

My Family's Totem

Mark Tirris



KNOWLEDGE
BOOKS AND SOFTWARE

**OUR
STORIES**

Knowledge Books and Software

PO Box 50, Sandgate, Queensland 4017 Australia
p. +617-5568 0288 f. +617-5568 0277 email: sales@kbs.com.au

First published 2020

ISBN 9781925714685

Illustrations and prepress: Dean Maynard
Text/editor and producer: Sharlene Coombs
Publisher: Robert Watts

Series information: **History of the First Australians**

Reproduction and Communication for educational purposes

Fair Go! Make sure you record any copying of this book so we may get some benefit please.

The Australian Copyright Act 1968 (the Act) allows a maximum of one chapter or 10% of the pages of this work, whichever is the greater, to be reproduced and/or communicated by any educational institution for its educational purposes provided that the educational institution (or the body that administers it) has given a remuneration notice to the Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) under the Act.

For details of the CAL licence for educational institutions contact:

Copyright Agency Limited
Level 15, 233 Castlereagh Street,
SYDNEY, NSW 2000

Telephone: +61 2 93947600 Fax: +61 2 93947601 Email: info@copyright.com.au

Reproduction and Communication for other purposes

Except as permitted under the Act (for example for the services of the Crown or in reliance on one of the fair dealing exceptions ie. a fair dealing for the purposes of research or study) no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, communicated or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior written permission.

Acknowledgements

Mark Tirris © Copyright, Images pp 3,9,11,15,17,19,21,23. Illustrations pp 1,5,7,13.

Dean Maynard: Cover design 2020



1

In Aboriginal Australian culture, a totem is extremely important, not only to a person but also to a family or Nation. They are to be closely protected and cared for. There are many different totems and each family has their own totem. Most animals are a totem to someone.

SAMPLE

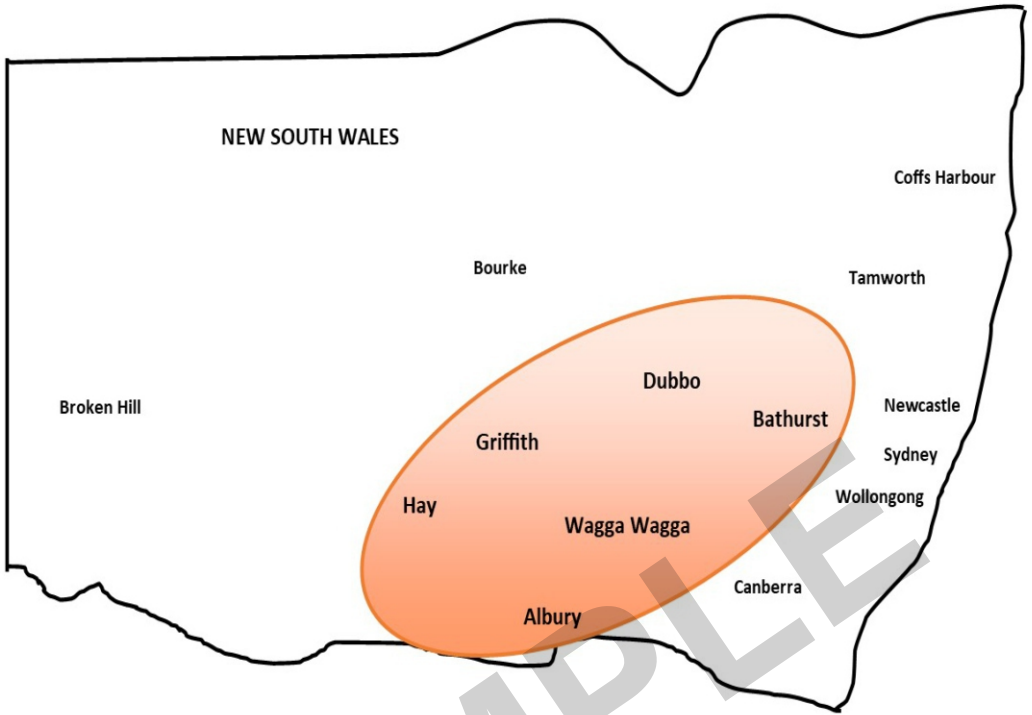


Different totems exist in different areas of Australia. If you live in the desert, your totem would be from the desert. If you live on the coast, your totem would be from the coast. A totem animal is given to you at birth or when you are ready. Your totem is passed down from your family and you can't marry someone with the same totem.



My Aboriginal family comes from the Wiradjuri Nation in South West New South Wales. Wiradjuri means "people of the three rivers". These three big rivers gave food and nourishment to the Wiradjuri people. I am extremely proud to come from this nation.

SAMPLE



Word bank

Northern
mountains
Bundjalung
Nation
visitor
Wiradjuri
Aboriginal
ancestors
important
coastline
skateboards
surfboards
definitely
favourite
temperature
breaking
paddled

becoming
decided
dolphins
connected
creator
wonderful
hometown
grateful
mussels
ocean
otherwise
poisoned
cousins
nephews
nieces
relaxing

Reading Recovery Level: 27

Word count: 604

Content: Non-fiction explanation and report

ACARA F-10 references:

Learning Areas: English; Science; Humanities and Social Sciences; The Arts; Languages.

General Capabilities: Literacy; Critical and Creative Thinking; Personal and Social Capability; Intercultural Understanding.

Cross Curriculum Priorities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures; Sustainability.

Teacher Notes:

The Gugaa Totem explains the importance of totems in Aboriginal Australian culture and specifically focuses on the author's Wiradjuri family's totem, the Gugaa, or goanna. Mark explains how his totem teaches him and his family all about life.

Discussion points for consideration:

1. Gugaa is the Wiradjuri term for goanna. Research some other Aboriginal Language terms for goanna.
2. Do you have a totem? If not, what would you like to have as your totem? Why?
3. How does Mark and his family ensure that his totem stays protected?

Difficult words to be introduced and practised before reading this book:

Aboriginal, Australian, culture, totem, extremely, Nation, closely, protected, different, exist, desert, coast, Wiradjuri, nourishment, Gugaa, goanna, language, unique, however, delicious, believes, design, surfboards, surrounded, cherish, continue.

Acknowledgement of the First Nations' People: We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Sensitivity Notice: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are **warned** that the following series may contain images - photographs and illustrations and text about deceased persons.

My Family's Totem

In this story, Mark explains the importance of totems in Aboriginal Australian culture. He talks about his Wiradjuri Family's totem, the Gugaa, or goanna, and how it teaches his family about life.

Author's Bio:

Mark Tirris is a proud descendant of the Wiradjuri Peoples of South West NSW and has always been active in his local Aboriginal community in Northern NSW. He successfully completed a Master's degree in Indigenous Studies (Wellbeing) through Southern Cross University. His professional experience includes five years working in several Aboriginal organisations and managing his own Indigenous consultancy business.



ISBN 9781925714685



KNOWLEDGE
BOOKS AND SOFTWARE



The First Australians