

PLENTY STORIES

INDIGENOUS SERIES OF BOOKS

Education News

Currently in development is the most substantial Indigenous curriculum package for schools that the Museum has undertaken. This publication series represents another partnership with leading education publisher, Harcourt Education, who will design and publish the series. The series, authored by the Museum's Senior Indigenous Education Officer, will draw upon the National Historic Collection, as well as new material that the Education Officer will collect from many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The map denotes communities that have been visited for consultation, research and photography in the second half of 2006. The Museum's Senior Photographer has provided excellent photography as well as good humour in sometimes physically demanding environments. The challenges of working in the very hot conditions of western Queensland and central Australia followed by the chill and drizzle in the rainforest could not dampen his enthusiasm to capture the best images!

The books will explore the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. One of the distinctive features of the series will be exploring the past, present and the future through the experiences and traditions of Indigenous groups as well as the strong focus on issues and experiences of diverse contemporary communities.



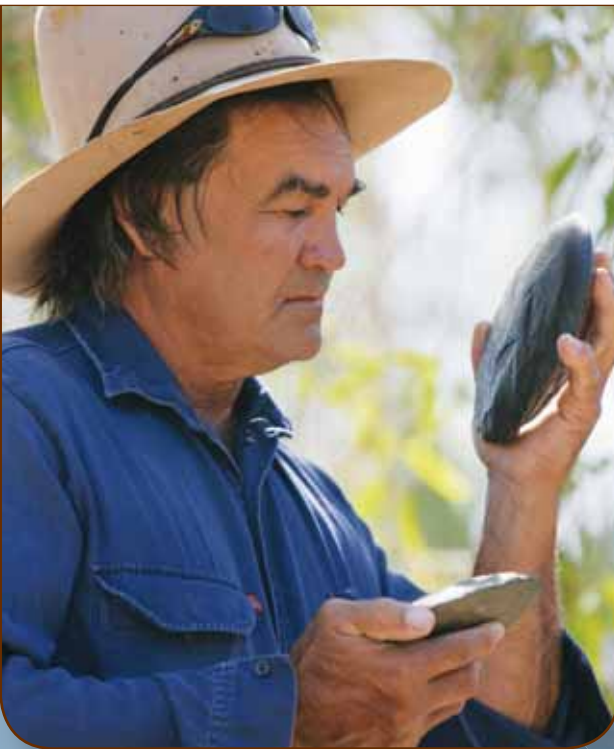
Patrick Donovan, Isabel (Monie) Holt, Thelma Sullivan and Lawrence (Sonny) Condron at a special quarry site on Calton Hill Station near Mount Isa.

Photos: George Serras

Why is 'Country' important and what does it mean?

In one of the *Plenty Stories* books presently being written, students will explore the notion of 'Country' and Aboriginal people's continuing connection to places which have become significant sites for Australian archaeology. The book will introduce students to six sites across Australia and the ways that Aboriginal people express their rights and responsibilities to these sites today.

Elders from the Kalkadoon Tribal Council shared their stories over two days during a recent field trip to Mount Isa. On the second day, we joined Patrick, Sonny, Thelma and Monie on a day trip to visit a quarry on their land. It was a sweltering day, reaching 40 degrees, but that didn't hinder Patrick and Sonny leading us on a walk to a hilltop so that they could survey the best location for their group photograph. Meanwhile, Thelma and Monie, both in their seventies, waited patiently in the somewhat cooler car. It was a special day for everyone, and Thelma and Monie talked about how they felt about being out on Country.



Inspecting stone artefacts on the ground at Calton Hill Station.



Kaisiana enjoying her favourite music.

Thelma said: 'I might go back and talk to my little grandson, tell him about Country. My husband Roger Sullivan was a Law man. We never stayed in town back then, he used to do all the dances, paint up.'
 Monie said: 'My Granny was a survivor of Battle Mountain (massacre). To come out here and see these artefacts, it makes me proud. You get this funny feeling inside and you know that's them.'

Through the eyes of Kaisiana

In this Plenty Stories book, students will view the world of a twelve-year-old Torres Strait Islander girl as she travels for the first time on her own, from her home town of Cairns to Thursday Island to visit her grandmother. Kaisiana's special journey will help students to discover the history and unique culture of Torres Strait Islander people.



Cecelia and Maryanne Cook preparing ingredients for Sop Sop.

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Group at a rockhole.



*Lindsay Bird begins his Bush Plum Dreaming painting.
Photos: George Serras*

Linking art and culture at Mulga Bore Community

A painting by Lindsay Bird of his Bush Plum Dreaming story will allow students to explore the link between art, culture and community. What are some of the things that children like to do in the remote desert community of Mulga Bore today? What are some of the ways that Aboriginal people express their beliefs?

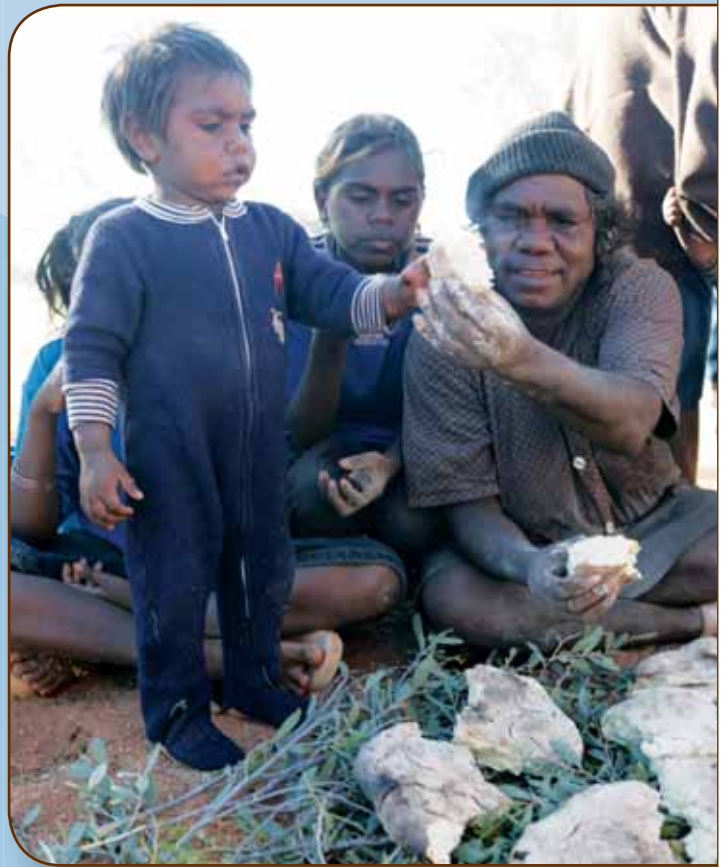
The communities of Mulga Bore and Angkula embraced us during our intensive five-day field trip, making it a success in very many ways. They shared their knowledge so generously, and were very excited that some of their 'living history' will be captured in a book that many students across Australia will also experience. It was a privilege to be welcomed by the families of the Mulga Bore and Angkula communities. Special thanks must be given to Lindsay Bird, senior elder, for his strong support and leadership, enabling the Museum to include their stories in the Plenty Stories series.

Maggie cooking internal parts of a kangaroo.





Trish Albert with children.



Aileen handing out warm damper.



Mavis and Lindsay Bird.

The Museum acknowledges all of the Indigenous communities and individuals as well as the group of educational reviewers for their support with this Indigenous education curriculum package.

The first set of nine books in the Plenty Stories series will be published in September 2007, and the next nine books will be available in 2008.

*Trish Albert, Senior Indigenous Education Officer,
National Museum of Australia.*

