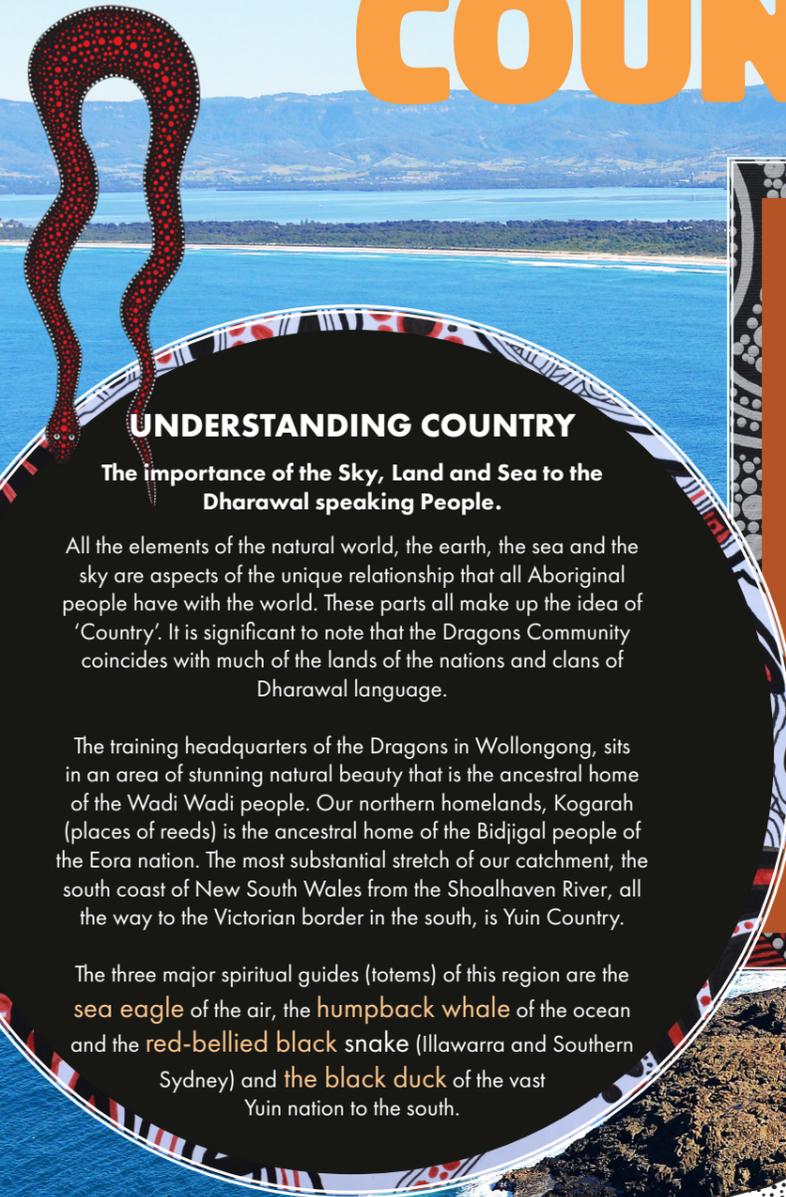


# UNDERSTANDING COUNTRY



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The St George Illawarra Dragons acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our games are played, where our programs are conducted and in the communities we support. We acknowledge their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay respect to them and their Elders past and present and acknowledge them as the oldest living culture in the world.



### UNDERSTANDING COUNTRY

The importance of the Sky, Land and Sea to the Dharawal speaking People.

All the elements of the natural world, the earth, the sea and the sky are aspects of the unique relationship that all Aboriginal people have with the world. These parts all make up the idea of 'Country'. It is significant to note that the Dragons Community coincides with much of the lands of the nations and clans of Dharawal language.

The training headquarters of the Dragons in Wollongong, sits in an area of stunning natural beauty that is the ancestral home of the Wadi Wadi people. Our northern homelands, Kogarah (places of reeds) is the ancestral home of the Bidjigal people of the Eora nation. The most substantial stretch of our catchment, the south coast of New South Wales from the Shoalhaven River, all the way to the Victorian border in the south, is Yuin Country.

The three major spiritual guides (totems) of this region are the sea eagle of the air, the humpback whale of the ocean and the red-bellied black snake (Illawarra and Southern Sydney) and the black duck of the vast Yuin nation to the south.

#### KNOWING OUR HISTORY

Many Australians are unaware of our region's true history. It is important to note that in many places across Australia, including our region, we have a dark and shameful history in regard to the treatment of our First Nation's People.

Between 1814 – 1816, by order of the then governor, nearly all of the three thousand Dharawal speaking people had been killed or driven off their ancestral lands.

#### TODAY

Today, the Dharawal culture is kept alive by Aboriginal people who descend from the ancient Dharawal people.

The Elders are advocates and cultural historians for this rich and inspiring culture, that has thrived for over 8500 years in this area. Research and study of many hours of spoken language has helped enormously.

This is now our shared heritage for which we all have a responsibility to know and understand. This inheritance must then be used to enrich the lives of future generations.

We acknowledge that all Australians have a cultural heritage that is worthy of respect, and we hope that you all embrace this Dharawal heritage, adding to the fabric of our wonderfully diverse and rich Australia.



Kevin Butler



## THE SIX DAUGHTERS OF THE WEST WIND

This is the local Aboriginal story of how five islands off our coast and Mt Keira were created. The story goes....

The west wind, Oolaboolawoo lived on top of Merrigong, (Illawarra Range) and had six daughters. Mimosa, Wilga, Lille Pilli, Wattle, Clematis and Geera. Mimosa would scratch and fight when the girls were playing and to punish her, the west wind blew her and the rock she sat on out to sea. She landed away from the land and became an island, which none of her sisters could swim to. Mimosa's fate should have been a lesson to her sisters, who were also cast out to sea by their father.

Because Oolaboolawoo was always busy out west, the last sister Geera sat lonely on the escarpment looking out at her sisters, the Five Islands. Sitting motionless, eventually the animals and trees grew all over her. She turned to stone and became the mountain now known as Mt Keira (Geera).

### CLASS ACTIVITY

Do you know your cultural background?

1. What is your cultural heritage  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. List below the cultural heritage of all your classmates  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Explore and research important landmarks or cultural stories from your local area**

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