



Yumi Olgeta

Crafting
a More
Inclusive
Democracy

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INTRODUCING AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS (PORT JACKSON):

www.assi.pj.com.au

Australian South Sea Islanders – Port Jackson (ASSIPJ) recognises the traditional owners of the lands on which we operate from known as the Gadigal People who are one of the twenty-nine clans of the Eora Nation in Sydney New South Wales, Australia.

At this time in our nations development we remember what was before colonisation and reflect on our nation's true history, which began tens of thousands of years ago with the First Australians – the world's oldest living culture – and we must never forget the impact that European settlement had on our First Nations families way of life. We reflect and pay our respect to the knowledge keepers of land, sea and sky and in caring for Country.

WHO ARE WE:

Australian South Sea Islanders – Port Jackson were voted the official representative voice at the ASSI National Secretariat in 2012. Today we continue to advocate on behalf of our people to be included more prominently as part of the great Australian narrative.

An effective leadership organisation, Australia's South Sea Islanders – Port Jackson ensure full and fair participation for communities at large and Australian South Sea Islanders on a state, national and global scale through sharing of knowledge and resources as a means of capacity building and cultural significance to sustain, educate and support generations to come.

Australian South Sea Islanders – Port Jackson draws on culturally appropriate methods to ensure our respected Elders, leaders, youth, individuals and broader community come together to foster healthy relationships and a greater understanding of our shared history.

The Yumi Olgeta workshop allows for the meaningful conversation of this forgotten part of our history while sharing a unique artform in embroidery and traditional customs of the Napen Napen women who have weaved the centrepiece of the quilt that will be shared at the workshop. It is also a vehicle to assist with transgenerational trauma within the ASSI community and a culturally appropriate strategy that honours assertion and self determination.

HISTORY:

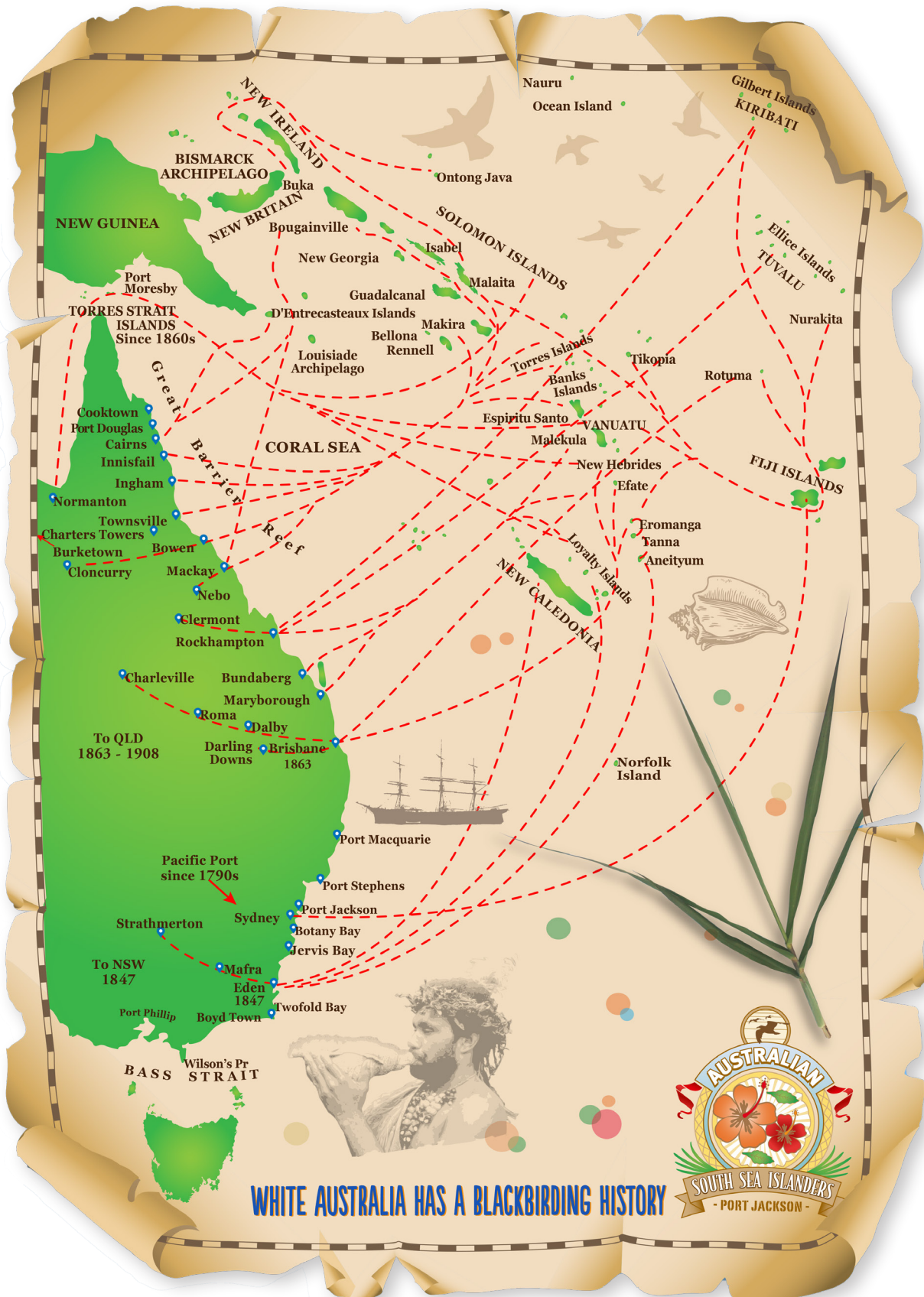
Australian South Sea Islanders have an evident kinship with the Melanesian region of Australia in sustaining strong cultural, family and spiritual bonds with Torres Strait Islands and Aboriginal Australia. As descendants of Australia's Blackbirding, we were absorbed under Aboriginal protection acts of the 1930s onto missions, stations, plantations and farms.

The practice of Blackbirding refers to some 60,000 men, women and children stolen, tricked and coerced from the eighty islands of Vanuatu and Solomons and included Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, Tuvalu, New Caledonia and Fiji.

Benjamin Boyd illegally trafficked the first men to NSW in 1847, followed by the influx to Queensland by Robert Towns and John Mackay the more famous names of township founders that Blackbirded between 1863-1908 in establishing a booming economy in sugar, maritime, pastoral and cotton industries.

In 1994 the Australian South Sea Islander community was recognised as a 'distinct cultural group' due to the lobby work of community leaders, in particular, Mrs Faith Bandler, the driving force behind the 1992 Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission Report ('The Call for Recognition') as well as other families from the northern rivers region of NSW who formed the first Australian South Sea Islanders United Council (ASSIUC) founded at Tweed Heads in 1972 by Phyllis and Robert Corowa, Allan and Marg Togo.

Today some 49 years later the organisation is housed and recognised through the establishment of a South Sea Islander room at Tweed City Council and represent the Tweed Gold Coast ASSI United Community which is considered a sacred hub of elders that reinforce a historical truth and knowledge of survival for a formidable workforce and community demographic that established Australia's economy as one of the largest sugar providers in the world.



WHITE AUSTRALIA HAS A BLACKBIRDING HISTORY



THE MAP:

The map 'White Australia has a Blackbirding History' is an updated artistic version of a historical map that demonstrates the shipping routes of close to 800 voyages. Port Jackson (Sydney Harbour) has been a receiving port for Pacific Labour since the 1790s and Pirrama Park Sydney NSW is historically the Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR Sugar) site that received the Sugar from across Queensland and NSW plantations.



Conch Shell Embroidery
by Wendy Matthews

HISTORY OF YUMI OLGETA: CRAFTING A MORE INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY:

Yumi Olgeta is the Bislama word for 'you and me altogether'. Bislama is a language that was formed in Bundaberg Queensland in the 1800s as a result of clans tribes and plantation owners needing to communicate. This language is now spoken throughout the Pacific and is the national language of Vanuatu given 90% of the trade were taken from Vanuatu and largest population affected were those from Tanautu (Tanna). In some cases small scale islands in some cases were ravaged of their entire male populations.

Crafting a More Inclusive Democracy is a unique collaboration that has formed over the last two years between Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson), Australian Artist Helen Fraser and the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House in Canberra. In 2017 Helen joined an international quilt project called the United Declaration of Human Rights Quilt Project which led her to research Australia's Slave Trade history. Her quilt block in this project was titled "Australia has a Slave History too" and was projected onto the front of Old Parliament House during the Canberra Enlighten Festival in 2019. It is now part of the Museum of Australian Democracy collection as they purchased the four quilts from this project in 2020. As a white, middle-aged woman born in country Victoria Helen was shocked and profoundly upset that she did not know about the history of Blackbirding. Wanting a more personal perspective she reached out to ASSIPJ Chairwoman Waskam Emelda Davis and travelled to Sydney in November 2018 to meet some of the community. When Auntie

Shireen Malamoo said the words "If we tell the truth we will all grow up", Helen was committed to finding a way to learn and contribute to a more inclusive society where Blackbirding is recognised and descendants honoured. With the help of the creative team at the Museum of Australian Democracy, she joined with Emelda, Auntie Lydia George, Danny Togo and the Napen Napen Cultural Women visiting from Vanuatu for a heartfelt conversation about the true history of this nation. Participants were able to listen while chain stitching an embroidery block Helen designed in collaboration with ASSIPJ to symbolise the calling together of the community with the conch shell. It was a powerful day of truth-telling and learning.

Due to the success and impact of this first workshop, the participants decided to donate their blocks for a commemorative ASSI Quilt. Helen's network also contributed so we now have 40 blocks for a colourful border for the quilt. With the help of the City of Sydney ASSIPJ commissioned the Napen Napen Women in Port Vila, Vanuatu to create three custom-designed weavings to add significant wording, symbolism and to honour Vanuatu's 40th year of Independence titled Yumi 40 Anniversary which has taken place during the project this year.

The weavings will be surrounded by a patchwork of these culturally symbolic motifs – the frangipani and hibiscus flower, the sugar cane plant and the turtle. This first Yumi Olgeta Project will be donated to the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House in Canberra for their private collection.

MATERIALS LIST:

Essential

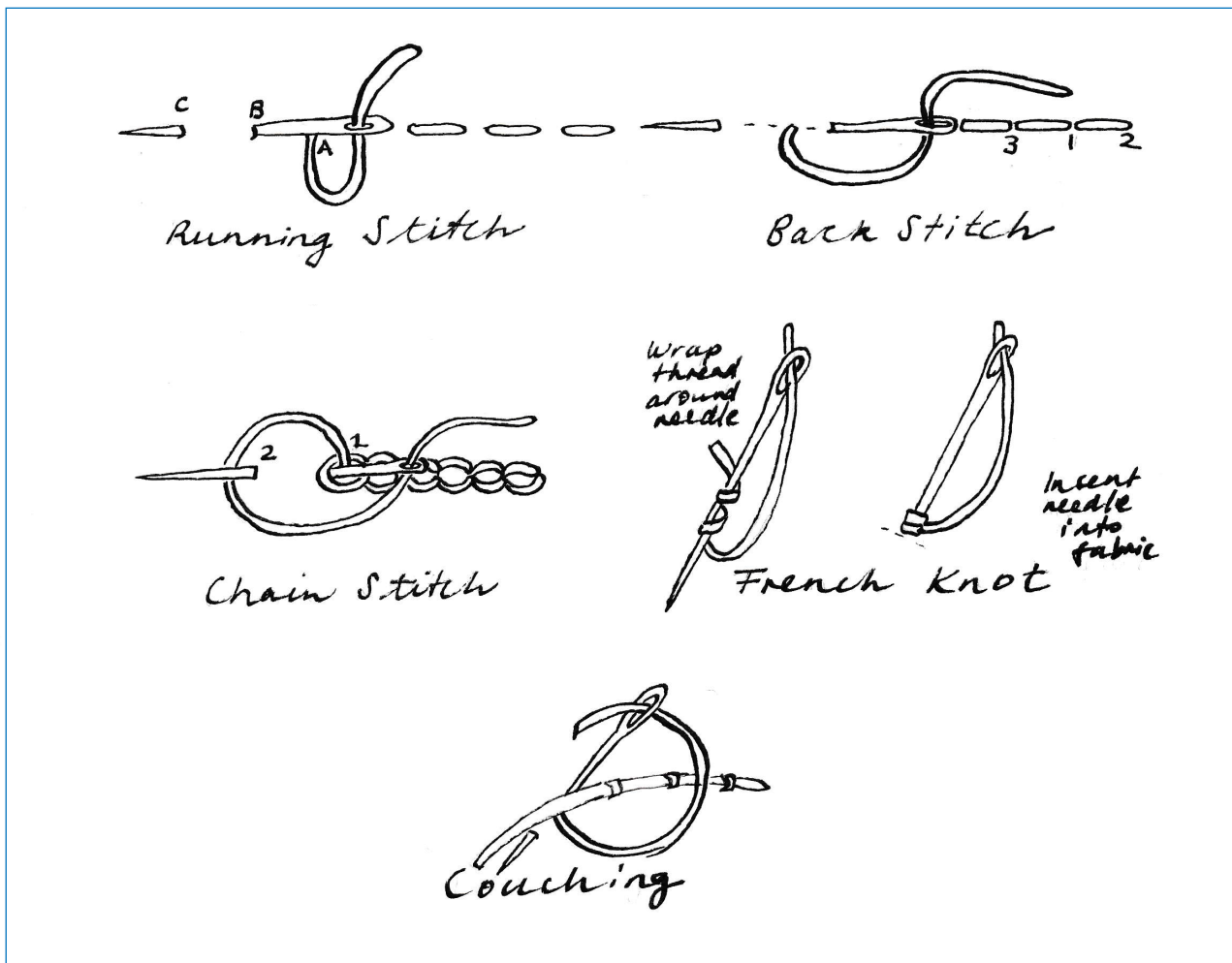
- 1 x Size 8 or 9 embroidery needle (has large enough eye to fit No 8 Cotton Perle thread)
Jeana Kimball Foxglove Cottage needle recommended
- Sand Coloured linen (or cotton) background fabric
- Assorted DMC Embroidery Cotton and Cotton Perle No 8 in the following colours to match the ASSIPJ Logo; moss green, grass green, burgundy, red, sand, lemon, mid brown, orange, light blue and black
- Assorted fabrics in the above colours. Cotton quilting fabrics preferred. Floral or geometric fabrics recommended. If you have a fabric of personal significance, feel free to use this in the work to add depth and meaning
- Scissors to cut fabric and thread
- Fabric Glue Stick or pins

Optional

- Applique Pins (smaller than the usual pins)
- Pincushion
- Flexion Iron Off Pen (\$4.00 from office supply stores)
- If you wish to do clean edge applique you could use Vliesofix
- Iron (if you are using Vliesofix)

STITCHING DIAGRAMS:

Use these diagrams to assist in your stitching





DESIGN 1

HOW TO APPLIQUE AND EMBROIDER A FRANGIPANI FLOWER

Aim: Using simple raw edge applique and basic embroidery stitches you will create a five petal frangipani flower on cloth. It will be adorned with running stitch, back stitch, french knots. Optional wording can be created in chain stitch.

Suitable for beginners.

How to:

1. Cut out petal template.
2. Choose fabric and using template, cut out 5 petals from the fabric.
3. Place petals onto sand coloured fabric and pin in place to match diagram.
4. Thread needle with Cotton Perle (thicker thread) and using Running Stitch secure the petals to the fabric. Knot the thread at the back of the work and cut the thread.
5. Select a matching thread and using Back Stitch, work around the petals to create an outline. Knot the thread at the back of the work and cut the thread.
6. In the centre bring some cotton perle thread up and create 3 French Knots. Knot the thread at the back after creating each one and cut the thread.
7. Using a Flexion Iron Off Pen, add wording or additional imagery and stitch using Chain Stitch or other stitches to add personal meaning and detail.



DESIGN 2

HOW TO APPLIQUE AND EMBROIDER A HIBISCUS FLOWER

Aim: Using simple raw edge applique and basic embroidery stitches you will create a five petal Hibiscus flower with two leaves and a stamen on cloth. Each will be adorned with running stitch, back stitch, couching and chain stitch.

Suitable for beginners to intermediate.

How to:

1. Cut out petal templates.
2. Cut out two leaves from printed fabric or use templates provided.
3. Choose fabric and using template, cut out five petals from the fabric.
4. Place petals and leaves onto sand coloured fabric and pin in place to match diagram.
5. Thread needle with Cotton Perle (thicker thread) and using Running Stitch secure the petals to the fabric. Knot the thread at the back of the work and cut the thread.
6. Select a matching thread and using Back Stitch, work around the petals to create an outline. Knot the thread at the back of the work and cut the thread.
7. In the centre bring some cotton perle thread up and create 3 French Knots. Knot the thread at the back after creating each one and cut the thread.
8. Using a Flexion Iron Off Pen, add wording or additional imagery and stitch using Chain Stitch or other stitches to add personal meaning and detail.



DESIGN 3

HOW TO APPLIQUE AND EMBROIDER A SUGAR CANE PLANT

Aim: Using simple raw edge applique and basic embroidery stitches you will create a sugar cane plant with embroidered leaves. Each will be adorned with running stitch, back stitch, couching and chain stitch.

Suitable for beginners to intermediate.

How to:

1. Cut out stem templates.
2. Place stem segments onto sand coloured fabric and pin in place to match diagram.
3. Using a Flexion Pen to draw leaves onto fabric as per diagram.
4. Thread needle with Cotton Perle (thicker thread) and using Running Stitch secure the stem segments to the fabric. Knot the thread at the back of the work and cut the thread.
5. Select a matching thread and using Back Stitch, work around the edges of the stems to create an outline. Knot the thread at the back of the work and cut the thread.
6. Using Back Stitch create an outline around the leaves.
7. Fill the leaves with Chain Stitch or other filler stitches for decoration.



DESIGN 4

HOW TO APPLIQUE AND EMBROIDER A TURTLE

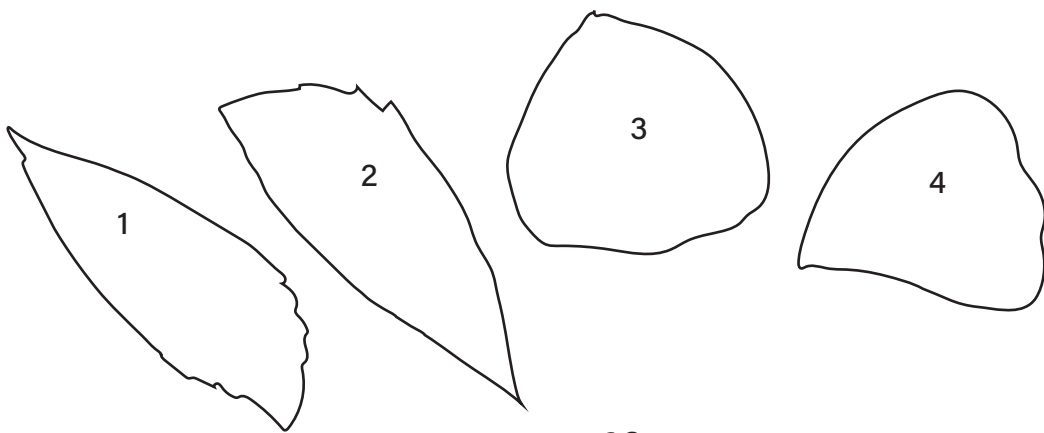
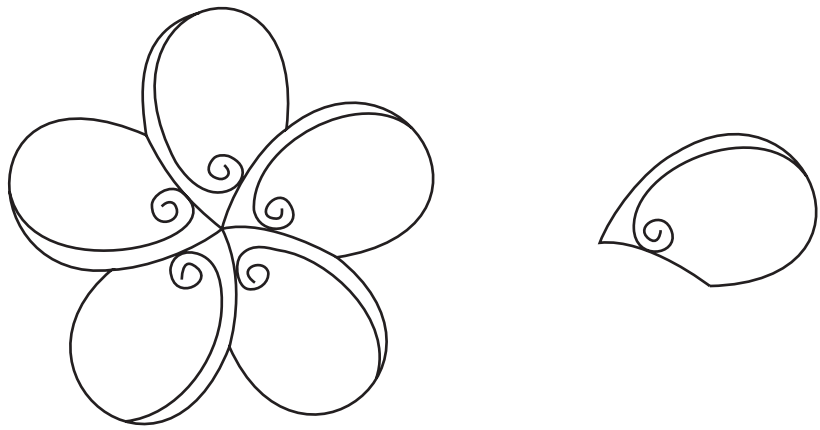
Aim: Using simple raw edge applique and basic embroidery stitches you will create a turtle. It will be adorned with running stitch, back stitch, couching and chain stitch.

Suitable for beginners to advanced.

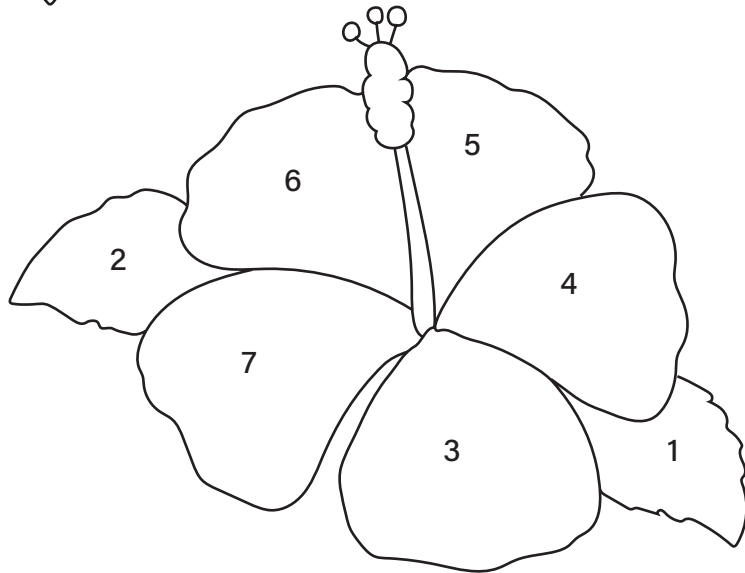
How to:

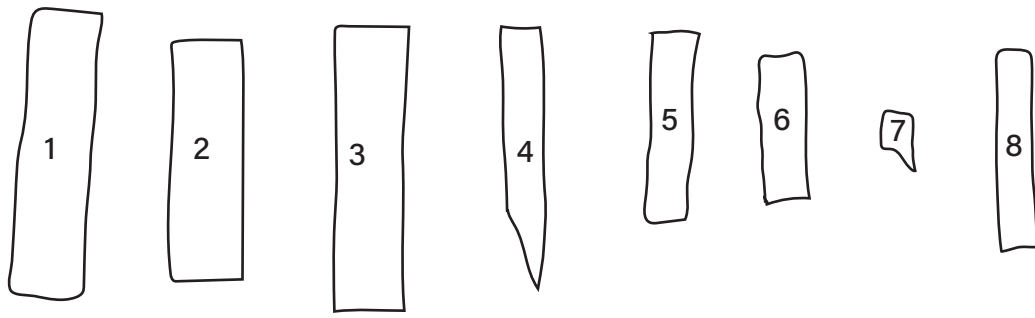
1. Cut out head and shell templates.
2. Choose fabric and using templates, cut out the pieces from the fabric.
3. Place fabric pieces onto sand coloured fabric and pin in place to match diagram.
4. Draw on small shell areas for decorative stitching. Shown in black in photo.
5. Thread needle with Cotton Perle (thicker thread) and using Running Stitch secure the larger fabric shapes to the linen. Knot the thread at the back of the work and cut the thread.
6. Select a matching thread and using Back Stitch, work around the shapes to create an outline and small areas for decoration. Knot the thread at the back of the work and cut the thread.
7. In the eye area bring some Cotton Perle thread up and create 3 French Knots. Knot the thread at the back after creating each one and cut the thread.
8. Add Chain Stitch or other stitches to add personal meaning and detail.

**FRANGIPANI
FLOWER**

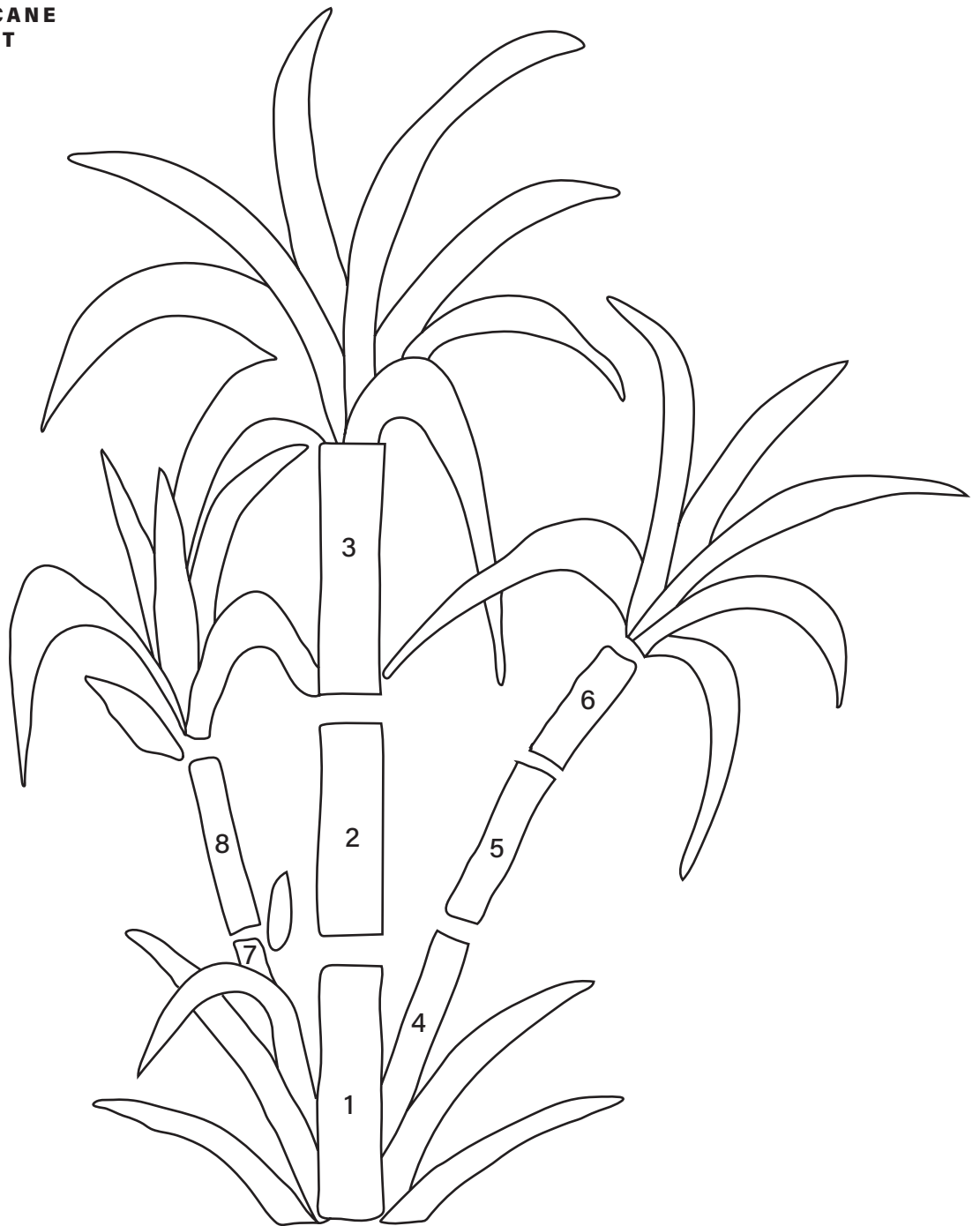


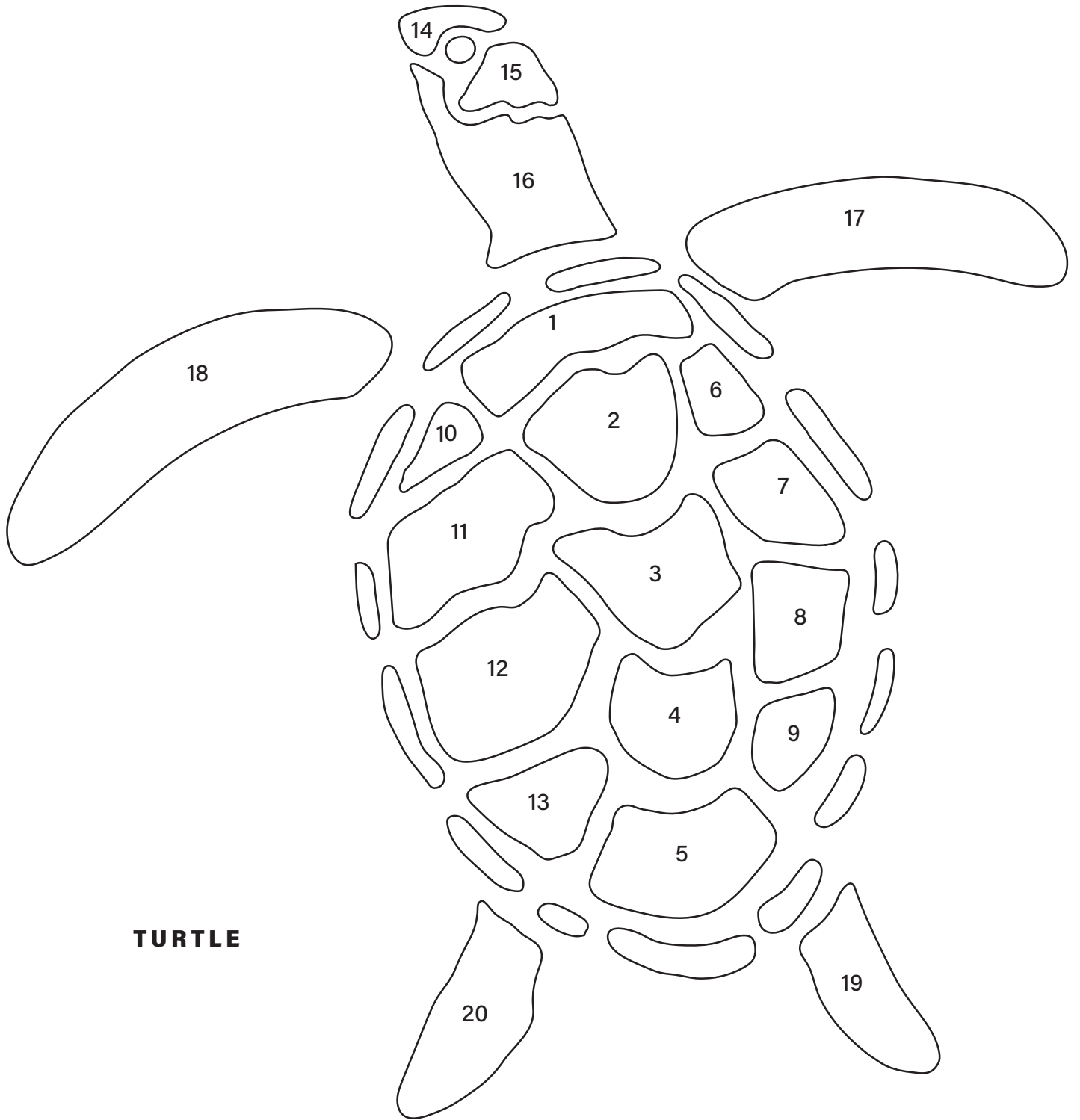
**HIBISCUS
FLOWER**





**SUGAR CANE
PLANT**

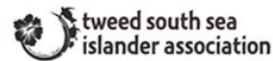




TURTLE



Australian Government



NOTES:

You may like to become an Associate Member of ASSI-PJ or follow them on Social Media. www.assipj.com.au or @assi.pjofficial or Facebook Page Australian South Sea Islanders Port Jackson

This is the first project of the collaboration with many more to come. You might like to follow Helen Fraser Artist on @helenfraserartist or www.helenfraser.net.au for more information as the collaboration progresses.



Tshirts \$40 + plus postage - please advise via email if you wish to purchase a Tshirt

Contact: assi.pj@gmail.com