

# Aboriginal history in South Australia since 1800s

Slide 1

Teachers and community groups are welcome to use this role play for the purpose of informing children and adults about South Australian Aboriginal history. It has been adapted for middle primary students from that developed by the Department for Education in the early 1990s. Further information is available from Adele Pring, [pringaa@icloud.com](mailto:pringaa@icloud.com).

## Introduction

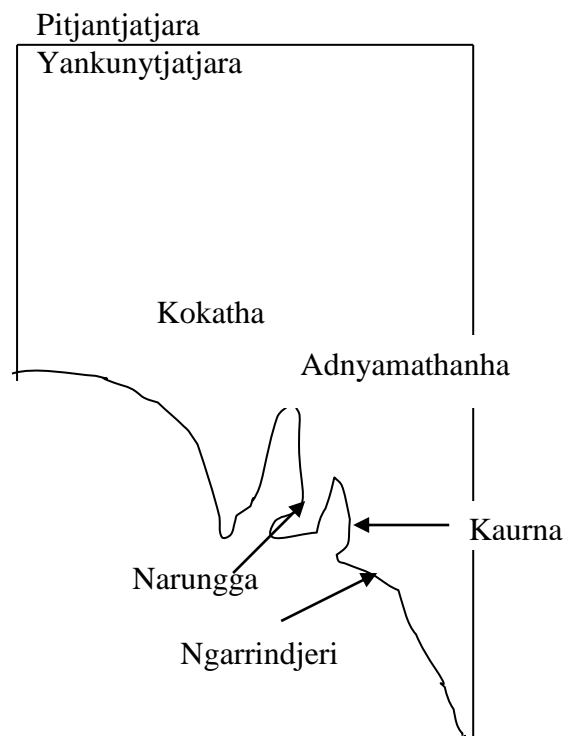
The role play could be completed in one or several lessons enabling children to gain understanding and empathy for Aboriginal peoples' history.

It is important to debrief well after the role play (see notes at end) and to explain that the purpose is to educate and help develop empathy, not blame or make people angry. If children are aware of this part of SA history, they are more likely to become active, empathetic citizens in future.

In previous lessons the following activities could help provide background knowledge:

- view and discuss the video *Alinta - the flame* in the Women of the Sun series
- research the quality of life for the average person in Europe, especially England, around 1800
- use an atlas to research geographic features and climate of relevant parts of SA
- research aspects of traditional life in SA using Aboriginal Studies documents, eg language, stories, relationship terms, laws, games, foods, especially those relating to Kurna, Narungga, Ngarrindjeri, Adnyamathanha, Kokatha and Pitjantjatjara/ Yankunytjatjara
- access a map of Aboriginal Australia to show the groups below in the context of other South Australian Aboriginal groups.

**Map of South Australia showing just six of what was once more than 50 Aboriginal language groups.**





Slide 2

<http://taungurung.com.au/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/country-aiatsis-map.jpg>

### Before the role play begins

Children will be divided into six small groups to represent the South Australian Aboriginal groups: Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara, Kurna, Narungga, Ngarrindjeri, Kokatha and Adnyamathanha. Descriptions of environment are included with this role play to distribute to the appropriate groups (see end of document).

Ask the group to draw pictures or symbols of significant items on their 'paper' land. This might include precious waterholes, sacred sites, foods from your environment and artefacts used in daily life. Children can do this in a whole lesson or two prior to the role play. Photocopy the children's 'land' and use the copies only for the role play, keeping the original 'land' safe (so that it can be returned at the end of the role play). It is helpful to draw a map of South Australia on a whiteboard to illustrate particular places throughout the role play OR project the slide show that accompanies the script of the role play.

Prepare three sheets each of six different coloured A4 paper. Cut each into 12 pieces. These will represent extended family of the group members. Prepare for each child one piece of relevant colour paper with a safety pin, to pin on them and to link them to their group.

To begin the role play, divide the floor space between these groups on a geographical basis, as shown on the map. Each group sits around their 'land'. Give each group the small coloured pieces of paper that represents their group's colour. Ask the children to divide the pieces of paper between them and write on each, a name of a family member, eg grandmother, daughter, brother, father, uncle. The group should physically keep in touch with and protect their (paper) land and their (paper) relatives which should be spread on the floor near them.

Each group should now take it in turns to show their 'paper' land to the others and talk about their particular environment.

Keep one or two children aside to represent European explorers, settlers, missionaries and government officials. At various stages in the role play, those who role play the Europeans physically shift those playing Aboriginal people at appropriate times.

Hand out the scripts for each group (see end of document)

When you mention particular groups and dates (shown in **bold**), a child of that group reads their relevant statement from their script. You read the main script and stops regularly to seek comments from each group. You can adapt and/or add extra comments wherever appropriate, depending on your knowledge and the dynamics of the group. Other props could be included depending on resources.

Be sure to allow sufficient class time for discussion. Follow up activities are suggested at the end of the narrator's script.

## Script

You are going to be learning just a little history of the last 200 years.

By the 1800, just over 200 years ago, Europeans begin settling in what becomes called New South Wales (show on a map of Australia). There is no contact between Europeans and Aboriginal people in what is now known as South Australia.

Life for Aboriginal people is generally peaceful and fulfilling but with occasional disputes as in all cultures. You live in extended family groups consisting perhaps of a husband and wife, brothers and sisters-in-law, grandparents and grandchildren. The women gather fruits, vegetables and various seeds and hunt small animals. Yams and seeds were the main foods, just as are potatoes, bread or rice in other cultures around the world. The men hunt larger game and gather some foods as they hunt. You walk for up to 50km on some days to hunt and gather.

You know the best places to find food at particular times of the year. You know from the stars at night when to collect emu eggs and other foods. You know how to identify and follow the tracks of animals. You are very fit and healthy. A lot of time is spent around the campfire telling stories, making tools, nets, and bowls, clothing and teaching the young children. Dancing and singing are a regular part of life. (Creative teachers could spend a whole lesson or more just on this paragraph and that following.)

Several times a year your extended family shift within their country or land, visiting familiar campsites of previous years. The time of moving camp depends on the availability of seasonal foods or because of deaths. Groups meet regularly with relatives belonging to the same or neighbouring language groups for ceremonies. Sacred sites are respected and maintained by elders who have responsibility for them. Aboriginal people are proud and dignified.

Life at this time for the majority of people in England, Ireland and other parts of Europe is generally hard. Many work long hours in factories or workhouses, in muddy fields or in dark, damp coalmines. Illness is common. Only the wealthy live in comfort. The prisons were overflowing and Britain wanted somewhere to send them away. Britain was taking over control of many countries around the world, and so were other countries like France, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. (Narrators can ad lib according to their knowledge or that of the students)

1801 to 1803 - Flinders, an English man and Baudin, a French man, explore the SA coast from opposite directions and meet at Encounter Bay, near Victor Harbour. (Instruct 'explorers' to 'sail' up Spencer Gulf and leave again) **Adnyamathanha group 1801-1803**, Narungga 1802.

Early 1800s Disaster strikes nearly thirty years before white people settle in the colony of South Australia. **Ngarrindjeri group 1805**. (Instruct an explorer to remove paper elders and children from the Ngarrindjeri)

European and American men hunting fur seals set up on Kangaroo Island. **Kurna group 1805**. (Instruct a 'European sealer' to physically take away one of the 'Kurna' girls to Kangaroo Island and discuss how she and her people might be feeling). Sealers and whalers visited lower Eyre and Peninsula at this time too.

1820s A second smallpox epidemic kills Aboriginal people as far north as Mt. Remarkable in the southern Flinders Ranges (Nukana country). Again many of the old people and young children die. **Kurna group 1820s.** (Instruct your helper to remove paper elders and children from the Kurna and Ngarrindjeri)

1820s A whaling station is set up near Victor Harbor. The local Ramindjeri people were very interested in this. They had eaten whale before but only when it died naturally. They used its rib bones as frames for their homes.

1830 The explorer Charles Sturt travelled along the River Murray from New South Wales to the Murray Mouth. (Instruct an 'explorer' to row down the river and leave again)  
Ngarrindjeri group 1830.

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1834 A new law, *The Foundation Act* is passed in the British Parliament. This Act means that 300 000 square miles (777 000 square kilometres) legally becomes the British colony of South Australia. The land is described as 'waste and unoccupied'. (Ask children what they understand by this and how they feel about it).

The *Letters Patent* relating to the Act said that nothing could be done which would (I quote) "affect the rights of any Aboriginal natives of the said Province to the actual occupation or enjoyment in their own persons or in the persons of their descendants of any lands therein now actually occupied or enjoyed by such natives" end quote. (Ask children what they understand by this)

Sympathetic people in England know that Aboriginal people in the other Australian colonies have been very badly treated and they try to protect their rights.

1840 By now there are fewer than 500 Kurna people but more than 17,000 Europeans as well as 200,000 sheep and 15,000 cattle. Most of the land around Adelaide is now being farmed. Traditional plant are eaten or trampled by the cattle and sheep and the kangaroos are short or frightened away. Missionaries come from Germany to work with the Kurna people and some other groups. At first the Kurna people of the Adelaide plains and the Europeans got along well and they were curious about each other. Kurna and Ngarrindjeri people were dying from diseases such as colds, measles and whooping cough because they have no immunity. **Kurna group late 1830s.** (Instruct a farmer to remove all the Kurna land but one corner)

An Aboriginal woman who'd been living on Kangaroo Island travels to Adelaide where her knowledge of Aboriginal languages and English is valued. (Shift the people on Kangaroo Island to Adelaide)

1839 to 1840 Edward John Eyre explores the Flinders Ranges. He hardly has any contact with Aboriginal people because you hide out of his view but you watch him and his men closely from where you hide. You keep your tracks well hidden but used sign language to keep each other informed of the explorers movements (Instruct an 'explorer' to 'ride his horse' through the Flinders Ranges) **Adnyamathanha group 1839-1840.**

1842 All of Yorke Peninsula has been explored by the newcomers and most of the land cleared of trees so crops could be planted. (Shift some Ngarrindjeri to Kurna land. Narungga group 1842  
*Q. Might the Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara group have known what was happening?*

1844 Sturt and Stuart led an expedition north to find an inland sea but there wasn't one.

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By 1850 only 10% of the Aboriginal population in the newly settled areas are alive. Not all Europeans are hostile. Many Europeans are respectful to Aboriginal people and seek better conditions for them. Most don't see Aboriginal people as they go about their lives in the towns or on their farms. However, they would not have their farms if the Aboriginal owners had not been frightened away or killed by violence or disease.

Europeans make land claims in the southern and northern Flinders Ranges. One of them, JF Hayward, brags in his diary of whipping and shooting Aboriginal people. Some land grabbers put poison into the flour they give Aboriginal people.

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By 1850, the best agricultural land within 400 kilometres of Adelaide has been sold or leased to Europeans by their government and belonged to them under the law of the new colony. (Instruct 'Europeans' to collect the remainder of the Kurna land, half of the Narungga and Ngarrindjeri lands and some of the Adnyamathanha land. This is a powerful way of showing how much Aboriginal land was lost.) *Ask the groups to talk about how they feel.*

1850s Gold was found in Victoria. Many European men who were living in South Australia leave their jobs as farm labourers and shearers to join the gold rush in Victoria. Aboriginal people are needed to do the jobs left behind. **Ngarrindjeri group 1850s.**

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1850s Port Augusta is established as a port. Inabuthina (also known as Pompey) becomes a resistance fighter and leader in the Flinders Ranges until he is shot about ten years later.

**Adnyamathanha group 1850s.** (Show map at [http://www.southernflinders-midnorth.com.au/maps/map\\_pastoralmapsmain.htm](http://www.southernflinders-midnorth.com.au/maps/map_pastoralmapsmain.htm))

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1850 Some of the young Kurna and Ngarrindjeri people in Adelaide are taken without their family to Poonindie north of Port Lincoln where there is a mission. (Instruct a 'European' to physically move the remaining Kurna group to Port Lincoln) Many suffer badly from illnesses, probably including stress at leaving their land and living in what was to them a foreign land. Those who survive and their descendants become excellent farmers, winning prizes for their skills in district competitions.

1850s The Aboriginal Friends Association is formed by caring Europeans to push for better conditions for Aboriginal people.

Whaling stops because there are not enough whales left to hunt.

1858 The explorer John McDouall Stuart travels through Kokatha country and returns to Adelaide to give optimistic reports of the grazing potential of the land. **Kokatha group 1858.**

1860s There are now more than 60 ration depots throughout SA. The Narungga people of Yorke Peninsula are shifted to a new mission at Point Pearce and most of the Ngarrindjeri people of the Murray Lakes and Coorong move to the new mission at Point Macleay. Several families remain living along the Coorong in the bush not wanted by the European farmers. (Instruct a 'missionary' to shift the Ngarrindjeri group onto Point Macleay) The missionaries would not allow Aboriginal language or ceremonies but they did protect people from being killed. **Narungga group late 1860s**

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Part of the mission at Poonindie is sold off to European settlers so the young adults who were taken there are shifted to Point Pearce or Point McLeay. (Instruct the 'government officials' to shift the Poonindie people) *Q. How might these people have felt about their situation?*

Whenever missionaries started work, their main concern was to Christianise the Aboriginal people and to teach them how to work in the European ways. Aboriginal people easily learnt the skills. What was hard, was understanding how white people thought and why they acted the way they did. Aboriginal groups already had their own spiritual beliefs relating to creation, the land and all living things. Many Aboriginal people readily accepted Christian stories though many others did not.

1872 Ernest Giles, the explorer, travels through Pitjantjatjara land looking for suitable grazing country or a stock route. **Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara group 1873.**

Late 1860s - 1880 Kokatha land is taken over by pastoralists. They bring in hundreds of thousands of sheep and cattle and become very rich. Our country is damaged by too many sheep and cattle, and rabbits. (Instruct a 'pastoralist' to remove all of the Kokatha land) **Kokatha group 1890**

1884 The rail line is built between Port Augusta and Marree to the north (show on the map). **Adnyamathanha group 1884.** 'Afghan' men (from what was then British India) arrive with camels to carry goods to outback properties and return with wool and minerals. Several marry Aboriginal women. None of their women were allowed to come to Australia with them. Slide 10

1888 More explorers with 25 camels travel through Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara land in search of pastoral land. Their effect on the precious and scarce waterholes in the area was disastrous. **Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara group 1888** (Instruct 'Carruthers' to walk through Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara land)

1890 There are thirty towns now on Yorke Peninsula. **Narungga group 1890.** Slide 11

1901 The Australian Commonwealth is formed. Aboriginal people are not to be included in the census or given rights to vote. Some Ngarrindjeri people who already had the right to vote could still vote. **Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara group 1901.**

1911 The First *Aborigines Act of SA* means that Aboriginal people are supposedly 'protected' by being segregated onto reserves away from non-Aboriginal people. They can be kept there indefinitely and arrested for leaving. **Ngarrindjeri group 1911.**

1913 The Koonibba Children's Home is built at Koonibba Mission near Ceduna at the request of Aboriginal families, so that their children would not be removed from them. Some Kokatha children are placed in the home. Their families visit them on Sundays. After the government took over the home, bush tucker was not to be given to the children and they could not speak in their own language. (A Kokatha 'child' could be placed in the Koonibba mission home).

1912 -20 The east-west railway is built through Kokatha land. Kokatha people travel around the pastoral stations by foot, on camel and camel wagon. Many work for the pastoralists but receive little pay. Families live in bush shelters or tents and survive on bush foods, rabbits as well as rations from the train or ration depots. Ceremonies continue. **Kokatha group 1915.**

1919 Daisy Bates and missionaries arrive in Ooldea providing rations and clothing for the Yankunytjatjara people there. (Draw train line on map and shift a Yankunytjatjara person from their country south to Ooldea) **Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara group 1919** Slide 12

1920s The government offer a bounty (reward) for dingo scalps. Dingoes are said to be attacking and killing large numbers of sheep in the north of the state. **Pitjantjatjara/ Yankunytjatjara group 1920s.**

1923 The *Aborigines (Training for Children) Act* means that Aboriginal children can be removed from their families against their will and sent to institutions until they are adults. This continued for another 40 years. (Instruct the 'European government officials' to remove 'children' from the Ngarrindjeri group and Narungga at Point Pearce and take them to Adelaide). **Ngarrindjeri group 1923.** Q. *How might the parents have felt?* Q. *What advantages and disadvantages would there have been for the children?* Q. *Do you know the stories of anyone this has happened to?*

1930 Nepabunna mission is set up in the northern Flinders Ranges for Adnyamathanha people. RM Williams set up his first leather workshop at Nepabunna, employing Adnyamathanha people to make boots and saddles. **Adnyamathanha 1930**

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1930s Umeewarra Mission is set up on reserve land near Port Augusta. Aboriginal people come from as far as Ooldea and Oodnadatta for rations, medical treatment, work and children's education. (Shift the Yankunytjatjara person at Ooldea to Port Augusta)

1930s Ernabella mission is set up in Pitjantjatjara country. Aboriginal children here are taught in their own language at school and do not wear clothes unless they have a European parent. Sometimes they take off their clothes so they won't look different to the others. Ceremonies and language continue with support of the missionaries.

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1934 Exemption certificates are introduced which make certain Aboriginal people honorary 'whites'. Those with exemptions are not allowed to mix with their relatives who were not exempted but they can buy land, have a bank account, vote, drink alcohol and work in normal employment. (This was very rare) Those without are not allowed to leave the reserve they are living on without written permission each time. Some so-called troublemakers had exemptions imposed on them. (Give the exemption certificate to someone, make him or her leave where they're living and read out what is written in italics on the certificate)

1936 The Police Act states that any non-Aboriginal person found moving about or living with Aboriginal people without satisfactory reason is liable to arrest and three months imprisonment. The Pitjantjatjara children who have 'white' fathers lose contact with them because they are no longer allowed living with their mothers unless legally married. Permission of the Protector of Aborigines, 2000 miles away, is needed for permission to marry

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Many of the children having white fathers were forcibly removed to the Colebrook mission at Oodnadatta. (*Take some children across to Oodnadatta*) The missionaries didn't like the influence of Aboriginal community on the children so they were moved down to Quorn (shift the children south to Quorn). There is a drought in Quorn so the children are moved to Eden Hills in Adelaide, some never ever seeing their parents again. (Move the children to Eden Hills, Adelaide)

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Aboriginal children who had been brought up in the mission homes in Adelaide were only trained to be stockmen or housemaids. A group including Lowitja O'Donoghue and Faith Coulthard protest at the Adelaide town hall in the mid-1950s and gain the right to take up trades, nursing and teaching. While many of the mission children have had successes in their lives they had many sad times. Because of being taken from their families and culture. Many died from alcohol and other stress related diseases.



A number of Aboriginal people serve in the armed forces during the war. (Send a Narungga man from Point Pearce off to war). Exempted men who return from war (bring the men back from war) are not allowed to visit their families on reserves without a permit. (Give the permit to a returned soldier and have them read it aloud) They stay longer than permitted. (Give them an exclusion notice and have them read the wording in italics aloud)

1950s Aboriginal people living at Ooldea and Woomera are shifted further south to Yalata, Ceduna or the Riverland because the British government will soon test atomic bombs in their country. The Aboriginal people working on pastoral stations as well as the managers and their families didn't understand the risks. **Kokatha 1950s**

1960s Aboriginal people finally get the right to vote, get old age pensions, widow's pensions and unemployment benefits, and are entitled to equal pay with other Australians.

1967 A National Referendum vote means Aboriginal people will now be counted in the census  
*Q. Does this mean Aboriginal people are now treated equally in society? Why do you think so?*

1970s Some of the children taken away from the far north return to find their families.  
**Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara 1970s**

1974 Two pastoral stations in the Flinders are purchased by the government and are now controlled by the Aboriginal Lands Trust **Adnyamathanha 1970s**

1981 The Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara land rights are recognised.  
**Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara 1981**

1984 The Maralinga Tjarutja lands are returned to the traditional Aboriginal owners, however, poisonous radioactivity remains in some areas from the 1950s atomic bomb tests.

1986 Equal Opportunity Act makes discrimination unlawful on the basis of race. *Q. What still needs to be done for Aboriginal people to be treated fairly?*

1990 The song *Tjilbruke* composed by Buck McKenzie is the first Aboriginal song performed by the Adelaide Festival of Music Choir since it was founded in 1890. (Play the Tjilbruke song from CD published with the songbook '*Songs for Aboriginal Studies and Reconciliation*')

1992 Paul Keating, Prime Minister of Australia, gave a speech during the United Nations Year of the World's Indigenous People. He said, in part:

*... it was we who did the dispossessing.  
We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life.  
We brought the diseases. The alcohol.  
We committed the murders.  
We took the children from their mothers.  
We practised discrimination and exclusion.  
It was our ignorance and our prejudice.  
And our failure to imagine these things being done to us ...  
Guilt is not a very constructive emotion.  
I think what we need to do is open our hearts a bit.  
All of us.<sup>i</sup>*

1993 Following the 1992 Mabo decision, the Native Title Act recognises native title rights of Indigenous peoples of Australia who have maintained a 'continuing connection' with their land and waters in accordance with their traditions. Native title is extinguished by valid grants of land to others.

1996 The Wik decision states that native title rights can co-exist with pastoral leases. Where there is conflict, Native Title rights are to be subordinate.

1997 The 'Stolen Generation' report from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission outlines the experience of Aboriginal people who were removed from their families. It calls for a formal apology and compensation to support communities to heal. 20 years later this is still being discussed.

2000 Aboriginal people are making films, writing books, working in tourism, government departments, studying law, natural resource management, anthropology and management.

2000 Hundreds of thousands of Australians publicly show their support for Reconciliation.

### **Kokatha 2000**

2008 Kevin Rudd, then Prime Minister of Australia apologises to Australia's Indigenous people.<sup>ii</sup> End of Script.

The original 'land' could be returned to the groups.

### **Debriefing**

Make clear to the children that the aim of the activity is to promote understanding and not to have anyone feel guilty. It is when people are aware of injustices in the past that they are more able to prevent them from occurring in the future.

Children should be given a few minutes to discuss in their groups what they have learnt from the activity and each group should have one person recording comments (see possible discussion questions below). They should then be invited to share their learning with the whole group. Those activity explorers, missionaries and government officials should also consider what they learnt and share their feelings with the whole group.

Discussion and follow up activities could focus on the following questions:

- Is the activity better than watching a video about the same events? Why?
- What did you learn that you didn't know before? Describe.
- Did anything about the activity surprise you? How or why?
- What would you like to find out more about?
- How do you think the activity could be improved?
- How do you know the information is true? Search keywords in group for more information. <https://www.creativespirits.info> › *Aboriginal culture* › *History* has a timeline and other relevant links.

## Adnyamathanha environment

The Adnyamathanha environment ranges from rocky hills and mountains such as Wilpena Pound and the Elder Range to dry flat plains with precious waterholes amongst the rocks and creek beds. Animal foods include Emu, bush turkey, kangaroo, euro and the yellow footed rock wallaby and all the birds which are not meat eating such as pigeons, doves, parrots, quail, duck. Tubers and fruits included quandong, native orange, pear and more and acacia seeds are ground for flour. Large nets are used to snaring emus and euros. (For more information read *The Adnyamathanha people: Aboriginal people of the northern Flinders Ranges*)

## Adnyamathanha script

1801 Some of our neighbours from down south tell us about a huge canoe, like an island on the water and ghosts (Anngula) who came ashore and walked up a high hill in their country. Our neighbours were very curious and frightened but the ghosts soon left again.

1839-40 Tonight around the campfire we tell how we saw the *Udnyu* (pronounced wood-new) again today while we were out hunting and how they sit on giant possums and use small sticks to make fire. It was interesting looking at their campsite after they had gone. *Udnyu* is our word for white people.

1850s The *Udnyu* people are here on our land to stay now. There are too many of them for us to frighten away. Their guns and whips have killed many of our people and some of us want to fight them with our spears. It is hard to know what is best to do. It might be safer to be friendly and work as shepherds and messengers for the *Udnyu* because we can keep looking after our country and sites that way.

1884 Our northern neighbours, the Dieri from around Lake Eyre can travel on the train now to Parachilna now to collect ochre. It's much safer than travelling by foot where they might get shot by pastoralists.

1930 We like the missionaries because they care about us but they don't understand our law. They won't let us practise our ceremonies or speak our language. When missionaries told us we should behave because there was a fellow called God in the sky watching everything we did, we said there were two and they could see you in the daytime too, even though you couldn't see them except at night. Astronomers call them the Magellanic Clouds.

*'The two that made that rule has gone up into the sky. You know the white spots you see in the sky, that's the two. They reckon that you can't do nothing in this land unless those two is watching. I remember the things we used to do. We used to get into a hell of a row over it because they reckon those two was watching us.'*<sup>iii</sup>

1970s Some of us would like to let the land revert to bush but we have to graze sheep to pay the expenses.

## **Kaurna environment**

Kaurna country includes what is now the metropolitan area of Adelaide, the land south along the coast of Fleurieu Peninsula as far as Cape Jervis and the land north to Crystal Brook. There are several winter creeks, fresh water springs in the sand dunes and swampy areas along the beaches and fresh water soakages, which have now been filled in and built on at places which in the future will be called Adelaide airport, West Beach and West Lakes.

Traditional foods includes possum, kangaroo, emu eggs, quandong, bush turkey, acacia seeds and gum, fish and shellfish, witchetty grubs, ducks and other birds and seeds for flour. Young men wear black cockatoo feathers in their hair when dressed for ceremony. Nets are used to catching ducks and fish. Wooden implements are used for digging and throwing and wooden bowls are used for water and seed collecting. (For more information read *The Kaurna people: Aboriginal people of the Adelaide plains*)

## **Kaurna script**

Early 1805      Some of our young women are kidnapped and kept as wives by the white men hunting fur seals. One woman swims from Kangaroo Island with her baby tied to her back. Our people 'found her body on the beach just above high-water mark, with her baby tied to her back'.<sup>iv</sup> She had tried to swim home but died of exhaustion.'

1820s            A dreadful illness has come and many of our old people and children are dying. There are so many deaths, they cannot have proper funerals. Their spirits may come back to haunt us because of this.

Late 1830s      It is a confusing time. The Europeans are putting up fences and frightening our animals away. Some of the newcomers are friendly and give us tobacco, flour and sugar if we do jobs for them but others scare us. They are bad mannered in taking land and hunting kangaroos without giving food and goods in return. A few Europeans were killed for breaking our laws. When we take sheep or flour, Europeans accuse us of theft and sometimes shoot or poison our people. A few friendly ones are interested in learning our language; especially the missionaries and some like to attend our *palti* (pronounced Paul-tee). *Palti* is our word for ceremonies in the moonlight when we have singing and dancing.

## **Kokatha environment**

Kokatha country includes the Gawler Ranges, rocky hills with waterholes in several places, and plains with many large salt lakes, sand dunes and mallee type vegetation. Supplies of water are very precious and rockholes are protected with stone to stop them being polluted.

The main Dreaming is the sleepy lizard. Reptiles form an important part of the diet as do bush turkey, kangaroo and emus and yams, seeds from grasses and acacia trees which are ground to make flour and damper. In drought time, water is found in roots of mallee trees, which are cut and drained into a container. Quandong is one of our fruits. A particular eremophila is one of our medicine plants. In summer we travel south to the area around what is now called Port Lincoln, to gather and eat edible seeds.

## **Kokatha script**

1858 John McDouall Stuart, the European explorer came with his packhorses to discover how useful our land would be to his people for grazing sheep and cattle. We watch with curiosity and fear.

1890 Those of us who have survived the guns and poison work for the pastoralists now and they give us rations but we eat bush foods too when we can. From 1890 there is a drought for more than 10 years and the pastoralists walk off their properties. Thousands and thousands of sheep and cattle die.

1915 Some people are very frightened at first by the steam train, which they think is a mamu (our word for devil spirit). After that we sold artefacts to train travellers.

1950s We see the black mist coming through the trees after the bomb test. We vomit and have diarrhoea. The station people get sick too. None of us know it is because of the bomb.

2000 I didn't know so many people support us. It makes me feel good, even though there's still a long way to go. We don't want a nuclear waste dump in our country.

## **Narungga environment 1800**

Yorke Peninsula, land of the Narungga, extends as far north as Port Broughton and east to the Hummock Range which runs north from Gulf St Vincent. Narungga are divided into four groups, the Kurnara in the north, Winderera in the east, Wari in the west and Dilpa in the south. Fresh water rock holes are covered with slabs of stone or wood to keep the water clean. Paths are maintained through the thick mallee forests.

There are many camp sites around the coast making easy access to fresh fish and shellfish which we gather, spear or catch with nets. Fish include butterfish, salmon, mullet and snapper and shellfish include periwinkles, warreners and abalone for which we dive in deeper water. The men also hunt emu, kangaroo, wombat and lizards.

There are fruits ripe in the warmer months and nutritious tubers (yam) and various seeds to gather at particular times during the year. Much time is spent making and mending hunting and gathering implements, teaching the children and occasional ceremonies of singing and dancing.

## **Narungga script**

1802 We saw the floating islands made of wood and were fearful. The ghosts on them must have seen our campfire smoke but we hid out of view.

1842 We asked the newcomers why they were cutting down the trees. They said 'So we can grow food.' We said 'But there's food in the trees!'

Late 1860s It has been ten years since they started mining copper at Moonta and Wallaroo and 8,000 white people live there and at Kadina now. They send us to Point Pearce Mission, so we can be controlled and our land can then be available for their farming. They employ our men and women in return for rations. We do shepherding, clear the land, fence, shear and other odd jobs around the farms.

1890 They build their towns on our campsites, where we always had fresh water and good fishing for us. By now 90% of our country is own freehold by Goonyas, all except a few patches of bush which are no good for grain farming. We have to rely on rations now from Kadina, Point Pearce, Yorketown and Edithburgh.

## Ngarrindjeri environment

The land of the Ngarrindjeri is one of the richest and most densely populated areas in Australia before European contact. There is abundant fresh water available from the River Murray, the Murray Lakes and from springs and wells along the Coorong.

Foods include a wide range of fresh and salt water fish and shellfish, emu, wombat, kangaroo, ducks and other birds, as well as fruits including munthries (a bit like apple in taste). Mats and baskets are woven from rushes and whale bones sometimes used as frameworks for shelters and then covered with branches, seaweed and mud. Nets are used for fishing and catching ducks. (For more information read *The Ngarrindjeri people: Aboriginal people of the Murray River, Lakes and Coorong*)

## Ngarrindjeri script

1805 Many of our older relatives and children die. We think it is a punishment for something we've done wrong. It is a very sad time because our elders are dying with all their knowledge and our babies too before they have a chance to live. We find out years later that it was deadly smallpox that spread from New South Wales, starting with the Europeans.

1830 We see *Krinkari* (pronounced krin-kree) in a large canoe paddling along the river to the lakes. Our neighbours are frightened of them so we hide. They wear strange clothing and carry guns like the violent sealers who steal our women. *Krinkari* is our word for ghosts.

1850s It is good with the white men away. We are employed to do their work as labourers and shearers on the farms. Sadly the men come back again to their jobs and we once again have to survive on handouts of flour, tea and sugar.

1911 We tell the government officials that we want our own land to farm. We've proved that we're good farmers but they don't listen to us. There is not enough mission land to keep the men busy with work. Our women are still mothers and feel important, but the men feel bad because they can't support their families. They're not allowed to speak our language or follow our traditions and are feeling very depressed. We hear it's the same at Point Pearce Mission.

1923 We're very angry yet frightened and ashamed at the same time. Government officials can come into our houses at any time and if we have too little food or clothing for our children, they take them from us. We tell our children to head bush whenever they see the officials and not come home until supper time or after dark. It's not fair.

## **Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara environment**

The Musgrave and Everard Ranges are central to the landscape and plains that surround them. There are several rock holes where water can be found in good seasons but droughts can be devastating. Reptiles are a main food source as well as occasional kangaroo, emus, bush turkey, wallabies and native cat. It is important to learn the tracks of animals. Human hair is used to make *mankuri*, a ring shaped cushion so that women can comfortably carry dishes on their heads.

We dig for honey ants after rain when their abdomens are full with nectar from mulga blossom. *Maku* (or witchetty grubs) are dug for in the roots of acacia bushes. Seeds of grasses and trees are ground to make flour for damper and sometimes we have quandong fruit. Burrowing frogs can be dug up in drought time for emergency water. After rain the country is beautiful with lots of wildflowers. Spears, boomerangs, dishes and digging sticks are made with stone axes and scrapers and the spears are straightened and hardened with use of fire. (For more information read *Pages from an Aboriginal book: history and the land* by Yami Lester, Institute for Aboriginal Development 1984 or *Desert crafts: Anangu Maruku Punu* by Jennifer Isaacs, Doubleday Australia 1992.)

## **Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara script**

1873 Giles, the explorer came through our country with other men. We were very afraid of them and tried to frighten them away. Their horses and camels polluted our waterholes and nearly drank them dry. Water is very precious in our country.

1888 I am a young child. The white men with camels shot at my family. We had to walk for three days in extreme heat to the next waterhole to get drinking water.

1901 The Commonwealth of Australia was formed but it means nothing to us. We don't even know that foreign language called English. We just get on with our lives, not realizing that our land now belongs to the Queen of England. We don't see many *Piranpa* (pronounced peer-an-pa) except for some who come looking for gold. *Piranpa* means white in our language.

1919 Our people have camped at Ooldea during drought years for thousands of years. It has been a trading place for items from as far away as Broome in Western Australia. This ends when the railway people get greedy for more water for their steam trains by digging too deep and mix the salt water with our precious fresh water.

1920s *Piranpa* men came to our country on camels and give us clothes and food in exchange for dingo scalps. Some of these men are good and we give them wives but others are cruel and treat us very badly. Some *Piranpa* men started cattle and sheep leases in our country and many light-skinned children were born.

1970s They had no language in common to communicate and just sat and cried together.

1981 It always been our land under our law.





Exemption certificate	PHOTOGRAPH OF BEARER
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>UNCONDITIONAL EXEMPTION FROM THE PROVISION OF THE ABORIGINES ACT, 1934-1939.</b></p> <p><i>In pursuance of the powers conferred by section 11a of the Aborigines Act, 1934-1939, the Aborigines Protection Board, being of opinion that</i></p> <p>.....(say your own name).....  <i>by reason of ... character and standard of intelligence and development, should be exempted from the provisions of the ... Act ... the said</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(say your own name)</p> <p>.....  <i>shall cease to be an aborigine for the purposes of the said Act.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PHOTOGRAPH OF BEARER</p> <p>Signature of Bearer.....</p> <p>The Seal of the Aborigines Protection Board was hereunto affixed on the ....6th.... day of .....May.....19 35 , in the presence of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">...J. Cleland.....  Chairman</p> <p style="text-align: center;">...J. Whitburn..  Member</p> <p style="text-align: center;">....C. Bartlett.....  Secretary</p>

Aboriginals Department, Adelaide	
<b>Exclusion notice</b>	
<p>To ....(say your own name).....</p>	
<p><i>TAKE NOTICE that you are forbidden to be within any aboriginal institution in South Australia. If after receiving this notice you are present within such institution you will be guilty of an offence for which you may be fined a sum not exceeding twenty five pounds for every day during which you are so present or you may be imprisoned in jail for a period not exceeding three months.</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">.....  A. McLean  Chief Protector of Aboriginals</p>	
<p>A copy of the above notice was served on .....personally by me on / /</p>	
<p>A.L. Payne  Superintendent</p>	

## Permit

To (insert your name)

Dear Sir

*The Board has agreed to permit you to visit Point Pearce on 25th December 1945 You are to report to the Manager immediately upon arrival at the station and must depart before sunset.*

J. Smith  
Secretary  
Aborigines Protection Board

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## References

<sup>i</sup> [https://antar.org.au/sites/default/files/paul\\_keating\\_speech\\_transcript.pdf](https://antar.org.au/sites/default/files/paul_keating_speech_transcript.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/our-country/our-people/apology-to-australias-indigenous-peoples>

<sup>iii</sup> Lynch Ryan, Adnyamathanha elder, personal communication to Adele Pring, recorded 1980s

<sup>iv</sup> Richards, Eric, 1986, p. 285, *The Flinders History of South Australia: Social history*, Wakefield Press, Netley SA, quoting Taplin, 1879, p. 8, *The folklore, manners and languages of South Australian Aborigines*.