



Birrigai

'Birrigai' means laughter in the language of the Ngunnawal peoples

School Program Options

2024

Programming Options

Upon booking, schools will be allocated a Birrigai Coordinator who will advise how many activity sessions need to be scheduled for the duration of the visit.

Indigenous Perspectives

Program Name	Description		Year Group
Grass Trees & Bogong Moths – Bushwalk	Learn about the world’s oldest continuous cultures and why Tidbinbilla is a significant place for the Ngunnawal Peoples. Visit the Birrigai Rock Shelter where evidence of Aboriginal habitation has been found dating back over 25,000 years. Discover bush food and medicines, learn about traditional tools and how to find an animal by observing tracks and scats. Learn about the Bogong moths and their flight to the mountains each year and how they were used by the Ngunnawal people.		P – 12
‘The Wombat’s Songline’	Students learn a song about a wombat’s journey to guide their own travel and learning on Ngunnawal Country. They develop an awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge sharing storytelling traditions through the concept of Songlines. Students learn how reading Country can tell us about changes in weather and how the plants can help us when we are hurt or sick. They learn about caring for Country and celebrate their new knowledge by cooking and sharing stories around a campfire.		P – K
The River	Inspired by Sally Morgan and Johnny Warrkatja Malibir’s picture book, ‘The River’, this program connects students to Ngunnawal Country, following a Birrigai waterway. Students walk a sensory journey alongside the creek bed to explore and learn more about its features, plants, animals, and their connections to each other. The program finishes with time for students to connect further with Country and their learning through bush play and opportunity to contribute to Birrigai creek Landcare projects		K - 1
Shelter Building	Investigate how First Nations Peoples' knowledge was used to inform the architectural design of traditional housing and shelters, their orientation and choice of materials. Participants discover the four main types of shelters built by Indigenous Australians and learn to construct a shelter.		K - 8

<p>Our On Country Bush Journey</p>	<p>Like Sam in Sally Morgan and Ezekiel Kwaymullina’s story ‘Sam’s Bush Journey’, students go on a journey of discovery developing knowledge and exploring skills about living and caring for Ngunnawal Land. Following a walk on Country that explores themes of the story, students have the opportunity to engage with activities that build further connections and knowledge about Country and cultural practices First Nations Peoples have practised for thousands of years.</p>		<p>1 -2</p>
<p>First Nations Campfire focus, Seed Grinding, Bush Tea & String Making</p>	<p>Enjoy a campfires session where participants build and cook on open fires. This can include making wattle seed damper and lemon myrtle tea. Create string bracelets with raffia string using traditional Aboriginal methods and add decorations such as seed pods or beads.</p> <p>Ask our Birrigai staff member about including Indigenous fire management perspectives to this program.</p>		<p>3 - 12</p>
<p>Let’s Stick it Together</p>	<p>Explore the use of resins and gums as adhesive tools with Aboriginal knowledge of chemical science. Students go on a bushwalk to a Grass Tree forest and learn the importance of this plant in the landscape and its traditional uses by Aboriginal people as a source of resin.</p> <p>Students then conduct a Science experiment to determine how strong a bond is formed when resin is used as an adhesive.</p>		<p>3-10</p>
<p>First Nations Plant Use</p>	<p>Groups will enjoy a beautiful walk in the bush and learn to identify a range of plants and how they are traditionally used in Aboriginal culture.</p>		<p>3 – 12</p>
<p>Science of Spears</p>	<p>Experience and explore the design and construction of spears and spear throwers with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and physics. Students discover how Aboriginal Australians considered many variables in the design and construction of spears and woomera, including force, mass and acceleration. This program has junior (K-4) and senior (5-10) options.</p>		<p>K – 4 5 - 10</p>

First Nations Program – the nature and consequence of colonisation	<p>Through and immersive simulation activity, students explore what life was like for First Nations Peoples before 1788. Students then participate in an interactive workshop to explore the nature and consequences of colonisation of First Nations Peoples, on their ways of life, culture, and Country. The interactive workshop concludes with reflection on learning from the program (the story so far) and what actions can be taken towards reconciliation (our role in writing the ongoing story).</p>	3 – 12
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Creating with Country



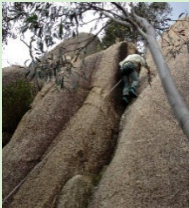



The ‘Creating with Country’ programs are designed to engage students with natural settings and build deeper conceptual understandings and respect for natural environments. Indigenous perspectives can be readily and authentically interwoven into Creating with Country sessions.

Program Name	Description		Year Group
Sensory Journey Sticks	<p>Students are taken on a bushwalk (60-90 minutes) where they connect and explore Country through a range of fun activities that engage their different senses. Making and drinking bush tea, creating a sound map, exploring the miniscule of nature with hand lenses are just some of the activities offered. During the walk, students create a journey stick by attaching natural bush items to tell the story of their walk and what they discovered. This program works well combined with a Nature Art add-on session.</p>		P - 4
Nature Art	<p>Students use natural materials to create a wide range of masterpieces individually or collaboratively. Clay nature pendants, ephemeral artworks, plant dye flags, string making, and bush weaving, charcoal drawings, bush potions, bush shelters, and bush cooking are just some of the many options available for students to get creative across a wide range of activity stations.</p> <p>This program can be combined with a bushwalk to collect natural bush treasures to create with.</p>		P - 10
Landscape Writing	<p>Let the Birrigai landscape inspire great writing! This is a targeted program tailored for different age groups that explores the use of nature to inspire creative writing, storytelling, and reflections about Country. There are many options to scaffold students in, so they feel confident to allow creativity to flow.</p>		2 - 12

Outdoor Adventure


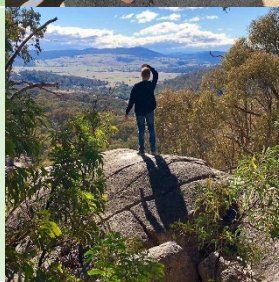
Please Note: All high ropes activities have a maximum weight limit of 95 kgs

Program Name	Description		Year Group
Abseiling	Visit a spectacular rock face and experience the Challenge by Choice and peer support opportunities offered by an abseiling session. Various suitable rock faces are easily accessible at or from Birrigai.		7 – 12
Crate Climb	Two participants work together to climb a tower of milk crates being built by remaining team members on the ground. Partners work to steady each other as they climb. A great activity for promoting teamwork and leadership.		4 – 12
Flying Fox, Team Haul up	Flying Fox is a Challenge by Choice activity that addresses personal challenge and teamwork. Flying Fox operates on the principle of team haul-up with each participant towed to a starting position of their choice. Participant activates a release rope to commence their ride along the cable.		4 – 12
Flying Fox, Off the Pole	On belay, participants climb a pole to the take-off platform and then launch themselves for a ride along the cable.		6 – 12
Giant Swing	A Challenge by Choice activity where participants choose the height the haul-up team raise them to and release themselves for a swing with views over Paddy's River Valley & the Bullen Ranges.		4 – 12
Giant Swing, Pod	Using the same Challenge by Choice principles and team haul-up as Giant Swing, participants lie in a hang glider-like harness for a thrilling swing.		7 – 12
Glider Possum	This Challenge by Choice activity resembles a glider possum in flight. Glider Possum operates on the principle of team haul-up with a single participant raised and lowered by a team of peers.		2 – 3

Leap of Faith	<p>Leap of Faith is a Challenge by Choice activity. Participants climb a pole and stand on a platform about 6 meters high. They leap forwards and attempt to slap a suspended ball, after which they are lowered. Each climber is supported by an adult belayer.</p>		6 – 12
Low Ropes	<p>Low Ropes is a Challenge by Choice activity that develops trust and communication in small teams. Teams have fun working together to complete the nine elements that constitute the course. Learn how to spot and keep your team members safe on the elements.</p>		3 – 12
Top Roping	<p>Visit a spectacular rock face and experience the Challenge by Choice and peer support opportunities offered by a rock-climbing session. Various suitable rock faces are easily accessible from Birrigai.</p>		7 – 12
Vertical Playpen & Dangle Duo	<p>Vertical Playpen and Dangle Duo are Challenge by Choice activities. Participants attempt to climb a variety of obstacles to reach the top of each structure. Each climber is supported by a 3-person belay team.</p>		4 – 12
Adventure Bushwalk	<p>Love an adventure? Love to explore? Love to rock scramble? We have the bush walk for you. Students can crawl, scramble and squeeze through hidden natural landscape features. Track grades range from easy or moderate through to challenging. Extended walks in neighbouring Tidbinbilla and Namadgi NP are further program options including Gibraltar Peak.</p>		P - 12
Passport to Nature Adventures	<p>An early childhood program aiming to connect students to nature through fun activities and unstructured play. We provide opportunities for children to build self-esteem and social skills through hands-on learning in a bush environment. Sessions include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bush cooking • Nature art • Building bush shelters • Nature scavenger hunts • Walks • Creek play • Aboriginal plant use <p>Students are empowered to manage their own risk in physical activities.</p>		P – 2

Leadership and Team Building

Program Name	Description		Year Group
Team Initiatives	The Team Initiatives obstacle course is a dynamic way to build leadership, problem solving, cooperation and communication skills in small groups. Groups discuss ideas and formulate solutions to each of the initiatives and have fun putting the ideas into action.		3 - 12
Team Rescue	In a rescue scenario, teams are challenged to negotiate a series of obstacles. Success requires a high level of cooperation and lateral thinking. The challenge can be increased in difficulty to suit a range of age groups and outcomes of your group.		3 - 12
Team Trek	Using a map, groups work in small teams to locate numbered boxes and complete the challenge inside. Groups record their solutions on an iPad, with challenges developing confidence, communication, and problem-solving strategies. The challenges can be increased in difficulty to suit a range of age groups.		3 - 6
Scavenger Hunt Challenge Campfires	A great activity to promote teamwork, problem solving and navigation skills as well as learning about campfire safety and use. Students work in small groups to decipher clues and read a map to find all the resources they need to build, light, and cook damper twists on a fire.		3 - 6
The Radiation Zone	The “Radiation” Zone is a simulation game that immerses the group in a race against time to save the people of Birrigai Outpost from the threat of radiation exposure. The “Radiation” Zone exposes individuals to opportunities to develop capabilities around leadership skills, working collaboratively, making decisions, and developing reflective practices.		8- 12
Team Building Games	Enhance your groups team building and leadership skills through a wide range of games and challenges. Groups collaboratively problem solve and network to reach solutions. Have a laugh and have some fun!		3 - 12

<p>Escape from Birrigai</p>	<p>Groups will search for keys to unlock a box which will determine which team they are in and then progress through a number of team building activities to try an Escape from Birrigai. The session culminates with both teams taking on the challenge course. The activity promotes leadership, communication, cooperation and organisational skills as part of a team.</p>		<p>2 – 6</p>
<p>Duke of Edinburgh Support Programs</p>	<p>Individual programs can be tailored to your group’s needs for Bronze, Silver or Gold levels of the Award, with a particular emphasis on the ‘Adventurous Journey’ activities.</p>		<p>9 – 12</p>



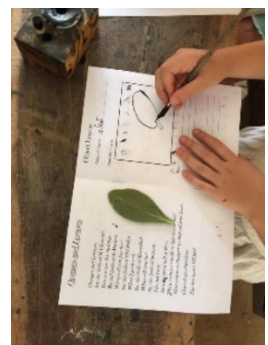
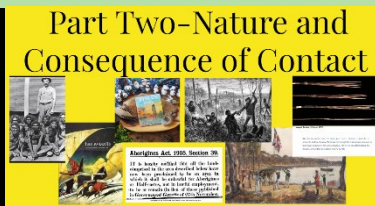
The Australian Environment and Biodiversity

Program Name	Description		Year Group
Geology/ Geography Bushwalk	Embark on an interactive bushwalk investigating the signs of change to Birrigai's bushland over time. Conduct experiments, visit granite tors, explore rock formation, and discover how various impacts form today's landscape.		3 – 8
Mindfulness Bushwalk	Enjoy a scenic bushwalk and embrace the opportunity to engage, explore and interact with Birrigai's abundance of flora and fauna. Take the time to connect with a special space out in nature. Explore an area and create works of art with natural materials.		3 – 12
Adventure Bushwalk	Love an adventure? Love to explore? Love to rock scramble? We have the bush walk for you. Students can crawl, scramble and squeeze through hidden natural landscape features. Track grades range from easy or moderate through to challenging. Extended walks in neighbouring Tidbinbilla and Namadgi NP are further program options including Gibraltar Peak.		P - 12
Campfires	In small groups participants learn about fire safety, build their own campfire, and learn how to cook damper twists. Depending on desired learning outcomes, emphasis can be placed on the role of fire in the lives of Aboriginal Peoples, Early Settlers on the Australian Goldfields or in maintaining biodiversity. Campfires can also be run as part of Early Childhood programs with Preschool to Year 2.		P – 12
Habitat Health and Biodiversity	To develop understandings of habitat health and biodiversity, participants visit two habitats to collect real data. Participants establish survey sites in a managed area and a natural bush setting and compare findings of species found.		3 – 6

<p>Grassland Detectives</p>	<p>Using two sampling techniques discover who/what lives in Birrigai’s grassy woodland habitat and explore their interconnectedness. Use microscopes to have a closer look at the special features of these plants and insects.</p>		<p>2 – 6</p>
<p>Web of Life</p>	<p>The Web of Life simulation game is one of the most popular environmental activities at Birrigai. Participants take on different animal roles to explore the interrelationships between animals and Australian ecosystems. They examine the effect of disturbances as they resonate through the whole food chain.</p>		<p>3 - 8</p>
<p>Wetland Wonders</p> <p>Subject to levels of water at our wetland</p>	<p>Have fun exploring wetland environments and the animals that live there. Build a model wetland with an ecology kit and develop techniques for catching and identifying macroinvertebrates in a safe environment. Use microscopes to see water bugs up close. Join in a picnic with some of the wetland animals and find out what they like to eat.</p>		<p>Pre-School</p>
<p>Wetland Friends</p> <p>Subject to levels of water at our wetland</p>	<p>Investigate habitats with a particular emphasis on identifying the variety of external features found in a vast variety of wetland plants and animals. Discover the wetlands on a binocular walk and dip a net in the water to catch macroinvertebrates. Use microscopes to discover what special features water bugs have that help them live in the wetlands. Find out how they breathe, move and eat. Model a clay animal with special features to thrive in the wetlands.</p>		<p>K – 2</p>
<p>Wetland Connections</p> <p>Subject to levels of water at our wetland</p>	<p>Find out who eats who in a food chain by exploring the plants and animals at Birrigai’s wetland. Join in an animal identification walk and using binoculars discover some of our amazing wetland creatures. Use nets to catch macroinvertebrates and our microscopes to identify and classify them according to their features. Learn ways to care for our sensitive wetland ecosystems.</p>		<p>3 – 4</p>
<p>Wetland Detectives</p> <p>Subject to levels of water at our wetland</p>	<p>Investigate the structural features and adaptations that help plants and animals survive in Birrigai’s wetlands. Collect evidence to assess the health of the water system. A guided walk through the wetlands, water testing and assessment of the macroinvertebrates will assist participants to judge the systems health. Use the microscopes to identify species. Examine the ecological role of wetlands and the need to conserve these ecosystems.</p>		<p>5 - 6</p>

Australian History – Early Settlers

Program Name	Description	Year Group
Early Settlers	The activity sessions outlined below make up a 2-day History program, each session may also be used as a stand-alone experience or in combinations.	3 – 4
Explorers Walk	Participants imagine they have never seen Australia before. They take on an Explorer’s role: a Navigator to map the land; a Botanist to collect plant specimens to send back to England; a Geologist to take soil samples; an Artist to sketch the landscape. Participants investigate how local Aboriginal knowledge supported explorers in their journeys.	
A Day in the Life of Beth and Tom	Experience life as a child during the 1820’s and enrol in Paddy’s River School for a day. A traditional classroom is recreated to give participants a valuable opportunity to compare and contrast life in the 1820’s with modern day schooling. They will learn to write using a nib pen, complete a subtraction lesson with a slate and lead, read poetry and play traditional bush games like bush billiards and marbles.	
Campfires & Tent Pitching	In small groups participants learn about fire safety, build their own campfire, and learn how to cook damper twists. Participants discover the importance fire had for Early Settlers.	
First Nations Program – the nature and consequence of colonisation	Through and immersive simulation activity, students explore what life was like for First Nations Peoples before 1788. Students then participate in an interactive workshop to explore the nature and consequences of colonisation of First Nations Peoples, on their ways of life, culture, and Country. The interactive workshop concludes with reflection on learning from the program (the story so far) and what actions can be taken towards reconciliation (our role in writing the ongoing story).	



Australian History - Gold

Program Name	Description	Year Group
Gold	The activity sessions outlined below make up a 3-day History program, each session may also be used as a stand-alone experience or in combinations.	5 – 6
Prospectors Walk	Experience the life of a prospector during the Australian Gold Rush. Participants explore the bushland for likely gold deposits, dig for and collect 'gold' and use traditional mining equipment like cradles, dolly pots and gold pans to see if they strike it rich.	
1850's Classroom	Become a student during the gold rush of the 1850's and role play a traditional classroom scenario. Participants experience the rules and behaviours expected of children during this time, write with ink and nib pens, count in pounds and shillings, and measure a claim in inches and feet. Beware those who choose to disobey the teacher as traditional punishment applies.	
Tent Pitching & Campfires	Learn how to pitch a traditional A-frame tent by using tree branches and a canvas. Then build a campfire to cook your own damper. Participants discover the importance of a campfire during the Gold Rush Era and the sense of community a fire can create.	
Gold Field Investigations	Learn about the challenges faced by men, women, and Chinese miners on the diggings. In small groups participants work together to investigate and recreate a museum display of a goldfields character before presenting a dramatization of their findings.	
Journey to the Goldfields	Experience the hardships endured by miners making their way to the goldfields. Miners have limited funds to decide what supplies to bring with them on their 100-mile journey and negotiate a series of obstacles as they try to make their way to the goldfields.	
Democracy – Life on the Diggings Simulation	Visit Paddy's River goldfields and become a miner facing the hardships of living in the 1850's Australian goldfields. In small groups each team fossicks for gold, makes a claim, and trades their gold for money at the Assay Office. Miners are subject to the whim of the Governor and soon understand why an uprising amongst the miners is necessary. The circumstances surrounding the Eureka Stockade are explored as participants learn how to find their voice.	

