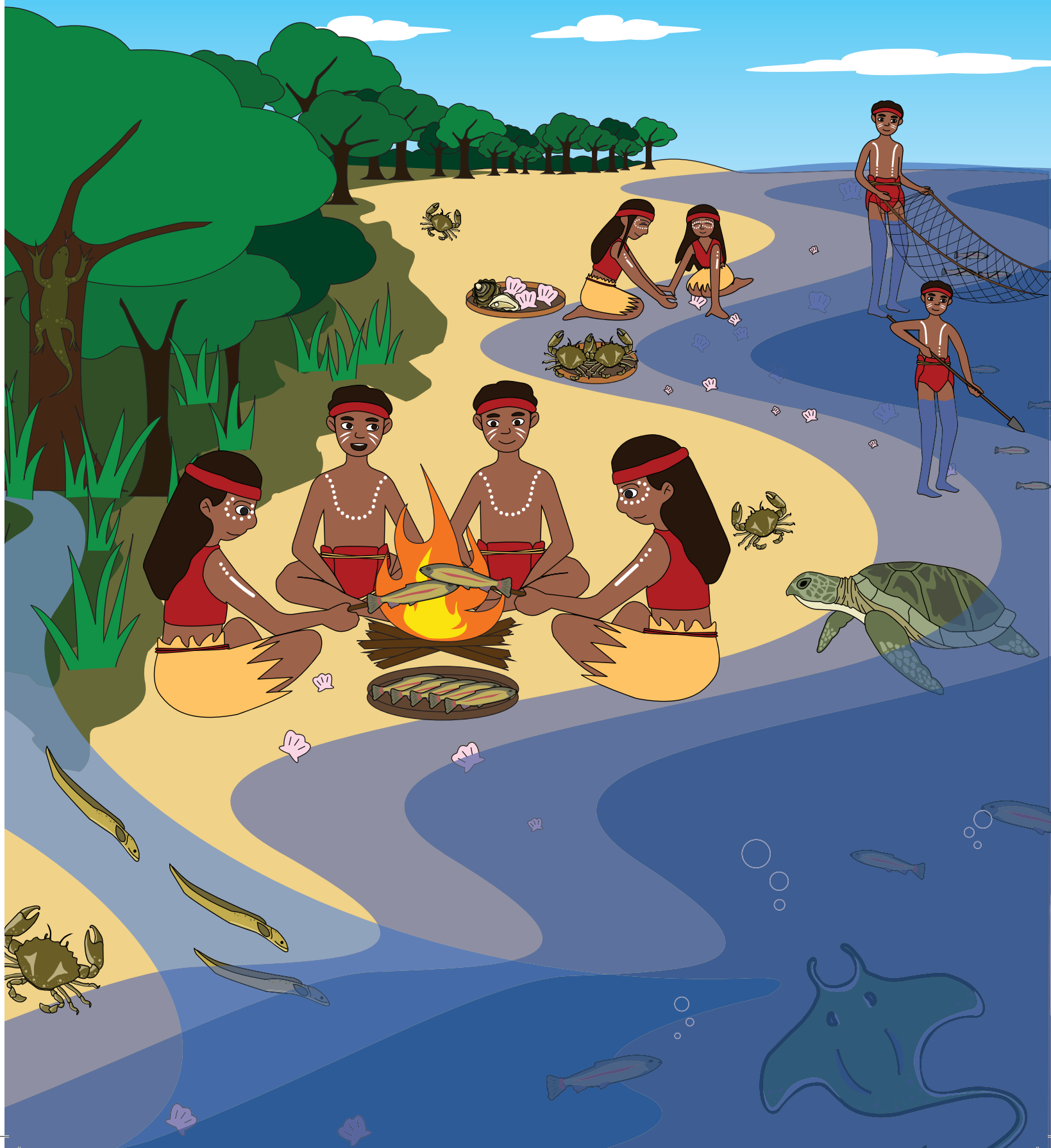


Caring for Country at  
**SEALIFE**  
Sydney





## Traditional Custodians

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are the oldest surviving culture on earth. They have been living on this continent for thousands of years in many different and distinct groups, each with their own customs, language and laws.

They are the 'Traditional Custodians of Country', which means they have rights and responsibilities to care for Australia's land, sea and sky, and to protect Aboriginal culture, knowledge and stories.

Each area is looked after by a different language group and it is important to respect the unbroken connection between Traditional Custodians and the Country they live on and care for. One of the ways we do this is by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land.

SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium is on Gadigal Country.

Who are the Traditional Custodians of the area in which you live?

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## Acknowledgment of Country

SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land we are on, the Gadigal People. We pay respect to Elders, past, present and emerging and recognise the important role they have in Australian society.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People across Australia and the ongoing connection they share with Country and culture.

We respect the continuing commitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People to caring for Country and are committed to learning from and incorporating traditional knowledge in our work.

This resource has been developed with thanks to Wingaru Education, Aunty Leanne King, Aunty Tricia Wallace and Dharug artist Marlee Webb.

# Gadigal Country

SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium is on Gadigal Country, located in what is now known as Darling Harbour in New South Wales, Australia.

The traditional custodians of this land – the Gadigal People – call this area Tumbalong, which means ‘a place where seafood is found’.

The Gadigal People are one of 29 clans in the Sydney basin that speak a language called Dharug.

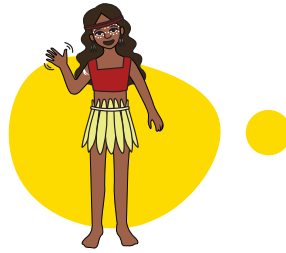


## Say What?!

“Warami mittigar! Welcome to Warrane.”

In Dharug language, that means, “Hello friend! Welcome to Sydney”.

Draw a line to match the Dharug images to English shadows.



Yanu



Water



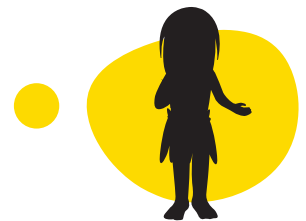
Badu



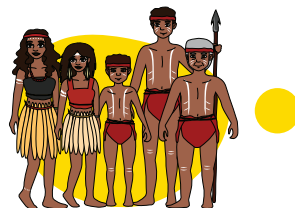
Family



Ngununy



Thank you



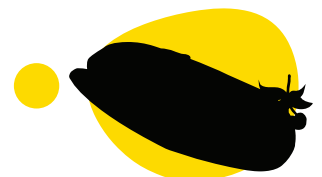
Mudyin



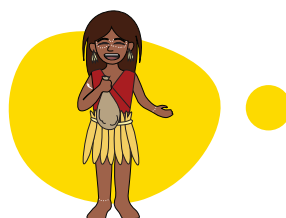
Fire



Guwiyang



Food



Didjurigura



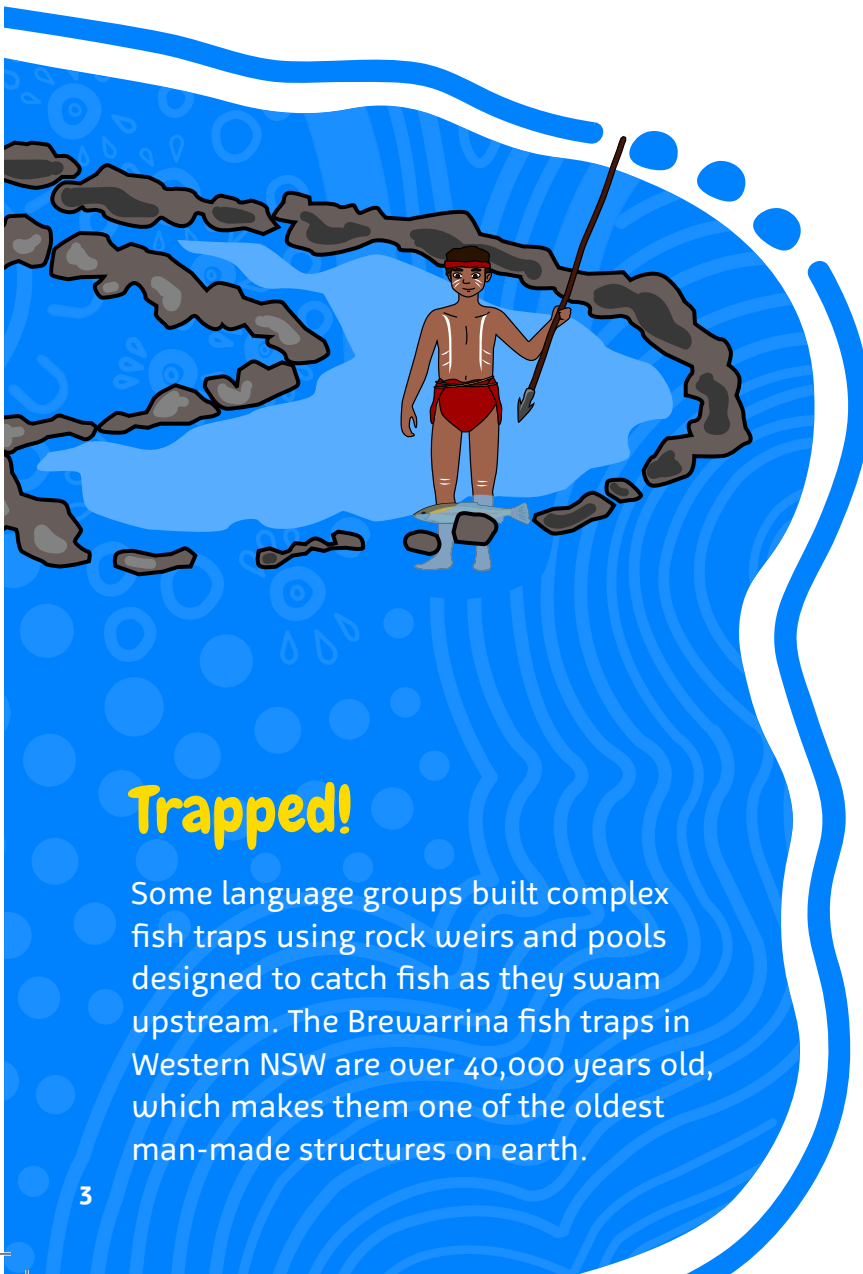
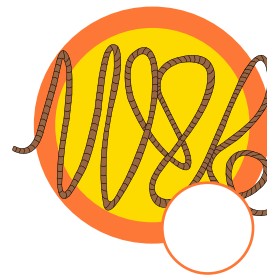
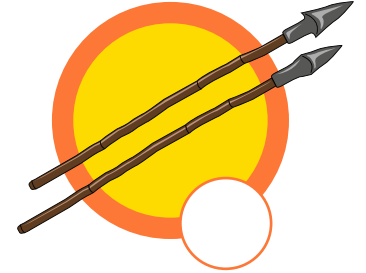
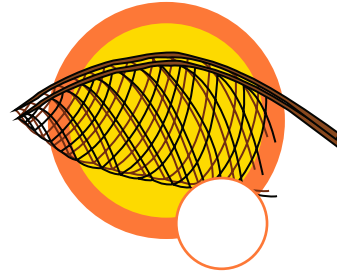
Goodbye

This 'seafood' place – Tumbalong (Darling Harbour) – was where Aboriginal People held important ceremonies and ate all the good tucker (food) that was found here, like seals, eels, oysters, stingray, turtles and fish. Mmmmmm, delicious!

Everyone played a part in gathering bush tucker: men hunted larger animals, both on the land and at sea, while women and children fished and collected plants to eat.

There are heaps of different ways to catch seafood – fishhooks, nets, hand lines, spears and even poison! The leaves of certain plants can be crushed up and added to pools of water to stun the fish so they are easier to catch! That's almost fast food...

Match each picture with the correct word.



### Trapped!

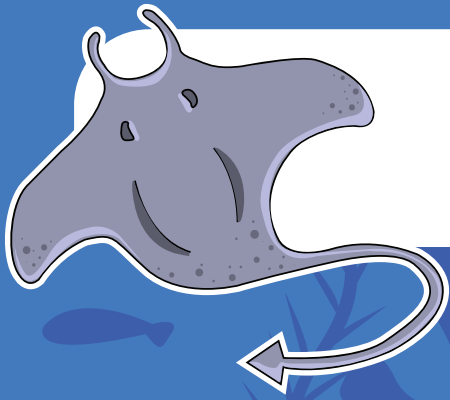
Some language groups built complex fish traps using rock weirs and pools designed to catch fish as they swam upstream. The Brewarrina fish traps in Western NSW are over 40,000 years old, which makes them one of the oldest man-made structures on earth.

- A Fish Hooks
- B Plant Poisons
- C Nets
- D Handlines
- E Spears
- F Eel Trap

**PUT YOUR SPEARS DOWN...**  
No need to hunt bush tucker here!  
**SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium** is home  
to lots of the creatures that were  
eaten by the Sydney clans.

Add the English name to the  
Dharug name in the boxes below  
each animal.

Seal      Stingray  
Oyster    Fish  
Eel        Turtle



**Daringyan**

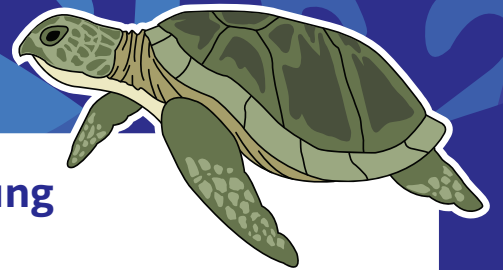


**Magura**

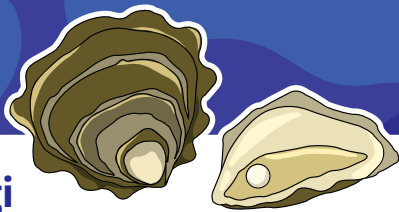
**Barra**



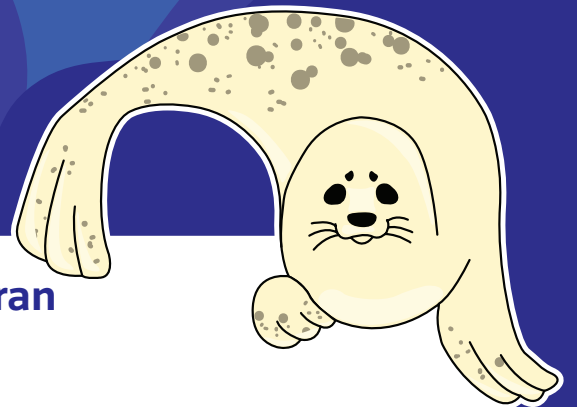
**Gudugulung**



**Badangi**



**Dawaran**



Which of these creatures did you see during your visit?  
Write their Dharug name below.

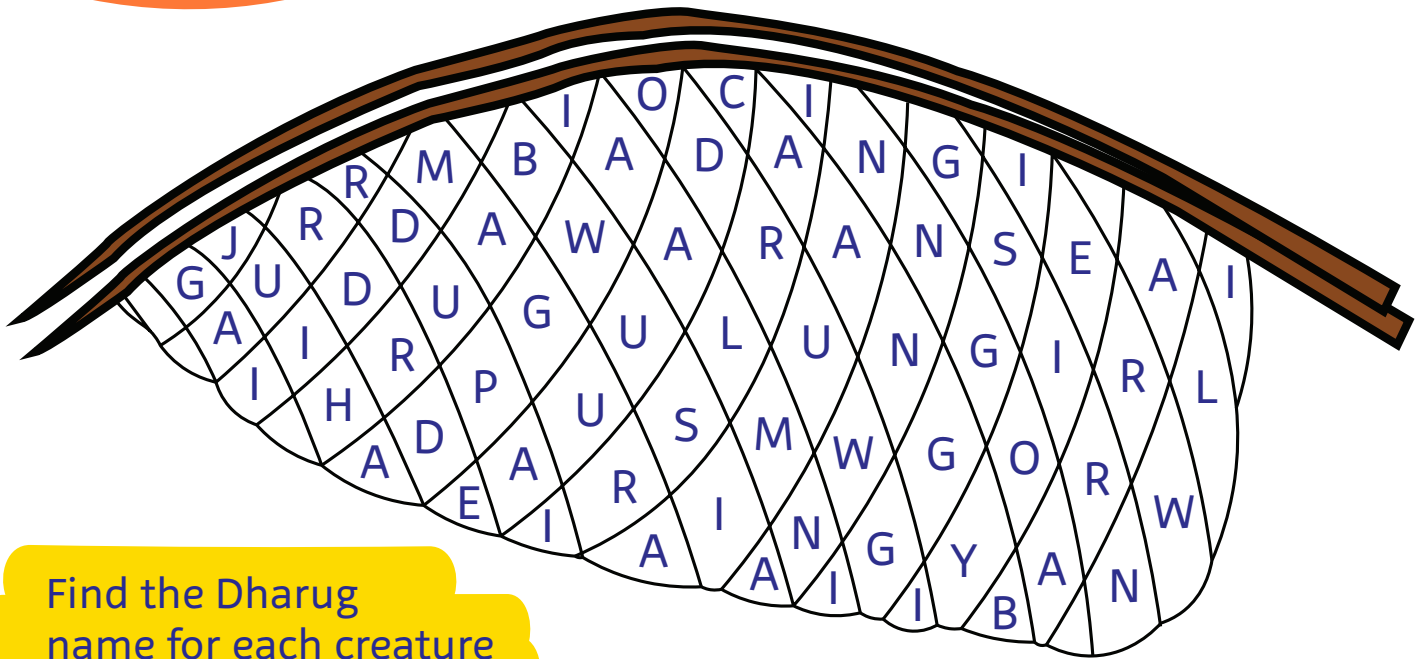
Blank rounded rectangular box for writing Dharug names.



## Trash Talk

Giant stinky rubbish piles might not seem very cool, but these ones can talk! Shell middens are where Aboriginal people threw their rubbish – shells, broken tools and bones. They could be really big, growing larger every time the clan visited, and they tell us heaps about how Aboriginal Australians lived.

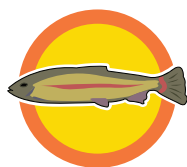
Archaeologists study middens to learn about who lived there, how many people there might have been at the site, how often the clan used that location, what they ate, and what tools they used to hunt and gather food.



Find the Dharug name for each creature in the fishing net.



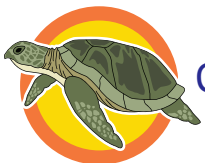
Daringyan



Magura



Barra



Gudugulung

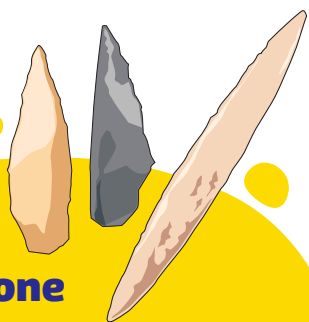


Badangi



Dawaran

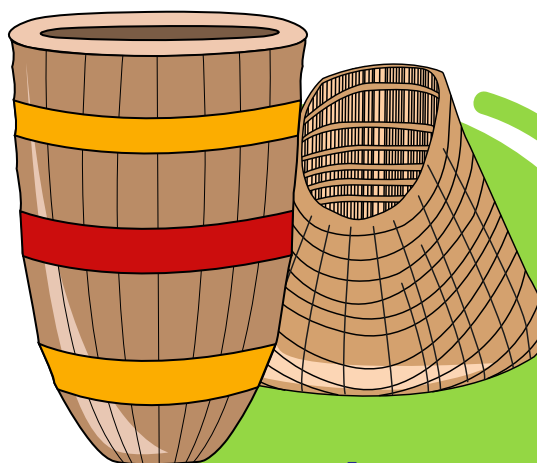
# Aboriginal Tools



## Stone + Bone

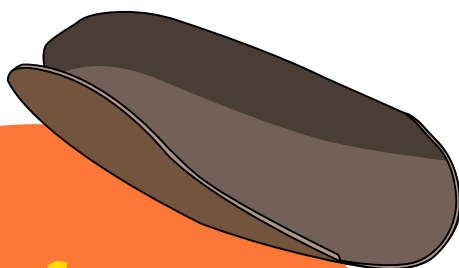
Imagine carving a piece of wood using a piece of bone – tricky, huh?

Aboriginal people used heaps of clever tools made out of wood, stone, reeds, grasses and animal bones in their day-to-day lives, all harvested from the natural environment. They were important things to trade, too, with different language groups swapping tools or natural resources like flint.



## Baskets + Bags

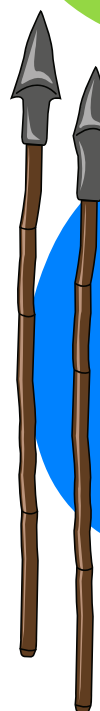
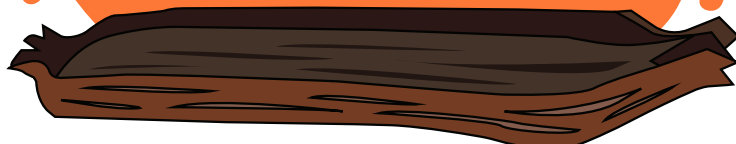
Woven from a range of natural fibres like reeds, tree bark and long grasses, baskets and bags were used to carry food, tools and natural resources. Weaving techniques have been passed down through generations and are still used today – that's like time travel!



## Coolamon + Canoes

Carved from wood, coolamons were used to carry things, including food, water and... babies! They can be any size and shape but were generally long and oval which made them useful for digging and scooping as well.

Canoes and rafts were super important for Gadigal clans as they travelled far and wide along the coastline and up freshwater rivers and creeks. Canoes were carved from trees and logs, then shaped, while rafts were made of bark, reeds and grasses bundled together.



## Spears

A spear is a pole weapon usually made from wood and featuring a pointed head. The spearhead was made from a variety of naturally found materials including wood, bone, rock and flint.

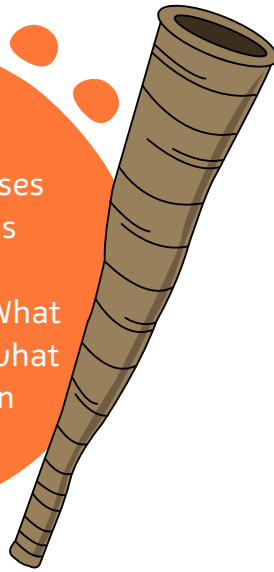


## Fishhooks

Usually made from shell, fishhooks could also be made from wood, bird talons and bone. They were carved by women, who ground and smoothed the hooks using grinding tools.

## Nets + Traps

Woven from natural grasses and plants, nets and traps were used to gather fish, eels and other seafood. What was used depended on what grasses and fibres grew in the area.



## Boomerangs

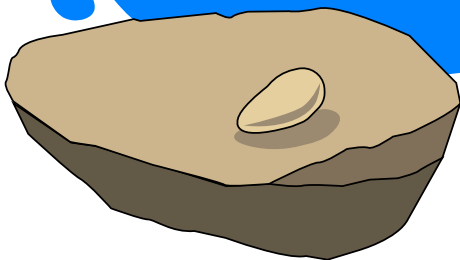
Do they really come back? They do - sometimes with a wallaby attached!

Used for hunting birds and animals like emus, kangaroos and other marsupials, the boomerang was an effective hunting tool, thrown to pull down an animal as it was moving, sometimes up to 100 metres away. Carved from wood, there are many types of boomerang, each used for a different purpose.



## Grindstones

Used to grind seeds into flour, crush bones and plants, grind ochre and resin, and sharpen tools, grindstones were made from two stones - a larger lower platform that held the item being ground and a smaller stone used to do the grinding.



## Mobile Shopping

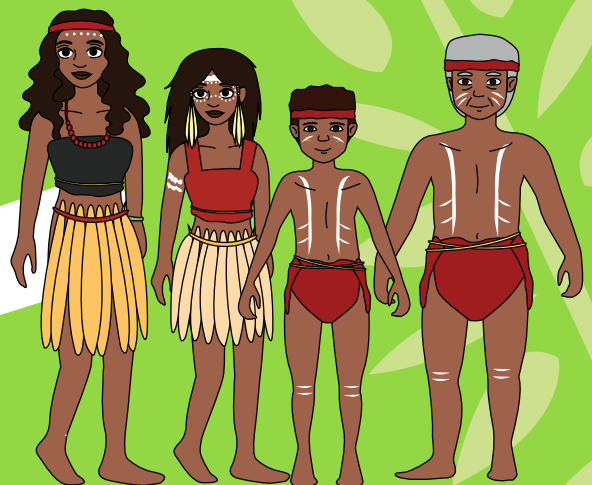
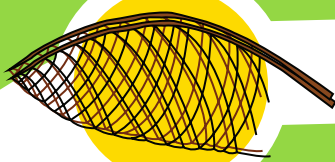
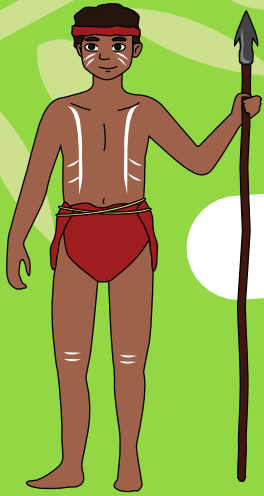
There were no shops back then, so Aboriginal People had to trade with each other to get what they needed. Clans shared resources with neighbouring mobs but also with people further away: shells, for example, have been found in the centre of Australia, miles from the ocean, and records show that people from China visited Australia from 592 BC to 1432 AD - that's up to 2,300 years before Captain Cook visited!





# Seafood Feast

Nullah wants to meet his mob for a seafood corroboree. Help him get there by collecting fishing tools and the seafood needed for the feast.





### Reading the Skies

Aboriginal People have a deep understanding of climate, weather and the stars. Gadigal seasons are marked by changes in the weather, plant cycles and animal migrations, and patterns in the stars. When Tea Trees flower, for example, it means there will soon be plenty of fish to catch; when the Lilli Pilli fruit starts to fall from the trees, it's time to move to a warmer place.

### Sustainable Life

Part of looking after Country includes looking after the animals and plants that share the land. Aboriginal clans made sure that there were always enough fauna left by only taking (at most) a third of the meat or eggs available. They would leave a third for other predators, and a third so that animals could continue to breed. The same principle was used for plants so there was enough food for the animals and to maintain a healthy environment to support all of Country, not just the clan there at the time.

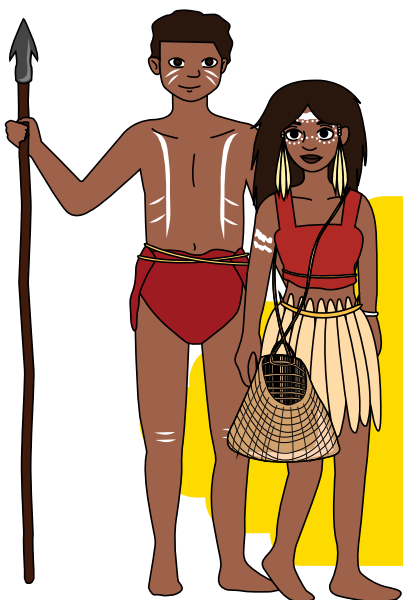
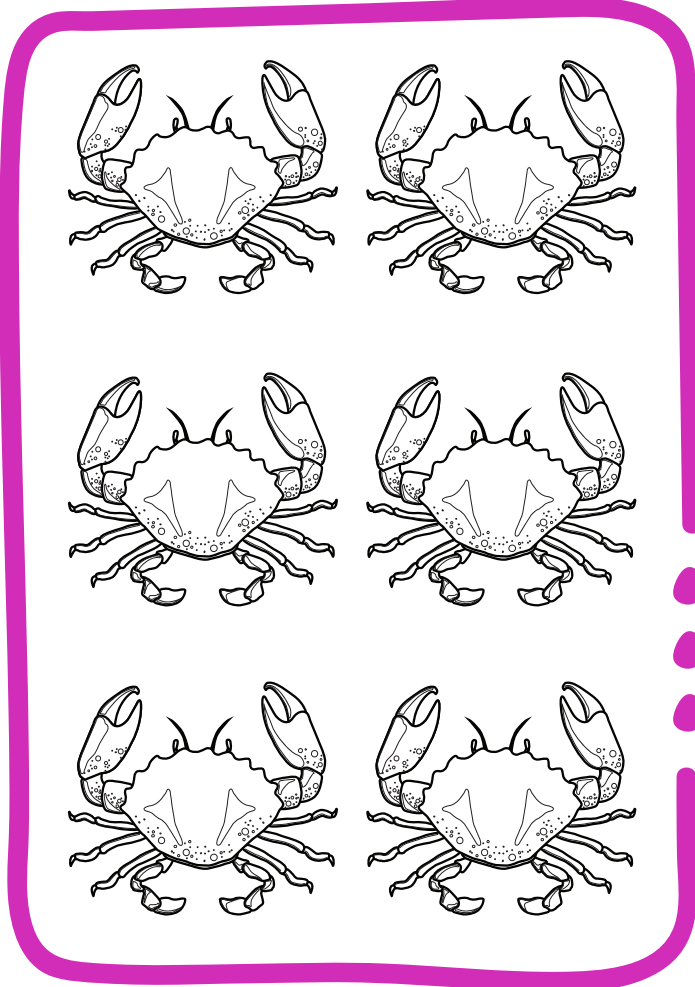
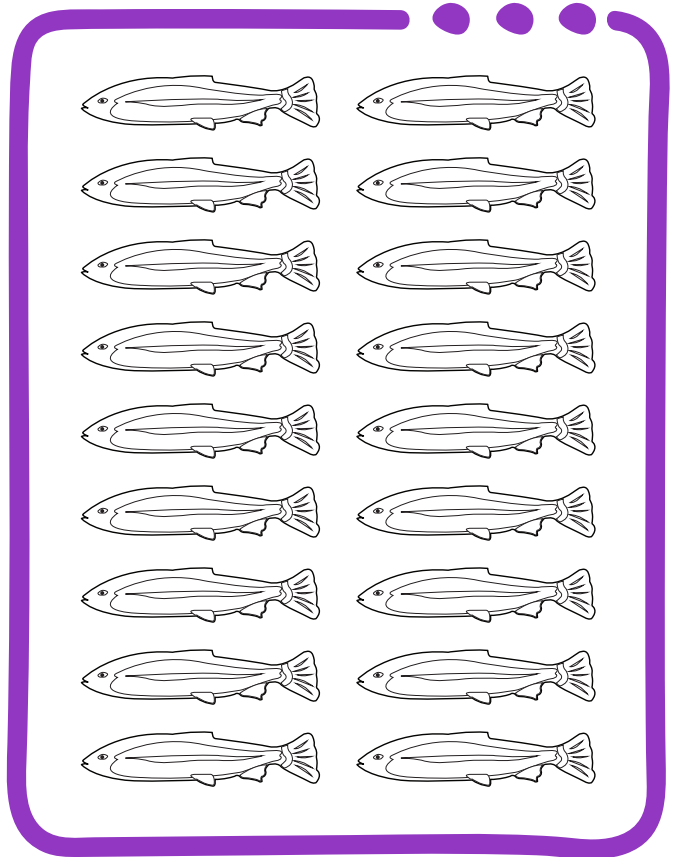
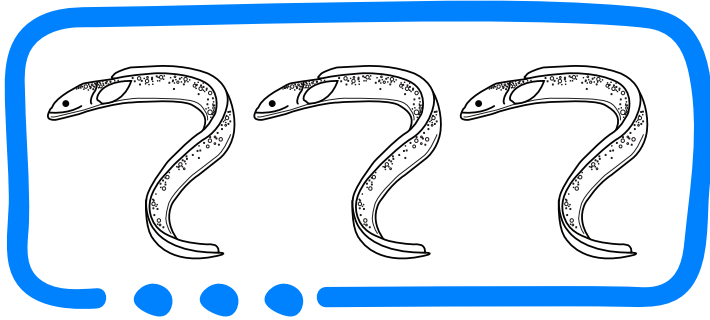


### Singing the Water Song

The Gadigal use lots of ways to locate water, sharing stories about finding water and caring for the rivers and streams as part of songlines and Dreaming stories passed down over thousands of years.

## I ♥ You! Caring for Country

Aboriginal People consider themselves to be part of Country and have always had a spiritual connection with the land. Looking after Country is very important to them.



## The Rule of Three

Aboriginal people followed a rule of only taking a third of the supplies to ensure sustainability.

Colour in how many items Dural and Merindah should take back to their mob.

## Sharing Stories

Aboriginal People share a special connection with the animals that live on Country with them. They are seen as not just a food source but as an important part of Aboriginal spirituality and culture. Because of this special relationship, animals are part of Aboriginal stories.

Storytelling is used to share knowledge between Aboriginal People – how to get somewhere; what not to do; where the fishing is good; and other cultural knowledge. Every mob has their own stories that feature animals that are significant to the area. In Sydney the barra (eel) is one of the important creatures: it is a totem for some of the clans and local stories often feature the barra.

### The Boora Birra: Creation of Sydney Harbour

The Boora Birra story is a story shared between the Gadigal People and other nearby clans. It tells the story of the creation of Sydney Harbour.

Boora Birra was a flat land between the highlands and the sea. Because it was flat, it was easy to travel across and had plenty of food. The People took this for granted and became lazy, no longer honouring the animals they hunted and killed. They wasted much of the animals, eating only the parts they liked most, and they stopped teaching the children their ways. They began to steal and fight, no longer paying their respects to Country or giving thanks for the food that could be hunted so easily. One day, some of the young men approached the home of the great barra (eel), which was guarded by a warrior. The men killed the warrior and angered the barra who grieved the loss of his



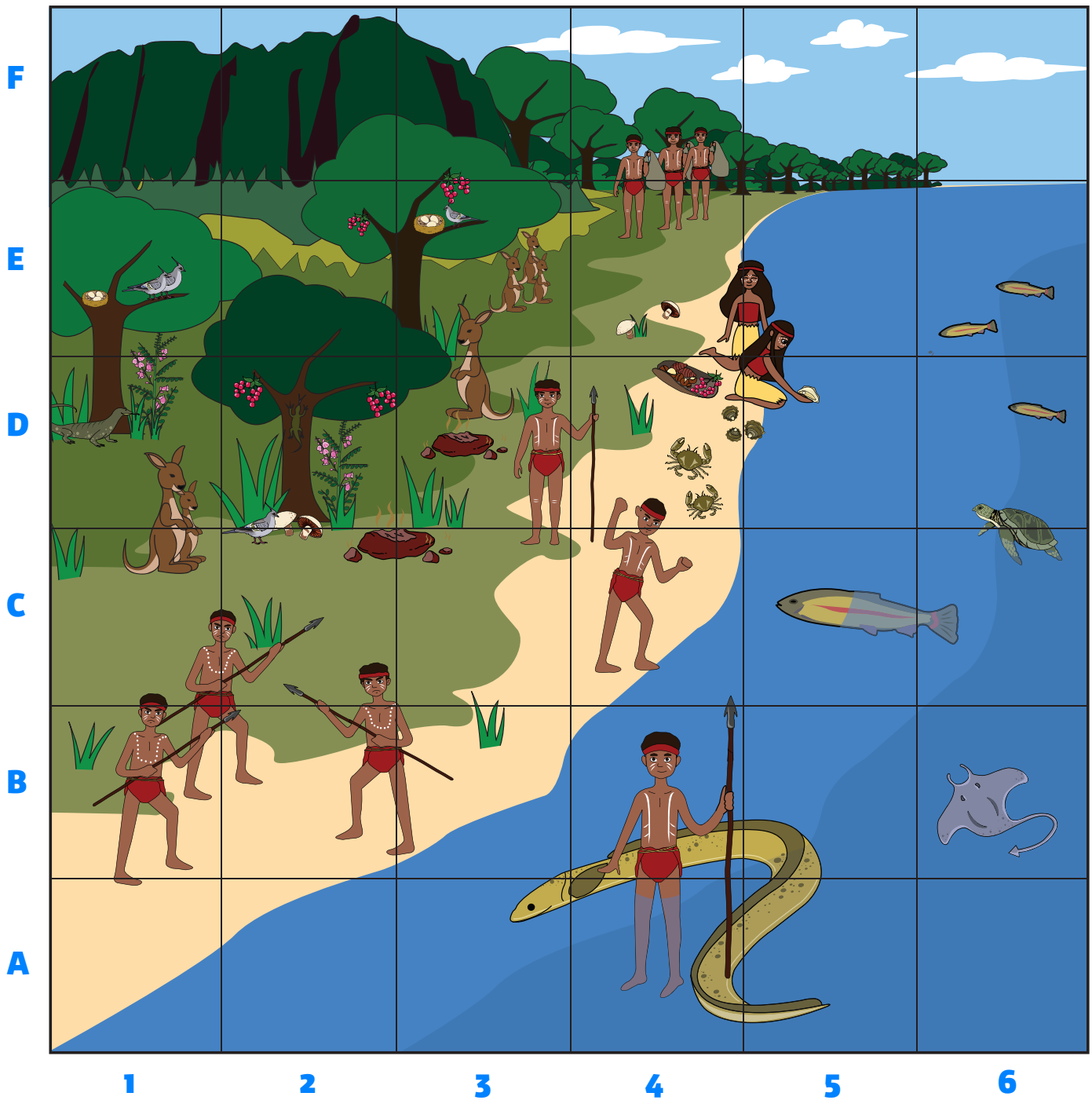
“My grandfather would often share this story with me to remind me of the importance of respect, doing the right thing and appreciating what we have.”

**Lesley, Dharug woman.**

old friend. The great barra cried out in grief, slamming the ground with his tail. The earth began to shake violently, a storm came in from the sea and the waves crashed across the flatlands until they reached the cliffs.

“Let this be a warning!”, the great barra said as the Boora Birra filled with water. “The laws of this land must be obeyed, and the proper ceremonies and respects must be observed. The Boora Birra will now be a place for the sea creatures. This place will be safe for people to hunt and fish, and you may visit from time to time, so that you will remember why our ways and laws must be passed on to the young.”

Can you see how the deep chasm that the barra made is Sydney Harbour? And the waves that crashed over this became its water? It is clear that this is a story about respect, and honouring the Country we are a part of.



Use the map to answer the questions

What sea creature is located in B6? \_\_\_\_\_

How many fish are located in E6? \_\_\_\_\_

What square are the crabs in? \_\_\_\_\_

What animal is in the tree located in D2? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the location of the group of 3 kangaroos? \_\_\_\_\_

Find the women collecting seafood, draw in the woven tool to help.

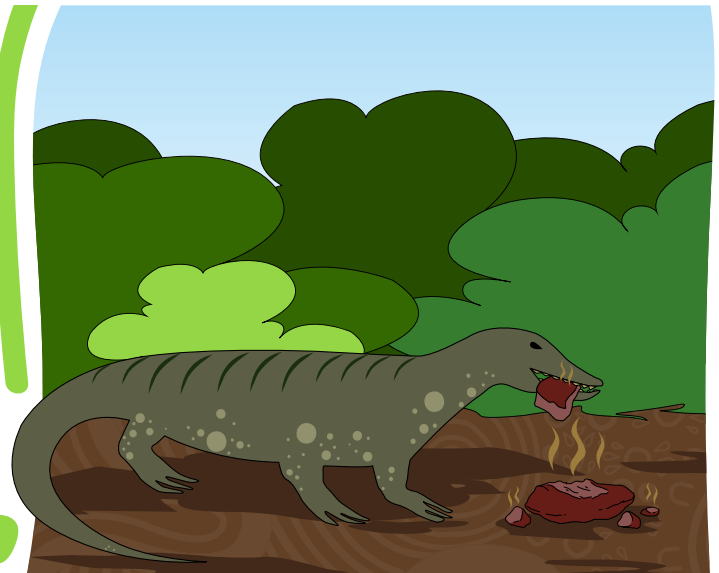
Find the man hunting a big fish, draw in the tool that will help him be successful.

# Totems

Totems are another example of the special relationship between Aboriginal People and Country. They are natural objects, plants and animals that Aboriginal People have a special connection to, and are inherited and passed down through the generations. Totems define Peoples' roles and responsibilities, as well as their relationships with each other and Creation.

Totems ensure that everyone plays a part in caring for Country and looking after the environment. The Sydney clans have many totems that help keep Country healthy. People never eat their totem, and they have a responsibility to make sure the species is healthy and continues to survive.

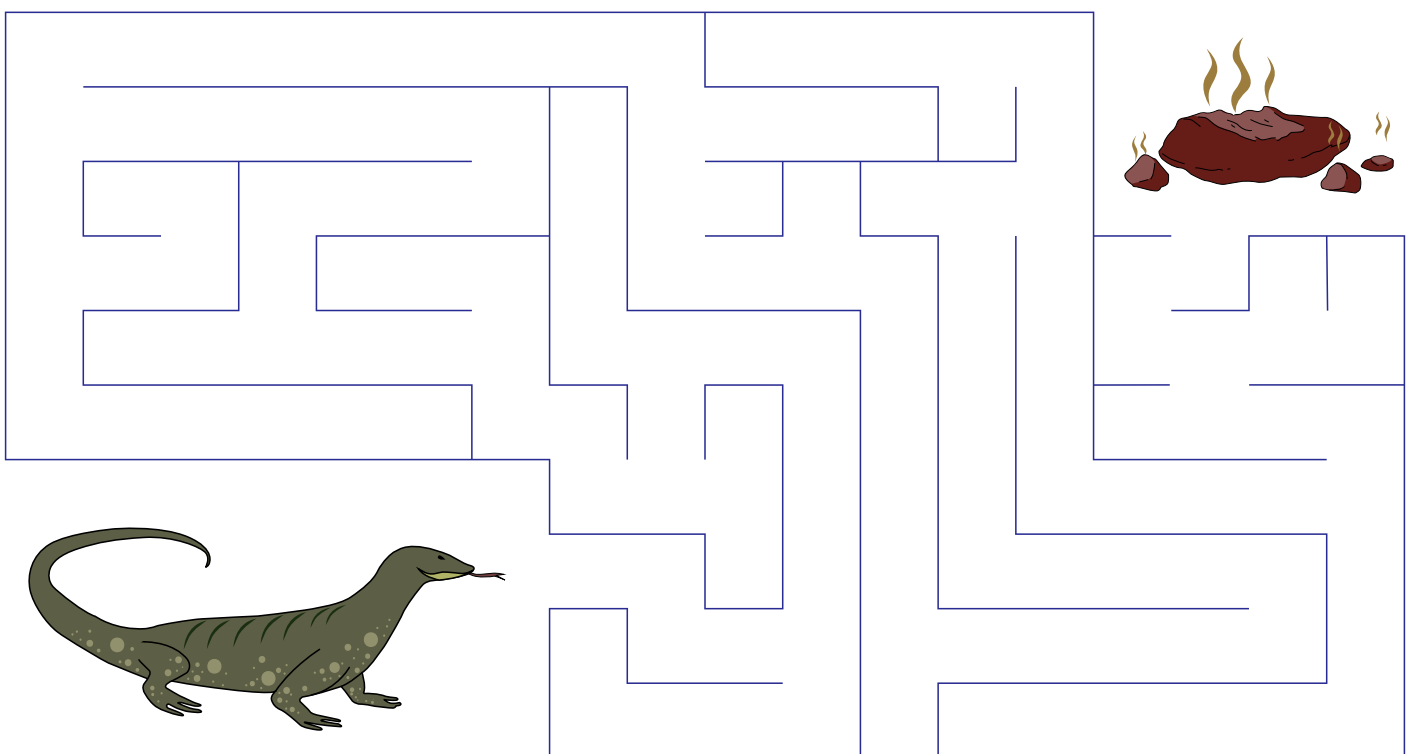
One of the Gadigal totems is the goanna.



## Bush Cleaners!

Goannas can be found throughout Australia, except in Tasmania. They can grow to two-and-a-half metres in length, and because they eat carrion (dead things), they are known for carefully cleaning up Country. Imagine if they didn't eat all the rotten meat? Ew! Stinky!

Help the goanna through the maze to eat the stinky rotten meat.



# Goanna Totem

Colour in the goanna artwork



Artwork by emerging Dharug artist Marlee Webb, living and creating on Dharug land.



## About the Artist

Bitja (Dixon Patten) is a proud Gunnai, Gunditjmara, Dhudhuroa and Yorta Yorta man with blood connections to Wiradjuri, Yuin, Wemba Wemba, Wadi Wadi, Monaro and Djab Wurrung.

He is an artist, designer, mentor, influencer and a strong community advocate.

## About the Artwork

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People exist in harmony with the land, and the environments they live in are central to their Dreaming stories, songlines and wellbeing.

The central motif in this work represents a meeting place where Merlin staff and the community come together. The 'u' shape symbols represent people sitting, sharing and learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture(s). The ripples depict the positive influence that takes place when we connect with people and our environments: we care more, we share more and we grow. Growth is depicted by the gum leaves, which are also used in smoking and cleansing ceremonies.

The pathways with feet depict Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples walking their own paths, coming together in Reconciliation. The other pathways represent our diversity as people, and the different backgrounds and experiences we have, and they intersect and connect through our shared history and the fact that we all call Australia home. They also represent opportunities, which are borne of working together.

The larger feet and smaller feet represent Eldership and the role that our Elders have in taking the lead in teaching and guiding us.

The stones represent healing and wellbeing.