

OUR PLACE, MY STORY



Port Macquarie
Bicentenary Year
Schools Storytelling Project

RESOURCE PACK

Exploring our history,
our place and our stories.

This project received funding through the Regional Tourism Bushfire Recovery grants program, an Australian Government bushfire recovery initiative, & Port Macquarie Hastings Council



BUILDING OUR FUTURE



**National Bushfire
Recovery Agency**

An Australian Government
bushfire recovery initiative



Port Macquarie-Hastings
Bicentenary 2021



PORT MACQUARIE
HASTINGS COUNCIL

PORT MACQUARIE-HASTINGS COUNCIL
RESPECTFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE
BIRPAI PEOPLE AS THE TRADITIONAL
CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND, SEAS AND
RIVERS ON WHICH WE WORK AND
LIVE. COUNCIL COMMITS TO BUILDING
POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS, RESPECT AND
OPPORTUNITIES WITH OUR LOCAL
ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY.

OUR PLACE, MY STORY



Port Macquarie's Bicentenary Year

This year marks the 200th anniversary since the establishment of Port Macquarie as one of Australia's earliest Penal Settlements. Council acknowledges that this caused suffering and displacement for the traditional owners, the Birpai people. Recognising this long, diverse and challenging history, Council and its Bicentenary Working Group invited residents and visitors in a wide range of activities designed to reflect on our past, celebrate our present, and look forward to an inclusive and positive future. More information about the Bicentenary Year can be found at portmacquarieinfo.com.au/whats-on/bicentenary

Our Story, My Place: A Storytelling Project for our local schools

Having reflected on the stories and events of our past, with the ongoing theme of "Our Place", we wish to capture the essence of our present place, by inviting our children and youth to share their own stories as they connect with what makes our regional a special place to live. These stories will be captured to form part of our future history; a time capsule of our young people's connection to our place in Port Macquarie's Bicentenary Year. Stories will be shared digitally and a collection of works published in a portfolio.

Contact Us

This project is being co-ordinated by Port Macquarie-Hastings Council's Education team, in collaboration with the Destination and Cultural Development team. Please direct enquiries to:

Jenna O'Connell, Education Officer, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council

02 6581 8128 | jenna.oconnell@pmhc.nsw.gov.au

Copyright notice

Our storytellers have generously shared their stories under a license specifically for the purpose of inspiring students to participate in this project. Should you wish to use any piece within this resource for any other purpose outside this project, please contact the storyteller directly to discuss licencing fees.

OUR PLACE, MY STORY

→ How to use this resource pack

We have designed this project with the aim of providing a good balance between guidance and flexibility, to allow you to deliver the project in a way that suits you and your students, and encourages creativity and personal style in the storytelling process.

In this resource pack, you'll find a range of stories told in various forms by local storytellers, and an accompanying description about how they have used their storytelling medium to communicate their connection to our place. These are designed to spark conversations with and ideas amongst your class about the different ways stories can be told, and how we can express our connection to place through stories. Feel free to use these resources in any way you find helpful, for the purposes of inspiring students to produce their own works. We've also provided some discussion questions to help you.

→ How should student works be presented?

As we are planning to print a copy of the final student works portfolio, we have decided to keep this project focused on print-based storytelling methods. In the project pack, you will find 2 PDF templates (landscape and portrait options) for students to use in creating their story. Students may choose to express their story in anyway they wish, keeping within the boundaries of the box on the template . A space has also been provided for them to add their name, age, school and story title.

If your students find these templates limiting or experience technical difficulties in using them, please contact us and we'll work with you to consider alternative options.

→ Submitting student works

All submissions are due by Wednesday, 15th September, 2021

You can submit works electronically to jenna.oconnell@pmhc.nsw.gov.au (group or individual submissions accepted) or contact us to book a physical collection by our Education team.

OUR PLACE, MY STORY



Conversation questions

The theme, “Our Place, My Story”

- What is a story?
- What are the different ways people share stories?
- Why are stories important?
- What is one of your favourite stories? How is it told (words, pictures, other?) and why is it a favourite?
- What do you think of when you hear “our place”? What does it mean to you?
- What are your favourite places in our town? What makes them special?
- Can you think of a special memory you have about being in this place? Who were you with? What were you doing? What made it special?

The stories provided in this resource

- What method has this storyteller used to tell their story?
- What do you think this story is about?
- What does this story make you think about?
- What do you like or find interesting about the way this story has been told?
- How do you think this story connects with the theme of “our place”?
- What techniques have been used to help tell the story?

STORY 1:

'Mudyi-galang Wubunginya' (Underwater Friends)

Storyteller:: Mel Streater, Marramarra Creative

Storytelling method: Acrylic on canvas (1m x 75cm)



About the story

From May to November the Humpback whales make their annual migration along the East coast of Australia.

Within this artwork you can see the meeting circles and tracks the whales take from the cool Antarctic waters in the South to the warmer breeding grounds in the North where their pods grow, learn and play. The sun rays indicate the warmth they are seeking. The mountains and caves reflect the beautiful and vast landscape below the surface of our ocean.



About the artwork title

The artwork title, 'Mudyi-galang Wubunginya', is written in Wiradjuri language. When broken down 'Mudyi' translates to 'friend', galang is a 'plural' or 's', and 'Wubunginya' is 'underwater'. Directly translating to 'Friends Underwater'. In Wiradjuri language the Subject or most important element comes first, hence 'Friends' followed by 'Underwater'. But for ease of reading in English, it has been changed to 'Underwater Friends'.



About the storyteller

Mel Streater is a descendant of the Wiradjuri nation who was born and lives in the beautiful seaside town of Guruk, (Port Macquarie) on Birpai Country. Her love of art developed at a young age while watching her dad paint and sculpt. As her hands and understanding of the world grew, Mel recognised that she was driven to capture and create beautiful moments.

Mel has a Bachelor of Creative Arts and Design majoring in Graphic Design from Charles Sturt University. She also has a certificate in Wiradjuri Language and is on a journey of furthering her understanding and education in her ancestral country's native tongue.

Her visual narrative is crafted with detailed, fine line illustrations and a bold contrasting colour palette.

Mel enjoys tying visuals and written content together to share ideas and stories. Central to all her work is a desire to design from a culturally aware and ethical framework. Her passion for environmental sustainability and preservation, and social justice drives her to choose clients whose principles align with her own. To view more of Mel's work, visit marramarracreative.com

Storyteller:
Mel Streeter
Title:
'Mudyi-galang
Wubunginya'
(Underwater Friends)



STORY 2:

Photograph of a Man on the Kindee Bridge

Storyteller: Barbara Westwood

Storytelling method: Poetry



The story behind the story

'You should write something for this competition', my friend said at the writers' meeting.

I shrugged my shoulders, 'I don't know'. I hesitated. 'I'd like to enter it but as you heard, the prose or poem needs to be based on local history. As a newcomer to this area, I don't know anything about the history of this region.'

On the way home, my thoughts went back to the competition. It was a challenge and all my life I've liked challenges. What were my chances of finding something I could write about? I'd been here just over a year. The places, which meant something to the local people living in this area for many years, wouldn't trigger anything for me.

But the thought about the competition, like a motif in a piece of music kept coming back into my mind. Then, one day, I remembered a photograph of my husband Bill on the Kindee Bridge. My friend had taken the photo when she went with Bill for a drive to show him the wooden structure. As a retired engineer he was interested in seeing this surviving suspension bridge.

Suddenly I felt excited. I opened my iPad, scrolled through the photos, and there it was, the Kindee Bridge spanning the banks of the Hastings River and Bill, a man of eighty-four, standing on the bridge. Both old and yet still living, functioning.

In the next few days that image filled my brain. I looked at the photo again and again until, one day, I felt a twinge, a spark of creative thought. Like a seedling breaking through the soil showing its first leaf, the poem started to take shape in my head. It would be about an old, unique bridge, the last of its kind in NSW, and the old man, unique as an individual, the last in his family's generation. Both the bridge and the man had been a miniscule part of life. But it was a long way from the idea to the poem on the page.

The other members of my writing group had already finished their projects or were well advanced in their tasks. I was still thinking about mine. A week later looking again at the photo, I wrote the first line:

A man stands on the bridge

Then I stopped. What now? I needed images, similes and metaphors. They should apply to the bridge as well as to the man. It was supposed to be poetry not prose. After a few minutes I typed a few more lines:

*he leans on the rail
his hair grey as the wood
face leathered by sun, rain and wind
like the bridge, he is the oldest in his family
remembers...*

I stopped again. What could the old man on the bridge remember today from the past here, in this area? It had to be something historically true and significant, something that was related to the bridge, or passing over it.

I read online about the bridge and the region and learnt more about timber logging and wool shipping from Port Macquarie. Bullock teams were used to transport those commodities from the inland to the port. I liked the word 'bullocks', but could my man remember the bullocks? How old did he need to be now? I smiled to myself, he couldn't be over 100 years old, unless the bullocks had disappeared late, when he was still a child. Was it possible? Again, I looked online but there was no detailed information about bullocks in the Camden area. I saved my draft and called my local friend from Wauchope. She knew almost everyone around here. I asked her who could give me that information. Helpful as always, she told me the name of a man from the Historical Society in Wauchope.

The next day I called him. I thought, it must have sounded a bit silly when I told him I was trying to write a poem about the Kindee Bridge and I wanted to know about the history of bullock teams. According to him, the bullocks disappeared in 1941. Until then they were still working hard because of the war and the shortage of petrol for the heavy trucks. I said thank you to the man at the other end of a line and put down the receiver. Hurrah, I said to myself. My man still could remember the bullocks and be alive today.

From that moment it was just writing and rewriting those lines, looking for the precise nouns and verbs and getting rid of the unnecessary words. The poem was getting shorter and shorter but also tighter. When I was rewriting it, I had in my mind the image of a sculptor chiselling off superfluous layers of stone until what was left was true to his intended idea. After another two weeks most of the poem was on the page. I still didn't have the ending. It was an observation poem and as such needed to end with a summary, a general idea.

It took me another two weeks to find the right words to express my thought. But finally, it was finished. Just in time before the closing of the competition.

At the launch of the anthology, I was nicely surprised to learn that my Kindee Bridge poem was highly commended. When I was collecting the certificate, I felt as if I belonged, and Port Macquarie had now become my place.

Photograph of a Man on the Kindee Bridge*

A man stands on the bridge
alone, his hair grey
as the wood of the rail he leans on,
his face leathered
by sun, wind and rain,
above him the trusses
criss-crossing the sky.
Like the bridge, he is the oldest
in his family— remembers
the bullock drays, pack horses.
No one has kept the record of his daily life;
no one knows how many people and carriages
passed over the bridge
yet
the man and the bridge
have been integral parts
in the wheel of life.

*Kindee Bridge, built in 1936, over the Hastings River is the oldest timber suspension bridge in NSW.

Storyteller:

Barbara Westwood

Title:

Photograph of a Man on
the Kindee Bridge

STORY 3:

Three Brothers Mountains Birpai Country

Storyteller: Corina Latimore (inspired by the story, as told by Aunty Marion Holten)

Storytelling method: Painting

Note: The following story may be distressing for some people to hear. Please consider whether it is appropriate to share with your students.



Inspiration for the artwork

Corina Latimore's artwork was inspired by the story of The Three Brother Mountains. Below is a copy of the story, as told by Aunty Marion Holten:

"I'm here to tell you about the mythology of the Three Brothers Mountains as told to me by my elders, passed down to them for generations. It's a mythology story which was used as a teaching aid.

When the land was flat there was a large lake whose spirit was the mother of three brothers. Dooragan, the eldest, Mooragan, the middle son and Booragan was the youngest son. Booragan had more favour in his mother's eyes than his siblings.

As a part of their initiation, the brothers were fostered out to the other clans among the Birpai nation. Dooragan was fostered out to the Stingray People in the north, Point Plomer. Mooragan to the Crab People, also in the north at Lake Cathie. And Booragan to the Shark People of the south, at Harrington.

On their way to the north, Dooragan tried to persuade Mooragan to help him kill their youngest brother so that he might have more favour in his mother's eyes. Mooragan refused. But this didn't stop Dooragan fleeing to the south to kill Booragan.

The Willie Wagtail saw what had happened and upon telling the brothers' mother, she got very angry and killed the two brothers for murdering Booragan.

When the great spirit Eagle heard what had happened, he became very angry. As punishment for the mother, he turned the three brothers into mountains. Booragan into the mountain to the south. Mooragan into the middle mountain and Dooragan into the mountain of the north, dividing his mother's domain into two, which is now known as Watson Taylor Lake and Queens Lake. Also, as punishment for the mother's actions, he turned the mother into the Comboyne Mountain, so that she would forever look over her sons, the Three Brothers, and know her wrongdoings.

The moral of the story is favouritism leads to jealousy which then leads to wrongdoings. Don't jump to conclusions - and that's why the mother was punished, because she jumped to conclusion and murdered the innocent son. Because of the mother's actions, women are not allowed to go up North Brother Mountain."

Storyteller:

Corina Latimore

Title:

Three Brothers Mountains
Birpai Country



STORY 4:

Oxley Beach Shifting Tides

Storyteller: Cherie Morton, Reimagined Images

Storytelling method: Photography



About the story

A photograph of the water movement and dawn looking out to Bird Rock.

This spot can be found at the Northern end of Oxley Beach. A spot that is part of “our place” and this is my story about Oxley Beach. It has been my family beach for as long as I can remember back; a place my family has met and gathered, we have said our good byes and hellos to different family members at Oxley Beach, we have had Christmas and Easter gatherings and it is also a place we have set our loved ones off on a spiritual journey with the waves and the tides. This exact spot photographed is the spot we have said goodbye to my grandfather, my auntie, an uncle, and a cousin. This photograph was taken for a family member who could not be with us on one of our goodbye gatherings because they lived overseas.

The water in this photo represents the movement of life. The rocks represent the solid foundation of family, Bird Rock is like a family member who stands not with us but they still stand solid in our hearts always and the dawn light in the sky and on the water is like the light that our memories of loved ones gives us, its warm and soft and you can feel it if you close your eyes and imagine the sun just gently reaching your skin.

About the storyteller and her storytelling medium

I have been a photographer since I was just 15 or 16 and for me photography has been a way for me to share my thoughts and feelings without having to actually explain with words (except for this project). It has been a way to share the way I see my world, my space and my story in a wonderful creative way, it was also a way that I found courage when I had none. Photography is a way you can use light and moments to paint a picture that is filled with reality or imagination. You can take a picture of a real moment like for a newspaper article or an assignment or you can turn what’s in front of you into a magical story by finding the lights secret and moving it and capturing it in special way to help someone else not just see what you see but feel what you imagine. Photography for me now is like breathing, it just happens, and maybe I take it for granted sometimes but then one day someone feels the story behind a photo without me explaining it and it reminds me of the powerful connection that can come from sharing your story

Storyteller:
Cherie Morton
Title:
Oxley Beach Shifting Tides



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



To See the Ocean For the First Time, Todd Fuller

In 2018, Todd Fuller was invited by the Glasshouse Regional Gallery to spend some time in Port Macquarie and create an artwork exploring a local story. The animation Todd created, To see the ocean for the first time, tells the story of local icon Harry Thompson. Although this artwork is in animation form, it is a wonderful example of how a local story can be told in art form.

Free Primary and Secondary education kits can be downloaded from the Glasshouse website:

<https://www.glasshouse.org.au/Education/Gallery-Education-Kits>



Heritage In a Box

The Heritage in a Box is a free education resource that has been developed as an aid for teachers in the instruction of Port Macquarie's local Colonial history in accordance with Stage 2 of the HSIE syllabus. The kit includes a comprehensive teacher's guide providing historical detail, ideas for student activities, classroom posters, reference books, DVDs and excursion ideas. In addition to the kit is a box of historic artefacts.

Schools are able to book out this resource through Port Macquarie Library or the Glasshouse:

<https://www.glasshouse.org.au/Education/Heritage-in-a-Box>



Port Macquarie Museum

Port Macquarie Museum hosts The Story Port: an online portal where you can discover, learn, browse and explore our online curated stories about life at Port Macquarie. There are many other resources on the site and at the museum that may be of further interest.

<https://portmuseum.org.au/stories.html>