

TERRIFIC TRADITIONS OF TOOGIMBIE



Georgia Booth, Tom Christensen, Hugh Duncan,
Liam Hayward, Marlee McPhellamy, Adrian Pascoe,
Kayla Rickus and Hannah Shea

Hay Public School



Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to agriculture and natural resource management issues.

www.wirraminna.org/creative-catchment-kids/

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants.

www.wirraminna.org

Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeeKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

www.envirostories.com.au

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School: Hay Public School

Our Culture

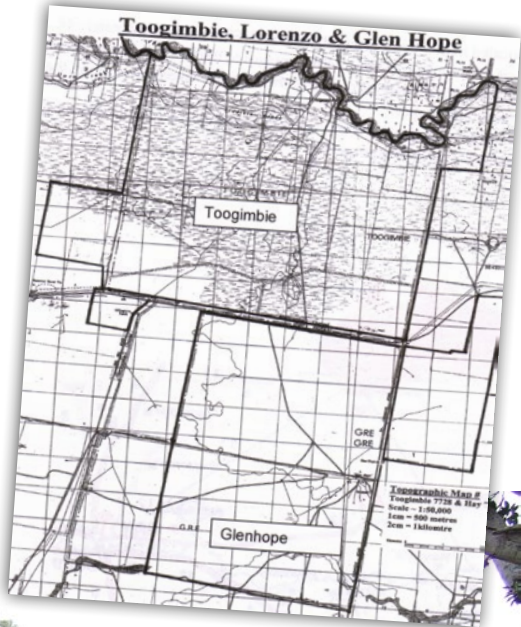
In 2016, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about Aboriginal culture in their local communities. The program was generously funded by Riverina Local Land Services.

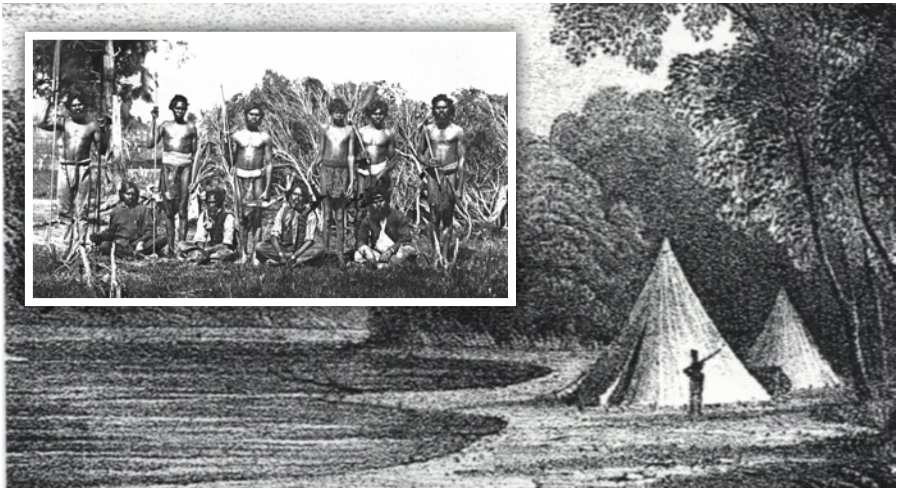
Creative Catchment Kids - Our Community is part of Enviro-Stories, a Peekdesigns education program.



Toogimbie is a property situated west of Hay along the Murrumbidgee River. Toogimbie covers 22,000 acres along the south side of the Murrumbidgee. 11,300 of these acres are set aside as conservation and cultural areas; and 4000 acres are used for cropping with the remaining area being used for cattle and sheep grazing.

The property also includes the adjoining country known as 'Glenhope'.





Toogimbie Station was taken up by squatters in the mid 1800s and this is when the local Aboriginal people first came into contact with new settlers.

The station possessed an enormous wooden wharf where the paddlesteamer 'The Pevensy' would load wool from the station. The property also had a swing bridge across the river. The pillars from the wharf can still be seen today. Many of the stockmen on Toogimbie were Aboriginal.



The property is owned and managed by traditional custodians.

Jamie Woods and his wife Samantha live on Toogimbie. Samantha and Jamie have three boys - Kyper, Bronx and Oaken. Kyper attends kindergarten at Hay Public School. Every morning Jamie and Sam drive up a 7 kilometre dirt road to the highway for the school bus.



Toogimbie has vast tracks of flood plain which are natural wetlands for native birds and animals. Some of these include swans, ducks, ibis, fairy wrens, different species of bats, non lethal scorpions and Southern Bell Frogs. In order to encourage these creatures to flourish the custodial owners of Toogimbie realised that they would need to ensure a constant supply of water to this area.



By using the existing channel system and levee banks and by increasing their height, wetlands have been created to provide breeding areas, protection and a food source for a variety of species. The channel and levee banks create land cells where the water is held. This allows vegetation such as lignum and medicinal plants to grow and flourish. When water is needed to be released into the next cell, the banks are broken.



One of the agricultural enterprises that Toogimbie operate is that of grain cropping. The traditional custodians initially leased the cropping ground to an established local family cropping enterprise for 15 years. Due to this family moving onto a new district they again leased the land to a family enterprise from Wagga Wagga. Conventional cropping methods are used to grow grain crops such as wheat and barley.



The other agricultural enterprise found on Toogimbie is that of livestock grazing. The land known as 'Glenhope' has the livestock. The cattle on this land are either agisted from other farms or owners or are there because of a process called 'backgrounding'. This means that an abattoir pays Toogimbie money for the use of their land for their cattle to put on a certain amount of weight.



The Aboriginal burial sites on Toogimbie are dotted all over the property; as well as mounds where Aboriginal people cooked, lived and traded. The main burial site at Toogimbie is gazetted as an 'Aboriginal Place'. This means that nothing can be built over the land as it is sacred to the Aboriginal custodians. Scattered amongst the mounds are a variety of rocks, grinding stones and burnt clay, which are remnants of the past.



The practice of cultural burning is used on Toogimbie to help control the weeds and maintain healthy grasslands and bush country. Aboriginal people used fire to help them manage the land. Burning grassland allowed for a fresh green pick after rain. This would then bring the animals such as kangaroos and emus, which made it easier to hunt them.

Income from the various enterprises on Toogimbie allow the custodians to have their own independence. This independence and management style has led them to be awarded one of the best managed IPAs in the country (Indigenous Protection Area). This income is also used to support programs and training that help the Aboriginal community to maintain their connection to country.

Toogimbie is a great example of modern day farming coexisting with Aboriginal cultural land and fragile important wetlands.





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2016 Year 6, Hay Public School

Congratulations!

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre and
the Creative Catchment Kids Program won the
National 2016 Yates Junior Landcare Team Award.

