

voices of aboriginal tasmania

ningenneh tunapry education guide



Written by Andy Baird

Tasmanian Museum
& Art Gallery

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Tasmania
Explore the possibilities

voices of aboriginal tasmania

ningenneh tunapry

A guide for students and teachers visiting *ningenneh tunapry*, the Tasmanian Aboriginal exhibition at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Suitable for middle and secondary school
Years 5 to 10, (students aged 10–17)

The guide is ideal for teachers and students of History and Society, Science, English and the Arts, and encompasses many areas of the National Statements of Learning for Civics and Citizenship, as well as the Tasmanian Curriculum.



Above: Brendon 'Buck' Brown on the bark canoe

curricula guide

A separate document outlining the curricula links for the *ningenneh tunapry* exhibition and this guide is available online at www.tmag.tas.gov.au/education/resources

suggested focus areas across the curricula:

Primary

Oral Stories: past and present
(Creation stories, contemporary poetry, music)

Traditional Life

Continuing Culture: necklace making, basket weaving, mutton-birding

Secondary

Historical perspectives

Repatriation of Aboriginal remains

Recognition: Stolen Generation stories: the apology, land rights

Art: contemporary and traditional

Indigenous land management

Activities in this guide that can be done at school or as research are indicated as

***classroom**

Activities based within the TMAG are indicated as

***museum**

voices of aboriginal tasmania

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in the beginning...when was that?

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sharing knowledge and understanding—trade

tools

'country'

Relates to these ningenneh tunapry exhibition themes;

Law from the land

Family life

Stone tools

Gardown West coast hut

Aboriginal Country

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our people

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exiled in body and spirit

Relates to these ningenneh tunapry exhibition themes;

Invasion and war

From freedom to exile



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cultural renewal—the bark canoe

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song and dance today

baskets

forest of the sea—kelp water carriers

mutton-birding—a lifetime of tradition

Relates to these ningenneh tunapry exhibition themes;

Bark canoe

Shell necklaces

Reigoua

Tareena

Karnepleelare

Mutton-birding

maireener, *canlaride*

kelp water carriers

baskets

dance

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stand up together

celebrate—create

Relates to these ningenneh tunapry exhibition themes;

Our community

Bringing our people home

They took the children away

Cultural heritage protection

Aboriginal land

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Stolen Generation

caring for country

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ningenneh tunapry: naming a exhibition and the languages of the tasmanian aboriginal people

Museums and the 'story' of a new exhibition called *ningenneh tunapry*

Museums collect and keep objects and show them to visitors and researchers. They chart the material culture of this world, and offer visitors insights into another time, place or culture from their own. But more than this they are places where stories can be heard, felt and understood. Stories told by the objects and the people surrounding them. It is these stories that can lead us to an understanding of the present and the creation of the future.

Ningenneh tunapry is the story of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people, past and present. The phrase *ningenneh tunapry* means 'to give knowledge and understanding'. The exhibition deals exclusively with the story of *Trouwerner*, or Tasmania as it is now called. It tells that story from a particular perspective.

Activity

*museum / classroom

Read this introductory passage from the exhibition:

ningenneh tunapry
explores the journey of the tasmanian
aboriginal people
our culture endures, our beliefs firmly
held
we are who we are
pakana palawa

The way it is written gives us a clue to the 'voice' of the written information in the gallery. Whose voice or perspective do you think it is? Whose voice do the text panels in other museum exhibitions use?



Activity

*museum

Naming something is a powerful event. Think about something you have 'named', perhaps a pet, or a special place. What is the name of your suburb or town? Places, and descriptions of plants, animals etc were already named when the first Europeans arrived here. *Trouwerner* became Van Diemen's Land then Tasmania, *kunanyi* became Mt Wellington.

Can you think of any Aboriginal names that you use? (Hint: place names like Moonah may be Aboriginal names, but do we use them accurately? Do they reflect what Aboriginal people traditionally named these locations?)

Indeed there were several languages spoken by different tribal groups in Tasmania. Evidence suggests there were six to twelve spoken languages at the time of European invasion. Some of the words from these different languages that have been recorded in Plomley's 1976 book, *A Word List of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Languages* are used in the exhibition.

ningenneh tunapry: naming a exhibition and the languages of the tasmanian aboriginal people

Activity

*museum

Write down 5 Aboriginal words from the text in the exhibition and their meaning in English.

Aboriginal word	English translation
<i>kunanyi</i>	Mt Wellington

How does someone learn a new language?

What would happen if the language you were hearing was constructed differently from the English you spoke? ie a different grammar, different sounds, reflecting different relationships to objects, to the land, to Country. Tasmanian Aboriginal languages were complex and subtle. The written description of these languages by the early Europeans explorers and ‘settlers’ in Tasmania was fraught with misunderstanding, often due to a lack of in-depth study. Unfortunately not enough of any single original Tasmanian Aboriginal language was recorded, and since speaking in their native tongue was actively discouraged, neither has any language been maintained by the descendents of these language groups.

However Tasmanian Aboriginal language is being revived. Called **palawa kani**, this new language is different from the individual original languages but has the distinctively Aboriginal characteristics that the original Tasmanian languages shared; distinctive sounds, meanings and grammar.

Activity

*museum / classroom

Try saying the following **palawa kani** words:

palawa = (*pal-a-wah*) Tasmanian Aborigine

milaythina = (*mee-lie-dtee-nah*) Country

paywootta—long time ago in the beginning...when was that?

A land of ancestors, spirits and beings.
A story told, a stone tool placed, a carving
cut and a stencil blown...remembering
paywootta—a 'long time ago'.

For thousands of years before Europeans arrived,
Tasmanian Aboriginals maintained their culture
through an oral and artistic tradition, not a written or
text based tradition. Creation stories are the stories
of the land, living with the land and belonging to the
land. They are stories of Country.

*"The old fella tells the story to one of his daughters
about his ancestors. It's a sort of spiritual
cultural story. As it should be from Legends and
Landscapes and it fits in well as an education
tool about Aboriginal peoples history and how we
relate to some things that people don't know about
and I feel that it will be fairly well accepted by our
community anyway, and that way I am sure it will be
accepted across the country."*

Jim Everett speaking about the story of *Ballawinnie* (Red Ochre)
and the importance of stories (from *The Dreaming* DVD series by
Aboriginal Nations 2000)



Jim Everett

Jim Everett

Jim Everett is a
Tasmanian Aboriginal
Elder and poet. He
was born on Flinders
Island in 1942 and has
been writing poetry
from an early age,
inspired by his deep
connection to Country.
He has also been
heavily involved in the
struggle for recognition
of the Tasmanian
Aboriginal people and

their land rights. In more recent times Jim has worked in television
documentary, educational video and theatre.



Wargata Mina cave, South West Tasmania

Activity

***museum / classroom**

Listen to the First Black Man story in the gallery
or online [www.tmag.tas.gov.au/education/
resources](http://www.tmag.tas.gov.au/education/resources). People from different cultures describe
their ancestral beginnings in many different ways.
What is your story? Does it influence the way you
behave?



Wooreddy, painted by Thomas Bock

Wooreddy

A renowned storyteller
and warrior of the
Nuenonne band from
Bruny Island, Wooreddy
travelled around
Tasmania with George
A Robinson, Truganini
and others from 1830 to
1834, communicating
with the Aboriginal
people living in the bush.
Taken to the interment
camp Wybalenna on
Flinders Island, and

then on to Victoria, he eventually died just as he was returning to
Flinders Island aged in his fifties. A proud traditional man, he never
wore European clothes, never ate European food and retained an
unshaken belief in his Aboriginal identity and customs through the
years of dispossession.

paywootta—long time ago petroglyphs

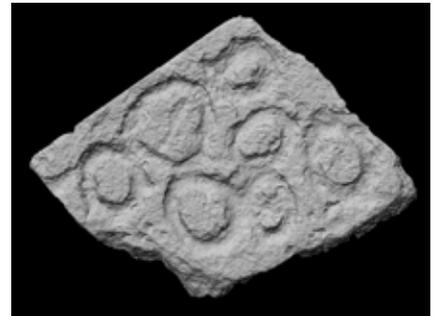
Petroglyphs are ancient rock carvings, and those at *Preminghana* (Mt Cameron West) are the most extensive and complex examples of ancient Aboriginal art known in Tasmania. The petroglyphs were made by pecking a line of holes in the soft rock then abrading the ridges between them, creating deeply grooved, non-figurative geometric designs.



Petroglyph 'collecting' in 1962

The question now is where should this petroglyph belong, in the Museum, back up at *Preminghana* or somewhere else? And who should 'own' it or be responsible for it?

Aboriginal relics created prior to 1876 are protected by the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975* which prohibits people from removing or damaging artefacts and sites such as petroglyphs, stone tools, middens, rock art and burial sites. Aboriginal heritage is important for all Tasmanians and provides a rich record of an ancient history. But what about Aboriginal heritage created since 1876? New legislation is under discussion. What should it include?



Computerised 3d scan of petroglyph

In 1962 this large petroglyph was cut away from the rock at *Preminghana* and is now part of the TMAG collection. It was on public display from 1967 till 2005. Whilst having it in the collection in Hobart protects it from the vandalism which has unfortunately occurred to some of the remaining petroglyphs in North West Tasmania, the real value of these engravings is in them being preserved in their original locations and being accessible by the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.



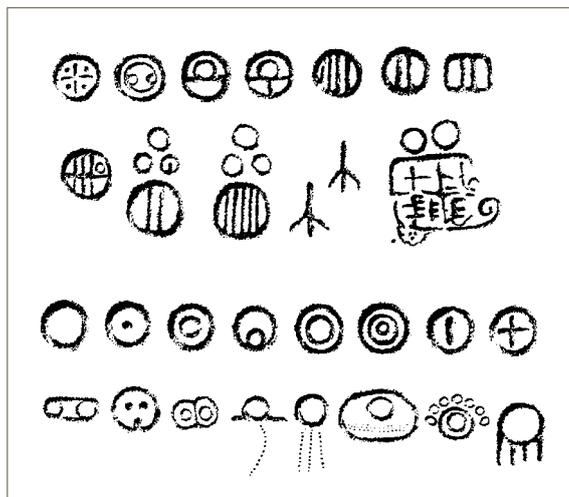
Preminghana petroglyphs still in-situ

paywootta—long time ago petroglyphs

Activity

*classroom

The meanings of the symbols on the petroglyphs are today unclear. By listening to some of the Creation stories, looking at how Aboriginal people lived and trying to understand what they might have been thinking, maybe you could come up with some possibilities? Look at the petroglyph images, copy a symbol and suggest a meaning.



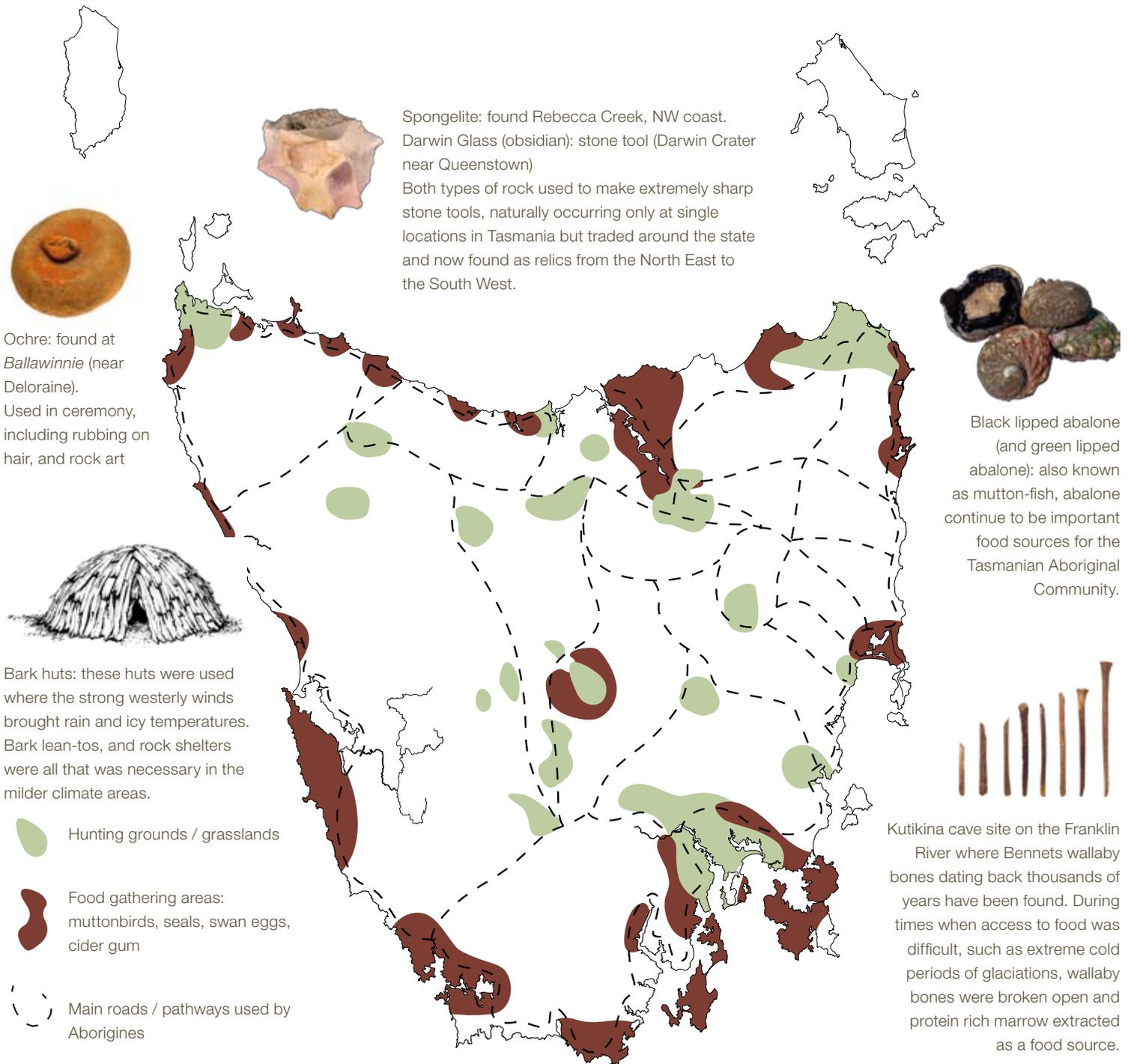
Symbol

Meaning

Symbol	Meaning

paywootta—long time ago

sharing knowledge and understanding—trade'



Activity

*museum / classroom

See if you can connect the natural resources above with where they are found in *Trouwerner* (Tasmania). Where would you add shading for the important resource of shellfish? You may need to research this some more at school.

Getting around: Aboriginal people maintained open grassland trade routes and hunting grounds by regularly firing the vegetation, preventing the shrubs and trees taking over. Where are the large grassland areas today?



paywootta—long time ago

sharing knowledge and understanding—tools

Activity

*museum

Traditional Tasmanian Aboriginal people didn't use boomerangs, spear throwers or hafted stone axes? Why not? What did their 'tool kit' for hunting and gathering consist of? Draw and label some of these tools and record their sizes.

draw and label tool

size (approx)

draw and label tool	size (approx)



paywootta—long time ago sharing knowledge and understanding—‘country’

‘Country’ is more than just the name of a place. When used by the Tasmanian Aboriginal people it is about connection to all aspects of the land; landscape, ecology, spirituality, seasonal rhythms, people and culture.

More than 2,000 generations of Tasmanian Aboriginal people have lived on *Trouwerner*, a long time to gather the knowledge and understanding of Country. This knowledge was essential; where materials such as good stone tool making rocks occurred; where good supplies of ochre used for ceremony could be found; where abundant food supplies were available: where shells for necklaces could be collected and even where shelters were necessary. This unique knowledge was acquired over a long time from their connection with the land.

The sharing of such knowledge and resources meant trade routes were established along the open buttongrass plains and grasslands.

Activity

*museum

Look carefully at the bark hut and the backdrop image: describe how the huts were constructed and arranged and who might have lived in them.

Activity

*classroom

Why are these words about Country—landscape, ecology, spirituality, seasonal rhythms, people and culture—important to Aboriginal people? If you were asked by a tourist to describe your Country, what would you say?



carner me malettenener—where is your country? our people

Activity

*museum

Thomas Bock was a colonial artist of the nineteenth century who drew numerous portraits of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people he met, including a series of 14 life portraits of Robinson's Tasmanian Aboriginal companions during the latter's trip around Tasmania from 1830–34 to 'conciliate' the remaining Aboriginal population.

See if you can match the identity of the people in Dowling's painting by using Bock's images shown on the following pages.

1

2

3

4

Robert Dowling was another colonial artist, but rather than using real life studies for his painting, he used Bock's portraits (painted between 1831–35) to create the painting shown, it was actually painted in England in 1859.



Robert Dowling (1827–86)
Aborigines of Tasmania 1859



carner me malettenener—where is your country? our people

Activity

Below are Thomas Bock's paintings of Tasmanian Aboriginal people (1831–35).

Research the lives of these people.



Truganini



Woureddy



Probelattener, Lacklay (Jimmy)



Manalargena

carner me malettenener—where is your country? invasion and war

The arrival of the Europeans, especially the English in Hobart in 1804, marked a huge upheaval for the Tasmanian Aboriginal people who viewed the newcomers as invaders. It was also undoubtedly a major dislocation for the convicts sentenced to the other side of the world. In the ensuing years the clash of cultures resulted in a war being fought over Country and differing systems of ownership, governance and law.

In 1829 Governor Arthur issued proclamation boards to try to communicate English justice to the Aboriginal people. These pictograms show white men being punished by hanging for killing black men, and vice versa. In reality things were very different. No white man in Tasmania was ever hanged for killing a black man, even though there are documented cases of this crime occurring in Tasmania.

Activity

*museum / classroom

The pictograms are based on the assumption that the European pictorial conventions were universal. Discuss this assumption, and think of analogies (eg Scales of Justice, universal signs ie flags, cross etc).



George Frankland (attributed) (1800–38)
Governor Arthur's proclamation board 1829

carner me malettenener—where is your country? invasion and war

Activity

*classroom

Read John Marsden's and Shaun Tan's classic pictorial allegory *The Rabbits* and discuss the meaning of invasion and resistance from various perspectives.

Activity

*classroom

Map the pattern of early white settlement against the distribution of viable hunting grounds and Aboriginal trade routes. What might the effect of this displacement from traditional food sources have been? Research first contact accounts between Europeans and Aboriginals in Tasmania. Compare these accounts and explain the differences.

Activity

*museum

The way people are represented in paintings tells us a lot about the artist's perspectives on society. Study *The Conciliation* 1840 by Benjamin Duterrau which depicts George Augustus Robinson meeting Tasmanian Aboriginal people. What does it tell you about Duterrau's attitude about Aboriginals and Europeans, which would have been shared by many of his contemporaries.

Below: Benjamin Duterrau (1767–1851)
The Conciliation 1840



carner me malettenener—where is your country? exiled in body and spirit

William Lanne (also referred to as Lanney and Lanna) was a member of the last free family captured in 1842. He was taken from near the Arthur River in North West Tasmania to Wybalenna on Flinders Island, at the age of seven, along with his parents and four brothers. His parents died there. When the settlement closed in 1847 he was taken to Oyster Cove and then later apprenticed to whaling ships. He remained a whaler till his death in Hobart in March 1869.



Above & below: William Lanne and his pipe—what constitutes a 'collection' when both the pipe and the hands that held it were 'collected'.



Right: Complicit in crime; a stereographic image of the Royal Society Museum 1862 where William Lanne's hands and feet were found and which housed the remains of Trunganini

There was much scientific interest in Lanne at this time as he was considered the last tribal male Tasmanian Aborigine. His body was placed under guard in the Colonial Hospital because of rumours of possible foul play. It did not, however, prevent his mutilation at the hands of leading surgeons and 'researchers'. In the night his head was cut off and swapped with that of another man, then his hands and feet were cut off. Buried the following day in St David's cemetery, his body was subsequently dug up and removed. His body was further mutilated, a portion of his skin made into a tobacco pouch, and sections of his arm removed. His hands and feet were later found in the Royal Society rooms in Argyle Street, now TMAG, and a skull identified as Lanne's was finally repatriated from Edinburgh in 1991 and buried by the Tasmanian Aboriginal community in the north west of the state.

Trunganini, who died in 1876, wasn't treated any better. Her body was exhumed by the Royal Society at a later date and placed 'on display' at the TMAG from 1904 till 1947. She was only returned to the Aboriginal community for respectful cremation in 1976, 100 years after her death.

Activity

*museum

After reading the above material, and seeing Lanne's image, his pipe, his story, what do you feel about his treatment?



tunapry pakana mapali—our people’s knowledge cultural renewal—the bark canoe

The Tasmanian Aboriginal community today has a rich and varied culture that is connected with traditions stretching back thousands of years. Whilst Aboriginal people today are involved in a wide range of cultural activities—such as film, theatre, literature and the graphic arts—traditional practices such as shell necklace making and basket weaving still have a special place in the community. These practices have been handed down through the generations, each new artist putting their own flavour into the work but maintaining that thread of cultural continuity. Some practices, such as the making of bark canoes, stopped for over 170 years, but renewal of these skills is now taking place.



Above: CAT scanning the bark canoe at the Royal Hobart Hospital

Below: Scan of the bark canoe

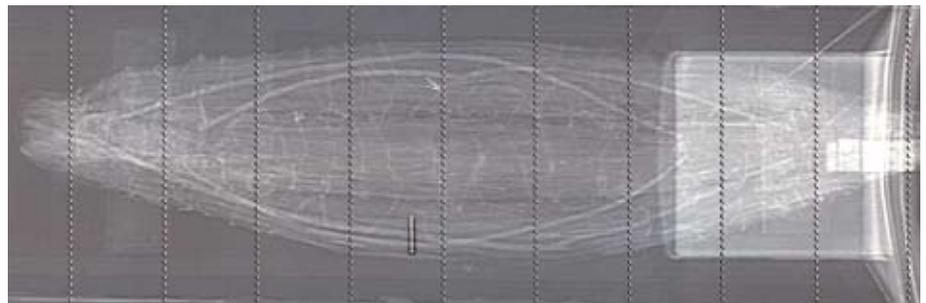
Activity

*museum / classroom

Building the bark canoe was a significant project of ‘cultural renewal’—relearning (were they ever really lost?) the skills in building a canoe after a gap of over 170 years. Watch the video, have a look at the 1840s model canoe, and the French explorers sketches, to learn how the new one was built by four Tasmanian Aboriginal men; Brendon ‘Buck’ Brown, Shane Hughes, Sheldon Thomas and Tony Burgess, and *Windward Bound* captain Sarah Parry.

What do you think the scans of the model shown here told these 21st century canoe builders?

Right: Canoe builders from left: Sheldon Thomas, Brendon ‘Buck’ Brown, Tony Burgess, Shane Hughes, and Sarah Parry



tunapry pakana mapali—our people’s knowledge maireeners—shell necklace tradition

Maireeners are small conical kelp shells much prized by Tasmanian Aboriginal women shell necklace makers. Found only at a few locations around the Bass Strait islands, they have been collected for thousands of years, specially treated, pierced and threaded onto sinew (nowadays cotton or beading thread). Tasmanian Aboriginal women continue this tradition, making trips around the islands in search of a range of shell types.



Activity

*museum / classroom

Many shells are found around the shores of Tasmania, but there are some specific ones that necklace makers utilise in their art.

Find out what these different shell species are, where they are found and what they look like.



drawing	Aboriginal name	scientific name	where found

tunapry pakana mapali—our people’s knowledge song and dance today

Song and dance form an important part of culture today and though practiced by only a small number of contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal people, remains a significant part of ceremony and expression. They are also part of a continuing tradition. Recordings in 1899 and 1903 onto wax cylinders of Fanny Cochrane Smith singing are some of the earliest documentation of Aboriginal songs in Australia. You can hear the recordings in *ningenneh tunapry*.



Above: Fanny Cochrane Smith recording with Horace Wallace 1903

Activity

*museum / classroom

Who was Fanny Cochrane Smith?
What is her story?

Activity

*classroom

View the online clip of the opening of the *ningenneh tunapry* exhibition and additional footage showing dance and music from Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

www.tmag.tas.gov.au/education/resources



Above: Leah Brown and Josh Brown

Activity

*classroom

Dewayne Everettsmith is a young Tasmanian Aboriginal musician who appeared on Australian



Above: Dewayne Everettsmith

Idol in late 2007. Listen to Dewayne singing a song written by a group of Tasmanian Aborigines about the importance of Country. It is sung in *palawa kani*, Tasmanian Aboriginal language, to students on a TMAG program.
www.tmag.tas.gov.au/education/resources

tunapry pakana mapali—our people’s knowledge baskets

Contemporary baskets, such as this one by Colleen Mundy, are made from natural fibres from the white flag iris (*Diplarrena moraea*). Traditionally a range of grasses and sedges were used, including blue flax iris (*Dianella tasmanica*) and sagg (*Juncus pallidus*).

Activity

*museum / classroom

This drawing by Colbron Pearce shows traditional Tasmanian Aboriginal women with string baskets around their shoulders. Can you guess what they are using them for?

Below: Colbron Pearce (1883–1971)
Women diving for shellfish c.1930



Above: basket by Colleen Mundy



tunapry pakana mapali—our people’s knowledge forest of the sea

Kelp water carriers are recorded to have held up to 5 quarts (5.7 litres) of water by the French explorers. Whilst there has been a resurgence of making contemporary carriers, kelp artists have expanded the mediums use to include decorative sculptures such as the one shown here.

Activity

*classroom

What is kelp? Research where it occurs around Tasmania and what is happening to the kelp ‘forests’ in recent years.



Above: Kelp sculpture by Aunty Verna Nichols

Below: Aunty Verna Nichols collecting kelp



tunapry pakana mapali—our people’s knowledge mutton-birding—a lifetime of tradition

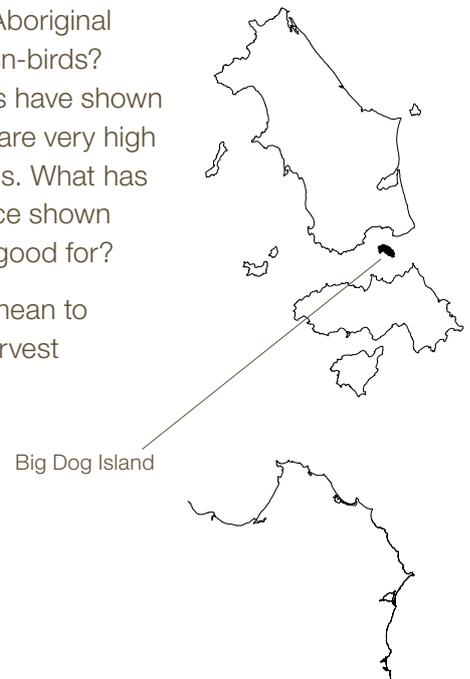
Every year around the end of March, members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community gather on Trefoil and Big Dog Islands to collect mutton-bird (short tailed shearwater) chicks. These incredible birds, who as adults fly from Tasmania to Alaska each year (a round trip of 30,000km), return home to the same burrows to lay their eggs around the end of November. The fledging chicks, after intensive feeding over several months by their parents, are rich in fat and oils. It is at this time that the Aboriginal community gather to sustainably harvest them.

Activity

*museum / classroom

What are the Aboriginal uses for mutton-birds? Recent studies have shown that the chick are very high in Omega 3 oils. What has modern science shown these oils are good for?

What does it mean to sustainably harvest mutton-birds?



Below: Mutton-birding on Big Dog Island, 2005



pakana palawa—recognition

‘Where the bad was we can always make it good.’

Aunty Ida West (1919–2003) Tasmanian Aboriginal Elder

The Federal Parliament’s apology to indigenous Australians on 13 February, 2008, marked a significant event in the Australian calendar. It is but one more step in a long and often difficult history of black and white relations in Tasmania. There are many key dates that resonate with both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population of Tasmania.

Recent events in the struggle for recognition and reconciliation include:

1967 90.8% of Australian voters support the *Constitutional Alteration (Aboriginals)* in the 1967 National Referendum. Aborigines are removed from inclusion under the states’ Flora and Fauna Acts.

1975–76 The Tasmanian Aboriginal community petition the Tasmanian Government to repatriate Truganini’s remains. Almost one hundred years after her death she is cremated and her ashes scattered in the D’Entrecasteaux Channel.

1977 Kutikina Cave on the Franklin River is rediscovered and regarded as one of the most significant archaeological sites in the world.

1982 The Aboriginal community lobby for the return of Ancestral remains stolen from Oyster Cove held by the TMAG. Subsequent debates and legal battles with the Museum’s Trustees attract widespread media attention.

1984 Aboriginal community reclaim Oyster Cove. Legislation is passed to repatriate all Ancestral remains held in Tasmanian museums.

1985 The TAC begins campaigning, on behalf of the community, for the repatriation of Ancestral remains held in overseas institutions.

1986–87 Aboriginal Rock Art is rediscovered in *Ballawinne* and *Wargata Mina* caves, south-west Tasmania.



Above: Repatriation of Aboriginal remains

1991 Tasmanian Aboriginal Ancestral remains held by the School of Anatomy of the University of Edinburgh are repatriated—the first repatriation from an overseas institution.

1993 Aboriginal community reclaim Rocky Cape National Park in protest to the failed Land Rights Bill.

1995 The Aboriginal Land Act 1995 is passed, returning twelve sites to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

1996 Aboriginal community reclaim Wybalenna in protest to it being left off the 1995 Bill.



Above: Premier Ray Groom handing back Aboriginal land at Risdon Cove, 1995

pakana palawa—recognition stand up together

The 'sorry books' and the reconciliation bridge walks were a personal attempt by people around Australia to do what governments had failed to do, acknowledge injustice. People often need to lead the governments and take action to create change for a better society.

Activity

*museum / classroom

Read some of the Stolen Generation details in the gallery or on-line (www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/bth_report/report/ch6.html) and write your own few sentences to express what you feel.



Above: Reconciliation walk, Derwent bridge, July 2000

Repatriation of Aboriginal Remains

Is this 'old news'? In 2007 the British Museum of Natural History was determined to carry out genetic studies on the remains of Tasmanian Aboriginals it had in its collection, despite rigorous appeals by the Tasmanian community for the remains to be returned without further interference. Only after legal processes had started did the museum acknowledge the wishes of the descendants, and return the remains without further 'testing'.

These headlines appeared in the *Mercury* January 17 and 26 2007, and in the *Weekend Australian* February 17–18 2007.



pakana palawa—recognition celebrate—create

Pakana mana mobberly takamuna rulla —We stand strong

Each year at Oyster Cove, just south of Hobart, a music and cultural festival celebrates the continuing vibrant Tasmanian Aboriginal community. On land that has been handed back to the Aboriginal community after years of land rights struggle; on land that in the late 1840s housed the remaining Aborigines brought back from Wybalenna on Flinders Island; on land that has always been Tasmanian Aboriginal land, dance, song, and community sharing occurs.

Activity

*classroom

Caption the celebratory photos below from the Oyster Cove Festival to express this powerful sense of community and strong culture.



exhibitions; one way, many ways, of telling a story

Museum exhibitions are only one way of telling a story, and even within them many choices have to be made as to what is told and what objects should be displayed to tell it.



Activity

*classroom

Design your own exhibition on 'Your family!' What stories about your family would be worth sharing and list 5 objects you would choose to convey these stories. Write 'labels' for your exhibited objects. What would you choose not to share?

This object isn't in the exhibition!
Why not?

This necklace was listed as 'Tasmanian Dog claws' when it was auctioned in New York in 1997. Further study however has revealed it is made from the claws of a large number of juvenile wombats, but there are no records of Tasmanian Aboriginal people making or wearing such necklaces. So where did it come from, or as they say in the museum world, 'what is its provenance?' A clue comes from the tag that was attached by the original collector. The initials 'G A R' are written on it, suggesting it was collected by George Augustus Robinson, possibly in 1839. Whilst Robinson is renowned in Tasmanian history as 'the conciliator' and had significant interactions with the Tasmanian Aboriginal people, who really made the necklace and whether it is from Tasmania is uncertain. Is it part of the story of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people or does it tell us more about the collector? This gallery is about the Tasmanian Aboriginal people, not their 'collectors'.



visiting ningenneh tunapry—a learning perspective

exploring further

“Because the exhibition speaks with the voice of the Aboriginal community, teachers and students can feel the authenticity of what’s presented. They can see real objects, hear from the people who made some of these, the beautiful baskets and shell necklaces, but also learn of the struggle to get recognition. It isn’t always an easy or comfortable story to hear, but the museum is a safe place to explore these themes for students. Ideally though I’d love to see students move way beyond what we are showing here, get out bush with some Aboriginal people, learn what deep connection to Country means, and share in some of that connection, that wisdom, with a sense of gratitude and recognition for today’s Aboriginal people.”

Andy Baird, Manager—TMAG Centre for Learning and Discovery

Exploring Further

Tasmania has a wealth of resources available for the study of Aboriginal themes. Indeed the whole landscape may be regarded in a way as an Aboriginal construct. With continued occupation for over 2,000 generations and the use of fire to modify the vegetation patterns to suit hunting, harvesting and travel, the ‘outside classroom’ is an invaluable source of study material. Specific sites around the TMAG in Hobart include Risdon Cove, Bedlam Walls, Oyster Cove and Mt Wellington.

Books, multimedia and other resources

Keeping Culture: Aboriginal Tasmania, 2006, Reynolds, A (ed), National Museum of Australia Press, Canberra.

The Aboriginal Tasmanians, 1996 Ryan, L Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

Collection, 2007, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart.

The Big Dog Connection: an excellent mutton-birding educational kit developed by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Education Unit.

The Aboriginal Education Unit Resource Centre, Elizabeth College, Hobart. A resource library available to all Tasmanian teachers.
<http://library.eliz.tased.edu.au/collections/AbEd/>



collection



Thomas Bock (1790–1855)
Woureddy, native of Bruny Island, Van Diemen's Land 1837
watercolour
Presented by the Tasmanian Government, 1889
AG715



Dr William Brydon (1904–92)
Leo Luckman (master stonemason) and Eric Smith (stonemason) removing petroglyph from Preminghana, March 1962
Presented by Jessie Luckman, 2001
Q2001.25.42.2



Jack Thwaites
Carvings at Mt Cameron West 1969
35mm colour transparency
Presented by the Estate of Mr Jack Thwaites, 1986
Q1986.7.693.26



Basket c.1840s
white flag iris (*Diplarrena moraea*),
Tasmanian flax lily (*Dianella tasmanica*), sag (*Lomandra longifolia*)
M4844



Tasmanian Aboriginal waddies c.1840s
wood (*Leptospermum* sp.)
Presented Dr J Milligan 1852, Superintendent of Wybalenna 1843–47 and Oyster Cove 1847–54.
M2725, M2726



Robert Dowling (1827–86)
Aborigines of Tasmania, 1859
oil on canvas
152.7 x 304.3 cm
Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery



Thomas Bock (1790–1855)
Truggernana, Native of Recherche Bay Van Diemen's Land, (1837)
watercolour
Presented by the Tasmanian Government, 1889
AG714



Thomas Bock (1790–1855)
Jimmy, Native of Hampshire Hills, (1837)
watercolour
Presented by the Tasmanian Government, 1889
AG720



Thomas Bock (1790–1855)
Manalargenna, a Chief of the Eastern Coast of Van Diemen's Land, (1837)
watercolour
Presented by the Tasmanian Government, 1889
AG833



George Frankland (attributed) (1800–38)
Governor Arthur's Proclamation Board 1829
oil on board
Presented to the Royal Society of Tasmania by Mr A Boltar, 1867
S1997.216



Benjamin Duterrau (1767–1851)
The Conciliation 1840
oil on canvas
Purchased by Friends of the Museum and the Board of Trustees, 1945
AG79



Charles Woolley (1834–1922)
William Lanne, Coal River Tribe, (1834–1869), 1866
albumen print
Q180.2



William Lanne's Pipe
c.1869
lacquered wood, brass
Presented by Miss RG Gourlay, 1953
S516



Alfred Abbott (1838–72)
The Royal Society Museum on the corner of Argyle and Macquarie streets, during construction 1862
Presented by Miss J Beattie
Q576



Maireeners collected before going through processing stage
Cape Barren Island, 2002



Howard & Rollings (n.d.)
Horace Watson making a record of Mrs Fanny Cochrane Smith, 1903
toned silver gelatin print
Presented by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, 1978
Q7709



Colleen Mundy
Basket, 2007
Primrose Sands
white flag iris (*Diplarrena moraea*)
Purchased 2007
M8710



Dennis Colbron Pearce (1883–1971)
Women diving for shellfish c.1930
gouache



Wombat claw necklace early nineteenth century
juvenile wombat claws strung on animal sinew
Collected by George Augustus Robinson, 1839
Purchased by the Friends of TMAG from Mr Leo Fortess, Hawaii, USA, 1999
M8427

image credits

Sea trial of bark canoe by Brendon (Buck) Brown, Cornelian Bay, 2007 p.1

Ochre hand stencils, c.14,000 BP
Wargata Mina Cave, 2006
Image courtesy of Tony Brown p.5

Jim Everett
Image courtesy of Jillian Mundy, (detail) 2006 p.5

Tasmanian landscape Image courtesy of Rob Blakers p.9

Canoe builders from left:
Sheldon Thomas, Brendon 'Buck' Brown, Tony Burgess, Shane Hughes and Sarah Parry p.17

Kelp sculpture by Verna Nichols
Image courtesy of Verna Nichols, 2008 p.21

Tasmanian Aboriginal delegation repatriate Ancestral remains from the United Kingdom.
Hobart Airport, 1991

Image courtesy of the Mercury p.23
Land return ceremony Risdon Cove, 1995
Image courtesy of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs p.23

Annette Peardon addressing Parliament, Hobart 1997
Presented by the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, 2007 p.24

Parliament Lawns Hobart, National Sorry Day 2003
Presented by the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, 2007 p.24

Walk for Reconciliation Hobart, 23 July 2000
Image courtesy of Roger Lovell p.25

Design plan of Invasion Island, ningenneh tunapry
Thyalicine Design, 2007 p.27