



Teachers Notes

Aboriginal Identities in the Inner West Local Government Area

These teacher's notes are developed to support the information and images contained on the slides titled 'Aboriginal Identities'. This resource could be used within the Aboriginal Studies 7-10 Syllabus or History 7-10 Syllabus. The information in the document provides contextual/background knowledge that teachers may find useful when discussing the diversity of Aboriginal peoples, cultures and identities in the Inner West of Sydney.

By Janelle Scott & Deborah Lennis

Syllabus

Learning Areas/ Core Subjects

The new [Aboriginal Studies 7–10 Syllabus \(2024\)](#) is to be implemented from 2027. Detailed implementation information, including key features and resources, is available on the [HSIE syllabus development page](#).

ABORIGINAL STUDIES YEARS 7-10	HISTORY YEARS 7-10 (new syllabus)
Aboriginal Identities	The Era of Colonisation – Aboriginal Experience
Self-determination and Autonomy	The Making of the Modern World – Federation – WW2
Site- Studies (See wheel down the page)	The Modern World – Human Rights & Freedoms

Aboriginal Studies can contribute to ethical and empathetic understandings that support students' personal social cultural academic and professional development. With this knowledge, students can become active and informed advocates for a just and inclusive world. <https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au>

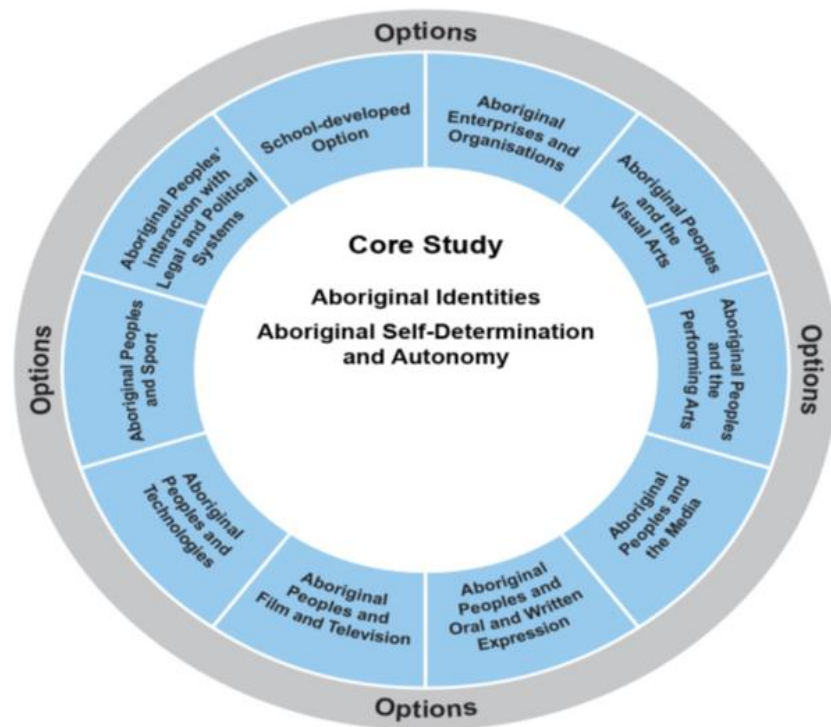
PowerPoint Syllabus Outcomes: including life skills

AST4-ADJ-01 in Stage 4 teachers may adjust the Stage 5 outcomes as appropriate to the needs of students in Years 7 and 8), **AST5-IDE-01**, **ASTLS-IDE-01**, **AST5-IDE-02**, **AST5-IDE-02**, **ASTLS-IDE-02**, **HI4-APP-01**, **HI5-APP-01**, **HILS-SPE-01**, **HI4-SOU-01m**, **HI5-SOU-01**, **HILS-SPE-02**, **HI4-INQ-01**, **HI5-INQ-01**, **HILS-IEP-01**, **HI4-COM-01**, **HI5-COM-01**, **HILS-CPP-01**, **HILS-EPC-01**, **HILS-EPC-02**

General capabilities	Cross-curriculum priorities	Other learning across the curriculum areas
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Teacher Notes – Aboriginal Identities in the Inner West Local Government Area

Critical and creative thinking	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures	Civics and citizenship
Ethical understanding	Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia	Difference and diversity
Information and communication technology capability	Sustainability	Work and enterprise
Intercultural understanding		
Literacy		
Numeracy		
Personal and social capability		



Outcomes:

- describes factors that contribute to an Aboriginal person's identity

- identifies Aboriginal Peoples' ways of maintaining and celebrating identity
- explains the diverse nature of Aboriginal Cultures across time and location
- explains the roles of families and Communities for Aboriginal Peoples
- accounts for the importance of self-determination and autonomy for Aboriginal Peoples
- explains the roles of Aboriginal Peoples locally, regionally, nationally or internationally
- describes factors that influence perceptions of Aboriginal Peoples and the range of relationships with non-Aboriginal people
- applies appropriate Community consultation protocols and ethical research practices to gather and protect data
- uses research methodologies and technologies to organise and share information and findings

Studying Aboriginal Studies 7–10 develops students' capacity to:

- develop respect for the Knowledges and Practices of Aboriginal Peoples
- apply Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) protocols
- understand the interconnectedness of Country, Culture and Community
- engage with local Aboriginal Community(ies) and Knowledge Holders
- learn about this country's rich Cultural heritage, equipping themselves with the depth of knowledge and understanding to respond to social issues
- develop respectful, inclusive and reciprocal relationships with Aboriginal Peoples and Communities
- apply ethical research and Community engagement practices become active and informed advocates for a just and inclusive world.

Historical Overview

This unit of work will cover the Aboriginal Studies Syllabus core subject Aboriginal Identities, with the focus in the Inner West Local Government Area.

This unit covers the Aboriginal Experience in the Era of Colonisation it will also help with a unit on the Making of the Modern World (Federation – WW2). It also covers the Modern World from the History Year 7-10 Syllabus.

This Unit of work is 'Core Study' - the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within the Inner West Local Government Area (LGA).

Aboriginal Identities of the Inner West Local Government Area focuses on how Council works with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents. How Council and Inner West residents celebrate the resilience and self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, and organisations within the Local Government Area.

It also gives some general information regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia, whilst looking at unjust Government policies.

Slide 1: Protocols

Education policies in NSW consistently foreground the importance of observing appropriate protocols when working with Aboriginal peoples and communities as part of community engagement to establish and maintain respectful relationships (Board of Studies 2008). The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) made the statement below which we encourage you to read at the beginning of the slide presentation.

Protocols for collaborating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities and engaging with Cultural works

NESA is committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal Communities and supporting teachers, schools and schooling sectors to improve educational outcomes for young people.

It is important to respect appropriate ways of interacting with Aboriginal Communities and Cultural material when teachers plan, program and implement learning experiences that focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Priorities.

Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) protocols need to be followed. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' ICIP protocols include Cultural Knowledges, Cultural Expression and Cultural Property and documentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Identities and lived experiences. It is important to recognise the diversity and complexity of different Cultural groups in NSW, as protocols may differ between local Aboriginal Communities.

Teachers should work in partnership with Elders, parents, Community members, Cultural Knowledge Holders, or a local, regional or state Aboriginal Education Consultative Group. It is important to respect Elders and the roles of men and women. Local Aboriginal Peoples should be invited to share their Cultural Knowledges with students and staff when engaging with Aboriginal histories and Cultural Practices.

Slide 2 – Disclaimer

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised this PowerPoint may contain names, works and images of Aboriginal peoples who are deceased.

SLIDE 3 – Title Slide

Aboriginal Identities – Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples of the Inner West Local Government Area (LGA)

Slide 4 – Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country is a speech given by a Traditional Custodian of the land, usually a Community Elder or representative of the local Aboriginal community, who in the Inner West Local Government Area (LGA) are either nominated by Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Lands Council (MLALC) or a recognised local Aboriginal Elder.

It welcomes people to visit and meet on the traditional area. The Traditional Custodians of the area are people who have originally come from that region, and are acknowledged by the community.

Slide 5 – Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians to Country

In general, a non-Aboriginal person, or an Aboriginal person from a different community, cannot present a Welcome to Country. They should present an Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians of Country.

An example of an Acknowledgement could be something like:

“I would like to acknowledge the Gadigal and Wangal peoples, who are the Traditional Custodians of this land. I would also like to pay respect to Aboriginal Elders, past and present and pay my respect to any Aboriginal peoples here today”.

Further information is available on the Inner West Council Website

<https://www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/live/community-wellbeing/aboriginal-community/tradition-custodians>

Slide 6 – Aboriginal Language Groups throughout Australia

There are two distinct groups of Indigenous peoples in Australia:

- 1) Aboriginal peoples: who have lived on the Australian mainland and Tasmania, as well as few small Islands off the coast, like Palm Island (QLD), Bathurst and Melville Islands (NT).
- 2) Torres Strait Islander peoples: who inhabit the islands off Torres Strait,

between Papua New Guinea and the northern tip of Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can also be referred to as 'First Nation People', 'Indigenous', and 'Traditional Custodians', however, the local peoples would prefer to be known as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are the oldest continuing cultures on earth and celebrates wisdom and special connection to the land and waterways. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians were the first people of this land, having occupied Australia and the islands that surround it since the dawn of time according to The Dreaming. Archaeological evidence demonstrates that Aboriginal peoples have been here for 65,000 years.

'The Dreaming' is used to describe the spiritual concept of people having a purposeful relationship with humans, the animals, the environment and the universe. It provides a framework for living that encompasses all that was, is and will be: past, present and future.

The Australian Museum has developed a resource for teachers to use about the Dreaming and the archaeological evidence titled 'We are from here, at least 65,000 years ago: Archaeological evidence of First peoples on the Australian continent:

<https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/evidence-of-first-peoples>

There are many Aboriginal groups throughout Australia, which differ in many ways. Each have their own language, customs, beliefs, music, dance, kinship systems, art forms and ceremonies, due to 'the Dreaming' of the area. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are distinct from each other both ethnically and culturally. While there are some similarities between cultural protocols of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, it is important to remember that the history, culture and traditions of each, are unique and differ between States and Territories.

Slide 7 – Sydney Basin Aboriginal Clan Groups

The lands that are boarded by the three rivers form the Sydney Basin

Hawkesbury River in the north

Nepean River in the west

Georges River in the south

Coastline along the east

Within that boarder there are 29 different languages/dialects

The three Rivers and coastline borders are housed by the NSW government and is accessible

<https://portal.spartial.nsw.gov.au/portal/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=82ae77e1d24140e48a1bc06f70f74269>

Slide 8 – Traditional Custodians of the Inner West Council Local Government Area

The original residents of the Inner West LGA were the Gadigal and Wangal peoples two of the language groups within the Sydney Basin.

Inner West Council acknowledges the traditional Aboriginal custodians of this land. We acknowledge this is a country of which the members and Elders of the local Aboriginal communities have been custodians for many centuries, and on which these people have performed age-old ceremonies. We acknowledge their living culture and unique role in the life of this region.

Inner West Council has a long history and association with the local Gadigal and Wangal Peoples of the Sydney Basin, the Traditional Custodians of this land.

Gadigal People: Although exact boundaries cannot be determined it is believed the Gadigal clan stretched along the south side of Port Jackson from South Head to about Petersham.

Wangal People were believed to have occupied the area from about

Petersham, along the southern shore of the Parramatta River to about Rosehill.

Slide 9 – Unique Country

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a unique relationship to the land and water of their country. The land is not just soil and rocks or minerals but a whole environment that sustains and is sustained by peoples and culture.

The Inner West landscape is characterised by gentle undulating terrain influenced by Ashfield Shales of the Wianamatta Group.

Towards the north and south ends of the LGA, along the Cooks (Goolay'yari) River and tributaries. As well as exposed sections of ridges leading away from the foreshore along Balmain Peninsula small outcrops of Hawksbury Sandstone occur.

Southern most point of the LGA, silty/peaty quartz, from the Quaternary Period.

Marrickville to Lilyfield reaching into Ashfield in the west, Ashfield Shales that overlay Hawksbury Sandstone dating back to the early/middle stages of the Triassic Period – approx. 242-247 Million years ago.

Approximately 18,000 years ago the sea level in the present day of the Sydney region was 110-113 meters lower than it is today. The Eastern coastline during this same period was 15 kilometers further out to sea than it is today.

Suburbs close to the city such as Glebe were of importance to the Gadigal and Wangal ancestors and the surrounding bushland, which was rich in plant, bird and animal life with fish and rock oysters available from Blackwattle Bay.

Slide 10 – Unique History

The land and water are the core of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' spirituality and requires a certain responsibility to look after the spiritual and environmental wellbeing of Country. The responsibility and cultural obligation to care for Country is defined through 'Traditional' lore and is central to all issues that are important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This is essential for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to maintain their identities today.

Even though British Explorer James Cook observed Aboriginal people all the way up the coast, he noted he had seen no 'fix'd habitations' or 'one inch of cultivated ground. Under English law land that was not properly occupied and used was 'terra nullius', *land that belonged to no-one*.¹

NB: 3 June 1992– Mabo Decision: the High Court of Australia rejected the notion of 'terra nullius' (land belonging to no-one), which claimed that Australia was unoccupied prior to European Settlement. The High Court's decision in favour of Mabo and the Meriam people recognised that Aboriginal peoples had lived in Australia for thousands of years as well as acknowledging that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continuing connection and rights to land through Native Title.

<https://www.aiatsis.gov.au/explore/mabo-case>

In the early stages of European settlement (1770's), relationships between the new settlers and the Aboriginal inhabitants of the Sydney region were initially hospitable and based on an understanding of trading foods, water source, tools, cloth and artefacts. Soon after, the relationship became adverse as Aboriginal people realised that the land, resources and cultural significance—which they depended on for survival, were being seriously disrupted by the on-going impacts of the new settlers' needs to cultivate and develop land to sustain them.

<https://www.sydneybarani.com.au/sites/first-contact>

The new settlers began changing the landscape by cutting down trees, using food resources, and denying Aboriginals access to the land. Aboriginal people resisted being driven off the land, and the whites protected 'their property' and their lives.

At the same time introduced diseases such as smallpox, measles and influenza caused the deaths of many Aboriginal people who had no resistance to them. Within the first two years of European settlement these diseases wiped out more than half of the Aboriginal population around Port Jackson. Some years later the first explorers observed people with smallpox scars well beyond Sydney.

Between 1790 and 1810, clans in the Sydney area, led by Pemulwuy of the Bidjigal language group, undertook a campaign of resistance against the English colonisers in a series of attacks.

With the arrival of the Europeans, the landscape was appropriated, and traditional hunting and foraging lands were destroyed, Aboriginal people were displaced from their land and cut off from their traditional pathways leading to conflict and resistance up until 1830. Following colonisation, disease and war, remaining Sydney clan groups were forced to leave their lands, and most likely married into other clans.

It is thought that some Aboriginal peoples-maintained connections with their country, by living in urban areas. Catching and trading fish remained a way Aboriginal peoples-maintained connection to their country. During the twentieth century, Aboriginal people moved back into areas like Balmain and Leichhardt for work, affordable housing, as well as educational, cultural and political opportunities.

Again, local stories reveal fishing was used as a way to support the poor and maintain community. With establishment of the Koori Knockout rugby league competition, first held in Camdenville Oval St Peters in 1971, commentators have noted that while football may have been the medium, the event was really about family and community coming together in celebration and enjoyment.

Slide 11 – Stolen Generations

In Australia, between 1910 and the 1970s*, governments, churches and welfare bodies forcibly removed many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families. These children became known as the Stolen Generations.

Their removal was sanctioned by various government policies (AIATSIS 2022a), which have left a legacy of trauma and loss that continues to affect First Nations communities, families and individuals today.

The forcible removal of First Nations children from their families was based on assimilation policies, which claimed that the lives of First Nations people would be improved if they became part of white society.

Assimilation policies proposed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples should be allowed to ‘die out’ through a process of natural elimination, or, where possible, assimilated into the white community (Behrendt 2012).

Policies focused on assimilating children as they were considered more adaptable to white society than adults. Children of First Nations and white parentage were particularly vulnerable to removal because authorities thought these children could be assimilated more easily into the white community due to their lighter skin colour (Behrendt 2012).

Children taken from their parents were denied access to their families, communities and cultures and taught to reject their First Nations heritage in favour of white culture.

The children’s names were often changed, and many children were forbidden from speaking First Nations languages. Some children were adopted by white families, and many children were placed in institutions where abuse and neglect were common (Behrendt 2012).

What’s been done to address the ongoing impact of the removal of First Nations children in Australia?

- Individuals, families, communities and organisations (such as the Healing Foundation) have been working to reconnect members of the Stolen Generations and their descendants with family members, First Nations communities, cultures and Country, and to heal the hurt caused by child removals. This important work has been ongoing for many decades and continues today.
- In 1980, a government Link-Up service was established in New South Wales to support members of the Stolen Generations in their search to reconnect with their families. Over the next 15 years this expanded to all states and territories, and the service continues to assist members of the Stolen Generations and subsequent generations today (AIATSIS 2022b).
- In 1995, the Australian Government launched an inquiry into the policy of forced child removal. The report, Bringing them Home, was delivered to Parliament on 26 May 1997. It estimated that between 10 and 33 per cent of all First Nations children were separated from their families between 1910 and 1970, and concluded that this was a breach of fundamental human rights.
- While it was the Keating Government that commissioned the inquiry into the Stolen Generations, the Howard Government had come to power by the time the report was finalised and largely ignored its 54 recommendations.
- Recommendations included financial compensation for victims of the Stolen Generations on a national level. Some state-level reparations have been made; however, many people who were removed as children have found they don't fit the criteria for these compensation schemes. Other people have said that no amount of money will ever be able to compensate them for the trauma they were put through (Boney 2016).
- *Policies of forced removals were in place from 1910 to 1969, but there are many stories of forced removals prior to and after these dates.

<https://australianstogether.org.au/discover-and-learn/our-history/stolen-generations>

Slide 12 – Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community of Inner West LGA

Inner West Council has a long history and association with the local Traditional Custodians of our lands. Which are and always will be Aboriginal lands as sovereignty was never ceded.

2021 Census 2,172 residents (1.2%) identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, this has grown by 8.6% since the 2011 Census
Non-indigenous population of the Inner West 173,585
Status not stated 7066

Statistics on the PowerPoint can be located

<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA14170>

Slide 13 – Comparative Statistics for Inner West Council – 2021 Census

The Inner West Local Government Area is among the top twenty most prosperous communities in Australia, however there are deep pockets of disadvantage, poverty and housing stress in the Inner West, and many Aboriginal residents live in those places.

The 2021 census revealed the following facts about the Inner West:

- 12% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households own their own home, compared with 26% of all households
- 25% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households live in public housing compared to 4% of all households
- 69% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households live in rented dwellings, compared to 41% of all households
- The average median wage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples was 51% lower than the overall median
- 8% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders workforce are unemployed compared with 2% of the wider workforce
- 8% of the IW Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents are in the older age bracket, the majority 20.1% are aged between 25–34 years.

Slide 14 – Council Connections

Inner West Council has two full time Aboriginal staff dedicated to working with and advocating for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and acknowledging and celebrating their histories and cultures.

There are several Aboriginal sites of significance in the Inner West. These include two main areas at Callan Point and the Cooks River along the natural shoreline that have remained largely undisturbed.

The sites at Callan Point contain shell middens in sheltered areas close to the water's edge where groups camped or stopped for a meal. These middens, like other sites in Port Jackson, contain rock oysters, cockles, mussels and *Terrebralia* shells which have been dated at about 4,500 years old.

There are also sites on private land which comprise of middens located under rock overhangs, an art site with hand stencils, a charcoal outline of a shark, as well as scarred trees (trees which have had bark removed for the creation of shelters, bark canoes etc.).

Fishing played a key role in Aboriginal life along the Cooks River, as evidenced by one of the few surviving shell middens at Kendrick Park in Tempe, 'filled with the shells of cockles, mud whelks, rock oysters, mud oysters and hairy mussels, as well as fish bones and stone artefacts'. It is believed that a stone axe from the Kendrick Park midden was 'likely used to remove bark from trees to make canoes, containers, shields and other resources'.

Slide 15 – Council Wards

In December 2018 Inner West Council resolved to change the ward names for the five wards within the Inner West Local Government Area, from area names to Aboriginal language words.

This was further to recognise and commemorate the Inner West's unique Aboriginal history and to give the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander a sense of belonging to the area.

Following detailed process of engagement and consultation with the local Aboriginal peoples, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategic Reference Group and Indigenous language experts Council resolved to name the Council Wards as follows:

- Ashfield Ward – Djarrawunang (Magpie)
- Balmain Ward – Baludarri (Leather Jacket)
- Leichhardt Ward – Gulgadya (Grass Tree)
- Marrickville Ward – Midjuburi (Lillypilly)
- Stanmore Ward – Damun (Port Jackson Fig).

The ward names chosen to reflect the flora or fauna of significance to the area for local Aboriginal people.

Slide 16 – Council Commitment

Council is recognising Aboriginal cultural identity through:

- dual naming of places,
- a deepened understanding of archaeology through new research
- Understanding Country through walks and landscape/park redevelopment

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Local Democracy Group (LDG)
Council has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LDG that assists in matters related to services, programs and activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in the local area. The LDG provides feedback, guidance and recommendations to Council on specific issues including strategic planning and policy, contributes local knowledge regarding community impacts, emerging trends, opportunities and service gaps, supports the delivery of NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week

activities/ celebrations, and participates in the annual Local Government Aboriginal Network (LGAN) Conference.

Council Policy documents:

- Reconciliation Action Plan

- Cultural Strategic Plan

- Heritage, Culture & History

- Local Elders for Welcome to Country for Council & community events.

- Aboriginal design for council branding

Slide 17 – Councils Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Annual Events

Council celebrates the following Indigenous events each year:

National Reconciliation Week: celebrated annually from 27 May (the successful 1967 referendum) to 3 June (The High Court Mabo decision) – dates which commemorate two significant milestones in Australian history. The week celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and is a time for all Australians to learn about shared histories, cultures and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia. According to Reconciliation Australia, 'Reconciliation must live in the hearts, minds and actions of all Australians as we move forward, creating a nation strengthened by respectful relationships between the wider Australian community, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples'.

The Pauline McLeod Awards: held as part of National Reconciliation Week celebrations and aim to recognise 'silent achievers' who have worked diligently in promoting Reconciliation through selfless acts for residents of the Inner West LGA. Nominees may be family members, neighbours, work colleagues, or acquaintances. They will have one thing in common, and that is their desire to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Awards also include the Primary School Art Competition and the High School Short Film Competition.

<https://www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/contribute/community-participation/community-awards/pauline-mcleod-awards-for-reconciliation>

NAIDOC Week (National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration): between the first Sunday (National Aborigines Day) and the second Sunday of July. The week celebrates the survival of Aboriginal culture and the contribution to modern Australia. All Australians are encouraged to participate in NAIDOC Week activities. Each NAIDOC Week has a theme for communities to reflect on.

Reconciliation can be meaningful when the smallest gesture is performed including: holding an activity or event with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, forming a touch footy club, holding regular morning teas in the community, or providing equal employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Slide 18 – Councils Infrastructure Commitments

Play the YouTube video attached to the slide

Further information regarding the Survival Memorials can be found on the Self-determination & Autonomy Site Study – Breathe PowerPoint

Slide 19 – Uluru Statement from the Heart

2022 the IW Council and Councillors adopted the Uluru Statement from the Heart and all its principles – Voice Treaty Truth.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart is an invitation to the Australian people from First Nations Australians. It asks Australians to walk together to build a better future by establishing by firstly establishing a First Nations Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution, and then the establishment of a Makarrata Commission for the purpose of treaty making and truth-telling .

In response to the Uluru Statement from the Heart, a national referendum was held in October 2023, that asked Australian citizens to vote “Yes” or “No” to giving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples constitutional recognition that would enshrine a Voice in parliament.

The Referendum failed with 60.6% of Australians voting ‘No’ to constitutional change. Australian Electoral Commission, 2023

Leading up to the Referendum, the Inner West Council trained over 1,100 residents to understand the Uluru Statement from the Heart and what it meant for Aboriginal peoples across Australia. The Inner West residents after the Referendum had the highest YES vote in the State.

Slide 20 – Self-Determination, Autonomy, Resilience and Advocacy

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have endured much injustice since European settlement but despite this have demonstrated resilience and autonomy.

For Council it is important to

- recognise the efforts of all residents within the Inner West to expand networks, advocacy with initiatives that support building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, services, and corporations.
- Refine existing practices and protocols to guide the Council’s dealings with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Promote leadership and participation in public, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander celebrations, programs and events.

- Increasing the employment, equal participation and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, community groups and organisations within the Inner West

Slide 21 – Significant Dates for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples in your local area

It is important to acknowledge the significance of the following dates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in your local area. For more information on the following dates please view Self-Determination & Autonomy PowerPoint

26 January 1938: The Day of Mourning – celebrations were being held for the 150th anniversary of the landing of the First Fleet in Australia, otherwise known as Australia Day (which has become a public holiday). The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples had nothing to celebrate and considered this day as a 'Day of Mourning'.

<https://www.aiatsis.gov.au/explore/day-of-mourning>

1965– Freedom Ride: was significant for the civil rights of Aboriginal peoples. Students from the University of Sydney formed a group: 'Student Action for Aborigines', led by Charles Perkins and Jim Spigelman. They organised a bus tour of western and coastal New South Wales towns, aiming to draw public attention to the poor state of Aboriginal health, education and housing. They hoped to point out and help lessen the socially discriminatory barriers which existed between Aboriginal and white residents. And they also wished to encourage Aboriginal people themselves to resist discrimination.

August 1966– Wave Hill Walk Off: refers to the strike by Aboriginal workers that focused national attention to Aboriginal Land Rights. Two hundred stockmen and domestic servants, mainly Gurundji people, employed at Wave Hill station went on strike for better pay and conditions. The Gurundji people also sent a petition to the Governor General requesting the return of the land that was their forefathers'. The petition was rejected, and the land was not returned to the Gurindji peoples until 1975.

27 May 1967 Referendum: The Australian Government held a referendum which expressed the will of the Australian people that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples would be counted in the national census and the Australian Government would have the power to make laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The referendum results were a high 90.77% YES vote, which showed that the vast majority of Australians felt goodwill towards Aboriginal peoples and wanted to improve their circumstances.

<https://www.abc.net/news/2017-05-26/larissa-behrendt-mythbusting-the-1967-referendum/8349858>

3 June 1992– Mabo Decision: the High Court of Australia rejected the notion of 'terra nullius' (land belonging to no-one), which claimed that Australia was unoccupied prior to European Settlement. The High Court's decision in favour of Mabo and the Meriam people recognised that Aboriginal peoples had lived in Australia for thousands of years as well as acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' continuing connection and rights to land through Native Title.

<https://www.aiatsis.gov.au/explore/mabo-case>

13 February 2008– National Apology: the National Apology to the Stolen Generations by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd came about as a recommendation from The National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal Children from their Families. It spotlighted the great suffering of Indigenous families under the Commonwealth, state and territory Aboriginal protection and welfare laws and policies.

In his Apology to Australia's Indigenous peoples the then Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, made the following statement regarding closing the gaps in the social inequalities faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:

This new partnership on closing the gap will set concrete targets for the future: within a decade to halve the widening gap in literacy, numeracy and employment outcomes and opportunities for Indigenous children, within a decade to halve the appalling gap in infant mortality

rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and, within a generation, to close the equally appalling 17-year life gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous when it comes when it comes to overall life expectancy.²

26 May– National Sorry Day (1988): an annual day of observance that acknowledges and recognises the pain and suffering by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were part of the ‘Stolen Generations’ and the effects of their removal from family and community. It is also a day that puts focus on the necessary steps towards healing.

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