



Teachers Notes

Self-determination and Autonomy Site Study – Survival Memorials

These teacher's notes are developed to support the information and images contained on the slides titled Self-determination & Autonomy Site Study – Survival Memorials. 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 and Australia.

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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](#).

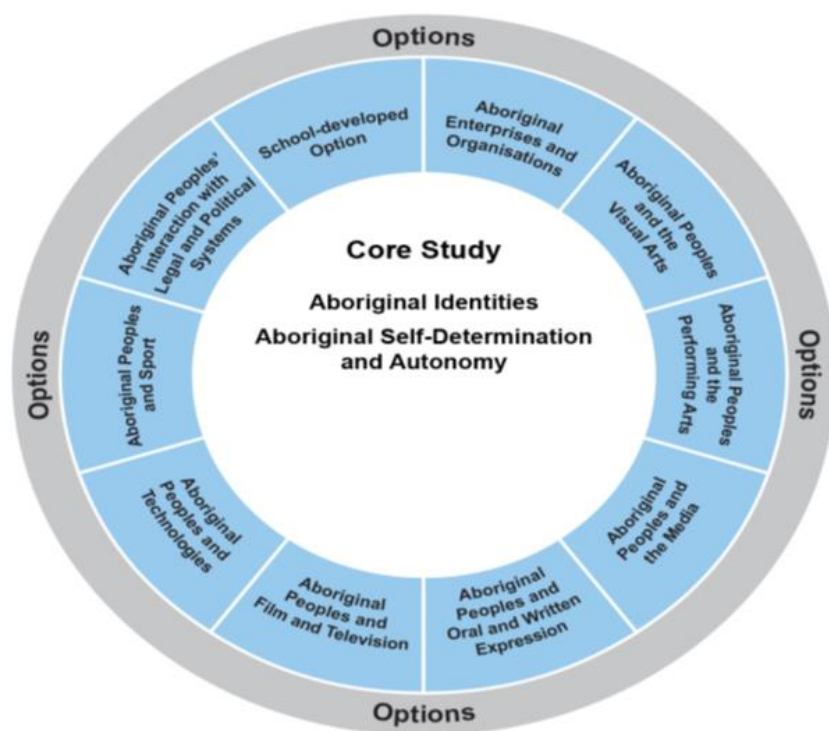
ABORIGINAL STUDIES YEARS 7-10	HISTORY YEARS 7-10 (new syllabus)
Aboriginal Identities	The Era of Colonisation – Aboriginal Experience
Self-determination and Autonomy	The Making of the Modern World – Federation – WW2
Site- Studies (See wheel down the page)	The Modern World – Human Rights & Freedoms

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-SAA-01, AST5-SAA01, ASTLS-SAA-01, AST4-ROL-01, AST5-ROL-01, ASTLS-ROL-01, AST-REL-01, AST5-REL-01, ASTLS-REL-01, ASTLS-REL-02, AST4-DAT-01, AST5-DAT-01, ASTLS-DAT-01, ASTLS-DAT-02, HI4-IEP-01, HI5-IEP-01, HILS-IEP-01, HI4-APP-01 HI5-APP-01, HILS-SPE-02, HI4-INQ-01, HI5-INQ-01, HILS-EPC-01, HI\$ COM-01, HI5-COM-01, HILS-EPC-02

General capabilities	Cross-curriculum priorities	Other learning across the curriculum areas
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 Self-Determination and Autonomy. It could also be used as options for the following:

- School development
- Aboriginal peoples in the Visual Arts
- Aboriginal peoples in the Media
- Aboriginal Enterprises and organisation

This unit also covers The Modern World from the History Year 7-10 Syllabus.

This Unit of work is a 'Site Study' - of Council actively listening to the voice of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities of the Inner West Council Local Government Area.

The Survival Memorials began as a Councillors concept, to commemorate 'The Frontier Wars', from The Era of Colonisation to a multi award winning Memorial based on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities' story of 'Survival'.

This is only one of three proposed Survival Memorials, Breathe – By Nicole Monks & Maddison Gibbs (Mili Mili). This Memorial is about *Connecting to Country* by reflecting and contemplating which helps to heal.

The other two Memorials are yet to be completed as Council has had other priorities and infrastructure works taking place near the site that have been chosen.

Illoura Reserve – Since the Dawn of Time – Gunya Jia by Jason Wing (Mili Mili) will be in situ by the end of 2025.

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

Self-Determination & Autonomy Site Study – Survival Memorials

SLIDE 4 – Inner West Council's Survival Memorials

Council celebrates the survival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, heritage, beliefs and the relationship with the land and water and acknowledges the continuing importance of this relationship to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living today.

Council is committed to embedding the values and perspectives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to ensure we learn from the mistakes of the past and forge a positive future of long-lasting value built on mutual respect, equality and opportunity.

Council understands its responsibilities and role in working with the Aboriginal community to promote cultural heritage and history, address areas of disadvantage, and protect and preserve the environment as well as sites of significance to Aboriginal peoples. In doing so, it acknowledges that Aboriginal cultures continue to strengthen and enrich the Inner West community.

The original concept from the Councillor's in 2018 was to look at a way to honour the 'Frontier Wars' and the Aboriginal resistance fighters to colonisation.

After consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities the concept changed, from a Frontier War memorial to memorials that commemorated the longest continuous living culture in the world.

It was suggested by the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community that Survival Memorials should be created to tell that story.

SLIDE 5 – Aboriginal Community Engagement

Councils Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee looked at all the parks within the IWCLGA especially the bigger and well used. It was decided to put forward to the Council and Councillors that to tell the story of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander survival that we would need to install three.

Days of forum discussions, which included how do we tell the story of Survival?

Site Visits – across the Inner West Local Government Area (LGA)

The following parks were identified and reviewed

- Illoura Reserve – Balmain East

- Enmore Park

- Kendrick Park/Tempe Reserve

- Ashfield Park

- Yeo Park

Ashfield & Enmore Parks were not considered as suitable locations for memorial artworks due to the parks designs and the lesser significance for the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Both Illoura and Kendrick parks were identified as significant fishing and meeting places, with middens still present at Kendrick Park. The parks are also located on the north-eastern and south-western boundaries of the LGA.

Yeo Park was also identified as a significant meeting place for several Aboriginal communities for the discussion of lore. This site was considered suitable for memorial artwork that lends itself to reflection, gathering and education.

The locations selected reflect outcomes of the consultation work done with the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities

Nicole and Maddison worked closely with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to come up with the carvings on the sandstone boulders within the artwork. This is so the sandstone boulders tell their own Aboriginal community stories.

This Aboriginal Community Engagement took place across all aspects of the Survival memorials conception, installation, and opening

Slide 6 – Selection Process

The following parks were recommended to tell the story of Survival
Illoura Reserve – Balmain East Theme: Survival through Connection to Country – fishing, fire, water sustaining life.

Yeo Park – Ashfield Theme: Reflection and reconciliation – gathering, passing of knowledge and Connecting to Country

Kendrick Park – Tempe Theme: Crossing the threshold – family and community – survival through intergenerational storytelling.

The memorial artworks would

- Be of suitable scale as appropriate to their significance as statements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survival.
- Demonstrate artistic excellence, quality and integrity
- Be site specific
- Culturally significant to the area
- Reflective of local Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander heritage
- Inspiring and engaging for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities

An open expression of interest process is recommended for all three artworks, with an Aboriginal curator engaged to develop the project briefs and assist Council in the selection of artists.

Aboriginal artists would be invited to either:

1. submit concepts for the development of works by relevant professions, as project managed by Council in collaboration with the appointed artist/s;
2. submit concepts for proposals to create and install the memorial artworks. Collaborations and teams would be encouraged, to ensure requisite skill sets were available.

Slide 7 – Selected Artists

Selected with an EOI process and via a panel the winning design was by Nicole Monks and Maddison Gibbs (Mili Mili)

Concept – Connection to Country

Artwork Breathe: Nicole Monks and Maddison Gibbs came up with this concept in response to an EOI for a 'Survival Memorial' from Inner West Council. They wanted to focus on resilience and connection to our old people. This artwork represents to our past and connects us deeply to the earth and our old peoples.

The work entitled *Breathe*, features 243 hand carved and inscribed sandstone boulders, which have been engraved and will be carefully placed to act as portals to ancient stories.

The process was collecting the sandstone that has always been on this place. The artists reclaimed those rocks and placed them back on Country and carved into them stories of Ancestors' past, present as a reclamation of Aboriginal culture, people and our place.

SLIDE 8 – Community Engagement

All before the final design, committed and continued throughout the design stages to final award-winning Public Art space.

Discussion with residents and the wider community of the Inner West LGA
Issues that arose

- Landscaping

- Drainage
- Loss of greenspace/grass
- Loss of 'heritage' roses
- No more made-made infrastructure (concrete)

Slide 9 – Breaking Ground & Instillation

The Memorial meets a commitment in the Reconciliation Action Plan adopted in 2022.

New landscaping is within the memorial and surrounding parklands. All materials that are excavated from the site of the memorial will be placed within the park and done in such a way that it goes with the current undulation/slope of the lands.

Extra seating will exist within the Memorial for community to sit and reflect.

No trees will be removed; however, three new mature trees will be planted. No loss of roses from the park as they will be replanted into the other current rose-gardens within the parklands.

The concrete will be coloured so that it blends within the environment of the park as well as with the materials used in the Memorial.

Slide 10 – Opening Day

please play the You Tube video to watch the Opening of Breathe – Nicole Monks & Maddison Gibbs (Mili Mili) This video was produced at the Opening.
<https://youtu.be/a8oKNd3DsvI>

SLIDE 11 – Current Awards Won for Breathe

Councils' commitment to public art projects have seen both the artists and council win a few awards in 2024

- Good Design Awards – Nicole Monks & Maddison Gibbs
- Keep Australia Beautiful – Community Spirit Award

Nicole & Maddison have been named finalist for an award with Create NSW
Inner West Council has been named as a finalist for an Award with Local
Government NSW

Both will be awarded later in 2025

Slide 12 – Current Community Use

The non-Aboriginal community of the Inner West has expressed a genuine interest in learning more about the cultural life of Aboriginal communities both past and present. These public art projects have offered one such opportunity.

Aboriginal Community, Residents, Councilors, and Staff turned out in droves for the opening.

Local Schools can arrange excursions and lessons to be held at the Memorial

Building relationships with the local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities enhances the living experience of our residents, businesses and general community members, and promotes reconciliation through better understanding.

Quote – Mili Mili

‘Connecting with the past, responding to the present to create a beautiful future for all’

Slide 13 – Connection to Country

please play the You Tube video to watch a short film which documents the work Breathe – Nicole monks & Maddison Gibbs (Mili Mili). This short film was proudly produced by Ashwater Films and commissioned by Inner West Council

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-cFM-3L38I&t=2s>

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