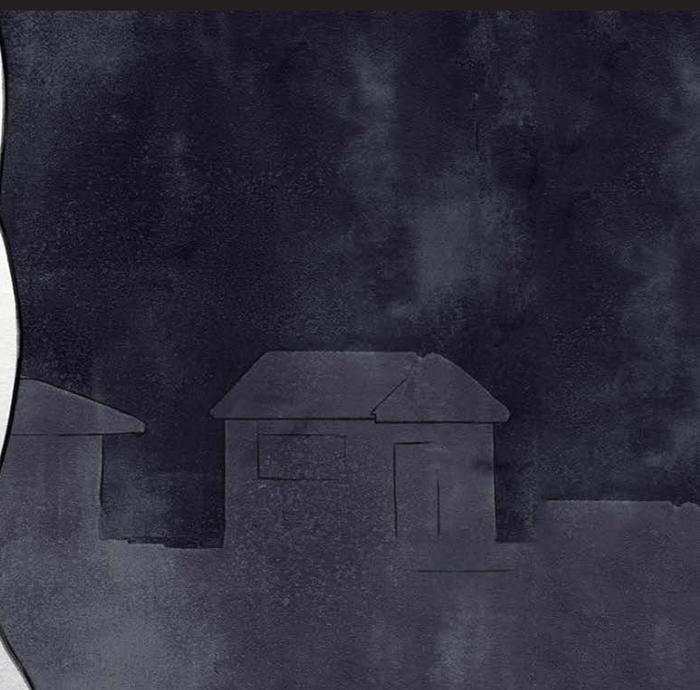




# AFTER THE APOLOGY



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AUSTRALIAN TEACHERS OF MEDIA

A STUDY GUIDE BY  
EMILY DAWSON



## SYNOPSIS

The rate of Indigenous child removal has increased since Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered the apology to the 'stolen generations' in 2008 and less Aboriginal children who are removed are placed with extended Aboriginal family.

Suellyn Tighe thought Family and Community Services (FACS) would only remove children in extreme cases until her own grandchildren were taken in the middle of the night. The experience turned her into a bush lawyer. Hazel Collins decided to take on the FACS system after her fourth grandchild was taken into state care. Jen Swan expected to continue to care for her grandchildren but FACS deemed her unsuitable, a shock not just to her but to her sister, Deb Swan, who was, at the time, a FACS worker; Deb quit her job with the department after witnessing her sister's experience.

These four grandmothers find each other and start a national movement by creating Grandmothers Against Removals (GMAR) – to place children with extended families as a key solution to the rising number of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care.

Their stories mirror the experiences of other Aboriginal families around the country. Donna had her children removed for neglect because her daughter was underweight though she had a medical condition and, as doctor's attested, was well looked after by her mother; Barbara had her granddaughter removed due to suspicion of neglect from her family, it turned out her granddaughter's behaviour at school was the result of school bullying; Kerry was reported to FACS by police who made claims including

that her daughter was playing in dog faeces even though Kerry didn't have a dog; Audrey was accused of not taking her children to school by FACS though the school reports proved otherwise. Together their stories start to expose the problems within the system where Aboriginal children are being removed in questionable circumstances.

Collectively, GMAR have called for a change of policy that would see children placed with extended Aboriginal family, more support for Aboriginal families through intervention and more investment in Aboriginal community controlled services. An example of the latter is the Mallee District Aboriginal Service (MDAS). They have supported single parent, Jason, to ensure he can be the primary carer of his daughter Bonnie, and teen-aged mother Amanda\* who became pregnant while she herself was in state care.

Aboriginal experts working from within the system – former FACS Minister Linda Burney, Victorian Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People Andrew Jackomos, and CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, Muriel Bamblett. – all reinforce the approach advocated by GMAR, that the solution to the issue is more responsibility from the Aboriginal community and a greater support network for families. They all advocate an approach of self-determination, a key recommendation of the *Bringing them Home* report and through the grannies, we see this principle in action.

## CONTENT HYPERLINKS

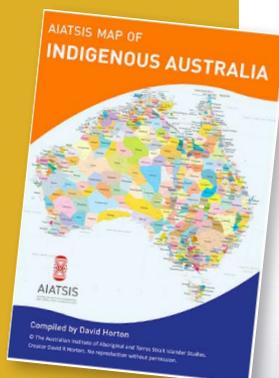
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## PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES & IDEAS

The 1788 colonisation of Australia was an invasion by European conquest over Indigenous systems of governance, Law and ownership of land. Despite clear systems of law, occupation of land and existence of people, the Crown declared Australian land *terra nullius*, or 'land belonging to no one' as per international law. British law was forcefully implemented, while deliberate Acts of government were passed to 'protect' Aboriginal people by removing people from country, children from their families and denying the basic human rights to practice culture and speak language. Within twenty years of European colonisation in Victoria, 80% of the Aboriginal population was killed. It was illegal for Aboriginal children to attend school up until the 1970s.

1. Research what the year 1788 meant for Aboriginal people. Describe in your own words how you think Aboriginal people were affected by the impact of colonisation.
2. Define 'colonisers'.
3. Research the realities of colonisation for Indigenous people.
4. Explore the cultures of the Indigenous groups who are the Traditional Owners of the land your school and your home occupies.
5. Why did European colonisers declare that Australia was *terra nullius* (land belonging to no one), when it clearly did belong to people?
6. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples face today do you think might be associated with the effects of colonisation? Explain why.
7. In pairs, research an Aboriginal-run welfare organisation. Explain their purpose and the benefits they provide the local Aboriginal community. Develop a 3-minute presentation of your findings to deliver to your class.
8. What is culture?
9. Indigenous Languages Map.
  - a. Download the permission form from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies to use the map of Indigenous Australia: (<http://aiatsis.gov.au/aboriginal-studies-press/copyright-permissions>). This is a very important resource to learn about to be informed citizens of Australia.
  - b. Take the time to discuss the significance of this map as a class, especially discuss why colonisers of Australia (and subsequent governments) never took this into account.
10. Research one of these language groups and write down three new facts you have learnt, as well as one that surprised you and why.
11. Personal Reflection: Write down your initial thoughts in a journal entry, after first watching *After the Apology*.



### DIRECTOR STATEMENT: LARISSA BEHRENDT

I come to this subject matter with a very personal passion for it. My grandmother was a stolen generations woman and my father grew up in an orphanage. Their treatment under the removal policy was one of the strongest motivating factors for me choosing a career in law.

Like many Aboriginal people, I was touched by Kevin Rudd's apology speech and believed it would be a turning point on how child welfare matters were dealt with. It is shocking to me that the number of Aboriginal children being removed today by welfare agencies is higher than during the time of the Stolen Generations.

As a legal researcher and lawyer, my team has worked on the several cases of child removal – all instances where children were removed wrongly and parents or grandparents had to fight to regain children back into their care. Through this work I met Hazel Collins, Suellyn Tighe and Deb Swan. For me, they embody what I love most about the matriarchs in my community. They are agents of change. Their stories are similar and striking – 'ordinary'

women who find themselves in a situation that is unfair. To me, they embody the spirit of self-determination.

Throughout the film the women independently find themselves in a situation they never imagined – fighting the state for the return of their children and grandchildren. We follow them as they find other women who are in similar situations and it leads to them starting *Grandmothers Against Removal*. They go from marching in the streets to changing departmental policies. Suellyn becomes a kind of bush lawyer who can quote the legislation back at bureaucrats. Hazel works to make changes in her own community. And we see the extraordinary story of Deb Swan, a former DOCS worker, who, after her sister, Jenny, has her grandchildren removed, leaves her job within the system to start fighting it.

The film includes animated vignettes of the stories of four women – Donna, Kerry, Audrey and Barbara – who have their own stories of unjust removals. They are a mix of fragility and steeliness and together they highlight the diverse range of women who are fighting for their families in what is clearly a national issue. I am also interested in drawing out the links between what is happening now and the events that were chronicled in the 1997 *Bringing them Home* report. I bring the archival material to life through performance in a way that merges past and present and evokes the emotional experience of members of the stolen generations who were brave enough to tell their stories and stands as a reminder that the past is always present.

I want the audience to feel for the people whose stories we hear. I want them to understand what underlying issues are leading to the epidemic rates of child removal. I want them to be angry, ask how can this be happening today and know they can help Aboriginal people and their organisations to make a difference.

”

## CHECK-IN WITH YOUR PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

1. Write down what you know about Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal culture.
2. Reflect on your writing.
  - a. Does your prior knowledge include information about Aboriginal people living in urban areas, cities and *your* community?
  - b. Why do you think your knowledge does / does not?
3. Research task: Who is *After the Apology's* Director, Professor Larissa Behrendt?
4. Define 'activism'.
5. How do you think the media portrays Aboriginal people?
6. Write at least 250 words explaining what you think the Director means by '*the past is always present*'.
7. Discuss in pairs or as a class who defines history?
8. How can '*real history*' be taught in schools?

## RELEVANT CURRICULUM AREAS

This study guide hopes to equip students with critical analytical skills, in order to understand why Indigenous peoples continue to experience a lack of social justice and marginalisation, due to the genocidal policies of child removal and assimilation at the hands of the State in both the past and the present. In doing so, students will develop skills in civics and citizenship by being more informed and ideally, motivated to promote change and equality in Australia.

This study guide includes activities specifically tailored to the Year 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 Modern History, English, Geography, and Civics and Citizenship content descriptions. These areas are all taught through the framework of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority as outlined in the Australian Curriculum, with particular reference to the Personal and Social Capability.

*After the Apology* asks students to look beyond the issue of institutional racism in Australia, by presenting the realities of enduring injustices caused by colonisation and the discrepancy of welfare outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

By holding Indigenous knowledge in esteem and teaching learning outcomes from alternate viewpoints, students and teachers can work toward attaining the educational aims set out by the following government documents.

The **Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians** encourages students to:

*'Understand and acknowledge the value of Indigenous cultures and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians [and in doing so] become active and informed citizens'.*

*'Have a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing', with a sense of hope and 'optimism about their lives and the future'.*

*On a social level, it helps students to 'form and maintain healthy relationships' and prepares them 'for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members'.*

(Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs 2008).

## + National Professional Standards for Teachers

The *National Professional Standards for Teachers* (launched in February 2011) have been an important response by the Australian educational system wherein the problems of Indigenous education are critical.

Focus area 1.4 provides strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students while focus area 2.4 mandates teachers to ‘understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians’ (AITSL 2015). These requirements are interwoven and place expectations on all teachers to be committed to challenging colonial paradigms surrounding the delivery of education.

## + General capabilities

Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Intercultural Understanding, Personal and Social Capability



*After the Apology* allows students to acknowledge that literacy exists outside the confines of their English classes. The general capability of *Literacy* asks students to analyse different sources and interpret the use of narrative in alternative contexts. The style and tone of the film brings together multiple perspectives and stories with each element having its own unique stylistic and tonal approach.

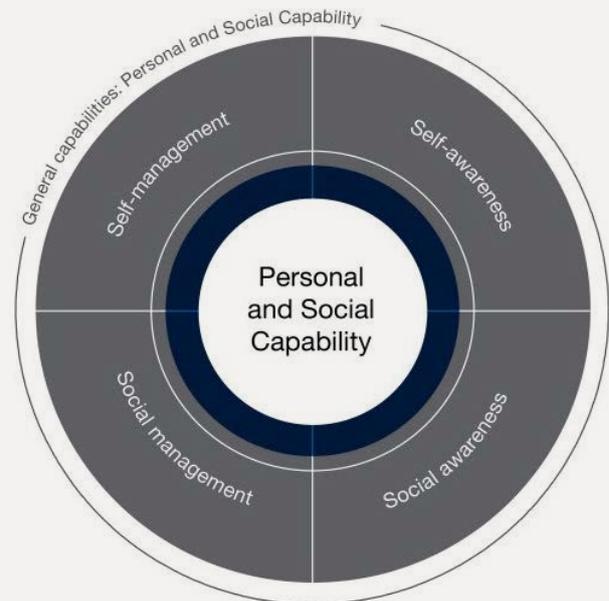
Interspersed with this overarching narrative arc are the four vignettes that provide case studies of contemporary child removal. These are stories told in first person narratives taken from interviews but illustrated through animation.

The *Critical and creative thinking* general capability requires students to think broadly and develop a sophisticated understanding of the world around them. By deepening

their understanding of cultures outside of their own allows students to begin to think critically about alternative ways of knowing.

*After the Apology* develops students’ *Personal and social capability* by encouraging an open dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures. As students learn more about other cultures, particularly the many strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures of their own country, they can improve skills in having empathy for others and building positive relationships. Specifically, Year 7 and 8 students are asked to consider ‘features of post-war reconstruction, including industrialisation, immigration, the provision of social welfare, and attitudes and policies towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and women (ACHMH125)’, for instance. Historical, geographical, civic and economic studies inform students’ personal identity and sense of belonging and offer opportunities to consider ways of contributing to their communities.

As students gain understanding about human experience, past and present, and about their own interconnectedness to people and places across local and global settings, they identify issues and others’ perspectives which inform reflective practice, empathy, communication skills, teamwork and advocacy.



Organising elements for Personal and Social Capability

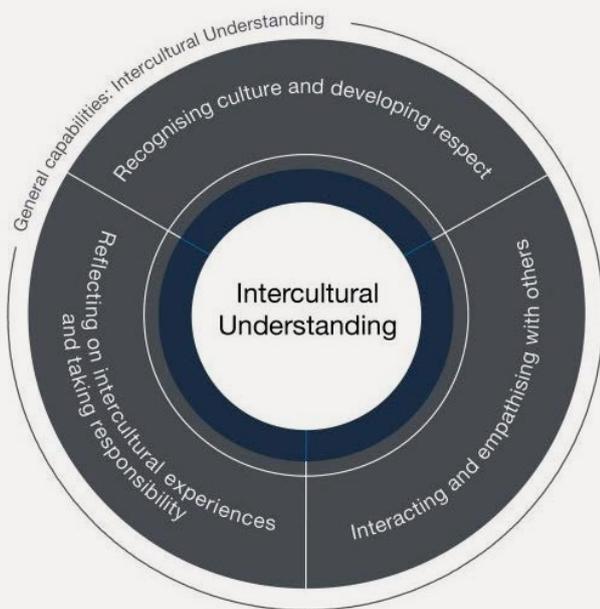
The ‘Social Awareness’ and ‘Social Management’ components of the Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 *Personal and Social Capability*, specifically provide a framework students can scaffold their viewing of *After the Apology* with. They ask students to:

- analyse personal and social roles and responsibilities in planning and implementing ways of contributing to their communities
- assess the extent to which individual roles and responsibilities enhance group cohesion and the achievement

of personal and group objectives

- plan, implement and evaluate ways of contributing to civil society at local, national regional and global levels
- learn to appreciate the effects of civic, social, environmental, economic and business decisions, and the effect of these on their lives and those of others.

Lastly, *After the Apology* allows students to practice their general capability of *Intercultural understanding* by appreciating Australia's social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity. Particularly, the stories told throughout the film enhance students' ability to relate to and communicate across cultures.



Organising elements for Intercultural Understanding

For more information, go to: <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/generalcapabilities/overview/introduction>

## + The Australian Curriculum Links

*Year 11 Modern History – Unit 2: Movements for Change in the 20<sup>th</sup> century*

It is not until Year 11 that students are given a comprehensive framework to explore historical legacies that continue to disadvantage Indigenous Australians today. In Year 11, History students are allowed to study two significant movements for change, including:

1. *Recognition and rights of indigenous peoples*  
*Students study Australian society and ONE other relevant 20th century society, to investigate:*
  - The nature of the relationship of indigenous peoples with their land and their response to perceptions of, and feelings about, the arrival of the colonisers(ACHMH070)
  - The basis on which the colonists claimed sovereignty and imposed con. trol, including conquest, treaty and the doctrine of 'terra nullius'; and the consequences for the legal status and land rights of Indigenous

peoples (ACHMH071)

- The nature of government policies and their impact on indigenous peoples, for example protection, assimilation (including the Stolen Generations), and self-determination (ACHMH072)
- The role of individuals and groups who supported the movement for indigenous recognition and rights, including the methods they used and the resistance they encountered (ACHMH073)
- The economic, political and social challenges and opportunities indigenous peoples have faced, including the role of cultural activity in developing awareness in society(ACHMH074)
- The achievements of indigenous peoples at the end of the 20th century, including the right to vote, land rights/native title, and attempt at reconciliation (ACHMH075)
- The continued efforts to achieve greater recognition, reconciliation, civil rights, and improvements in education and health (ACHMH076)

### 2. *Decolonisation*

*Students select TWO countries from Algeria, Congo, India, Vietnam and East Timor to investigate:*

- The reasons for colonisation and how the country became colonised, including the different situations of the chosen countries, and the nature of those differences(ACHMH077)
- Conditions in the colony at the start of the 20th century, with specific reference to the living conditions of the colonisers and the colonised, the political structure in place, the aspirations of those living under colonisation, and the nature of the economy (ACHMH078)
- The economic and moral challenges to Europe's ability to maintain colonies that resulted from the impact of World Wars I and II (ACHMH079)
- The emergence of movements for decolonisation, the key groups and individuals that pressed for liberation of the colony, the ideas that influenced them, and their struggle to achieve independence (ACHMH080)
- The **significance** of international movements for change that supported the decolonisation process, for example the emerging recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples, movements for international peace and cooperation, and the recognition of human rights (ACHMH081)
- The outcomes of decolonisation, government, democratic freedoms, economic development, education and health care (ACHMH082)
- The key developments over time in the independent country, for example increasing urbanisation, and matters related to governance (single party or democratic **representation**), internal security, social equality, and independent foreign policy (ACHMH083)

*Year 10 Languages / Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages (ACLFWU066)*

Investigate programs, initiatives and techniques that keep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages strong

- Understanding the importance of intergenerational collaboration and transmission in keeping languages strong and discussing some of the associated challenges
- Exploring the role and importance of advocacy in supporting the maintenance and development of language and culture

### 7-10 History

In the Australian Curriculum: History, students gain understanding about human experience and develop skills of historical inquiry as they develop skills in empathy, reflective practice, appreciation of the perspective of others and a disposition to make a contribution to their communities and society more broadly. History provides students opportunities for them to engage with understandings such as historical empathy, contestability, perspectives, cause and effect, and continuity and change.

### 7-10 Geography

Students learn how geographical knowledge informs their personal identity, sense of belonging and capacity to empathise with others, as well as offering opportunities to consider ways of contributing to their communities.

Inquiry-based learning helps students develop their capacity for self-management. It gives them a role in directing their own learning and in planning and carrying out investigations, and provides them with opportunities to express and reflect on their opinions, beliefs, values and questions appropriately.

### 7-10 Civics and Citizenship

Students are encouraged to develop and apply personal, interpersonal and social skills, behaviours and

dispositions, through working collaboratively and constructively in groups, developing their communication, decision-making, conflict resolution and leadership skills, and learning to appreciate the insights and perspectives of others.

### 7-10 English

Language is central to personal and social identity through exploring narrative point of view and the way it shapes different interpretations and responses in readers. Using English to develop communication skills and self-expression assists students' personal and social development as they become effective communicators, able to articulate their own opinions and beliefs and to interact and collaborate with others.

### + Cross-curriculum priority

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures are embedded in all areas of the curriculum. *After the Apology* helps students to achieve the Organising Ideas of this cross-curriculum priority by illuminating the thriving Aboriginal resistance to systemic racism in Australia.

See Table below.

For more information, go to: <http://v7-5.australiancurriculum.edu.au/CrossCurriculumPriorities/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-histories-and-cultures>



Code	Organising ideas
<i>Country/Place</i>	
OI.1	Australia has two distinct Indigenous groups, Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
OI.2	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities maintain a special connection to and responsibility for Country/Place throughout all of Australia.
OI.3	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have unique belief systems and are spiritually connected to the land, sea, sky and waterways.
<i>Culture</i>	
OI.4	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies have many Language Groups.
OI.5	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' ways of life are uniquely expressed through ways of being, knowing, thinking and doing.
OI.6	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have lived in Australia for tens of thousands of years and experiences can be viewed through historical, social and political lenses.
<i>People</i>	
OI.7	The broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies encompass a diversity of nations across Australia.
OI.8	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have sophisticated family and kinship structures.
OI.9	Australia acknowledges the significant contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people locally and globally.

# STUDENT ACTIVITIES



## + Write a Biography

Research the three (3) of the following prominent Indigenous academics and activists and write a 250-word biography:

- PROFESSOR LARISSA BEHRENDT
- THE HON. LINDA BURNEY, MP
- FORMER COMMISSIONER ANDREW JACKOMOS
- COMMISSIONER JUNE OSCAR AO
- SENATOR PATRICK DODSON
- SHIRLEY COLLEEN SMITH AM MBE
- FORMER MAGISTRATE PATRICIA JUNE O'SHANE
- MURIEL BAMBLETT
- MICK GOODA
- PEARL GIBBS
- STAN GRANT, JNR.
- DR ANITA HEISS

## + Critical Discussion / Debate Topics

1. Do all Australians currently enjoy the same access to human rights, civil rights and social justice?
2. 'No system of knowledge can have authority over another'. Discuss.
3. The wrongs committed against Indigenous peoples are, as past Prime Minister John Howard once claimed, 'historic and therefore not the responsibility of Australians today'. Why do you agree or disagree with this sentiment?

## + Make a Class Glossary

1. Working individually, select one of the following terms or definitions below, making sure you don't have the same as anyone else in the class.

Discussed	Apology
Sovereignty	Bias
Mutual respect	Affidavit
Consultation	Protection
Genuine	Matriarchal
Partnership	Cultural safety
Treaty	Neglect
Debate	Racism
Powerless	Sorry
Acknowledge	Care
Empower	FACS
Self-determination	DOSC
Systemic	GMAR
Social justice	

2. Find a suitable definition for your word.
3. Once all students have finished their definitions, as a class, take it in turns to teach the rest of the class the meaning of your word.
4. Now armed with your new knowledge of what these terms mean, select your favourite word or definition, and explain why it appeals to you.

## + A Rights-based Approach

1. The 1975 *Racial Discrimination Act* made racial discrimination illegal in Australia, and overrode any state Act that covered the same area of law and that was inconsistent with the Commonwealth Act.
  - a. Do you think that this Act is important to Australians? Why/why not?
  - b. What might happen if we didn't have this Act protecting Australians?
  - c. Research how members of parliament proposed making changes to Section 18C of this Act in 2016. Summarise why you think these amendments should or should not go ahead.
2. Australia signed the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in 2009, declaring that it agreed with it and intended to give effect to its provisions in Australian laws. The UN document is aspirational, and is not binding in the Commonwealth Parliament.
  - a. Find this Declaration online and summarise two of the Articles that you consider the most important, and explain why.
  - b. Why do you think that it is important to recognise the unique rights inherent to Indigenous people?
3. Why might 'strengths-based approaches' be successful?
4. How might empowerment link to the success of human rights being protected?
5. Research and read the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of a Child (1990). Are these rights being adequately protected today?
6. Conduct research into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. How could these rights be better protected in Australia?
7. Has Australia fulfilled its commitment to human rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, under international law?
8. During the 19th and 20th centuries, the Commonwealth had the power to make laws relating to any race of people in Australia except for Aboriginal people. What does this mean?
9. Conduct an Internet search to find out more about the Children and Young Persons 'Care and Protection' Act 1998.
  - a. What does it say about the need for consultation with families?
  - b. What do you consider are the three most important points of this Act?
  - c. How would you improve this Act to better protect the rights of Aboriginal children and their families?



## + The Stolen Generations

1. Watch a selection of the following musical performances that share stories about The Stolen Generations in order to hold a class discussion:

Paul Kelly with A.B. Original and Dan Sultan, 'Took the Children Away #APRAs, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRvTpFec12o>

  - a. Schools Spectacular 2016, 'Took the children away' with lyrics, <https://youtu.be/H34Y00HrkUU>
  - b. Bob Randall, 'Brown Skinned Baby' (They took me away), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3ytJioxKzl>
  - c. Archie Roach, 'Took the children away' with lyrics, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=br83o\\_JplFw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=br83o_JplFw)
2. In 1995, the Australian government commissioned a national report into the formal Aboriginal child removal policies. The ***Bringing Them Home Report*** included the powerful testimony of over 500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Their testimonies reflect experiences of people caught up in the system. The evidence is performed to demonstrate how the past is still present.
3. Read the recommendations of the Bringing Them Home Report (1997) that resulted from the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Their Families.
  - a. Which of these recommendations do you think would benefit health outcomes for Aboriginal people?
  - a. Do you think these recommendations suffice?
  - a. What different recommendations would you include?
4. Have a class discussion after you have read 'Chapter 11: The Effects', in *Bringing them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*. How did reading this chapter affect you and your classmates?
5. Why is history important? Why must historical perspectives be considered?
6. Think about what *enduring injustice* might be. Discuss as a class how you think the atrocities of colonisation continue to affect the lives of Aboriginal people today?
7. Using a dictionary to help you, what do you think '*intergenerational trauma*' means? How is this different to '*trans-generational trauma*'?
8. Forced removal and alienation are a historic legacy of formal assimilation policies that existed under the guise of 'protection' legislation. Unpack this statement in a 500 word personal response.



## + The Apology

1. Watch a short snapshot of former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's Apology to Aboriginal families: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKWfFp24rA>
  - a. For the full apology, watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xiLnsFyAVqE>
2. What does he mean by a "blemished chapter"?
3. Why do you think it is important that he also apologised to the decedents of those affected by past government assimilation policies?
4. What do you think is the aim of his apology?
5. Why do you think past Prime Ministers never apologised for the government's shameful past?
6. Why is *acknowledgement* important when apologising?
7. A protest banner featured in *After the Apology* reads, "Don't say sorry, do sorry". Explain 5 ways the government can "do sorry".
8. Aboriginal children are being removed at greater rates than at the time of Rudd's speech. Does this demean the value of the Apology to Indigenous people? Why/why not?

## + Still taking children away

In June 2007 9,054 Indigenous children were in out of home care; by June 2016, that number had risen to over 16,816. Indigenous children are ten times more likely to be placed in out of home care than non-Indigenous children.

1. Define 'disproportionate'.
2. Australia's shameful history of The Stolen Generations

- caused a breaking down of family ties, of cultural, of language, and of connections to country. How do you think the children being taken away today, in our generation, will be affected?
3. Write a poem or draw an illustration from the perspective of a young person being taken away from their family by child welfare agencies. Personally reflect on how you feel.
4. A Member of the NSW Legislative Assembly, David Shoebridge speaks throughout the film. He describes what is happening as a 'new stolen generation'.
  - a. What does he mean by this?
  - b. What political party does he represent?
  - c. In pairs, research what the major political parties are doing about the issue of disproportionate child removal from Aboriginal families.
  - d. Explain which party's policies you agree with and why.
5. Write a short one-paragraph story about a time when you were embarrassed and/or felt ashamed.
6. Write a diary entry from the perspective of one of the mothers or fathers featured in *After the Apology*, which describes the many, perhaps conflicting, feelings you have after your child/ren have been taken away by the government.
7. Why do you think case managers lie to mothers, fathers and children affected by removal?
8. When an issue affects people from different towns and different language nations, it can be argued that the issue is actually a systemic one. Explain what you think this means and how it can be overcome.



## + Poverty VS Neglect

**Most Aboriginal children removed are classified as ‘neglected’ because a judgement is made that their environment is not suitable.**

1. Explain why you do/do not believe a comparison of Aboriginal family standards to ‘white’ family standards is fair practice.
2. Suellyn points out that views of child abuse being a part of Aboriginal culture are racist and part of a European construct.
  - a. Define ‘racist’.
  - b. What is a ‘European construct’?
  - c. Do you think different cultures should be allowed to live differently?
  - d. What are the dangers of ‘sameness’ in any society.
3. Non-Indigenous people may view Aboriginal children staying at different family members as ‘neglect’, without understanding the communal nature of Aboriginal parenting. It’s a supportive model for raising children.
  - a. ‘Neglect’ is subjective. Discuss.
  - b. What is meant by ‘children learn from natural consequences’?
4. What issues do you think might arise if:
  - a. Non-English-speaking Aboriginal people have to prove themselves in a western English-speaking court?
  - b. Non-English-speaking Aboriginal people are required to fill out a lot of English-written paperwork?
  - c. Children are removed from families that speak Aboriginal languages and placed with English-speaking non-Aboriginal families?
5. In the film, Audrey explains:
 

*“We need them kids for home culture. They can learn their languages. We can teach him for dancing, we can take him bush and sometimes we take him hunting and teach him what’s bush tucker”.*

Why are these crucial components to the upbringing of

many Aboriginal children?

6. Deb explains how Aboriginal people live with multiple generations in one house. Why do you think welfare agencies would view this as ‘neglect’?
  - a. Do you think that is right?
  - b. Is it unreasonable to believe that all families should be brought up exactly the same in such a multicultural country as Australia? Explain your answer.
7. While many people experience poverty, it is unfair that this is a barrier to providing a loving, caring and safe environment for children to live with their families. Discuss.
8. How might the fact that many child welfare workers have had ‘white’, middle-class upbringings affect their perceptions of Aboriginal households?
9. How may welfare workers bring their own value judgements to Aboriginal families?
10. Research what steps can be taken to ensure ‘cultural awareness’ is practised.
11. The median income in Indigenous households is \$465, in non-Indigenous households it is \$869.
  - c. Why is this the case?
  - d. How can this be argued to be fair?
12. Should people be denied from being parents just because they do not have a lot of money? Why/why not?





### + Aboriginal Child Placement Principle

Kids sometimes might need to be taken from their parents, but they do not need to be taken away from their whole family.

1. Draw a four-point flowchart that outlines the stages of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle.
2. Why do you think there is an emphasis on ensuring Aboriginal children live with Aboriginal families, even if there reside outside of their community?
3. What are the cultural needs of an Aboriginal child?
  - a. How would non-Aboriginal people learn to understand these needs?
4. Despite having the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle framework, in 2016, 69.8% of Aboriginal children in out of home care were placed away from their Aboriginal families. Why do you think this is?
  - a. What do you think the impact would be for their families?
  - b. What do you think the impact would be for the individual child?
  - c. How are the clauses of the following international rights-based frameworks, that Australia has signed, are being breached in these cases?
    - i. United Nations Declaration of the Rights of a Child
    - ii. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
    - iii. United Nations Declaration of Human Rights

5. Define what 'cultural safety' is.
6. As a class, discuss how your school is culturally safe.
7. Do you think that the 'system' is racist across Australia-wide? Explain your answer.
8. Do you think "Protection" and "Care" are appropriate names for these government agencies removing children? Devise two more appropriate names you think are more suitable.

### + Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

Of the 99 cases investigated by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, 66 were people who had been removed from family or country.

1. What was the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody?
2. When did it take place?
3. What are the most shocking elements of the report for you?
4. Write a personal reflection on the emotions you feel as you read the following article: 'Deaths in custody: 25 years after the royal commission, we've gone backwards': <https://theconversation.com/deaths-in-custody-25-years-after-the-royal-commission-weve-gone-backwards-57109>
5. Explain the link between child removal and the juvenile criminal justice system.
6. How do you think the juvenile criminal justice system often fuel a 'cycle of disadvantage'?

#### Confidential evidence, 146 – removed and placed in a group home

*I reckon all my troubles started when I was living in them homes. That's when I first started stealing because I wasn't allowed to have anything and if I wanted something the only way I could get it is get it off someone else, get me brother or sister to buy it or just take it. We were sort of denied everything we wanted, just got what I was given and just be satisfied with that. I felt second-rate. I didn't feel like I got the love I was supposed to get; like a kids supposed to get at that age, because they're more vulnerable at that age.*

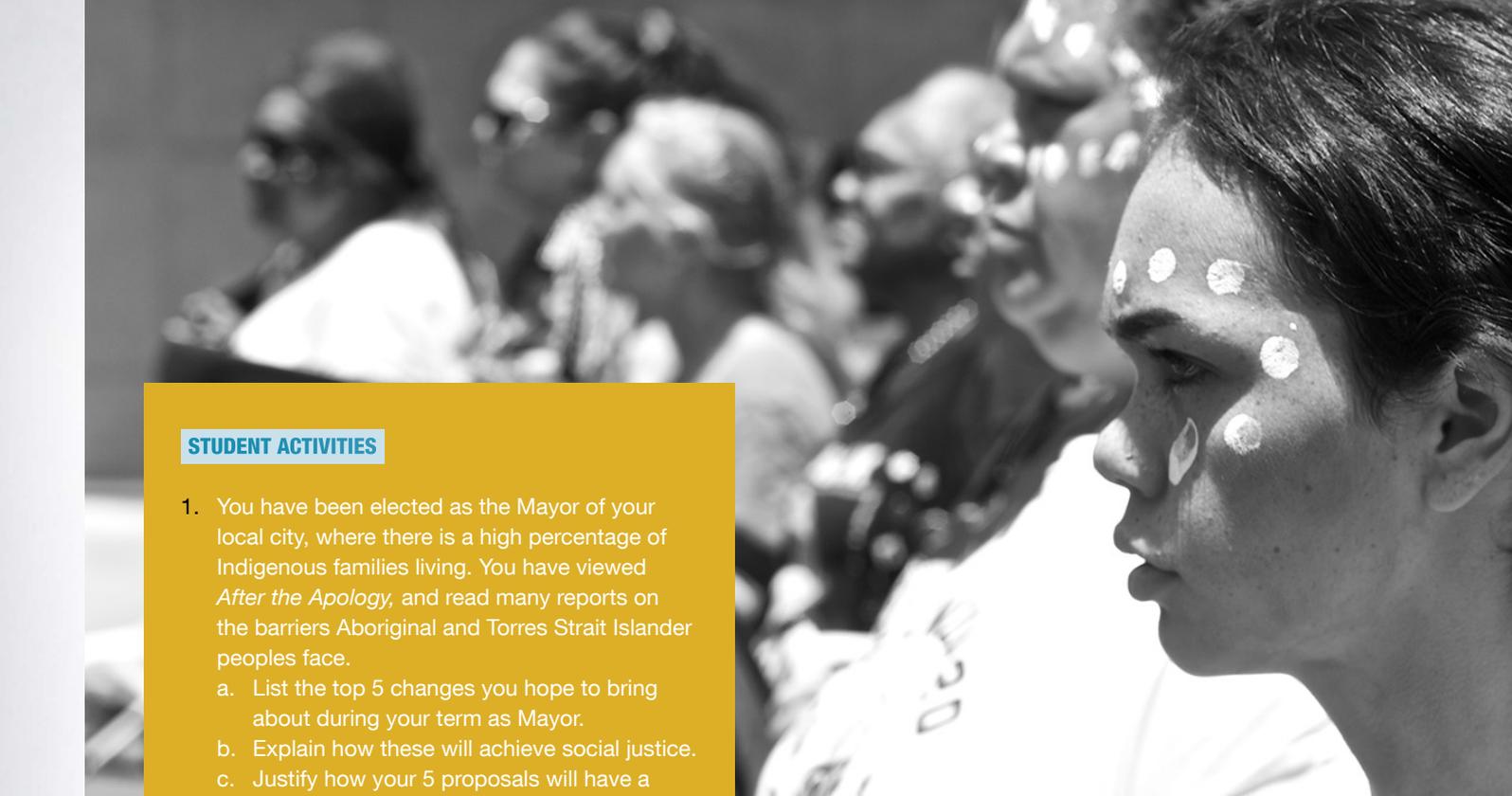




## + Self-determination

All evidence tells us that children do much better in their own family environments. Henceforth, Aboriginal children are best cared for by Aboriginal people. A key recommendation of the Bringing them Home report was self-determination.

1. Find a definition of self-determination and explain it in your own words.
2. Aboriginal educationalist, Chris Sarra, believes programs that promote self-esteem and confidence through engaging with culture with programs that focus on academic excellence are key to self-determination.
  - a. Explain why self-esteem is important to any person.
3. During her speech at the 4th Annual Marg Barry Memorial Lecture, Larissa Behrendt argued that self-determination requires, 'investment in human capital so that communities are developing the capacity to deal with their own issues and problems and have the skill sets necessary to ensure their own well-being'
  - a. What is human capital?
  - b. How can it be invested in?
  - c. What skills sets are necessary for individuals to achieve in their communities?
  - d. What skills have you required when dealing with your own issues or problems when they have arisen?
4. Explain why effective consultation with, and working with Aboriginal people is key to success in Indigenous self-determination?
5. What is a community-run, or community-controlled organisation that serves your community?
6. Mallee District Community Services in Mildura (MDAS) is an excellent example of a successful Aboriginal-run initiative. In 2016, MDAS has 56 families in intensive case management. None had children permanently removed from their care.
  - a. Why do you think this organisation has been so successful?
  - b. Is there a service like MDAS in your community? Find the nearest service that is similar to MDAS and write a brief summary of their mission.
7. Provide 3 ways that government agencies can ensure they treat *all* clients with respect.
8. Why is "prevention better than a cure"?
9. How are welfare agencies and organisations that assist communities funded?
  - a. Do you believe more money should be invested in community-run organisations? Why/why not?
  - b. How can these organisations receive more funding?
  - c. More funding goes into out-of-home care than it does into early intervention programs. Why do you think this is?
10. What are the **guiding principles** featured in the film that work to empower communities and to build a network within the communities?
11. Explain how you think sitting down and speaking directly with families will help the current situation of Indigenous over-representation in welfare cases?



## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. You have been elected as the Mayor of your local city, where there is a high percentage of Indigenous families living. You have viewed *After the Apology*, and read many reports on the barriers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples face.
  - a. List the top 5 changes you hope to bring about during your term as Mayor.
  - b. Explain how these will achieve social justice.
  - c. Justify how your 5 proposals will have a practical effect in helping overcome areas of disadvantage that disproportionately affect Indigenous people.
2. Mayors and people in positions of power are not the only agents of change in communities.
  - a. Define who an 'agent of change' might be.
  - b. Who are agents of change in your community and why?
  - c. How do you strive to be an agent of change?
3. *After the Apology* highlights the diverse range of women who are fighting for their families. Who's story affected you the most and why?
4. The injustice these Aboriginal women face is clearly a national issue. What do you think should be done to improve such a widespread problem?

## STUDENT ACTIVITY

### + Document Analysis

1. Analyse one of the articles below written by different people on the social issue of Indigenous disadvantage in Australia. Identify the author, the different perspectives and the tone of each article, for example, sympathetic, assertive or respectful.
  - a. *The Apology to the Stolen Generations* Reconciliation Australia: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Apology-fact-sheet.pdf>
  - b. *Kevin Rudd says sorry*: <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/prime-minister-kevin-rudd-made-today-an--historic-one-for-australia/2008/02/13/1202760342960.html>
  - c. *Reconciliation after the Apology*: [http://www.innersydneyvoice.org.au/our-projects/annual-marg-barry-memorial-lecture/](http://www.innersydneyvoice.org.au/our-projects/annual-marg-barry-memorial-lecture/reconciliation-after-the-apology/#.WcXCHtMjE_U)
2. Investigate services provided to your local community, including social welfare and support services, and considering ways to assist such organisations in promoting and delivering their services to improve Indigenous social justice.
3. Why do people have such different views on the issue?
4. Why is it important to understand that there are alternative ways of knowing and understanding outside of the western framework of thinking?
5. Discuss a definition of 'epistemology'.
6. Think of an example of conflicting perspectives and justify the value of each. For instance, western ideas versus Indigenous Australian ideas of what a family looks like.
7. Develop a class response to the issue.



**CLASS ACTIVITY**

**+ Stereotyping**

- a) Discuss as a class how racism affects the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people?
- b) What are some recent examples of racism that has been in the media?
- c) **Picture analysis:** What stereotypes are being portrayed in the newspaper cartoons above. How does the class think these would be damaging for Aboriginal people?



**INDIVIDUAL OR PAIRED RESEARCH ACTIVITY**

**+ Strengths-based Approach towards better health**

Saint-Jacques, et al. (2009) outlines achieving a strengths-based approach towards achieving better health outcomes through six principles:

1. *Every individual, family, group and community has strengths, and the focus should be on these strengths*
2. *rather than “fixing” a problem.*
2. *The community is a rich source of resources*
3. *Interventions are based on client self-determination. Define ‘self-determination’*
4. *Collaboration is central through a strong practitioner-client relationship*
5. *Outreach is employed as a preferred mode of intervention*
6. *All people have the inherent capacity to learn, grow and change*
  - a. In pairs, choose a particular health service that is provided to Aboriginal people.
  - b. Work through each of the six principles listed above. Explain how you and your partner could improve this particular health service making use of each of the six principles of a strengths-based approach.

**CLASS ACTIVITY**

**+ Equality VS Fairness**

- c. Fairness is not receiving “equal” treatment. It is allowing difference. Discuss what these statements mean critically and in depth as a class. You might like to define these terms to assist the discussion.



**INDIVIDUAL OR PAIRED RESEARCH ACTIVITY:**

**+ Empowerment**

- d. Study the table below outlining a framework for empowerment at a family, workplace and wider community lever, provided by Tsey & Every (2000)
- 9. Discuss how each of these levels of empowerment attributes relate to improving welfare outcomes for Aboriginal people.
- 10. Why are long-term approaches so important to improving welfare conditions rather than 'quick fixes'?
- 11. What are 'ecological factors'? Why are they important to consider in welfare cases?
- 12. How can approaches to improving health conditions aim to be empowering?
- 13. Taking these approaches into account, write whether you agree or disagree with the Close the Gap campaign and why: <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/projects/close-gap-Aboriginal-health>

**+ 'Closing the Gap'**

Watch the following video: 'Close the Gap – Jackie Huggins' and respond to the questions below. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCpftVmVUPE>

- 1. What does Jackie Huggins suggest will help 'close the gap'?

- 2. What does Jackie Huggins think is a sad reflection on Australia?
- 3. What has been the only successful target of the Close the Gap campaign, and why has this been successful?
- 4. List three strategies you believe will achieve meaningful improvement in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.
- 5. Jackie Huggins believes that the Redfern Statement acts as a blueprint for engagement in communities. In your own words, explain what the Redfern Statement is.
- 6. Why do Aboriginal people feel like they are not seen as equal before the law?
- 7. Why is the aim to 'keep kids on Country' important?

**+ The battle ensues through Protest, Movements & Maintenance of Rights**

The women who are taking on the system are fighting a David and Goliath battle. The film captures the energy, capability and resourcefulness of women like Debra and Jen Swan, Hazel Collins and Suellyn Tighe who are challenging the system to bring about real change. Their world is chaos and the stakes could not be higher. What they are fighting for are their families, their communities and for the childhoods of their grandchildren.

As a larger backdrop, there are the ghosts of the stolen generation and the policies that saw the removal of Aboriginal children for the purpose of assimilation.

**Table 1: A framework for empowerment evaluation.**

Wallerstein's levels of empowerment	Corresponding settings applied in evaluation	Related empowerment attributes/ variables (evaluation criteria)
Personal or psychological empowerment	The family	Improved perceptions of self-worth and mutability of social environment as evidenced by: empathy and perceived ability to help others; emotional responses to change; critical thinking abilities of root causes of problems, belief in one's ability to exert control; and a sense of coherence about one's place in the world.
Organisational empowerment	The workplace	Stronger social networks and community/ organisation competence to collaborate and solve problems as evidenced by: perceptions of support, satisfaction and community connectedness; and changes in network function and utilisation.
Community empowerment	The wider community	Actual improvements in environmental or health conditions as evidenced by: changes in public policy; systems level changes; and the community's ability to bring in resources to create healthier environments.

Source: Adapted from Wallerstein, 1992

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