

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Long ago, Ancient Indigenous peoples took inspiration and shared their identity with the plants, animals and skyworld in the local community of where they lived. They have been given the English word—Totems.

The Ancient ones possessed the ability to connect with their Totems and even switch bodies with them when they needed their strengths and wisdom. The Ancient people honoured their Totems through art, stories and dance. They learnt everything about their Totems to make sure they would be protected and the Totems returned the favour.

How amazing to run as fast as an Emu or feel the power of an Eagle.

The Australian Culture Totems are here to remind and teach people about the importance of their connection to all living things in their homelands and local communities. The Cue Team you choose will be a representation of you in nature and vice versa.

Many of Australia's Native species are battling to survive in a time where humans have forgotten how much they need nature to stay alive. We all feel like we are in a battle sometimes. What the Ancient Indigenous people wisely knew was that we are never alone when we stay connected to all living things where we live. (Your Totem had to be in your area)
Ancient Indigenous personal Totems were our Dream Sisters and Brothers who looked after us as we slept. Our Dream Totems became our names.

Instructions

Sort through the pack and set aside the Australian animals and plants that you know live in your local area and you are likely to see often or occasionally

This is your Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Read through carefully front and back your ACT and choose one Totem that you have always felt a special connection with when you see or hear them—This is your Dream Protector Totem

Next step choose is to choose from the pack the Cue that has the skills you need courage for when you need them. Each time you see or hear your Courage Cues, they remind you that you are never alone, and the strengths your Guardians have—are also in you
Learn all you can about your Totem in the Teaching Through Culture Totem Stories and discover ways you or your community can help honour and protect them (to make sure they stay near)

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)



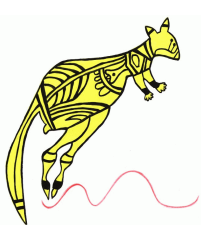
Kangaroo

With his ears pricked on high alert the Kangaroo lives to protect his mob. Watch how he worries about his mob's happiness before his own. The Kangaroo searches for food to feed his family everyday to make sure they survive. Brave Mother Kangaroo hides her joey and jumps in the other direction sacrificing herself when there is danger. The Kangaroo has shared every part of himself with Australian people for thousands of years.

Kangaroo Power Instinct—Physical Fitness

The Kangaroo's strengths to share in are being brave, generous, giving and kind

The Kangaroo message to you is; "Share all you have with your local Community"



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Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Learn about the Kangaroo to understand him better

- 1) Kangaroos are marsupial animals that are found in Australia as well as New Guinea and all of their names are from Aboriginal languages. The name Kangaroo comes from Nth Qld and was called "Gangurru"(gung ga roo
- 2) There are four different kangaroo species, the red kangaroo found in the arid interior of Australia, the eastern grey kangaroo found in the eastern part of Australia, from northern Tasmania to Cape York, western grey kangaroo which is found in Western NSW and Victoria through South Australia to Western Australia and the Wallaroo found in the top end.
- 3) Kangaroos can hop around quickly on two legs or walk around slowly on all four.
- 4) Kangaroos can't walk backwards.
- 5) Kangaroos can jump very high, sometimes three times their own height.
- 6) Kangaroos are really good swimmers.
- 8) Baby kangaroos are known as 'joeys'.
- 9) A group of kangaroos is called a 'mob'.
- 10) The red kangaroo is the largest marsupial in the world.
- 11) Kangaroos usually live to around six years old in the wild.

How Ancient Australians honoured the Kangaroos

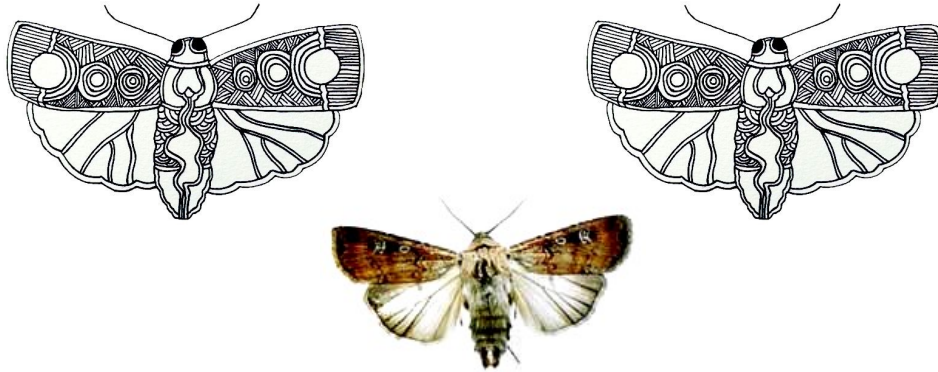
Food – one of the main food sources of Aboriginal Australia. The Roo was usually roasted whole in a ground oven or over a fire.

It sustained large groups and every single part of the Kangaroo was eaten and utilised. Bones for tools, fur for warmth, meat & even teeth

Story character – Roos were used as characters in stories throughout Ancient Australia and were often represented as a strong, kind character.

Weather Sign - The Kangaroo were also important weather indicators to show when seasons were changing. The Wiradjuri people knew that when the Quondong fruit (Native fruit known as a native peach) was ripe it was good time to hunt Kangaroo. The people watched how many joeys were born each year to know how dry it was going to be this season.

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)



Bogong Moth

Each Spring, Australia's Bogong moths make the incredible migration of over 1,000 kilometres to alpine caves in New South Wales and Victoria, and then back to their birthplace, so their huge family can survive. They are amazing insects who battle against huge odds to fulfill their destiny. Bogong Moths are in tune with the energies of the universe. They have been honoured for thousands of years by Aboriginal people in a huge ceremonial feast

Bogong Moth Power Instinct— Positional Navigation

The Bogong Moth strengths to share in are being determined, sensitive and brave

The Bogong Moth message to you is; “The most ordinary can achieve extraordinary things.”

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Learn about the Bogong Moth to understand him better

- 1) Their name comes from Bogong High Plains region in the Victorian Alps. It is a Dhudhuroa (dud tha rower) language word *bugung*
- 2) Bogong Moths live in urban areas, forests and woodlands
- 3) During winter, Bogongs feed inland on seedlings of wide-leafed plants in an area ranging from southern Queensland to South Australia
- 4) During spring, they fly south to south-eastwards, to high altitude regions in the southern part of the Great Dividing Range
- 5) Caterpillars of the Bogong Moth are known as cutworms and are considered an agricultural pest, causing significant damage to crops.
- 6) They are important foods for some animals, including ravens, bats, mountain pygmy possums and even trout.
- 8) They really are plain to look at, and have a wingspan of only 4-5 centimeters
- 9) some two thousand million Bogong moths migrate up to a thousand kilometres to spend summer in granite caves and crannies in the Australian Alps each year in Australia

How Ancient Australians honoured the Bogong Moth

Ceremony—It has been recorded for 1000's years that seven clans would converge at what is now the Mungabareena Reserve on the New South Wales side of the Murray River to discuss tribal law, settle disputes, trade goods and conduct marriage ceremonies and feast on the Bogong Moth

Food – one of the main food sources of Aboriginal Australia. It was usually roasted whole in sand or in ashes of a fire. It sustained huge groups and Moth meat is said to have a nutty taste, and is somewhat like charred pork.

Story character – They were used as a character in stories throughout Ancient Australia and were often represented as a curious being

Weather Sign - They were also important weather indicators to show when seasons were changing. The Wiradjuri people knew that when the Bogong was seen in huge numbers, hot weather was coming

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Australian Culture Totems (ACT)



Brush Turkey

Brush Turkey are shy, wary and solitary. They usually fly only to escape danger or reach a tree to roost in. Although very active, they are seldom seen using their dark plumage to hide in the undergrowth & render them invisible (flying away only if surprised or chased). Amazingly in tune with mother nature,.

They are one of the most hard working of all the Aussie animals to ensure their families survive. They have been important to the survival of Ancient Australians for thousands of years.

Brush Turkey Power Instinct— 4D

The Brush Turkey strengths to share in are being alert, determined and hard working

The Brush Turkey message to you is; “Keep trying and retrying until you reach your goal.”

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Learn about the Brush Turkey to understand him better

- 1) The Brush Turkey mother will eat extra nutrients before laying an egg, and incredibly will vary the number of eggs according to the conditions, such as rainfall and the length and timing of the previous summer
- 2) The Brush Turkey has very keen hearing and eyesight, enabling it to detect dangers well in advance
- 3) During the Great Depression when jobs and food were scarce the Brush Turkey became a reliable source of meat and eggs. The eggs are bigger than a goose egg and are 80 per cent yolk.
- 4) In summer, the male needs to protect the eggs from the hot sun. He adds more and more sand to the mound, which absorbs the sun's warmth. Then, in the cool of the morning, he removes the sand and scatters it in the colder air. When the sand has cooled down, he puts it back on the mound.
- 5) Brush turkeys are the most ancient member of a family that dates back 30 million years and includes chickens, quails, peacocks and pheasants
- 6) Australian Brush-turkey chicks hatch fully feathered and can fly within a few hours.
- 7) In winter, the male selects an area of ground, usually a small, open space in Rainforest & scrub, and scrapes a depression about 3 m across and just under 1 m deep in the sandy soil by raking backwards with his feet. Building it into a nest mound, which usually rises to about 0.6 m above ground level

How Ancient Australians honoured the Brush Turkey

Ceremony— Brush Turkeys are unusual in that they will join forces to kill a snake, circling and stamping their feet whilst drawing closer to their hapless victim. Ancient Aboriginal people mimicked the behaviour of animals & turned them into dances

Food – The Brush Turkey were a staple food in mostly rainforest areas of Australia. The Brush Turkey eggs were highly prized and even when British Settlers came to Australia they created many recipes using Brush Turkey eggs and meat.

Story character – There are many stories up and down the east coast of Australia about the Brush Turkey and how he was jealous and determined.

Weather Sign - The Aboriginal people watched for signs of the Brush Turkey building his nest and knew the cold weather was coming soon.

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)



Kookaburra

Very much home bodies. Kookaburras stick together as a family to help each other survive. The offspring help with the feeding of new babies for four years before they start their own families. Definitely morning people they sing the sun to rise each morning.

Kookaburra Power Instinct— Loyalty

The Kookaburra strengths to share in are being sensitive, happy, supportive and loyal

The Kookaburra message to you is; “To always be there when the people you love need you.”

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Learn about the Kookaburra to understand him better

- 1) The name Kookaburra is a loanword from Wiradjuri *guuguuburra*, (goo goo burra)
- 2) Two species of kookaburra can be found in Australia—Blue winged and laughing
- 3) Kookaburras are almost exclusively carnivorous, eating mice, snakes, insects, small reptiles, and the young of other birds.
- 4) The Kookaburras' beak can reach 4 inches long and is used to snatch a variety of invertebrates and small vertebrates, including the occasional small snake.
- 5) Kookaburras can live for up to 20 years in the wild
- 6) Females Kookaburras lay one to five eggs in hollow trees, which are tended by parents and elder brothers & sisters (a collective effort).
- 7) To kill its prey it shakes its head vigorously, and bangs the prey against the ground or a tree. (Kookaburra does this with all food instinctively)
- 8) The Kookaburra call is to warn other Kookaburras to stay away
- 9) Kookaburras build their nests in not only trees, but also by digging out holes in *termite* mounds

How Ancient Australians honoured the Kookaburra

Protocol — One important thing to note about Kookaburra is that he must NEVER be mocked. It has always been Law in some Aboriginal Language Groups. Although this fellow appears to be bursting with self-confidence, he is indeed a sensitive soul. Any teasing will result in hurting Kookaburra's feelings so deeply, he won't waken the star people. Imagine living without the sun!

Story character – According to Aboriginal lore in many Aboriginal Language areas, the Kookaburra's chorus each morning is a signal to the sky people to light the great fire that illuminates the sky and warms the earth.

Weather Sign - The Aboriginal people watched for signs of the Kookaburra mum and dad building his nest in a hole in the tree and knew the cold weather was coming soon.

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)



Galah

Galahs are important for spreading seeds which is of great importance for growing and saving Australian Native plants. Galahs strip bark away from the entrance to their nest, and line the nest with leaves, the only cockatoo species to do so. They are considered the old man of birds in the Australian outback because of the way they stoop over and wander around on the ground chatting to themselves.

Galah Power Instinct—Selfless

The Galahs strengths to share in are being funny, clever, loyal and open minded.

The Galah message to you is; “Have fun and look away from the negatives to see goodness.”

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Learn about the Galah to understand them better

- 1) Galahs are a common bird in almost all of Australia, and are a type of parrot, specifically a cockatoo.
- 2) Galahs typically lay 2 to 5 eggs in their nest, a hollow in a tree, and when chicks hatch, they leave the nest after approximately 49 days.
- 3) Galahs like eating vegetation, and small seeds of plants, as well as nuts and berries and they like to grind or chew objects to keep their beak sharp.
- 4) Galah's can often be seen in large flocks of 500 – 1000 birds, although they only have one mating partner for life.
- 5) The term *galah* is derived from *gilaa*, a borrowed word found in Yu-waalaraay (You well a ray) Aboriginal language of NSW
- 6) The average lifespan of all Galahs in the wild is about 30 years of age .
- 7) Galahs tend to feed in either the morning or late afternoon. They often mix with other species of cockatoo
- 8) Galahs are very funny to watch often seen in acrobatic postures, sometimes hanging upside down, holding on by one foot only, flapping their wings and giving a loud "screech!"
- 9) Galahs are well adapted to inland Australia's hot, arid conditions, and can tolerate high temperatures as well as long periods of dehydration. They can rehydrate through drinking salty water

How Ancient Australians honoured the Galah

Totem — Many Ancient Australian people were proud to call the Galah their Totem (Family). They are an important part of cultural identity and are especially significant in song, dance and music and on cultural implements.

Story character – Many Ancient teaching stories are about the Galah. These stories were based on what was special about him. For example the comical movements and noises he makes made sure he was a character in many Ancient Teaching stories

Decoration/tools—The feathers of the Galah was utilised as decoration in ceremony.

Food— The Galah along with many native birds were once important food

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)



Pelican

A great explorer who is happy to try and try again. Pelican has excellent stamina and is tough skinned. He prefers to go around in large groups and loves his tucker. The pelican can be a bit clumsy and inventive in how he does things.

Pelican Power Instinct — Risk taker

The Pelicans strengths to share in are being determined, clever and brave.

The Pelican message to you is; “Never be afraid to explore new opportunities and places.”

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Learn about the Pelican to understand them better

- 1) Male Australian pelicans can weigh in excess of 10 kg, but 8 kg is a more usual upper weight
- 2) Only one native species of Pelican can be found in Australia
- 3) Pelicans are not capable of long flapping flights, but can remain in the air for 24 hours, covering hundreds of kilometres
- 4) By moving from one thermal to the next, pelicans can travel long distances with a minimum of effort, reaching air speeds of up to 56 km/hour.
- 5) Pelicans mainly eat fish, but they are cunning feeders and eat a lot of aquatic animals including crustaceans, tadpoles and turtles
- 6) The bill and pouch of pelicans play an important role in feeding. The bill is sensitive and this helps locate fish in murky water.
- 7) Pelicans plunge their bills into the water, using their pouches as nets. Once something is caught, a pelican draws its pouch to its breast. This empties the water and allows the bird to move the prey into a swallowing position. The bills pouch can hold up to 13 litres of water
- 8) The Pelican can live up to 25 years in the wild
- 9) The Pelican has a wing span of up to 2.5 metres

How Ancient Australians honoured the Pelican

Totem — Many Ancient Australian people were proud to call the Pelican their Totem (Family) They are an important part of cultural identity and are honoured in song, dance and music and on cultural implements.

Story character – Many Ancient teaching stories are about the Pelican. These stories were based on what was special about him. For example the huge pouch of his bill is similar to a net, so one creation story was about how the pelican made the first fishing net scoop.

Decoration/tools—The feathers and skin of the pelican was utilised as decoration and clothing. The large beak and bones were used to make weapons and tools

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)



Pandanus

Pandanus have always been very useful and important plants for Australian Aboriginal people, a 'one stop shop' with every part of the tree being used for craft objects, food and medicine. Many animals also use the Pandanus as a safe home to hide in due to its prickly leaves

Pandanus Power Instinct— Unselfishness

The Pandanus trees strengths to share in are being caring, protective and generous.

**The Pandanus Trees message to you is;
“Knowledge should be shared to help others.”**

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Learn about the Pandanus Tree to understand them better

- 1) Pandanus commonly have many thick stilt roots near the base, which provide support as the tree grows top-heavy with leaves, fruit, & branches
- 2) Pandanus have many prism-like sections, resembling the fruit of the pineapple. Typically, the fruit changes from green to bright orange or red as it ripens. The fruits can stay on the tree for more than 12 months.
- 3) Pandanus leaves are used for crafts. People collect the leaves from plants in the wild, cutting only mature leaves so that the plant will keep growing. The leaves are sliced into fine strips and sorted weavers produce mats, place mats and boxes
- 4) The pandanus produces large seed pods from June – October .These pods are a favourite food of Sulphur-crested cockatoos.
- 5) There are around 30 to 40 species of Pandanus in Australia
- 6) Pandanus spiralis produces tough fibrous fruit. Each cluster of fruit has about 10 to 25 individual nut-like fruits which each contain 7 to 10 seeds
- 7) If you want to try eating the seeds from inside the fruit, wait until they have changed to a brown colour. Place them in a vice and use a saw to gently cut into the nut-like fruit. The reward is worth it though; they're delicious, tasting a little bit like peanuts and coconut together

How Ancient Australians honoured the Pandanus

Tools — The Pandanus leaf fibres are woven into baskets, bags and mats

Food – Aboriginal people used the core of the pandanus trunk to treat stomach pain, diarrhea, wounds, toothache and mouth sores. The tree's large clusters of woody nuts contain seeds that can be eaten raw or roasted. Pandanus fruits contain an oily, protein rich, nutty tasting seed which can be eaten raw or cooked (usually roasted). This was an important food for coastal Aboriginal people.

Weather Indicator —When the Pandanus ripened, this meant that the “straight” down rains and “cold time” weather season will start in Western Australia

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)



Crow

In some Aboriginal language groups of Australia the Crow is known for his cleverness and keen eyesight. A sentry to warn when some of the people in the group are in the wrong place according to Aboriginal law. This bird is dreaming for Some Aboriginal groups. It has a dreaming story from the old times. People dance for this bird; he 'has a lot of culture'.

Crow Power Instinct—Brain Storming

The Crows strengths to share in are being clever, strong and mischievous.

The Crows message to you is; “Never be afraid to fail or take risks.”

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Learn about Crow to understand them better

- 1) Crows are extremely intelligent birds. They have the largest brain of all birds except for parrots. The body to brain ratio of a crow is the equivalent of a chimpanzee! This means that it is not far off that of humans.
- 2) There are six members found in Australia - three are called crows and three ravens, although there is very little difference between them and they look very similar. The bases of the feathers of the crows are white, while those of the ravens are grey
- 3) They are frequent backyard visitors with a distinctive cry, very loud and increasing in volume when they chat to each other.
- 4) They show great ingenuity when it comes to nest building. They have been seen pulling the rubber strips out of car windscreen wipers to line their nests and stealing letters from letterboxes to shred.
- 5) Crows are garden buddies to have around as they will eat every snail they can find. Crows and ravens have similar diets - they eat a variety of foods including grains, fruits, insects, small animals, eggs, refuse
- 6) crows and ravens are the creatures with the highest capacity for memory and learning when viewing the landscape from the air
- 7) Crows have complex vocal communication, possibly even basic language skills. Their repertoire is up to 80 or more call types, and includes vocal mimicry. They transfer knowledge to each other, and can count to about 6.

How Ancient Australians honoured the Crow

Creation Stories – In Australian Aboriginal Creation stories, Crow is a trickster, culture hero and ancestral being. In the Kulin nation in central Victoria he was known as *Waa* (also *Wahn* or *Wang*) and was regarded as one of two skin family ancestors. Legends relating to Crow have been observed in various Aboriginal language groups and cultures across Australia. To the Noongar people of southwestern Australia, the Australian raven was *Wardar*, "the Watcher" and was wily and unpredictable.

Weather Indicator —When the Crows started building their nests this meant that the cold weather was starting to come to an end and when the chicks were in the nest it would be warmer (spring)

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)



Cicada

The Cicada is an insect that represents a warning animal that protects others. The Cicada was also seen as great mentor for young Aboriginal people in some groups, as he loudly showed them how to go through the many level of Initiation before they become adults—a time of rebirth and continuous learning

Cicada Power Instinct— Educator

The Cicadas strengths to share in are being determined, carefree and a protector.

The Cicadas message to you is; “Learn by following your instincts.”

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Learn about Cicada to understand them better

- 1) Australia has two types of Cicadas which are large insects made famous for the courtship calls of the males
- 2) Cicadas have 5 prominent eyes set wide apart, short antennae, and clear membrane front wings.
- 3) They typically live in trees, feeding on watery sap from sugary tissue and laying their eggs in a split in the bark
- 4) When the eggs hatch, the newly hatched nymphs drop to the ground and burrow. Cicadas live underground as nymphs for most of their lives at depths down to about 2.5 metres
- 5) As they grow the nymphs construct an exit tunnel to the surface and emerge. They then shed their skins on a nearby plant for the last time, and emerge as adults. The abandoned exoskeletons remain, still clinging to the bark of the tree
- 6) A cricket predator from Australia is capable of attracting singing male cicadas by imitating the timed click replies of single female cicadas, who respond in pair-formation by flicking their wings . Very clever
- 7) Cicadas are the loudest insects in the world and there are more than 200 species in Australia. some are even loud enough (120 decibels) to be painful to the human ear. Cicadas also often sing in chorus, which makes it more difficult for a predator to locate an individual.

How Ancient Australians honoured the Cicada

Creation Ancestor—In many Aboriginal Language Groups the Cicada is special because he created sacred places and still lives there.

Food – The Cicada contain an oily, protein rich, nutty tasting seed which can is eaten cooked (usually roasted). This was an important food for many Aboriginal people.

Weather Indicator —The cicadas would usually warn of a pending bad storm, this is because they 'cry out' by making a distinct noise when a bad storm is coming, even if the storm is still 2 days away. They're nature's natural weather forecaster, so in effect, they give us a warning when there's a danger. As such, listening out for a Cicada people are given a 'signal' when a bad thing is about to happen.

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)



Green Tree Frog

The Green Tree Frog was seen as a knowledgeable and important part of the group in Ancient Australia to many Aboriginal Language groups. He is attached to water teachings and all stories about him teach survival and water knowledge

Frog Power Instinct — Protector

The Green Tree Frogs strengths to share in are being open to change, sensitive and powerful.

The Green Frogs message to you is; “embrace your voice with pride, be heard, and shed any negative forces you hold each new day.”

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Learn about Green Tree Frog to understand them better

- 1) The Australian green tree frog is a member of the tree frog family is native to Australia and New Guinea and includes about 160 species
- 2) The green tree frog is native to northern and eastern regions of Australia and to the lowlands of New Guinea. Distribution is limited mostly to areas with warm, wet tropical climates.
- 3) When a frog swallows its prey, it blinks, which pushes its eyeballs down on top of the mouth to help push the food down its throat.
- 4) A frog completely sheds its skin about once a week. After it pulls off the old, dead skin, the frog usually eats it.
- 5) Most frogs have teeth, although usually only on their upper jaw. The teeth are used to hold prey in place until the frog can swallow it.
- 6) Frog bones form a new ring every year when the frog is hibernating, just like trees do. Scientists can count these rings to discover the age of the frog.
- 7) The Green Tree Frog has an average life expectancy in captivity of 16 years, but some have been known to live over 20 years
- 8) They aren't very good jumpers, but are excellent climbers, using their sticky fingers and tummy to climb steep and slippery surfaces.

How Ancient Australians honoured the Green Frog

Food – Aboriginal people ate many different types of non-poisonous frogs mainly in the summer when they were not breeding. The frogs were generally roasted on the hot coals of a fire.

Weather Indicator — It is believed in the Northern Territory If you listen to the frog calls, frog tells you where the water is, where you can find water to drink. It's call also tells you when the lightning is around. The green frog known as Garkman knows that the water will come and tells that the water is close. Garkman is found in paintings and songs and is associated with both rain and flood, water and seasonal change: he is a weather symbol. He symbolises the wet season and replenishment

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)



Magpie

The bird the European Colonists now call Magpie have always been very important to Australian Aboriginal people. Aboriginal peoples stories often used the Magpie as an example to teach stories based on the Magpie's motherly love, protection and provision of food and warnings. These stories have been told in Australia for thousands of years

Magpie Power Instinct—Guardian

The Magpies strengths to share in are being optimistic, vocal and a good listener.

The Magpies message to you is; “Look for the best in others so they can gain your trust. Each day is a new beginning”

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Learn about Magpie to understand them better

- 1) Magpies occupy the same territory for their entire life. Once they find a suitable patch, they will stay there forever — up to 20 years. That area doesn't have to be very big, it might be just a couple of hectares or even less in the city
- 2) Although it's bad news if a magpie takes a dislike to you, they're actually pretty easy to make friends with. Once a magpie knew you and judged you to be a nice person, you would have earned a friend for life. They will form very long friendships, like dogs
- 3) Believe it or not, only between eight and 10 per cent of magpies ever swoop people. The vast majority will never look at you sideways, even during mating season.
- 4) Magpies can hear the sound of grubs and worms under the ground. If you've ever seen a magpie turn its head to the side while walking across grass, it's probably zeroing in on the location of its lunch.
- 5) There are nine distinct varieties (sub-species) of these birds. There are four known as the 'black-backed' Australian Magpie, while the rest belong to the 'white-backed' type
- 6) This bird are good at mimicry, and can mimic the voices of over 35 species of native and introduced birds, and even those of other animals like horses and dogs.
- 7) The Aussie Magpies have a wide variety of simple to complex calls, the pitch of which may vary over up to 4 octaves: The babies and young ones would emit continuous high-pitched short begging noises when hungry. When threatened or distressed, they would give out a series of high-pitched alarm calls. As they successfully defend their turfs, they will burst into song (known as 'carolling').

How Ancient Australians honoured the Magpie

Stories — The Australian magpie featured in aboriginal folklore around Australia. The Yindjibarndi people of the Pilbara in the northwest of the country used the bird as a signal for sunrise, frightening them awake with its call.

Creation Ancestor—The Magpie is given credit by the Noongar (noong ah) people of Western Australia as a creator of Australia's first ever sunrise

Totem Ancestor—It was a special totem bird of the people of the Illawarra region south of Sydney who considered it their ancestor

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)



Australian Falcons

Known to some Aboriginal groups as Fire hawks. These amazing and clever birds learnt from Aboriginal people to burn the undergrowth off with fire to get their dinner. Sometimes when the Aboriginal man's fire is dying off, these raptors will pick up a burning stick and fly with it in his beak to start another fire so he can keep feasting on the fleeing insects and bugs.

Falcons Power Instinct— Insight

The Falcons strengths to share in are having amazing vision, commitment and patience.

The Falcons message to you is; “Focus on your goals looking at the big picture, don't rush Important decisions.”

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Learn about Falcons to understand them better

- 1) The Brown Falcon is one of the most widespread birds in Australia — there is almost nowhere they cannot be seen, at least occasionally
- 2) Falcons they are most commonly seen perched on power poles, or hovering or flying back and forth over open habitats, especially grasslands and low shrublands, where they search for prey
- 3) Falcons are opportunistic raptors, catching and eating mammals and birds, snakes and insects, with introduced rabbits are their most common prey in many places, especially in summer.
- 4) Falcons are usually seen alone, searching for food from an exposed perch. When prey is sighted, the bird swoops down and grasps it in its claws (talons), killing the prey with a bite to the spine
- 5) Often Falcons will hunt by hovering or gliding over the ground, often at great heights
- 6) Falcons breed from June to November, usually in an old nest of another hawk species; they occasionally nest in hollow limbs of trees. The brown falcon lays between two and five eggs that have red and brown spots and blotches.
- 7) Falcons will pursue flying birds, being able to fly at speeds of up to 300 km/h, and it soars to a great height in search of prey. The Peregrine Falcon is considered the fastest animal in the world

How Ancient Australians honoured the Falcons

Totems — The power and hunting prowess of the falcons made these common birds of prey important Totem ancestors for many Aboriginal Language Groups around Australia

Creation Ancestors – Multiple Sacred areas or landscape creation were credited to Australian native Falcons and hawks. An example is Mt Andulja (Place of the hawk) in Central Australia

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)



Gecko

An important Totemic ancestor of many Aboriginal people who used the strengths of the fast and flexible Gecko to teach young people important lessons to help the group survive. The Gecko was used as a subject in stories because he was seen a lot by the children (as he is such a common animal) which was a constant reminder to be good and help their family

Gecko Power Instinct—Logic

The Gecko's strengths to share in are being adaptable, clever and agile.

The Geckos message to you is; “Focus and use the amazing skills you have, size is no barrier”

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Learn about Geckos to understand him better

- 1) Australian Geckos are easily recognised, being mostly nocturnal with soft bodies and tiny granular scales
- 2) Geckos have well-developed limbs with five digits, large eyes with vertical pupils, no eyelids, and broad fleshy tongues. In the absence of eyelids, the tongue is used to lick the eye clean.
- 3) Geckos are nocturnal hunters with eyes that are up to 350 times more sensitive at night than human eyes
- 4) Geckos are the super communicators of the reptile world and apart from legless lizards are the only lizards able to make noises. Their chirruping calls attract mates or let other geckos know that they are in their territory
- 5) Geckos eyes can distinguish colours by the light of the moon - conditions in which humans and most other animals are colour-blind.
- 6) They can instantly shed their tail if they are caught by a predator, and then grow a new one: a skill beyond the powers of most animals with a backbone. Other species can shed their tails but do not then grow a new one: they learn to live with a stump.
- 7) Geckos can cling to glass windows and even ceilings, thanks to their sticky Velcro-like feet covered by thousands of minute bristles

How Ancient Australians honoured Geckos

Creation Ancestor—The Gecko is given credit by the Aranda people of Northern Territory as a creator of a large sacred rock formation 160km below Alice Springs

Moral teachers —The Aranda tell of how the powerful Gecko ran off with a girl from the wrong skin group. They were both punished and turned into stone. This was told to kids for thousands of years to teach marriage laws. In another story Gecko is called Oolah and he teaches all new generations of young Aboriginal children to not think you are better than your group or bad things will happen.

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)



Australian Storm Bird

The Storm bird was used by Aboriginal people to lead people to safety, as well as forewarning a change in the seasons to let the Aboriginal people know to move to a new camp and time to hunt other animals

Storm Bird Power Instinct — Purpose

**The Storm Birds strengths to share in are being
A protector, tactical and adventurous.**

**The Storm Birds message to you is; “Explore new
places using your instincts to keep your family
safe.”**

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Learn about Storm birds to understand them better

- 1) The real name of the Australian Storm bird is the Common or Pacific Koel who is a member of the Cuckoo family of birds
- 2) The male Common Koel is easily identified by its entirely glossy black plumage, tinged with blue and green, and striking red eye. The female has glossed brown upperparts, heavily spotted with white, and a black crown
- 3) The male Eastern Koel advertises its presence by a loud ascending whistle or 'koo-el', monotonously repeated; the call of the female is a repetitive 'keek-keek-keek-keek'. Males will call throughout the day and often well into the night when sound travels further.
- 4) In March the Storm Birds leave Australia to return to New Guinea, they travel long distances. A Storm Bird tagged in New South Wales was located in New Guinea 2950 kms away. The young Koels usually leave for New Guinea shortly after the adult birds. This is a remarkable journey since the young birds do not have any parental guidance or escort to make this first long journey to New Guinea.
- 5) Storm Birds feed almost entirely in the canopy of trees. Their food consists of fruits, especially figs, taken directly from the tree.
- 6) A Storm bird lays its eggs in the nests of other bird species. Common hosts are honey eaters. A single egg is laid in the host's nest and once hatched the chick forces the other eggs and hatchlings out of the nest. When the chick leaves the nest it roosts in the outer branches of a tree, cheeping all the time while the significantly smaller parents desperately search for enough food to satisfy the nagging youngster
- 7) Due to its loud vocal arrival each spring, which typically coincides with warmer weather and an increase in rain and storms, the Koel is often referred to as the "rain bird" or "storm bird".

How Ancient Australians honoured Storm Birds

Creation ancestor — The Storm bird was an important ancestor to many Aboriginal language groups. In one story the Storm Bird is an important character in the creation of the Milky Way star system

Weather Indicator —When the Storm Bird started calling in Spring time of each year, it was an indicator to the Aboriginal people that seasons were changing, the rain was coming and different foods/plants were now available as medicine, to make tools and undertake various camp activities and ceremonies.

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)



River Red Gum Trees

The bark of the River Red Gum was one of several trees Aboriginal people used to make wooden bowls known as Coolamons in parts of Australia. They were used for collecting, transporting and storing food and water. Some had a sharpened end for digging. Aboriginal Women used head rings traditionally made of human hair to balance these bowls on their heads. Gum from the trees was used as a type of glue to hold tools and weapons together.

River Red Gum Power Instinct—Mindfulness

The River Red Gums strengths to share in are being generous, charitable and Healing.

The River Red Gums message to you is; “You have many gifts to offer the universe. Use them wisely.”

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Learn about Red Gum trees to understand them better

- 1) River red gum is a medium-sized to tall tree that is commonly 20m tall, but can exceed 45m tall. River red gum is the most widely distributed of all Eucalypt trees.
- 2) The bark of the River red gum can vary from being rough to smooth, with colourings of cream to white, pale grey or buff, with grey and reddish patches. The bark sheds in large irregular flakes over most of the trunk
- 3) River red gums are notoriously dangerous (but very clever) for dropping their branches in times of drought to conserve water
- 4) Old rotten limb hollows, or broken branches of River Gums, provide important nesting hollows for galahs, sulphur-crested cockatoos, gang-gang cockatoos, cockatiels and various parrots. (hollows take about 120 years to form so old trees are important)
- 5) The Eucalyptus oil of gum trees is used in the pharmaceutical industry for a variety of products such as cough lozenges, inhalations, liniments and mouth washes. This usage came from watching the Aboriginal Australians using the tree for medicine
- 6) The timber of Gums were traditionally used in rot resistant applications like stumps, fence posts and sleepers, more recently it has been recognised in craft furniture for its spectacular rich deep red colour

How Ancient Australians honoured the River Red Gums

Medicine — The Aborigines used the Red Rive Gum tree for its medicinal properties. A handful of young leaves, crushed and then boiled in water, was used as a liniment that was rubbed in for chest or joint pain, particularly for general aches and flu symptoms. Young leaves were also heated in a pit over hot coals, and the vapors were inhaled, which helped with the treatment of general sickness.

Food – Manna is sap which exudes from many gum trees, often from where insects have made holes. It dries into sugary white drops which fall to the ground. Delicious

Tools —Bowls and dishes were made from the heavy bark. Those gnarled round growths on the trunk were used as well. Aboriginal people made canoes from the **bark** of eucalypts .They cut the bark to shape about 3m long then held it over a fire, so that the sides would curl. Both ends were tied with inner-bark fibre rope and wooden stretchers were used to prevent the sides collapsing.

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)



Kurrajong Tree

The native Kurrajong tree has been central to Aboriginal communities for thousands of years as a weather indicator (when it flowers it predicts rain), compass (rough bark on one side was north), important food & water source and supplier of materials to make netting and tools that will enable their survival.

Kurrajong Tree Power Instinct — Observation

The Kurrajong strengths to share in are being useful, reserved and wise

The Kurrajong Tree's message to you is; "Draw on the instincts you inherited from your Ancestors to know the answer."

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Learn about Kurrajong Trees to understand them better

- 1) The Kurrajong, or Bottle Tree, is a medium sized tree, and native to Eastern Australia (Eastern Victoria to Townsville). It grows 5-15m tall with a short, Boab-like trunk and dense crown of glossy green foliage.
- 2) The Kurrajong Tree is semi-deciduous - trees lose their leaves briefly during winter, before shooting beautiful new foliage.
- 3) The Kurrajong bears bell shaped, cream to pink flowers with red speckles from October to January. Flowers are followed by hard-shelled, dark brown seed pods. Seed pods are 2-3" long, and contain large yellow seeds
- 4) The Kurrajong has a very deep root system, which is responsible for its drought hardiness. The stout trunk also holds water, similar to a Boab Tree, which makes this tree even more able to handle hot, dry conditions
- 5) The Kurrajong is a compass tree. If you want to know where North is just look at the rough bark side of a Kurrajong.
- 6) The name KURRAJONG comes from the Dharug Aboriginal people's language in the Sydney area and means bark used to make fishing line. It was originally Gar-Ra-Jun

How Ancient Australians honoured Kurrajong Trees

Tools — Kurrajong's soft spongy wood was used for making shields and fibre was stripped from the trunk of the tree and was soaked in water for a few weeks and then was traditionally used to make rope, fishing line and nets.

Food – Aboriginal people ate the Kurrajong's young roots, and the seeds located in a seed pod were often removed and cleaned of the fine hairs within the seed pod and were often roasted and ground for damper.

Weather Indicator —When the Kurrajong came out in flowers the Aboriginal people knew it was coming into dry time

Water Holder—The Kurrajong has always been a water holder tree. Aboriginal people carved holes into the soft bark to use the large amount of water stored between the inner bark and the trunk. The Roots of the Kurrajong could be squeezed for water when there was drought.

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)



Sulphur Crested Cockatoo

Such a noisy fellow of the Australian bush. His showy and loud attitude make sure he was used in many Ancient Australians Creation and teaching stories. The Sulphur Crested Cockatoo is a member of the parrot family. They hang out in large 'gangs' or family groups, and communicate using bobs of the head, squawks, and the movement of that amazing bright yellow crest.

Cockatoo Power Instinct — Story Teller

**The Cockatoo's strengths to share in are being
A good communicator, flexible and finding joy in life.**

**The Cockatoo's message to you is; "Find your
sense of fun in everything you do."**

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Learn about Cockatoos to understand them better

- 1) Eleven species of cockatoos are native only to Australia. Seven species of cockatoos can be found on the islands of the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and the Solomon Islands.
- 2) Cockatoos are known for the feathered yellow crest on their head. They can raise or flatten this crest and will often raise it when agitated
- 3) The cockatoo's bills are curved and very powerful. They keep their bills sharp by scraping the jaws together when resting and chewing on wood
- 4) Cockatoos are social birds and usually live in flocks. Flocks may be as small as 100 birds when food is plentiful but often grow to thousands in times of drought. They have lookouts when eating
- 5) The call of the cockatoo can be harsh and extremely loud. They use their voice to communicate danger to other birds, to indicate moods of fear or anger, and to recognize each other. When they feel threatened they will sometimes growl
- 6) Cockatoos stay in the same area year-round and do not migrate due to weather.
- 7) The Cockatoos eggs are laid in a suitable tree hollow, which is prepared by both sexes. Both birds also incubate and care for the chicks. The chicks remain with the parents all year round and family groups will stay together indefinitely.

How Ancient Australians honoured the White Cockatoos

Tools — The Cockatoo's bones were used as sharp tools or on the end of fishing prongs. It would usually be a piece of rib, leg or wing bone, sharpened at both ends and fixed to the end of a spear with plant resin as glue.

Teaching and Creation Story Character/icon – Aboriginal people used the screeching, common and characterful Cockatoo as a character for many Creation and Teaching stories.

Decoration —Cockatoos feathers are so beautiful. So it is not surprising that their feathers were utilised often in Aboriginal people's ceremony and dance. Amazing headdresses were assembled, and feather down was attached to much of the dancers body with ochre paint or animal fat.

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)



Black Wattle Tree

Wattles enriched Aboriginal culture by being the raw material for dyes, perfumes, clap sticks and other instruments and, using knowledge acquired over centuries, it was applied in various ways as medicines. Boomerangs were traditionally fashioned from Mulga or Black Wattle. Returning boomerangs were made from the roots of trees which already had the desired shape. This is because the tips of a boomerang will break off when it hits the ground unless the grain of the wood follows the shape.

Black Wattle Power Instinct — Cooperation

The Black Wattles' strengths to share in are being giving, resilient and skillful

The Black Wattle's message to you is; "Look to the past to know your future."

Australian Culture Totems (ACT)

Learn about Black Wattle Trees to understand them better

- 1) The cracks and crevices in the wattle's bark are home for many insects and invertebrates. The rare Tasmanian Hair Streak Butterfly lays her eggs in these cracks, which hatch to produce caterpillar larva attended by ants that feed off the sweet excretions.
- 2) It has attractive (feathery) leaves, dark green foliage, and smooth, dark bark – hence its common name. It has the typical pale yellow to golden wattle flower.
- 3) It was grown in plantations here and overseas, as its bark and wood contain high levels of chemicals called tannins, used in tanning leather.
- 4) The clever Black Wattle tells you when it needs water. When the plant is dry its leaves, which are usually open and in full display, noticeably close up. This is the time to give it a good drink.
- 5) Black Wattle is part of the Acacia family of plants. There are around 1000 Acacia species native to Australia and go back 35 million years.
- 6) Black Wattle produces many seeds that are spread by birds or rodents, in mud on people and domestic animals, in contaminated soil and by water. It's germination is stimulated by fire.
- 7) The roots of the Black Wattle help bind and fix soils after fire

How Ancient Australians honoured the Black Wattle Tree

Tools — The bark of many species, including black wattle, was used for coarse rope and string, and the tannins and gums in the bark of black wattle were used as a valuable natural glue that plugged holes of weapons & tools. Wattle's bark was split into lengths of coarse string to produce baskets and bind the flint heads onto Aboriginal people's spear shafts.

Food – Different Aboriginal groups used wattles for various purposes as high protein food. Seeds were often ground & consumed as cakes or bread. An infusion of the bark in water has also been used for medicinal purposes.

Weather Indicator —When the Wattle Flowers dropped into the Yarra it meant the mullet were running. Wattle was a signpost for events, such as the coming of the whales on the coast, the Bogong moths in the high country and the eels in the rivers .

Medicine—Burning the acacia leaves to make smoke, Aboriginal groups performed a cleansing ceremony. This burning also pays respect to country & the old people