indigenous Peoples at the centre of this vote have never been otherwise. Parliament still makes the decisions.

"the common law can and does recognise that Indigenous peoples can and do possess certain rights and duties that are not possessed by, and cannot be possessed by, the non-Indigenous peoples of Australia" High Court Justice

References:

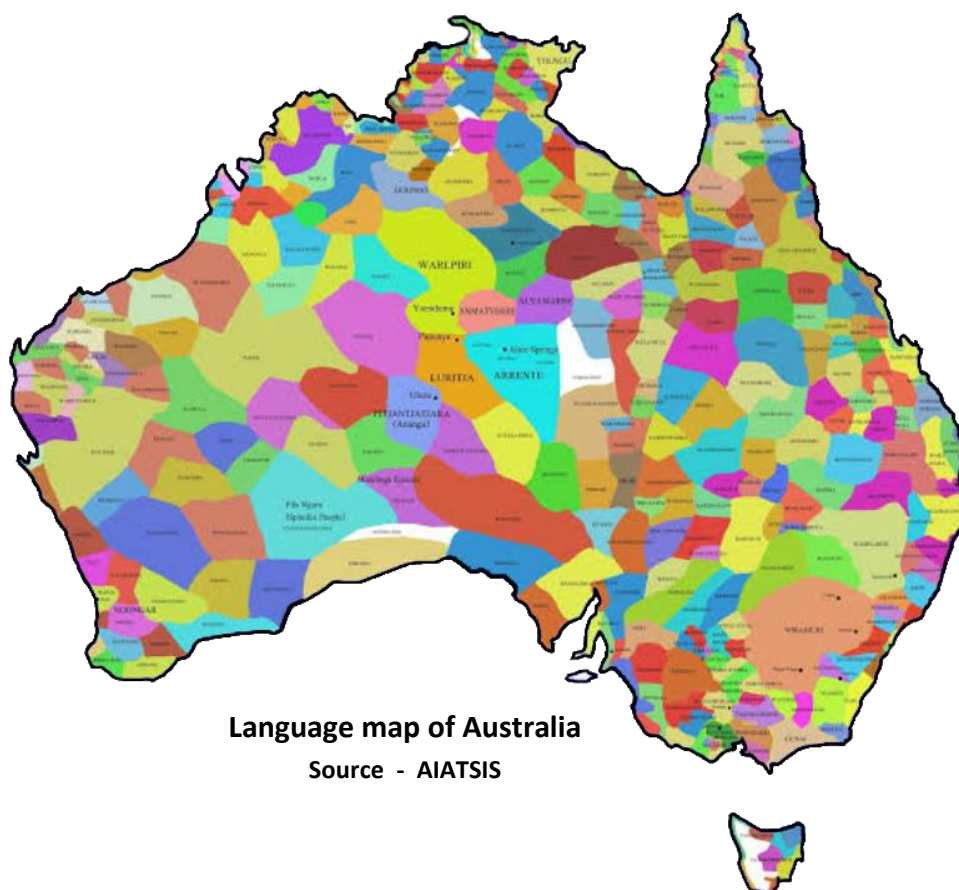
<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/about/Pages/Women-in-Parliament.aspx>

<https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/white-australia-policy>

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/australias-population-country-birth/latest-release>

<https://www.abs.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/2021-census-nearly-half-australians-have-parent-born-overseas>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-15/unresolved-question-of-indigenous-sovereignty-haunts-australia/11962834>



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER THE CHANGE MAKERS WEEK

AHO SKILLS REFRESH AND CASUAL CATCH-UP WEDNESDAY 17TH MAY

If you're new and keen to learn more, or have been volunteering for a while and would like to refresh your skills, reporting and photographing techniques, come along to the Skills Refresh Sessions held at the AHO Freshwater Museum during National Volunteer Week.

11am—Skills Refresh at Freshwater Museum followed by lunch at Sushi Hiro in Freshwater

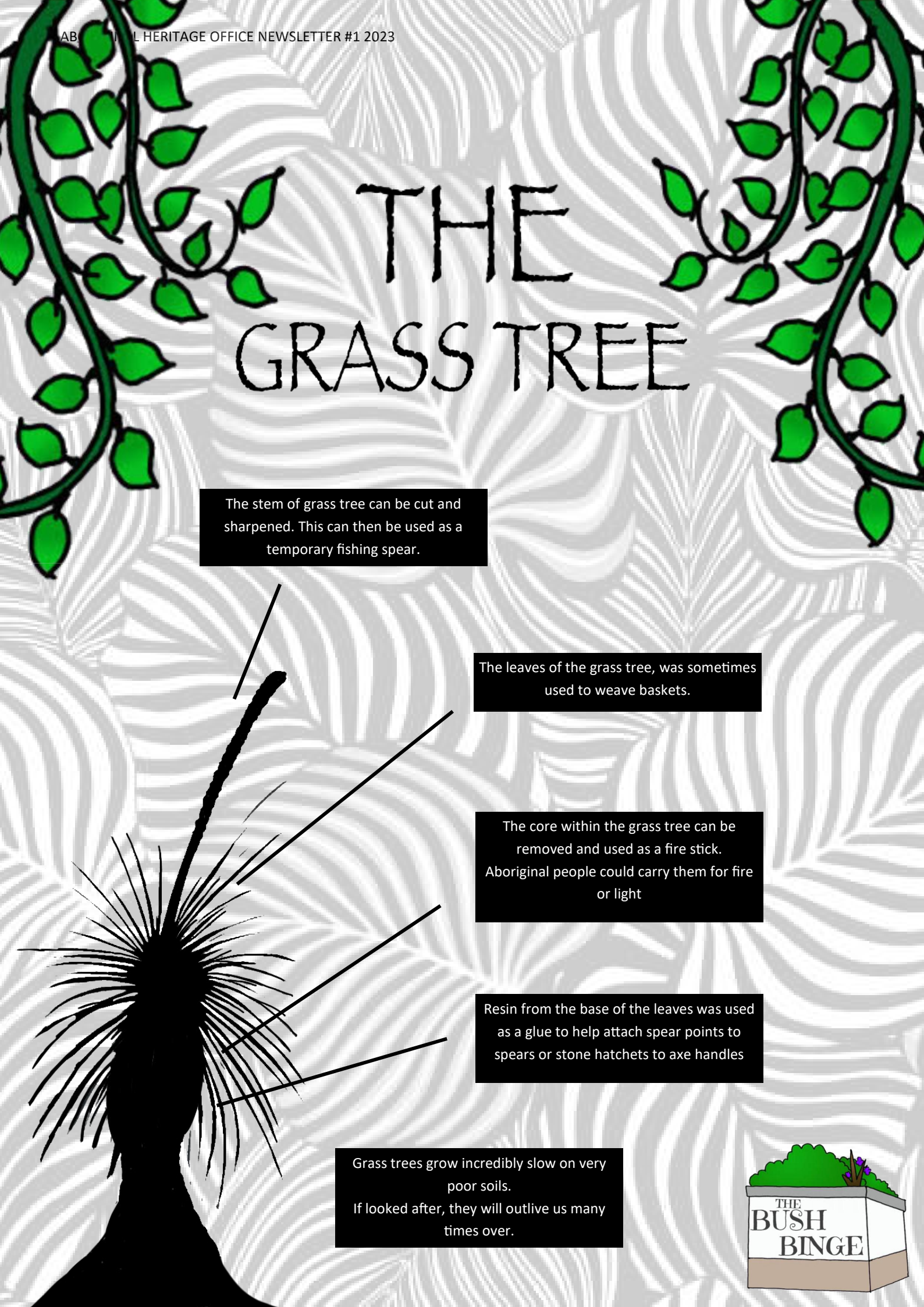
<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/578147774557>

6.30pm— Skills Refresh at Freshwater Museum, food and drinks provided.

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/578177332967>



THE GRASS TREE



The stem of grass tree can be cut and sharpened. This can then be used as a temporary fishing spear.

The leaves of the grass tree, was sometimes used to weave baskets.

The core within the grass tree can be removed and used as a fire stick. Aboriginal people could carry them for fire or light

Resin from the base of the leaves was used as a glue to help attach spear points to spears or stone hatchets to axe handles

Grass trees grow incredibly slow on very poor soils. If looked after, they will outlive us many times over.





I have long been interested in the pollinators of Country. Without pollinators there is no regeneration of plant species and a diminishing of our biodiversity. European bees are facing a serious problem with the varroa mite. Recently we have seen an outbreak of this and the regional eradication of European Bees and their hives. Surveillance zones are set up in Northern NSW and Newcastle and hives showing varroa mite are close to Sydney.

Some Farmers on the North Coast and inland are unable to pollinate their vegetables. They are pollinating by hand. While on holidays I heard from these farmers.

When people think of pollinators the often only think of European bees. It is true that they play an important role in the pollination of many current food crops - one third of our human food supply depends on them - but it is also true that some of our native species of plants are facing extinction as their traditional pollinators are disappearing.

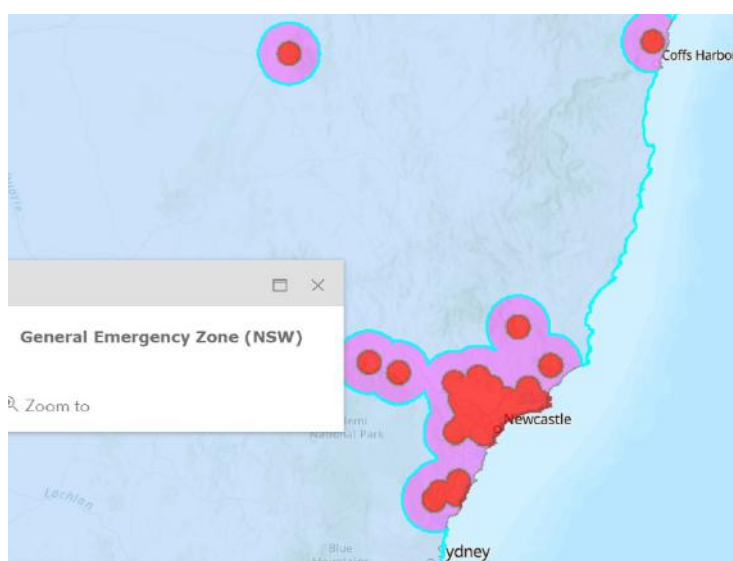
So if we lose the European bees what can we turn to. There are many different types of pollinators native to Australia.

Australian Pollinators

Moths

There are 11,000 species of Moth in Australia who do a lot of our pollination.

“60% of our birds feed on insects, and a main part of their diet is moths. Many other animals also rely on them for food, so they’re an important part of our ecosystems. However, habitat loss and climate change are affecting their life cycles.”



Pollination - Importance to Country

While visiting family in Canberra I heard of no sightings of Bogong Moths or Christmas Beetles. The skies in Canberra used to blacken from the numbers of bogong moths in flight.

Pygmy possums are dying out as this is their essential food.

ABC NEWS gave this report:

"For five years the Bogong moth has been in dire straits, with extreme drought conditions in 2017 pushing the species to the brink of extinction, but experts say they may be making a comeback."



The small and unassuming brown invertebrate only measures about 3 centimetres from head to wingtip, but it is an important part of many Australian ecosystems.

*Bogong moths pollinate plants along their migration route to the Australian Alps, and are an essential food for native animals including ravens, lizards and **the critically endangered mountain pygmy-possum**.*

Before the majority of the population was decimated by climate change, Bogong moths provided the second-biggest input of energy into the Australian Alps, second only to the sun".

Butterflies

Butterflies are also pollinators.

Feeding on nectar, their bodies collect pollen which they pass on as they flit from plant to plant. Gardens that attract butterflies also attract other pollinators. Some plants to attract butterflies include bottlebrush, daisies, grevillea, lavender, and wattle. Egg laying

plants include crepe myrtle, snapdragons, and native violets. Butterflies are also an important part of the food chain for some creatures such as birds, spiders, lizards, mice. Their caterpillars are also eaten.

Research has revealed there are 26 Butterfly Species facing extinction. Out of a total off only 400 species in Australia – we can't afford to lose any.



Pollination - Importance to Country

Dr Michael Braby, from the ANU, has been studying Australian butterflies for over 40 years.

"Most of the species identified at risk have little or no management occurring to conserve them.

"It is vital that we value and conserve Australia's invertebrate biodiversity – our ecosystems and ultimately our survival may depend on it."

<https://www.nespthreatenedspecies.edu.au/news-and-media/media-releases/australian-fritillary-and-pale-imperial-hairstreak-top-list-of-butterflies-at-risk-of-extinction>

<http://lepidoptera.butterflyhouse.com.au/sydbuts.html>

Wasps

Wasps are useful to have in your garden because they help to pollinate flowers and control insect pests.

There are 2 aggressive feral wasps, the European Wasp, *Vespula germanica*, and the English Wasp also called the common wasp, *Vespula vulgaris*, and these are bad for the ecology and need to be controlled and eradicated. Recently arrived, and also upsetting the ecological balance, is the Asian Paper Wasp, *Polistes chinensis*.

The Australian Museum lists over 12,000 species of native wasps in Australia. Many native wasps are tiny e.g. the *Eulophidae* wasp is only 2mm long.

Native Wasps are natural pest controllers. They control bugs that may be harmful to your garden. Wasps also help pollinate. They pollinate flowers and orchids and they are essential with the reproduction of figs (which they live and die inside of).



Painting: Suzanne Houghton
from the book Wonderful Wasps by Katrina Germein, Suzanne Houghton

Pollination - Importance to Country



Native Bees

Australia has around 1,650 species of native bees that we know of. The Federal Government recognised 3 species of native bee critically endangered.

There has never been definitive data to know how many native bees we have or much about them and because of this we don't know how many native bees were lost in our catastrophic fires. It is believed that there are species of bee that have never been identified.

"There's potentially another 30 per cent of bees we haven't discovered and given names to."

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2021-10-01/australias-native-bees-black-summer-bushfires/100503694>

We know, while some bees build their nests in stems of grass, others live underground or in old or dead tree hollows. Native bees seek nectar from flowering plants are essential for pollinating native plants in Australia.

Recent research shows that these wild pollinators and also a vital part of our crop systems,.

<https://beeaware.org.au/pollination/native-bees/native-bees-as-alternative-pollinators/>

Native bees at this stage do not seem to be affected by varroa mite but are damaged by native hive beetles and pollen mites. Weak and old colonies are most susceptible. Assassin bugs can hunt and kill Australian bees. Australia has 300 species of Australian assassin bugs in the Family *Reduviidae*. Insects such as *Bembix* wasps or Velvet ants are parasitoids of native bees.



Yarn Up

With Kazan Brown

On a warm evening on the 1st of March people gathered at the new Strathfield Library in Homebush for the first AHO Yarn Up since 2019. While the building might have been new, and the event lively and fresh, the topic was about connections to Country that were anything but.

Kazan Brown, Gundungurra Traditional Owner, kindly accepted our request to do the Yarn Up on the Warragamba – Burragorang Valleys and their amazing Aboriginal heritage and history. Her photos and descriptions of the many archaeological sites showed the area is very special from that side of things. More so because of the song lines and creation stories that run through the area. Her photographs of family members, the places they farmed and the community that had transitioned from pre-Invasion to a twentieth century rural neighbourhood, were particularly moving. Especially when she explained that her family were given virtually no support to leave the newly declared water catchment area and had to leave everything behind except what they could fit in the car. While other Aboriginal families took up opportunities in different parts of the state, Kazan's family eventually moved back to town.

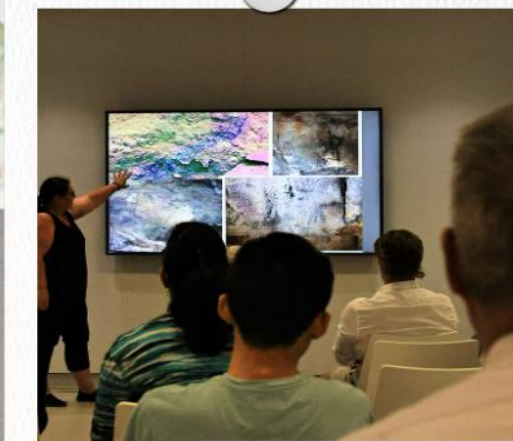
During the Q&A people asked Kazan about the threat to the area from the proposed raising of the Warragamba Dam wall. Kazan explained many more culturally sensitive areas and archaeological sites would be inundated and destroyed.

The proposal was apparently on hold for now but there is still pressure to build the wall despite many saying it won't actually achieve much in flood mitigation due to the layout of surrounding rivers. She also talked more about her family and memories of the valley, and how they are still trying to negotiate access to keep the connections going.

It was a fun and informative evening, a chance to catch up with old AHO friends and meet some new ones. A big thanks to Strathfield Council and Library staff who made the event possible, including organising the tasty treats, and to Mayor Karen Pensabene who was there to greet us all.



Yarn Up#1 2023



Australian Native Spiced Hot Cross Buns



Ingredients

For the buns

625g strong white flour
1 tsp. Salt
1/4 tsp. cinnamon anise, powder
1/4 tsp. lemon myrtle, powder
45g butter (grated)
90g sugar
2-3 finger limes, peel finely and diced
1 1/2 tsp. yeast (dried is fine)
1 free range egg
275ml luke-warm milk
75g muntries (fresh, dried or frozen and thawed)
50g ribberries (fresh, dried or frozen and thawed)
50g Chocolate chips

For the glaze

1/4 cup self raising flour
600ml water

Method

Sieve flour, salt and spices in mixing bowl. Rub in butter with your fingers. Add zest, yeast and sugar. Beat eggs separately and then add to the mix along with the milk. Mix to a soft dough. Turn out onto a lightly floured bench and work in the mixed fruit. Knead lightly for about 3-5 minutes.

Grease a large mixing bowl lightly with butter or oil. Shape the dough into a large ball, place in the bowl and cover with a clean tea towel. Set aside in a warm place for an hour.

Turn out onto your lightly floured again work surface and 'knock back the dough', which is just another very quick knead. Put back in the bowl, cover for another 30 minutes to prove (rise some more).

Preheat your oven to 200.C and line a baking tray with baking paper. Mix self-raising flour and water.

Turn out one more time and divide the mixture into 6 large or 12 small pieces and form them into individual balls and flatten with your fingertips. Cover and rest for a final 15 minutes. Pipe crosses onto the buns. Place in the oven and bake for 10 minutes.

Reduce oven temperature to 180°C and bake for a further 15 minutes. Brush buns with jam, syrup or honey while hot.

Recipe by Rebecca Sullivan from NITV

<https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/easter-recipe-australian-native-spiced-hot-cross-buns/ldk3mzsro>



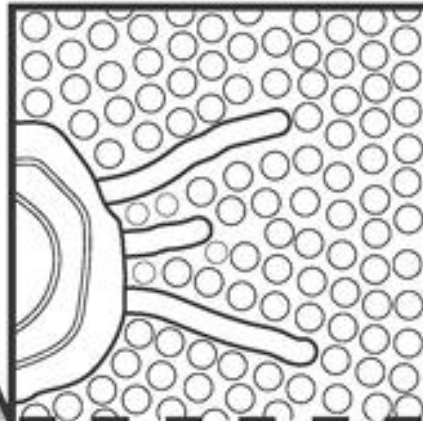
WINGARU EGG BASKETS

Didge Ya Know?

Aboriginal weaving techniques have been passed down through generations and are still used today.

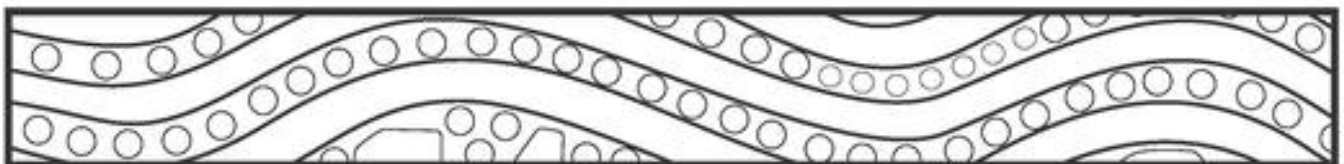
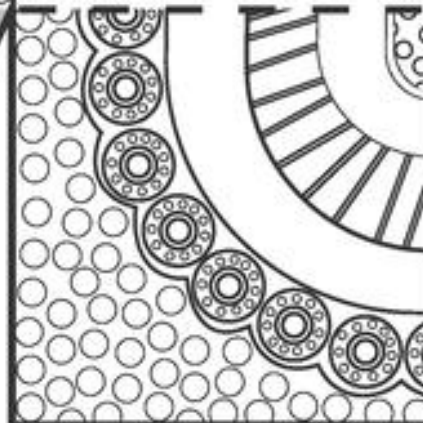
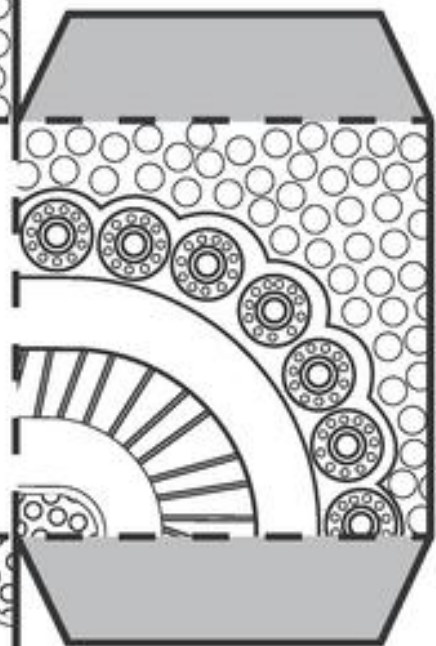
Didge Ya Know?

Traditionally baskets were painted with red, white and brown ochre. What colours will you use?



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Keegan Williams is a Gumbaynggirr and Wiradjuri woman, currently working, learning and living on Dharug Country.



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cut along the outside lines and fold along the dashed lines.
2. Put glue on the shaded sections and join up the sides.
3. Attach your handle with glue or staples.

Language from the Earth by Phil Hunt

We are in the UN declared International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032). Indigenous languages around the world have been disadvantaged for so long. We know the main causes. Even the written word has been a contributor. Yet even a single written word is miraculous. There is a word for a word, others for parts of words. Words for groups of words and how to set them out. There are words for collected pages of words and even for rooms where they are kept (and the keepers of them). A single word can have multiple definitions and each definition subject to debate by many of how such a definition must be worded. What is *blue*? What is *real*?

How many words do we gulp down in a day, in an hour? Do we rush them for the thrill of a more dazzling set? Is there not one to savour? To linger over?

Think of the tragedy of all the words that Indigenous peoples have lost. Full of meaning and woven culture.

Think how wonderful that more and more surviving language is being recorded, protected, revived, respoken. How wonderful that words that came from the molecules of the very landscape, sky and waters are returning.

And sometimes words are not enough. Or are too much. Too many. Superfluous to knowledge. Obstacles to inspiration. Weapons for adversaries. Bricks and walls to mutual understanding.

Sometimes they just fill the space where quiet belongs.

Sometimes it is good to s l o w them

d o

w

n

Turn them into

c l o u d s

So the letters

d i s s i p a t e & s p

a c e

returns

The breath needs no words. Thought free. Nor does the sound of branches in the wind.

Or the tumble of water on a shore. A heartbeat. The pulses of the natural world are wordless.

Lower the eyes. This land is ancient. Wise teacher. Listen without words...They can wait a few breaths. Can't they? The earth still turns. Can you feel it?



