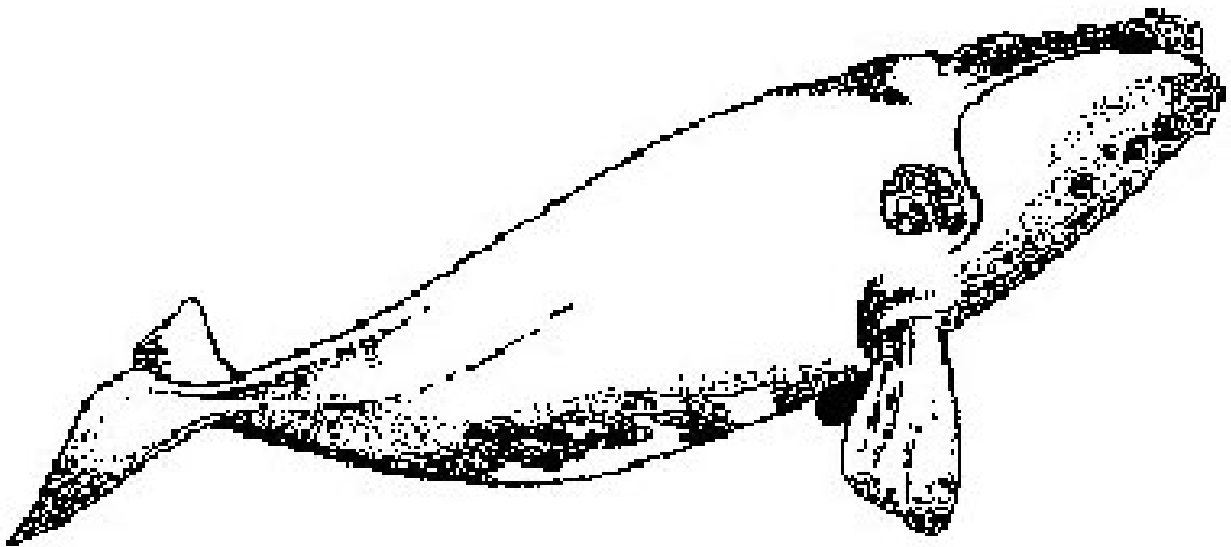


Kondili the whale a Ramindjeri and Kurna story

Teaching resources including the story, song lyrics,
link to the song, background information and
suggested activities



Kondili, the whale

Many years ago in the Dreaming there was a man called **Kondili**. Whenever **Kondili** walked or moved his feet sparks and fire flew out from them.

Kondili's friends and other people who lived in the area were so fascinated by the sparks and fire as they had never seen fire before.

One day a man called **Tiritpa** saw **Kondili**'s fire and he decided that he would like to have some.

Instead of asking **Kondili** would he share his fire **Tiritpa** was planning how he could get some of the fire without asking.

Tiritpa spoke to his friend **Tjintrin** about a plan he had to take some of **Kondili**'s fire without asking.

Tiritpa and **Tjintrin** asked all **Kondili**'s friends to come to the party. The friends that were invited **Nakkudla**, **Watteparu**, and **Mandiltu**.

The party began at the beach where **Kondili** made a warm fire for every one to dance around the people loved **Kondili**'s fire as the food tasted better when it was cooked and fire was nice and warm to be around when the weather was cold.

Everyone was having a great time dancing around when suddenly **Tiritpa** and **Tjintrin** came out of the bushes with their spears and threw them at **Kondili**.

One spear hit **Kondili** in the neck and fire sparks flew out everywhere.

Kondili was hurting so much he jumped into the sea and he changed into a whale. Water spurted out of his wound.

His friends jumped into the sea after him and **Nakkudla** became a shark **Watteparu** became a seal and **Mandiltu** became the stingray.

Tiritpa and **Tjintrin** were punished for spearing **Kondili** and they became a lark and the willywagtail as we know them today and they were never able to use fire.

This is a Kurna version of the Kurna/Ramindjeri story set near Victor Harbor, South Australia, as told by Cherylyne Catanzariti with permission from Veronica Brodie, using some Kurna words.

A Ramindjeri version of this story, together with teaching activities, is included in the book *Ngarrindjeri people and environment: past present and future*, sent to all DECS R-7 schools in 2002.

See following pages for background information, song lyrics, song link and suggestions for learning activities.

Kondili song

Verse 1

Tiritpa and Kondili were in the form of men.
They'd gone to a ceremony,
Just the two of them.
Kondili started dancing
Without a worry or a care
And every time he moved his feet
Sparks flew everywhere.

Verse 2

Tyintrin the little wagtail and Tiritpa the lark
Fought over who would spear Kondili
And grab some of his spark.
They both attacked poor Kondili
With their sharpened spear.
They hit Kondili in the neck
Just below the ear.

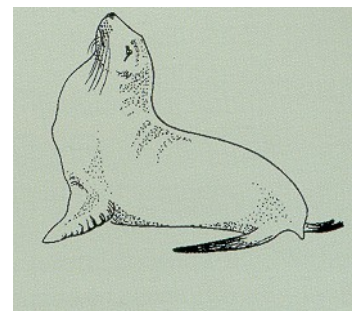
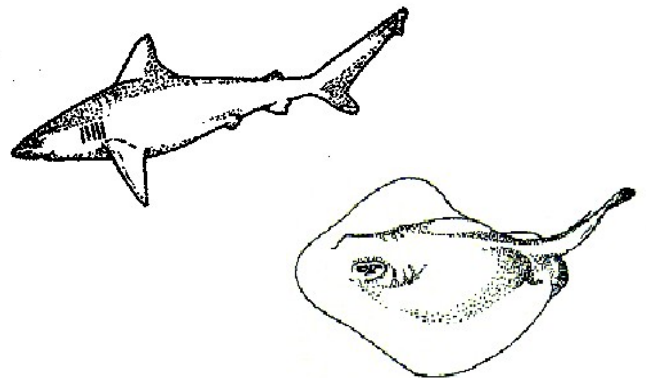
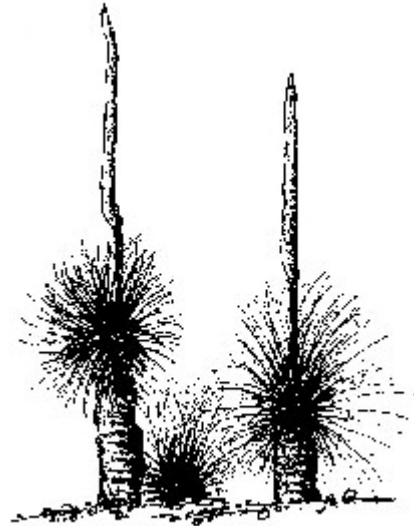
Verse 3

Tiritpa, Tiritpa was a little lark.
Mantidlu's a stingray
Nakkudla's a shark.
Watteparu is a seal with a throaty bark.
Kondili is a whale, the keeper of the spark.

Verse 4

Kondili he was hurt so much
He jumped into the sea
Nakkudla, Watteparu, Mantidlu were the other three.
Now they swim the sea together
Kondili's now a whale, Nakkudla's a shark,
Watteparu's a seal, Mantidlu's a stingray - with a barbed tail.

Repeat verse 1



Song lyrics by Buck McKenzie, *Kondili Song* performed by Malu Wildu recorded as part of the *Musica Viva In Schools Program*. Recording reproduced with the kind permission of Musica Viva In Schools and Buck McKenzie.



[Click here](http://www.aboriginaleducation.sa.edu.au/pages/Educators) to download the song (if reading on line) or go to:
www.aboriginaleducation.sa.edu.au/pages/Educators
then click on 'Kondili the whale' song by Buck McKenzie' (3 Mg MP3 file, allow time to download).

Eileen Wanganeen, 'Kondili the whale' and other Dreaming story teaching activities

Our Kondili unit incorporates English, The Arts and Studies of Society and Environment. The students have learnt the Kondili song which has been written using Kurna language by Buck McKenzie and first sung by Cherylynne Catanzariti and Buck.

... using puppets

The students are each **making a stuffed paper bag puppet** based on one of the characters they have chosen from the Kondili story and they're working towards their final **performance** in which the main characters will have two lines each using the words of the song as their script. The main characters are Nakkudla (shark), Mantidlu (stingray), Kondili (whale), Wateparu (seal), Tiritpa (lark), Tyintrin (willy wagtail) which are the Kurna names.

The children who do not have a major character are not left out because they're making up **puppets to represent other creatures from the sea**. The puppets will be attached to sticks to be held up high. Some of the girls in the class expressed concern that so many of the characters from Dreaming stories are males and so for our purposes, some of the characters have been changed to females.

We're trying to keep the stories alive for the generations to come and we want the kids to feel proud of being Aboriginal and proud of their stories. We're trying to have the children make connections with Dreaming stories from the past and to show the relevance and importance of the stories to them in the present.

I want them to think how they can make their paintings of Dreaming stories contemporary. One way to help make the link for them is to take them on **excursions**, especially **to places which are relevant to the stories** and to more natural environments. Last year we went to Morialta Falls with Uncle Dookie and Andrew Lindsay.

The children are encouraged to make the link between the animal characters in the stories and humans and how now people often have a **spiritual link with a particular animal and/or plant and it is like their brother or sister and they have to care for it**.

One class made **shadow puppets** for a performance based on the **Narungga Dreaming story about Winda the owl** and a Western Australian story *How the birds got their colours*. We used an overhead projector, a sheet and the shadow puppets. For the colourful bird puppets, we used different coloured cellophane. The children gradually learnt skills like having only the puppets showing on the sheet screen and not their heads. The unit took about five weeks.

Nola, another teacher and I, worked with a Year 2-4 class and based on **Tjilbruke** and other Dreaming stories, the students made **costumes which consisted of masks, hats and other props**, eg spears, to symbolise the characters from the stories. Audiences love the performances and are usually another class and sometimes parents. We always try to link hands on activities with the stories such as an excursion, play or song.

... create an artwork based on a story first

One successful strategy we have learned from the book and course on **Aboriginal art and the Dreaming** is that if students **create an artwork** based on a story first, they're more likely to write at length about it after. The middle primary class wrote pages and pages after they'd done their artwork. **Usually teachers have the students write their story first and then illustrate it, but the reverse works much better**, especially if they spend time first working out symbols to tell the story in their artwork. They **Painted their stories on canvas**.

Reprinted from p. 17 *Aboriginal voices: activities and resources for English*, a DECS book sent to all DECS schools in 2000

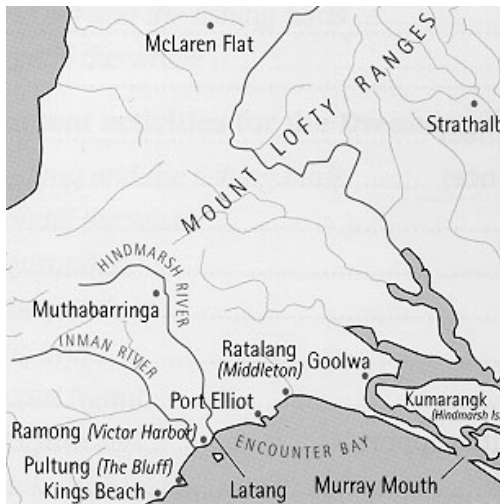
More activities related to Kondili the whale

Read the story aloud and discuss what can be learnt from the story about how to behave, the environment and spirit world. **Retell** the story in words and later through art, drama, song.

Make puppets or costumes, **paint** a relevant backdrop and perform the story. **Make** a video essay of it and/or **record** it in photographs with text.

View the animated story of Kondili the whale which is on *The Dreaming* series 6, on video or DVD, by Aboriginal Nations, a copy of which is available to schools through DECS Tape Services www.tapeservices.sa.edu.au.

Listen to then **sing** the song of 'Kondili the whale' (see page 2).



Show places mentioned in the story including Hindmarsh River Valley and Victor Harbor. Learners can **adapt** the map here (which is a portion of the map on p 6 of *Ngarrindjeri people and environment: past, present and future* or others available in the school).

Read the life stories of Ramindjeri people, Bernice Karpany, Hector Rigney and Marj Tripp, in the book *Ngarrindjeri people and environment: past, present and future*. They all grew up in or near Victor Harbor.

Read the Ramindjeri version of Kondili in the same book and talk about how there can be different versions of stories depending on the age of listeners.

Research the various creatures mentioned in the story and draw and write about them. Talk about the appearance of each. Talk about the differences between fur, feathers, scales, shark, sting-ray and whale skin and the advantages and disadvantages of each for different purposes. **Find out** which particular whales and seals are found near Victor Harbor.

Locate and **view** nature videotapes or find reference books, Internet sites or CD Rom showing whales and the other characters from the story then share learning. Links could be made to the Science and Arts learning areas.

Find out what is being done to protect the species in the story and which factors endanger their lives. Compare this to the way Ngarrindjeri people protect their *ngatji* (totem), a plant or animal to which they are spiritually related and which they protect.

Research, draw, paint and practice the movements and characteristics of the various creatures and imitate this. The following notes may help:

- stingray gently moves the ends of its 'wings' to glide through the shallow water just before dark
- fish move their tails from side to side, sometimes fast, sometimes slow
- seals sit up and they swim with fins close to their sides for speed
- whales dive, roll and seem to play
- skylarks run along the ground, fly low, sing as they ascend, hover then dive to earth. The skylark has extremely long hind claws and a tail which appears as a shaft when flying
- willie wagtails run along the ground, perch on animals, have a chattering song, wag tails from side to side.

Organise a day trip to the area to get a feel for the country and wildlife of the area. Take photographs or make a video essay of the trip. Places to visit could include the:

- Whale Watch Centre, Discovery Centre and The Bluff at Victor Harbor to learn more about Aboriginal history and the history of whaling at Encounter Bay
- Hindmarsh River Valley and Falls
- Urimbirra wildlife park on the Adelaide Road near Victor Harbor
- Deep Creek Conservation Park
- Signal Point River Murray Interpretive Centre at Goolwa (tel 0885 553 488) to view five Ngarrindjeri Dreaming stories.

Find out how Ngarrindjeri people used the whale for food and its bones for frames for shelters as well as working with whalers to hunt the whales in the 1800s. The books *The Ngarrindjeri people: Aboriginal people of the Murray River, Lakes and Coorong*, DECS 1990 and *Ngurunderi: a Ngarrindjeri Dreaming*, SA Museum 1989 will be helpful.

Make a link with other Dreaming stories learners may know, especially Ngarrindjeri stories of *Ngurunderi* and *Thukeri*, the boney bream, a story associated with Loveday Bay off Lake Alexandrina.

Kondili the whale

Background information about the story

Kondili the whale is one of the few Dreaming stories recorded which is set in country close to metropolitan Adelaide. Students can learn the story and visit the country relevant to the story near Hindmarsh Valley and Victor Harbor.

The Ramindjeri story of *Kondili* the whale was first published in *Manners and customs of the Aborigines of the Encounter Bay tribe: South Australia* in 1846 by Pastor H. Meyer who recorded the story from the Ramindjeri people at Encounter Bay with whom he worked. The story of Kondili is set before Ramindjeri people had fire.

Meyer wrote that two to three hundred people would meet (probably from near and far) for dances during the time he worked with at Encounter Bay. A fire would be lit at sunset for light. Women sat apart with animal skins rolled up and held between the knees upon which they beat time. Young men wore emu feathers in their hair and red ochre paint or used chalk to make circles round the eyes, along the nose and dots on the forehead and cheeks and more designs on the body. These designs should not be copied without permission.

Similar versions of the story were recorded from Ngarrindjeri people, Albert Karloan, a Yalalde man, and Pinkie Mack by Ronald and Catherine Berndt in the 1940s. Extracts from both versions have been recorded in the Berndt's book *A world that was: the Yalalde of the Murray River and the Lakes, South Australia*, Melbourne University Press 1993. References to the story were also recorded from Kurna people around Adelaide in the 1800s.

Ramindjeri country is around Encounter Bay and now includes the towns from Victor Harbor to Goolwa and the Hindmarsh and Inman Valleys. The Ramindjeri were linguistically linked to the neighbouring Ngarrindjeri groups and got along with the Kurna people to their north.

George Trevor from the Coorong Wilderness Lodge says that he thinks of Kondili every time he goes to Victor Harbor because he sees him in the hill when standing on the Bluff looking north over the town, although the contour of the landscape has changed through development in recent years.

Sometimes when Dreaming stories are told there are differences between versions and sometimes changes over time. For example, *Krilbalu* is described by Meyer as a skylark. Skylarks, according to Australian bird reference books did not arrive in Australia until 1857, however there is an indigenous singing bushlark in the area.

One Ngarrindjeri informant said that the bird was a snipe and there are two species of snipe found in the area. The snipe has a long sharp looking bill (spear like?) and is a swamp bird.

Traditionally, Ramindjeri people have a *ngatji* or spiritual connection to a particular animal and/or plant and they protect it as they would a friend. Some groups would not eat their particular *ngatji*, eg a seal or shark though some groups did. The *ngatji* was represented in ceremonies through storytelling, dance and song.

One *ngatji* which was eaten was the Kondili which was eaten and shared with others by the Kondilindjerung clan. They believed that the bodies of the whales which were washed up on the beach were sent there by the departing Kondili spirits for its human counterparts.

Kondilindjerung clan country is on Youngusband Peninsula to the south of Tauwitchere Island and not far south east of the Murray Mouth (see map). This country is Tanganekald country, southeast neighbours of the Ramindjeri.