

# QUEENSLAND MUSEUM

25 June 2021 to  
25 April 2022

TORRES STRAIT  
**ISLAND  
FUTURES**

**WHAT LIES AHEAD  
FOR ZENADTH KES?**

**Teacher Resource and Curriculum Links**  
HASS (Year 6)

PRINCIPAL PARTNER



Part of Energy Queensland

**QUEENSLAND  
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Government**

Original image: Kantesha Takai

### Cultural Warning

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visitors are advised that this display contains images and accounts of people who have passed away. We also advise that some of the topics discussed could be distressing.

Queensland Museum is committed to helping our audiences understand both past and ongoing experiences of Australian First Nations people and as part of our commitment to truth and reconciliation.



### Copyright Notice

These teacher resources were developed by Queensland Museum Lifelong Learning and are intended to support educators when planning a class visit to the exhibition, *Island Futures: What lies ahead for Zenadth Kes*. Learning Resources produced by Queensland Museum cannot be reproduced or used for commercial purposes in any form. Material remains the property of Queensland Museum, or other therein acknowledged sources, and normal copyright laws apply.

## An Introduction to *Island Futures: What lies ahead for Zenadth Kes*

Torres Strait Islanders' rich and enduring cultures and languages are inextricably linked to the place they call "home". More than just a physical structure, an interconnectedness between people, place and knowledge is their foundation of identity. Now with the threat of rising sea levels, how do Torres Strait Islanders maintain their strong sense of identity and place if home is underwater?

On the 150th anniversary of the Coming of the Light – the introduction of Christianity throughout Torres Strait - *Island Futures: What lies ahead for Zenadth Kes* empowers voices and conversations about Torres Strait Islanders' place and visibility in present-day Australia.

Developed in collaboration with the community, this powerful and vibrant exhibition features more than 200 objects and images interwoven with Islander perspectives and stories. Included are a number of works from well-known artists including cinematographer Murray Lui, visual artists Christopher Bassi and Dylan Mooney, photographer Kantesha Takai, performance maker Margaret Harvey and Jo Ze spArks, and a new commission from world-renowned Erub Arts.

Torres Strait Islanders are one of Australia's First Peoples. From the tip of Cape York, to the borders of Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, Zenadth Kes (Torres Strait) covers an area of 48,000 square kilometres and over 200 islands. For those who live and have connections to the 18 inhabited Islands and two Northern Peninsula Area communities, this is home.

Torres Strait Islander Cultural Leaders in the late 1980s made a move to reclaim the name of the region by creating the acronym "Zenadth Kes". This acronym describes the winds and geography of the Torres Strait Islands and region. Zenadth Kes stands for:

- ZE – Zey (South)
- NA – Naygay (North)
- D – Dagam (Place/Side)
- TH – Thawathaw (Coastline)
- KES – Passage/Channel/Waterway

The exhibition explores five themes:

- Home
- Ancestors
- Old Ways
- New Ways
- New Challenges



Kemus, Erub - Coming of the Light

## Home

In Torres Strait Islander culture, home is more than a physical structure: it is about people, place, purpose, and a connection. It is about that feeling you get when you know you're "home". It evolves and changes, just like people do, reflects who a person is at any given time.

As you enter this first space in the exhibition, you will see a room that looks like any other, however, the importance of the objects is not what they are, but what they represent. As a whole, this room is a vessel, embodying a constant awareness of the past, present and future. It is a relational space where the physical, spiritual, cultural and environmental come together in harmony, showcasing Torres Strait Islanders' unique understanding of the world and the future.



## Ancestors

This space invites you to stop and take a moment to reflect on where you have come from, and how you honour those who came before you.

In Torres Strait Islander culture, ancestors are a person's connection to village, clan, totems and their Island of origin. They are the voices in the wind, the energy underneath your feet and the whispers from the sea. Not only do they pave the way; they continue to be present. For Torres Strait Islanders, it is in family names, songs and objects. Ancestors are with you every step. Without them, you lose your way.

## Old Ways

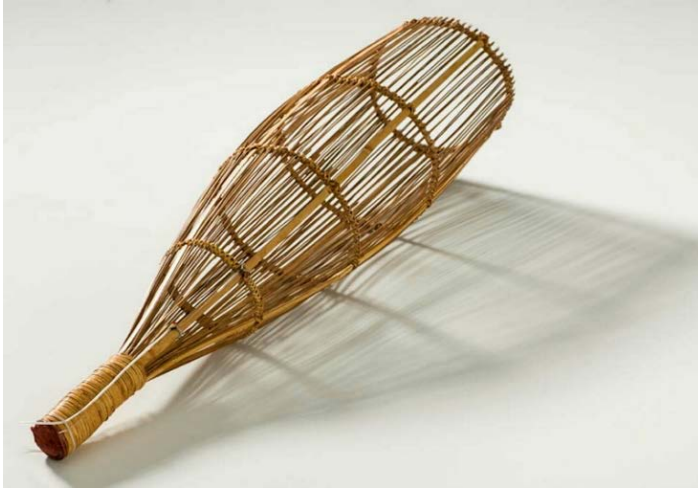
Old Ways are at the core of Torres Strait Islander being. It is a lifelong process of learning and is a presence that is embedded within the soul. Handed down orally through the generations, Old Ways inform cultural identity, family and community responsibilities, as well as understanding and maintaining the surrounding environments. The objects in this space embody the Old Ways within the home, the village and the individual.



## New Ways

Torres Strait Islander culture has not remained static. It has adapted to not just survive but to thrive. This change is manifested in the creation of new songs, dances, materials and artistic expression.

However, new creations still acknowledge the Old Ways and maintain important connections to bloodlines and histories for generations of Torres Strait Islanders to come. Without New Ways, Torres Strait Islanders couldn't look forward with a blueprint of hope for the future.



## New Challenges

When you leave home, there's an expectation that you can always return. But what if you couldn't? This space explores the harsh realities faced by Zenadth Kes communities as sea levels rise. Some challenges are natural; some are man-made; yet each impacts the other.

Torres Strait Islanders' cultures and languages are inextricably linked to the place they call "home", which is more

than a physical structure or material objects. It is the interconnectedness between people, place and knowledge. How can the people of the Torres Strait maintain a strong sense of identity and place if their island is underwater?

## Meet the Curators



### Rhianna Patrick – Guest Lead Curator

Rhianna Patrick is a media professional with family connections to the Zagareb (Mer) and Wagadagem (Mabuyag) clans of the Torres Strait. She has over 20 years media experience and has worked across radio, television, news and current affairs. After a long career with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), Rhianna joined IndigenousX, where she is currently developing audio and podcast offerings with support from the Judith Neilson Institute for Journalism and Ideas. Rhianna has a strong passion for Indigenous controlled media and loves all things audio.

### Imelda Miller - Curator, Torres Strait Islander and Pacific Indigenous Studies

Imelda Miller is the Curator, Torres Strait Islander and Pacific Indigenous Studies at the Queensland Museum Network. Imelda works with material culture and archival collections inside and outside of traditional museum environment and spaces to create access to collections for communities of origin. Her collaborative curatorial practice incorporates a combination of cultural practice, community engagement and community-led research and development.



## Year 6 HASS – Stimulus Questions

These stimulus questions provide a starting point for curriculum-relevant conversations with your students:

1. What is Indigenous Futurism? Find an object or story in the exhibition which reflects this movement.
2. What influence do ancestors have on Torres Strait Islander identity? Do all cultures hold similar beliefs?
3. Do you believe that Torres Strait Islander objects and artefacts should be kept in museums? Why or why not?
4. What impact did the [Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act](#) have on Torres Strait Island communities?
5. Name a protest or demonstration of free speech that occurred in the 20<sup>th</sup> century which improved the living conditions of Torres Strait Islanders.
6. Why was the 1992 Mabo Decision important to Torres Strait Islanders and a legacy for First Nations peoples?
7. Why is the [Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa Act 2020](#) a significant legislation in Australia's history?
8. What complaint did the Torres Strait 8 take to the United Nations in 2020? What impact will the United Nations' decision have on their community?
9. Describe the effects that climate change could have on Torres Strait Islander culture and identity.
10. Choose one artwork or object in the exhibition and describe how the materials chosen reflect Torres Strait Islanders' culture, beliefs and understanding of the world.

## Year 6 HASS – Australian Curriculum Links

KEY INQUIRY QUESTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How have key figures, events and values shaped Australian society, its system of government and citizenship?</li> <li>• How have experiences of democracy and citizenship differed between groups over time and place, including those from and in Asia?</li> <li>• How has Australia developed as a society with global connections, and what is my role as a global citizen?</li> </ul>
INQUIRY AND SKILLS
Researching
Locate and collect relevant information and data from primary sources and secondary sources ( <a href="#">ACHASSI123</a> )
Analysing
Examine primary sources and secondary sources to determine their origin and purpose ( <a href="#">ACHASSI126</a> )
Examine different viewpoints on actions, events, issues and phenomena in the past and present ( <a href="#">ACHASSI127</a> )
Evaluating and reflecting
Evaluate evidence to draw conclusions ( <a href="#">ACHASSI129</a> )
Reflect on learning to propose personal and/or collective action in response to an issue or challenge, and predict the probable effects ( <a href="#">ACHASSI132</a> )
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING
History
Experiences of Australian democracy and citizenship, including the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, migrants, women and children ( <a href="#">ACHASSK135</a> )
The contribution of individuals and groups to the development of Australian society since Federation ( <a href="#">ACHASSK137</a> )
Civics and citizenship
The shared values of Australian citizenship and the formal rights and responsibilities of Australian citizens ( <a href="#">ACHASSK147</a> )
Communication and reflection
Reflect on their role as a citizen in Australia's democracy ( <a href="#">ACHCS060</a> )



**CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES: ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES**

The diverse cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are explored through their:

- long and continuous strong connections with Country/Place and their economic, cultural, spiritual and aesthetic value of place, including the idea of custodial responsibility. Students examine the influence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on the environmental characteristics of Australian places, and the different ways in which places are represented.
- experiences before, during and after European colonisation including the nature of contact with other peoples, and their progress towards recognition and equality. In particular, students investigate the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, past and present, including civic movements for change, the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to Australian society, and contemporary issues.
- exploration of how groups express their particular identities, and come to understand how group belonging influences perceptions of others.

The use of primary and secondary sources, including oral histories, gives students opportunities to see events through multiple perspectives, and to empathise and ethically consider the investigation, preservation and conservation of sites of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.