

Day 12 Activity

Tales of the Todd Role Profiles

Role #1 The Original Australians - Aboriginal families who have always been here

Your ancestors have lived in the area of the Todd River forever. You now live in a suburban house with your family. You work as a teacher.

Background

The land along the Todd River has always been home to Aboriginal people. The big trees provide shade and wood and sometimes good tucker could be found there too. When the rain collects in waterholes it could be used for drinking and animals are attracted to waterholes so it has always been a good place for hunting. The old people say that some of the places along the Todd - such as what is now the Telegraph Station - have stories about them and ceremonies that used to take place there.

Effects on the River system

The lifestyle of many Aboriginal people has changed so much that they don't use the river as they used to in the past. Sometimes they go out to the waterholes or camping along the Todd just like everybody else, but many of them live suburban lives now.


Concerns

One of the main things is the lack of respect for places that have been identified as 'sacred sites'. Aboriginal people recognise that times change, but it is important to conserve both cultural and environmental history. Apart from that, these stories and ceremonies are an important part of their lives, even if they are unable to practice them as they used to do.

They also see the problems that are happening because of the way people treat the river bed when they are camping there, such as destroying trees or leaving rubbish. They know that something needs to be done about it.

They are affected just like everyone else by things like flooding and salt build-up and fires and weeds etc.





Role #2 The Original Australians - Aboriginal people from other places who come and camp in the Todd or close by

You usually live out bush in a small remote community, but you enjoy the town life of going to the football and having drinks and playing cards with your mates. Sometimes you get a lift to town and don't feel like going back so you camp in the creekbed. Sometimes its hard to get a ride home as well. Life out bush can also be quite boring if you have nothing to do.

Background

River beds like the Todd or areas such as the Coolibah Swamp have always provided a place for Aboriginal people to travel along and camp in when they are visiting. If you have no family to stay with and can't afford to pay for accommodation, a river bed is the next best thing.

Effects the River system

In the old days, any visitors would have only stayed for a short time and there would only be one group at a time. Now, because of the facilities that the town provides, lots of groups of people come in from out bush and camp there and sometimes stay for a long time. Everyone can see the effects of this in burnt or broken down trees and rubbish left around; the dogs probably also affect the wildlife.

Another thing is the drinking and fighting you see, which makes it not very friendly for other people to come near.

Concerns


Some people want to stop the aboriginal mob from camping in the Todd. Other people aren't allowed to camp there. What they say is that if you can't camp there, where can you go?

Role #3 The Original Australians - Permanent Camps along the Todd (and its tributaries)

Your family had lived all their lives out bush a long way from town, but when you were a baby your parents decided that living in town would be better. You joined other members of your extended family at a camp on the outskirts, right beside a tributary of the Todd.

Background

Town camps have been set up when more and more people came in from out bush to live near the good facilities that the town provides. Setting up camp near a creek or river bed is what people have always done because of the



availability of wood and shade and water (either from waterholes or you can get it by digging). The camps have gradually become more permanent with houses being built and power and water being supplied.

Effect on the river system

Town camp people don't really make much use of the river itself these days. However rubbish from some camps blows or gets washed into the river and when it floods it gets carried downstream. If they burn or cut down the trees this will also affect the way the river system works. Sometimes heavy rain causes erosion and washaways around the camps. If there aren't proper toilets this can also cause a contamination problem when it rains heavily.

Concerns

Life in the town camps is not easy. Sometimes there are too many people and things happen that shouldn't like drinking and fighting. Its quite a struggle to live here so they haven't got much time for thinking about what they can or need to do for the river.