

Sea of Hands Schools Kit



The Sea of Hands is a great activity for students, particularly if it supports work being done in the classroom. Some schools have also incorporated students' own hand designs and artworks within the installations, enabling students to make a more personal response to the event. ANTaR can supply hands and poles which can be used by your school to create a Sea of Hands installation. We can also supply hand pins for sale, which raise funds to support ANTaR's mission of advocating for Justice, Rights and Respect for Australia's First Peoples. The hands can be booked by phoning the ANTaR office on ph. 02 9564 0594 or via email antar@antar.org.au.

National Reconciliation Week 2012

The theme for this year is “**Let’s Talk Recognition**” - a great opportunity to engage staff and students in a conversation about Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

ANTaR has prepared a supporters kit about Constitutional Recognition, including:

- Factsheet
- Q&A
- Editable powerpoint presentation
- 7 ways to get involved
- Event hints and tips



The kit is available for download and print at: www.antar.org.au or email oliver@antar.org.au.



About the Sea of Hands

The first Sea of Hands was held on the 12 October 1997, in front of Parliament House, Canberra.

The Sea of Hands was created as a powerful, physical representation of the Citizen’s Statement on Native Title. The Citizen’s Statement was a petition circulated by ANTaR to mobilise non-Indigenous support for native title and reconciliation. Plastic hands in the colours of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, each one carrying one signature from the Citizen’s Statement, were installed in front of Parliament House in what was then the largest public art installation in Australia.

The Sea of Hands has become a symbol of the People’s Movement for Reconciliation. Over 300,000 Australians have signed their names on one of 120,000 plastic hands that make up the Sea of Hands, to show their support for Native Title and Reconciliation.

The Sea of Hands has been installed in every major city and many regional locations throughout Australia, and continues to gather signatures everywhere it appears.

Today, the hands symbolise community support for reconciliation, rights and respect.



Please contact ANTaR NSW to arrange:

Hands for installation - patrick@antar.org.au or (02) 9564 0594.

Hand pins for sale at school - lesley@antar.org.au or (02) 9564 0594.

SIGNIFICANT DATES

26 January	Australia Day Known by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as “Survival Day” or “Invasion Day”
13 February	Anniversary of the Federal Government’s Apology to the Stolen Generation
21 March	Harmony Day International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
24 March	Close the Gap Day Campaigning for Indigenous Health Equality
26 May	Sorry Day The anniversary of the 1997 tabling of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission report ‘Bringing Them Home’
27 May- 3 June	National Reconciliation Week Includes two significant dates: 27 May - anniversary of 1967 Referendum and 3 June - Mabo Day
3 June	Mabo Day Celebrating the 1992 High Court decision, in a case brought by Eddie Mabo and others, which led to the official recognition of Native Title rights in Australia and an end of the ‘terra nullius’ doctrine
First full week in July	NAIDOC week A time to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
4 August	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Children’s Day
9 August	International Day of the World’s Indigenous People
7 September	Indigenous Literacy Day An opportunity to support children living in remote Indigenous communities



Image courtesy of ANTaR NSW

Suggested National Reconciliation Week & Sea of Hands Activities

- **Sea of Hands installation.** ANTaR can provide plastic hands with wire supports to complete your design. Invite an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander artist to design the installation or use a design that is meaningful to your school. Some schools have installed the hands over a period of days, with each class making their own additional contributions to the installation. Others have used the school oval and staged it as a whole school event.
- **Invite a local Elder to do a Welcome to Country at a special Assembly.** Your state Reconciliation Council may also be able to assist speakers for Reconciliation activities.
- **Invite the parents or grandparents of Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander students enrolled at your school to come and speak to students at the school.** This could be done within the context of an assembly or other classroom activities such as Grandparents Day/ local history day.
- **Raise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island flags at assembly.** Discuss the symbolism of each.
- Organise a **heritage walk with a local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander leader.**
- Plan a **school excursion** to an Aboriginal community.
- **Students can create a play, poems, songs or banners** in response to classroom activities. Present these at Assembly.
- **Hold a poster competition** on the theme of Reconciliation.
- Host a **parents' cultural awareness workshop or bushtucker day.**
- **Connect with a 'sister school'** from a remote area.
- Encourage your **student council** to design and plan events throughout the year in support of Reconciliation.
- Recruit students and/or interested parents to form a **permanent Reconciliation Group** at your school. Consider a Reconciliation Action Plan (see Reconciliation Australia website).
- Look at ways that the Sea of Hands event can be extended into the **class curriculum** (see list of web resources and worksheets).
- Initiate an **artist or writer-in-residence program.**
- **Host a fundraising event** to raise money for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation or initiative.
- **Display the *Aboriginal Australia* poster** in your classroom, which maps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land around the country. The poster is available at www.antar.org.au/store.
- **Display a land acknowledgment plaque** at your school, available at www.antar.org.au/store.

Here are some further ideas from the SchoolAid website:

- Display Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander posters around your class room.
- Listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music.
- Study a famous Aboriginal or Torres Strait Australian.
- Research the traditional owners of your area.
- Study Aboriginal arts and crafts.
- Read a Dreamtime story.
- Start your own Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hall of fame featuring local role models and achievers.
- Visit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander websites on the Internet.
- Make your own trivia quiz.
- Learn the meanings of local or national Aboriginal place names.

Useful Resources

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures and Histories

- **ANTaR website:** www.antar.org.au.
- **The Little Red, Yellow, Black Book.** This book, published by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), provides an entry point into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history for older students and teachers. The book is available at www.antar.org.au/store. The AIATSIS website provides links to teachers notes and resources www.aiatsis.gov.au.
- **Reconciliation Australia** www.reconciliation.org.au/home/reconciliation-resources. The web site provides reconciliation resources including an excellent Reconciliation timeline.
- **Share Our Pride** www.shareourpride.org.au. This cultural awareness website has been developed by Reconciliation Australia for use by schools, workplaces and individuals.
- **Twelve Canoes** www.12canoes.com.au. This video website was developed by the Yolgnu people of Arnhem Land as an introduction to their culture, history and country.
- **Aboriginal Perspectives across the Curriculum.** Website developed by the West Australian Department of Education which includes lesson plans and mind maps to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the curriculum.
- **School Aid website.** This website has a range of classroom worksheets which can be used in conjunction with literacy week but could also be used for more general activities.
- **Stories of the Dreaming.** The Australian Museum website offers videos of traditional stories told by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members from many different areas in Australia. www.australianmuseum.net.au/Stories-of-the-Dreaming

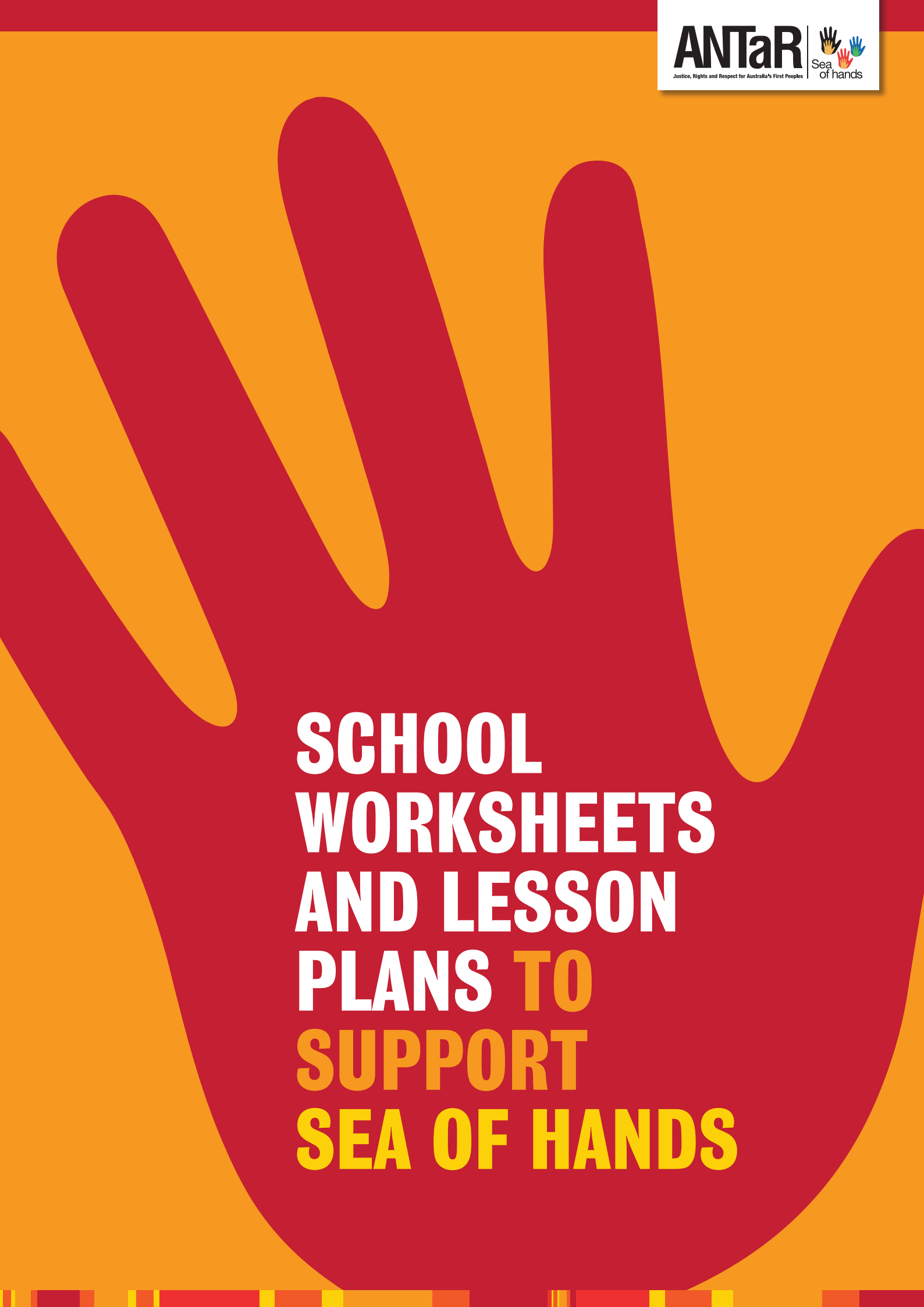
The Stolen Generations:

- **Bringing Them Home Education Module.** Suitable for secondary students. Worksheets explore the report, the personal stories, intergenerational effects, laws, global comparisons, and related literature.
- **Second Step.** Engaging Students with the Stolen Generations. Written specifically for Victorian teachers, it still has many great ideas for working with secondary students, which are applicable for all teachers.
- **Lesson plan for upper primary students.** <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/det-learning-resources/viewLearningResource/%5b28169%5d275271/apac003.pdf>
- **The Apology.** Video of the apology to the Stolen Generations made by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on behalf of the Australian Parliament. <http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/our-country/our-people/apology-to-australias-indigenous-peoples>

Caring for Country

- **Mirriwoong Seasonal Calendar and Movie.** Created by the Mirriwoong community of the Eastern Kimberley, students can explore the interactive calendar online and watch community Elders share some of their knowledge about the indicators of seasonal change and water availability on their country. www.mirima.org.au/calendar
- **Kakadu Seasons.** Lesson Plan www.det.wa.edu.au/det-learning-resources/viewLearningResource/%5b28169%5d328579/apac262.pdf
- **Burarra Gathering: Sharing Indigenous Knowledge.** Learn about the traditional technologies and knowledge systems of the Burarra people of Arnhem Land. Includes ideas for classroom activities which encourage students to explore different ways in which knowledge is developed and communicated between people. <http://burarra.questacon.edu.au/pages/welcome.html>
- **Bush tucker.** Lesson plans suitable for early primary. <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/det-learning-resources/viewLearningResource/%5b28169%5d328578/apac261.pdf>
- **Northern Land Council and the Central Land Council.** Both websites have information about caring for country. www.nlc.org.au, www.clc.org.au
- **Indigenous Ecological Knowledge - an introduction.** <http://www.clc.org.au/articles/cat/indigenous-ecological-knowledge/>
- **NAILSMA. Northern Australia Land and Sea Management Alliance** (www.nailsma.org.au). Includes information about projects run by the Salt Water People's Network, including Ranger projects and short videos.
- **Carpentaria Ghost Nets Program** (www.ghostnets.com.au) A great website which outlines the activities of the program, marine species under threat and local communities involvement in the program, including maps of the area. It also includes information and photos of local community art projects which are recycling ghostnets. This offers a great segue into classroom activities which look at ways of using recycled materials to create art pieces.





**SCHOOL
WORKSHEETS
AND LESSON
PLANS TO
SUPPORT
SEA OF HANDS**

RECONCILIATION – WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT?

*BEFORE
RECONCILIATION
WEEK*

**WHAT IS
RECONCILIATION?**

*DURING
THE WEEK*

**WHAT HAVE I
LEARNT DURING
RECONCILIATION
WEEK?**

REFLECTION

**WHAT DO I THINK
RECONCILIATION IS
ALL ABOUT?**

**WHAT CAN I DO
ABOUT IT IN MY
OWN LIFE?**





From Little Things Big Things Grow is a song written by **Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody.**

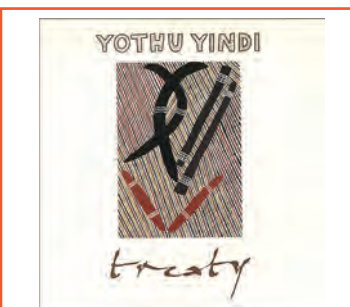
- Play or watch song performed on [Youtube](#) and then print a copy of [the lyrics](#) or read the children's book about the song, available at www.antar.org.au/store.

The song tells the story of the Gurindji Strike.

- In groups produce a poster about this strike.

Here are some questions you might like to research for your poster:

- What was the Gurindji Strike about?
- Who was Vincent Lingari?
- Who was the tall man who poured sand through Vincent's hand. What did this action symbolise? (Perhaps you can find photos of this ceremony on the internet).
- Include a map showing the location of the Gurindji land and any other images that are meaningful to you.
- Why might this song still be important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?



Treaty is written and performed by the band **Yothu Yindi.**

- Watch the song performed on [Youtube](#) and then print a copy of [the lyrics](#).
- Create a poster about the band and the song.

You might like to research these questions:

- The band comes from the Yolgnu homelands. Find out more about their country (try the website www.twelvecanoes.com.au)
- Find out more about the lead singer of the band
- What languages are sung in the song? Why use more than one language in the song?
- What is a treaty?
- Why would a treaty be important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

GALLERY



Rainworth State School 2009



Rainworth State School 2009



Sea of Hands at Parliament House Canberra. 1997



NRL Grand Final 2011
Sea of Hands

Photo by Joseph Mayers, courtesy of Reconciliation Australia



Sea of Hands at the Sydney Botanical Gardens. 1998

SAMPLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

26 MAY **SORRY DAY**

- Welcome to Country - local community Elder.
- The Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Australian flags at half mast.
- Parents of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the school speak about the meaning of Sorry Day.
- Senior students present a performance about Sorry Day – play, poem, song.
- Student Council lays a wreath in the colours of the Aboriginal flag as a mark of respect for members of the Stolen Generation.
- Student Council informs students about the week of activities ahead.

26 MAY - 3RD JUNE **RECONCILIATION WEEK**

- Students work in classrooms on Reconciliation-related tasks. Using the hand motif, students develop a range of individual and group artworks incorporating personal messages to display at the Sea of Hands day.
- During the week, each class installs their set of hands, according to the design laid out by designer. (Design can be laid out with string or chalk beforehand).
- A cultural awareness/bushtucker evening is held for parents and staff of the school.

3 JUNE **SEA OF HANDS ASSEMBLY**

- Free dress day in colours of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island flags – gold coin donation with funds going to charity.
- Welcome to Country by a guest Elder from the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- Principal addresses the school.
- Guest performers.
- Each class presents a large decorated hand/banner to incorporate into the display.
- School choir - special performance of relevant material.