

The Oyster Gardener

History (Primary, 3–6)



About this film



The Oyster Gardener

Can a functionally extinct reef system be brought back to life? Jolie, a year 12 student and aspiring marine biologist, joins forces with her community to bring back the lost oyster reefs of the Noosa River.

The Oyster Gardener is a short film that follows Jolie on a journey of discovery to see if restoring biodiversity and reversing the impacts of climate change in her local river system is possible. This year, she's part of a specifically-designed curriculum program that has been engaging young people in this ambitious local restoration project through real-world learning and citizen science.

As the journey unfolds, we learn that parallel to the story of the oyster reef, Jolie is going through a life transition of her own. She is finishing high-school and preparing to leave home for the first time. Grappling with so many uncertainties, yet seeking moments of joy, awe and curiosity wherever she can, we watch as Jolie navigates the unknown, while finding her voice and her purpose.



About this unit

Essential question:

How have humans changed and shaped your local environment?

Key vocabulary:

waterways

restoration

oysters

colonial

ecosystem

conservation

reef

river

impact

environment

community

Dreaming

First Nations

Learning intention:

Students will research and describe how their local waterway/river has changed over time, and justify the importance of protecting local environments.

Curriculum information:

The activities in this unit address the following outcomes from the HASS F-6 Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum as outlined in the Australian Curriculum v9, and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Years 3-4 activities:	AC9HS3K01
Years 5-6 activities:	AC9HS5K02

Sustainable Development Goals:	
Goal 11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Goal 12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Goal 13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
Goal 14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

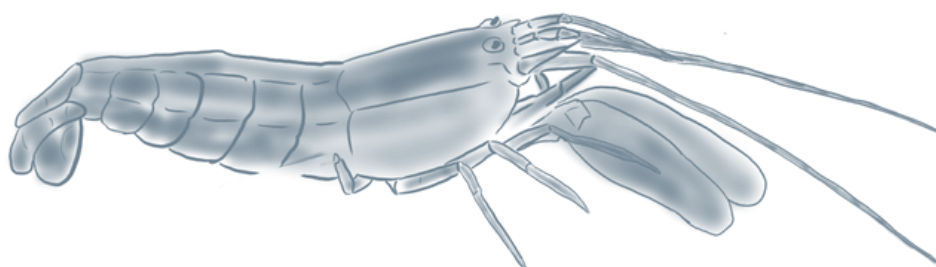
Before watching

Activate prior knowledge

Either in pairs or small groups students reactivate prior knowledge about their most local/proximate river system or waterway/or the most significant. The teacher may identify this for them or students can choose for themselves, depending on the location. Students should be encouraged to use their own knowledge and then share their findings with the class.

As a post-video or homework activity students could do further research to fill in any gaps.

What is the name of your local river system or waterway?	
What does this name mean?	
Which traditional land, language group, clan or nation, is the river located on? Visit the AIATSIS website to find out. https://aiatsis.gov.au/whose-country	
What plants can you find near your river?	
What animals can you find around your river?	



After watching

Here are some activities to take your students' learning from the film further.

Years 3-4 activities:	
Curriculum alignment:	AC9HS3K01

Activity 1: The First Nations story of our river

Students will explore a First Nations story of their local river/waterway and examine how First Nations knowledge and messages about place and caring for Country can be passed down and used today.

- Introduce students to the concept of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Dreaming Stories, and their role as an oral history of land and water. Discuss the importance of oral history storytelling for passing down lessons and knowledge through time.
- Ask students to identify personal examples of morals or information being passed down through stories.
- Teacher is to locate a First Nations story from the local area, or an appropriate waterway creation story from a First Nations source. It is encouraged to reach out to your local First Nations community and invite them to visit and share their knowledge (with appropriate remuneration). You could also contact the Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) or the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) to begin building connections with local First Nations people.
- As a class read through/listen to the story.
- Divide students into small groups. Students work in groups to read through the story again and highlight what they think are the important events in the story.
- Students discuss the following prompts:
 - What were the key moments and characters in the story?
 - What are the important lessons or morals of the story?
 - How can we apply those lessons to modern-day care of our rivers?
 - How is learning through story different from how you usually learn about history at school?
- As a class, discuss these prompts and students' responses.

Support:

Provide students with a dot-point list of events from the story that they can



then use to identify important moments. Encourage the use of who/what/when/where/why/how prompts to formulate questions.



Extension:

Students could research the local First Nations land management groups and come up with questions to ask them about how to incorporate First Nations knowledge to help look after their local river. Alternatively, students could research their local First Nations language and create a glossary with three words that relate to the river.

Activity 2: River timeline

Students will construct a timeline detailing the local history of their waterway/river from pre/early colonisation to the modern day.

- Place students into groups, and each group is assigned a time period. E.g., Pre-1770, 1770-1800, 1801-1900, 1901-1950, 1951-2000, 2000 to present day. The years are to be set by the teacher appropriate to the local environment.
- Using the table provided on page 10, students will identify and research an important local event from that time period. Students can also be pre-provided with events surrounding their river/waterway for them to research.
 - For example: Events happening around the Yarra River included:

1803	Charles Grimes, during his exploration, named it 'Freshwater River' and declared it to be "the most eligible place for a settlement that I have seen".
1835	John Batman "purchases" land from local people of the Kulin Nation.
1850's	The Yarra's southern bank is a 'tent city' after tens of thousands of people from around the world arrived in Melbourne to join the Victorian gold rush.
1891	The biggest recorded flood saw the water rise 14 metres higher than normal.
1925	300,000 Melburnians visit the Yarra for one day and night to celebrate the river for the Henley Regatta
1955	The first Moomba Festival

- Prepare a blank timeline outlining the time periods assigned to students and show it on the board. As a class, have students come up and share their events and place them on the timeline.
- Have a class discussion on how both the river, the local area, and Australia, to a greater extent, have changed over time and what has caused these changes.



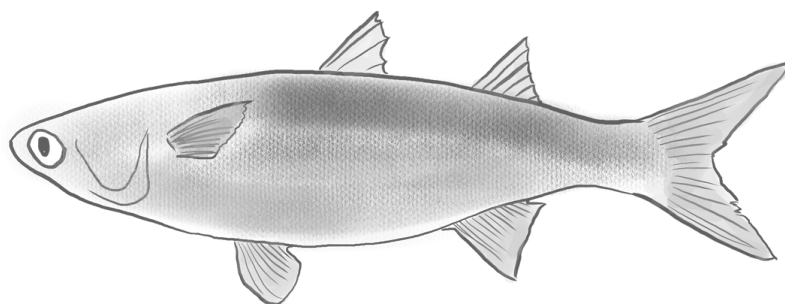
Support:

Students can be given a selected event with a paragraph of information to use to fill out the table.



Extension:

Students can choose one event from the completed class timeline that they think is the most important, and write a short explanation to explain why they think it is the most important event in the life of the river.



Years 5-6 activities:	
Curriculum alignment:	AC9HS5K02

Activity 3: Mapping the river

Students will explore how their local river has changed from early colonisation to the modern day.

- Provide students with two maps of the local river or waterway showing only its geographical features. One will be an early historical map, and the other will be a modern-day map.
- Students will use these maps to observe and record how the features and uses of the river/waterway have changed between early colonisation and the modern day. They should use local or general historical resources to research and answer the questions provided on pages 11-13.
- Students will then draw and annotate the human features on each map to compare and contrast, and respond to the question prompts on the final page.

Support:

Students can be given a document with the relevant historical information from which to draw the answers and can work in pairs or small groups.

Extension:

Students can access their local council and historical society websites and find a map or image of the river from a different time period. Based on this image, they can identify three features that are different from the early colonial and modern-day maps.



Activity 4: Our river

Students will conduct interviews to explore how people have interacted with local rivers/waterways over time, and the importance of protecting local environments.

- Students brainstorm as a class to create five interview questions that will help them learn about how people have used the local rivers/waterways and how they use them today. The questions should explore what the river looks like, how they interact with it, and any local stories, memories, or important events associated with it.
- Students then use the questions to interview an adult (e.g. family members, teachers or staff, or local community members). This could be conducted as homework, a class activity, or an excursion. Encourage the inclusion of historical photos if available as primary sources.
- Students will share what they found out with the class and discuss the differences or similarities between the past and present uses of the waterway.
- In groups or as a class, discuss why it is important to continue looking after the local river and environment. Encourage students to use their oral history research to support their answers.
- Teachers provide information about the school's local/state/federal representatives and students can write a letter to their members explaining why it is important to continue looking after their local river/waterway.

Support:

Students can use who/what/when/where/why/how prompts to form their questions and can be given a letter-writing template to assist them.



Extension:

Students can research a local or regional organisation that is currently involved with protecting and looking after their local river/waterway and identify three actions they are doing to care for the environment.

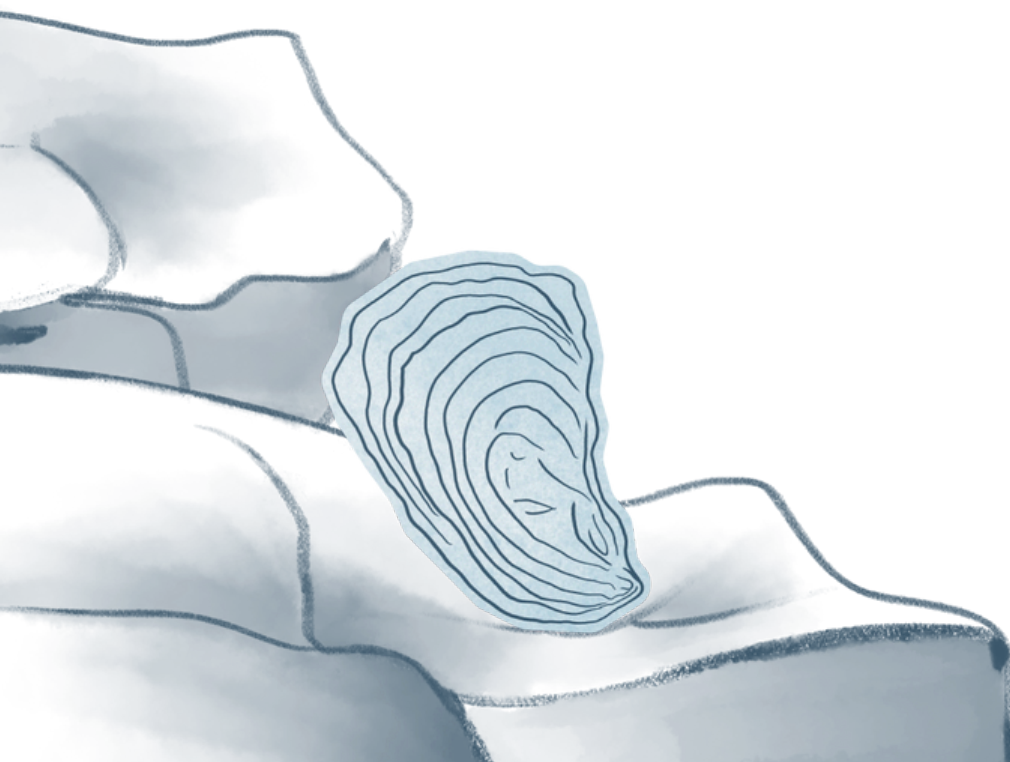
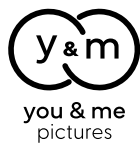


Conclusion

Ask students to respond to the essential question posed at the beginning of the lesson.

Ask if they still have any questions about the content presented in the film. Discuss and answer these questions as a class.

You & Me Pictures and Regen Studios would like to thank the generous contribution of Doc Society Climate Story Fund for the development of these resources.



River Timeline

Years 3-4

Using the table below, identify and research an important local event from your assigned time period.

Based on your findings, construct a timeline detailing the local history of your local river or waterway from pre/early colonisation to the modern day.

What year did the event happen?	
What happened?	
What were the names of important people involved?	
How did your event impact the river?	
Draw an image to represent your event.	

Mapping the River

Years 5–6

You will receive two maps of your local river or waterway. One will be an early historical map, and the other will be a modern-day map.

Using these maps, observe and record how its features and uses have changed between early colonisation and the modern day. Use local or general historical resources to research and answer the questions in the table below.

Then use your answers to draw and annotate the human features on each map to compare and contrast, and respond to the prompt on the last page.

	Early colonisation	Modern day
Which community groups are living around the area?		
What plants can you find in the area?		
What animals can you find in the area?		

Mapping the River

Years 5-6

	Early colonisation	Modern day
How are people using the area for food or housing?		
How are people using the area for recreation?		
Are there any significant natural features in the area?		
Are there any significant human-made features in the area?		

Mapping the River

Years 5-6

What do you think has been the most significant change to the river, and what caused this change? Are its impacts still felt today? If so, how?

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