First Australians
THE UNTOLD STORY OF AUSTRALIA

A STUDY GUIDE BY ROBERT LEWIS

http://www.metromagazine.com.au
http://www.theeducationshop.com.au
OVERVIEW OF THE SERIES

*First Australians* chronicles the birth of contemporary Australia as never told before, from the perspective of its first people. *First Australians* explores what unfolds when the oldest living culture in the world is overrun by the world’s greatest empire.

Over seven episodes, *First Australians* depicts the true stories of individuals — both black and white — caught in an epic drama of friendship, revenge, loss and victory in Australia’s most transformative period of history.

The story begins in 1788 in Sydney, with the friendship between an Englishmen (Governor Phillip) and a warrior (Bennelong) and ends in 1993 with Koiki Mabo’s legal challenge to the foundation of Australia. *First Australians* chronicles the collision of two worlds and the genesis of a new nation.
The seven episodes in the series cover key events, people and places throughout all Australia:

**Episode 1: 'They Have Come To Stay'**
Sydney and New South Wales (1788–1824)

The first Australians and the British, the most powerful Empire in history, come face to face in Sydney on 26 January 1788. Their differences are immense but apprehension quickly turns to curiosity. Friendships form, some between powerful men such as Governor Arthur Phillip and the Aboriginal Bennelong. But by the time this pair leave for London three years later, relations between the two races have soured. The bloodshed worsens as settlers spread out across the land.

**Episode 2: 'Her Will to Survive'**
Tasmania (1803–1880)

The land grab moves south to Tasmania. In an effort to protect the real estate prices, it is decided to remove the Tasmanian Aboriginal people from the island. The Government enlists an Englishman for the job, who is helped by a young Aboriginal woman, Truganini.

**Episode 3: ‘Freedom For Our Lifetime’**
Victoria (1860–1890)

The threat of extinction hovers over the first Australians of Victoria at the time Wurundjeri clan leader Simon Wonga seeks land from the authorities. He soon gives up and leads his people to the banks of the Yarra River, claiming a parcel of land, Coranderrk. With the help of a Scottish preacher, and inspired by the farming practices of the settlers, the community prospers – until the authorities step in and resist self-determination.

**Episode 4: ‘There is No Other Law’**
Central Australia (1878–1897)

Throughout the history of white settlement, individual white men, good and bad, have significantly affected the first Australians. Supported by pastoralists keen to make their fortune, the homicidal police officer Constable Willshire, brings mayhem to the Arrernte nation in Central Australia. With the authorities turning a blind eye, the telegraph operator Frank Gillen stops him. Gillen’s other legacy is comprehensive records of the Arrernte people’s way of life.

**Episode 5: ‘Unhealthy Government Experiment’**
Western Australia (1897–1937)

Jandamurra is born on a cattle station in the Kimberley in the 1870s. His hybrid life takes a bloody turn when he trades in his status as a police tracker for his own people. Gladys Gilligan is one of more than 50,000 half-caste children plucked from her family and sent to a mission. The Chief Protector of Aborigines, A.O. Neville, institutionalizes her first son, orders her to be arrested, and denies her the right to marry three times, but she remains resolutely independent.

**Episode 6: ‘Strength to Stand a Long Time’**
South-Eastern Australia (1937–1967)

Across the continent, the first Australians are governed by ‘protective legislation’ which binds them to reserves, controls their wages, residency, ability to marry and travel. Yorta Yorta man William Cooper forms the Australian Aborigines League in 1933 to continue his life-long campaign for equality. His nephew also becomes a political animal; Doug Nichols, a Church of Christ pastor who becomes a champion for those affected by the Maralinga nuclear bomb tests in the 1950s.

**Episode 7: ‘We are No Longer Shadows’**
Queensland and the Torres Strait Islands (1967–1993)

Eddie Koiki Mabo fights for Australian law to recognize that his people own Murray Island, where they have lived for generations. In 1992, six months after his death and a decade after the statement of claim was first lodged in Queensland, the highest court in the land decides in Mabo’s favour. The outcome overturns the notion of terra nullius, that is, the notion that the land belonged to no-one at the time of white settlement.

The series provides rich information, and raises controversial and challenging issues and ideas about Australia’s past, present and possible futures.

**CURRICULUM APPLICABILITY**

*First Australians* is suitable for middle and senior secondary students studying:

- Australian History
- Studies of Society and Environment / Human Society and its Environment / Social Education
- Indigenous Studies.

This study guide provides discussion points, additional material and classroom activities to help teachers and students develop an understanding of Australia’s past and the experiences of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians through these rich resources.
Introduction to the guide

The ‘Exploring the story’ section is designed to help middle secondary students follow and understand the narrative.

The ‘Exploring the series as a representation of history’ section is to enable senior students to apply critical analysis to the series as a historical source.

The ‘Exploring issues and ideas’ and the ‘Telling the story’ sections can be used at the teacher’s discretion with both middle and senior secondary students.

It is recommended that teachers show each episode in segments rather than in a single sitting, particularly for middle secondary students. The study guide suggests suitable breaks or pause points.

EPISODE 1:
‘They Have Come To Stay’

The first Australians and the British, the most powerful Empire in history, come face to face in Sydney on 26 January 1788. Their differences are immense but apprehension quickly turns to curiosity. Friendships form, some between powerful men such as Governor Arthur Phillip and the Aboriginal Bennelong. But by the time this pair leave for London three years later, relations between the two races have soured. The bloodshed worsens as settlers spread out across the land.

BEFORE WATCHING THIS EPISODE

Imagine that there is going to be a meeting between you and a totally new and different group, with no shared language, totally different origins, technology, lifestyle, culture and traditions.

1. Speculate or hypothesize on what might determine the success or failure of the meeting. Consider such things as:
   • leadership
   • size and strength of each side
   • attitudes and values
   • and other factors you might identify.

2. When they actually meet, speculate on the likely:
   • fears
   • hopes
   • emotions
   • questions likely to be felt and asked by each group about the other.

THINKING ABOUT THE PERIOD

This episode covers the period 1788 to 1824.

Some focus questions that any study of that period would try to answer

• What was life like for the First Australians before 1788?
• Why did the First Fleet come to Australia?
• Was the British seizure of the country legal?
• How did the two groups respond to each other initially? Why?
• Did these responses change over time? Why or why not?
• How did the culture of each group influence their attitudes and reactions to each other?
• What were the impacts of the new colonial occupation on the First Australians?
• How successful was resistance to the invasion? Why?

You will be asked after watching the episode to decide how this film contributes to your knowledge and understanding of, and your empathy with the people who were part of this historical time.
EXPLORING THE STORY

The story progresses through several stages. Students should be able to pause the film at the suggested stages to reflect on the stages of the story being told.

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<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Approximate time</th>
<th>Aspects of the story to consider</th>
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| 1     | 00:00 – 04:30    | 1. The opening only briefly considers the nature of the First Australians before the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788. What can we assume about these aspects of Aboriginal life:  
   • Knowledge of the environment  
   • Sustainable use of the environment  
   • Laws  
   • Social relations  
   • Technology  
   • ‘International’ relations – relations with neighbouring but separate groups  
   • Culture. |
|       | 04:30 – 11:30    | 2. What is the nature of the first contact – how do people respond to each other? Why? In answering this you might look back to the pre-viewing activities for possible factors to consider.  
   3. The film focuses on two men: Phillip and Bennelong. Describe the qualities that each man shows.  
   4. How might these two men influence the contact between the First Australians and the newcomers? |
| 3     | 11:30 – 17:00    | 5. What are some immediate impacts of the occupation/invasion? Consider a range of impacts, including environmental, social, cultural and technological impacts. |
| 4     | 17:00 – 29:20    | 6. What is Bennelong’s role in the new settlement?  
   7. Why is he such an important figure in this narrative?  
   8. Up to December 1790 relations seem to be amicable. Why? |
   10. What is Phillip’s reaction?  
   11. This reaction seems out of character for Phillip. Why might he react in this way? |
| 6     | 35:40 – 53:00    | 12. Phillip leaves, and Bennelong accompanies him to Britain. What happens to Bennelong in Britain?  
   13. How does it change him?  
   14. How does the government of the colony change after Phillip’s departure?  
   15. How does Pemulwuy respond?  
   16. What happens when Bennelong returns?  
   17. What has happened to the Aboriginal people of the Sydney area during his absence? |
| 7     | 53:00 – 68:00    | 18. What happens when the settlers move into the new land?  
   19. Describe Windradyne.  
   20. How do the Wiradjuri react?  
   21. Why do they treat some settlers differently to others?  
   22. How does the war end? |
1. After watching the episode, decide how it has helped you gain knowledge and understanding of, and empathy with, the people of this period.

2. Imagine that a television guide has asked you to summarize the story of 'They Have Come to Stay' in a few sentences. How will you describe it?

3. The television guide finally wants you to explain the message of the episode in a few sentences. What do you think is the message in this film about the settlement/invasion of Australia and the impacts on the First Australians?

4. The television guide also wants you to write a short comment or evaluation of the episode. Write your assessment piece.

5. Alternatively, instead of writing for a television guide, develop and then present your views on the episode as though you are presenting a film review for a television program.

6. Go back to the focus questions listed in the 'Thinking about the Period' section. Which of these questions do you think this episode of First Australians has helped you answer?

EXPLORING ISSUES AND IDEAS

Language

A film about the coming of Europeans to Australia in 1788 has to address the issue: what do we call these newcomers? The main possibilities include:

- Colonists
- Settlers
- Invaders
- British
- Whites
- Europeans

1. Provide a definition of each.
2. Explain how each word involves a different set of values or judgement about the people.
3. How might each possibility be accurate? How might each be an inaccurate or inadequate term to use?

4. Which do you think is most appropriate and accurate?

5. Could it be possible that the different words have different meaning and applicability at different periods? For example, if we look upon the newcomers as 'invaders', might they have seen themselves as 'settlers' in their own day? Discuss this idea.

A film about the coming of Europeans to Australia in 1788 also has to address the question of what we call the existing inhabitants. The possibilities include:

- Aborigines
- Indigenous inhabitants or people
- First Australians
- Australians
- Using a tribal or clan name (such as Eora Nation, comprising for example Cadigal, Cameragal, Wanghal clans or sub-groups)

Remember that there was no notion or sub-groups) of the boundaries of the continent of Australia among Indigenous Australians in 1788, the name 'Australia' did not exist to describe the continent until 1814, and the nation Australia did not legally exist until 1901.

6. Provide a definition of each.

7. Explain how each word involves a different set of values or judgement about the people.

8. How might each possibility be accurate? How might each be an inaccurate or inadequate term to use?

9. Which do you think is most appropriate and accurate?

10. Look at <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/aboriginal_studies_press/aboriginal_wall_map/map_page/> where you will find a map developed by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, of the locations and origins of Indigenous clan groupings across Australia. The map attempts to represent language, tribal or nation groups of Australia's Indigenous peoples. How does this map help you to answer question 8?

11. Why do you think the filmmakers chose the title 'First Australians'?

Reconciliation

An idea expressed in the film is that all Australians must acknowledge the good and bad in Australian history, including the impact of the settlement of Australia on the First Australians.

In a now-famous speech in December 1992 the then prime minister Paul Keating said:

['The starting point [for reconciliation] might be to recognise that the problem starts with us non-Aboriginal Australians. It begins, I think, with the act of recognition. Recognition that it was we who did the dispossessing. We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life. We brought the disasters. 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. With some noble exceptions, we failed to make the most basic human response and enter into their hearts and minds. We failed to ask – how would I feel if this were done to me? As a consequence, we failed to see that what we were doing degraded all of us ...']
It might help us if we non-Aboriginal Australians imagined ourselves dispossessed of land we have lived on for 50 000 years – and then imagined ourselves told that it had never been ours.

Imagine if ours was the oldest culture in the world and we were told that it was worthless. Imagine if we had resisted this settlement, suffered and died in the defence of our land, and then were told in history books that we had given up without a fight. Imagine if non-Aboriginal Australians had served their country in peace and war and were then ignored in history books. Imagine if our feats on sporting fields had inspired admiration and patriotism and yet did nothing to diminish prejudice. Imagine if our spiritual life was denied and ridiculed. Imagine if we had suffered the injustice and then were blamed for it.

It seems to me that if we can imagine the injustice then we can imagine its opposite. And we can have justice.

http://apology.west.net.au/redfern.htm

1. What is Keating saying about non-Aboriginal Australian’s past actions and about this period?
2. How do you respond to these claims?
3. Do you agree that Australians need to be able to acknowledge the good and the bad in their history if they are to be able to share their full identity? In your class, set up the labels ‘agree’, ‘strongly agree’, ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ in four corners of your classroom. Move to the label that reflects your opinion. Talk with other class members who move to each space and share your views. Be prepared to justify your opinions in a whole class discussion.

Here is another comment on the issue, by historian John Hirst:

There is literally no place for settler Australians to stand to decry the conquest of this country. It belonged to the Aborigines. The only honest approach is to recognise the conquest as conquest ... In the European world of the late eighteenth century acquiring new territory was perfectly legitimate; what dispute there was concerned the treatment of the people already there ... according to their lights the settlers were right to invade and the Aborigines were right to resist them. It is our common fate to live with the consequences of that conjunction.


4. Discuss the different views represented in these two quotations: should we express guilt about our past and do the best we can in the future, or should we accept the past as it was and do the best we can in the future?

First Australians is a representation of history. This means that it is somebody’s version of what happened. Every secondary account of history is a representation. The creator of the version has chosen what to include and what to exclude from all the possible elements and sources, and has chosen the sequence in which they will be presented. In the case of film, the creator, the writers, director and editor, have also chosen the sound, lighting, expert commentators, images focus and other filmic elements that constitute the final product.

If senior students are to use this film as a source of information and ideas in their study, they must be prepared to critically analyse and evaluate it as a historical source.

The use of expert commentators

One of the features of First Australians is the use of commentators. We need to consider who they are, how they present information, and how the filmmaker uses them in the overall representation.

1. Think back to the commentators. What was their role?
2. How did you respond to them?
3. Why do you think the filmmaker chose them?
4. Why do you think they are used in the film?

Now look at this brief biographical information on each of them and answer the questions that follow.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professor Marcia Langton</th>
<th>Professor Janet McCalman</th>
<th>Inga Clendinnen AO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A leading Indigenous scholar, commentator and activist, Professor of Australian Indigenous Studies at the University of Melbourne.</td>
<td>A historian specializing in the history of health and medicine, Australian and British social and political history, urban history and history of women, children and the family. She has collaborated on the demographic and medical history of the Aboriginal people of Victoria, 1800–2000.</td>
<td>A retired academic historian who has written <em>Dancing With Strangers</em>, a history of the arrival of the First Fleet and its impact on the local people.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Allen Madden</th>
<th>Dr Jim Kohen</th>
<th>Dr Gordon Briscoe AO</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural and Educational Officer with the Metropolitan Land Council in Sydney. The Metropolitan Land Council acts as cultural custodians for the traditional owners of the region.</td>
<td>An academic researcher at Macquarie University Department of Biological Sciences into ethnobiology, environmental biology, conservation biology, Indigenous studies.</td>
<td>A former director of the Australian National University’s Centre for Indigenous History. He is a long-standing Indigenous activist, organizer, researcher, writer, teacher and mentor.</td>
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<th>Professor Peter Read</th>
<th>John Connor</th>
<th>Bruce Pascoe</th>
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<tr>
<td>An academic researcher at the Australian National University History Department. Has been Deputy Director of the Centre for Indigenous History. Chairperson for the journal <em>Aboriginal History</em>, and Public Officer for the Stolen Generations Link Up (NSW).</td>
<td>An academic historian at the Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra. He has written <em>The Australian Frontier Wars 1788–1838</em>.</td>
<td>National award-winning author, has worked as a teacher, farmer, fisherman, barman, farm fence contractor, lecturer, Aboriginal language researcher, archeological site worker and book editor. Author of <em>The Convincing Ground</em>, a history of Aboriginal massacres in Victoria.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Richard Green</th>
<th>David Suttor</th>
<th>Bill Allen</th>
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<td>Information to come</td>
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5. Comment on why each might have been chosen to be part of this episode.

6. Do you think they are appropriate and believable experts?

The treatment of controversial or uncertain issues

One of the ideas raised in the film is the coming of the smallpox epidemic in 1789. Look at that sequence again, and answer these questions.

1. What impression do you have of the outbreak?
2. What damage did it do?
3. What was the cause?

These are the messages you have received from the film. How have they been achieved? Here is the script from that segment.

NARRATOR:
Before Phillip can conciliate the affections of the natives, in 1789 disaster strikes.

WATKIN TENCH:
An extraordinary calamity was now observed among the natives. Repeated accounts brought by our boats are [of] finding bodies of the Indians in all the coves and inlets of the harbour … pustules, similar to those occasioned the by small pox were thickly spread on the bodies; but how a disease to which our former observations had led us to suppose them strangers, could at once have introduced itself, and then spread so widely, seemed inexplicable …

MARCIA LANGTON:
How did it come to Australia, I think there’s such a debate and there’s such speculation that we can’t know definitively, but in my own mind it’s clear that it came with the First Fleet.

INGA CLENDINNEN:
It is sometimes said, more often believed, that the small pox was let loose by the British at that point in time to destroy the possibility of the Aboriginal resistance, I simply can’t comprehend that notion at all. In all the accounts there is bewilderment, despair and horror in the British accounts as they see that smallpox is loose amongst the native population.

DAVID COLLINS:
The excavations in the rocks are filled with putrid bodies, who had fallen victims to the disorder not a living person was anywhere to be met with. It seems as if flying from the contagion they had left the dead to bury the dead. He lifted up his hands and eyes in silent agony for some time and then exclaimed, ‘Dead, all dead’, and then hung his head in mournful silence.

NARRATOR:
None of the whites are affected by it as they are immune to it.

ALLAN MADDEN:
England were masters and the first masters of germ warfare … They tried it in the Americas, they released it in the West Indies, and they brought it here.

NARRATOR:
Some say it came in from the north of the continent bought by Macassan fisherman and [that it] arrived coincidently just after the British.
Whatever the source it wipes out the great majority of the First Australians in the Sydney region.

4. How are the experts used in the film episode?
5. What do the experts say?
6. What disagreement is there?
7. Is the cause of the smallpox outbreak a settled fact?

Look back at your ‘impression’ answers above. Would you now change any of these?

Here is the most authoritative statement about the outbreak, from historian Judy Campbell in her book *Invisible Invaders*, published in 2002.

“We now know that … smallpox virus was adversely affected by high temperatures and high relative humidity. Hence [smallpox carried on the First Fleet] would almost certainly have been inactivated by the voyage through the tropics in 1787, followed by fifteen months of Sydney’s frequently hot and humid weather before April 1789, when Aboriginal deaths first occurred … The most likely explanation of its unexpected appearance at Sydney seems to be … that it entered Australia on the north coast [through infected Indonesian trepang fishermen] and spread through the interior to the south-east, to reach the east coast of New South Wales a few years later.”


8. Do you think the film has presented this issue fairly and well? Explain your views.

Conclusion

What do you think are the main strengths and the main weaknesses of this episode of *First Australians* as a representation of history?

TELLING THE STORY (FILM STUDY)

*First Australians* uses a variety of elements to tell the story.
Here are some comments by Rachel Perkins about the making of the series. Read them and answer the associated questions.

4. What have you decided about the name?

I thought I would talk today about a project called *First Australians*, which is a documentary project. We are still in the midst of it. When I talk to people about it, like taxi drivers, they ask ‘What do you do?’ and I say I make films. They say, ‘What are you working on?’ and I say, ‘I’m working on this documentary series called *First Australians*’ and they go ‘Oh great, it is about the migrant community coming to Australia’ and I say, ‘No, no! It is actually about the first Australians, Indigenous Australians.’

So, we are still grappling with the title and whether it is going to be too confusing for people to grasp. But the name *First Australians* sort of makes the point of it trying to claim the space as Australia’s first people. If anyone has any better suggestions, come up to me at the end of the session! …

It has a national perspective and it is really the history of colonisation, which is a big part of our story. It charts the period from the 1780s through to 1993 …

5. Do you think the series has achieved this aim of giving Indigenous Australians their own history?

It began in 2002 when Nigel Milan, who was the then general manager of SBS, approached me. They had shown a series on SBS called *500 Nations*, which is a series on Native American people. At the time, SBS had a big audience response which asked; ‘Why don’t we have an equivalent series here?’ …

When Nigel was searching for what his contribution could be to Indigenous Australia, he asked [fellow Board member Gordon Briscoe] and Gordon said, ‘Give my people back their history. Give Indigenous Australians their history because that has been taken from them. And that’s something you can do.’

6. Do you think that the emphasis on individuals within a chronological framework has been successful?

So from these two starting points Nigel approached me and said, ‘Make a series on Indigenous Australia.’ He gave us quite a whack of money and we were suddenly overwhelmed with how we would approach it.

We had a pivotal meeting with an American filmmaker called Ken Burns, who had made *The Civil War* which also screened on SBS – a beautiful series of black and white photographs and diary accounts of people charting the American Civil War. He said to us that he thought the most compelling way to make a series, such as the one we were doing, was through individuals. It is through the individual experiences that the history becomes alive because you get the emotion of their experience. We agreed with that. He also suggested that we take a chronological approach because it was a natural way of story telling. Rather than getting too tricky with ourselves – just tell it as one event after the other. It seems like a basic piece of advice, but it really galvanised our direction …

One of the greatest challenges we came across was finding Indigenous individuals who were documented in some kind of dimension in the records. Mostly we are known as natives, blacks, savages and at best Aboriginals or Islanders.

Because of our oral tradition, Aboriginal people didn’t really start writing until the 1940’s. The bulk of the written record is therefore from non-Indigenous Australians. So of course whatever snippets of evidence there is or reporting of voices is skewed through a certain view.

Our challenge is to use the records but to bring a contemporary Indigenous interpretation to those records …
7. How has the lack of Indigenous resources been overcome?

Interestingly enough, the history wars are not just being fought in the academic world and in the papers. They are also being fought on the landscape across Australia, which is something we discovered when we went to film at many of the sites around the countryside.

8. How has the landscape been a source of evidence?

For instance, Bull Cave in Camden, down in Dharawal Country. We went to film there because that was where the First Fleet’s cattle escaped and they wandered down South and they went into Dharawal Country and the Dharawal people painted this extraordinary image of this massive bull on the cave wall. It is one of the first pieces of contact art, a really important site. We went down there to film and of course, someone has spray painted across it in red letters: ‘This is bullshit’ and painted a big penis across it, so of course we can’t film there.

These sites go on and on. The Barak Monument was once in Healesville and this huge marble monument was somehow pushed over in the street so it had to be removed and taken back to Coranderrk. Red Hand Cave in the Blue Mountains has been completely covered by perspex and bars so that people can’t access it, yet people still dig underneath the bars to graffiti it. Bunjil Cave in Garriwerd – the Grampians has a metal cage around it because it has been graffitied so many times. Carved trees of the Wiradjuri and Gamilaroi have been chopped down and removed and burnt. There’s very few now that we can still film. Caterpillar dreaming sites in Alice Springs – blown up by the town council. Eddy Mabo’s tombstone – his face taken off it, swastikas painted across it, so it has had to be moved to the Torres Strait. Rock engravings in Darkinjung National Park, just the other day, we were going to some rock engravings and the local traditional owner said to us, ‘Oh over there, some guy brought a semi trailer full of wet cement and unloaded it onto a huge rock engraving site.’
The lengths that people will go to are just extraordinary – to destroy the historical record or the landscape, of our occupation. It’s just amazing. And the fact that it is done everywhere is just extraordinary – I don’t know how they coordinate themselves, these people.

It is even hard talking to National Parks because we want a list of sites and they say ‘Well we can’t give them to you.’ We say, ‘Why not?’ and they say, ‘Because if we make them public or if people find out where they are they will be destroyed’. So sites aren’t advertised or marked. It’s a very bizarre situation we have in this country where people feel the need to do destroy and deny the Indigenous record.

But it’s not all bad. The other day we were filming up on the Central Coast and we were shooting at a big rock escarpment and we had been up since 4am because we wanted to get the dawn shots and I was trekking up the hill with a huge tripod on my shoulder and bags and it was raining and just on sunset and I was thinking, ‘I don’t know if this is really worth it and I must be mad doing this!’ Feeling sorry for myself. We finally scrambled up this hill to this big rock escarpment and on this rock area, some blackfella had gotten up there and scratched a huge Aboriginal flag across the stone. I thought, ‘Isn’t that fantastic! We are getting our own back! We are still thereand we are still identifying ourselves on this contemporary landscape.’

Before I started this series, I really didn’t have a knowledge of the libraries and collecting institutions who are our memory in this country. I really have so much admiration for the people who work in those institutions … you guys are building upon them and making them accessible to people like me.

By making them accessible to people like me, we hope to take the work that you have done and continue to do, to the lounge rooms of people across the country.

Through this series we will have a DVD and a book and a website. We will take it into every school in Australia and we think we will get it as compulsory curriculum and we hope to change a new generation of Australians’ thinking so they grasp a further dimension to the history of this country and hopefully embrace Indigenous history as part of their own culture as Australians.

10. Why is it important to preserve records that tell us about our past?

9. Why have some people tried to destroy this evidence?
FURTHER INFORMATION


Curriculum Corporation resources – details to be provided