

# HIPBONE STICKING OUT

LEARNING RESOURCE PACK



## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the study guide of the 2014 Melbourne Festival production of *Hipbone Sticking Out*. Activities related to the AusVELS domains as outlined below. These activities are not sequential, and teachers are encouraged to modify them to suit their own curriculum planning. Lesson suggestions for teachers are given within each activity, with questions that are intended to be directed at students.

### AUSVELS LINKS TO CURRICULUM

See Appendix C for details

## MELBOURNE FESTIVAL

Melbourne Festival is one of Australia's flagship international arts festivals and one of the major multi-arts festivals of the world, in terms of quality of work, innovation of vision, and scale and breadth of program.

Each Festival brings an unparalleled feast of dance, theatre, music, visual arts, multimedia and outdoor events from renowned and upcoming Australian and International companies and artists to Melbourne.

Melbourne Festival is quintessentially Melbourne's festival - physically by reaching out into the topography and geography of the city itself, artistically by presenting Melbourne's finest artists in new works and international collaborations, and demographically by engaging with as many people of Melbourne as possible, giving them ownership of their annual international festival.

**The 2014 Melbourne Festival will take place between 10 - 26 October.**

[melbournefestival.com.au](http://melbournefestival.com.au)

## FOCUS ONE NOT-QUITE-THE- “FIRST” FLEET

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### DISCUSSION POINT:

Some of the characters in *Hipbone Sticking Out* are from the Netherlands, as the Dutch exploration of Australia – particularly Western Australia – is explored in the plot. By the time James Cook arrived on the *Endeavour* there had been many non-Aboriginal visitors here, but what do most Australians know about the pre-First Fleet explorers to the Australian continent?

### ACTIVITY

1. What sort of contact was made with Indigenous Australians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; for example, with the Macassans and the Dutch?
2. Why was there no settlement of the continent apart from Aboriginal Australians and the British - why were the Macassans, the Dutch, and later the French, only “visitors”?

### ACTIVITY

1. Create a timeline showing the important dates of contact with Aboriginal Australians and the following:
  - a. The Dutch
  - b. The British
  - c. The Macassans
  - d. The French

## FOCUS TWO OLD GODS, NEW GODS

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### DISCUSSION POINT:

Pluto, the God of the underworld, is an important character in *Hipbone Sticking Out*. As in the legends of Orpheus and Odysseus, Pluto (Hades in the Greek tradition) accompanies the hero – in this case, John Pat – through the world of the dead. John’s Aboriginal traditions and the mythologies associated with them are not merely a lot older than the Greek or Roman mythologies, they still exist in the beliefs of people from that region. By contrast, the Greek and Roman beliefs died out long ago – the character Pluto laments in *Hipbone Sticking Out* that he has already been “forgotten”.

### ACTIVITY

1. Try this with someone you know: ask them how many characters from Greek mythology they know (not just gods - think Orpheus, Ulysses, Penelope and so on). Get them to compile as comprehensive a list as possible!
2. Now ask them how many characters they know from Indigenous Australian mythology. Which list is longer?

Chances are that most people know at least some Greek Gods and heroes, but few or even no Indigenous equivalents.

### DID YOU KNOW?

*The name “Pluto” is derived from the Greek word “Plouton”, meaning “wealth”. This is in reference to the valuable minerals contained under the ground!*

## FOCUS THREE AN AGE-OLD ARGUMENT

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### DISCUSSION POINT:

The term “New World” is commonly attributed to the explorer Amerigo Vespucci, who was referring to the then newly-discovered (to Europeans) continent of what is now called the Americas (in fact, they were named after Vespucci himself). By extension, the “Old World” refers to Europe, Africa and Asia, as these were the places that were already known and familiar to the explorers of the Americas and Australia from the fifteenth century onwards. It should be noted that Australia and New Zealand are not generally referred to as the “New World”, except when grouped with the Americas.

However, are these terms neutral? Is it even appropriate to use them these days? What is intended by these terms? If they are not accurate, are they pejorative or an attempt to frame the world from a particular point of view?

### ACTIVITY

1. In groups, discuss and provide as many responses as possible to the following statements:
  - a. “Europe should be referred to as the ‘Old World’ because ...”
  - b. “Australia should be referred to as the ‘New World’ because ...”
2. Following a class discussion of the different group’s findings, the teacher shows the following facts to students and asks them to consider them in light of the discussion of ‘Old World’
  - a. When Aboriginal Australians arrived in Tasmania 35,000 years ago, no human being had ever been so far south in the world.
  - b. Huge structures for residential and ceremonial purposes, built with heavy stone in Northern Australia, pre-date Stonehenge and the Egyptian pyramids by many tens of thousands of years.
  - c. The petroglyphs at Murujuga are the earliest representations of human faces ever found.

### ACTIVITY

Extension activities can include essays that explore the limitations of the paradigm of “Old World” and “New World”.

## FOCUS FOUR FLYING FOAM MASSACRE

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### DISCUSSION POINT:

In *Hipbone Sticking Out*, actual historical court records are used at various points in the script. A significant event portrayed in the plot is the Flying Foam Massacre. Read more about this at Appendix A.

### ACTIVITY

Research the history of the Flying Foam Massacre. Note that the Massacre was actually a series of incidents that took place over a number of months.

1. “In character” as one of the colonists involved, write a letter to a family member, describing one of these incidents from the character’s perspective.
2. Write another, similar letter about the same incident, but from the perspective of a Yaburrara person.

## FOCUS FIVE DEATHS IN CUSTODY

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### DISCUSSION POINT:

The death of John Pat in 1983 was the impetus for nationwide calls for an inquiry into the truth of his deaths and the deaths of other Aboriginal people who found themselves in the same situation. Although his death was highly symbolic in terms of the events that followed, John's family is keen for audiences to know that John Pat was a person, rather than just a symbol. In *Hipbone Sticking Out*, John is the main character of the story, and played by two actors – one a young man the same age as John when he died, and a middle-aged actor portraying John as he would have been were he alive today. A concise summary about the death of John Pat and its aftermath can be seen in the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Report of the Inquiry into the death of John Peter Pat.<sup>1</sup>

The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody was established in 1987, a few years after John's death, acknowledging that there was a problem and that solutions needed to be found. However, over twenty years after the final report was handed down, many of its recommendations have not been implemented and in many ways Australia is no nearer to a solution than we were then. A good explanation is given in the article *Aboriginal deaths in custody numbers rise sharply over past five years*<sup>2</sup> and also the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody*.<sup>3</sup>

The creators of *Hipbone Sticking Out* are hopeful that this production can be a springboard for greater awareness of this issue: as indicated above, the final report was released over twenty years ago and many Australians do not have it in the forefront of their minds as they did then.

### ACTIVITY

The producers of *Hipbone Sticking Out* have been able to create a theatrical and musical work that brings the issue of deaths in custody back into the public imagination. Create a work using the media of your choice (suggestions include posters, pamphlets, videos, plays, songs) that highlights the issue of deaths in custody?

Consider: What are the drawbacks (for broader society, not just the inmate) of imprisoning people who have offended? What are the benefits to society? List the pros and cons.

### DID YOU KNOW?

*The producers of Hipbone Sticking Out have worked with prisoners as part of this project, creating a partnership with the Juvenile Justice team in Roebourne. Their greater awareness of the issue of deaths in custody came about because of this partnership.*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.archive.deathincustody.org.au/johnpatrciadireport>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-05-24/sharp-rise-in-number-of-aboriginal-deaths-in-custody/4711764>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/law/royal-commission-into-aboriginal-deaths-in-custody>

## FOCUS SIX WHERE THE HIPBONE STICKS OUT

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### DISCUSSION POINT:

Murujuga, usually known as the Burrup Peninsula, is a peninsula in the Pilbara region of Western Australia, adjoining the Dampier Archipelago and near the town of Dampier. In Ngayarda languages, including that of the indigenous people of the peninsula, the Yaburara people, murujuga means “hip bone sticking out”.<sup>4</sup> This region of Australia is one that is scarcely visited, let alone known about, by most Australians.

### ACTIVITY

How well do you know the area? Read the descriptions and see if you can fill in the names of the six towns in the correct boxes on the map (Appendix B).<sup>5</sup>

- Fitzroy Crossing – “Here you can gaze in awe at the soaring cliffs of Geikie Gorge National Park, or cruise beneath the sheer 100-metre walls of Windjana Gorge.”
- Halls Creek – “Then spend the afternoon making your way east on the three-and-a-half-hour drive to Halls Creek, the last stop on the road before reaching the Bungle Bungle Range in the World Heritage Listed Purnululu National Park”
- Karratha – “The tranquil gorges of Millstream Chichester National Park are the perfect place to stretch your legs before continuing the five-and-a-half-hour drive from Karijini to Karratha”.

- Broome – “The Warlu’s journey ends just 360 kilometres north of 80 Mile Beach, in the vibrant pearling port of Broome.”
- Port Hedland – “From Karratha, it’s worth swinging by the town of Port Hedland to gaze in awe at its super-sized industrial port facilities and discover its rich Indigenous cultural heritage. Continue on to arrive at 80 Mile Beach.”
- Roebourne – “... the rugged coastline of the Pilbara, home to one of the world’s largest collections of rock art (on the Burrup Peninsula) and Roebourne – one of the oldest surviving pioneering towns in Western Australia. Nearby, the living ghost town of Cossack.”

### DID YOU KNOW?

*The two Indigenous languages used in the show are Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi, both of which are used by the people of Roebourne, and are a way of reminding the audience that ownership of the play belongs to these people. The histories of these two groups are quite different, however:*

*The Ngarluma people are the original inhabitants of the coastal areas around Roebourne (West Pilbara Western Australia). Archaeological surveys reveal that continuous occupation & ancestry stretches back more than 30,000 years, and important cultural sites such as the rock art on the Burrup Peninsula (Karratha) show a deep historical and spiritual connection to the land, waterways, rivers & the sea.*

*The traditional ‘country’ of the Yindjibarndi people is mostly along the middle part of the valley of the Fortescue River in the Pilbara region of northwestern Australia, and on adjacent uplands. As a result of the European colonization process (from the 1860s), most of the Yindjibarndi speakers now live in and around Roebourne, in what traditionally was Ngarluma country.*

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<sup>4</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murujuga>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.westernaustralia.com/en/Things\\_to\\_See\\_and\\_Do/Suggested\\_Itineraries/Pages/Best-of-Australias-North-West.aspx](http://www.westernaustralia.com/en/Things_to_See_and_Do/Suggested_Itineraries/Pages/Best-of-Australias-North-West.aspx)

## FOCUS SEVEN POP MUSIC

### DISCUSSION POINT:

Pop songs from different eras and styles in the last fifty years are used in *Hipbone Sticking Out*. The original meanings contained in the lyrics of the songs are maintained, but with a new angle within the context of the play. Students attending the play will find it interesting to research the pop songs and their meanings (“Golden Brown”, “I Fought the Law” and “Oops I Did it Again”) *before* seeing the show, and comparing this to their intended meaning in the play.

How to play the songs:

- *Golden Brown* tutorial on YouTube<sup>6</sup>
- *I Fought the Law* tutorial on YouTube<sup>7</sup>
- *Oops I Did it Again* interactive chord chart<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpqeYIGN3zQ>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtftEMkVgSU>

<sup>8</sup> [http://tabs.ultimateguitar.com/b/britney\\_spears/oops\\_i\\_did\\_it\\_again\\_ver4\\_crd\\_1080834id\\_o4082011date.htm](http://tabs.ultimateguitar.com/b/britney_spears/oops_i_did_it_again_ver4_crd_1080834id_o4082011date.htm)

## FOCUS EIGHT MUSIC OF THE PEOPLE

### CURRICULUM LINK: (THE ARTS – MUSIC)

### DISCUSSION POINT:

Along with more contemporary pop music, music of other eras that could be described as “folk” or “popular” has been used in *Hipbone*. Students should know that “popular music” could be used to define such diverse material as *sea shanties*, *gospel songs*, *bush dances*, *jazz songs* and *light opera arias*.

### ACTIVITY

Read the list of songs from *Hipbone Sticking Out* on the left below and see if you can match them up with the correct description on the right:

“Three little maids from school are we”	Sea shanty
“Leave her, Johnny”	Gospel song
“Dem Bones”	Bush dance
“Brown Jug Polka”	Jazz song
“It’s Only a Paper Moon”	Light opera aria

## FOCUS NINE MY COUNTRY

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### DISCUSSION POINT

The famous work “Ma Vlast” (meaning “My Country”) by the Czech composer Bedřich Smetana is heavily referenced in *Hipbone Sticking Out*. Smetana was a progressive composer who used modern compositional techniques, and sought to portray nationalistic ideals through his music; a popular European ideal in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The melody from the second movement, “Vltava” (also known more famously as “The Moldau”) is intended as a portrayal of the main river that runs through the countryside of Czechoslovakia.

In *Hipbone Sticking Out*, the melody is used at a number of different points, most notably in the section describing how the “blackbirders” came to the river country in the 19th century to kidnap workers.

### ACTIVITY

Sing or play the main melody from the second movement of *Ma Vlast* (below).



Have you heard it before? What do you notice about the phrase?

Change the key from E minor (one sharp – example above) to E major (four sharps – example below) and sing or play.



How has it changed the “feel” of the melody? Does it sound more hopeful, or more serious, or something else altogether?

Play a recording of *Ma Vlast*<sup>9</sup> and read the story of its composition<sup>10</sup>.

Why do you think this work in particular was used in *Hipbone Sticking Out*?

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVJePP3MRCY>

<sup>10</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%A1\\_vlast#Vltava](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%A1_vlast#Vltava)

## FOCUS TEN ORIGINAL MUSIC

The creators of *Hipbone Sticking Out* worked closely from the very outset with professional musicians, including the percussionist David Hewitt, to create a sound world that enhanced the production in a meaningful way. Music is an important part of traditional and contemporary Indigenous culture – a unifying element – and this is reflected in the vocal and percussive aspects of the musical score. An important social comment on the influence of cultural background on one's artistic perception is made - with deep dramatic irony - in an exchange between two European characters in the play:

“Are they [Aborigines] musical at all?”

“Oh, no, not in my experience! Sort of an ugly, scratching noise.”

Songs known as *Tjabi* (pronounced ‘jowl-wee’) in the Ngarluma language are sung by Patrick Churnside at the side of the stage, who accompanies himself using two boomerangs clapped and scraped together. *Tjabi* are traditional songs used in ceremony, sung up country or sung spontaneously in response to an event or happening or feeling. Certainly not an “ugly, scratching noise”! Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi people often say these songs ‘come through’ people, rather than being written as such. Certain people have the authority to sing *Tjabi*, and Mr Churnside is a senior Ngarluma man who has this authority.

Sound effects and rhythms are created using a specially designed wooden, angled stage. Three different types of percussion are used:

- body percussion, using a stage specifically set up for percussion with knocks and thuds of different timbres
- beatboxing by David Hewitt (percussionist formerly with Taikoz)
- Indigenous musician with two boomerangs at side of stage (used in traditional manner and to create atmosphere).

### ACTIVITY

The stage is set up for percussion - knocks and thuds of different timbres. Create your own stage design that incorporates sound and sound effects.

## FOCUS ELEVEN THE REDFERN SPEECH

In 1992, then-prime minister Paul Keating made an impassioned speech (written in collaboration with his famous speechwriter Don Watson) in Redfern that has since made its way onto the list of many people's favourite speeches ever. Excerpts from this speech are used in *Hipbone Sticking Out*.

A full transcript of the speech can be found online at the ANTaR website<sup>11</sup>. As a piece of persuasive writing analyse the devices that make it so effective. Discuss the effect each of these devices has on the speech:

- repetition (“We committed the murders / We took the children from their mothers / We practised discrimination and exclusion” and “If we improve the living conditions ... If we raise the standard of health ... If we open one door others will follow”)
- hypotheticals (“Imagine if ours was the oldest culture in the world and we were told that it was worthless”)
- appeals (“Isn't it reasonable to say that if we can build a prosperous and remarkably harmonious multicultural society in Australia, surely we can find just solutions to the problems which beset the first Australians”)

<sup>11</sup> [https://antar.org.au/sites/default/files/paul\\_keating\\_speech\\_transcript.pdf](https://antar.org.au/sites/default/files/paul_keating_speech_transcript.pdf)

## FOCUS TWELVE

# GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING

A very famous painting by Johannes Vermeer (1632 – 1675) is used in *Hipbone Sticking Out*. *Girl with a Pearl Earring* is notable both in the art world and in popular culture, largely due to the novel and film that were a fictionalized version of its origins.

In *Hipbone Sticking Out*, the image is projected on screen with a particular emphasis on the pearl in the earring of the girl. One of the characters is also dressed as the girl, with a blue and gold turban, and pearl earrings added later in the plot – a gift from another character. This is a re-imagining of the character in the painting itself – just as the eponymous novel and film.

### ACTIVITY

1. What significance do you think that pearls have to the broader story of *Hipbone Sticking Out*?
2. Create your own “re-imagining” of the character either through visual arts or literature. For example:
  - a. Paste a print of the painting onto a larger piece of paper and complete the picture with paints, pencils or other media
  - b. Draw / paint their own version of the girl’s head (also known as a *tronie*) from a different angle
  - c. Write a diary from the girl’s point of view as she sits for the painting

You can read more about this fascinating painting and the life of the artist online<sup>12</sup>.

Learning resource written by David Perry

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.girl-with-a-pearl-earring.info>

## APPENDIX A

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**From the AIATSIS document (*Hidden Histories: Conflict, massacres and colonization of the Pilbara. Summary Report. Dr Malcolm Allbrook and Dr Mary Anne Jebb*):**

From the writings of Sholl and letters of other colonisers such as Alexander McRae, we can get an idea of what happened at Flying Foam in 1867. This story has been told by Tom Gara, a historian from South Australia. Two posses, one travelling by land, the other by sea, were sent by Sholl to punish Yaburrara people who were believed to have murdered a police man Griffis and two of his colleagues. McRae's account in a letter to his sister uses language from those times that does not give exact names or numbers of people killed but records punishments that took place and that Aboriginal people were taught a lesson they would never forget:

“The natives have been rather troublesome of late. Hitherto they confined their depredations to stealing a little flour or the odd sheep, but a few days ago murdered a Police Constable and his assistant that had been sent out [to] arrest some of them for flour stealing. Together with two men the crew of a pearling boat with whom they were camped near the coast. Two strong parties were organized to go out and give them ‘fitz’ – one by land and the other by sea to co-operate with the land party in a craft organized by the Govt. for the purpose. I was in charge of the Land lot. Farquhar and Anderson was out with me – a great many lost the number of their mess.”

Tom Gara tried to unravel details of exactly what happened at Flying Foam and spoke to a number of Ngarluma and Yaburrara people, as well as looking at old records. Even so, details of the Flying Foam massacre remain unclear and it is likely it will never be known precisely what happened or how many people were killed. Stories of the old people tell of many people dying, and this is confirmed by some of letters from other white people. Gara found a letter from a settler called Taylor reporting that Griffis had been killed because he had stolen an Aboriginal woman. The posses carried out ‘most cowardly and diabolical acts both on innocent women and children.’ Another white man named David Carley, who was living in Roebourne, reported that at least sixty Aboriginal men, women and children were killed.

Later, the police man who replaced Griffis, a man called Albert Francisco, hunted down three men near Fortescue River who he believed had killed Griffis, and shot them all.

### APPENDIX B

Map of the Pilbara and Burrup Peninsula with town names blanked



## APPENDIX C

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### AUSVELS LINKS TO CURRICULUM

**The Arts** (Drama, Music and Art)

**Civics and Citizenship:** Civic knowledge and understanding,  
Community engagement

**English:** Reading and viewing, Writing, speaking and listening

**The Humanities – History:** Historical knowledge and understanding,  
historical skills

**The Humanities– Geography:** Geographic knowledge and  
understanding, geographical skills

**Cross Curriculum Priorities:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
History and Cultures

- Focus One: Not-quite-the-“First” Fleet - The Humanities – History
- Focus Two: Old gods, New gods - The Humanities – History
- Focus Three - An age-old argument - The Humanities – History
- Focus Four: Flying Foam Massacre -The Humanities – History
- Focus Five - Deaths in custody - The Humanities – History
- Focus Six - Where the hipbone sticks out - The Humanities – Geography
- Focus Seven - Pop music - The Arts – Music
- Focus Eight: Music of the people - The Arts – Music
- Focus Nine: My Country - The Arts – Music
- Focus Ten: Original music - The Arts – Music
- Focus Eleven - The Redfern Speech - English
- Focus Twelve: Girl with a Pearl Earring - The Arts – Art