

Awaba: Know Our Stories

Education resource and instructions

Lake Macquarie City Council

Community History Swansea Centre 228 Pacific Highway Swansea NSW 2281

Wandakalua (Welcome)

We remember and respect the Ancestors
who cared for and nurtured this Country.

Dhumaan ngayin ngarrakalu kirraanan barayidin.

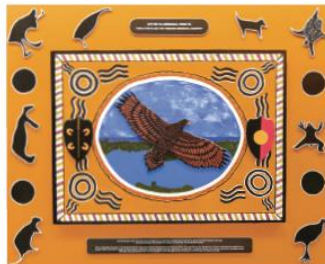
It is in their footsteps that we travel these lands and waters.

Ngarrakalumba yuludaka bibayilin barayida baaduka.

Lake Macquarie City Council acknowledges Awabakal People
and Elders past, present and future.

***Lake Macquarie City Council dhumaan Awabakala ngarrakal
yalawaa, yalawan, yalawan.***

The word 'Aboriginal' was introduced by Europeans to label the first inhabitants of this country. 'Awabakal' was a name given to local first inhabitants of this region.



As in some European language, the masculine sumx is used in a word unless specified. For example 'kal' is the masculine sumx and 'kallin' is the feminine sumx.

Artwork by Uncle Jim Ridgeway *Ant! Bo Ka Awabakal Paral Ta* (This Is the place that remains Awabakal Country).
Wording by the Aboriginal Reference Group and translated by Miromaa Aboriginal Language and Technology Centre.



Lake Macquarie City Council acknowledgement of country

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Co-curator Amos Simon's statement about the exhibition

In this exhibition, we are sharing one of the oldest living cultures. We are one, but there is so much diversity in our stories and in the local Aboriginal community.

As we shared, we remembered who we are today, our walk through life's influences and our many footsteps along this journey.

Read, reflect and feel *Awaba: Know Our Stories*. The exhibition is connected to past, present and future Aboriginal people's sharing.

Co-curator Rebecca Dallwitz's statement about the exhibition

Lyn Milson's statement contains a description of collecting pipis in the Lake Macquarie region. Collecting natural food resources is an example of continuing Aboriginal culture.

Collecting pipis was also part of my childhood holidays at the south coast of NSW. It has been part of so many Australian childhoods. We are all connected through our experience of place and the environment.

We are deeply indebted to traditional Aboriginal culture. We know that British settlers copied and in some cases were taught how to access food resources by Aboriginal people.

The debt continues to this day. We are indebted to Awaba participants for sharing these teaching stories with us and the Lake Macquarie community.

The Awaba Project

Inspiration

The *Awaba: Know Our Stories* project was inspired by

- the 2020 History Week theme 'History: what is it good for?'
- the historic and in some cases ongoing failure of museums and galleries to give primacy to Indigenous persons and their voices in representing Indigenous lives and culture
- the diversity and strength of the Indigenous community in the Lake Macquarie area

Concept

To create a self-determined space where Indigenous community members can tell their stories for History Week 2020.

Process

A number of participants were approached. We attempted to balance location of residence around the Lake, age, gender, sexuality and abilities.

Those who decided to participate were interviewed by Amos Simon and/or Rebecca Dallwitz or by DET Aboriginal Education Officers in the case of students. Participants were asked questions to get a conversation flowing. Questions weren't fixed, but focused on participant's work and impact in the community, experiences of place and particularly of the Lake Macquarie region, experiences of Aboriginal history, identity, family and messages for future generations.

Statements are as much as possible in the participants' own words, with light edits for audience comprehension and flow. Statements appearing in the exhibition were checked with participants after interviews were given. Statements are necessarily only a part of what was said. Statements were often slightly modified on each participant's request.

Participants were later photographed by Neil Keene.

The exhibition was then designed and printed at Lake Macquarie Council and installed at the SEEN exhibition space in the Swansea Centre.

Neil, Amos and Rebecca are all Lake Macquarie City Council staff.

Participants were given a recognition payment each as social justice measure and to recognise their time and expertise. They were also given copies of the images taken of them. Their efforts were recognised at a ceremony with LMCC's Mayor Cr Kay Fraser. The exhibition's ethics and process were congruent with its concept.



Cr Kay Fraser speaks at the Awaba launch.

Original exhibition at SEEN @ Swansea

In the original presentation of the exhibition, some participants self-selected sporting trophies and artworks to accompany their exhibition panel.

Uncle Noel Simon also selected a video in which he features. The video is available on Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXY5V3AnYHk>.

The exhibition touring to schools is comprised of the printed panels only.



Awaba exhibition at SEEN. Auntie Zelma Moran selected some trophies to accompany her panel.

Awaba: Know Our Stories education resource

The *Awaba: Know Our Stories* exhibition can be used by schools to integrate into a range of existing programs for the purpose of meeting the Cross Curriculum Priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, as well as giving students an opportunity to develop their General Capabilities. The following provides some ideas of the way the content of this exhibition can be used by teaching staff.

Themes: Family, Identity, History, Place/Environment

General Capabilities

Personal and Social Capabilities: “In the Australian Curriculum, students develop personal and social capability as they learn to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively. Personal and social capability involves students in a range of practices including recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for others and understanding relationships, establishing and building positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams, handling challenging situations constructively and developing leadership skills.”

The exhibition gives students the opportunity to consider their own emotional response to these narratives and discuss the reason for their feelings. For older students, there is an opportunity for them to analyse their own responses and deconstruct the way personal experience influences our understanding of others’ experiences.

Intercultural Understanding: “In the Australian Curriculum, students develop intercultural understanding as they learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. They come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture. Intercultural understanding involves students learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect.”

The exhibition allows students the opportunity to consider the culture of contemporary Indigenous Australians in the local area. It allows for them to consider if the realities depicted in the exhibition support, oppose, enhance or reconsider their existing understandings of Indigenous culture. In older years, this allows students the opportunity to analyse the way presentations of “other” are taught via media, culture, tradition etc.

Cross Curriculum Priorities – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures are included in each learning area in ways that are consistent with its content and purpose. They also make it possible to link content across learning areas, which can lead to integrated units of work.”

English

These are contemporary, local narratives. They can be analysed as reflective texts and personal statements. The content of the exhibit is based on oral interviews. Hence, the exhibit content can be analysed as written as well as oral text.

Mathematics

The content of the exhibit discusses mathematical concepts such as time, place and familial relationships. This content can be used as the basis of mathematical examples or as the basis for a specific concept study.

Science

As the content of the exhibit discusses the personal lives, family lives and cultural understandings of the participants, it lends itself to the study of the following scientific concepts:

observation, using all the senses **(e.g description of water using colour, mineral composition, life within the lake, activities within water etc).**

prediction and hypothesis **(e.g discussing the future of how people will recognise and discuss their Indigeneity).**

testing (trial and error) **(e.g discussion of education, who can teach, who can learn and the process of learning as a process of trial and error).**

making generalisations within specific contexts such as the use of food, natural materials, navigation and sustainability of the environment. **(e.g discussion of the comparative nature of the land and waterways at Forster and Lake Macquarie).**

Humanities and Social Sciences

The diverse cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are explored through their:

long and continuous strong connections with Country/Place and their economic, cultural, spiritual and aesthetic value of place, including the idea of custodial responsibility. Students examine the influence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on the environmental characteristics of Australian places, and the different ways in which places are represented. **(e.g names of places and discussion of totems).**

experiences before, during and after European colonisation including the nature of contact with other peoples, and their progress towards recognition and equality. **(e.g discussion of being born in a tent and put in a suitcase which acted as a bed).**

exploration of how groups express their particular identities, and come to understand how group belonging influences perceptions of others. **(e.g. discussion of criminality in response to difficult social circumstances and recognition that culture could heal the wounds of other Indigenous people who had suffered the same challenges in their life and achieving this via mentoring).**

The use of primary and secondary sources, including oral histories, gives students opportunities to see events through multiple perspectives, and to empathise and ethically consider the investigation, preservation and conservation of sites of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. **(e.g. the content is based on oral interviews, thus can be analysed as a contemporary oral source).**

The Arts

Students' exploration of traditional and contemporary artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples provides insight into the way the relationships between People, Culture and Country/Place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples can be conveyed through the arts, their expression in living communities, and the way these build Identity. **(e.g discussion of different artistic expression of culture from painting to wood burning).**

Health and Physical Education

This learning area allows students to appreciate and celebrate the beauty of the world's oldest continuous living cultures. Students will be able to explore personal, community and group identities and so build understanding of the differences and commonalities in systems of knowledge and beliefs about Health and Physical Education. **(e.g discussion of outdoor lifestyles and how families are sustained through physical activities such as fishing or swimming etc).**

Languages

The Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages provides a direct way of learning about and engaging with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures are an integral part of learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages as there is an inseparable connection between the languages and land, sea, sky and waterways. Through learning a framework language, all students gain access to knowledge and understanding of Australia that can only come from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander perspective. **(eg. Use of language and discussion of the loss of language).**

Work Studies

The exploration of concepts of self-identity provide opportunities to develop understanding of the distinctive sense of identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. **(e.g many examples of people who pursued careers that celebrated and honoured the Aboriginality of the participant and their respect for culture and educating others about culture).**

Activation

Response cards are supplied in this document. The response cards can be used as an in-exhibition activity to increase dwell times in the exhibition, stimulate close reading of the texts and self-reflection.

Project participants are available to activate this exhibition at your school. Please contact participants directly to organise this.

Name	Contact	Activation type
Auntie Zelma Moran	0481 758 373	Talks; cultural awareness; acknowledgement of country.
Auntie Laurel Williams	4945 1651	Talks; cultural awareness; acknowledgement of country.
Uncle Noel Simon	0481 710 550	Talks; cultural awareness; acknowledgement of country; dancing; art.
Amos Simon	0402 742 153	Curator's talk; cultural awareness; music; dancing.
Lorraine Riley Oldham and Greg Oldham Darcy	redochreworkshops@gmail.com 0418282797	Art workshops



Amos Simon activating *Awaba: Know Our Stories* at Fennell Bay School.

Exhibition installation

A large space such as a gym, assembly hall, library or long corridor is needed for the exhibition. Each panel is 150cm by 150cm. A minimum of 14.5 linear metres is needed to hang the exhibition. Other means of hanging the exhibition may include the use of noticeboards, room dividers, easels or mobile blackboards. Please identify a space in your school to install the exhibition.

Installation is completed with velcro and adhesive Command strips which don't damage painted surfaces. LMCC supply the nine exhibition panels and strips for installation. Lake Macquarie City Council staff with current Working with Children checks are available to visit your school and install the exhibition.

Please contact us at history@lakemac.nsw.gov.au to book the exhibition and arrange install and demount times to suit your schedule. The exhibition is generally at your facility for about two weeks. However, longer or shorter periods can be arranged.

The exhibition is supplied free of charge.

Support

Lake Macquarie Council would like to support teachers and other community members in using *Awaba: Know Our Stories*.

Please contact us if there is some support that we can provide history@lakemac.nsw.gov.au

Awaba

Know Our Stories.

**We'd love to
hear from you.**

**Please take a card
and write or draw
your response.**

Awaba

Know Our Stories.

**Draw your response to
the exhibition.**

Awaba

Know Our Stories.

**Please put your finished
card into the box. Our team
will add it to the wall.**

***Nhunda kumba kumba*
Thankyou**

Awaba

Know Our Stories.



PLACE AND PEOPLE

Awaba is a small town in the heart of the Blue Mountains, nestled in the foothills of the Blue Mountains National Park. It is a beautiful area with stunning views and a rich history. The town is known for its friendly atmosphere and scenic beauty.



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Awaba

Know Our Stories.



Long Graham Berry
Age: 85
Occupation: Retired
Hometown: Awaba

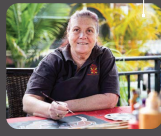
Based on the stories of the people who have lived in Awaba, the town has a rich history. The stories of the people who have lived in Awaba are a testament to the town's resilience and spirit.



CONTRIBUTION AND HERITAGE
The town of Awaba has a rich history and a strong sense of community. The people of Awaba have made significant contributions to the town's development and heritage.

Awaba

Know Our Stories.



Lucinda Wilby O'Brien
Age: 65
Occupation: Retired
Hometown: Awaba

I started to love to try and find out about the history of Awaba. I found it fascinating to learn about the town's past and the people who have lived here.

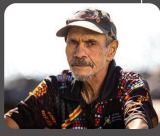


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Awaba

Know Our Stories.



Ursula Ruth Brown
Age: 72
Occupation: Retired
Hometown: Awaba

As long as I've been in Awaba, I've been part of the community. I love the people and the history of the town.

HERITAGE

The town of Awaba has a rich history and a strong sense of community. The people of Awaba have made significant contributions to the town's development and heritage.

PLACE

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FAMILY AND CULTURE

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Awaba

Know Our Stories.



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Awaba

Know Our Stories.



Lynne Brown
Age: 68
Occupation: Retired
Hometown: Awaba

We've got to keep our culture alive. It's important to remember where we come from and who we are.

PLACE AND PEOPLE

The town of Awaba has a rich history and a strong sense of community. The people of Awaba have made significant contributions to the town's development and heritage.

CONTRIBUTION

The town of Awaba has a rich history and a strong sense of community. The people of Awaba have made significant contributions to the town's development and heritage.

CULTURE

The town of Awaba has a rich history and a strong sense of community. The people of Awaba have made significant contributions to the town's development and heritage.

Awaba

Know Our Stories.



Annie Stokes
Age: 75
Occupation: Retired
Hometown: Awaba

When I was young, I was always interested in the history of the town. I love to learn about the people who have lived here.

PLACE

The town of Awaba has a rich history and a strong sense of community. The people of Awaba have made significant contributions to the town's development and heritage.

CULTURE

The town of Awaba has a rich history and a strong sense of community. The people of Awaba have made significant contributions to the town's development and heritage.

HERITAGE

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Awaba

Know Our Stories.



Wendalawa
Age: 60
Occupation: Retired
Hometown: Awaba

Hi, my name is Wendalawa. I love the people and the history of the town. I'm proud to be part of the community.

Wendalawa

Kayli

Hiello

The people of Awaba have made significant contributions to the town's development and heritage. We are proud of our history and our community.

Awaba

Know Our Stories.



Amos Simon
Wiradjuri/ Biripi
Lake Macquarie City
Council staff member
51 years old
Fennell Bay

Wandakaluwa **Kaayi**
Welcome Hello

I'm a proud Aboriginal man. My mobs are Wiradjuri and Biripi. I've lived on Awabakal country since I was three years old.

I co-curated this exhibition called *Awaba: Know Our Stories*. Awaba means 'plain' or 'flat surface' and is the Awabakal word for Lake Macquarie. This is Awabakal country.

Awaba shares our connection to Lake Macquarie and the places that we love. Aboriginal peoples from all around the lake talk about family, identity, our history and the contribution that we have made to Lake Macquarie communities. Meet your mobs and neighbours, know our stories.

Our way of life is ongoing. Our lore, our stories and our Dreaming are alive today. We are sharing and passing on our knowledge here.

Working on this exhibition brought up a lot of feelings for me. But I have listened, learnt and am grateful to everyone for sharing their stories.

I hope you enjoy and learn here too.

Nhunda kumba kumba
Thankyou

Awa boa

Know Our Stories.



**Lyn Milson
and family**

Kamilaroi
Community worker
and mother
35 years old
Windale

We've got to keep our culture alive.

We're the first nation here. I want my kids to know who they are and where they're from.

PLACE AND FAMILY

My kids definitely are outdoor kids, so we're out constantly. Beaches, parks, lots of activities. They're sporting kids so we're always on the go.

Our favourite spot is probably Pelican. It is the best spot for gatherings. My kids love it because of the jetty. The kids can jump off without being yelled at. At the lake it's very loose and you can just be a kid.

I grew up there as a kid too, so what I did, my kids are doing now. We spent Christmas, Easter, family gatherings, baby showers (baby gender reveals now) at the lake.

I love my family. If we're not at the lake, we're always at Mum's house. Barbeques, baked dinners on Sunday, we still do all that.

CONTRIBUTION

You see other kids that don't have the love or support. That's why I love my job.

My boss Geraldine Moran is the CEO of Centre for Hope. When I first met her, I just instantly said I want to do what you do. I thought, I'm mentoring friends and family anyway in normal life, so why not do it with other people and in schools and give back.

I work with Centre for Hope. I work in the Windale community in schools running mentoring programs. I studied life coaching. We have parents from the community come up to us and say thankyou for helping their kids.

My kids look up to me, knowing what I'm doing and I'm teaching them also.

CULTURE

The kids normally do cultural stuff with their Pop. He takes them on long adventures through the bush. He's taken them to Redhead Lagoon and shared a couple of stories there with the kids.

My kids love dancing. They'll be shaking a leg...

We also go out pipi-ing. The kids love pipi-ing. I say 'You've got to do the pipi dance!' It's pretty much like doing Zumba in the sand. Its fitness, you're sore the next day in every part of your body. Its like ow! What did I do? I went pipi-ing the other day!

We've got to keep our culture alive. We're the first nation here. I want my kids to know who they are and where they're from.

Awaboa

Know Our Stories.



Kayle Jackson
Wiradjuri
Lake Macquarie
High School
student
15 years old
Bolton Point

My most memorable times at the lake were when I was a young boy. My sister and I would fish there for hours and hours. These are the times I cherish most because it brought us closer together.

IDENTITY

I am a proud descendant of the Wiradjuri people. My family connections are in the Dubbo, Trangie area. I was born and raised in Lake Macquarie at Bolton Point and still live there today.

PLACE AND FAMILY

My most memorable times at the lake were when I was a young boy. My older sister and myself would fish there for hours and hours. These are the times I cherish most because it brought us closer together before my sister moved back to Dubbo.

I've built a strong connection to the lake over the years I've lived here. I spend a lot of my summer swimming with my mates, cousins, nephews. Our family loves having barbecues down there.

I remember catching a big bream down off the jetty of Bolton Point. I reckon it was about 35-40cm long.



Awaboa

Know Our Stories.



**Auntie Zelma
Moran**

Anaiwan
Aboriginal health
worker, elder
and activist
82 years old
Toronto

*When I was seven year old,
I said to my Dad: 'Will you teach
me my language?' He said to me:
'Darlin', by the time you're eighteen
you'll be so white-orientated your
language will be forgotten.'*

*And that's true. We did.
We forgot our language.
And no one was there to teach us.*

PLACE

I moved from Armidale in 1972, and I moved here to Toronto. We had twenty homes and there were a hundred Aboriginal people living in them. We were all friends, we were all good mates and cared for one another. When we came, it was a bit racist. We broke the racism down here. We talk up. And that is why it's a good place to live in now. I love it. I've been here since '72 and I'm not leaving because I love it.

CULTURE

I am an Anaiwan from Armidale. My female totem is a preying mantis and the male is an echidna. We're not allowed to eat our totems. Same with the people here. This is Awabakal country.

HISTORY

Barry and myself went to work picking grapes out at Cessnock. Instead of them giving money, they were bringing out casks of wine for us to have a drink before we left to come home.

That's how alcohol was introduced to our men. Our women weren't allowed to drink back in those days, but this is what the bosses used to do to the men, get them drunk before they went home. And that's how they paid us. That's why we had no money!

When I was seven years old, I said to my Dad 'Will you teach me my language?' He said to me 'Darlin', he said, 'by the time you're eighteen you'll be so white-orientated your language will be forgotten.' And that's true. We did. We forgot our language. And no one was there to teach us.

CONTRIBUTION

I got a job in Hunter Area Health. I worked there for twenty years as an Aboriginal liaison officer. I started in '78 and retired in 1998.

In that time, I used to help people, take them to hospital, their babies. I went out to the country and I got them moved into Newcastle Hospital. People would come into town with nothing, as medical emergencies. They never got time to go home and get their belongings or anything. They used to say to me, 'Auntie Zelma, will you go down to Vinnies and get me some clothes?' They'd give me their keycard and I'd go down and get their money out of their bank and bring it back to them. That made the patients happy and they would stay in hospital then and get their full treatment.

I used to get out of bed all hours of the night. I never had a day off in those twenty years.

Awa boa

Know Our Stories.



**Auntie Laurel
Williams**

Biripi
Aboriginal educator,
mentor and activist
78 years old
Belmont

What does it mean to be a contemporary Aboriginal person? I think it's very complex again. I think it's being conscious and aware of your own heritage and connections to people and country and not fitting a popular stereotype.

IDENTITY

I think we're in a phase of - I suppose confusion is a fair term to use - ourselves because we've been dislocated from Country and family groups. People are learning a lot about where they come from because we've been so mobile over years. What are we going to call ourselves so that everyone will understand and appreciate our connection to who we are and our history? I accept Aboriginal as being the term to use and Torres Strait Island for Torres Strait Island people.

I've got Chinese heritage as well and Irish. I know my ancestry, but I don't identify as Chinese. The strength I think of identity has to do with how you're brought up and what you know and what you've been told and taught. I'm Aboriginal. Cut and dried. Because I was never taught or probably at that time allowed to learn about those other non-Aboriginal aspects of my heritage.

What does it mean to be a contemporary Aboriginal person? I think it's very complex again. I think it's being conscious and aware of your own heritage and connections to people and country and not fitting a popular stereotype. It's up to every individual to define how they need to interact within this society in 2020.

PLACE AND CULTURE

Belmont is a very special place for me. I live here because it reminds me of my home in Forster. On a beautiful day when you come over Swansea Bridge and look at the colours of the water it's absolutely magic and that's what it's like when you go over the Forster-Tuncurry bridge. When you think about the landscape of Belmont, you've got the lake on that side and the ocean on that side and a strip of land in between. That's the same as up home.

There are other special places around here. Nobbys in town is a really special place, Redhead where Biraban is, Swansea Heads and Pelican. This is a very scenic place but it's also very historical, cultural and spiritual. The very first Aboriginal mission that was ever established in Australia is at Belmont. That's a special place.

I'm a salt water person and that's important to me. No way in the world could I live inland. I don't go to the beach much now, but I know it's there. I hope people look after it and don't destroy it so you can always go there if you have to, either in spirit or person.

To rejuvenate, I will go home and just be on country, and that will build my spirit up as well as my wellbeing in terms of physical feeling too. If I need to, I'll go for a drive across the bridge here at Swansea. The lake can do that too.

Awa boa

Know Our Stories.



Uncle Noel Simon
Wiradjuri/ Biripi
Aboriginal educator,
elder and activist
58 years old
Tingira Heights

As long as I'm teaching somebody, I'm happy, because I know my words are getting passed along. That's what we want – to pass our knowledge along. Years ago, I wouldn't have done this, but we find our place in life. And I think this is my place.

HISTORY

I think a lot of this history is part of me. It's part of everybody. And with the Aboriginal culture it is *us*, it's in our body, but we have to know where we come from. You do need to know where you come from, what you do, where you belong. It's terrible wandering around not knowing exactly your place in life or where you belong or even your Country.

Australia needs to know a bit about the history. Everyone loves the history, I know they do, even if it is false, most of it. I know about Captain Cook from school. I didn't know that before I went to school. Why do I need to know about him? You need to know stuff that's been in your past, even all the bad, bad stuff. You need to know that, and build on that and prevent that from happening to your kids. *Any* kids. We're all heading for a future and making it better and educating more people. We are making history right now!

PLACE

One of my favourite spots to come to, and bring people to, is Swansea Heads. It's the entrance to the lake. There's heaps of Dreaming stories around this area. I know a few of the stories, and I bring people out and show them.

If I ever go fishing, I do have a little favourite spot that I go to. It's just down the road from my place, down Valentine. There's a little spot down near the park almost guaranteed a fish every time. My kids love it. There's barbeques there, so we have dinner. I just feel comfortable, sort of like I belong there. It is always good down there.

CONTRIBUTION

As long as I'm teaching somebody, I'm happy because I know my words are getting passed along. That's what we want - to pass our knowledge along. Years ago I wouldn't have done this but we find our place in life. And I think this is my place. I don't know what I'd do without doing this.

As people find out more about Aboriginal culture they get fascinated. They want to know more and more. This is what I want to start. I get them to taste and let them go on their own journey and find out their own little way in the world with Aboriginal culture.

FAMILY AND CULTURE

The plants I do touch I've eaten when I was a kid with my Dad. I didn't realise that was traditional food.

The whole family used to go and get periwinkles around Newcastle beach. It was something we did every day but it was special. They're very small, so you do need a lot. They're everywhere. They're always there for when you're hungry.

When I was doing traditional stuff it was just normal. It was just me being me with my family.

Awaoba

Know Our Stories.



Greg Oldham Darcy

Wiradjuri
Aboriginal elder and
artist
62 years old
Wallsend

I lived on the streets of the Cross for a while. I saw a lot of Koori kids seeing the bad side of life like I did. I thought that it's time to give something back now... I felt that if I could save even one kid from going back to jail then my job was done.

CONTRIBUTION AND FAMILY

I was brought up by my nannas, the Aboriginal nanna and the Italian nanna. I was always told to get respect, you've got to give it.

I started doing wood burning as a young kid. I watched my uncle burn bits of root from a willow tree and sell them as burnt snakes. I taught my wife Loraine how to wood burn and she taught me how to paint.

I had a disrupted life. I was in trouble a fair bit. When I was locked up for a short period of time I helped all the kids there. Black, white - didn't matter. I found out that I was good at it. I said, 'I'll go back to culture. I won't charge any fees.' I've been teaching art and mentoring since I was 45.

I had a pretty hard life. My family were drovers and boozers. I lived on the streets of the Cross for a while. I saw a lot of Koori kids seeing the bad side of life like I did. I thought that its time to give something back now. I just woke up to myself. I had a wife and two kids. I helped kids to stay out of jail. I felt that if I could save even one kid from going back to jail then my job was done.



Awabba

Know Our Stories.



Lorraine Riley Oldham

Thungutti
Aboriginal elder and
contemporary artist
62 years old
Wallsend

I went to TAFE to try and find out if I could learn a little bit about my culture because we never got taught any of it when we were at school. All we were taught was about what the white people wanted us to learn.

HISTORY

When I was born, my Mum was living in a tent on the riverbank at the Dubbo Mission. I used to sleep in a suitcase. She put a belt on it to hold the lid up.

We had to sit up the back of the classroom. That's where the Aboriginal kids always sat. The Aboriginal kids were the last to go and get their milk at recess. It was very hard growing up to find out why.

We only had one artist in the family out of Mum's nine kids. She couldn't teach us, because it was forbidden. My brother used to sneak up the back and watch my uncle do wood burning. He didn't actually teach him. I went to TAFE to try and find out if I could learn a little bit about my culture because we never got taught any of it when we were at school. All we were taught was about what the white people wanted us to learn.

They weren't allowed to teach any of their children their culture or their language. If they were caught teaching us the language they would take the kids away. That's why a lot of Aboriginal people don't know their language to this day. I only found out later in life why Mum couldn't teach us.

CONTRIBUTION

I went to a TAFE course first probably when I was about 26. I have always been inspired by Aboriginal art. I went there and it just took off! Ever since then I've been doing Aboriginal art, then I become a recognised artist. I was asked by the head of TAFE to do some TAFE teaching, and now I own my own little business called Red Ochre which I invite Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to share our culture.

I work with the community and I donate a lot of artwork to help people in the community. It makes you feel good because they appreciate what you're giving them.

There are so many talented Aboriginal kids out there, and all they need is direction in life. When I was teaching in jails they'd come in and they'd be down. They started putting their artworks in exhibitions with TAFE. They were just overwhelmed that there were so many people that liked their artwork. And they just wanted to keep coming back.

We need this in the schools for the kids. If someone just shows them the right direction and helps them, they will go a long way.

Awabaka

Know Our Stories.



**Jordan and Jesse
Cooper-Pearce**

Wiradjuri
Fennell Bay Public
School students
10 years old
Bolton Point

*We often go down to the lake
for fishing and swimming.
To get the bait for our rods to
fish at the end of the jetty,
we get some cockles from
the edge of the lake.*

PLACE AND FAMILY

Our family are from Trangie on Wiradjuri nation which is one of the biggest nations in NSW. We were born and live on Awabakal county in Bolton Point close to Lake Macquarie.

We often go down to the lake for fishing and swimming. To get the bait for our rods to fish at the end of the jetty, we get some cockles from the edge of the lake. We collect a few. To get the bait out of the cockles we smash them on the concrete. To get the cockle out of its shell, we slide with our thumbs to the right, getting the bait out. It's quite squishy.

We use the bait in the hope of catching baby bream. We usually catch and release the fish. We like fishing. It's fun with our mates.

Once we have had enough our dad comes down with the tube and we ride on the water around the lake.

