Students understand how the physical environment on Earth and its position in the universe impact on the way we live.

**Student Focus for Learning**

- relationships between resource use, human impacts on the environment and ecological sustainability
- the interaction between physical and natural systems
- dynamic processes of the Earth
- the properties and structure of materials making up the Earth
- features of the Universe and processes of change
- understandings of astronomy and the use of technologies for exploration

**Background**

Aboriginal people have a connection to land that ensures their cultural and social well-being. Aboriginal people not only draw their strength from the land but also their identity. Their Creation stories, also referred to as the Dreaming, talk of ancestral beings which moved across the land forming the earth, rocks, waterholes, rivers and other physical phenomena. It is important that all generations acknowledge the place of these beings in the construction of their world.

**Ideas for teaching units in culture from an Aboriginal perspective**

**Outcome A  Sustainability of Life and Wise Resource Use**

Traditional ecological knowledge is information built up over generations by groups of Aboriginal people living in close contact with their environment. For each group it is a
set of interpretations about the local ecology and a system of self-management that
governs the uses of both the non-living and the living parts of their environment, such
as collecting, hunting, trapping and fishing. This knowledge is passed by word of mouth
within traditional laws and practices and often as part of Creation stories.

http://ab-ed.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

• Students investigate how Aboriginal communities relied on observations of
environmental changes and used these to efficiently manage their resources.

Outcome B   Earth Forces and Materials

• Catastrophic forces
  ○ floods
  ○ earthquakes
  ○ droughts
  ○ volcanoes

• Naturally occurring forces
  ○ Rain
  ○ Wind
  ○ Waves
  ○ Thunder
  ○ Lightning
Outcome C  Relationship Between The Earth, Our Solar System and The Universe

• Creation stories
  o Rivers
  o Rock formations
  o Hills
  o Valleys
  o Cave paintings

• It is important for students to be given the opportunity to extend their understanding of how Aboriginal peoples' observations of phenomena were used to explain both the physical and metaphysical world. Their tasks needs to challenge the notion that the only view of the universe is the western one. Investigate topics such as:
  o Interpretation of patterns of darkness
  o Creation beings in the night sky
  o Stories of creation

• Students investigate how Aboriginal communities relied on observations of environmental changes to identify the differing seasonal changes. Students to investigate these issues using the headings:
  o Interpreting the seasons
  o Number of seasons
  o Naming of seasons
  o Importance of seasons for hunting
  o Travel
  o Ceremonial responsibilities

• In traditional Aboriginal society, there was a rhythm to daily activity not dictated by time measured in minutes. Students to consider how they would operate if not dictated by time lines.
• Phases of the moon have been important in hunting and gathering for all civilisations. Students to discuss how Aboriginal populations would have worked with the phases of the moon in conducting cultural responsibilities, hunting and fishing. Also to consider the influence of tidal movements.

• Students to make up a comic strip of an Aboriginal story about the stars.

**Resources**

• ABC Indigenous kids astronomy site

• The Sun and Moon– some Aboriginal perspectives and activities

• Aboriginal Astronomy