

Katijin Coolungah [Seek and See What Was and What Can Be]

An Education Program for students to learn about the culture, strength and resilience of the Stolen Generations through the artwork created by Aboriginal children at the Carrolup Native Settlement in the 1940's.



Image : Once Known Child Artist, *Encampment II*, c.1946, pastel, graphite, and charcoal on paper, 25.4 x 40.6cm. Courtesy of the Jean Thompson Carrolup Collection.

Noongar Boodja - Noongar Country

Noongar means someone from the south-west of Western Australia.

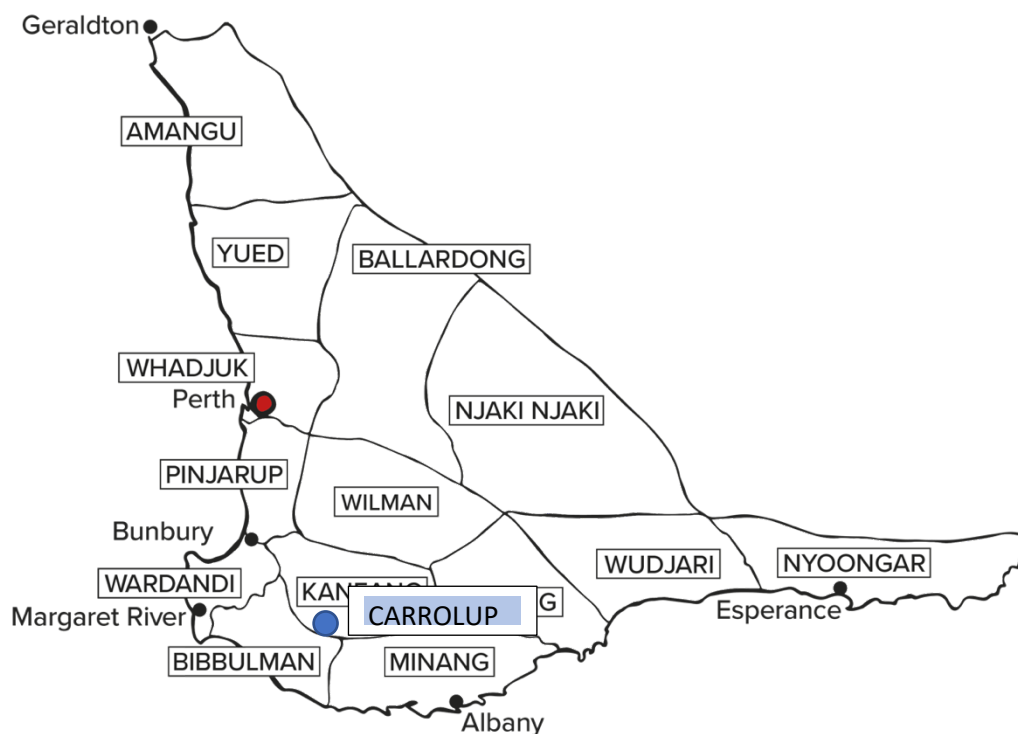
Archaeological evidence establishes that Noongar people have lived in the south-west of Western Australia for at least 45,000 years.

The boundary of Noongar boodja extends from the west coast at a point north of Jurien Bay, proceeds roughly easterly to a point approximately north of Moora and then roughly south-east to a point on the southern coast between Bremer Bay and Esperance.

Noongar are made up of 14 different dialect or language groups in 14 different geographical locations see map below of the Noongar nation.

Boorloo (Perth) is located in Whadjuk Noongar Boodja – red dot on map.

Carrolup was located in Kaneang Noongar Boodja – blue dot on map.



Curriculum connection : Classification of environmental resources and the way that water connects and changes places as it moves through environments (AC9HG7K01). The spiritual, aesthetic and cultural value of landscapes and landforms for people, including Country/Place of First Nations Australians (AC9HG8K03). The effects on environments of human alteration of biomes to produce food, industrial materials and fibres (AC9HG9K02). First Nations Australians' approaches to custodial responsibility and environmental management in different regions of Australia (AC9HG10K03).

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Noongar Language

There are many common words in Noongar, for example:

Kaya – hello

Wanju – welcome

Boorda - goodbye

Moort – family

Boodja – country

Yonga – kangaroo

Kulbardi – magpie

Karla - fire

Some words have multiple meanings like

Moorditj means 'great', 'strong' or 'excellent'

Many sound the same across the Noongar language groups, but can be spelt differently.

Yonga - Kangaroo

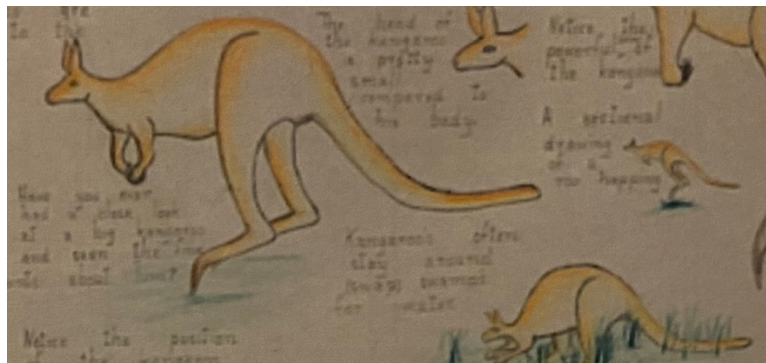


Image above: Detail of Reynold Hart's, *Kangaroos*, c1949, graphite and wax crayon on paper.

Curriculum connection : Investigate ways that visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials are manipulated to represent ideas, perspectives and/or meaning in artworks created across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts (AC9AVA8E01) (AC9AVA10E01). Investigate the ways that First Nations Australian artists celebrate and challenge multiple perspectives of Australian identity through their artworks and visual arts practice (AC9AVA10E02).

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Six Seasons Calendar

Traditionally the Noongar people of the south west region of Western Australia hunted and gathered food according to the seasons, being guided by the signs in nature as to which animal and plant resources were plentiful at those times.

The Noongar seasonal calendar includes six different seasons in the yearly cycle. This calendar is unique because the seasons can be long or short and the durations are determined by what is happening around us rather than by fixed dates on the calendar.

Calendar below is based on an artwork by Kathleen Toomath, Manager of Carrolup Centre.



Curriculum connection : The spiritual, aesthetic and cultural value of landscapes and landforms for people, including Country/Place of First Nations Australians (AC9HG8K03) Strategies to manage the sustainability of Australia's changing urban places (AC9HG8K09). First Nations Australians' approaches to custodial responsibility and environmental management in different regions of Australia (AC9HG10K03). The human-induced changes that challenge the sustainability of places and environments (AC9HG10K01).

History of Carrolup Settlement

1905 – the Aborigines Act of ‘protection, control and segregation’.

1915 – Carrolup established during World War I as a ‘government settlement’ for Aboriginal people built on a traditional camping ground on the banks of the Carrolup River outside Katanning.

1922 – Carrolup was closed and all residents sent to Moore River Native Settlement.

1939 – Carrolup reopened by the Department of Native Affairs. The policy became one of assimilation notable for the escalation and devastating practise of forcibly removing Aboriginal children from their families.

1944 – there were 129 boys, girls and older children in the government ‘care’ at Carrolup.

1946 – **School teacher Noel White and his wife Lily arrive at Carrolup encouraging the children to draw their country**

1947 – **Carrolup school children’s artwork displayed Lord Forrest Centenary Exhibition, Perth Town Hall.**

1949 – **Soroptimist Florence Rutter visits Carrolup for the first time**

1949 – **All girls removed from Carrolup, many sent to Wandering mission**

1950 – the school at Carrolup was closed and school age children were transferred to other missions according to their religious denominations.

1951 – Carrolup Native Settlement was closed, adults were dispersed and teenage boys kept to establish Marribank Farm Training School.

1951 - **Children’s artwork exhibited London, Manchester, Nottingham, (UK) organised by Mrs Rutter.**

1952 – Carrolup transferred to Baptist union to become Marribank Baptist Mission.

1964 – the Aborigines Act 1905 repealed by the Native Welfare Act 1963.



Above Image : Carrolup Classroom, photographed by Noelene White January 1948.

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Carrolup Art

What is generally referred to as Carrolup Art can be traced back to the earliest artworks produced by the children at the Carrolup Native Settlement between 1946 – 1950. Taken from their families, these children (known as the Stolen Generations) were kept at the settlement as part of government policy at the time. This policy was aimed at getting the children to adopt European culture and values and discontinue their traditional language and cultural practice in an attempt to ready them for colonial labour such as housekeeping and farm handing.

It was the arrival of the newly appointed Headmaster Noel White and his wife Lily at Carrolup in 1946 that would be the catalyst for these remarkable artworks. Dismayed at the desperate living conditions of the Aboriginal children in the settlement. Noel and Lily White set about improving the children's lives in whatever ways were possible, they had compassion and foresight to encourage the children to express their deep connection to their Country through art.

Noel would look after the boys, 7-14 years old while his wife Lily looked after the girls and the younger boys under 7 years of age. Mr White soon realised that art was the key and would take the boys out on 'rambles' through the nearby bushlands keen to help the children observe their surroundings. These rambles were taken in the afternoon, and this is reflected in the artwork produced. Many of the Carrolup artworks contain the unique sunset colours of Western Australia's south-west.

'In school we used to have one nature lesson a week, the afternoon before the day, Mr White the school teacher used to take us for a ramble in the bush and in that way we found and learnt the things in nature, the next day would illustrate everything we saw on the ramble.' Barry Loo in a letter to Florence Rutter, 1950.



Above Image: Barry Loo, *Bounding for Home*, 1950, watercolour and ink on paper, 302mm x 505mm.

Florence Rutter a British philanthropist and Soroptimist visited Carrolup and was inspired to act as an ambassador for the children. She purchased artworks and promoted the children's art throughout Australia, New Zealand and then Europe. After failing health and financial hardship, the New York art dealer Herbert Mayer purchased all 122 Carrolup artworks that remained in Rutter's collection in 1956. In 1966, Herbert Mayer donated the entire collection to Colgate University. In 2004, visiting Australian Professor of Anthropology Howard Morphy recognised the significant children's drawings at Colgate and thus began the repatriation of the Carrolup collection back to Noongar country 64 years after they had left.

The 122 beautiful but fragile artworks, collectively known as *The Herbert Mayer Collection of Carrolup Artwork*, have been cared for by the John Curtin Gallery at Curtin University since their return to WA. In 2013, the exhibition Koolark Koort Koorliny (Heart Coming Home) celebrated the custodianship of the artworks by John Curtin Gallery and Curtin University. Under the guiding hand of the Carrolup Elders Reference Group, exhibitions and tours back to Country have enabled Noongar communities to engage with the artworks and begin to reconstruct family connections.

The exhibition *Kalyagool Karni-Wangkiny [Telling Truth Always] A Decade of Carrolup* commemorates the 10-year anniversary of the return of the Herbert Mayer Collection of Carrolup Artwork from Colgate University New York, to Noongar Boodja in Western Australia.



Above image: Installation view of exhibition *Kalyagool Karni-Wangkiny [Telling Truth Always] A Decade of Carrolup*, John Curtin Gallery, 2023. Features Western Australian State Library footage of three of the Carrolup children drawing, Parnell Dempster, Barry Loo and Reynold Hart.

Curriculum connection: The cultural obligations of First Nations Australians about significant heritage sites, including ancestral remains, material culture and artefacts, and the role of collaboration between First Nations Australians and other individuals and groups to ensure cultural preservation (AC9HH7K07). Different experiences and perspectives of colonisers, settlers and First Nations Australians and the impact of these experiences on changes to Australian society's ideas, beliefs and values (AC9HH9K06). Investigate the diversity of First Nations Australians' artworks and arts practices, considering culturally responsive approaches to Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property rights (AC9AVA8E02). Reflect on the ways that they and other artists respond to influences to inform choices they make in their own visual arts practice (AC9AVA8D02). Investigate the ways that First Nations Australian artists celebrate and challenge multiple perspectives of Australian identity through their artworks and visual arts practice (AC9AVA10E02)

Activities to enhance connection:

Research different types of Maps , and how we divide land. Compare the Map of Australia with AIATSIS map*. Look the fourteen different language groups that make up Noongar Country.

- What part of Noongar Boodja do you live on ?
- How would you map a country?

Investigate how language and environment shape our identity and connection to the natural world.

- Design and make a poster to educate people in your community of the actions they could take to respectfully contribute to the on-going care of Country.
- Consider who you would like to share this poster with and how that might direct your design.
- Where would you like to put your poster up? Think about the audience you would like to reach.

Discuss the Noongar six seasons calendar , look at what animals and plants were utilised by Noongar people in different seasons.

- Create your own six season calendar
- write about how Aboriginal people followed the six seasons to live sustainably with their country.

Take a 'ramble ' in the afternoon and create a landscape drawing of your time in nature

- compare and contrast the works of the Carrolup artists with other Aboriginal artists , look at works by Albert Namatjira, Yulkultji Napangati and Shane Pickett.

Discuss how laws effect the way we look at the world , and who makes laws? How do we change laws? Discuss the role of power in society

- Think of a person in your family's lineage who you recognise as powerful and important.

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- Take a moment to consider what makes this person powerful and important.
- Speak to your family members to broaden your understanding and connection with this person and their story.

Discuss how life changed for Aboriginal people after colonisation.

Have you ever spent a night away from home in a new place? Discuss how the children would feel leaving their families and being taken to a strange new place. Write a short story from their point of view.

*AIATSIS map - This map attempts to represent the language, social or nation groups of Aboriginal Australia.



References:

For Noongar Language and definitions:

South West Land and Sea Council

<https://www.noongar.org.au>.

For Six Seasons information:

Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology

<http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/calendars/nyoongar.shtml>

For the AIATSIS map

Reconciliations SA

<https://reconciliationsa.org.au/aiatsis-map-of-indigenous-australia/>

For Carrolup Collection and Centre information

<https://www.curtin.edu.au/friends/our-community/carrolup/>

For media around the Carrolup collection

[Carrolup in the Media | Curtin Friends](#)

For the John Curtin Gallery

jcg.curtin.edu.au

For questions on the content of the Education Program or Resources at John Curtin Gallery

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