

# The Role of the National Capital Authority

The National Capital (Planning) Authority was established by the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1989, the same year the Australian Capital Territory was established as a self-governing and separate legal entity.

The purpose of the National Capital Authority is to manage the Commonwealth Government's continuing interest in the planning and development of Canberra as Australia's National Capital:

*...the Commonwealth has a clear interest in and responsibility for the National Capital. This interest extends not only to the development and functioning of the National Capital aspects of Canberra but also to the role which the National Capital can play as a source of national identity and pride in developing understanding of the Australian political system.*

Steering Committee Report of the Review of the Functions and Resourcing of the National Capital Planning Authority (1995)

The Authority is charged with the further design and development of significant national areas such as Lake Burley Griffin, Commonwealth Place, Reconciliation Place, Commonwealth Park and Kings Park. Individuals and organisations are also engaged to design major commemorative works, such as memorials, that reflect significant moments in Australia's history. Complementing this function, the Authority raises awareness of Canberra as the National Capital. This promotion enhances the character of the National Capital and creates many new and diverse opportunities for Australians to appreciate their capital.

## Our Vision

- a National Capital which symbolises Australia's heritage, values and aspirations, is internationally recognised, and worthy of pride by Australians

## Our Goals

- to realise the promise of the city plan and the ideals of the founders
- to foster Canberra as the National Capital
- to develop the special character of the National Capital

## Our Mission

- to build the National Capital in the hearts of all Australians

# References and suggested Resource Material

## Websites

- National Capital Authority website - [www.nationalcapital.gov.au](http://www.nationalcapital.gov.au)

- The Story of our Nation's Capital - A Resource for Primary Teachers - [www.education.nationalcapital.gov.au](http://www.education.nationalcapital.gov.au)
- The Ideal City website - [www.idealcity.org.au](http://www.idealcity.org.au)
- National Library of Australia website - [www.nla.gov.au](http://www.nla.gov.au)
- National Archives of Australia website - [www.naa.gov.au](http://www.naa.gov.au)
- Parliamentary Education Office website - [www.peo.gov.au](http://www.peo.gov.au)
- Parliament of Australia website - [www.aph.gov.au](http://www.aph.gov.au)
- Old Parliament House website - [www.oph.gov.au](http://www.oph.gov.au)
- Australian Electoral Commission website - [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)
- National Museum of Australia website - [www.nma.gov.au](http://www.nma.gov.au)
- Australian War Memorial website - [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au)
- High Court of Australia website - [www.hcourt.gov.au](http://www.hcourt.gov.au)

## Fact Sheets

- National Capital Authority fact sheet - Ngunnawal Country
- National Capital Authority fact sheet - Indigenous Voices in the National Capital
- National Capital Authority fact sheet - The Early History of the ACT
- National Capital Authority fact sheet - The Siting and Naming of Canberra
- National Capital Authority fact sheet - Selecting a Site for Australia's National Capital
- National Capital Authority fact sheet - Federation and the National Capital
- National Capital Authority fact sheet - Walter Burley Griffin
- National Capital Authority fact sheet - Charles Weston and the Greening of Canberra
- National Capital Authority fact sheet - Building Canberra to 1958
- National Capital Authority fact sheet - Building Canberra from 1958-1988
- National Capital Authority fact sheet - Lake Burley Griffin
- National Capital Authority fact sheet - Scrivener Dam and the Creation of Lake Burley Griffin
- National Capital Authority fact sheet - Parliament House - A Recollection
- National Capital Authority fact sheet - Canberra, the Seat of Government
- National Capital Authority fact sheet - Diplomatic Missions

*Note: All National Capital Authority fact sheets can be found on the National Capital Authority website. [www.nationalcapital.gov.au](http://www.nationalcapital.gov.au)*

## Publications

- Beck, Hiage. *Parliament House Canberra: A Building for the Nation*, Watermark Press, 1988.
- Coltheart, Lenore and Marsden, Susan. *Charters of our Nation*, National Archives of Australia, 2001.
- Fitzgerald, Alan. *Canberra in Two Centuries*, Clareville Press, 1987.
- Gillespie, Lyall. *Canberra 1879-1913*, AGPS, 1991.
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- Headon, David and Williams, John, (eds) *Makers of Miracles: The Cast of the Federation Story* Melbourne University Press, 2000.
- Hirst, John. *The Sentimental Nation: The Making of the Australian Commonwealth*, Oxford University Press, 2000.
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- Lahey, John. *Faces of Federation: An Illustrated History*, Royal Historical Society of Victoria, 2000.
- Machen, Mary. *Pictorial History of Canberra*, Kingsclear Books, 2000.
- Matthews, Brian. *Federation*, Text Publishing, 1999.
- Metcalf, Andrew. *Canberra Architecture*, The Watermark Press, 2003.
- Overall, John. *Canberra: Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow*, Federal Capital Press, 1995.
- Pegrum, Roger. *The Bush Capital: How Australia Chose Canberra as its Federal City*, Hale & Iremonger, 1983.
- Reid, Paul. *Canberra following Griffin: A Design History of Australia's National Capital*, National Archives of Australia, 2002.
- Reps, John W. *Canberra 1912: Plans and Planners of the Australian Capital Competition*, Melbourne University Press, 1997.
- Taylor, John. Ed. Lengelle, Jean G. and Andrew, Caroline (eds). *Capital Cities Les Capitales*, Carleton University Press, 1993.
- Vernon, Christopher. *A Vision Splendid: How the Griffins Imagined Australia's Capital*, National Archives of Australia, 2002.
- Watson, Anne. (ed) *Beyond Architecture: Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin*, Powerhouse Publishing, 1988.

### National Capital Authority Publications

- National Capital Authority. *Parliamentary Zone Review - Outcomes*, Australian Government, 2000.
- National Capital Authority. *Guidelines for Commemorative Works in the National Capital*, Australian Government, 2002.
- Headon, David. *The Symbolic Role of the National Capital*, Australian Government, 2003.
- National Capital Authority. *The Griffin Legacy: Canberra the Nation's Capital in the 21st Century*, Australian Government, 2004.
- National Capital Planning Authority. *Looking to the Future: Australia's National Capital*, Australian Government, 1994.

## Units Themes

The kit is divided into four **themed units** and provides an exciting journey of investigation for students. It starts at a time before Canberra existed and works through to contemporary Canberra and the role it plays as our National Capital.

### *1. The Human Landscape*

The Human Landscape dispels the myth that Canberra is a 'new' place, a place without history. This unit explores the Canberra region before it was selected as the site for the National Capital. It also covers topics based on the early Aboriginal and European inhabitants of the area.

### *2. Creation of a Nation*

Federation was not a foregone conclusion. Debate raged for many years as practical considerations and political idealism proved difficult to reconcile. Finally, in January 1901, the Australian colonies united to become a nation. This was an obvious turning point in the history of Canberra as it led to the creation of a National Capital.

This unit highlights the struggle for nationhood and the events that occurred at that time.

### ***3. The Ideal City***

The newly created Commonwealth Government pursued a vision to create a city that would be the finest capital in the world. In 1912 American architect Walter Burley Griffin won an international design competition to design our National Capital. This unit helps students to discover the process behind planning and building Australia's capital city, the planting of Canberra and the iconic Lake Burley Griffin.

### ***4. On Behalf of the Nation***

The National Capital is a place where Australia's elected federal representatives meet to make decisions that affect our lives, our nation and our future. This unit highlights the formal role of the National Capital for all Australians and the construction of (new) Parliament House. A detailed timeline of the Prime Ministers of Australia is also included.

## **Canberra Quick Facts**

Did you know...

- The Ngunnawal are the indigenous people of the Canberra region. The neighbouring people are the Gundungurra to the north, the Ngarigo to the south, the Yuin on the coast and the Wiradjuri inland. Indigenous people have been living here for at least 30,000 years.
- One of the reasons why the Canberra area was chosen as the site for the National Capital was that residents generally lived long and healthy lives. When the selection process commenced, at the turn of the twentieth century, both Sydney and Melbourne had outbreaks of the plague and the climate was hot and humid, and prone to fevers. Therefore, one of the criteria for the National Capital site was a bracing climate.
- In October 1908 the Seat of Government Bill passed both Houses of the Federal Parliament. On 7 December 1909 the Surrender Bill ceding the area to the Commonwealth passed both Houses of the New South Wales State Parliament. The Federal Capital Territory came into being on 1 January 1911. The name was changed to the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) in 1938.
- Harold Lasseter, famous for searching for a huge reef of gold in the Australian outback, lived in Canberra during the construction phase. He is listed in the 1928 Electoral Roll as a labourer living in a camp on Mount Pleasant. The electoral roll for 1928 was the first for the Federal Capital Territory, compiled for the first referendum - to vote to end prohibition of alcohol in Canberra.
- Sargent's Meat Pies were served at the opening of (Old) Parliament House in 1927 - about 10,000 were left over and buried near the site.
- In 1912, American architect Walter Burley Griffin won the international competition to design Australia's National Capital - until 1913 he'd never been to Australia.
- Sir Edmund Barton was the first Prime Minister of Australia (1901-1903). His statue stands in Kings Avenue on the approach to Parliament House.
- The area of the ACT is 2,356 square kilometres (910 square miles). It is approximately 85 kilometres north to south and about 35 kilometres wide.

- The Australian Capital Territory's floral emblem is the Royal Bluebell or Australian Bluebell (*Wahlenbergia gloriosa*). The Gang-Gang Cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*) is the territory's bird emblem.
- There was a competition to name the Capital. Some of the names proposed were Kangaremu, Eucalypta and Swindleville. Luckily the name 'Canberra' was chosen.
- There are many Canberra suburbs named after explorers
  - COOK - Captain James Cook 1728-1779
  - FORREST - John Forrest 1847-1918 and Alexander Forrest 1849-1901
  - HUME Hamilton Hume 1797-1873
  - MAWSON Sir Douglas Mawson 1882-1958

## Unit 1 - The Human Landscape

### Lesson plan

#### Activity - Mothy Mobile

### SETTING THE SCENE

Each year Aboriginal people gathered in the mountains close to what is now the National Capital to feast on bogong moths. During the collection of the moths, important ceremonies were held, art was painted in rock shelters and goods traded. Bogong moths were regarded as an essential food item for Aboriginal people and were a rich source of fat and protein.

Millions of bogong moths migrate to the mountains in summer to escape the extreme heat and lack of food in the lowlands. The moths shelter in crevices and caves. They were easily collected by aboriginal people with sticks and sheets of bark. Once collected, they would be roasted on a fire and eaten. Sometimes the roasted moths were ground into a paste and made into cakes to enjoy later. It is said that they taste a bit like peanut butter.

Bogong moths still make the yearly migration to parts of the Great Dividing Range and are often disturbed from their route by light emanating from Canberra city and Parliament House.

### AIM

Students research biological and historical aspects of the bogong moth and then create a moth mobile incorporating brief quotes from their findings.

### STUDENT OUTCOMES

- understand and successfully complete a set of instructions
- be aware of the existence of Aboriginal people in the Canberra region
- understand basic biological aspects of the bogong moth
- understand the value of the bogong moth for Aboriginal people

### NATIONAL CAPITAL EXHIBITION LINK

Exhibit title - Bogong Moths

Location - The Human Landscape, section 1

Exhibition title - Bush Tucker

Location - The Human Landscape, section 1

This activity relates to the bogong moth display located in section 1 (refer to map supplied in National Capital Exhibition Interpretation Guide). The bogong moth fun time activity; 'create your own bogong moth cookies' also supports this activity.

## MATERIALS

- student activity sheet n bogong moth template
- colour pencils n thin cardboard
- craft materials for decoration n scissors
- sticky tape n wooden skewers
- hole punch n string

## PROCEDURE

1. Introduce the topic by setting the scene with the class.
2. Provide opportunity for students to research the bogong moth and its relationship with the Aboriginal people of the high country and surrounding region (refer to discussion points in section 3), or;
3. Ask students to write down sections of information as you discuss the bogong moth and its relationship with the Aboriginal people of the high country and surrounding region.
  - **Discussion points could include:**
    - Why do bogong moths migrate to the mountains located close to Canberra?
    - How did Aboriginal people collect the moths?
    - What did Aboriginal people do with the moths?
    - Were there any ceremonies associated with the collection of the moths?
    - Do Aboriginal people still collect the moths today?
    - What do bogong moths look like?
    - What does the word 'migration' mean?
    - What do the moths reputedly taste like?
4. Hand out student worksheet.
5. Students design and decorate several bogong moths on cardboard using craft material.
  - *Note: a black and white template of a bogong moth is included in the kit. The template can be photocopied, decorated and glued to a piece of cardboard and then trimmed with scissors. Care should be taken when students use scissors.*
6. Students draw a bubble shape on a piece of cardboard and include written information about the moth on both sides. The bubble shape is then cut out and decorated. This process can be repeated as many times as you like.
7. Students create a mothy mobile with string and wooden skewers using the bogong moth cut outs and bubble information.
  - *Safety note: students may need supervision when using a hole punch. Alternatively, students can use the tip of a pencil to carefully push a hole through the thin cardboard.*
8. Display the mothy mobiles in the classroom.

## Lesson plan

### Activity - Lovely Limestone

## SETTING THE SCENE

In December 1820, Joseph Wild, James Vaughan and Charles Throsby Smith became the first European explorers to discover the region today known as Canberra. On advice from his

uncle, Smith carried a jar of acid and routinely tested the ground for limestone, considered to be an essential ingredient for building early pioneer houses. The explorers found deposits of limestone and hence the name 'Limestone Plains' was used to describe the area prior to the National Capital's establishment.

## **AIM**

Students work through a simple activity either individually or in small groups to establish a basic understanding of the geological make-up of the Canberra region.

## **STUDENT OUTCOMES**

- understand and successfully complete a set of instructions
- identify and record the reaction of limestone with a weak acid
- understand that Canberra's soils contain deposits of limestone and, because of this, the 'Limestone Plains' were considered suitable for colonising by early settlers
- record and discuss results of an experiment

## **NATIONAL CAPITAL EXHIBITION LINK**

Exhibit title - Cement Blocks

Location - The Human Landscape, section 1

This activity relates to the large cement blocks located in section 1 (refer to map supplied in National Capital Exhibition Interpretation Guide). The blocks are an artistic representation of Canberra's limestone plains but, due to the powdery nature of limestone, the blocks are made from cement which contains 70% limestone.

## **MATERIALS**

- student activity sheet
- chalk sticks (2 per student/group)
- clear glass or plastic jars
- water
- white vinegar

## **PROCEDURE**

1. 1. Introduce the topic by setting the scene with the class.
2. 2. Label two glass jars per experiment - A and B.
3. 3. Half fill jar A with water.
4. 4. Half fill jar B with white vinegar.
5. 5. Allow the student to carefully place a piece of chalk in each jar. For safety reasons, students should not touch the vinegar solution.
  - *Note: If vinegar comes into contact with an open cut or a person's eyes, repeatedly rinse the affected area with running water and seek medical advice.*
6. 6. Students record their observations on the activity sheet.
7. 7. Discuss with the class the results of the experiment and the suitability of Canberra's soil for settlement by farmers.

## Lesson plan

### Activity - Tool Time

#### SETTING THE SCENE

The first European settlers to the Canberra region were mostly farmers who established sheep and cattle stations. Farm stations had to be as self-sufficient as possible due to the large distances required to travel to purchase supplies. To maintain their properties, farm labourers used a variety of equipment and had to adapt to harsh environmental conditions. Equipment was often repaired to extend the life of the particular tool and great care was taken to maintain them.

#### AIM

Students hypothesise the use of historic tools and farm equipment used during the European settlement of the Canberra region, and consider similar equipment used in current farming practises today.

#### STUDENT OUTCOMES

- name and identify the use of historic farm tools used in the Canberra region
- compare the differences between historical farm equipment and modern farm equipment
- understand the isolation experienced by early settlers in the Canberra region
- engage in group discussion

#### NATIONAL CAPITAL EXHIBITION LINK

Exhibit title - Patrick Curley's Crowbar

Location - The Human Landscape, section 2

This activity relates to a tenant farmer's crowbar, found at historic Mugga Mugga Homestead, on display in section 2 (refer to map supplied in National Capital Exhibition Interpretation Guide).

#### MATERIALS

- student activity sheet
- images of tools and farm equipment commonly used around historic Canberra homesteads

#### PROCEDURE

1. Introduce the topic by setting the scene with the class.
2. Divide students into small groups and hand out a photographic image of a farm tool used during the European settlement of the Canberra region.
3. Hand out the activity sheet. The activity sheet aims to promote group discussion through key questions (refer to activity sheet). Remember, there are no wrong or right answers at this stage.

##### Key questions:

- What do you think this tool was used for?
- Describe the materials used in creating this tool.

- Name the tool. If you don't know the name, then make one up.
  - Are there similar tools used today?
  - What is the difference between your historical tool and a similar tool used today?
  - Was this a valuable tool to have at a homestead?
4. Once all of the key questions have been addressed by each group, students present their opinions to the rest of the class.
  5. You can now reveal the actual name and use of each piece of farm equipment to the students, and further engage the group by discussing the differences and similarities of modern farm equipment used by farmers today.
    - Some solutions for the photographic images
  6. To extend the activity, you can create a research project for students based on the development of farm tools and farming equipment over an historical period of time.

NAME	USE	2004
Hand drill	Hand powered drill for making holes in wood	Electric drill
Sickle	Used for harvesting grain such as wheat. A sickle was also used 'on the road' to clear a space for a	camp site or to cut the long grass for mattress stuffing
Harvesting machine Lawn mower	Scythe	Same principle as a sickle but a scythe has a long handle to make broader sweeps for cutting more stalks at once and it was considerably harder to use
Harvesting machine Lawn mower	Axe	Cuts into hard material such as wood
Chain saw	Hand saw	Cuts into hard material such as wood
Electric saw (jig-saw) Chain saw	Branding iron	Heated in a fire and applied to an animal's skin, a branding iron makes a lasting visible mark on the animal to prove its ownership
Plastic ear tags Microchips	Poison cart	Distributed poison bait for rabbits
Calici Virus (a fatal viral disease for rabbits)	Brick mould/stock	Used to make sun dried clay bricks by hand Mechanical brickworks where bricks are dried in a kiln (an oven that produces extremely high temperatures)

## Lesson plan

### Activity - A Stitch in Time

## SETTING THE SCENE

The word 'sampler' comes from the French word 'exemplaire', meaning a model or pattern to work by. Stitching samplers was typical school and homework for girls in the 1880s, when all clothing and household linen had to be stitched and decorated by hand. A sampler was evidence of a girl's skill with a needle. The most common sampler stitch was cross-stitch and often alphabets and numbers were neatly stitched above the girl's name, along with the completion date of the sampler.

## **AIM**

Students create their own traditional sampler pattern using graph paper and then apply the pattern to a piece of cloth using traditional cross-stitch techniques.

## **STUDENT OUTCOMES**

- understand and successfully complete a set of instructions
- recognise different assignments and homework were given to boys and girls in the past
- understand school assignments for girls were aimed at developing domestic skills
- create a basic sampler pattern using letters and/or numbers
- transfer the pattern to a piece of cloth using a needle and thread

## **NATIONAL CAPITAL EXHIBITION LINK**

Exhibit title - Embroidery Sampler

Location - The Human Landscape, section 2

This activity relates to the embroidery sampler, stitched by Canberra school girl Margaret Shumack in 1887, located in section 2 (refer to map supplied in National Capital Exhibition Interpretation Guide).

## **MATERIALS**

- student activity sheet
- colour image of historic sampler
- colour pencils
- lead pencil
- calico cloth approximately 30cm x 30cm
- masking tape
- scissors
- stranded cotton
- tapestry needle (size 22)

## **PROCEDURE**

1. Introduce the topic by setting the scene with the class. Use the image of a traditional sampler in the 1900s to explain what a sampler is.
2. Hand out student activity sheet.
3. Students design their initials, or a single letter, on the activity sheet graph paper.
4. Students then convert their graph paper design on to a piece of calico cloth using a needle and thread.

- *Note: Students can use a pencil to lightly draw an X onto the cloth to assist in the stitching process.*
- 5. To stop the edges of the cloth from fraying, line the edge of the material with masking tape.
- 6. Stitching the design on to calico works best with a sharp needle. If you prefer the students to use a needle that is not sharp, then substitute the calico with hessian which is coarse enough to allow easy stitching with a blunt needle.
- 7. The level of complexity for each design will be based on the student's cognitive ability. A basic design has been included on the activity sheet and, if required, can be adapted as part of the lesson for less confident students.