

The Oyster Gardener

History (Secondary, 7–10)



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 does history determine the significance and value of a landscape?

Key vocabulary:

waterways

rivers

artefacts

aquaculture

ecosystem

conservation

significance

First Nations

Learning intention:

Students will research and describe the historical and cultural significance of local rivers/waterways for First Nations communities, and justify the importance of protecting them.

Curriculum information:

The activities in this unit address the following outcomes from the History 7-10 curriculum as outlined in the Australian Curriculum v9, and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Years 7-8 activities:	AC9HH7K05, AC9HH7K07
Years 9-10 activities:	AC9HH9K03, AC9HH10K18

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 discuss and research their most local/proximate river system or waterway, or the most significant in their region, and fill in the table below.

The teacher may identify this for students, or students can choose for themselves, depending on the location. Encourage students to use their own knowledge as well as research, and then share their findings with the class.

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	
How do people interact with or use the river?	
What is a memory you have of the river? If you don't have memories of the river, what facts do you know about the river/waterway?	

After watching

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

Years 7-8 activities:	
Curriculum alignment:	AC9HH7K05, AC9HH7K07

Activity 1: Historical site assessment

Students are to research the historical, cultural, and ecological significance of their local river system. Encourage students to explore their local heritage library, water management organisations, council and Aboriginal Land Council websites, and Aboriginal Corporations.

- Place students into pairs and distribute a copy of the *Historical Site Assessment* worksheet (found on pages 9-10) to each pair.
- Students will research and complete the worksheet and share their answers in small groups or with the class based on the following prompt:

UNESCO has asked you to complete a site assessment for the historical significance of your local river or waterway. Your report will help the UN to decide how to protect the cultural heritage of your country.

Support:

Provide students with a completed table and use the information provided to highlight keywords and phrases. Based on this, they can decide whether the area should be protected and write their recommendation.

Students could also be provided with alternative explicit questions to respond to, to form their recommendation response. E.g. *Why is this river important to historians?*

Extension:

Students can write a short paragraph in response to the following prompt:
How might the historical significance of the river change in the future?

Activity 2: Exploring history through cultural artefacts

Students will research and complete a profile on First Nations archaeological artefacts/cultural objects related to the local river/waterway or general aquaculture in Australia. Examples may include eel and wallaby traps, a crocodile mask from the Torres Strait, shellfish hooks, water carriers, canoes, etc.

- Teacher is to create a list of First Nations archaeological artefacts related to rivers/ waterways/aquaculture to provide to students.
- Distribute a copy of the *Exploring History through Cultural Artefacts* worksheet (found on page 11) to each student.
- Students will choose one artefact from the list provided by the teacher and create a fact sheet using further research online.

Support:

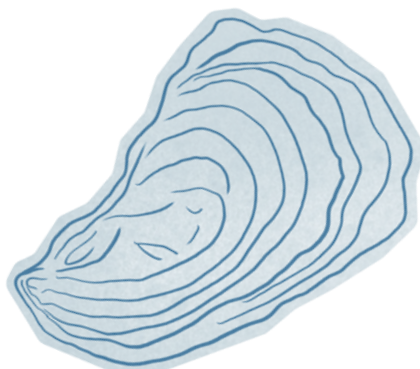
Students are provided with a pre-selected artefact and general information on it. They can use this information to assist them in filling out the fact file.



Extension:

Students write a short response to the following prompt:

How do historical artefacts help us to understand the history of Australia's waterways?



Years 9-10 activities:	
Curriculum alignment:	AC9HH9K03, AC9HH10K18

Activity 3: Site significance assessment

Students are to use research to complete a significance assessment for their local river or waterway based on the following prompt:

Your local council has asked you to complete a site assessment for the historical, environmental, cultural, spiritual, and recreational significance of your local river or waterway. Your report will help the council to decide whether they should protect the area from development. You should consider historical and cultural links to the area.

- Distribute a copy of the *Site Significance Assessment* worksheet provided on pages 12-14 to each student and have them complete it.
- Using the information from the table, students will then write a short recommendation to the council outlining what is historically, environmentally, culturally, spiritually, and/or recreationally significant about the river or waterway. They should use historical and scientific references to support their recommendation.

Support:



Students could be provided with a simple completed table, and use the information provided to decide whether the river should be protected and write their recommendation. The table could also be completed as a class or group, and the recommendation written individually.

Students could also be provided with alternative explicit questions to respond to, to form their recommendation response. For example:
Why is the river/waterway important for the local First Nations peoples?

Extension:



Students can write a short paragraph in response to the following prompt:
How might the significance of the river change in the future?

Activity 4: How can history help?

Students will identify a modern-day environmental issue impacting their local river or waterway, and research sustainable solutions to address it.

- As a class, brainstorm current issues affecting your local environment with a focus on rivers and waterways. This could include pollution, invasive species, bushfires, drought, etc.
- Students are to choose one of these issues and use the *How Can History Help?* worksheet found on pages 15-16 to create an action plan for their local council.
- Once completed, discuss the following prompt:

Why is it important to involve First Nations peoples in caring for the local environment? What are some traditional and sustainable land management practices that could help?

Support:

Students can be provided with a chosen issue and a list of links to relevant local resources to find the appropriate information.



Extension:

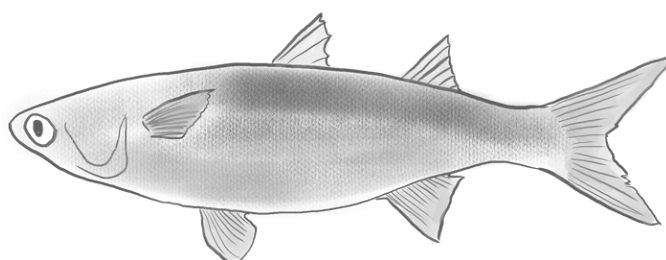
Using the information gathered, students research who their local council member is, and write a short letter or email outlining the issue and how it could be fixed to allow for real-world application.



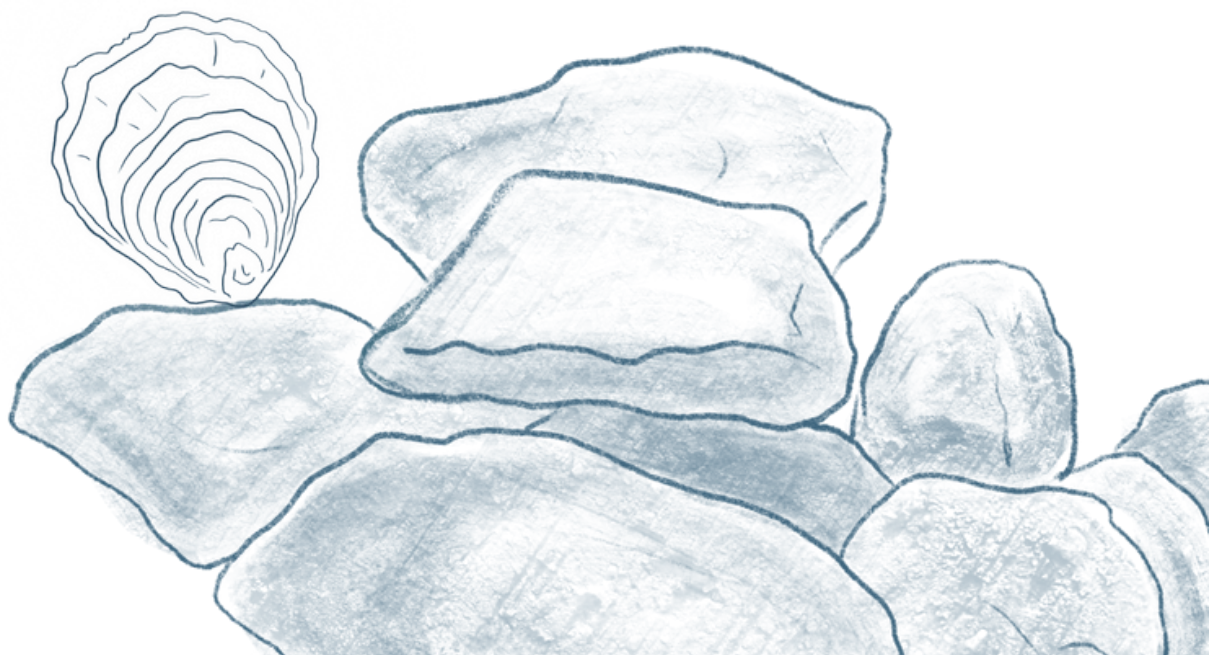
Conclusion

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.



Historical Site Assessment

Years 7-8

UNESCO has asked you to complete a site assessment for the **historical significance** of your local river or waterway. Your report will help the UN to decide how to protect the cultural heritage of your country.

Research the historical, cultural, and ecological significance of your local river system or waterway and fill in the table below.

Location:	
What are the important natural features of the area?	
What are the important human-made features of the area?	
Who are the traditional custodians of the land?	
Are there significant archaeological sites along the river?	
Does the river have important spiritual or cultural significance to local communities?	
What unique biodiversity or ecosystems are present in the river system?	

Historical Site Assessment

Years 7-8

How did First Nations people use the area for food or living?	
How has the river landscape evolved over time?	
How have people used the river system over time? / What are the interactions between societies and the river environment?	
Are there any significant events that have occurred or people who have lived at the site?	
Is the river associated with significant events, traditions, ideas, or beliefs?	
Based on your information, do you believe the area is historically significant and should be protected?	

Exploring History through Cultural Artefacts

Years 7-8

Choose one First Nations archaeological artefact related to the local river/waterway or general aquaculture in Australia and fill in the table below using online research.

Name of artefact:	
Which First Nations group does it belong to?	
What is its date of origin?	
What is it made of?	
What is its size?	
What was the artefact used for?	
Why is this artefact important?	
Draw a sketch of your artefact and label any important features:	

Site Significance Assessment

Years 9–10

Your local council has asked you to complete a site assessment for the **historical, environmental, cultural, spiritual, and recreational significance** of your local river or waterway. Your report will help the council to decide whether they should protect the area from development. You should consider historical and cultural links to the area.

Research the historical, environmental, cultural, spiritual, and recreational significance of your local river system or waterway and fill in the table below.

Location:	
Who are the traditional custodians of the land?	
Who are the community groups or people connected to the area?	
What are the important natural and human-made features in the landscape?	
Are these features unique to the area or culturally significant? Provide evidence to support your answer.	

Site Significance Assessment

Years 9–10

What are some of the First Nations stories or historical events associated with the area?	
How do First Nations peoples use the area for living and recreation?	
How do other community groups use the area for living and recreation?	
How has each of the community groups' relationship with the landscape changed over time?	
How does the area shed light on enduring or emerging issues in Australian history and contemporary life?	

Site Significance Assessment

Based on your findings, write a recommendation to the council outlining what is historically, environmentally, culturally, spiritually, and/or recreationally significant about the river or waterway. Remember to use historical and scientific references to support your recommendation.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

How Can History Help?

Years 9–10

Identify a modern-day environmental issue impacting your local river or waterway, and research sustainable solutions to address it. Use the table below to create an action plan for your local council.

What is the issue?	
What is the historical context of the issue?	
How has the issue developed over time?	
How does this issue impact the river/water ecosystem?	
	Hyperlinks
Find one historical article or image that identifies the issue.	
Find one news article or image that identifies the issue.	

How Can History Help?

Years 9–10

<p>What is one thing that your local community could do to fix the problem?</p>	
<p>List your local Aboriginal Land Council, Corporation, or other community groups or organisations.</p>	
<p>What are some of the First Nations sustainable land management practices that relate to the issue?</p> <p>OR</p> <p>What are the organisations or groups that are contributing to land management in your community?</p>	