

BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE

WUDJANI

NOT THE PAST



STUDY GUIDE FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Bangarra Dance Theatre pays respect and acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, create, and perform. We wish also to acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples whose customs and cultures inspire our work.

INDIGENOUS CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (ICIP)

Bangarra acknowledges the industry standards and protocols set by the Australia Council Protocols for Working with Indigenous artists. Those protocols have been widely adopted across the Australian arts communities to respect ICIP and to develop practices and processes for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultural heritage. Bangarra incorporates ICIP into the very heart of our projects, from storytelling, to dance, to set design, language, and music.

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WUDJANG

NOT THE PAST

SYNOPSIS

In the deep darkness just before dawn, workmen find bones while excavating for a dam. Among them is a Yugambeh man, Bilin (bat), who convinces his colleagues to let him keep the ancestral bones. This ancestor is Wudjang (mother) who longs to be reburied the proper way. With her young companion spirit, Gurai, (wonder) she dances and teaches and sings of the past, of the earth, of songlines. With grace and authentic power, a new generation is taught how to listen, learn, and carry their ancestral energy into the future. *Wudjang: Not the Past* follows the journey to honour Wudjang with a traditional resting place on Country.

The production of *Wudjang: Not the Past* is presented as a work of narrative dance theatre and contemporary ceremony. It shares elements of performance art with opera, drama, musical theatre, and contemporary dance, rendering them with innovative design to create a potent form of storytelling that reaches into the heart and demands acknowledgement of the truth.

CURRICULUM LINKS

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

GENERAL CAPABILITIES:

- Intercultural understanding
- Ethical understanding
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability

LEARNING AREAS:

- Humanities and Social Sciences: History, Civics and Citizenship
- Arts: Drama, Dance, Music, Visual Arts, Media Arts
- English
- Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages
- Health and Physical Education

THEMES:

- Indigenous perspectives
- Historical Inquiry
- Colonisation
- Concepts of power
- Human rights
- Intergenerational trauma
- Ritual and ceremonial practices
- Creative expression of historical story
- Contemporary ceremony

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PART 1

STORY & CULTURE - ALIVE & PRESENT

Wudjang is our word for mother, but in this work we use the word as a metaphor for the way both urban and traditional clans can use knowledge of the past to build a strong future, to carry and own trauma, and build a shield of resilience for future generations.

Wudjang is our mother as the land is our mother; our sustenance, our wonder, our future. Our stories and our culture are not from the past or in the past - they are, as you will vividly see on stage - alive and in the present. Nor is the trauma or pain we have suffered in the past, that too is carried all too freshly, and manifested all too tragically in the present, The way forward, the way that Wudjang teaches, is to own and speak our difficult truths together, to draw strength from our solidarity with those who respect culture, and to reconnect with patience.

STEPHEN PAGE
DIRECTOR, CHOREOGRAPHER

When Dad was a young boy, he never spoke language due to Assimilation. If young people spoke in language at school they'd get into trouble. Mum never spoke her language. She did not know about her Aboriginality. Her brothers told her they were Maori, as it was more acceptable to be another Indigenous cultural than to be Aboriginal.

Mum and Dad survived the racism of assimilation. When they married, they had to work hard to keep their family together during those challenging and hard times. When I was a young girl, I thought everybody was Aboriginal until I went to town with Mum in Beaudesert. During my schooling we were teased. I remember a teacher making me stand facing the back wall. I was in school, but I was never taught anything. Mum and Dad couldn't do much about it. It's the way things were then.

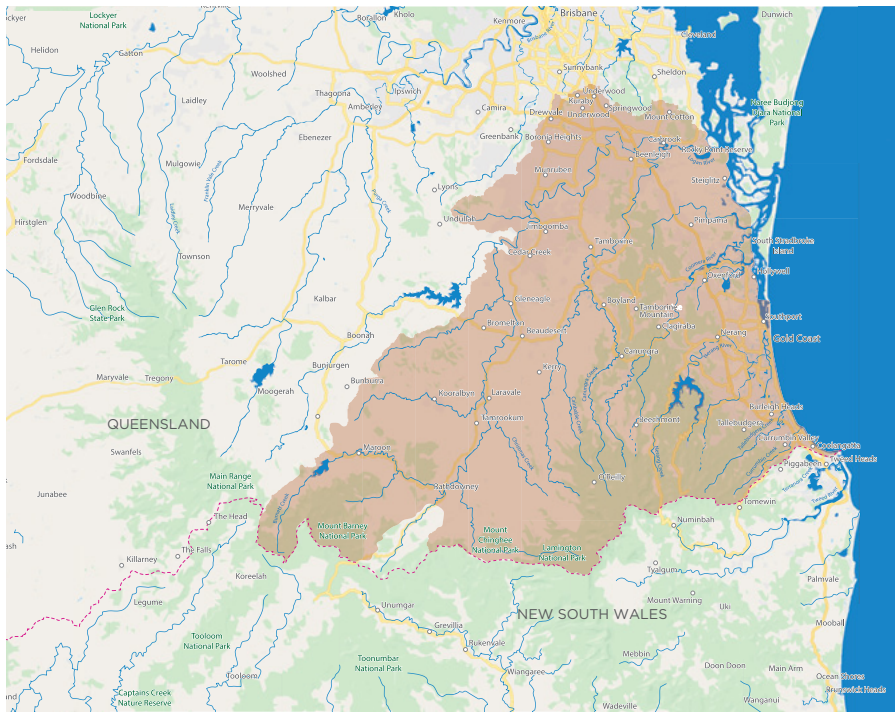
DONNA PAGE
LANGUAGE CONSULTANT



On Country, Beaudesert, QLD.
Gail Stephenson, Donna Page, Stephen Page
Photo David Kelly

PART 2

YUGAMBEH LANGUAGE REGION



Bilin Bilin at Deebing Creek Aboriginal Mission, ca. 1900.

BILIN BILIN - ACTIVIST, LEADER, NEGOTIATOR

Bilin Bilin (1820-1901) was a Yugambeh man who is renowned for his reputation as a strong activist, a formidable leader, and a crafty negotiator for his people during some of the most destructive periods of early European settlement. He devised and implemented strategies to protect his family and negotiated work contracts for his people with the pastoralists of SE Queensland. He refused to pay to travel on the train which by 1887 was crossing his Country. He officiated at cultural ceremonies and presided at burials, keeping such 'sacred' locations secret. Many of Bilin Bilin's descendants live in the Yugambeh region to this day, continuing to battle the long term impact of colonisation as they work towards building respect for their cultural heritage. While much of this contemporary battle is framed around past events related to control of land and the right to practice Culture, it is also a battle with white anthropologists and historians who have continued to tell versions of this country's history that ignore the voices and the lived experience of First Nations people.

From the early 1800s, the people of the Yugambeh Language region encountered many non-Indigenous people coming to their Country – shipwrecked sailors, escaped convicts, explorers, missionaries, government officials, military troops, settlers, and pastoralists. While some of these visitors were merely trying to survive in challenging circumstances, it was when the pastoralists, backed by the colonial government, started to significantly take up control of large tracts of land that the region became one of many places in Australia where the so-called frontier wars occurred. These were violent times and the impact on Indigenous people was devastating.

Many Indigenous people in the area were being forced on to reserves, being essentially written out of any economic benefits to agricultural development and were treated (and often impounded) by a legal system that was completely different to their own.

On 14 September 2017, Native Title was granted to the people of the region by the National Native Title Tribunal, thus officially recognising the rights and interests of the people of the Yugambeh Language region in respect to the land and waters according to their traditional laws and customs.

The region includes traditional lands that lie within and between the Dangan Balun (Five Rivers), Christmas Creek (Migunberri Tribe), Beaudesert (Mununjali Tribe), Logan (Guginin Tribe), Coomera (Bullongin Tribe), Mt Tambourine (Wanagerriburra Tribe), Nerang (Kombumerri Tribe), Birinburra Tribe and Tweed River Valley (Minjungbal Tribe).

*Spelling may vary between different sources.

PART 3

TRUTH-TELLING

“The very ink with which history is written is merely fluid prejudice.”

MARK TWAIN

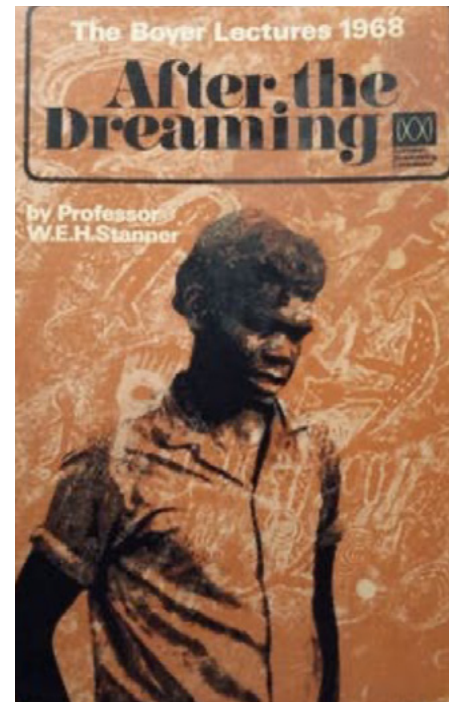
Australian history is no stranger to contest. Perspectives have constantly re-framed the narratives, manipulated the angles, and competed for validation. Truth-telling has been silenced, buried, or framed to serve political, economic, and/or social aims. Claims of fact have been disputed by historians and writers of the public record – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – and with each generation, mind sets have shifted and galvanised to push, and in some cases demand, for the revision of Australian history to re-set the frame for its teaching into the future.

The 1968 Boyer lecture given by William Edward Hanley Stanner titled ‘After the Dreaming’ is widely recognised as the moment Australian history faced the issue of accountability. Stanner’s phrase, ‘the great Australian silence’ awakened both the academy, and the next generation of writers and readers of Australian history to reconstitute reality and the language of truth into the understandings of post-colonial Australia.

So how deep do we need to dig, and how hard do we need to listen, to hear the language of truth, and listen to the voices of those who lived that history?

It seems to me that Indigenous accounts of history do not have to be in conflict with the evidence supplied in white documentation, but if there is a discrepancy, then perhaps we could ask historians to be just as critical of white-authored documents as they are of Aboriginal oral accounts. I believe that one’s responsibility as a historian is to seek knowledge of an Indigenous viewpoint and lived experience, and to look for additional evidence that might support that view, or at least explain why it exists. Our aim should be not to undermine Indigenous perspectives and squabble about whether Aborigines are ‘accurate’, but rather to understand their viewpoint with compassion, and at the very least, ‘include’ it, (and) consider it. For me, the inclusion of Aboriginal voices as primary sources is an absolute must for understanding and practising Aboriginal history.

Frances Peters-Little, Kamileroi/Uralirai writer, film maker and academic in *Passionate Histories: Myth, Memory and Indigenous Australia*, ANU press, 2010.



It is a structural matter, a view from a window which has been carefully placed to exclude a whole quadrant of the landscape. What may well have begun as a simple forgetting of other possible views turned under habit and over time into something like a cult of forgetfulness practised on a national scale.

W E H Stanner, ‘After the Dreaming’, 1968 Boyer lectures.

PART 3

TRUTH-TELLING

MASSACRE

Yugumbeh

We fought them hard, We fought them clever
We won't surrender, never ever
We used surprise and firesticks
Sent out spies with hunting sticks

Wheeler/soldiers

We fought then hard, We fought them clever
This is our country now, forever
We came in lines of marching troops
We herded them in family groups

From *Wudjang: Not the past*
(Scene 10, Nerang River Massacre)

There was once a myth that this country was settled peacefully. This myth was promoted well into the 20th century. This myth has now been well and truly dispelled – yet the implications of accepting the truth are far from resolved. Let's examine some of this truth.

Massacres of Aboriginal people – men, women, children – occurred across Australia from the time of European settlement through to the 1930s. The most intense periods of this time are referred to as the 'frontier wars'.

The true violence of the frontier wars was often either misreported, not reported at all, or reported through a process of political white washing. It is only in recent times that substantive and detailed evidence of over 400 massacre sites across the country is being unearthed and published for all to see, and all to take notice.

It is estimated that massacres reduced the Australian First Nations population by nearly 30%. If this is combined with the number of deaths through disease and maltreatment, the loss and subsequent trauma experienced by Indigenous people of this land is cause enough for the myth of peaceful settlement to be well and truly dismissed. For more information about the history of massacres in colonial Australia, we recommend the Colonial Frontiers research project University of Newcastle. (See page 14 for link)

Massacres can be characterised as a planned attack on undefended groups, usually in reprisal for theft of animals or goods. There were relatively few massacres of colonists. Massacres tended to be kept secret. Evidence was hidden and the language of official reports was manipulated. A code of silence and intimidation towards witnesses in the aftermath of a massacre made detection difficult. The purpose of a massacre is to eradicate the people and force others into submission. Campaigns of mass killing taking place over a wide area over several weeks or longer can be called genocidal massacres. The most reliable evidence is often provided by witnesses, killers and survivors who are prepared to acknowledge the massacre, though most often this is long after the event, when fear of arrest or reprisal has passed. Massacres diminish when more people are aware of incidents taking place and the killers no longer have impunity. [Colonial Frontiers website 2021.](#)



Sergeant James Whiteford and his trackers, Cape York Peninsula, 1898. Image courtesy of Queensland State Archives.

NATIVE POLICE

The conscripting of Indigenous men to police troops was a tragic reality of the frontier wars. Young Aboriginal men were recruited from areas far away from the location of where they were conscripted so that there would be no kinship relationships. They were given shelter, rations, and minimal payment. Recruits were coerced into following the orders of their white officers to threaten and often kill Aboriginal people who resisted the taking of their land by settlers. Descendants of the Native Police struggle to deal with this inherited trauma.

Sometimes referred to as The Black Police, the first Native Police forces were initiated in the 1830s and remained active for the next 70 years. They were considered by governing bodies as a highly successful law and order strategy.

The Native Police often recruited vulnerable Indigenous men from anywhere they could get them. Often, they would take them from local settlers, or they'd go to missions and recruit people. Some of them would have been survivors of massacres themselves, taken as small children by the Native Police

ABC Radio National interview, 2019. Heather Bourke, Flinders University.

PART 3

TRUTH-TELLING

SACRED

The Australian Trade and Investment Commission defines Sacred site as follows:

Sacred site means a site that is sacred to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people or is otherwise of significance according to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tradition.

Sacred sites are given protection under federal and various state laws, often under what are described as heritage laws. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage can be protected under those laws to varying degrees. Usually State and Territory laws automatically protect various types of areas or objects, while enabling developers to apply for a permit or certificate to allow them to proceed with activities that might affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.

Website - Australian Trade and Investment Commission: Native Title, sourced December 2021.

On the 24th of May 2020, one of the largest global mining companies in the world, Rio Tinto, detonated a series of explosives in the Juukan Gorge in Western Australia, destroying a 46,000 year old sacred cave and one other site in order to expand its iron ore production in the area. This sacred cave is traditionally owned by the Puuti Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura (PKKP) people, who have been travelling through the area, conducting ceremony and preserving the ecological balance of the land for tens of thousands of years.

Back in 2014, when Rio Tinto was conducting archaeological investigations, having received permission to do so from the WA government in 2013, and after committing to conditions under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 to damage the site, sacred objects were discovered, including tools, bones and a length of plaited hair. DNA testing on this particular sacred object revealed a direct connection with the current traditional custodians of the Juukan Gorge region.

The event attracted enormous public interest around the world, including the United Nations' Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. A Federal Ministerial inquiry was carried out where Rio Tinto executives admitted a mistake had been made and the blast had been set in motion without addressing key compliance directives. They also claimed that the detonation could not be stopped despite strong and valid protestations from local PKKP Elders. Rio Tinto apologised and made a public pledge to review all current explorations on sites identified as being sacred, and initiated a range of new policies and actions to ensure 'mistakes' do not happen again. The WA Government began a review of its 40 year old Aboriginal Heritage Act, announcing an amendment to the Act in November 2021 passing legislation in December of the same year. However, this amendment has attracted a significant level of criticism from local Aboriginal groups and others who maintain it has made little difference.

While the Juukan Gorge event was unfolding, another mine site in Northern Territory's MacArthur River area, operated by international mining giant Glencore, was also being identified by local custodians as not complying with conditions required when operating and excavating near sacred sites. Glencore has similarly offered an apology for the 'legacy of sadness' its mining activities have generated.



The sacred cave at Juukan Gorge, before and after detonation of explosives. Via PKKP Aboriginal Corporation

PART 3

TRUTH-TELLING

SACRED (cont.)

The ravaging of sacred sites has been going on for long long time. Since the mid 1800s, mining for coal, iron ore, minerals and precious stones in this continent we call Australia, has created enormous wealth for many thousands of people around the world. Stakeholders and shareholders have ridden this economic boom for well over 150 years, extracting non-renewable resources from a land whose sovereignty was never ceded - a land where knowledge systems about the land, and cultural connections to the past are the foundation for the continuum of First Nations people and their culture.

During the Federal Senate Standing committee enquiry into the Juukan Gorge disaster, Senator Patrick Dodson (WA) said:

“Anyone that’s been objectively listening to this inquiry and the matters coming before this committee ... would have to draw the conclusion that this is a form of incremental genocide,... You (referring to the Rio Tinto bosses) have destroyed significant heritage for humanity. Saying sorry is one very important matter. And it seems to me that your future reputation will swing very much, as will other companies’ on how they behave to First Nations peoples”.

Senator Pat Dodson (WA), Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia, 2020 inquiry into examining the adequacy of state and Commonwealth heritage protection laws, the power imbalance between traditional owners and mining companies, and compensation owed to traditional owner groups.

Navigating the systems and complexities of changing and/or outdated government policies, diverse legal jurisdictions, the power play of competing economic interests, and growing environmental issues is extremely arduous. There are winners and losers and the impact on futures can be either enriching or devastating, promising or benign – depending on who you are and how much influence your voice has, if indeed your voice is heard at all. First Nations Cultures are more than often the most marginalised voices in such negotiations.



Class Activity.
Sacred. Page 16

PART 3

TRUTH-TELLING

ASSIMILATION POLICIES IN THE 20TH CENTURY

In 1961, the policy of Assimilation was formally adopted by the Australian Government. It proclaimed that:

'... in the view of all Australian governments that all aborigines (sic) and part-aborigines (sic) are expected eventually to attain the same manner of living as other Australians and to live as members of a single Australian community enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes and loyalties as other Australians. Thus, any special measures taken for aborigines and part-aborigines are regarded as temporary measures not based on colour but intended to meet their need for special care and assistance to protect them from any ill effects of sudden change and to assist them to make the transition from one stage to another in such a way as will be favourable to their future social, economic, and political advancement'.

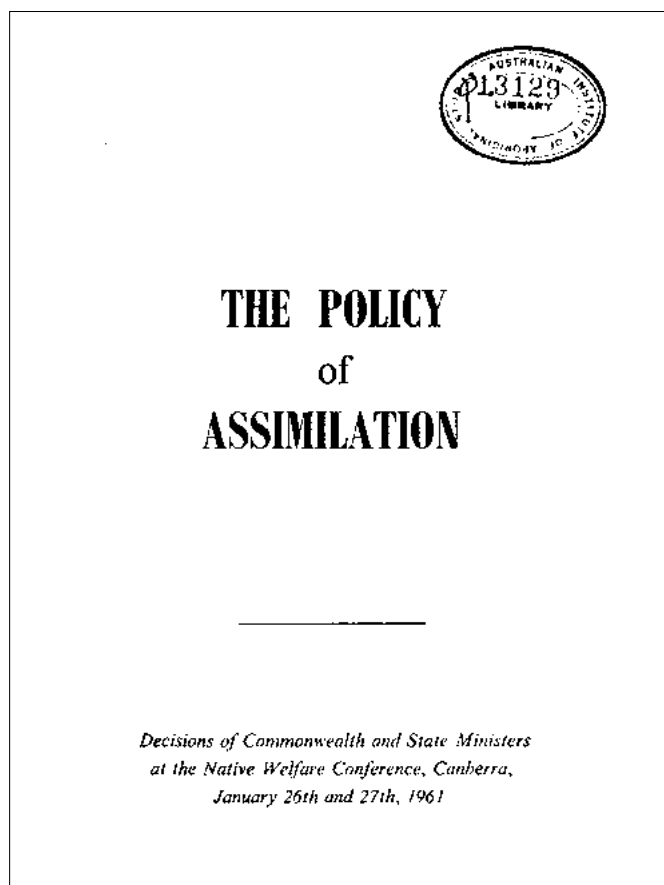
Statement by leave by the Minister for Territories (the HON. PAUL HASLUCK, M.P.) in the House of Representatives on Thursday, 20th April 1961.

Implementation of The Policy of Assimilation came after many decades of failed government approaches to the so-called 'native problem' that were invariably named as policies to 'protect' Aboriginal people. One of the easiest implementation tools in bringing about assimilation was limiting the speaking and/or learning of Traditional languages. In 1843, South Australian politician Anthony Forster declared,

'The natives would be sooner civilized if their language was extinct. The children taught would afterwards mix only with whites, where their own language would be of no use - the use of their language would preserve their prejudices and debasement, and their language was not sufficient to express the ideas of civilized life'.

Report on a public meeting of the South Australian Missionary Society in aid of the German Mission to the Aborigines, Southern Australian, 8 September 1843, p. 2, cf. Scrimgeour 2007: 116)

 **Class Activity.**
Assimilation. Page 17



PART 3

TRUTH-TELLING

LINGUICIDE AND LANGUAGE REVIVAL

Linguicide (language killing) has been referred to as a form of cultural genocide, weaponised through assimilation policies and rulings. Traditional languages were frequently described as ‘gibberish’ during postcolonial times when English was considered the language of a ‘so called’ progressive and civilised society

While Australia’s Assimilation policy of the mid-20th century repealed several discriminatory rulings of past Protection policies, it was also based on an often publicly stated assumption that Aboriginal cultures and languages would die out once Aboriginal people conformed to western lifestyles. Among the most instrumental ways to advance this policy was to discourage or forbid people to speak their traditional language. Speaking one’s traditional language on mission stations was prohibited, and English was the only language of communication in schools and employment settings. English literacy was considered critical in achieving a united modern Australia. Yet for Aboriginal people, their languages were irreplaceable. Their words are embedded in their Land in a way that the English language could never be.

‘Language is part of our songlines, stories, spirituality, law, cultural identity and connection. Language transfers important knowledge passed down from our ancestors and elders that guides us’.

Lynnice Church, Ngunnawal. Living Languages, AIATSIS website.

In 1788 there were over 250 First Nations languages in Australia, by 2016 only 120 of these languages were spoken with only about 13 of these considered not in danger of extinction. While Language is not explicit in the 1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights it is strongly implied. In 1996, the Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights was drawn up and signed by several international NGOs and in recent decades national governments, including Australia, have initiated language revival programs alongside the efforts of many Indigenous people and organisations.

Professor Ghil’ad Zukerman, Chair of Linguistics and Endangered Languages at the University of Adelaide proposes that there are three motives for language revival: to right the wrongs of colonial linguistic supremacy; to provide a communication environment where, culture, cultural autonomy, intellectual sovereignty, spirituality, well-being, and the soul can thrive; and for the aesthetic ... the co-existence of so many distinct and unique languages is beautiful. Australia’s multilingualism is like the human reflection of the biodiversity for which the country is so well known.

Zuckerman in interview with Alex Rawlings, BBC, Future 2020.

It appears that things are improving. Today, thanks to a building critical mass of Indigenous artists, we hear more and more First Nations Languages in contemporary music, script writing, and new literature. We hear more traditional speakers in our parliaments thanks to the steady increase of First Nations representatives in government. Traditional names for locations are noted beside news reporters’ names, and Australia Post now includes a line in the address fields for traditional locations. Students can study some Indigenous languages in the school curriculum and bi-lingual schools are quite common – especially in remote areas. There are even apps for some languages, for example Wiradjuri and Dharawal.

Language is a lifeline. Language is the carrier of knowledge, the means for listening, communicating, and learning across generations. Language is a medicine. Loss of language leads to loss of voice, capacity to stand together, to negotiate for one’s rights. Language lives on as elders pass – unless the language is dead.

Photo Daniel Boud



*Sing me into Country
Dance me into Land
Give me my inheritance
Now I understand*

**Nanahng,
in Wudjang: Not the past**



**Class Activity.
Linguicide and
Language revival.
Page 16**

PART 4

THE SCENES (POEMS)

UNCOVERING

THE METAL MOUTH

A metal mouth digging
A change unforgiving
A dam is constructed
The land is disrupted
In the deep darkness just before dawn, a Yugambeh man, Bilin, sits singing in Mununjali language, anticipating the finding of ancestral bones. The bones they find are Wudjang (mother) and with her is Gurai (wonder).

RECLAIMING

BILIN'S HUT

The dam builders have disturbed her
From the place she was interred
Now I must find a sacred place
Where she won't be disturbed
Wudjang's spirit is awakened from the deep under the earth and given breath – fresh and new – the birth of the old exposed to the present moment.

BILIN'S LESSON

Nanahng, Bilin's niece arrives. He uses the stones to explain Nanahng's ancestral maternal line, tracing it back to Wudjang.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OLD GIRL?

Watch Listen Learn
This is what she show you
This is hers to know you
Watch, Listen, Learn
She is not the last
This is not the past
I already know
Stories from my Culture I will show respect,
Listen to my Elder
Then I have to go
Life is moving fast
These are only bones
This is the past

COLONISATION

BY ORDER OF

A non-Indigenous male character, the Duggai enters and plants a claiming flag.
It is amongst the other things enacted
Ineffectual things
The order of His Majesty
The royal pigsty

ONE MILLION SHEEP

The Mununjali are confronted with the strangeness of sheep.
Why you talking to a sheep. Ah?
I wasn't talkin', I was singin'.
Why you singin' to a sheep, ah?
Same thing as talkin' to a muggai (ghost)

BLACK SHEEP

A black sheep is sheared for Wudjang to create resistance in her clan.
You tell all your whiteface sheep cousins ya
You tell 'em to go. Yugambeh country.

RESISTANCE

THE MEN CARRY FIRE

The Yugumbeh/Munundjali gather for seasonal feasting. They are inspired by the beauty and power of having the Wudjang spirit among them.

The women dive deep down for shellfish
The lorikeet scream, mullet in the stream
And the men carry fire.

CONFUSION

TWO SYSTEMS ONE WAY

Wudjang is trying to connect Nanahng to the wisdom of the spirit of Wudjang and its purpose for generations to come. Bilin is trying to anoint Nanahng to become a leader for the next generation. But Nanahng is resisting their persuasion. She is aware of the trauma of the past, and fearful of the grief and pain. She becomes caught in the white system.

White system calls
This's not my concern
Twenty first century now
What is there to learn
Story of the land I pain
That's all in the past
This is not my shame
This is not my ask

CARRYING TRAUMA

DUGGAI

This massacre recalls a series of murders on the banks of the Nerang river, on Yugambeh country, under the direction of Frederick Wheeler.
Duggai spear those cattle, Duggai raid those huts
Duggai shoot us dead with spilling guts
Duggai Massacre with guns and cuts
Smallpox swells in sickly puss

NERANG RIVER MASSACRE

Here is the horror
The torn and gouged bodies lying across the stage
The innocent and the old, massacred.
We fought them hard, we fought them clever
We won't surrender, never ever.
We used surprise and firesticks
Sent out spies with hunting tricks
There is too much death
My energy is disturbed

PART 4

THE SCENES (POEMS)

FIVE POUNDS TWO POUNDS

A Munundjali family talk about the price on the head of Indigenous adults and children.

You want to listen sister

You want to know what happened

They give five pounds for every adult

Two pounds for every child

DISRESPECT

The women suffered terrible assaults at the hands of the colonisers.

We are their daughters

We are their voices

We give them honour

Now

MAREN'S REBELLION

Maren sings of their resilience and survival.

A rage like the sea will crush men who take

Women like me will destroy men who rape

Rage won't go away

We will kill you white snake

We will kill you white snake

We will make you pay for your violence

DE-COLONISING

NOT FORGOTTEN

(Duggai)

I am marked with blood

I am stark with regret

Shame comes in a thud

(Nanahng)

Sing me into country

Dance me into land

Give me my inheritance

Now I understand

REGENERATING

CEREMONY

Maren and Nanahng sing to each other of their understanding of Wudjang

(Nanahng)

How could I have thought

I knew how to listen

Everything is changed

Now my spirit opens

I am of this land

Call out to the old ones

Up my totem flies

Sing my ancient tongue

Look gather Breathe

We are not the last

Never be the past

Wudjang is restored to country and the clan

celebrate her endurance

While the wind is fierce we are

While the trees clutch sky we are

While the moon shines soft we are

While the mountains wait we are

While the land is here we are

While the land still breathes we are

While the rivers run we are

We will never leave

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Class Activity.

The scenes (poems). Page 16

CREATIVE TEAM

Stephen Page
Director/Co-writer/Choreographer

Alana Valentine
Co-writer

Jacob Nash
Set designer

Steve Francis
Composer

Jenny Irwin
Costume Designer

Nick Schlieper
Lighting Designer

Kate Dunn
Assistant Director

Alan John
Music Director

Veronique Serret
Associate Music Director/Musician

Leith McPherson
Vocal Coach

Donna Page
Language Consultant

Actors:

Elaine Crombie

Jess Hitchcoc

Elma Kris

Kirk Page

Justin Smith

Musicians:

Brendan Boney

Amaru Derwent

Tess Nuku

Dancers:

Beau Dean Riley Smith

Rikki Mason

Rika Hamaguchi

Glory Touhy-Daniell

Baden Hitchcock

Ryan Pearson

Lillian Banks

Bradley Smith

Courtney Radford

Kallum Goolagong

Gusta Mara

Kiarn Doyle

Janaya Lamb

Jesse Murray

See pages 16 to 31 of

[Wudjang: Not the Past program](#)

for full bio details.



Photo Daniel Boud



Photo Daniel Boud

REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

LINKS: LANGUAGE

Living Languages. AIATSIS
<https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/living-languages>

My Grandmothers' lingo
<https://www.sbs.com.au/mygrandmotherslingo/>

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LINKS: MASSACRE

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Photo Daniel Boud

CLASS ACTIVITIES

CONSCIENCE ALLEY THEME: SACRED

As a class, read the section Sacred on page 8, then consider the following two statements.

- Exploiting the Land for resources to develop industries that produce the materials for societies desires and economic gain requires **control of land**.
- Caring for the Land to ensure it can provide resources for survival of people, fauna and flora, into the future, while maintaining connection to ancestral knowledge requires **control of land**.

... then discuss and reflect on these two perspectives regarding **control of land**.

Conscience Alley is a strategy that involves mirroring what happens in our conscience when we face a dilemma. Conscience Alley helps students consider different perspectives and encourages students to manipulate voice and language in order to persuade their peer to take their opinion.

Split the class into two equal lines facing each other. One line of students will think of a reason for controlling the land through exploitation, while the opposite line of students will think of an alternative, from the perspective of controlling the land through care.

For example, a student in the first line will think of a reason why controlling the land through industry and production is important. Their sentence might start with 'I think you should exploit the land because...'. Students in the second line will think of a reason why controlling the line through resource management and ancestral knowledge is important. Their sentence might start with 'I think you should care for the land because...'. One student begins at the top of the Conscience Alley created by the two lines of students and slowly walks down the alley, stopping and making eye contact with a person from the first line and then a person from the second line and so on until they reach the end.

At the end of the alley, reflect as a class on which reasons were most compelling – were there any points of agreement between the two lines? What were the points of difference?

Conscience Alley description adapted from: Ewing, R., & Saunders, N. A. (2016). *The School Drama Book: Drama, Literature and Literacy in the Creative Classroom*. Currency Press.

LANGUAGE SHARE. THEME: LINGUICIDE AND LANGUAGE REVIVAL

As a class, read the section Massacre on page 7. Explore the richness of language in your classroom and community through a Language Share activity. Language Share involves participants translating a word from English into another language(s) and teaching the rest of the group how to say the word. The focus is on enabling each student to be a teacher in their own language(s). We encourage you to research the Indigenous language/s on the country where your school is located.

For this activity, invite students to contribute a word that means 'language'. Encourage participants to write their word for 'language' on the board (all alphabets welcome!) and teach each other how to pronounce the word. After writing the words on the board, form a circle, and ask students to choose a word from the board (in any language) and think about how they can say the word so as to emphasise its meaning (using vocal expression). They can also think about a gesture or action that can accompany the word and add to its meaning. This might involve a discussion about what language means to you – is it a way of connecting with others, expressing yourself, learning about the world, etc. Moving around the circle, each student shares a word with vocal expression and gesture. The rest of the group repeats the word and gesture each time.

Language Share description adapted from: Campbell, V. & Hogan, Z. (2022). *Connecting through Drama: Drama and literacy for learning English as an additional language*. Currency Press

READERS' THEATRE THEME: THE SCENES (POEMS)

Refer to the outline of the scenes in *Wudjang: Not the Past*, including some script excerpts (p:11-12). In small groups students select section/s and create a Readers' Theatre in the classroom. In Readers' Theatre, the focus is on voice, using a script and very limited on-the-spot movement. Students annotate their script with how they will read their part, what sound effects they will add and how their facial expressions and hand and body movements will add to the communication of feelings. Consider tone, volume, and pace. Encourage students to explore sound effects and body percussion. As a group, students decide where they will arrange the audience. Students may decide to say all parts of the script together or to break it down so that pairs of students speak together.

Adapted from *The School Drama Book* by Ewing & Saunders

CLASS ACTIVITIES (CONT.)

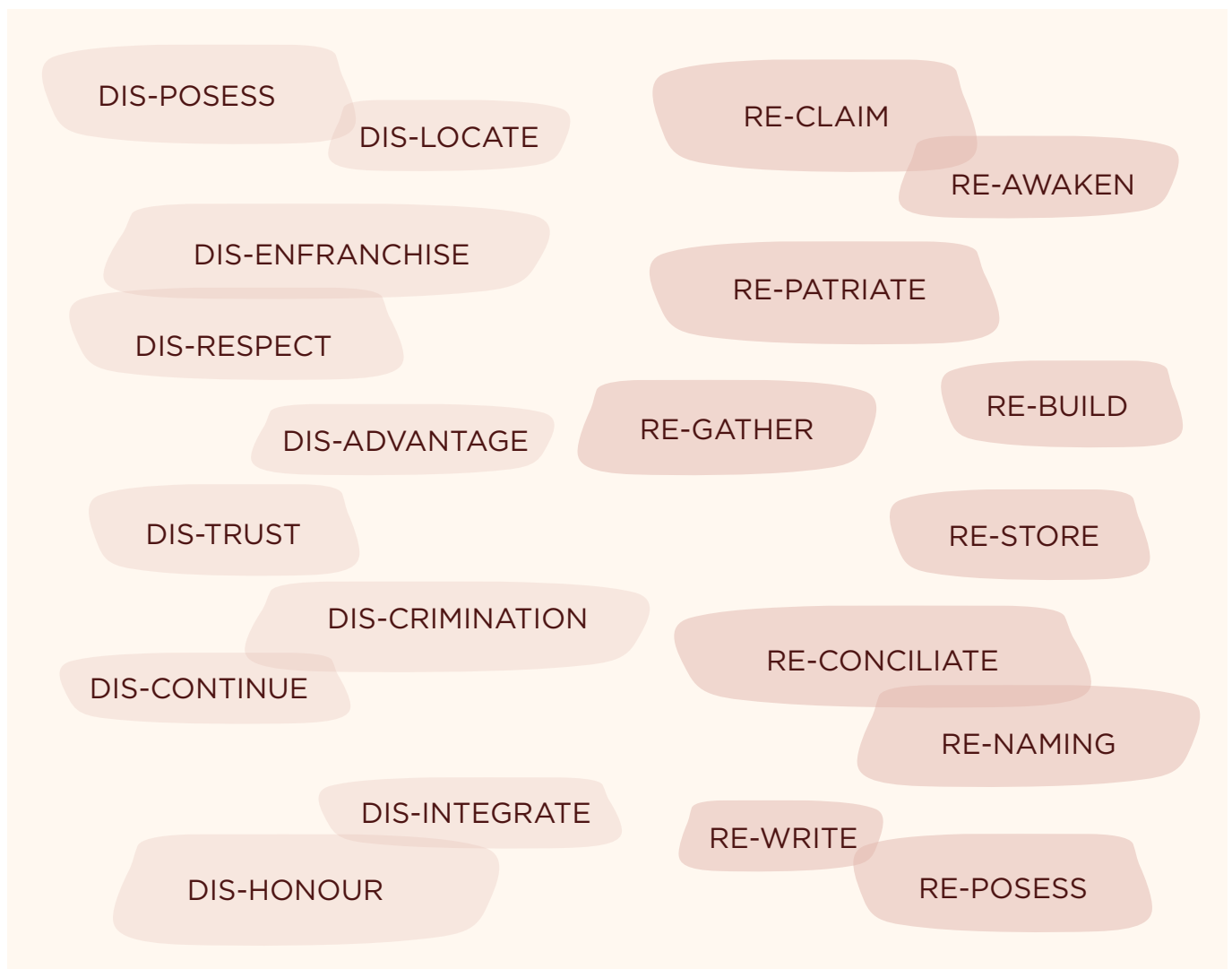
WORDSCAPE INTO MOVEMENT THEME: ASSIMILATION, TRAUMA

This wordscape draws on some of the themes that have inspired and informed *Wudjang: Not the Past*.

Working in small groups, ask students to select 3 or 4 of the words and interrogate them noting how the two different prefixes drive the meaning, or meanings.

Students then write down ideas about a concept that could be used for dance composition that responds to these ideas.

Consider how the concept could stimulate a series of movement motifs, thinking about dynamic qualities, timing, spatial floor patterns, body shapes, relationships, and other aspects of dance composition. Encourage students to think about design, sound, technology, and script work as part of the concept.



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DANCE THEATRE

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