

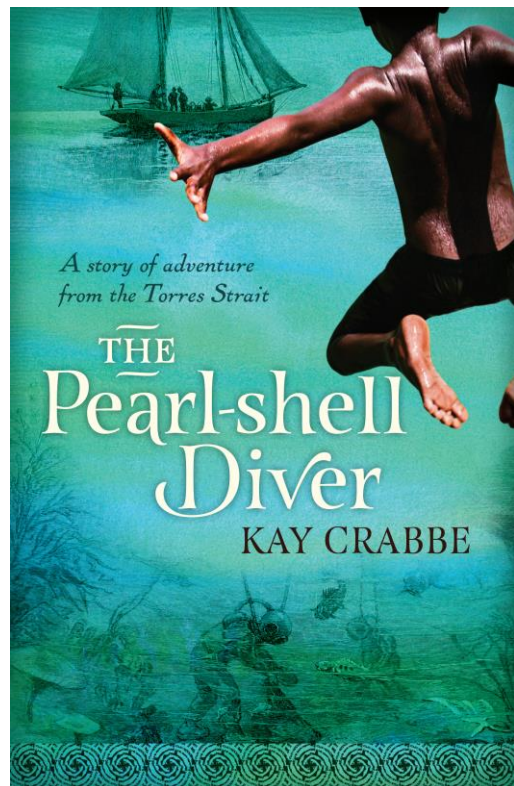
**Teachers' Notes**  
by Lyn White

**The Pearl-shell Diver:**  
a story of adventure from the Torres Strait  
by  
**Kay Crabbe**

ISBN 9781760290474  
Recommended for ages 9-13 yrs

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

<a href="#">Acknowledgement</a> .....	2
<a href="#">Introduction</a> .....	2
<a href="#">Supporting the Australian Curriculum</a> .....	4
<a href="#">Plot synopsis</a> .....	4
<a href="#">Before reading</a> .....	6
<a href="#">Cover &amp; extra text features</a> .....	6
<a href="#">Inquiry learning suggestions</a> .....	9
<a href="#">Literature</a> .....	14
<a href="#">Literature and context</a> .....	14
<a href="#">Responding to text</a> .....	15
<a href="#">Examining &amp; responding: Themes</a> ...	19
<a href="#">Examining literature</a> .....	27
<a href="#">References</a> .....	30
<a href="#">About the writers</a> .....	31
<a href="#">Appendix</a> .....	32



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As the consultant editor and author of these notes I would like to acknowledge the Torres Strait Islander peoples, their oral histories and traditional stories. *The Pearl-shell Diver* is a work of fiction inspired by historical events in the Torres Strait during 1898 and 1899. The novel is set on a fictitious island in the beautiful Torres Strait. I would also like to thank Nola Ward Page and Mavis Bani for sharing cultural and linguistic knowledge that has greatly informed this text.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is important for all Australians to understand the essential features of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, including our special connection to the land and our commitment to family and community—so we can walk on this land together as friends and equals, so you can share our pride. (<http://www.shareourpride.org.au/>

Long before the arrival of Europeans, Australia was a multicultural continent with over 200 Indigenous language groups. Australia has two distinct, dynamic and diverse Indigenous groups who are the traditional owners of our country: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As an educator, I am committed to developing greater understanding and appreciation of the Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. I believe we have a responsibility as teachers to ensure that our students create a society in which both the past and present realities of these First Peoples of Australia are acknowledged and celebrated. Torres Strait Islander peoples have a Melanesian cultural heritage and currently live in the Torres Strait, the Northern Peninsula Area (Cape York), and throughout mainland Australia. It is important for teachers to note that 'there is no single Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander identity'. (Russell Taylor, *Guidelines for ethical publishing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and research from those communities*)

Kay Crabbe has created an authentic sensitive work that transports young readers to the breath-takingly beautiful waters of Queensland's Torres Strait and back in time to one of the key events that shaped Torres Strait Islander society: the rise of the commercial pearl-shell industry. The author's consummate research and personal experience of this region ensure a rich experience of daily life in the Strait during the late nineteenth century. The novel promotes exploration of Islander peoples' defining connection to Country and Place.

Part One of the text includes evocative detailed images of a sea-faring community with their long tradition of harmonious subsistence. In Part Two, we travel to Waiben (Thursday Island), the location of the biggest pearling station in nineteenth-century

Torres Strait. As Sario's adventure begins, the reader is caught up in the heightened tension and drama of Sario's quest to realise his dream and save his family against incredible odds.

Students will readily engage with this poignant character-driven novel as the inevitable 'winds of change' impact on one boy's island paradise. Sario's story, although fictitious, represents the experiences of many Torres Strait Islander boys who journeyed far from home aboard pearling luggers. The Islanders risked their lives as they harvested the pearl-shell for the world market that peaked during this period. Deceptively simple, this narrative, set against the politically charged backdrop of the White Australia Policy and Federation, gives an important snapshot of an unfamiliar period in Australia's history. Text themes include Torres Strait Islander history and cultures, connection to country and environmental sustainability, the pearl-shell industry, migration, Federation and the White Australia Policy, racism, courage and resilience.

**The following resources provide excellent background reading for teachers:**

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Handbook 2010* published by the Queensland Studies Authority. Visit their website at: <https://www.qsa.qld.edu.au> to download the Handbook pdf.

(This resource is particularly helpful for guiding discussions around Indigenous history and culture as it unpacks key concepts and gives the preferred and non-preferred terms.)

Go to <http://www.jarara.catholic.edu.au/resources> >Useful Links>Resources for schools to locate the 'Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander Perspectives in schools' – a very helpful guide.

For an excellent introduction on how to embed Indigenous perspective in our curriculum see: <http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/>

*Timeless Isle: An Illustrated History of Thursday Island* by Captain John C.H.Foley.

(The Torres Strait Historical Society on Thursday Island published this reference.)

<http://shareourpride.reconciliation.org.au/sections/first-australians/>

The Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority has developed a range of materials to support the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into the school curriculum and can be viewed at:

<https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/k-12-policies/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-perspectives/support-materials>

*The Little Red Yellow Black Book: An Introduction to Indigenous Australia* by Bruce Pascoe with AIATSIS

## 2. SUPPORTING THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM V8

These notes are designed for use with students in years 4 – 7 of the Australian Curriculum v8. Links are also included to relevant Learning Areas in the Victorian Curriculum that replaces AusVELS from the end of 2016. The notes primarily support the Cross-curriculum priority 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures' and the English Learning area. Links to these areas accompany activities in these notes where appropriate.

Study of this text is also highly relevant for the Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Learning area that:

*... draws on students' growing experience of community and the wider world to develop their understanding of the world, its systems, and students' relationship to other people, places and systems, past and present.*

(<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/overview/3-6>)

Section 2 is continued in **Appendix 1** which makes detailed connections with:

- Cross-curriculum Priorities
- Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) years 4 -6
- History and Geography Year 7
- General Capabilities
- Links to the Victorian Curriculum

Engaging with the suggested text activities below supports the Achievement standards for Year 7 History and Geography.

## 3. SYNOPSIS

### **A STORY OF ADVENTURE FROM THE TORRES STRAIT**

It is 1898 and thirteen-year-old Sario lives with his clan on an idyllic island in the Torres Strait. The Islanders harvest béche-de-mer and mother-of-pearl shells to trade for 'white man's' tools, food and money. But the clan is ageing and Apu, Sario's mother, and Leilani, his sister, are both suffering from diving-related ailments. Sario is the clan's most skilful swimming-diver but he is burdened by the need to raise enough shell to sustain his extended family. Times are changing as increasing numbers of European pearlers are combing the Strait, setting up shelling stations and indenturing young divers from Asia, the South Pacific and the Torres Strait.

One particular white trader who frequents Sario's island is determined to have Sario on his lugger. Sario's dream is to become a pump-diver<sup>1</sup> but he fears he may never return to his home if he goes with the 'ghost man'. The drama builds as the white trader corners Sario in the Post Office cave on Booby Island and threatens him at knifepoint.

Sario, consumed by fear and anger, decides to hide when the trader next returns to his island. When Apu's respiratory condition worsens and Leilani's healing balms no longer bring relief, Thaati, Sario's father, offers to go with the white trader in return for money to purchase medicine. Overcome by guilt and shame at his cowardice, Sario and Leilani accept the responsibility for taking Apu to Waiben (Thursday Island) to receive hospital care. The adolescents are consumed by fear and apprehension as they struggle to understand 'white-talk' and entrust Apu to the medical staff.

While Apu is treated, Sario and Leilani set up home in an old fishing shack. Leilani prepares a new garden to grow her medicinal herbs and Sario seeks work at the docks cleaning luggers during the dry time until finally he secures a place on a pearling lugger as a swimming-diver.

Sario's excitement is short lived as he finds himself contracted to the lazy drunken Greely, captain of the *Sea Devil*. Hiroshi, the Japanese pump-diver on board the *Sea Devil*, becomes Sario's enemy, bullying Sario at every turn and causing him to vehemently oppose the domination of Japanese divers and their preferred employment over Islanders. Fortunately, Sario does have friends on board: Wesley, an illegally recruited mainland Aborigine who desperately misses his mob and the 'rhythm of his land' and Lauro, a victim of the ruthless blackbirding practice.

Life is hard and dangerous but driven by his need to care for his family, Sario bravely faces his many challenges. However, when his friend Lauro is taken by a shark and his first pay packet is swindled, Sario is at breaking point. An unexpected turn of events sees Hiroshi drunk and incapacitated with decompression disease, enabling Sario to get his chance to pump-dive. The initial exhilaration of a dream realised gives way to incredible pain and fear, as the pressure of deep water, the circling of a monstrous shark and the snagging of Sario's air-pipe on coral, render the young diver almost lifeless.

Unable to continue pump-diving, Hiroshi apologises to Sario for his bad behaviour and explains the shame he will suffer if he has to return to Japan. Our endearing compassionate protagonist reframes his perception of the Japanese diver, admiring his strong work ethic and resilience – so reminiscent of his own.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Pump diving' refers to underwater diving in a diving suit and helmet fitted with flexible pipes connected to a pump on the surface. Air is pumped down to the diver through these pipes.

Cyclone Mahini destroys the pearling fleet at Bathurst Bay. The *Sea Devil* crashes and plunges into the stormy seas, finally breaking up. The bleeding and broken Sario, Wesley and Hiroshi wash ashore at Bathurst Bay and find each other. Thankful to be alive and united by their love for home and family, the three friends begin to make new plans. Sario determines to return to his beloved island as soon as Apu is well enough to travel and, with the help of The Aboriginal Protection Fund, he will purchase a fishing lugger. Hiroshi will become a boat-builder – he may even build Sario’s lugger! As for Sario’s dear ‘brudda’ Wesley, he will return to his family on the mainland and as the friends separate, we do indeed know that they will be ‘alright’.

#### **4. BEFORE READING: TUNING IN**

*The Pearl-shell Diver* can be studied as a class text and is perfect for a tuning-in resource for Inquiry units across a range of Learning areas. It is also extremely suitable for use in Literature circles. The Primary English Teaching Association of Australia (PETAA) provides a useful introduction to this reading strategy on the association’s website:

<http://www.petaa.edu.au/>

The primary focus of these teaching and learning activities is engagement with the English learning area with its three interrelated strands.

##### **4.1 Examining the Cover and Extra Text Features**

Kress & van Leeuwen refer to visual grammar as ‘describing how the elements of a picture combine in different design to construct visual meaning’. See *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen.

Invite students to examine and discuss the composition of the beautiful cover with its stunning composition of evocative images and make predictions:

- What kind of text is *The Pearl-shell Diver*: narrative, expository, biographical, historical?
- List the cover elements that suggest what this story will be about? Record predictions in a reading journal or on a class blog.
- List the various images and the messages they convey to the reader. Comment on the effectiveness of the combination of etchings and photograph. Is the artwork familiar?
- What emotions does the cover create? List your expectations for the reading experience. Is this a place or topic you are familiar with?
- What clues to the type of text are there in the blurb?

*The Pearl-shell Diver* is an example of authentic historical fiction.

- Draw student's attention to the extra text features: Map, Timeline, and Author's note and Glossary. In recognition of the inseparability of language and culture the author has included words from the Mabuig language as recorded by anthropologists in the western islands of Torres Strait in the late 1880s. Mabuig words are explained within the novel but student's attention should be directed to the Glossary as a text feature.

## 4.2 Finding out about the Torres Strait

The Torres Strait is part of the state of Queensland and lies between the tip of Australia's Cape York Peninsula and Papua New Guinea. Of the more than 100 islands in the Strait, seventeen are inhabited and two communities, Bamaaga and Seisia, located on the tip of Cape York, are also classified as part of the Torres Strait. Many students will be unfamiliar with this region and its peoples but do take time to ascertain students' prior knowledge and understanding particularly if you have students from this area in your school.

Using Google maps (or Google Earth on a tablet device) students can:

- Locate the Torres Strait and the five geographically and culturally distinct island groups identified by the communities: Western Islands, Northern Islands, Southern Islands, Central Islands and Eastern Islands

**Note:** there is variation in nomenclature of this region. The author of these notes has taken advice from a recognized Torres Strait Islander authority. Today traditional names are preferred to European names. Both have been included on the text map.

- Look at the terrain and satellite views, as each island group is geographically different.

The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) map can also be accessed at the Authority's website: <http://www.tsra.gov.au/>

### 4.2.1 Classroom/Library Display

- Mount a large map of the Torres Strait and collect images to create a montage.

Useful sites include:

[http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/lag\\_meta\\_au](http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/lag_meta_au)

<http://www.tsirc.qld.gov.au/our-region/gallery>

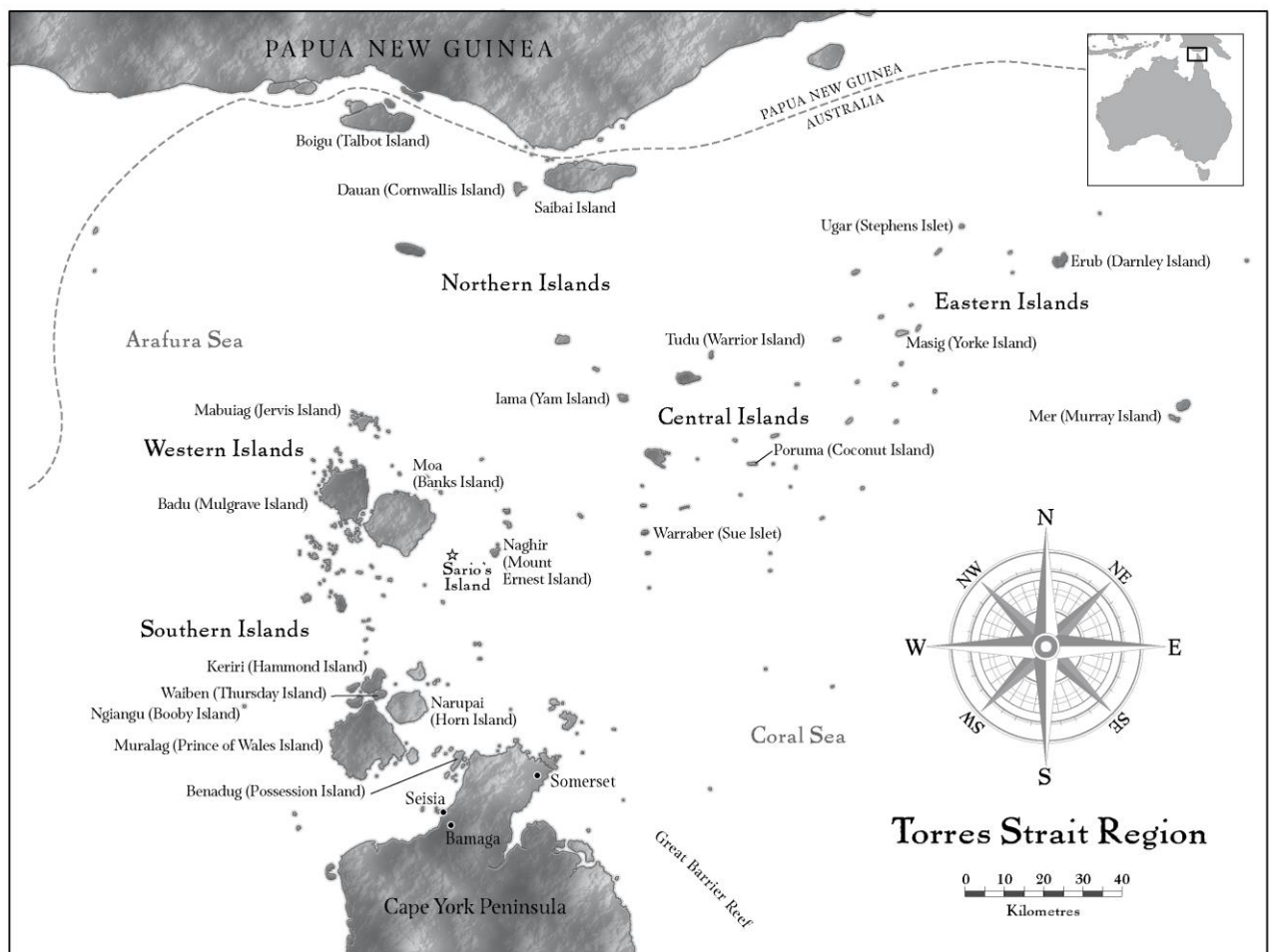
The Gab Titui Cultural Centre located on Thursday Island is a helpful reference for information and images of the region – its culture and peoples:

<http://www.gabtitui.com.au/>

- Students could create travel brochures or postcards using sites including:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/>

**Note:** Teachers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students need to be mindful when searching for images from the Torres Strait that any names and images of deceased people may cause distress.





## 4.3 Inquiry Learning

Text accessibility and engagement will be enhanced if students are given the opportunity to create age-appropriate inquiry questions and trails for group research into the key settings and concepts. Questions should focus on Torres Strait culture and its peoples, the historical period in which the story is set and the pearl-shell industry.

The following State Library of Victoria websites provide helpful advice for the development of effective research strategies:

<http://ergo.slv.vic.gov.au/learn-skills/research-skills>

<http://slav.global2.vic.edu.au/2012/12/14/research-skills-searching-strategies/-VsEiHSgm8sp>

Students may like to use an 'I Search Chart' to organize their research. This chart is available at: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/>

*Select, navigate and read texts for a range of purposes, applying appropriate text processing strategies and interpreting structural features, for example table of contents, glossary, chapters, headings and subheadings (ACELY1712)*

Students can conduct group research into various aspects of the Torres Strait with inquiry questions being adapted to suit the age and ability of students:

**Note: Teaching aspects of "culture", namely traditional practices, spiritual and sacred knowledge, is the responsibility of Torres Strait Islander people only.**

### 4.3.1 Early history of the Torres Strait Islanders

The traditional people of Torres Strait are of Melanesian origin and have lived on the islands for thousands of years. They are seafarers, agriculturalists and hunters who lived sustainably for thousands of years.

- Who explored and chartered the Torres Strait? Which islands are inhabited?
- The Torres Strait Islander peoples have always been sea-faring people. Describe their connection to land and sea and how it supported their communities and shaped their daily lives.

View the National Museum of Australia website:

[http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/lag\\_meta\\_au](http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/lag_meta_au)

*The Pearl-shell Diver* is set in the 1800s. Consider some of the key historical events of this period including the béche-de-mer industry, the arrival of the London Missionary Society and the annexation of the Torres Strait Islands to the colony of Queensland.

- What effects did these events have on the Torres Strait Islanders?

View: <http://www.tsra.gov.au/the-torres-strait/general-history>

An excellent DVD is *The Culture of the Torres Strait* by Alan Kasom, Leftfield Productions, Cairns, 2012

Students could select an island and research its history. Go to the Queensland Government website and search for Community histories: <https://www.qld.gov.au/>

### 4.3.2 World View

The terms 'The Dreaming' and 'Dreamings' have broadly come to mean the spirituality of Aboriginal peoples of Australia. The Dreaming pervades every aspect of Aboriginal culture and society. To confine what The Dreaming represents to religion in the Western sense diminishes its complexity. (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Handbook 2010 p.19)

The Torres Strait Islanders draw their spiritual beliefs and law from the stars of Tagai. Specific clans and families own the stories and through the stories the Islanders develop their world view and their identity.

Learn more about the Tagai stories at:

<http://www.nfsa.gov.au/digitallearning/mabo/info/tagaiMyth.htm>

<http://australianmuseum.net.au/indigenous-australia-spirituality>

### 4.3.3 Christianity and the Torres Strait

Torres Strait Islander communities continue to celebrate the Coming of the Light Festival that commemorates the arrival of Christianity in the Strait.

- Research the London Missionary Society's influence in the Strait and the response of the Islanders to this religion.

Students may like to view a YouTube clip on the Coming of the Light Festival at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koOmJUUKISs>

**Older students** may like to compare this experience with the introduction of Christianity into some mainland Aboriginal communities.

### 4.3.4 Waiben (Thursday Island)

Waiben (Thursday Island), sometimes spelt as 'Waibene', is the administrative centre of the Torres Strait and a popular tourist destination. It has a fascinating history and is a key location in the text.

- Research the early days of the Thursday Island settlement, its maritime importance, construction of the Green Hill Fort and its multicultural population.

Historical images can be viewed at: <http://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/torres-strait-islands-collection/thursday-islands-group>

### 4.3.5 Pearling in the Torres Strait

Students can trace the rise of the pearl-shell industry in the Torres Strait using sites such as:

<http://www.qhatlas.com.au/content/pearling>

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/photos/2013/10/22/3874583.htm>

<http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/australias-pearling-industry>

Have a whole class viewing of the excellent DVD: *The Pearl Shell Divers* by Gary Kerr available from: [garry.k@westvic.com.au](mailto:garry.k@westvic.com.au)

**Older students** may like to read extracts from the story of a Torres Strait pearl-shell diver: *Life B'long Ali Drummond: A Life in the Torres Strait* by Samantha Faulkner and Ali Drummond.

### 4.3.6 Torres Strait today

Torres Strait Islander cultures have remained quite strong despite having to accommodate the many changes to their way of life since 1788. Many Islanders have maintained their connection to their land and traditions.

For a great overview of Waiben today view a locally produced DVD entitled: *Thursday Island Via Cape York*. The DVD is available from <http://www.peddellsferry.com.au>

View the YouTube clip which can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dhRIJ16zTk>

View current images of Thursday Island at:

<http://ozoutback.com.au/Australia/ti/index.html - Pics>

- Where do Torres Strait Islanders live today?  
See: <http://www.racismnoway.com.au/teaching-resources/factsheets/53.html>
- How have their clothes, housing and foods changed?
- Find out how the special connection to land and commitment to family and community has been retained by viewing and reading the following resources:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dhRIJ16zTk>

**Younger Students:** Read *Kaisiana's Journey to Torres Strait* by Albert Trish and *Kaurareg Mob* by the same author.

- What are the key ways in which your life is different to that of a child living in the Torres Strait?

### 4.3.7 The Torres Strait Island Flag

Students can research the meaning of the various colours and images that feature on the flag: <http://www.tsra.gov.au/the-torres-strait/torres-strait-flag>

### 4.3.8 Education in the Torres Strait

Tagai State College has 18 community-based campuses across through the Strait.

Students can view the college website at: <https://tagaisc.eq.edu.au/Pages/default.aspx> and describe a typical school day for children at one of the Tagai campuses.

- How is the curriculum different to your own experience?

### 4.3.9 Traditional Arts

The Torres Strait Islanders have a long history of storytelling, crafts, games and dancing. Traditional dancing styles vary within each community and are performed at celebrations. Storytelling and music is shared from one generation to another. Useful sites include:

<http://nga.gov.au/collections/atsi/>

<http://www.baduartcentre.com.au/>

A pearling lugger dance can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTiJXs0lrLg>

**Younger students:** Read *Keeping Strong Through Art* by Trish Albert

Other research activities could include:

- View the work of famous Torres Strait **artists** Alick Tipoti  
<http://www.alicktipoti.com/ABOUT.4.0.html> and Segar Passi's digital story at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nefCfJaNuLo>
- Visit the Gab Titui Cultural Centre website at <http://www.gabtitui.com.au/>
- Students can also find out about other Torres Strait Island artists such as Christine Anu and Seaman Dan.  
<http://musicofaculture-y7.weebly.com/torres-strait-islander-music.html>
- **Masks:** Torres Strait Islander people traditionally made masks from turtle shell and wood. Strict rules surrounded the making and use and ownership of such masks. Masks made today are not usually worn. Find out about the makers of the masks in

the National Museum of Australia collection:

[http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/dhari\\_a\\_krar/home](http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/dhari_a_krar/home)

- **Dhari headdress:** The dhari is a traditional headdress made of white feathers. It appears on the Torres Strait Islander flag and is still used today in dances and ceremonies.
- **Weaving:** Leilani and the women in her clan make the shade mats for the canoe and baskets from island materials such as pandanus and banana leaves. Search the following website for simple craft activities: <http://www.snaicc.org.au/>
- Food in the Torres Strait. What are some of the traditional foods that are still important in Torres Strait Islander culture? Are food preparation methods the same? Recipes can be viewed at: <http://ck.slq.qld.gov.au/theme/strait-home/cook/ssk>
- The Traditional Torres Strait Islander Cookbook by Ron Edwards can be sourced from: <https://ramsskullpress.com/traditional-torres-strait-island-cookbook-update/>

#### 4.3.10 Presenting research findings

Students can create a range of presentations and text styles to present their research findings using both receptive and productive modes.

*Use interaction skills, varying conventions of spoken interactions such as voice volume, tone, pitch and pace, according to group size, formality of interaction and needs and expertise of the audience (ACELY1816)*

*Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts containing key information and supporting details for a widening range of audiences, demonstrating increasing control over text structures and language features (ACELY1694)*

- PowerPoint, Keynote or Prezi (<http://prezi.com>) can be used to create visual texts to share research with a group or class.
- Padlet lets students create walls collating links, text and pictures: <http://slav.global2.vic.edu.au/2013/03/26/a-favourite-gets-even-better-padlet/#.UuOcp2R9Jjd>
- Scoop.it! is a fun content curation platform that helps students both collect information on their research topic and create an online magazine. <http://www.scoop.it/t/what-is-scoop-it>
- Glogster poster: <http://edu.glogster.com/what-is-glogster-edu>

## 5. LITERATURE

### Strategies to enhance reading of the text include:

- Creating written or digital journals, reader's notebooks, video diaries or a class blog that records student reflections and comments
- Creating cumulative story maps: **Younger students** can combine text and visual features
- 'Stop and Think Aloud' and 'Responding to Questions': Students read a text extract, write down personal thoughts and questions to answer and then respond to their questions using text evidence
- Making connections: Give students frequent opportunities to make connections between the characters in *The Pearl-shell Diver* and their own lives (text-to-self), a comparison text (text-to-text) and current world events and issues (text-to-world)

### 5.1 Literature and Context

*Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts (ACELT1608)*

*Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1613)*

#### **Elaborations:**

**recognising the influence our different historical, social and cultural experiences may have on the meaning we make from the text and the attitudes we may develop towards characters, actions and events**

#### 5.1.2 Getting started: Reading the first chapter

From the very first page, readers are transported to Sario's island paradise. As we journey with Sario and his clan we realize we are in a very unique part of the world that is strange and enticing.

- What are your initial feelings about the story? What questions do you have? What is the mood of the first chapter?
- Discuss: What images suggest location and culture? Create a Y-chart graphic organiser: Looks like, feels like, sounds like. A BLM template is available at: <http://www.globaleducation.edu.au/resources-gallery/resource-gallery-templates.html>

- Invite students to list words and phrases in Chapter One that indicate setting and culture
- Students can write down their plot predictions after reading the first chapter. Students put their predictions in a sealed envelope and open when the text is read.

## 5.2 Responding to the text

*Clarify understanding of content as it unfolds in formal and informal situations, connecting ideas to students' own experiences and present and justify a point of view (ACELY1699)*

### 5.2.1 Brief Chapter Summary and Suggested Discussion Points

The following chapter breakdown and list of questions could be used to initiate teacher/student-led discussions:

#### **PART ONE 1898**

##### **Chapters One and Two**

These chapters introduce Sario's island home, his family, his dream of pump-diving and his fear of the white trader.

*'Sario is hoping their next boat is a pearling lugger with tall masts and canvas sails. If the clan had their own lugger, their lives could stay the same. No one would need to leave the island and work for white men.'* (p. 6)

##### **Discussion**

- How is Sario's life changing? What is his greatest fear?
- Why do you think Sario feels responsible for his clan's welfare and survival?

##### **Chapters Three and Four**

The clan prepares the sea harvest for trade and the white trader wants to take Sario. Thaati and the elders regretfully decide that Sario must go with the white trader to earn money for the clan.

*'If he [Sario] goes with the white man he'll earn money and help his clan. He'll get the machete. He'll sail in a lugger and learn to pump-dive. But how can he trust the white man? Would the trader pay up? Send the money to the clan? Bring him back to see his family?'* (p. 31)

##### **Discussion**

- Sario wrestles with his father's decision to send him away. What do you think Sario should do? Why?

### **Chapter Five**

The clan hunt, gather and prepare the feast for the Coming of the Light festival.

*'Missionaries brought law and order and offered protection. They taught us about the world and we saw the light.'* (p. 38)

### **Discussion**

- In what ways were the Islanders 'in the dark'? What was Thaati's perspective on the arrival of Christianity?

### **Chapters Six and Seven**

The brumbies arrive on Sario's island and Sario meets a kind sailor. Sario's clan undertakes a long sea voyage in search of shell. Drama builds as the white trader corners Sario in the Post Office cave on bird (Booby) Island. The arrival of some mainland Aborigines enables Sario to escape and soon he is saving Leilani from a shark that encircles the swimming-divers.

*The trader pounces. 'You're coming with me now.'* He slams Sario against the wall. *'You're not wasting any more of my time, boy.'* (p.52)

### **Discussion**

- The white trader abuses Sario. Describe how the author has conveyed the dramatic scene in the cave.
- What feelings do her choice of words engender in the reader? Is there hope for Sario? Why or why not?

### **Chapter Eight**

Sario tells Thaati about the cave attack and detests his own cowardice. Esike and Sario dive the shipwreck, only to be yet again confronted by the white trader. Apu's respiratory illness worsens and when the white trader returns to the island, Sario hides. Thaati is taken by the white trader in exchange for money to buy Apu's medicine.

### **Discussion**

This is a significant turning point in the narrative.

- Why is Thaati so afraid of offending the white trader? Describe how Sario begins to rise above his fear while he is in hiding. How does this event signal a dramatic shift in the story?

### **Chapters Nine and Ten**

Sario berates himself and is consumed by worry for his mother's worsening condition. Sario and Esike hail a steamer and Leilani and Sario accompany Apu to Waiben to seek help from 'the white healer'.



*'He's on his own, responsible for his sick mother and deaf sister ... and no Thaati or uncles to help him! He rushes to the railing and heaves his guts over the side.'* (p. 73)

### **Discussion**

- List the reasons why Sario is so distressed. Do you think he is up to the task ahead of him? Justify your response with reference to the character-building in the early chapters.

### **Chapters Eleven and Twelve**

In the dramatic concluding chapters of Part One, Sario and Leilani arrive at Waiben and Apu is admitted to the hospital. Accommodation is found and Sario starts working on the docks. Sario struggles with this new reality and wonders how he will ever earn enough money to care for his family in this strange and intimidating place.

### **Discussion**

- Compare and contrast the ways in which Leilani and Sario adjust to their new lives on Waiben. The author gives us some early glimpses of the pearl-shell industry. Who are the key players? Predict what will happen in the opening chapter of Part Two.

## **PART TWO 1899**

### **Chapter Thirteen**

Chapter Thirteen opens with the expectation of work on a pearling-lugger for Sario, the discharge of Apu from Waiben hospital and Leilani creating her gardens and building her healing business. Sario's hopes are soon dashed when Hiroshi, a Japanese pump-diver, attacks him. We also meet Lauro and Wesley who befriend Sario and the reader begins to understand more about the treatment of Indigenous crewmen and the influence of the Japanese during this period.

*'The Japee's a bully for certain, and he wants to demonstrate his power for some reason. He's important, he's a pump-diver. He has the top job. But importance won't save him down in the deep. 'Danger is always lurking,' Sario mutters.* (p. 95)

### **Discussion**

- Consider this quote from the text and discuss with a partner what this reveals about Sario and how he might deal with this new challenge.
- How strong is Sario's desire to 'walk the sea-floor in a diving suit'? Sario learns a lot of new information in this chapter. What perspectives are the most important for him do you think? Explain Wesley's very different perspective on working in the pearling industry.

### **Chapters Fourteen, Fifteen and Sixteen**

Leilani tends Sario's wounds and Sario, Lauro and Wesley sign on to Captain Greely's lugger the *Sea Devil*. Hiroshi bullies Sario again. The *Sea Devil* sets sail and Sario is finally on his way to fulfilling his dream. Wesley provides the reader with insight into the cruel recruitment of mainland Aborigines.

#### **Discussion**

- What are your first impressions of Captain Greely? What does the term 'company rice' mean? Why does Hiroshi bully and attack Sario?

### **Chapters Seventeen, Eighteen and Nineteen**

Sario swim-dives with his companions under Hiroshi's watch. Hiroshi forces Sario to keep diving till he blacks out. The Kanaka explains to Sario why Hiroshi is treating him so badly and why he cannot return to his home in Japan.

*'Hiroshi can't go home. He's indentured labour,' the Kanaka says. 'His passage was paid with borrowed money. Now he has to work and pay back his debt in Japan.'*

*'I'm not stopping him earning money. Why does he pick on me?'*(p.126)

#### **Discussion**

- At this point in the novel, which character has your sympathy – Sario or Hiroshi? Why? What is 'indentured labour'?

### **Chapters Twenty, Twenty-One and Twenty-Two**

In these dramatic and heart-rending chapters we witness the death of Lauro, more disappointment for Sario as he is cheated of his pay, and Apu's continuing ill-health. A conversation with an Indian pearl trader who is interested in buying Sario's pearl provides some respite from his misery. The pearlers debate the implications of the impending White Australia policy for their industry. Greely and Hiroshi arrive drunk at the docks for the journey to the Darnley Deeps. Sario fears Leilani may have been involved.

*'The others agree. 'We support a white Australia, of course we do,' one skipper says. 'But pearl-shelling is undesirable work – white men can't be expected to do it. ...Diving is difficult and dangerous.'* (p. 150)

#### **Discussion**

- With a partner, list the arguments presented by the inspectors and the pearlers around this contentious issue. What is your own opinion?
- Why does Sario think Leilani may have been involved with Greely and Hiroshi?

### **Chapters Twenty-Three and Twenty-Four**

*The Sea Devil* anchors in the Darnley Deeps and when Hiroshi suffers from the bends, Sario gets his chance to fulfill his dream and walk the sea floor. Pump-diving is not quite as wonderful as Sario had imagined especially when a shark appears and his air-pipe snags.

#### **Discussion**

- Discuss the many dangers that threaten the pump-diver. How has his attitude changed?

### **Chapter Twenty-Five**

Sario experiences decompression sickness from diving in the very deep water of the Darnley Deeps and determines not to compete with Hiroshi anymore. Bad weather is on the way.

#### **Discussion**

- Decompression sickness or 'the bends', also known as 'divers' disease', results from nitrogen gas bubbles forming within the body. What are Sario's symptoms? How does the tender handle the situation?

### **Chapters Twenty-six and Twenty-seven**

An unexpected reconciliation and a record-breaking climatic event occur in the final chapters. Hiroshi apologises to Sario and explains his situation and fears. Cyclone Mahina strikes the pearling fleet. Sario, Wesley and Hiroshi survive and are washed up on the beach and make plans for their future.

#### **Discussion**

- 'Every fella has problems,' Wesley says. 'We all bruddas. We all bleed.' (p. 178) What does Wesley mean by this statement? Do you think Sario should have forgiven Hiroshi? Does Hiroshi's situation justify his bullying? Explain your answer.
- Is this a satisfactory ending to the text? How does it compare with your earlier predictions about the story?

## **5.3 Examining and Responding - Themes**

*Discuss literary experiences with others, sharing responses and expressing a point of view (ACELT1603)*

*Reflect on ideas and opinions about characters, settings and events in literary texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others and justifying a point of view (ACELT1620)*

*Recognise and explain differing viewpoints about the world, cultures, individual people and concerns presented in texts (ACELT1807)*

### **5.3.1 Connection to Place/Country**

A strong theme throughout the text is connection to Country/Place. The identities of Indigenous Australians come from their own self-awareness and connection with place, histories, language and time. Sario cannot imagine living anywhere else but on his beloved island where his ancestors once lived and still continue to influence daily life.

*'His [Sario's] heart beats with connection, his link to his homeland.'* (p.5)

*'Beyond the sand, a shimmer of moonlight lights the thatched huts. 'B'long here', he mutters. This is his home, his link to his ancestors, his spirit. He'll stay here forever.'* (p.14)

The coastal and marine settings that make up Sario's home are beautifully drawn in the text and promote visualisation in the reader.

#### **Assessment tasks**

- Select a number of descriptive passages such as the following and use art materials to create pictures or a mural of Sario's island home:  
*'...he sees the jagged peaks of his island, the dark band of trees and creeper vines and the rows of palm trees along the beach bending to the sea. Beyond the sand, a shimmer of moonlight lights the thatched huts.'* (p.14)  
*'Sario spots a patch of clipped sea-grass as they glide into their shallow turquoise bay...a massive dugong surfaces and expels air before diving again quickly to the safety of the deep.'* (p. 34)
- Write a description of one of the settings in the novel to help another student visualise the scene. This student could then draw the picture his partner's words create in his mind.
- Write a new opening paragraph to *The Pearl-shell Diver* that suggests the ways in which Sario and his family are connected to their island and the longevity of this connection.
- In pairs: one student writes a Descriptive Sensory Poem about Sario's island and the other student writes a similar poem about Thursday Island using text images. Discuss the differences and how they promote or negate connection.
- Select a favourite place of your own that you feel a strong connection to and describe it to the class in a way that builds sensory images for your audience. Alternatively use a 'Connection Stem' graphic organiser to record your connection to your special

place. A BLM is available at:

<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/printouts/connection-stems.pdf>

**Older students:**

- Land Rights: research the life of Murray Islander Eddie Mabo and the concept of Native Title. Present your findings to the class reflecting on the significance of this historical event for the Torres Strait Islanders.
- An excellent resource to assist students' understanding of the history of the land rights is available at:
- [https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/approach2/indigenous\\_res006\\_0712.pdf](https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/approach2/indigenous_res006_0712.pdf)
- Compare and contrast the feelings Lauro and Wesley have for their homelands as revealed in the text. What differences do you note across the different Indigenous groups? See p.13 *The Little Red Yellow Black Book: An Introduction to Indigenous Australia* by Bruce Pascoe with AIATSIS

### 5.3.2 Culture and Family

*Australian Curriculum/General Capabilities/Intercultural Understanding/Introduction:*

*... students develop intercultural understanding as they learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. They come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture.*

*Intercultural understanding involves students learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect.*

Many important cultural traditions and practices have been woven into this narrative.

The knowledge imparted is known as 'outside knowledge:

'this is knowledge that may be shared outside communities for a specific purpose or context.' (AIATSIS. *Guidelines for the ethical publishing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and research from those communities* p.8)

**Note: The teaching of culture is primarily the responsibility of Torres Strait Islanders and sensitivities around cultural practices must be respected. *The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Handbook 2010* provides excellent advice on sensitive issues surrounding the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in the classroom.**

If practical, schools should arrange for a Torres Strait Islander person to visit the school and share 'outside knowledge' with students.

Torres Strait Islander peoples tend to use their island name to identify themselves. Although Sario's island is fictitious, the author has included cultural practices common in the Western Islands group. The author's meticulous research gives the reader wonderful insight into the culture of Sario's family. Many of these traditions are continued by the Torres Strait Islander peoples today living both in the Strait and on the mainland.

Significant cultural traditions in the text are:

Canoe-making, fishing and hunting, gardening, weaving, cooking, storytelling and ceremonial dance.

- Using Think, Pair, Share strategy students identify, list and classify examples of cultural practices as revealed in the text (The My Read site describes this strategy at <http://www.myread.org/organization.htm> - [thinkpairshare](#))
- Cultural Storytelling: Research the stories of Tagai and Gelam – see pages 13 and 29. Read excerpts from *Myths and Legends of the Torres Strait* by Margaret Lawrie
- Contemporary storytelling: Read the stories written by children of the Torres Strait in *The Children of the Torres Strait: Stories and drawings from children of the Sacred Heart School, the Thursday Island Primary School and the Horn Island School*. Edited by Ron and Anne Edwards
- Canoe-making: Read *Special Objects* by Trish Albert and learn about the making of the canoe on display at the National Museum of Australia.

Compare Sario's culture with the cultures of Indigenous peoples in Arnhem Land.

- Use a triangle Venn Diagram to compare and contrast the cultures. A BLM is available at: <http://www.readwritethink.org>
- Read stories from *Welcome to my Country* by Laklak Burarrwanga, Ritjilili Ganambarr, Merrkiyawuy Ganambarr-Stubbs, Banbapuy Ganambarr, Djawundil Maymuru, Sarah Wright, Sandie Suchet-Pearson and Kate Lloyd.

## **FAMILY**

Sario's clan is closely connected. Each member relies upon other clan members for their daily survival, emotional wellbeing and preservation of their lifestyle. Their mutual respect, despite age and gender, is conveyed throughout the narrative.

Family relationships and ties are known as kinship. The kinship system is complex and part of 'inside knowledge'. Relationships and reference protocols are diverse and differ from those of non-Aboriginal people.

- List the members of Sario’s clan and using text references create a relationship web using a Cluster Word Web. Describe the relationships between Sario and Leilani, Thaati, Apu, aunties, uncles, the Elders. A BLM is available at: <https://www.eduplace.com/>
- Alternatively use a K-W-L-S chart to organize text information about Sario’s family and raise further inquiry questions. A BLM is available at: <http://www.readwritethink.org>

### **Assessment Tasks:**

- Students select a cultural tradition and complete a ‘5 Ws and How’ Model drawing on their knowledge of the text. A BLM template for this activity is available at: <https://www.teachervision.com/>
- Create a procedural text for the making of ‘sop sop’ (see p.27 of the text)
- Create a menu for the Coming of the Light Festival
- Dhari headdress: Write an Information Report that explains the significance of the headdress, how it is made and how it is used in ceremonial dances. Search the Queensland Museum website: <http://www.qm.qld.gov.au/>
- The coconut palm tree has been suggested as a metaphor for Torres Strait Islander family life. See: <https://aifs.gov.au/publications/family-matters/issue-35/torres-strait-islander-family-life>  
Create a metaphor poem for your own family. For explanation of this task view [Year 6 English Satisfactory work sample](#) on the ACARA website.

### **5.3.3 The Pearl-shell industry in the Torres Strait**

*The Pearl-shell Diver* is set during the height of the pearl-shell industry – a lucrative industry that brought Europeans, Pacific Islanders, mainland Aboriginal peoples and Japanese to the turquoise waters that had once been the fishing and pearling domain of the Torres Strait Islanders. The industry’s exploitation of Indigenous workers caused significant disturbance and hardship for the Islanders, who received little reward for their dangerous work and relocation.

*‘The shell divers know that buyers in London pay a high price for mother-of-pearl from Torres Strait, and factories in Europe can’t get enough to make buttons and ornaments and jewellery.’ (p. 97)*

*‘Torres Islanders don’t benefit!’... ‘The sea feeds our families, it provides currency to trade – shell and dhanganal and waru. Our riches are in the sea and others are looting it!’ (p. 98)*

### 5.3.3.1 The Effects of the pearl-shell industry on the characters

#### Jigsaw strategy

The MyRead site describes this strategy at

<http://www.myread.org/organization.htm#jigsaw>

Divide the class into four groups to find instances in the text that detail the effects of the pearl-shell industry on the main characters and their individual responses. A grid similar to the following can be used to record findings. Share with whole class.

Character	Effects	Details	Chapter references	Response
<b>Sario</b>	Greater responsibility for finding pearl-shell Must leave his island home Exploitation			
<b>Thaati</b>	Unable to meet growing demand for pearl-shell Clan's livelihood at risk White-man's domination			
<b>Apu</b>	Suffers from diving disease Can no longer dive for the clan Has little energy for daily tasks.			
<b>Leilani</b>	Leilani has poor hearing due to diving for long periods. Leilani can no longer dive to support the clan			
<b>Hiroshi</b>	Burdened by the debt he must repay for his indenture as a diver His fear of shaming his family if he is not successful as a diver Leaving his family and homeland to do dangerous work in a strange place.			
<b>Lauro</b>	Taken from his home (Blackbirding) Exploited and future uncertain Loses his life			
<b>Wesley</b>	Taken from his homeland Exploited by greedy lugger-owners			



### *Analyse strategies authors use to influence readers (ACELY1801)*

- Discuss the author's perspective on the pearl-shell industry. How is this conveyed to the reader?
- Using One Minute Debate strategy divide class in half and give selected students a character from the text. Each student researches their character's viewpoint on the pearl-shell industry and then presents their key argument in one minute. Take turns to have one view from each side.
- Why were the Japanese so skilled as pump-divers?

Many Japanese divers lost their lives. There are numerous graves of Japanese divers on Thursday Island and families of these divers still visit the graves to this day.

View: <http://blogs.slq.qld.gov.au/jol/2013/11/01/queensland-places-torres-strait-japanese-in-the-pearling-industry/> and <http://www.torres.qld.gov.au/thursday-island-cemetery>

#### **Assessment Tasks:**

- Using a range of software and multimodal elements create persuasive posters for the protection of Indigenous workers in the pearl-shell industry in the nineteenth century.
- Design interview questions for Captain Greely, Hiroshi or Apu that reveal their position on the pearl trade at this time.
- Use a Diamond Ranking tool to show the hierarchy of control that existed at this time in the pearl-shell industry. Why was such a system allowed to develop and affect the lives of so many Indigenous people?
- Research the life of Torres Strait pearl-diver Seaman Dan and write a short biography.

### **5.3.4 Racial discrimination**

#### *Participate in and contribute to discussions, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions (ACELY1709)*

A key political event that is discussed in the text is the White Australia Policy that came into effect at Federation and continued until the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Through Sario we see and hear the early concerns that were voiced around this controversial policy proposal that presented enormous challenges for the pearl-shell industry with its dominance of non-white labour. Japanese, Malays, South Sea Islanders and Torres Strait Islanders were severely discriminated against because of their race. This theme is

developed throughout the text where there are very few examples of fair treatment of non-white swim- and pump-divers.

A variety of opinions is expressed in chapter Twenty-two:

Greely's comment: '*Pearling crews will never be all white.*' Greely winks at the boys as they go out the door. '*White Australia or not!*' (p. 150)

The Inspector: '*Who could blame them?*' the inspector replies. '*Aborigines are often treated badly and given little incentive to work. Children as young as six are forced to dive, it's a disgrace...*' (p. 150)

- What is racism? Students use sticky notes to jot down their responses and add to class chart for discussion.
  - What does it mean for Australia to be a culturally diverse nation? Consider Australia's historical journey towards cultural diversity using the interactive [Australian History Timeline](#) on the racismnoway website:  
The [racismnoway website](#) is an excellent education resource for promoting anti-racism in schools.

#### **Assessment task:**

*Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content and multimodal elements for defined audiences and purposes, making appropriate choices for modality and emphasis (ACELY1710)*

- In groups discuss the theme of racial discrimination in *The Pearl-shell Diver* and work collaboratively to create a short film that presents your group's understanding about the topic and how it has affected your reading of the text. This task may be extended to include the consideration of contemporary issues such as the recognition of Aborigines and Torres Strait Island peoples in the Australian Constitution. Students could view:  
<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/constitutional-reform-fact-sheet-recognising-aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-people>

#### **5.3.5 Courage and resilience**

Several characters in *The Pearl-shell Diver* show great courage and resilience.

- In the early chapters Sario struggled to find the courage he needed to go with the white trader. Do you think he was a coward? Why or why not? List plot events that enabled Sario to become a heroic character.
- Discuss: Leilani was a more resilient character than Sario? Use a Diamond ranking tool to rank the characters in terms of their resilience, justifying your

opinion with text evidence. A BLM template is available at:

<http://www.globaleducation.edu.au/resources-gallery/resource-gallery-templates.html>

- Which character do you admire the most?
- With a partner explore the text to find the strategies Leilani used to remain positive in her new environment. What were the consequences of her employment of these strategies?
- Drama: Invite students to develop a sequence of still images, frozen moments, which illustrate a scene from the text that shows a character's courage. Information about this activity is available at:  
<http://dramaresources.com/strategies/still-images-a-freze-frames>

#### **Assessment tasks:**

- Use iDraw or KidsPix to create a scene in which one of the characters shows great courage and write a reflection on how it made you feel.
- Hiroshi was a bully. In Chapter Twenty-six Hiroshi explains the reasons for his bad behaviour. Write a persuasive text for or against the statement: 'Once a bully, always a bully'.

## **5.4 Examining Literature**

*Recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches (ACELT1622)*

*Discuss how authors and illustrators make stories exciting, moving and absorbing and hold readers' interest by using various techniques, for example character development and plot tension. (ACELT 1605)*

### **5.4.1 Voice**

Kay Crabbe has chosen to write *The Pearl-shell Diver* in close third person, allowing the reader to have both the immediacy of the child protagonist and the wider viewpoint and background detail characteristic of first person narration. **Please note** some terms such as 'Jap', 'binghis' and 'blacks' are used for historical accuracy.

- Choose a short section of text and rewrite in first person from Sario's perspective. Share the rewrite with class members. How does this change affect engagement and comprehension of the text?
- Choose a text incident and write it from another character's point of view e.g. Esike's on his encounter with the white trader on p. 60

## 5.4.2 Plot development

The author has created an engaging narrative with dramatic events, external and internal conflicts and suspenseful action that rises to gripping climactic moments. The resolution is heart-rending but realistic and satisfying.

- Plot Diagram: In pairs, students discuss how the author builds and maintains tension throughout the text and then decide on six of the most important narrative events including inciting events (that make characters take action), turning points and climactic moments. Create a plot diagram using the interactive template available at:  
<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/plot-diagram/>
- List some of the protagonist's goals. How do these goals change as the story progresses? In the end, which goal would you consider to be the most important?
- Cause-effect patterns in the plot: Invite students to notice the cause-effect patterns used by the author to move the action forward. Use the graphic organiser available at:  
<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/graphicorganizers/causeandeffect/>
- The author has chosen not to have Thaati reunited with his family. With a partner discuss this decision. Is the ending hopeful? How is this achieved? Consider alternative endings and rate in terms of realism and suitability for the readership.

## 5.4.3 Characterisation

*The Pearl-shell Diver* has a cast of engaging, dynamic characters that show credible development throughout the narrative. As the protagonist, Sario reveals his vulnerability and his overwhelming sense of responsibility for his family. We do feel strong empathy for Sario and Leilani – two young Islanders forced to reinvent their lives in a hostile environment.

- Using <http://www.wordle.net/> create a wordle or Wordcloud for a character
- Work in pairs to create Kennings poetry for characters such as Apu, Wesley and Esike
- Gather text descriptions for the major characters and complete interactive character maps using  
<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/storymap/>
- Compare and contrast the characters of Sario and Esike, the Kanaka and Lauro.

**Assessment tasks:**

- Which character is the most inspiring? Why? Prepare a reflective speech on your chosen character
- Which character did you relate to the most? Why? Create an Open-Minded Portrait for your character. Explanation is provided at <http://pdspot.wordpress.com/2011/08/14/open-minded-portraits/>.

**5.4.4 Literary Style**

*Identify the relationship between words, sounds, imagery and language patterns in narratives and poetry such as ballads, limericks and free verse (ACELT1617)*

**Description and Mood**

The author uses simple prose that is enhanced by vivid description. The island fishing and pearling scenes are built with carefully chosen noun-phrases, interesting verbs and different types of adjectives.

- Use IWB to examine extracts from the text, looking closely at the vocabulary used. Students can highlight descriptive noun groups, descriptor and classifier adjectives and descriptive phrases or clauses. The following passages would be suitable for this activity: first views of Waiben in Chapter Eleven, the preparation of the pump-diver in Chapter Nineteen and the shark attack in Chapter Twenty.
- Write a descriptive first paragraph for a sequel to *The Pearl-shell Diver*. Use Publisher to design the book cover and blurb giving your reasons for language choices.

**Figurative language: Simile, Metaphor and Personification**

The author uses figurative language that enriches the text and creates strong visual images of setting, character and emotions. Examples include the following:

**Simile**

'The pump-boys leap on him and hold him there, legs and arms wriggling like sea snakes.' (p. 137)

'Sario's mind clogs like a net full of seaweed.' (p.310)

**Metaphor**

'His guilt is worse than a hundred shell cuts' (p. 103)

'He winks and smiles. 'You're a paekau, a butterfly – your delicate wings dust and heal my wounds.' (p. 102)

- Students can find further examples in the text and draw the images they create
- Choose a text character or event and write their own similes or metaphors

## 6. REFERENCES

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Handbook 2010  
[https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/senior/snr\\_atasi\\_10\\_handbook.pdf](https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/senior/snr_atasi_10_handbook.pdf)
- AIATSIS. *Guidelines for the ethical publishing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and research from those communities*, Aboriginal Studies Press, ACT, 2015
- Albert, Trish. *Special Objects*, Pearson Education Australia, Victoria, 2008
- Albert, Trish. *Keeping Strong Through Art*, Pearson Education Australia, Victoria, 2008
- Albert, Trish. *Keeping Language Alive*, Pearson Education Australia, Victoria, 2008
- Burarrwanga, Laklak, Dr Sarah Wright, Dr Sandie Suchet-Pearson, & Kate Lloyd.  
*Welcome to My Country*, Allen & Unwin, NSW, 2013
- Edwards, Ron & Anne (ed). *The Children of the Torres Strait: Stories and drawings from children of the Sacred heart School, the Thursday Island Primary School and the Horn Island School*, The Rams Skull Press, Queensland, 2005
- Edwards, Ron. *The Biggest Fish*, The Rams Skull Press, Queensland, 2000
- Foley, Captain John. C. H. *Timeless Isle: An Illustrated History of Thursday Island*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed, Torres Strait Historical Society, Thursday Island, 2003
- Gunther, Kress & van Leeuwen, T. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Routledge, London 2006
- Kaston, Alan. *The Culture of the Torres Strait DVD*, Leftfield Productions, Cairns, 2012
- Kerr, Gary. *The Pearl Shell Divers DVD*, Garry Kerr, Portland, 2010
- Lawrie, Margaret. *Myths and Legends of Torres Strait*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1970
- Pascoe, Bruce, with AIATSIS. *The Little Red Yellow Black Book: An Introduction to Indigenous Australia*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed, Aboriginal Studies Press, ACT, 2012
- Peddells. *Thursday Island DVD*, Thursday Island, 2009
- Queensland Studies Authority. *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Handbook 2010*, Queensland Studies Authority, Brisbane 2010

## ABOUT THE WRITERS

### KAY CRABBE

Kay began her writing career with feature articles for newspapers and lifestyle magazines before moving into writing educational material for children. Her work in schools with reluctant readers spanned twenty-six years and prompts her to write history simply. Her interest in history was fostered when commissioned to write *Patch Parker: Son of a Convict*, now a recommended resource by the History Teachers' Association of Australia. Research into lesser-known history took her to Torres Strait and the tumultuous time of Federation. Other of her works feature animals and the environment, including the non-fiction book *Introduced Species in Australia* commended in the Whitley Awards by the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales.

Kay grew up in Sydney and moved with her husband and children to remote areas of Tasmania and Western Australia before settling in Far North Queensland, where two spectacular environments meet: the Daintree Rainforest and the Great Barrier Reef.

### LYN WHITE

Lyn White has been a primary school teacher-librarian and English as an Additional Language teacher for more than twenty years and completed postgraduate studies in Editing and Communications at the University of Melbourne. She is passionate about children's literature, committed to developing life-long reading habits in children and has great expertise in engaging students with quality texts and teachers with quality resources.

Lyn is a part-time teacher at Blackburn English Language School and a pre-service supervisor with Deakin University. She was the consultant editor of *The Pearl-shell Diver* and visited the Torres Straits as part of her research to support the book and these notes. Lyn is also the series creator and editor of the *Through My Eyes* novels, about children living in contemporary conflict zones and natural disasters. She conducts professional development sessions for teachers on introducing students to the Torres Strait region and its peoples and how to use the *Through My Eyes* texts in primary and secondary classrooms.

## APPENDIX

### CURRICULUM LINKS:

#### SUPPORTING THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM v8 (AND VICTORIAN CURRICULUM)

### 2.1 Cross-curriculum priorities

#### 2.1.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

*The Pearl-shell Diver* is a timely and unique text that perfectly addresses the two needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education as identified by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA):

*that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are able to see themselves, their identities and their cultures reflected in the curriculum of each of the learning areas, can fully participate in the curriculum and can build their self-esteem*

*that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures Cross-curriculum priority is designed for all students to engage in reconciliation, respect and recognition of the world's oldest continuous living cultures.*

**(ACARA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures/Overview)**

A study of this novel develops Australian students' understanding and appreciation of the three Key concepts of this priority: Country/Place, Culture and People and in particular, the following Organising ideas:

**Country/Place – OI.1, OI.2 and OI.3**

**Culture – OI.5 and OI.6**

**People – OI.8, OI.9**

#### 2.1.2 Sustainability

Key organising ideas include:

**Systems – OI.2, OI.4**

**Futures – OI.7, OI.9**



## 2.2 Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) years 4 -6

### YEAR 4 LEVEL DESCRIPTION

*How people, places and environments interact, past and present.*

*Specifically, students study ... life for indigenous Australians pre- and post-contact.*

**(Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences F-6/7 Level 4 Description)**

### YEAR 4 CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

#### History

Knowledge and Understanding	Inquiry Questions
<p><i>The diversity of Australia's first peoples and the long and continuous connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to Country/Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) (ACHASSK083)</i></p> <p><i>The nature of contact between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and others, for example, the Macassans and the Europeans, and the effects of these interactions on, for example, people and environments (ACHASSK086)</i></p>	<p><b>What was life like for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander Peoples before the arrival of the Europeans?</b></p> <p><b>What was the nature and consequence of contact between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and early traders, explorers and settlers?</b></p>

#### Geography

Knowledge and Understanding Key Concepts: Place, space, environment, interconnection and sustainability	Inquiry Questions
<p><i>They [students] examine the use and management of resources and waste ... including the custodial responsibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander Peoples to their Country/Place and its effects on people and their environments. (Australian Curriculum: Knowledge and understanding Year 4 Geography)</i></p> <p><i>The custodial responsibility Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have for Country/Place, and how this influences views about sustainability (ACHASSK089)</i></p>	<p><b>How do different views about the environment influence approaches to sustainability?</b></p> <p><b>How does the environment support the lives of people and other living things?</b></p>

## YEAR 5 LEVEL DESCRIPTION

*Australian communities – their past, present and possible futures.*

**The Year 5 curriculum focuses on colonial Australia in the 1800s.**

**(Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences F-6/7 Level 5 Description)**

## YEAR 5 CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

### History

<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>	<b>Inquiry questions</b>
<i>The nature of convict or colonial presence, including the factors that influenced patterns of development, aspects of the daily life of the inhabitants (including Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples) and how the environment changed (ACHASSK107)</i>	<b>What was life like for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples before the arrival of the Europeans?</b>  <b>Why did the Europeans settle in Australia?</b>

### Geography

<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>	<b>Inquiry questions</b>
<i>The influence of people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, on the environmental characteristics of Australian places (ACHASSK112)</i>  <i>The custodial responsibility Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have for Country/Place, and how this influences views about sustainability (ACHASSK089)</i>	<b>How do different views about the environment influence approaches to sustainability?</b>  <b>How can people use environments more sustainably?</b>

## YEAR 6 LEVEL DESCRIPTION

*Australia in the past and present and its connections with a diverse world.*

**(Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences/F-6/7 Level 6 Description)**

## YEAR 6 CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

### History

Knowledge and Understanding	Inquiry Questions
<p><i>Students explore the factors that led to Federation and the different attitudes to Federation and citizenship at the time.</i></p> <p><b>(Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences/F-6/7 History Content description)</b></p>	<p><b>Why and how did Australia become a nation?</b></p>
<p><i>The contribution of individuals and groups to the development of Australian society since Federation (ACHASSK137)</i></p> <p><b>Elaborations:</b> investigating the role of specific cultural groups in Australia’s economic and social development (for example, the cattle industry, the Snowy Mountains Scheme, the pearling industry)</p>	<p><b>What contribution have significant individuals and groups made to the development of Australian society?</b></p>

### Geography

Knowledge and Understanding	Inquiry Questions
<p><i>Students explain the significance of an event/development, an individual and/or group. They identify and describe continuities and changes for different groups in the past and present.</i></p> <p><b>(Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences/F-6/7 Geography Content description)</b></p> <p><i>The world’s cultural diversity, including that of its indigenous peoples (ACHASSK140)</i></p>	<p><b>How do places, people and cultures differ across the world?</b></p> <p><b>How do peoples’ connections to places affect their perception of them?</b></p>

## 2.3 History and Geography Year 7

### YEAR 7 LEVEL DESCRIPTION:

*Sustainable pasts, present, futures*

(Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences/Year 7 Level description)

### YEAR 7 CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

#### History

Knowledge and Understanding	Inquiry Questions
<i>Unit 1: Investigating the ancient past</i>	<b>Why and where did the earliest societies develop?</b>
<p><i>Key features of ancient societies (farming, trade, social classes, religion, rule of law)</i> (ACHASSK166)</p> <p><i>The importance of conserving the remains of the ancient past, including the heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples</i> (ACHASSK171)</p>	<p><b>What emerged as the defining characteristics of ancient societies?</b></p> <p><b>What have been the legacies of ancient societies?</b></p>

#### Geography

*Who we are, who came before us, and traditions and values that have shaped societies.*

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' special connections to Country/Place.*

(Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences/Key Ideas)

#### Unit 1: Water in the world

Geographical Knowledge and Understanding	Key Inquiry Questions
<p><i>Economic, cultural, spiritual and aesthetic value of water for people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and peoples of the Asia region</i> (ACHASSK186)</p>	<p><b>What effect does the uneven distribution of resources and services have on the lives of people?</b></p>

## Unit 2: Place and liveability

<b>Geographical Knowledge and Understanding</b>	<b>Key Inquiry Questions</b>
<p data-bbox="185 349 762 506"><i>Factors that influence the decisions people make about where to live and their perceptions of the liveability of places (ACHASSK188)</i></p> <p data-bbox="185 517 703 703"><b>Elaboration:</b> discussing that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples choose to live on their Country/Place or might prefer to if they had the choice</p>	<p data-bbox="810 338 1299 450"><b>How do people’s reliance on places and environments influence their perception of them?</b></p>

### **2.4 General Capabilities**

The unique cultural and historical setting of *The Pearl-shell Diver* and its multiplicity of themes have strong relevance for the development of the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the following General Capabilities:

Literacy, Creative and critical thinking, Personal and social capability. More specifically the text supports:

#### **Intercultural understanding**

The text promotes interest in and respect for Torres Strait Islander culture and history and promotes recognition of commonality and connections that cultivate mutual respect.

#### **Ethical understanding**

Readers will be challenged to consider the ethical issues surrounding this period of history in the Torres Strait and the political and social impact these experiences have had on contemporary understandings of Indigenous culture and opportunity.

### **2.5 Links to the Victorian Curriculum**

#### **GEOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE**

**Levels 3 and 4:** Place space and interconnection: Diversity and significance of places and environments.

*The many Countries/Places of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia, and the custodial responsibility they have for Country/Place, and how this influences views about sustainability (VCGGK080)*

**Levels 5 and 6:** Place, space and interconnection: Factors that shape places and influence interconnections

*The nature of convict or colonial presence, including the factors that influenced changing patterns of development, how the environment changed, and aspects of the daily life of the inhabitants, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (VCHHK089)*

## **HISTORY**

### **Levels 3 and 4**

*The diversity and longevity of Australia's first peoples and the significant ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are connected to Country and Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) and the effects on their daily lives (VCHHK078)*

*The nature of contact between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and others, for example, the Macassans and the Europeans, and the effects of these interactions (VCHHK081)*

### **Levels 5 and 6**

*Identify and describe patterns of continuity and change in daily life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, 'native born' and migrants in the Australian colonies (VCHHC085)*

## **CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP**

### **Levels 3 and 4**

*Describe the different cultural, religious and/or social groups to which they and others in the community may belong (VCCCC007)*

**Elaboration: recognising that the identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Australia is shaped by Country/Place, language and knowledge traditions:**

**Explain the significance of an event and an individual or group that influenced change in the Australian colonies and in Australian society since Federation (VCHHC087)**

## **INTERCULTURAL CAPABILITY**

### **Levels 3 and 4**

*Explain the role of cultural traditions in the development of personal, group and national identities (VCICCD007)*

### **Levels 5 and 6**

*Examine and discuss the variety of ways in which people understand and appreciate differing cultural values and perspectives, and the things which promote or inhibit effective engagement with diverse cultural groups (VCICCD012)*