

## Resource Guide

# Health and Physical Education

The information and resources contained in this guide provide a platform for teachers and educators to consider how to effectively embed important ideas around reconciliation, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions, within the specific subject/learning area of [Health and Physical Education](#). Please note that this guide is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive, and that users are encouraged to consult with their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and [critically evaluate resources](#), in engaging with the material contained in the guide.

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*Please be aware this guide may contain references to names and works of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that are now deceased. External links may also include names and images of those who are now deceased.*

## Background and Introduction to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Physical Education

*“[Health and] healing goes beyond treating...disease. It is about working towards reclaiming a sense of balance and harmony in the physical, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual works of our people, and practicing our profession in a manner that upholds these multiple dimension of Indigenous health”* –Professor Helen Milroy, Aboriginal Child Psychiatrist and Australia’s first Aboriginal medical Doctor.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Australia’s colonial history has been characterised by devastating land dispossession, violence, and overt and unapologetic racism. Such inequitable and severe disruptions to community and cultural life can have profound impacts on both physical and socio-emotional health and wellbeing. Research into the current context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health frequently points to the enduring, intergenerational impacts of unjust colonial policies and practices, and the imperative to “[close the gap](#)” between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australian mental and physical health outcomes. While this guide focuses predominantly on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, programs, and events that have played a positive role in health and physical education in the postcolonial context, it is important to appreciate that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been engaged in positive health and physical education activities for thousands of years prior to colonisation. Cultural knowledges around physical and spiritual [healing practices](#); the uses of native Australian [bush tucker/medicine](#); everyday physical activity such as hunting and gathering; participation in active customs such as dance; as well as participation in [traditional games](#) all represent traditional modes of maintaining physical health, all the while contributing to the continuation of culture. To give just a couple of examples, team configuration conventions in the Juwularai game of [boogalah](#) work to teach players about Dhé or totems, and the Datiwuy game of [waayin](#) serves to educate players about bird and animal tracks to assist with traditional hunting activity. Similarly, the physical activity of traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance often also has metaphysical connections to the Dreaming, drawing on stylised and symbolic movement to convey culturally and spiritually significant stories and Songlines.

Often, beyond an individual’s physical well-being, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts of health thus simultaneously encapsulate the social, emotional, cultural and spiritual wellbeing of the whole community. An individual and community’s wellbeing is also conceived to be deeply tied to the natural environment, reflecting the importance of caring for, and connecting to, [Country](#). That is, according to a “[healthy culture, healthy country](#)” perspective, there is a clear synthesis between the health of culture, the health of Country, and the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members. Furthermore, as indicated through the quote by Professor Helen Milroy above, the promotion of health and healing in the present and into the future relies as much on actively recognising past ancestral knowledges and colonial injustices alike. This holistic understanding of health and physical education is, therefore, crucial to understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical, athletic, social and cultural events and issues to this day.

## Timeline of Key Dates in the Contemporary History of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Physical Education

This timeline chronologically lists some of the key dates in the more recent history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Physical Education and/or with regard to the relationship between health, physical education and reconciliation more generally.

- **60,000+ years ago:**
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia have maintained longstanding conventions and conceptualisations pertaining to health, physical education and wider wellbeing for tens of thousands of years.
- **1866:**
  - A historic year for cricket in Australia, when an Aboriginal cricket team from the western district of Victoria played against the exclusive Melbourne Cricket Club. Just over a year later (in 1868), this Aboriginal team became Australia's first-ever cricket team to tour England (10 years before the first non-Indigenous Test team).
- **1870-1912:**
  - During this period, Aboriginal sprinters dominated professional athletics and were often able to win significant prize money. For many, it provided an escape from the controls placed on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples under the Protection system.
- **1960:**
  - [Kevin Coombs](#) was the first Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Paralympian, first representing Australia (in wheelchair basketball) at the Rome Paralympics (and at four subsequent Paralympic Games)
- **1962:**
  - [Jeff Dynevor](#) (boxer) became the first Aboriginal athlete to win a Commonwealth Games World Medal.
- **1964:**
  - The first known Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Olympians, [Adrian Blair](#) (boxer) and [Michael Ah Matt](#) (basketballer) competed at the Tokyo Olympic Games.
- **1971:**
  - The first [Aboriginal Medical Service \(AMS\)](#) was initiated on a voluntary basis in Redfern, Sydney
- **1973:**
  - [Arthur Beetson](#) (Rugby League player and coach) became the first Aboriginal athlete to captain an Australian team in any sport.
- **1974:**
  - The national umbrella AMS organisation, the National Aboriginal and Islander Health Organisation (NAIHO) was formed.
- **1984:**
  - At the New York Paralympic Games, [Peter Kirby](#) became the first Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander athlete to win a Paralympic gold medal as part of the Australian men's 4x100m relay team.

- **1988:**
  - The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody was initiated.
- **1991:**
  - The final [report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody](#) was published, which led to the establishment of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation and thus the formal process of reconciliation in Australia.
- **1996:**
  - [Nova Peris](#) became the first Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander athlete to win an Olympic gold medal when she was part of the Australian women's hockey team at the Atlanta Olympic Games.
- **1997:**
  - The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission released [Bringing them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their families](#).
- **2000:**
  - At the Sydney Olympic Games, [Cathy Freeman](#) carried both the Australian and Aboriginal Flag—a symbol of reconciliation and her pride in her Aboriginal heritage—during her victory lap after winning Gold in the 400m sprint.
- **2005:**
  - The AFL put together a panel to select an [Indigenous Team of the Century](#) to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first senior Australian rules game played by an Aboriginal player ([Joe Johnson](#)).
- **2007:**
  - Oxfam released the [Close the Gap: Solutions to the Indigenous Health Crisis facing Australia](#) report, with the subsequent Close the Gap campaign being launched on April 4 to push for Federal, State and Territory Governments to commit to closing the gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a generation. The first National Close the Gap day was correspondingly held this year.
- **2009:**
  - Australia pledged official support of the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), which includes a number of health-related Articles.
  - Following the 2008 national [Apology to the Stolen Generations](#), and based on a national consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the [Healing Foundation](#) was established.
- **2019**
  - Reconciliation Australia co-hosted a [Truth-Telling Symposium](#) with the Healing Foundation, which focused on the goodwill and expertise required to progress reconciliation and healing through truth-telling.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Physical Education Organisations, Programs, Projects and Campaigns

The following list includes a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and physical education organisations, programs, projects or campaigns that are either active today, or have played an active role in the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and physical education in Australia. Note that some of these organisations, programs, projects or campaigns may not be exclusively Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned or governed, but are nevertheless meaningfully dedicated to supporting positive health and physical education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

- [Aboriginal Health/Medical Services](#)
- [Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory \(AMSANT\) Indigenous Leadership Program](#)
- [Arthur Beetsen Foundation](#)
- [Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association \(AIDA\)](#)
- [Australian Indigenous Health/InfoNet](#)
- beyondblue [The Invisible Discriminator](#) campaign
- beyondblue/Brisbane Indigenous Media Association (BIMA) [Proppa Deadly](#) project
- beyondblue [Always Be You](#)
- beyondblue [Stories for Keeping Strong](#)
- [Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives \(CATSINaM\)](#)
- [Close the Gap](#) campaign
- [Deadly Choices](#) campaign
- [Family Matters](#) campaign
- [Healing Foundation](#)
- [LIME Network](#)
- [Lloyd McDermott Rugby Development Team](#)
- [Lowitja Institute](#)
- [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Association \(NATSIHWA\)](#)
- [National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy \(NASCA\)](#)
- [Poche Indigenous Health Network](#)
- [South Australian Aboriginal Sports Training Academy \(SAASTA\)](#)
- [The Enemy Within](#)

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sportspeople

The lists below provides the names of a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sportspeople, past and present. You may wish to carry out some further research around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander athletes from your local area, or indeed compare the diverse stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sportspeople across Australia.

### Australian Rules Football

Adam Goodes  
Barry Cable  
Chris Johnson  
Cyril Rioli  
David Wirrpanda  
Derek Kickett  
Gavin Wanganeen  
Jeff Farmer  
Lance "Buddy" Franklin  
Leroy Jetta  
Mark Williams  
Michael Long  
Nicky Winmar  
Patrick "Paddy" Ryder  
Peter Matera  
Shaun Burgoyne  
Stephen Michael

Andrew McLeod  
Chance Bateman  
Chris Lewis  
Danyle Pearce  
Darryl White  
Des Headland  
Graham "Polly" Farmer  
James "Jim" Krakouer  
Leon Davis  
Lewis Jetta  
Maurice Rioli  
Michael O'Loughlin  
Norm McDonald  
Peter Burgoyne  
Phil Krakouer  
Sir Douglas Nicholls  
Syd Jackson

You can also learn about other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AFL players by visiting the AFL Players website's [Diversity](#) page. For a map of 2017 players, see: [http://www.aflplayers.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/AFLPA193\\_A-Indigenous-Player-Map-Update-2017.pdf](http://www.aflplayers.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/AFLPA193_A-Indigenous-Player-Map-Update-2017.pdf)

### Basketball

Danny Morseu  
Kevin Coombs (Wheelchair basketball)  
Nathan Jawai  
Patrick "Patty" Mills  
Rohanee Cox

### Boxing

Anthony Mundine  
Damien Hooper  
Dave Sands

Cameron Hammond  
Daniel Geale  
Elliot ('Elley') Bennett

Francis ('Frank') Roberts  
Jeffrey Dynevor  
Joe Williams  
Keith Saunders  
Lionel Rose  
Paul Fleming  
Robbie Peden  
Wally Carr

Hector Thompson  
Jerry Jerome  
Johnny Jarrett (Patten)  
Lawrence Austin  
Neville Williams  
Renold Quinlan  
Ron Richards

## Cricket

Ashleigh Gardner  
Eddie Gilbert  
Jack Marsh  
John McGuire  
<sup>[RA.1]</sup>Daniel Christian

Edna Newfong (Crouch)  
Jason Gillespie  
Johnny Mullagh  
Mabel Crouch (Campbell)

## Darts

Beau Anderson  
Kyle Anderson

## Hockey

Baeden Choppy  
Des Abbott  
Jarrad Chester (Ice Hockey)  
Joel Carroll  
Lorelle Morrissey  
Nova Peris-Kneebone

## Horse Racing

Darby McCarthy  
Frank Reys  
Leigh-Anne Goodwin  
Merv Maynard  
Norm Rose  
Richard Lawrence ('Darby') McCarthy

## Motorsports

Brendon Cook

## Netball

Beryl Friday  
Marcia Ella-Duncan  
Sharon Finnan-White

## Rugby League

Aidan Sezer	Albert Kelly	Albert Torrens	Alex Johnston
Amber Pilley	Amos Roberts	Andrew Fifita	Andrew Walker
Anthony Mitchell	Anthony Mundine	Arthur Beetson	Ben Barba
Ben Jones	Blake Ferguson	Beau Champion	Bo De La Cruz
Brad Tighe	Brenko Lee	Brenton Bowen	Briony Livingstone
Brett Grogan	Brian Kelly	Bruce Stewart	Burnum Burnum
Caitlin Moran	Caleb Binge	Carl Webb	Chris Grevsmuhl
Chris McKenna	Chris Sandow	Cliff Lyons	Colin Scott
Cory Paterson	Corey Stewart	Craig Garvey	Craig Salvatori
Craig Trindall	Daine Laurie	Dale Shearer	Dane Gagai
Dane Nielsen	Daniel Wagon	Darrell Trindall	David Fifita
David Peachey	Dean Widders	Dennis Moran	Derrick Watkins
Donald Malone	Dylan Farrell	Edrick Lee	Emily Young
Eric Simms	Esikeli "Esi" Tonga	Ewan McGrady	Frank Fisher
Frank Stokes	Fred Briggs	Gavin Lester	George Green
George Longbottom	George Rose	Gordon Tallis	Graham Lyons
Greg Bird	Greg Inglis	Ian Lacey	Ian Russell
Isaac Gordon	Jack Wighton	Jake Foster	Jake Friend
Jamal Idris	James Roberts	Jamie Soward	Jamie Simpson
Jason Bulgarelli	Jason Edwards	Jayden Hodges	Jeff Hardy
Jharal Yow Yeh	Joe Williams	Joel Moon	Joel Romelo
Joel Thompson	John Ferguson	John Simon	Johnathan Thurston
Johnny Jarrett (Patten)	Jonathan Wright	Josh Hoffman	Justin Carney
Justin Doyle	Justin Hodges	Kandy Kennedy	Katrina Fanning
Keirran Moseley	Kelsey Parkin	Ken Nagas	Kevin Longbottom
Kevin McGuinness	Kevin Yow Yeh	Kurt Baptiste	Kyle Turner
Larry Corowa	Lauren Motlop	Laurie Daley	Lavina Phillips
Lenny Beckett	Leo Dynevor	Lionel Morgan	Luke Kelly
Luke Walsh	Mal Cochrane	Marmin Barba	Matt Sing
Maurice Blair	Michael Bani	Michael Lett	Milton Thaiday
Molly O'Connell	Nakia Davis-Welsh	Nathan Blacklock	Nathan Merritt
Nathan Peats	Owen Craigie	Palmer Wapau	Paul Davis
Paul Shaw	Percy Knight	Peter Jensen	PJ Marsh
Preston Campbell	Ray Thompson	Rebecca Riley	Rebecca Young
Reece Robinson	Rhys Wesser	Richard Williams	Ricky Walford
Robert Laurie	Robert Lui	Rod Jensen	Ron Gibbs
Ron Saddler	Roy Bell	Royston Lightning	Ryan James
Sam Backo	Sam Bowie	Sam Thaiday	Samartha Leisha
Sarah Field	Scott Prince	Shannon Hegarty	Shannon Walker



Shea Moylan  
Steve Ella  
Tallulah Tillett  
Tony Hearn  
Tyrone Peachey  
Wayne Alberts  
Will Robinson  
Yileen Gordon

Sid Domic  
Steve Renouf  
Timana Tahu  
Travis Robinson  
Tyrone Roberts  
Wendell Sailor  
Will Smith

Simone Smith  
Suvannah Connors  
Tom Learoyd-lahrs  
Travis Waddell  
Tyson Andrews  
Wes Patten  
Willie Isa

Stephanie Mooka  
Tahlia Hunter  
Tony Currie  
Ty Williams  
Wally McArthur  
Will Chambers  
Willie Tonga

## Rugby Union

Andrew Walker  
Burnum Burnum  
Frank Ivory  
Glen Ella  
Kurtley Beale  
Mahalia Murphy  
Matt Hodgson  
Nathan Black  
Shannon Walker  
Will Chambers

Anthony Fainga'a  
Colby Fainga'a  
Gary Ella  
Jim Williams  
Lloyd McDermott  
Mark Ella  
Milton Thaiday  
Saia Fainga'a  
Timanu Tahu

## Soccer

Charles Perkins  
Dr Gordon Briscoe AO  
Jade North  
Kasey Wehrman  
Tanya Oxtoby

David Williams  
Harry Williams  
John Kundereri Moriarty  
Kyah Simon  
Travis Dodd

## Softball

Jeff Goolagong  
Joanne Lesiputty  
Stacey Porter  
Vanessa Stokes

## Swimming

Ben Austin  
Samantha Riley

## Tennis

Evonne Goolagong Cawley  
Ashleigh Barty

## Track and Field

Benn Harradine (Discuss Thrower)  
Cathy Freeman (Runner)  
Joshua Ross (Runner)  
Kyle Bernard Vander Kuyp (Hurdler)  
Nova Peris (Runner)  
Patrick Johnson (Runner)  
Percy Hobson (High Jumper)  
Robert "Robbie" Crowther (Long Jumper)

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Physical Education Events/Celebrations

The list below features a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and physical education-related events and/or celebrations.

- [AFL Indigenous Round](#)
- [Indigenous Sport Queensland Sports Awards](#)
- [NSW Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout – ‘Koori Knockout’](#)
- [Leaders in Indigenous Medical Education \(LIME\) Connection Conference](#)
- [Murri Rugby League Carnival](#)
- [NAIDOC Awards](#) (including specific Sportsperson of the Year Award)
- [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Association Conference](#)
- (Former) [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sports Awards](#)
- [National Aboriginal Wellbeing Conference](#)
- [National Close the Gap Day](#)

## Other Online Guides/Reference Materials

- ABC (2016) *Behind the News: AFL Kids*, <http://www.abc.net.au/btn/story/s4010022.htm>
- ABC (2015) *Behind the News: Indigenous Sport Stars*, <http://www.abc.net.au/btn/story/s4327602.htm>
- ABC (2016) *Behind the News: Is the Gap Closing?* <http://www.abc.net.au/btn/story/s4404476.htm>
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- ABC (2013) *Behind the News: Bush Tucker*, <http://www.abc.net.au/btn/story/s3527750.htm>
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- House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (2013) *Sport – More Than Just A Game: Inquiry into the contribution of sport to Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring*, [http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/House\\_of\\_Representatives\\_Committees?url=atsia/sport/report.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=atsia/sport/report.htm)
- Healing Foundation (2020) *Schools Resource Kit*, <https://healingfoundation.org.au/schools/>
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## Reflective Questions for Health and Physical Education Staff and Students

- How have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures influenced Australian health, sports and physical education, and what active role do these histories and cultures play today?
- What is the relationship between physical, socio-emotional, cultural and spiritual wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples? Why is this relationship important to appreciate?
- What is the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and physical education and other subject/learning areas such as Dance, History, or Geography? Why are these relationships important?
- What are some of the similarities and differences between non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and practices relating to health and physical education? What are some of the ways in which these conventions have or can work together in interesting and important ways?
- Choose to research an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander sportsperson, health professional or wellbeing campaigner. What is the importance of his or her contributions to health and physical education, either at the local or (inter)national scale?
- Choose to research a key date in the more contemporary history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and physical education. What was, or is, the significance of this event to the subject/learning area of health and physical education and/or to reconciliation?
- Where possible and appropriate, organise an excursion to a public Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health or physical education-related event. What important messages, information or ideas did you gain through engaging with this event?
- How might your school or early learning service contribute to the celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and physical education?
- How can embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures into the study and practice of Health and Physical Education help to foster reconciliation?