

Indigenous Water Knowledge 1

The Aboriginal people of Australia believe in oneness with nature. Rocks, canyons, waterfalls, rivers, islands, beaches and other natural features such as the Sun, Moon, visible stars and animals all have their own stories of creation and inter-connectedness. To the traditional Aborigine they are all sacred. The knowledge that Aborigines have about water is an important part of the government consultation process today. It is important that in a country such as Australia where traditional land owners believe in the inter-connectedness of humans and resources, that consultation continues for a long time to come.

- ☐ Read the Dreamtime story entitled *The Origin of Water* then complete the task on page 28.

The Origin of Water

(adapted by Fiona Back)

In the beginning the land had no water, or so the animals thought. The only way to get a drink or quench their thirst was to chew 'Gulbirra', kangaroo grass or to lick the dew from the plants.

One day the short-nosed bandicoot Gudjilla saw Bangarra the blue-tongued lizard drying himself out of sight behind a rock. When the other animals heard about it they were very angry and they said to Bangarra, "You must have some water hidden away! Where have you hidden it?"

Bangarra would not tell them because he wanted the water for himself.

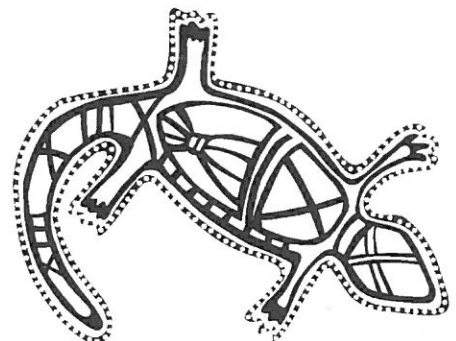
The animals called a meeting and they chose Gudjilla the bandicoot to follow Bangarra wherever he went. But Bangarra was very smart and could see Gudjilla out of the corner of his eye. He never revealed where the water was hidden.

The animals did not know what to do. Bangarra was too clever. Then Gula, the rat, the smallest of the animals said that he could follow Bangarra but all the other animals laughed at him, and Midin, the ring-tailed possum came forward and told Gula that he was too small and they would not listen to him.

Gula was very hurt, but he decided to follow Bangarra anyway and he crept up very close behind Bangarra, the blue-tongued lizard. Now and then Bangarra thought someone was following him, he would look to the left and then jump to the right but he couldn't see anybody. So the little rat Gula followed the blue-tongued lizard Bangarra to a spring that was hidden under a big flat rock. When Bangarra lifted the rock to let the spring flow, Gula jumped out from where he was hiding and frightened Bangarra away, and all the other animals praised Gula for what he had done.

The animals were so happy because now they all had bubbling water from the spring. They all jumped in and began to splash water everywhere and the kingfisher was so glad, he swam to and fro, and with his beak made drains and gullies in front of the running water all the way down to the sea. That is how the small creeks and gullies were made.

The moral of this story: water is a resource that should be shared.



Indigenous Water Knowledge 2

- ☐ Read the Dreamtime story entitled *The Origin of Water* on page 27 and recreate the story as a storyboard below.

