



## Walkabout with Warren Tours

### *Education for Cultural Awareness*

**Uncle Warren Taggart is a Wonnarua Elder who was born and raised in Wonnarua country.**

Much of his cultural knowledge has come from his father who spent most of his life in the bush in the Singleton region. Uncle Warren is a respected member of the Aboriginal community and a member of the Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (AECG) for Singleton, Kurri Kurri and Maitland Schools. He is a member of the Wonnarua Land Council and a custodian of the Baiame Cave, a heritage-listed Aboriginal site of national significance.

Uncle Warren has been honoured with many community awards for his commitment to the cultural education of community members, students and teachers in the region. In 2018, Warren was inducted into the Wambo Coal Singleton Hall of Fame for community service. He has been recognised widely for his work in relation to the Baiame Cave and often gives the Welcome to Country for local events (without payment). He has produced a Wonnarua colouring book for pre-school and primary students to engage younger students with Aboriginal culture.

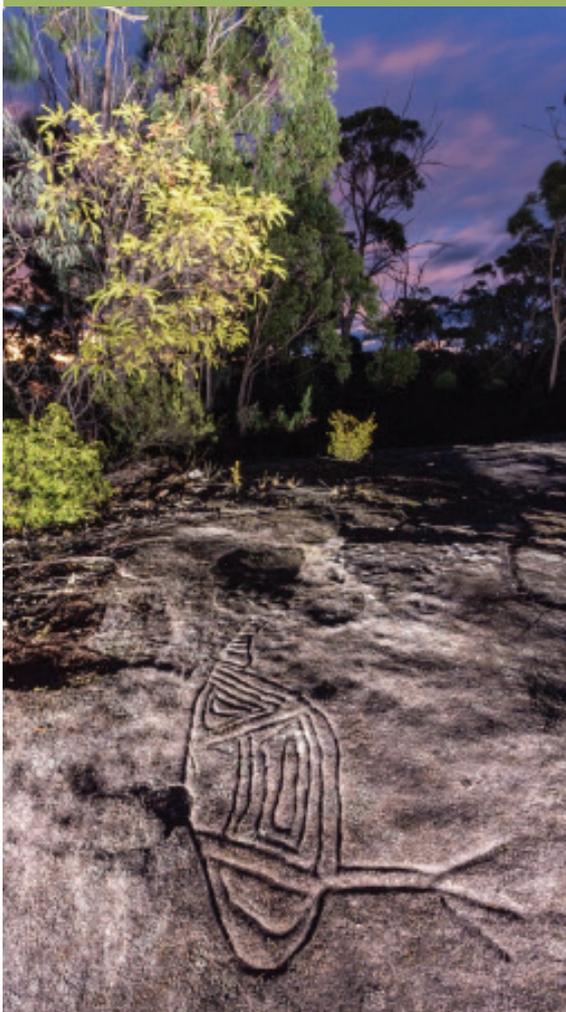
Uncle Warren loves to talk about Aboriginal culture and to be out in the bush. He has a passion for the cultural education of young people so that cultural knowledge is passed on to the next generation.



# TEACHING STANDARDS

1.4.2 Design and implement effective teaching strategies that are responsive to the local community and cultural setting, linguistic background and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

2.4.2 Provide opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.



## Research Base

The primary objective of this course is to provide knowledge and cultural awareness of the richness of belief and connection to country that is fundamental to inter-cultural understanding. The pathway to this understanding is through teachers and the importance of quality teaching is acknowledged in the 'Closing the Gap' report:

The quality of teaching is recognised as the largest 'in-school' influence on student achievement. Well trained, skilled and knowledgeable teachers who are able to engage with their students and the community are essential to lifting student outcomes.

The Australian Government is committed to improving the quality of the teaching workforce in Australia, from initial teachers to experienced teachers and school leaders. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to be successful, a culture of high expectations in schools, strong student teacher and community relationships and support for culture are important.

It is important to provide a cultural framework based on local knowledge through elders. Learning from being 'on country' provides the opportunity for teachers for an immersive experience, to be 'on site' and learn about culture from an elder custodian. Josie Douglas, 2011, 'Learning from country: the value of country visits in remote schools for community engagement and natural and cultural resource management', states:

**There was widespread recognition that 'this is a critical time in history' and 'a lot of knowledge will go with this generation of elders'. Overwhelmingly, there was concern that children should have 'strong language' and 'strong culture' so that they are in a position to 'carry culture forward'.**

This statement refers to remote communities where the elders speak Aboriginal language (Wonnarua language is currently in revival). To 'carry culture forward' is critical and teachers need to be culturally aware, have an understanding of protocols and work in collaboration with community leaders.



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**HIGHLY RATED**  
Cultural Awareness Education Tour



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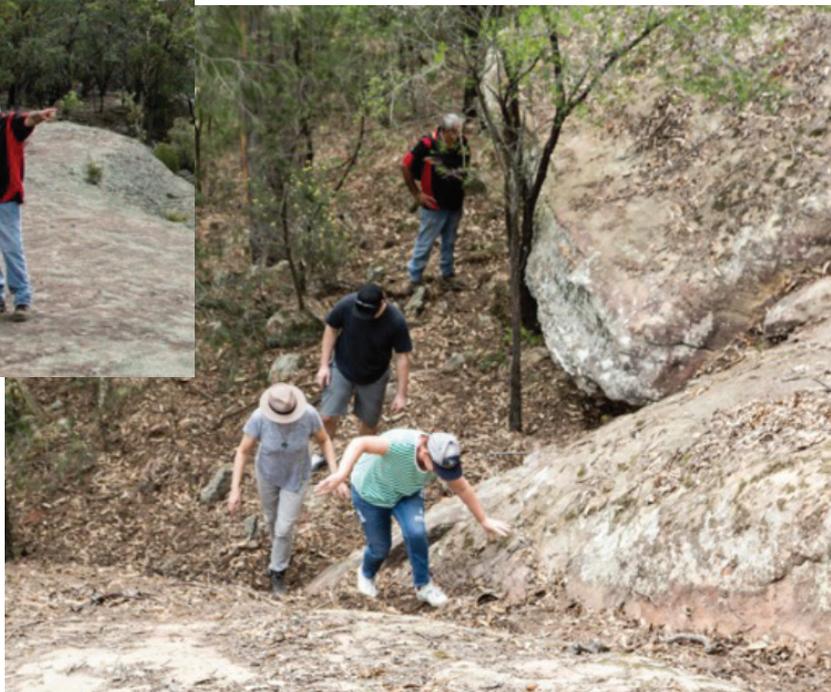
*ABORIGINAL SITE TOUR - 6 HOURS*  
*Primary and Secondary Teachers*

*This is an all-day visit by 4WD to a number of Aboriginal Sites*

Teachers will gain an experience of visiting significant Aboriginal sites in the Singleton/Wollombi region with a Wonnarua custodian.

These sites will include at least 2 caves with paintings and drawings, rock engraving images, axe and spear groove work sites and cultural significant topographical features in the landscape. Warren will be able to share his cultural knowledge, weaving the past into the present to give insights about Aboriginal culture in a contemporary world.

These teachers will be inspired to share and research more about Aboriginal culture, especially with relevance to local sites and local stories, to provide greater knowledge and inter-cultural understanding.



**\$150 pp**

4 participants

required for the day

### PLEASE NOTE:

General fitness is required with the ability to walk over uneven ground and slopes. There are some steep climbs down and back to caves.

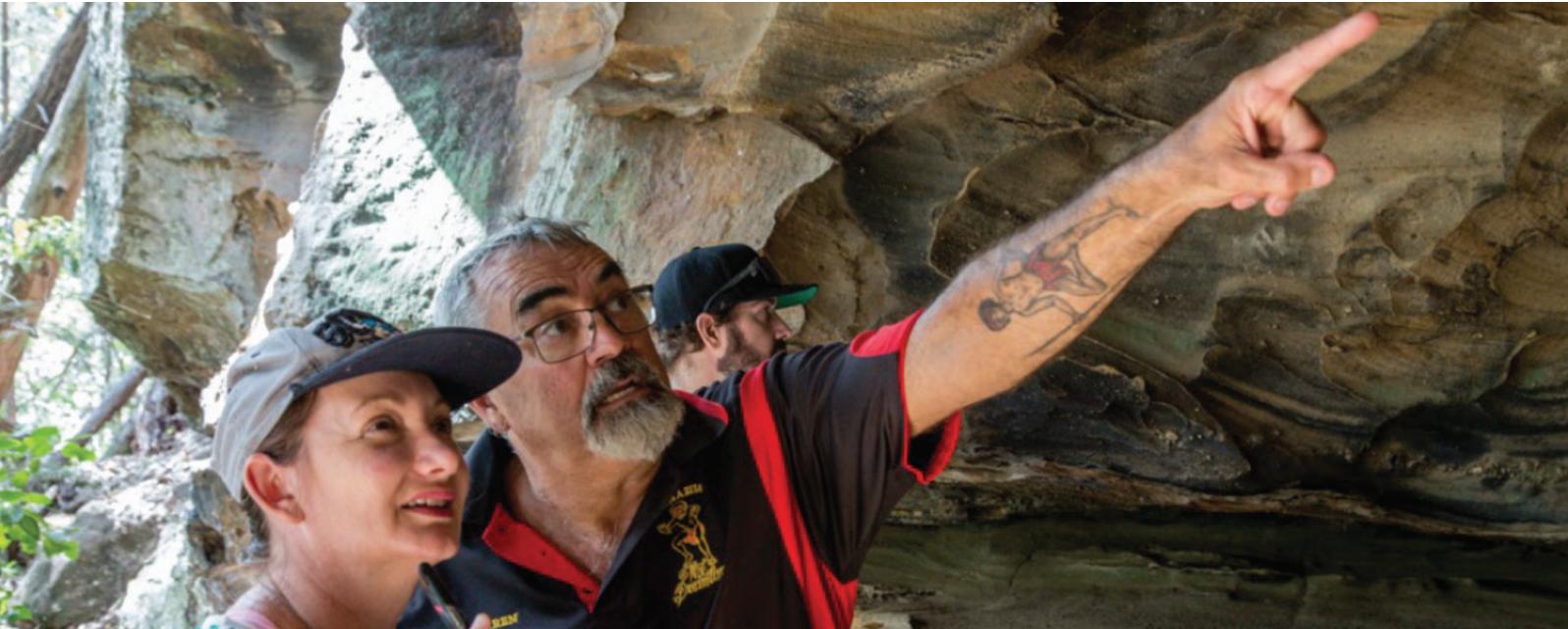
Warren carries in his car, a first-aid kit, insect repellent and water. It is expected that personal medications (for example, asthma puffer) would be with the participants as required.

Closed in shoes are essential and long sleeves and pants recommended as well as sunscreen and a hat/sunglasses.

All participants will need to bring a packed lunch.

Tours may be cancelled due to weather or adverse conditions (wind or fire). Warren is the driver of his 4WD vehicle.

Further details can be provided through email or mobile contact.



## Rationale

This course includes visits to a number of Aboriginal sites in the area. This provides a comprehensive overview of the different artwork made by the traditional people of the area and aspects of the physical landscape that form the basis of stories and beliefs. It provides a cultural framework based on local knowledge from a Wonnarua elder. Being 'on country' is an essential part of this understanding.

## Summary

Participants arrive at the meeting point at the rest area near the intersection of Broke and Heritage Road, starting promptly at 7.30am. Travelling by 4WD, driven by Warren Taggart, participants will travel towards Wollombi to the 'Bush Turkey' site. Uncle Warren will give a Welcome to Country. This site has many images engraved into the sandstone surface including figures, kangaroos, weapons and a decorated bush turkey. The site also has many axe grooves, made during the process of sharpening axes on the sandstone surface near a rock pool. Teachers will learn about how the engravings were made, the characteristics of engravings in the area and the care and preservation issues. From this site, the participants will travel to an area known as Lizard Rock. This is a large rocky outcrop that looks over the Broke valley and is part of a story about warriors and a large lizard. Warren will tell the story and explain about the stone placement site close by (a men's site, men only). From this site, the participants will travel to 3 cave sites. The first site has stencilled hand-prints, striped patterning, and charcoal drawings of spirit figures. His father showed this cave to Warren as a young man. The second and third caves are similar and give participants the opportunity to look carefully to see the different markings in ochre and charcoal and make their own interpretation. The sites visited all give participants the opportunity

to ask questions and discuss issues, for example preservation and the keeping/sharing of cultural knowledge as well as the protocols that must be followed.

## Further Professional Learning

It is anticipated that teachers will be more interested in local Aboriginal culture and feel more confident to seek out more information through Aboriginal community groups, including the AECG at their schools. There is published information for further research. The University of Newcastle has some excellent resources: <https://libguides.newcastle.edu.au/aboriginalsourcebook>

## For Booking Enquiries

Contact Warren Taggart on 0427 544 211 for all bookings and enquiries.

Email [warrentaggart@bigpond.com.au](mailto:warrentaggart@bigpond.com.au)

Payments made to:  
Warren Taggart  
78 Castlereigh Street, SINGLETON NSW 2330

Banking Details:  
BSB- 637000 Greater Bank  
ACC- 721967174

