WHICH WAY HOME
By
ILBIJERRI Theatre Company
Teacher Resources 2018

Ideal for Years 9/10 and VCE
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ABOUT THIS RESOURCE
This resource has been created to provide teachers with curriculum links to the Victorian Curriculum, and includes some preliminary and post show ideas and activities as to how to extend their experience of WHICH WAY HOME. The activities are designed to be open-ended and multi-ability. They may need differentiation for your specific cohort.

The performances and workshops included in the Arts & Education program are designed to offer students engaging arts experiences with strong links to the Victorian Curriculum and to VCE subjects where appropriate. Each Arts & Education program varies in its purpose and content and as a result the scope for integration across the curriculum varies. Please feel free to contact the Arts & Education team on (03) 9644 1808 or at education@rav.net.au.

If you have any questions about this resource, its content or its implementation within your classroom please do not hesitate to contact the Arts & Education team.

ABOUT REGIONAL ARTS VICTORIA
Regional Arts Victoria inspires art across the state. Through creative facilitation, touring, education, specialised resources, artistic projects and advocacy, we develop and sustain creative communities and artistic practice all over Victoria.

Regional Arts Victoria is an independent, not-for-profit, membership-based organisation working in long-term partnerships with every level of government, fostering contemporary and innovative regional cultural practice across five decades. We advise and impact on decision-making across multiple portfolios and levels of government.

Regional Arts Victoria is the peak body for regional artists and arts organisations, and the leading organisation for regional creative practice in Victoria.

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- Regional Cultural Partnerships
- Creative Arts Facilitators
- Membership program
- Devolved grants programs
- Resources, workshops and events
- Sector advocacy and leadership development

- Arts & Education Program
- Connecting Places
- Touring programs
- Education resources
- Industry development resources and events
- Sector advocacy and leadership development

- State-wide projects including Small Town Transformations, Artlands Victoria and FiftyYears 2019
- Internal Creative Professional Development programs
- Sector advocacy and leadership development
PROGRAMMING TEAM
Regional Arts Victoria’s Programming department has nearly 50 years of experience touring work to schools, community halls and theatres across Victoria and Australia. The department programs the Arts & Education, Touring Services and Connecting Places programs.

The Arts and Education program also provides significant subsidy assistance (up to 75% of program costs) to eligible remote and disadvantaged schools. Your school may be eligible so please contact us to find out more.

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### CURRICULUM LINKS – Victorian F-10 Curriculum

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### CROSS-CURRICULAR PRIORITIES
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

### VCE CURRICULUM LINKS
**Theatre Studies**

**Unit 3 Outcome 3: Production Analysis**

Analyse and evaluate the interpretation of a written play script in production to an audience.
INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

Tash and her Dad are going on a road trip. Home to country, where the sky is higher, and the world goes on forever. It’s a long way from the wide streets and big old houses of Tash’s childhood. Two Black faces in a very white suburb. Dad still thinks he’s the king of cool, but he’s an old fella now. It’s time for Tash to take him home.

ILBIJERRI Theatre Company tells stories about what it means to be First Nations in Australia today. Infused with humour and heart, WHICH WAY HOME draws on writer Katie Beckett’s own memories of growing up with her First Nations father.

“I write to keep my culture alive... I didn’t take writing seriously until my dad had his fifth heart attack, which is when I decided to write Which Way Home. It is a love letter to my dad, thanking him for all his hard work and sacrifices he made to raise me as a single Aboriginal father in the 90s ... The last thing I wanted was to lose my dad. I wanted to give him a gift of appreciation. [As] a First Nation’s actor in this country, I was sick of the roles I was getting and auditioning for: roles of victims, and constant abuse. I was sick of seeing stories that weren’t portraying what I had seen and what I grew up with as a child. I think we have so many stories of positivity, strength and laughter. I want to share the joy, fighting spirit and resilience of our people... I write from an urban Aboriginal perspective because that’s who I am, although I still have my country connections.”

Katie Beckett, Writer of Which Way Home

ILBIJERRI Theatre Company

ILBIJERRI is one of Australia’s leading theatre companies creating innovative works by First Nations artists. Our productions have toured to critical acclaim across Australia and the world. We challenge and excite our audiences with contemporary stories about what it means to be First Nations in Australia today. Established in 1990 ILBIJERRI is the longest running First Nations theatre company in Australia. Our creative processes aim to support our artists and communities to have a powerful voice in determining the future of Australia.

Artistic Director Rachael Maza
Executive Producer Lydia Fairhall
General Manager Kathy Morrison
Creative Director Kamarra Bell-Wykes
Associate Producer Jmaine Beezley
Marguk Associate Producer Davey Thompson
Producers Lisa Parris & Nina Bonacci
Development & Marketing Manager Iain Finlayson
Marketing Coordinator Fred Chuang
Finance Manager Jon Hawkes
ilbijerri.com.au
BIographies

KATIE BECKETT Writer / Performer
Katie Beckett is an actor and writer with a passion for storytelling, both for the stage and screen. She is also a founding member of Cope St Collective. WHICH WAY HOME is the first full-length play she has written. It enjoyed an extended sold-out season at Belvoir as part of the 2017 Sydney Festival. She also won the Balnaves Indigenous Playwrights Award and was nominated for a Green Room Award for her writing. She is currently working on a number of writing projects including a new TV series with Matchbox Pictures, a Young Adults novel with Allen & Unwin and has been commissioned by Arts Centre Melbourne and Belvoir to write two new plays. As a performer, Katie’s screen credits include Redfern Now, Black Comedy, The Slot, Little J and Big Cuz, The Marshes, Talkers, Drover’s Boy and Blackground.

RACHAEL MAZA Director
Rachael Maza is Yidinji from North Queensland and Meriam from the Torres Strait Island of Mer. Rachael is well known as a presenter on ABC TV’s Message Stick and for her outstanding performances in the film Radiance and the stage production of The Sapphires. Her performances have been recognised with a Green Room Award and a Sydney Theatre Critics Circle Award. Rachael has had a long association with ILBJERRI, first directing STOLEN for the company in 1992. Since becoming Artistic Director in 2008, she has directed the acclaimed JACK CHARLES V THE CROWN (2010) which continues to tour both nationally and internationally. For ILBJERRI she has also directed SISTERS OF GELAM (2009), FOLEY (2011) and WHICH WAY HOME (2016) as well as being a co-devisor and performer for BEAUTIFUL ONE DAY (2011). Rachael’s service to performing arts touring in Australia was recently recognised when she received the Drover Award for Touring Legend.
KAMAHI DJORDON KING Performer

Kamahi Djordon King in a Gurindji man who hails from Katherine in the Northern Territory. A multi-talented artist, Kamahi’s creative practice includes acting, singing and visual art. He holds an Advanced Diploma in Performing Arts from the Aboriginal Centre for Performing Arts and has just completed a Master’s degree at RMIT. Kamahi also performed in The Shadow King, Malthouse Theatre’s Aboriginal adaptation of Shakespeare’s King Lear. The production has featured at major Australian festivals and headlined at London’s Barbican Centre as part of Shakespeare’s 400th birthday celebrations. Kamahi is also well known as his female alter-ego, Constantina Bush, who has starred in Malthouse Theatre’s Blak Cabaret. Kamahi directed, produced and starred in his own cabaret show Constantina Bush and the Bushettes which was a hit on the Australian festival circuit. As Constantina, he has also performed with some of Australia’s leading cabaret artists including Maude Davey and Finucane & Smith with whom he received a Helpmann Award nomination for Best Cabaret Performer. In 2017 Constantina returned to Darwin Festival with a new show, An Evening with Constantina Bush. Kamahi’s other stage credits include Wulamanayuwi and the Seven Pamanui (Darwin Festival), Romeo & Juliet (Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne/Australian Shakespeare Company/La Boite), Nyet Nyets Picnic (Snuff Puppets) and The Sunshine Club (Queensland Theatre Company).
**EMILY BARRIE** Set & Costume Designer

Emily Barrie’s design history includes Set and Costume work for The Melbourne Theatre Company, The Malthouse, Belvoir Street Theatre, Rawcus Theatre, Chamber Made Opera, Arena Theatre Company, ILBIJERRI Theatre Company, Back to Back, Melbourne Worker’s Theatre, Circus Oz, N.I.C.A., and Moomba. She designed for ILBIJERRI Theatre Company’s Jack Charles Vs. The Crown, Foley, Coranderrk, North West of Nowhere and Chopped Liver. As an Associate Artist with Rawcus Theatre, her designs include Another Lament Chamber Made Opera (The Malthouse), Small Odysseys (Arts House), and most recently, Catalogue as a part of Dance Massive 2015 (Arts House). Most recently Emily designed NED – A New Australian Musical, Born in Sawdust and The Landscape Project with NICA, Sunny Ray and the magnificent Moon with Arena Theatre Co./Sydney Festival. The set Design for Twenty Sixteen – Circus Oz and costume design for The Annual Moomba Parade.

![Image of Emily Barrie]

**JANE BODIE** Dramaturg

Jane Bodie’s plays include the upcoming Lamb, Savage, Music, Hinterland, This Years’ Ashes, (Out Of Me/CUT) Ride, A Single Act, Still, Hilt and Fourplay. Jane was awarded the Victorian Premier Literary Awards in 2006 for A Single Act and a Green Room Award in 2003 for Still. As a Dramaturg, Jane has worked on many productions including Michelle Lee’s Rice, Dona Abela’s Jump for Jordan, Kathryn Marquet’s Pale Blue Dot, Performance 4A’s Murakami and Julia Rose Lewis’ Samson. Jane has written for TV and Radio in Australia and the UK, including The Secret Life of Us, Crash/Burn, Moving Wallpaper and No Angels. She’s currently adapting This Years’ Ashes for Screen Australia. Jane was Head of Playwriting at NIDA, Associate Artist at The Griffin Theatre and Artistic Associate at PWA in 2014. In 2013 she was awarded The Australia Council Theatre Board Fellowship and in 2016 she was shortlisted for both the Patrick White and Griffin Playwriting Awards.

![Image of Jane Bodie]
MARK COLES SMITH Sound Designer
Mark Coles Smith has explored an interest in sound design and music production for almost a decade. He holds a diploma in Audio Engineering from JMC Academy. He has produced the soundtracks for a number of short films and animations and is nearing the completion of his first album. In June 2016, Mark performed a collection of solo musical works under the alias ‘Kalaji’ at Federation Square as part of the Light in Winter Festival. Mark is also an actor, who performed opposite Leah Purcell in Belvoir’s acclaimed 2016 play, The Drover’s Wife. The actor’s growing screen credits include the features Last Cab to Darwin, Pawno, Around the Block and Beneath Hill 60, and the TV series Old School, The Gods of Wheat Street, Modern Family, Hard Rock Medical for Canada’s TV Ontario, Please Like Me, Miss Fisher’s Murder Mysteries, Blue Heelers, Dirt Game and The Circuit. He has a certificate in Aboriginal Theatre from Western Australian Performing Arts Academy and a Bachelor in Indigenous Studies.

NIKLAS PAJANTI Lighting Designer
Niklas Pajanti has designed for a range of leading Australian and international companies including Melbourne Theatre Company, Chunky Move, Victorian Opera, Dancenorth, Belvoir Theatre, Ranters Theatre, BalletLab, Sydney Theatre Company, Malthouse Theatre, Dancehouse, and Australian Centre For The Moving Image, among others. His design work has been recognized with two Victorian Green Room Awards as well as 10 nominations from the same association, two Sydney Theatre Award nominations and a Helpmann Industry Award nomination.
SUPPORT MATERIAL

Dear Students and Teachers,

CONGRATULATIONS on choosing to attend WHICH WAY HOME by First Nations writer and performer Katie Beckett. You are about to see a great piece of theatre that is insightful, challenging, funny and moving.

WHICH WAY HOME gives profound insight into father daughter relationships and questions the necessity of gendered roles in parenthood. It is a personal story of resilience, addiction, loss and triumph. The work centres on the final road trip to country undertaken by father and daughter. Told through the eyes of the daughter, from young girl to woman, we see the changes not only in the landscapes but also in the minds of the characters. The story has the capacity to remind audiences of every person’s need for family, history and heritage.

Australia’s First Nations Peoples have always used different mediums to share our knowledge, history and experience including dance, art and oral story telling. In the last 50 years we have built on this repertoire through the form of theatre. WHICH WAY HOME is a perfect example of a contemporary expression of our culture.

It is important to note that Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people are not homogenous but are two distinct peoples. Within these groups are many different nations with discrete beliefs and practices. There are mixed opinions about the appropriate terminology for the collective group; Indigenous, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or First Nations. When dealing with specific community groups it is best to seek their preferred term. For the purpose of this education resource we have chosen to use the term “First Nations Peoples” to identify the collective but very diverse original peoples of what is now known as Australia and the Torres Strait Islands.

On behalf of ILBIJERRI Theatre Company, I trust you will enjoy and be empowered by this powerful piece of theatre.

Kind Regards,

Kamarra Bell-Wykes
Creative Director, The MARGUK program
ILBIJERRI Theatre Company
Kamarra@ilbijerri.com.au
**HISTORY OF THE PROJECT**

WHICH WAY HOME was written and developed by Katie Beckett during her engagement in ILBIJERRI Theatre Company’s Writers Residency in 2014. The residency was an ILBIJERRI innovation to develop emerging First Nations Writers. The production then premiered at Northcote Town Hall in 2016 and enjoyed a hugely successful extended season at Belvoir as part of Sydney Festival in 2017. Beckett is currently working with Screen Australia to develop Which Way Home as a feature film, and she has been asked to present the story as a book designed specifically for high school students. As part of the 2018 national tour, Which Way Home by ILBIJERRI Theatre Company is set to perform at 32 venues across Australia- including Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.

**REVIEWS and AUDIENCE FEEDBACK**

- Using the links below look at the reviews from past seasons of WHICH WAY HOME.
- Are there any common elements throughout the different reviews?
- What do the reviewers praise or critique in the work?
- What are the themes of the work based on the opinions of the reviewers and the audience?


“Which Way Home mixes broad comedy with the most touching emotions” - Stage Whispers  Source: http://www.stagewhispers.com.au/reviews/which-way-home


“We are moved by the relationship between the daughter and father. It highlighted some of the racism still experienced by Aboriginal people in Australia.”

Audience Feedback:

“The play depicted a beautiful relationship between father and daughter, something rarely represented in our culture. It was really great to see a positive relationship being represented.”

“Call your Dad!”

“My husband and I were very moved by the relationship between the daughter and father. It highlighted some of the racism still experienced by Aboriginal people in Australia.”

“It was a deeper insight into the complexities of Aboriginal identities, how the daughter struggled to find a sense of belonging in her communities, her fears and the longing for her mother as well as her father's addictions. The main theme for me was the fear Aboriginal families face and holding families together in the climate of Australia's racism.”
SUPPORT MATERIAL: WARNING: Spoiler alert!

Look at this:
Head to the ILBIJERRI website and check out the WHICH WAY HOME production page. http://ilbijerri.com.au/event/which-way-home/

Read this: Q&A with ILBIJERRI’s Artistic Director and director of WHICH WAY HOME Rachael Maza as she gives insight into her creative process and approaches to interpreting WHICH WAY HOME for production.

Q: What are your processes when interpreting a new script for production?
A: In the majority of productions I have worked on, I am actually involved before there is even a script. So I am able to work with the writer/storyteller in shaping the script that best reflects the writer’s intentions. But essentially the process is the same:
1/. What are the writer’s intentions? What are they wanting to say? What are they wanting the audience to go away with? Once this is clear we can get to the next stage:
2/. Is the script actually achieving what the writer intends? If not what is needed (in the case of scripts still in development)?
3/. After working out what the writer’s intentions are, and interrogating the script in great detail, I am then able to start asking the directorial question of what design elements will best serve the script to achieve the writer’s intentions.
4/. Also part of this early interrogation of a new work is to study it in the broader political, cultural and artistic context. How is this work relevant/poignant to the now? How urgent and important is this work to the current political climate? Is this saying it in a way that hasn’t been heard before? And most importantly for me: How is it re-RIGHTing the false narratives about the First Peoples of Australia that are perpetuated in the dominant culture’s collective subconscious? It is this final point that informs all my decisions about the design, style and form, and how I will direct the actors in creating their characters.

Q: Do you have a conscious process for discovering the form and mood of a work or is that something you just stumble across on the floor?
A: I believe the writing informs the form/style—ie heightened, poetic, naturalistic, documentary etc. Though of course there are many ways to interpret these, and this is very much discovered on the floor with the actors. I like to work collaboratively, and love the discovery that happens in the room on the floor. I very intentionally ask actors not to learn their lines before rehearsals start so that we can discover it together before they start locking things down.

Q: How does the script inform your choices about set, lighting and sound?
A: The script is the starting point. With design elements, this is similarly an organic process that starts with preliminary conversations between myself and the designers, but is ultimately informed by what the actors and I have discovered on the floor. All of this is, or course, lead by what we’ve discovered in the script, uncovering what the writer has intended— in spoken word and stage directions. In the preliminary conversations, we talk through the literal physical requirements in the script, and then the METAPHORS in the piece. All conversations are mindful of the parameters of the project— budget, tourability, venue, etc.
Q: There are a number of major shifts in WHICH WAY HOME in both time and place. How as a director do you go about achieving these shifts so that the momentum and reality of the world(s) aren’t lost?
A: Good question! This is very challenging – getting the rhythm of any play right is always challenging especially in the case of this play where you are constantly jumping back into memory flashbacks. Lighting was critical to help this. The memory flashbacks lit in bold, rich colours are heightened in a way that a child holds memories. The sound designer (Mark Cole-Smith) worked in similar ways supporting the audience as we jumped back and forward in time. Of course, the actors themselves were very skilful in playing their younger selves.

Q: The waterfall of sand is a very powerful image in the production. How do you come to this imagining of it and what does it represent to you?
A: The decision to have a continuous trickle of sand throughout the play worked on many levels. But the initial inspiration was the dream/memory sequence where Tash (Katie’s character) recalls a moment of being with her mother washing the clothes, and in it she runs the powder through her fingers, also at the end she sprinkles her Dad’s ashes – after much conversation with Katie (who is also the writer) and the designer (Emily Barrie) the idea of sand came into being. We then also liked the way it reminds us of time passing, as time in this play is non-linear, jumping back in time as well as into the abstracted memory space. Once the lighting designer (Nik Pajanti) was able to do his magic in the final tech week, he was able to light it in such a way that it works in so many different ways, like with the pulsating blue in the underwater sequence.

Q: Having a play staged almost wholly in a car must have been quite challenging to create theatrically. What led you to staging it the way you did?
A: Yes, it was incredibly challenging! I often felt like Katie was writing a film not a play, and it took quite a lot to get it theatrical. But still there was an awful lot of play time with two actors bantering in a car which could have made for boring theatre. But what we worked on in the early stage of the rehearsals was how soon into the play could we stop having to be so literal about the car. How soon could we break the car convention but it still make sense? And then we discovered that this concept started to say so much more about the journey then we realised – so it ended up being an awesome opportunity to play with the metaphor of the journey being a deconstruction of Tash’s world. On this journey she is forced to peel away the constructs she has built up around her over many years to protect herself emotionally. The deconstructing of the car to open up the theatre became a beautiful metaphor for the deconstructing and opening up of Tash’s emotional world.

Q: In Which Way Home there is quite a large plot twist as we discover at the end of the piece that Tash’s dad is actually deceased and she is taking his ashes home to country. What challenges did this create in the direction of the piece? How did you solve these?
A: This was challenging but what we discovered in the final draft, and then on the floor in rehearsal, was the golden rule: as the father was not actually there throughout the present-day journey in the car, he couldn’t actually do anything physically that would break this illusion - i.e. he couldn’t open a car door. We broke this rule when he eats the lollies but this is resolved later when she takes the lolly wrappers out of her pocket. To be honest, I’m not sure we got this quite right as some feedback was that not everyone realised that he was not there the whole time. So we will continue to work on this when we get into the rehearsal room next.
Q: A director’s vision can often make or break a work. What do you think are the most important things to consider when staging a new work?
A: The first most important thing is not to lose sight of the writer’s intention. I always see myself as facilitating between designers to best support the writer’s intention. How best to communicate this message to the audience in a way that is clear, but not didactic, beautiful but not clichéd, artful but not obscure. I would call myself a collaborative director. I believe adamantly that the sum is greater than its parts and that together we will create magic far beyond what I could have imagined on my own. Obviously, I come in with a strong understanding of how to direct a work and am confident in my intuition but after that, I love not knowing what we will discover.

Q: What would you identify as being the most important themes and elements of WHICH WAY HOME and how have they influenced your directorial choices?
A: Katie was very clear from the start that she wanted to write a play that honored her father who, in contrast to all the stereotyping he faced, was a great dad! He was loving, caring, responsible and so many more great qualities we hope for in a parent. That message was the basis of the main themes of the work which are:

1/. DEBUNKING NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES OF ABORIGINAL FATHERS
As it turned out this theme was very poignant as almost the same week we premiered the hugely controversial Bill Leak comic strip about Aboriginal fathers came out. This was hugely offensive to Aboriginal people and yet there were many who strongly defended Bill Leake’s right to freedom of speech (covering thinly veiled attitudes that conferred with the article). Directorially, it was critical that the character of the father was played with absolute integrity and truth. It was important he be three dimensional - by no means perfect but ultimately a beautiful and loving father. Actor Tony Briggs was absolutely brilliant in this role. Not surprisingly he is the father of 3 beautiful kids in real life. Playing the role in our national tour in 2018 is actor Kamahi Jordan-King who has a similarly warm, loving and strong personality, and though different of course is just perfect for the role.

2/. FORGIVENESS and LETTING GO
TASH is not the same person at the end of the journey as she was at the start. She begins having things ordered, on time, and controlled. But this rigid world view is not working for her though she doesn’t know it yet. Throughout her journey she will learn to “loosen up” and forgive her father as she comes to understand how things were for him. Ultimately she will reach a peaceful place of being able to let him go.

Directorially, the metaphor of stripping off the layers became quite literal as TASH slowly pulls off layers of clothes, but also the car starts to break apart slowly spreading wider and wider apart till there is nothing just wide open ‘country’.

3/. COUNTRY
It’s critical to TASH’s journey that it ends with her standing on ‘her country’, the country where her mob lived since time began. It’s important she takes off her shoes and feels the ground with her bare feet, smells the air, feels the breeze on her skin. As Indigenous people, the very core of our identity is inextricably intertwined with the place we come from and belong to, and are responsible for.

Directorially, the decision to not have a car or a landscape behind was very intentional, this allowed the stage to be transformed over the duration of the play. The set’s central item is a 2-3 meter wide backdrop of a map in oranges and brown hues. If you look close you realise it is actually the map they are travelling, but it has become abstracted and if you look close you can see the layering of mapping - white man’s mapping over ancient black man’s country, country that didn’t need maps! Country that already had names, and stories, and knowledge.

I was also very keen that by the end of the play everything has been pushed off to the sides and all we are left with is the country that is her home, that is both familiar and unfamiliar to her.
A BRIEF HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA’S FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES AND EUROPEAN COLONISATION

Pre-colonisation – Before 1788, First Nations peoples lived in what we now know as Australia. It is believed that there were over 500 First Nations living at this time with their own languages, customs and cultural practices in well-established societies. First Nations peoples were in good health, free of disease, and living active lifestyles. Their lives and their relationship to the land were dictated by laws passed down generation to generation by each First Nation’s spiritual leaders and ancestors.

http://australianmuseum.net.au/indigenous-australia-timeline-pre-contact

Contact and Colonisation – From 1788 onwards, the arrival of the English First Fleet in 1788 was the beginning of colonisation of Australia’s First Peoples. With the arrival of white settlers to this part of the world came the destruction to the systems of living of First Peoples. The English did not understand or respect the cultural ways of First Nations peoples, how we lived and our connections to the land. They looked upon the land from their perspective, culture and beliefs, viewing land ownership as based on legal boundaries, fences, property rights and agriculture. The English declared the land terra nullius, a Latin expression meaning “land belonging to no one” and they believed this gave them the right to take the land for their own, which they did by force.


The English did not enter into negotiations with First Nations peoples about the use of the land. There has never been an agreement or treaty made between Australia’s new settlers and First Peoples. The result of colonisation was that Australia’s First Nations peoples were dispossessed of their land. European titles and boundaries were established and permanent physical land dwellings were erected. This taking of land dismissed the existing traditional land rights of First Peoples which were marked by the knowledge system of natural geographical boundaries passed down through our ancestors.

http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/aboriginal-history-timeline-1770-1899
http://australianmuseum.net.au/indigenous-australia-timeline-1500-to-1900

The movement to clear the land to make way for white settlers resulted in the massacre of thousands of First Nations peoples over years. Those who survived were violently removed from their traditional countries and forced to live in areas set aside by the governments. These areas were identified as reserves and church missions. There are documented accounts of the treatment of the First Nations peoples on these reserves and missions that reveal a life of hardship and punishment. There was a belief that First Peoples would die out in these missions: they were punished harshly for speaking their languages and practicing their beliefs. The Australian Government developed many policies to legalise the systematic oppression of First Nation’s peoples, including the Aboriginal Protection Act, the White Australia Policy and the Assimilation Policy. Many now refer to this system as a cultural genocide.

http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/aboriginal-history-timeline-1900-1969
Thankfully, this attempted genocide was not successful and First Nations peoples showed tremendous resilience in the face of this system of oppression. Over time, many people have joined in the effort and have taken action in fighting for First Nations rights. To this day, Australia’s traumatic and dark history continues to effect First Nations peoples. Despite the ongoing disadvantages and oppression, First Nations peoples have always strived for self-healing through preservation of culture, language, land rights, the arts, sports, health and political movements. Today, what we continue to strive for is a Treaty over our lands and the right to govern our affairs according to our ways.


Historically Australia’s First Nation’s people adhered to a complex system of protocols and practices when visiting and travelling through each other’s countries. These protocols were based on mutual respect and maintaining harmonious relationships with Country. The introduction of European Colonisation completely disregarded these practices and forced First Nation’s peoples from many different regions to live together on missions with no thought to whose land they were living on. This caused extreme discontent for First Nations peoples who despite their own traditional lores being completely ignored, were not allowed to leave or travel from the missions without a “pass” granted from their Mission Manager. If they did not adhere to this law and the many other demeaning requirements dictated by The Aboriginal Protection Act they would be jailed without trial.

Compare these 2 maps of Australia – what differences and similarities can you see?
http://www.travel-australia-online.com/political-map-of-australia.html
http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/map/

- Compare this map to a modern map of Europe.
- Ask the students the following questions:
  - What countries have you visited?
  - What rules/protocols did you need to follow to travel there?
  - Did you need special permissions or documentation to be able to travel?
  - Ask students to discuss how they think national boundaries were recognised in First Nations Australia.
SUGGESTED PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES
YEARS 9 AND 10: PRE PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

Theatre etiquette
OBJECTIVES:
• To develop an understanding of good theatre and audience etiquette.
• To develop an understanding of the relationship between performers and their audience.
• To maximise the theatre experience for audience members.

DISCUSSION POINT:
Theatre is an ancient art form. It has been around for thousands of years. It long precedes the Internet, television and radio. Theatre shows are exciting because the action is live in front of your eyes. Performers love a live audience because they can hear and see you, feel the energy of their audience, and gage people’s reactions. In this way, the audience has a direct influence on the performers and the pace and vibe of the performance.

CRITICAL THINKING: What is theatre?
This may seem like strange questions but for those who have not been to the theatre before:
• What is live theatre?
• What are some of the conventions of a theatre performance? (Story, characters, costumes, props, staging/lighting queues, stage manager, etc.)
• What types of theatre performances have you most enjoyed?
• What is the difference between theatre and film, television or books?
• What are the roles of director, designer, dramaturg, actor, stage manager?

THEATRE DOS A ND DON'TS
• Get students to share their own theatre experiences and asking some questions:
  o What show did you see?
  o Where did you see it?
  o What was the show about?
  o Was it an amateur or professional production?
  o What kind of impression did it leave on you?
• In small groups, get students to create a list of behaviors they think would be acceptable and not acceptable for a live theatre performance.
• Come back together as a whole group and share the lists.
• In small groups, get students to compare this list with what may or may not be appropriate in other performance contexts. For example, what is acceptable and unacceptable in a rock concert compared to going to a tennis match compared to a live theatre show.
First Nations Fathers

On the 4th of August, 2016, which is National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Day in Australia, The Australian published this Bill Leak cartoon depicting some stereotypical generalisations about First Nations families. Bill Leak was widely criticised for this racist depiction of First Nations fathers.

Use these links to answer the questions below:


https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/aug/05/bill-leak-defends-racist-cartoon-amid-widespread-criticism

- There are a number of negative stereotypes depicted in this cartoon – what are they?
- What concerns do you think First Nations people and leaders had with this cartoon?
- On what grounds did Bill Leak defend his cartoon?
- Stage a classroom debate arguing “for and against” the validity of this cartoon. (Remember to be safe, respectful and base your arguments on logic.)

In response to the cartoon, the First Nations community created the #IndigenousDadsCampaign to provide testimony to their amazing fathers. Check out the campaign at the links below:


WHICH WAY HOME is essentially a love letter from Katie Beckett to her dad.

- Write a love letter to someone you love in your life (it can be your dad, mum or anyone who raised you). Here’s some prompts for writing the letter:
  - What would you thank them for?
  - What are your favourite memories with them?
  - Is there anything you wish they or you had done differently?
  - Are there any things you would like to say to them?

- Learn more about National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Day
  - Google National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Day
  - What is the significance of this day?
  - Are there any special activities that happen on this day?
  - How can you commemorate this day at your school?

Media representation
Just as the Bill Leak controversy was occurring, WHICH WAY HOME was preparing to have its premiere season at the Northcote Town Hall in Melbourne, ILBJERRI Theatre Company was delighted to be able to present Katie Beckett’s brand new work to the conversation about such negative stereotyping and offer up a completely opposite – and positive- depiction of First Nations fathers and families. This is a perfect demonstration of the power of art in creating social change and reflecting human experiences in rich and empowering ways.

“Which Way Home was developed over many years with writer Katie Beckett. The premiere season could not have been more timely, opening just as the country was reeling from an infamous racist cartoon published in The Australian that perpetuated the negative stereotyping of Aboriginal men as dysfunctional fathers and bad role models. A stereotype that our men have too long had to contend with. This production is the perfect antidote. Which Way Home depicts an Aboriginal man who is loving, caring, funny and ultimately a very good father. This is a universal human story that transcends race, time and place. Almost everyone can relate to having a father or a child.”

Rachael Maza, Director Which Way Home & Artistic Director of ILBJERRI Theatre Company

“The play was written before the recent controversy over Bill Leak’s appallingly racist cartoon in The Australian depicting Indigenous fathers as neglectful drunkards. But it acts as a rebuttal to Leak’s cartoon, showing a wonderful Indigenous father who has proven to be resilient, smart, loving and supportive.”

Ben Neutze, Daily Review (14 January 2017)

Consider: First Nations people are under-represented in the mainstream media and are often portrayed in negative ways. There is a lack of positive stories about First Nations people in the media and there are very few First Nations people (and faces) on TV. Most people generally think of football players and other athletes but there are many great First Nations actors, singers, musicians, writers, teachers, lawyers, doctors, nurses, builders, designers, academics and professionals across all sectors whose lives and achievements are worthy of being represented in our media and on our televisions.

This has led to First Nations peoples creating our own media outlets in order to promote our own role models and tell our own stories.
Activity:
- As a class, make a list of Australian First Nations TV shows, plays, books, singers, performers and sports stars.
- Could you think of many?
- What category do most of them come under?
- Now Google “Australia’s First Nations” (you may have to use the terms Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) TV shows, plays, books, singers, musicians, performers and sports stars. What did you find?
- Are there many that you haven’t heard of before?
- Why do you think First Nations peoples are so under-represented in the media?

Read: Check out this article online about First Nations issues in the media.
http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/politics/media-coverage-of-aboriginal-issues

Activity:
- Check out the following links to First Nations media sources.
- What kind of stories do you see?
- How do they compare to mainstream media sources?
http://www.koorimail.com
http://www.nit.com.au

FAIR OR BIASED?
Consider: Often when we refer to an account of something, we talk about whether it is objective or subjective. When something is objective, it is considered to be an “observation of measurable facts”. Subjective accounts may consist of personal opinions, assumptions, interpretations and beliefs. Subjectivity and objectivity depends on the perspective of the focus. Clearly a cartoon is subjective however when featured in a mainstream newspaper like the Australian it still has a huge impact on the personal opinions of the readers who then incorporate this into their own belief systems as being fact.

Activity: Individually divide the following list into categories of “subjective” and “objective”. Then, as a group, compare your lists and discuss the reasons behind your choices:

- Encyclopedias
- Comments on the Internet
- Television news reports
- Editorials
- A celebrity article in a magazine.
- Blogs
- Biographies
- Autobiographies
- Textbooks
- Newspapers
- Gossip your best friend tells you

Now rank them in order, with most objective at one end of the scale and most subjective at the other.

Question: How many people put news reports/newspapers in the objective category?
Generally, we rely on news sources such as newspapers to provide an objective account of events, reporting on the facts as they happened. However, there are people who legitimately argue that news can be subjective, and newspapers have a point of view depending on the owner and/or corporation that owns it; using their media outlets to project the views and interests of an owner and/or corporation. Often sensationalising their content by using subjective language (emotive and descriptive words to describe objective events) and reporting a story from a particular point of view. This is called ‘media bias’. (For example the Murdoch Corporation owns a large percentage of Australia’s news outlets and this is very apparent in their representation of World events.)

Read these articles about the role and influence of mainstream media on public opinion.
http://www.cliffsnotes.com/sciences/sociology/contemporary-mass-media/the-role-and-influence-of-mass-media

Discuss: There have also been studies that show there are people who only want to hear news reports that reinforce their own personal views, that people choose news sources because they fit into their world view. In doing this, they disregard new sources that challenge their perspective and actively criticize them. This is called ‘culturalist theory’.

Read the article below to learn about the different types of media bias.
http://www.studentnewsdaily.com/types-of-media-bias

Activity/Homework:
- Watch an ABC news and commercial channel news on the same day.
  - Make a list of the different reports included in each.
  - What similarities and differences can you see?
  - Did you notice any examples of media bias?
  - Were some reports included in one news source and not the other?
- Choose one report that was included in both.
  - What are the similarities and differences in the reports?
  - Consider language, point of view and subjectivity/objectivity.

Activity/Homework:
Look at two different newspapers such as the Herald Sun and The Age.
- What kind of headlines do they use?
- Does the language used suggest an objective or subjective perspective?
- Read the article that goes with the headline - do you feel that the headline is appropriate for the article?
- How do the articles make you feel?
- What do you think is the purpose of emotive headlines?
- Can you see any major differences in the “style” of each newspaper?
Definition of Stereotypes

“A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.”

“A stereotype is a generalised statement or belief applied to everyone in a group, as though the entire group is the same. Any belief or characteristic, applied to an entire group, immediately makes it invalid because no characteristics are held by everyone in the group.”

Peoples views and values are generally influenced by their environment including family and friends, education level, socioeconomic status, media sources and one’s own experiences. Often these sources are not based in fact and can lead to problematic stereotypes. Stereotyping is actually a subconscious process where the brain uses stereotypes to create shortcuts for itself to explain why things may be a certain way, and many people don’t realise they are susceptible to making these assumptions. We are all capable of forming stereotypes and unfortunately, as a general rule, minority groups are labelled as a whole rather than as individuals.

Activity:
- Brainstorm a list of stereotypes
  - Who are these stereotypes about?
  - Where do you think these stereotypes come from?
  - Are these stereotypes negative or positive?
  - What impact do you think these stereotypes have on people?
  - Where do you think your personal perceptions come from?
  - Have you ever been stereotyped against? How did it make you feel?

Check out these links for examples of stereotypes.
https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CvJB5SvWAAA3BRW.jpg

http://examples.yourdictionary.com/stereotype-examples.html
**Australian First Nation Stereotypes**

Due to the extremely problematic history of Australia and a general lack of information and education provided to mainstream society about this history, there are a lot of misconceptions and misunderstandings about Australia’s first peoples. This leads to strong misrepresentation in the mainstream media and to what is called ‘racial profiling’ of First Nations peoples. Common stereotypes and discrimination are often part of how First Nations people are treated in Australia, and how we create policies and systems of treating First Nations peoples. While there can be some truth in any stereotype, it becomes highly problematic when there is no understanding about what leads to these stereotypes in the first place and when stereotypes are applied to only certain groups of people.

It is also unfair when we believe something to be true of a group of people but have no understanding of where the stereotype comes from or the reasons why such a stereotype may exist. In Australia, for example, First Nations peoples continue to grapple with the impacts of transgenerational trauma caused by colonisation and the Stolen Generations, as well as systemic racism which leads to an overall lack of education and employment opportunities.

**It is very hard to summarise the cause and effects of these complex factors but it is important to consider:**

- Colonisation led to the systematic destruction of First Nations cultural and social systems which were high functioning before the arrival of white settlers in Australia.
- First Nations peoples were forced to give up their own traditional social systems and fit into a system that did not accept or support them, but rather disdained them.
- Violence and abuse inflicted during colonisation and beyond by settlers and missionaries leading to these destructive cycles being acted out on others.
- Generations of First Nations children being removed from their families and essentially becoming forced orphans has given them no positive role modeling of how to be a parent which is then reenacted on to each following generation.
- Low levels of education and high levels of discrimination have led to high unemployment rates of First Nations peoples.
- The introduction of alcohol and drugs into traumatised First Nations communities have led to high levels of violence and crime. (A note here that drugs and alcohol have negatively impacted every community in which they have proliferated so it is unfair to single out First Nations people this way.)

**Think about your own personal attitudes and perceptions of First Nations Peoples.**

- What are your views and values and where do you think they come from?
- Do you know any First Nations peoples personally?
- What have you seen or heard about First Nations peoples?
- Do you think your views and perceptions are based on fact or opinion?
- How do you think your personal views and values affected the way you felt about WHICH WAY HOME and about seeing First Nations theatre?
- Do you think your views and values have shifted since watching the performance? If not, what do you think it would take to shift your perception?
- Do you think your views about First Nations peoples are fair and accurate?
**Definition of Transgenerational Trauma**

“Transgenerational trauma is trauma that is transferred from the first generation of trauma survivors to the second and further generations of offspring of the survivors via complex post-traumatic stress disorder mechanisms.”

Transgenerational trauma - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (Wikipedia, 2015)

**Consider:** The terms *transgenerational or intergenerational trauma* are used to describe a cycle of dysfunction. Transgenerational trauma due to forced disconnection from land, culture, story and language - is one of many factors that lead to First Nations peoples engaging in a range of destructive and antisocial behaviors. Australia’s First Nations communities and families are often reported as having high levels of violence, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol addiction, unemployment, incarceration rates and suicide. Sometimes this is the only thing that Australia’s wider society understands about First Nations peoples, not understanding the historical circumstances that have led to these conditions. Recently, there has been a lot of research into the effects of transgenerational trauma when there is no counseling, professional support, or formal acknowledgement of the reasons for the trauma. And the reality is this trauma has been passed from one generation to the next and to the one after that. What further complicates this is each generation faces new traumas even as they continue to cope with inherited trauma. This ongoing trauma can express itself in destructive ways and without proper supports in place, overcoming transgenerational trauma can be exceptionally challenging.

**Consider:** Inter-generational trauma can manifest itself in many different ways. To this day First Nation’s families live in fear of having their children removed by the Government, causing parents to become extremely over-protective of their children and cautious of how they are perceived as parents.

**Question:** What example of this can be seen in WHICH WAY HOME?
**First Nations Diversity & the Myths of the Stereotypes**

WHICH WAY HOME is a wonderful example of the diverse and positive lived experiences of Australia’s First Nations People. In the same way that not all non-Indigenous Australians are the same, Australian First Nations peoples make up a diversity of nations, languages, cultures, stories, and perspectives. We are not all the same. We look, think, feel and act individually, and we have complex and diverse character traits. It is unfortunate that First Nations peoples are broadly stereotyped. First Nations peoples are labelled and then treated according to negative stereotypes. And this is compounded when individual First Nations people don’t fit those stereotypes. One example: “Aboriginal people only live in rural places” so if we live in a city, we are not real First Nations people. Another example, “you all have dark skin” so if we have light skin, we are not real First Nations people. In reality, most of us have both positive and negative traits and most of us live with both traditional and contemporary elements in our lives. We are all coping with varying levels of trauma and opportunity, and we all make decisions and choices to the best of our abilities.

**Consider:**
The stereotypes First Nation’s peoples face can generally be classified into four categories:
- Traditional/real (lives in the bush, plays digeridoo, hunts etc)
- Contemporary/Urban/not real (Speaks English, lives in the city etc)
- Positive (spiritual, lives off the land etc)
- Negative (criminals, lazy etc)

**Activity:** In small groups brainstorm as many words/concepts as you can for each category.
- Which categories were you able to come up with the most ideas for?
- Do you consider one of the categories to be more “real” or better than the other?
- Where did your perceptions about Australia’s First Nations Peoples come from?
- What does this say about your collective perception of First Nations Peoples?

Read this article about a recent case of discrimination against a QLD First Nations woman (and check out the animation about racial discrimination while you’re there)

When a group of people are stereotyped or racially discriminated against on a continuous basis, this can lead to a range of issues including depression, aggression, self-hatred and hate towards society.

**Watch these 2 clips and discuss:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Bnflp4KVXc
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_AbjhXvOcl
VCE THEATRE STUDIES UNIT 3 – OUTCOME 3: PRE PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES
ANALYSE AND EVALUATE THE INTERPRETATION OF A PLAYSCRIPT IN PRODUCTION TO AN AUDIENCE

The next section of the resource is dedicated to unpacking the production conventions, elements and stagecraft used in the interpretation of the WHICH WAY HOME playscript to production. Remember these questions are designed only as a guide to prompt discussion, you as an audience member will take away your own interpretations and may choose to focus on different features of the performance for your SAC assessment task.

Key Knowledge
• the contexts of the interpretation of a playscript
• decisions taken that were evident in the production to interpret the playscript for performance
• the application of acting and other stagecraft to develop the playscript for performance
• theatrical styles in the playscript and in the play in performance
• terminology and expressions used to describe, analyse and evaluate a theatrical production

Key Skills
• analyse ways in which the contexts of a playscript were interpreted through performance to an audience
• evaluate the interpretation of the playscript for performance
• analyse and evaluate the application of acting and other stagecraft to develop the playscript for performance
• discuss similarities and differences of theatrical styles between the playscript and the play in performance
• use appropriate theatrical terminology and expressions
Playscript Interpretations

Contexts (time/place/cultural)

- Where is the play set? What specific information is given to establish this?
- What are the micro/macro contexts of the world?
- How do you think these settings might be created in the production? Think about set, lighting, sound, AV.
- As well as the main setting of the play, there are a number of jumps into other time and place settings throughout the script. Where do these happen (which scenes) and what information in the dialogue and stage directions indicate this?
- What production elements do you think might be used to establish these context changes?
- What writing devices are used to achieve this?
- What performance devices might be used to demonstrate this?
- What information is given in the playscript to establish the cultural context of the play?
- Scene nine gives strong indication of this societal/cultural context – what lines demonstrate this and how do you think this scene shifts the mood of the work?
- What other important information is given in scene nine that helps us understand the characters?
- The most specific stage directions in the script relate to the songs used in the play – listen to these songs – how do they contribute to the context/mood of the play?
- At the bottom of page 21 the stage directions “SX Sand, Laundry, Humming” are given - What do you think these are indication of in the production?
- Scenes 11 and 12 are significant shifts in the mood - how do you think these scenes may be interpreted on the stage to highlight the tension of these moments?
- There are a number of natural elements in the play (stars, birds, ocean) - how do you think these might be created in the work?
- In the final scene, we discover that Tash has been travelling with her father’s ashes in a box that she is taking home to scatter on country. What devices do you think may be used to create this huge shift in the reality of the play?

Scene:
TASH laughs to self at memory. DAD enters memory

DAD Where have you been?
TASH I told you.
DAD Who were you with?
TASH The kids around here.
DAD Has anyone seen you?
TASH What? / Why?
DAD Take a look at yourself. Go and shower now!
TASH I didn't do anything, just play with the other kids.
DAD Last chance. Go.
TASH Why?
DAD Those kids are different.
TASH How?
DAD People look at our people differently. Last thing I need is people saying we are dirty. You want to be taken off me?

TASH shakes her head.

DAD Well do you?
TASH I said NO! I wish mum was here.
DAD Get into the shower!
Characters and Performance

- Who are the main characters?
- How old do you think they are? Is there any specific indication of this in the script?
- Do their ages change throughout the script? How do you know this? How do you think the actors might use expressive skills to demonstrate these shifts?
- What clues does the script provide to the appearance of the characters? Give examples.
- What clues does the script provide to the personality of the characters?
- What is the relationship of the two characters and how might this inform the casting choices made by the director?
- Considering the contexts of the script what do you think the costume choices to portray these characters might be?
- How do you think the performers will utilise the actor/audience relationship through the play?

Theatrical style

- Which Way Home is marketed as a *Dramatic Comedy*. Give examples of dialogue that support this.
- How do you think this style will inform the acting choices made by the performers?
- How do you think the interpretation of the production can enhance the style of the piece?
Creative Task:

- Break out into small groups of three.
- Use the excerpt below (or one of your own choice) to rehearse and act out.
- Write up a mini theatrical treatment that details your vision for the piece including elements of stage craft and theatrical devices (lighting, sound, set).
- Delegate roles of director and performers to act out the piece incorporating blocking, expressive skills and actor/audience relationship.

Note: Remember the style of the piece is dramatic comedy so ensure that this inform the choices you make.

SCENE 5: FLASHBACK

TASH
Not in them shorts. They’re shame.

DAD
Look at these lubly legs.

TASH
Yuck.

DAD
Yeah, I lub these shorts. Them women’s, they’ll be chasing me along the beach. They got this little split here so all the women’s can check me out.

TASH
Dugin. You are as black as the night! And they are fluoro ORANGE!

DAD
I’ll get you a new mum wearing these.

TASH, now angry, walks off.

DAD
Baby!

TASH
I’m not a baby. I’m 12!

DAD
You’re my baby til you’re 90.

DAD
Baby, Where are you going?

TASH
Away.

DAD
Tash! Tash! TASH! We’re freshwater people. Not salt-water people. Be careful. The water’s different. There’s waves. Don’t go in past ya waist. Don’t piss in the water. There’s sharks. They can taste ya piss from 2km away. Did you put on enough sunscreen?

TASH
Yesss! Dad!!

DAD
Make sure your togs are tied up properly. And stay away from those boys. They’re no good!

TASH
YES! DAD! OK!

DAD
OK! I’m just here! I’m not going anywhere! I’m just here ok! Can you see me!

Are you hungry?

TASH
Sink into the water. Ahhh. Peace and quiet, at last.

I can feel warm sun through the layers of water. Sea lice bite my skin, seaweed tangles around my feet.

Then the water becomes disturbed. Everything’s moving really fast. I can’t see properly.

Oh God, help! Help! Help! HELP!!!!!

DAD has pulled her out of the water.

DAD
Breathe! Breathe!

I thought you’d died Tash.

TASH
Dad... It’s knee-deep water!

DAD
Tash... You were under there for a really long time

TASH
It was like 5 seconds. Fuck!

DAD
F stands for family. Tash.

TASH
F stands for fu....

DAD
Baby!

BACK TO THE PRESENT DAY

They have come to a turn off - one way is to Warwick the other way to Toowoomba.
YEAR 9 AND 10 - POST PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

Literacy and Critical Thinking – Responses to the Production

Now that you have seen the production what are your thoughts and feelings about it?
The following questions are posed to get you thinking about its form, its content and its ideas.

- In pairs tell each other the story of WHICH WAY HOME – what happened?
- Where was it set and how do you know; what indicated that setting?
- What costumes did the character’s wear?
- Did the costumes make sense in the world of the play?
- What other costumes could have been worn?
- How did the performers use their expressive skills – voice, gesture, movement, facial expression – to create their characters?
- What is one idea explored in the play that you found compelling?
- What was the play ‘saying’?
- What do you think happened afterwards to these characters?
- If you could change anything in the play what would you change?

Personal and Social Learning

WHICH WAY HOME offers insight into cultural identity as well as debunking myths, stereotypes about First Nations peoples generally, and fathers especially.

- How might a person’s cultural background or identity impact living in Australia? (ie, how might differing values and beliefs, parental expectations, roles with a family be viewed by Australian society)?
- How would you describe your own cultural identity? Were you born in Australia? If not, how did your family come to be here?
- If you were, what do you know about your family’s origins? What country did they come from? How long ago?

Literacy: Reviewing WHICH WAY HOME

Writing about the performance of WHICH WAY HOME will help to develop your understanding of theatre. Here are some prompt questions for writing a review:

- Begin with the name of the play, the company and the director
- Write a brief summary of the story
- What was the performance style/s? Was it clear?
- Who were the main performers? How skilful were they in playing their roles?
- Did any performers stand out as being particularly/talented?
- What effect did the play have on you? Was it worth seeing? Was it compelling, complex, overwhelming, vague, invigorating, enjoyable, dark, predictable, abstract, humorous? What other words could you use?
- What were the technical elements – set, costume, makeup, hair, properties, lighting, sound, staging? Were they effective?
First Nations Theatre

OBJECTIVES:
- To give context to the history of the development of First Nations theatre in Australia.
- To show how the arts and theatre can be an important mode of cultural maintenance.
- To demonstrate how the arts and theatre can be used to incite discussion and promote awareness of key topics.

DISCUSSION POINT:
In 1972 Uncle Jack Charles worked with Bob Maza to establish the first, First Nations theatre company entitled Nindethana in Melbourne. From there, First Nations theatre has grown and is now presented all over Australia and the world. First Nations stories are recognised as important within our whole Australian story and history. There are many theatre companies and arts companies across Australia that are working to get First Nations stories told through the Arts.

AUSTRALIA’S FIRST NATIONS PERFORMING ARTS COMPANIES:
- Moogahlin Theatre Company website http://www.moogahlin.org/

Activity:
In small groups, use the links above to learn about one of the First Nations arts companies here in Australia. View each of them, and then choose one company to focus on to answer the following questions then share your findings with the class.
- What is their art form?
- What traditional and contemporary elements can you see in their work?
- What “issues” or perspectives do they address in their work?
- Where are they based?
- Where do they present their work?
- What awards has the company won?
- Do First Nations people lead the company in its vision and management?
- What is the history of the company?
- Are there opportunities for community to get involved?

Now, in small group, choose a local or national arts company and answer the same questions.
- What is their art form?
- What traditional and contemporary elements can you see in their work?
- What “issues” or perspectives do they address in their work?
- Where are they based?
- Where do they present their work?
- What awards has the company won?
- Do First Nations people lead the company in its vision and management?
- What is the history of the company?
- Are there opportunities for community to get involved?
VCE TheATre StudIes Unit 3 – OutcOme 3: Post PeRformAnce ActIvIties

Contexts (time/place/culture)

- How are stagecraft and performance skills used to achieve time and world shifts in the production? How do these vary to your own predictions/interpretations?
- How are the areas of the stage divided to create the different worlds in the production?
- Choose a specific moment to describe how lighting, sound, blocking, dialogue and performance are used to create the specific context - i.e. Tash’s moment under the water? Was this different/similar to your expectations of how this would be created?
- What impact do these moments have on the rhythm and mood (the style) of the piece?
- One of the most significant and arguably unexpected set pieces is the “waterfall of sand” - what other moments does this element illustrate in the work and what specifically does it represent in these moments? What do you think it metaphorically represents?
- How is the car built on stage? What other functions do the packing boxes serve?
- What other sets/props create the idea of a road trip?
- How are the contexts of time and culture demonstrated or achieved in the production? How do they compare to your predictions/interpretations?
Characters and Performance

- What performance devices are used to create the world of the car (think specifically about focus)?
- Do you think the actors’ performances and use of expressive skills are effective in communicating who the characters are- i.e. personality, age, class etc.?
- Do you think their costumes were effective - would you change anything?
- Do you think one actor’s performance was stronger than another? Tell us why.
- Do you believe the relationship between the two performers was believable as father and daughter? Tell us why.
- How did the actors engage and interact with the various areas of stagecraft in the production? Was this effective? Could it have been done differently?
- How do the actors’ relationship with the audience vary and what impact does this have?
- Did one performer have a more effective actor/audience relationship then the other? Explain.
- How do the actors use of performance skills vary in the memory and present-day moments? Is this effective? How do these vary from your interpretation of these segments based on the playscript?
- In scene 19, Tash loses control of the car momentarily – how was this demonstrated in the production and was it how you expected? Do you think it was effective?
- In the opening scene, Tash studies a brown box which we later discover holds her dad’s ashes – do you think Tash’s relationship to the box effectively communicates its significance to the audience?
- Do you think one actor contributed more to the drama/comedy then the other? Explain.

Theatrical Style

- Now that you have seen the production do you agree that the work is a dramatic comedy?
- What role does stage craft play in creating drama/comedy in the piece?
- What would you describe as the dramatic and comedic highlights of the script versus the production?
- Do you believe the production enhanced or impeded the theatrical style of the piece? Explain.
FURTHER READING

- History of Black Theatre Podcast
- A Brief History of First Nations Australian Contemporary Theatre
- MORE AUSTRALIAN FIRST NATIONS PLAYS https://australianplays.org/blakstage

Contact the Arts & Education team at education@rav.net.au with further questions or, even better, examples of your work!