Walk with the Waugal

Students will learn about how the Waugal created the waterways in Perth. They will gain an understanding of how our waterways have changed over time and how they can protect it for the future.

Subject area:

Humanities and Social Sciences

Year level:

Year 7 - 10

Learning objectives:

- Understand that the Waugal is a significant being within Noongar culture and is linked to creation.
- Understand that snakes play significant roles in other cultures.
- Understand that some places have special cultural or spiritual significance.

Curriculum links

Water in the world	ACHGK040
Water in the world	ACHGK037
Place and liveability	ACHGK043
The ancient world	ACDSEH148

Cross curricular priorities – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

OI.2	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities maintain a special connection to and responsibility for Country/Place.
OI.3	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have holistic belief systems and are spiritually and intellectually connected to the land, sea, sky and waterways.
OI.4	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies have many Language Groups.
OI.5	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' ways of life are uniquely expressed through ways of being, knowing, thinking and doing.

General capabilities

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Information and communication technology (ICT) capability

Intercultural understanding

WATER CORPORATION

Spiritual animals

Animals hold a special place in many religions and cultures. The Waugal is a snake-like being that is central to the Noongar nyitting stories. Noongar people attribute the creation of many places, such as hills and water ways, to the actions of the Waugal.

Students will investigate the significance of animals lto religions and cultures around the world.

Time required:

1 hour

Resources required:

- **iPad or laptop per student**
- **Activity page: Spiritual Animals**

Preparation:

1. Ensure student access to Noongar culture – Spirituality

Steps:

1. Students are to find examples of stories from other cultures which feature a snake or a snake-like creature and complete the Spiritual Animals activity page.

2. Ask students to find any examples of places where snake-like creatures are believed to live/have lived, or where they are celebrated? (e.g. the Waugal is still believed to live in a cave, deep in the waters of Bennett Brook in Bassendean. Other snake-like creatures might be linked to natural features, or special temples or ceremonial spots).

   Students are to find an image of what one of these places look like today and comment on:

   a. What are some activities that happen in this place?

   b. What might 'looking after' this place involve?

   c. Do you think this place is only special or interesting to those whose culture is connected to the snake-like creature, or to people from other backgrounds?
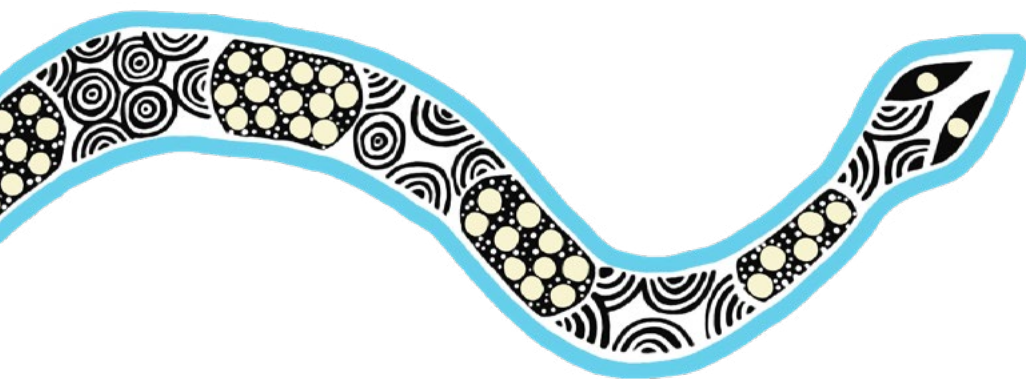
Changing Waugal's home

The Waugal is believed to have created the Swan and Canning Rivers, and other waterways around Perth and the South West of WA. Today, many of these natural features have been altered due to urbanisation. Students will investigate how people have changed the waterways around Perth, and that impact these changes have had.

Time required:

1 hour

Resources required:

- **Computer or iPad per student**

Preparation:

Ensure students have access to:

1. Perth water foreshore
2. Swan river system

Steps:

1. Discuss as a class what the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are associated with one of the following actions:

   a. Developing the waterway and surrounding land (e.g. building footpaths, jetties, changing the course of the river, building homes nearby etc); OR

   b. Leaving a natural water way and surrounding area in its natural state.

2. Investigate ways Perth water foreshore has changed over time. Some of the things students might want to explore include, but are not limited to:

   a. construction of dams (e.g. Victoria Dam)

   b. building of Elizabeth Quay

   c. development of Fremantle Port and the blowing up of the rock bar at the mouth of Swan River

   d. reclaiming land around South Perth and the Perth Esplanade

   e. building of bridges and jetties

3. Students might want to use the Swan river system landscape description in their investigation, published by Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. The descriptions of different precincts include information about how areas were used in the past and how this resulted in changes to the environment.

4. As part of their research report students must include:

   a. what changes were made to the foreshore

   b. why these changes were made

   c. what the impact was on the foreshore and community using the area

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Culture, well-being and liveability

Understand that cultural, spiritual and aesthetic values affect people's well-being and their connections to places.

Time required:

1 hour

Resources required:

- **Computer or iPad per student**
- **Student workbook**

Preparation:

Ensure students have access to the following websites:

1. Culture and closing the gap
2. Government budget

Steps:

1. Students will read about how connection with culture can help to close the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people (see p.2 and 3) and respond to the following questions in their student workbook:

   a. Which of the identified benefits do you think is the most important?

   b. Find an online article about the link between spirituality and health. Outline the positive impacts spirituality has on health across the world. How could this be reflected in Aboriginal culture?

2. Students examine the government budget showing how the (federal) government spends money. Students respond to the following questions in their student workbook:

   a. Who does the largest proportion of money go to?

   b. Approximately what fraction of the budget is spent on culture and recreation? (yellow bar). How are those finances distributed?

   c. Have a go at finding statistics for the State and/or your Local Government which show how their budgets are spent.

3. In their student workbooks, students reflect on their learnings and respond, if there were no limitations on funding:

   a. What sort of initiatives could be put in place around the waterways in your local area which would educate the community about the Waugal and encourage Noongar people to celebrate and share their culture?

   b. How would you design the suburb so that it has high cultural, spiritual and aesthetic value? You can add entertainment venues, places of worship, libraries and galleries into your plan – the sky is the limit! Be as creative as you can but try to balance the needs of different groups of people (e.g. both young and old, different nationalities).

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Spiritual animals

The Waugal is a snake-like being that is central to the Noongar nyitting stories. Noongar people attribute the creation of many places such as hills and water ways, to the actions of the Waugal.

Find examples of stories from other cultures which feature a snake or a snake-like creature and complete the table like the one below.

Name of creature	Country	Cultural group	Believed to have created or shaped the environment in some way	Not linked to creation or shaping the environment	Example of where this creature is believed to live/ have lived
E.g. Waugal	Australia	Noongar	Yes		Cave within Bennett Brook

Can you find examples of places where snake-like creatures live/have lived, or where they are celebrated? (e.g. the Waugal is still believed to live in a cave, deep in the waters of Bennett Brook in Bassendean. Other snake-like creatures might be linked to natural features, or special temples or ceremonial spots).

Find an image of what one of these places look like today and comment on:

1. What are some activities that happen in this place?

2. What might 'looking after' this place involve?

3. Do you think this place is only special or interesting to those whose culture is connected to the snake-like creature, or to people from other backgrounds?

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