



## 2. Aboriginal Heritage



### Background Information:

This significant site was the home of the Cammeraygal people. They were a clan of the Guringai language group. The Cammeraygal lived a sustainable lifestyle in keeping with the Dreaming. This area provided bountiful water resources with easy access to the harbour for bark canoes. Bush resources for food and tools were plentiful. This gave the Aboriginal people plenty of time for Spiritual practice and ceremony.

It is written in history that Cammeraygal were the main clan in the region that held the initiation ceremonies for the men and were feared, but also looked up to. The Cammeraygal were known over a very wide area and early historians wrote and drew of their ritual ceremonies. Early paintings show the Cammeraygal tooth removal ceremony.

For the Cammeraygal people, their way of living with Country and spirit followed the rules of the Dreamtime, and was learned and expressed in the Dreaming. Obligations for family and each other were expressed in Kinship lore and with Totems.

### The Aboriginal Dreamtime

Just as every culture has its creation stories – the Dreamtime is the creation period whereby Creation Spirits (ancestors) shaped the world and created every natural thing in it. The Dreamtime was the beginning of the world. In essence creation stories generally involve the intervention of supernatural events and beings as a means of explaining the origins of the world and the beings in it.

### The Aboriginal Dreaming

The Aboriginal concept of time is cyclic rather than linear. Although the Dreaming activities occurred at the beginning of the world and are now in the past, there is also a sense that they are still present. Each generation of Aboriginal people through ritual, song, and dance is able to enter into a direct relationship with the Dreaming and experience its present day reality. The Dreaming establishes the rules of governing interrelationships between people, land and spiritual beliefs.

### Kinship

Aboriginal Kinship is a multi-level system which often went back 16 generations. Kinship identifies skin groups, totems and language groups. Kinship systems enable Aboriginal people to know how to behave towards every other Aboriginal person in terms of reciprocal obligations. These obligations could relate to food, sharing, shelter, marriage, teaching and more. Importantly these obligations also include spiritual protection and caring for Country and sacred sites.



## 2. Aboriginal Heritage

### Totems

Aboriginal people are given a totem at birth by elders or close family members. An animal, sea creature, bird or plant can be your totem. It is a person's duty to take care of their totem. An Aboriginal person may paint their totem or carve their totem. People generally are not allowed to hunt or eat their totem as this would make them sick. Aboriginal people may not only have a personal totem but a family and clan totem.

The Cammeraygal people who lived in this area left important evidence of their way of life before colonisation. Information about the Aboriginal heritage evidence they left is kept on a central register. The things you may find in this area include:

### Middens

These are mounds of shell built up over hundreds or thousands of years as a result of countless meals. They primarily contain mature species of edible shellfish species. They might also contain bird and animal teeth and bones, campfire charcoal and stone tools.

### Rock Shelters – “giba gunyahs”

These are places where the Cammeraygal people would have taken shelter. This would have been a warm place to eat, sleep, repair or fashion tools and, we can imagine, talk of stories and exploits. Artefacts such as stone tools may be found in the rock shelters.

### Rock Art

Stencils are produced by mixing ochre in the mouth with other material into a wet paste and spraying it over the object to be stencilled. Often we find stencilled hands and tools represented in rock shelters. Other forms of artwork include ochre painting as well as charcoal drawings and etchings.

### Grinding Grooves

These are grooves resulting from the production or sharpening and maintenance of an edge ground tool such as a stone axe. These sites are usually located near a water source, like a water hole.

### Engravings

Engravings were made by drilling or pecking a series of holes in the rock which were then connected to form a line. An accepted understanding of these engravings is that they are the product of sacred ceremonies and were periodically re-engraved as part of ongoing ritual and to pass on knowledge and stories.

Today the Cammeraygal engraving at the Coal Loader is protected by a raised viewing platform. Sites like this are under threat every day from development, vandalism and natural erosion and cannot be replaced. Once they are destroyed, they are lost forever.

#### Curriculum Links:




- ✓ Preliminary HSC Course- Aboriginality and the Land
- ✓ Preliminary HSC Course – Heritage and Identity
- ✓ Stage 3 Science and History
- ✓ Stage 4 English and History
- ✓ Stage 5 English, Science and History

See the Curriculum Matrix (Appendix 1) for more detail.



### Further Information:

Watch the Coal Loader Aboriginal Heritage three minute video found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtyQH TYGJhE>  which will give your class an overview of what you will find at the Coal Loader.

### Aboriginal Heritage Office

The Aboriginal Heritage Office (AHO) is a joint initiative with eight councils in the north of Sydney, including North Sydney Council, established to protect Aboriginal heritage within these areas.

NSW State laws regulate the requirement to protect Aboriginal heritage, defined as any kind of material evidence of Aboriginal occupation. In line with these laws, the AHO monitors, maintains and protects sites such as rock art and engravings, shelters, stone arrangements, shell middens, and many more.

Therefore in order to ensure ongoing protection and sustainable handling of those sites, the AHO raises awareness through special training for council staff and many different education and school programmes. Presentations, walks, talks and also a Keeping Place and Museum, located at the AHO office in Northbridge, are available to the public.

Contact the Aboriginal Heritage Office for further information ph: (02) 9949 9882 or see their website [www.aboriginalheritage.org](http://www.aboriginalheritage.org).

### Stanton Library Heritage Centre

Another excellent source of information is North Sydney Council's Stanton Library Heritage Centre, which aims to document North Sydney's social and cultural heritage with a particular focus on the natural and built environments. The Centre collects and makes available primary and secondary materials for research. The Historical Services staff at the Centre conduct research, mount regular exhibitions and organise public programmes. Specialist staff are available to assist with information. See [www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au](http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au) or call 9936 8400.

### Australia State of the Environment Report 2001 – Natural and Cultural Heritage Theme Report

This report discusses the natural and cultural heritage places, objects and Indigenous languages that are significant to Australians. See [www.environment.gov.au/soe/2001/publications/theme-reports/heritage/introduction-1.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/soe/2001/publications/theme-reports/heritage/introduction-1.html)

North Sydney Council thanks the Aboriginal Heritage Office for providing advice and information on this chapter.



## Activity 1 – Cammeraygal Dreaming Writing Exercise

### Activity Summary:

Students will participate in a pre-excursion class discussion with their teacher using the Information provided. This will be followed by an excursion to the site where the students will complete an Activity Worksheet focussing on historical land-use in the area and Aboriginal Dreaming. Students will be asked to write or draw their own dreaming story.



### Aim:

To gain an understanding of the Cammeraygal people and their cultural practices and imagine how they would have walked the land.

### Materials Needed:

Each student will need a clipboard and writing equipment. Each student will also need their own copy of the Student Worksheet.



### Preparation:

Teachers are asked to hold a pre-excursion class discussion using the Information provided below. Please remind the students and teachers that we ask everyone to respect the spiritual significance of this site by not walking on the carving.

### Outcomes

- An understanding of what the Dreamtime is and why the Dreaming is important for local Aboriginal people and how it is expressed today.
- An understanding of Aboriginal heritage and Aboriginal connection to land.
- An appreciation of how archaeologists use scientific methods to examine evidence from the past and help increase understanding about Aboriginal people and their relation to their Country.
- Learn how to gather, select and organise information on the main cultural and spiritual aspects that combine to form Aboriginal peoples' relationship to the environment.





# Student Worksheet – Cammeraygal Dreaming Writing Exercise

## The Cammeraygal Engraving

This engraving has been called a 'whale' by archaeologists since 1843 and is known locally as 'whale rock'. Other archaeologists point out that it is more likely to be a shark due to the number of fins. Inside the 'whale' is another engraving. Some say it is a person, some say it's a dingo and others call it a koradji (doctor or magic man) singing whales into the harbour. What do you see?

We can imagine that we know what this engraving means but in reality this engraving has its connection to Dreamtime and the Dreaming. At the start of the colony in Sydney, the loss of so many Aboriginal people through disease and conflict with early settlers means that the dreaming story of this engraving was lost.



## Scientific Excavation

The Cammeraygal engravings were first seen by colonists in the early years of the colony and the first official record of them was made in 1843. As with many Aboriginal sites this site was not seen as valuable and later partly covered with a bitumen road.

The Aboriginal Heritage Office and North Sydney Council wanted to improve the protection of the site and also to try and find the other buried figures that had been recorded. In 2008 a major archaeological dig was carried out. It included the Aboriginal Heritage Office, North Sydney Council and the community of Redfern, and the original sandstone was uncovered. Several engravings were rediscovered as well as two previously unknown figures, that of an echidna and an eel.

Today the engraving is visible to all by means of a viewing platform which protects the carving.



David Watts, Manager of the Aboriginal Heritage Office, working with others at the archaeological dig to uncover the whale engraving.



## Activity

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**Please respect the spiritual significance of this site by not walking on the carving**

Sit quietly on the raised walkway and imagine you are looking at the site prior to 1788.

1. What would you see? Eg fishing, children, bark canoes, women gathering food?

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2. What physical features of this area make it a good food gathering area? Hint: to answer this question think about what food Aboriginal people ate and how they went about getting it.

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3. Observe the Cammeraygal carving, and make your own drawing of it.

4. Write or draw your own dreaming story about the carving, in this story emphasise how important whales are to the Cammeraygal people.



## Student Worksheet – Cammeraygal Dreaming Writing Exercise *continued*

We can gain an understanding of the respect for Country that people had in each era by looking at the way in which the engraving was cared for.

- Using information found at the Coal Loader on its history, create a local land use time line, describe how the land around Balls Head was used and by whom. What was the dominant activity carried out on the peninsula? How was the engraving cared for at this time? What is your evidence?

Time	Land Use	Care of engraving	Evidence
Prior to 1788			
Early settlers			
Industrial era			
Community owned site			

### Extension

North Sydney Council is working with the Aboriginal Heritage Office to protect this Aboriginal heritage site.

- What construction has Council completed with the aim to protect the Cammeraygal engraving?
- If you were working for Council how would you safeguard the engraving?
- If you were a visitor to the site, how would you show respect and safeguard the engraving?
- Why is the Cammeraygal engraving important to Aboriginal people?
- Why is the Cammeraygal engraving important to all Australians?

### Further extension:

- Create a totem for your school and a school emblem or badge using this totem
- Write the story of the totem and why it became the school totem
- Write a story from either the Aboriginal perspective or the early colonial perspective on your connection to land at Balls Head.



## Activity 2 – Bush Foods Role Play

### Activity Summary:

Students will participate in a pre-excursion class discussion with their teacher using the information provided. This will be followed by an excursion to the site where the students will complete a Student Worksheet focussing on understanding how bush foods were used in traditional Aboriginal culture and how they are still being used today. Students will be asked to undertake a role play activity and describe the bush food plants grown at the Coal Loader.



### Aim:

To increase knowledge and awareness of how plants were used by Aboriginal people, and how diet contributes to a healthy lifestyle.

### Materials Needed:

Each student will need a clipboard and writing equipment. Each student will also need their own copy of the Student Worksheet.



### Preparation:

After learning about bush foods at the Coal Loader, students are asked to use their creativity and imagination by participating in a role play. First the students are assigned their role, and they then take on that perspective while discussing bush foods.

### Outcomes :

- Improved understanding of the importance of various plant species used by Aboriginal people.
- Increased awareness of the impact moving away from a traditional diet has had on health







## Student Worksheet – Bush Foods

The Cammeraygal Aboriginal people lived on the North Shore of the harbour for many thousands of years before the British arrived, making use of the bushland and coastal environment around them for food, medicine, shelter and tools and spiritual practices. Bush resources found in this area include Red Gums, Red Bloodwoods, Casuarinas, Lillipillies, Dianella and heath plants such as Grevillias, Wattles, Banksias, Geebung as well as many native grasses.

In 2011 a bush foods garden was established at the Coal Loader featuring a variety of edible and otherwise useful native plants.

Just a few of the plants that were useful to Aboriginal people were:

### Xanthorrhoea:

These plants are sometimes known as the grass tree and once covered the Sydney landscape, taking hundreds of years to grow to a substantial height. The flowers made a good sweet drink. After flowering the long seed pod stem was used as a fishing spear or firestick. Also the starchy trunk pith of the plant could be eaten raw or roasted. The plant also produces a gum that is said to be stronger than superglue and was used for sealing bark canoes, sealing rope that had been made from bark, and attaching spear and axe heads.



### Melaleuca (Paper Bark)

There are over 210 species of paper bark in Australia. Traditionally paper bark blossoms were sucked for nectar and you could drink collected water caught in the bulges of the bark. Young leaves could be used for headaches and sickness. The 'paper' was used for wrapping objects and the softest part could wrap a baby.



### Banksia

Banksia blossoms were a good source of nectar and sugar. This could be sucked straight from the flower heads or soaked in water to make a sweet drink called *bool*.



**Note** – It is very important to remember that many plants contain toxins and cannot be eaten. Often foods require careful preparation over several days to render poisons harmless. Aboriginal people knew what preparation was needed to make them safe.



## Student Worksheet – Bush Foods *continued*

### Activity:

Get to know the plants that would have been used by the Cammeraygal people to live sustainably.

1. Use the information found near the Coal Loader's bush foods garden to fill in the table below.

Plant	Scientific name	Part of plant used	How is it used
Coast Wattle			
Lilli Pilli			
Heath Banksia			
Coffee Bush			
Native Grape			
Hop Bush			
Mat Rush			
Native Raspberry			
Wombat Berry			
Brush Cherry			
Warrigal Greens			
Wild Parsnip			



## Student Worksheet – Bush Foods *continued*

2. What other bush foods would have been sourced locally to create a balanced diet?

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3. Now that you know more about the local plants used by the Cammeraygal undertake a role play activity where the class is split into four groups.
- Food nutritionist – presents how bush foods can be good for your health
  - Florist – presents how a bush food garden can be used
  - Naturopath – presents how a bush food plants can be used as medicines
  - Gardener – presents why bush foods are good to have in our gardens

Be creative in your thinking and persuasive in your arguments. While each group is speaking take down some notes on the benefits of bush foods.

Bush food uses	Benefits
Food nutritionist	
Florist	
Naturopath	
Gardener	

4. From the plants listed in the bush food garden and the information that can be found at the Centre create a breakfast menu for a child living at Balls Head prior to 1788.

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5. How does it compare to your breakfast this morning?

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### Extension

- In your school grounds scope out a reconciliation garden. What plants would you include? What artwork would you include?
- Write a letter to your environment group seeking support for your garden.
- Research what other foods were available to the Cammeraygal and what season they were available.

### Further Extension

- What indigenous plants are being used in the cosmetic, therapeutical and pharmaceutical industries?



## Activity 3 – Coal Loader Bush Foods Cookbook



### Take away activity – for home or back at school

#### Activity Summary:

To help develop recipes for the Coal Loader Bush Foods Cookbook students are asked to find their favourite recipe and experiment using bush food ingredients.



#### Aim:

To gain an understanding of how bush foods can be used in cooking to create a class bush foods cookbook.

#### Materials Needed:

Students will need access to some cookbooks to look at the recipes in them. This activity does not need to have access to cooking facilities at school but this would be an advantage to test the new recipes. Those schools without cooking facilities may design a recipe in class and do the test cooking at home.



#### Preparation:

Students are advised to first undertake the Aboriginal Heritage activities at the Coal Loader to gain an understanding of Aboriginal heritage and the bush foods used by the Cammeraygal people.

#### Outcomes:

- Learn about healthy eating and a better understanding of Aboriginal heritage and cultural practices.
- Learn about the sustainable living concept of local food and eating in season.





# Student Worksheet – Coal Loader Bush Foods Cookbook

## Introduction:

Using bush foods in cooking was first made popular in the 1970's when horticulturalists started to assess bush food plants for commercial use and cultivation. Chefs started to notice that many bush foods have strong spice-like flavours and started experimenting. Jams and teas have also become popular.

Some sources of bush food recipes include:

- Feeding your Mob cookbook [www.mbcommunitygardens.com.au/](http://www.mbcommunitygardens.com.au/)
- Mark Olive (an indigenous bush food cooking expert) [www.blackolive.net.au](http://www.blackolive.net.au)



## Activity

1. Name some of the bush food ingredients found in the Coal Loader bush food garden.

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2. Name two additional bush food ingredients used in Australian cooking that are not from the North Sydney area.

1.

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2.

3. Write out one of your favourite recipes, you may need to refer to your favourite cookbook.

My favourite recipe:



4. Can any of the bush food ingredients you have listed above be substituted in your favourite recipe?

a. Bush food ingredient

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b. Substituted for

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5. Write out your new bush food recipe:

My new bush food recipe:

### **Extension**

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1. Combine together all the recipes developed in the class to create a class recipe book, with illustrations or photographs for each recipe.
2. Have a bush tucker day at school to test each recipe.
3. Use a mind map with the class to brain storm what is needed for the book to be published.
4. Share your favourite recipes with the Coal Loader team for possible inclusion in the Coal Loader Bush Foods Cookbook!

### **Further extension:**

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1. Investigate the importance of “Country” and traditional diets.
2. Investigate the link with western diets and disease in many Aboriginal communities, which has led to a prevalence of diabetes in many Aboriginal communities.