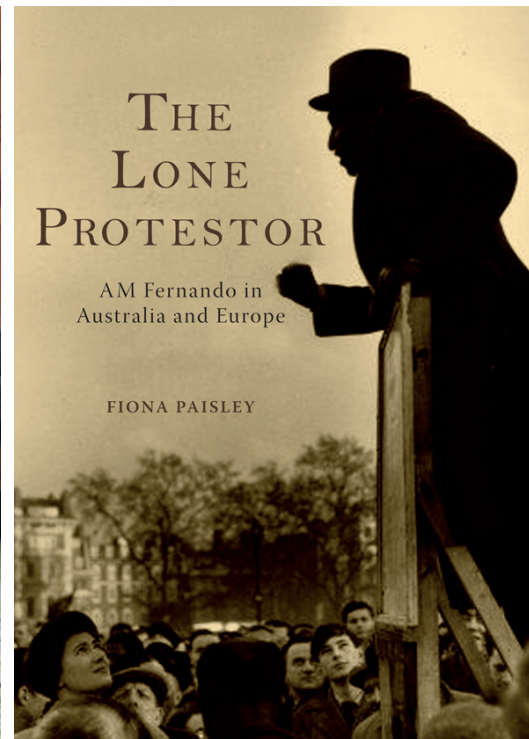
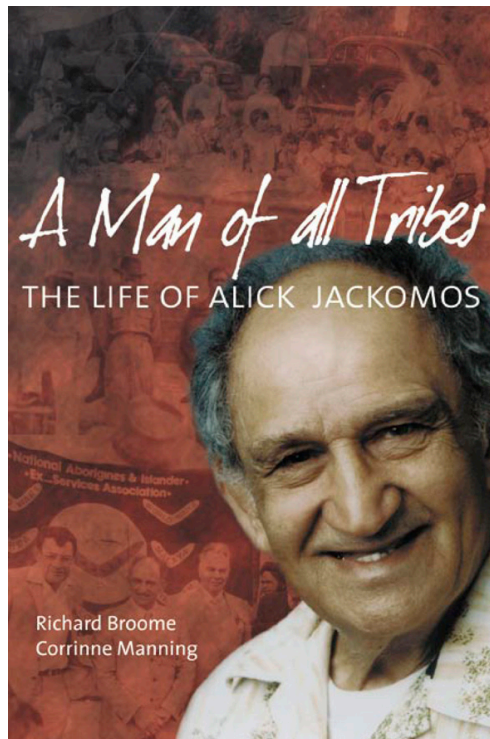


# Teachers' notes

Crossing boundaries: Two life stories



ABORIGINAL  
STUDIES  
PRESS

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# Contents

## To teachers: how to use these notes

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Australian Curriculum English: Stage 5 (Year 10)

Australian non-fiction

Comparative study of texts

NSW Preliminary HSC English: Area of Study

Intertextual links for an integrated unit

Curriculum links

Links to other syllabus learning outcomes

Special provisions

Trans-cultural considerations

Assessment provisions

Table 1: Specific Australian Curriculum Outcomes

Preparation

Assisting students with their reading

## Text 1 A Man of all Tribes: The Life of Alick Jackomos

---

Introducing the text

About the authors

Preliminary contextual questions

Key ideas about crossing boundaries

Analysing language forms, features and techniques

## Text 2 The Lone Protestor

---

Introducing the text

About the author

Preliminary contextual questions

Key ideas about crossing boundaries

Analysing language forms, features and techniques

## Thinking intertextually

---

Composing responses to the texts

Group discussion activities

References

Extension activities

Suggested resources

# TO TEACHERS: HOW TO USE THESE NOTES

## Australian Curriculum English: Stage 5 (Year 10)

These teachers' notes present two biographies from Aboriginal Studies Press — *A Man of all Tribes: The Life of Alick Jackomos* by Richard Broome and Corrine Manning, and *The Lone Protestor: AM Fernando in Australia and Europe* by Fiona Paisley. The teaching program has been specifically designed to facilitate a study of comparative texts in Stage 5 (Year 10) English, though teachers will find it has a number of other applications for intermediate to senior students of English, History and Aboriginal Studies.

## Australian non-fiction

Australian non-fiction is a compulsory component of the Australian Curriculum for English. In Year 10, students study a range of texts including Australian material, exploring writers' use of language techniques to develop themes that connect with wider issues affecting society. They have opportunities to develop skills in the synthesis of texts and textual forms composed in and for a variety of contexts, and for different audiences and purposes.

## Comparative study of texts

In the Language strand of the Australian Curriculum English's Stage 5 syllabus, Year 10 students are required to compare texts for purpose, structure and language features in different media. This unit will assist students in developing skills in treating texts comparatively. In the Literature strand, students develop familiarity with a range of texts, including non-fiction Australian material. In the Literacy strand, students must be exposed to a variety of texts that challenge and develop their skills as composers and responders.

This program provides a good foundation for intertextual thematic studies to prepare students for work in senior English courses or on the study of biography as a genre. It is a valuable exercise for students to study a pair of texts related by topic, theme or context. Teachers will find this resource useful for students studying the crafting of non-fiction narratives and how assumptions about the past are shaped by historical sources that require interpretation. The intertextual aspects of this study will enable teachers to accomplish those goals.

## NSW Preliminary HSC English: Area of Study

Intertextual studies forms the approach to the NSW HSC's common core content component - the Area of Study, themes of which are selected independently by teachers. With this in mind, teachers could use this program to explore a biographical theme of 'Crossing Boundaries' for Stage 5 students to prepare them for their senior studies in English.

A range of activities for completion in lessons is presented in these notes that engage the Receptive and Productive modes. Some activities are suitable for homework. Each text may also be studied independently, at the discretion of teachers seeking an alternative to the full program of study.

Students will encounter self-directed learning activities in this unit. They are encouraged to make links between the issues raised in each biography. Each text may also be studied independently, at the discretion of teachers seeking an alternative to the full program of study. Suggestions for differentiation for low literacy students and those requiring extension work are also provided.

There is sufficient material across these two texts for students to explore over one school term. There are also multiple opportunities for students to locate and incorporate a range of other related texts in their study of these texts.

## Intertextual links for an integrated unit

Teachers wishing to expose students to biographical studies in History and Aboriginal Studies will also find this program useful, as the texts are linked by topic and theme.

## Curriculum links

A summary table lists the relevant Australian Curriculum codes for the Language, Literature and Literacy strands of the Year 10 English syllabus. The cross-curriculum priority that focuses on teaching and learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture is another compulsory requirement of the Australian Curriculum that can be facilitated through the use of this program.

## Links to other syllabus learning outcomes

The program can be adapted to suit the syllabus requirements for equivalent year levels in the other Australian states. As well as meeting the specific outcomes listed in the Australian Curriculum English for Stage 5, it also has applications for the following courses of study:

- Stage 6 – NSW Preliminary HSC English (Advanced) Module A: Comparative Study of Texts OR
- Stage 6 – NSW Preliminary HSC English (Standard and Advanced) Area of Study: Discovery
- Stage 5 – Australian History
- Stage 5 – Aboriginal Studies
- the Australian Curriculum’s prescribed cross-curriculum priority of ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures’

Teachers using this program as an Area of Study in Preliminary HSC English should consult the NSW BOSTES curriculum documents for further information about the outcomes covered in this course of study.

## Special provisions

### Extension work

To supplement this program, suggestions are provided for extension tasks that will challenge students with advanced skills in English. Another useful strategy for extending more capable students is to convert group-assigned activities to individual tasks. Teachers may alter extension tasks so that they will challenge students to develop higher level writing and analysis skills.

### Learning difficulties

Students with special learning needs may be assigned more time to make written responses. They may elect to work in partnerships with peers or a learning support teacher. The more challenging tasks can be broken down into simpler steps, and can be refocused on the development of oral responses rather than formal writing tasks. This will help enable students with learning difficulties to achieve the desired learning outcomes. During teaching sessions, encourage students with learning difficulties to take time to discuss their personal response to ideas presented in the text.

### Trans-cultural considerations

Most Indigenous Australians prefer to be identified by a language label. For example, using the expression ‘Purungu woman’ makes it clear to which specific language group the person belongs. The terms ‘Aboriginal people’ and ‘Indigenous people’ have passed into accepted usage despite their originally generic meanings. To distinguish these terms as proper nouns naming cultural groups, it is important that they are capitalised when they appear in written language. It is appropriate to seek to properly define distinct and individual nations and peoples when making reference to Indigenous Australians.

When consulting other resource material, it’s important to keep in mind that natural variance between spoken and written Aboriginal languages. Variance also exists within the written forms of some languages. The difficulties presented by these idiosyncrasies can be streamlined with the help of Aboriginal language specialists. Teachers are encouraged, wherever practicable, to engage the assistance of such people.

It is important that teachers deal authentically with topics relying on the life experiences of Indigenous Australians. The intensely personal and emotive topics that dominate Aboriginal literature call for sensitivity and cross-cultural empathy. Subconscious deference to stereotypes and misconceptions can be avoided through proper listening to and contextualising of Aboriginal writing and storytelling.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this resource may contain images or names of deceased persons. Some quoted material contains language and views considered inappropriate today. These views are not the view of the author, and this material is provided in the interests of helping students understand the unique historical context in which they were located.

### Assessment provisions

Teachers are invited to use the assessment tasks selectively, attributing weightings to the activities as they deem appropriate. The table below summarises the provisions in the program for the evaluating of achievement standards in line with the Australian Curriculum English for Stage 5, Year 10 course.

**TABLE 1: Specific Australian Curriculum Outcomes**

This table provides a handy reference for teachers, showing the Australian Curriculum English's outcomes for Year 10 that are addressed in this program.

Language	Literature	Literacy
<p><b>Language for interaction</b></p> <p>Understand how language use can have inclusive and exclusive social effects, and can empower or disempower people (ACELA1564)</p> <p>Understand that people's evaluations of texts are influenced by their value systems, the context and the purpose and mode of communication (ACELA1565)</p> <p>Text structure and organisation Compare the purposes, text structures and language features of traditional and contemporary texts in different media (ACELA1566)</p> <p>Evaluate the impact on audiences of different choices in the representation of still and moving images (ACELA1572)</p>	<p><b>Literature and context</b></p> <p>Compare and evaluate a range of representations of individuals and groups in different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1639)</p> <p><b>Responding to literature</b></p> <p>Evaluate the social, moral and ethical positions represented in texts (ACELT1812)</p> <p><b>Examining literature</b></p> <p>Analyse and evaluate text structures and language features of literary texts and make relevant thematic and intertextual connections with other texts (ACELT1774)</p> <p><b>Creating literature</b></p> <p>Create literary texts that reflect an emerging sense of personal style and evaluate the effectiveness of these texts (ACELT1814)</p>	<p><b>Texts in context</b></p> <p>Analyse and evaluate how people, cultures, places, events, objects and concepts are represented in texts, including media texts, through language, structural and/or visual choices (ACELY1749)</p> <p><b>Interacting with others</b></p> <p>Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content and multimodal elements to influence a course of action (ACELY1751)</p> <p><b>Interpreting, analysing, evaluating</b></p> <p>Identify and analyse implicit or explicit values, beliefs and assumptions in texts and how these are influenced by purposes and likely audiences (ACELY1752)</p> <p><b>Creating texts</b></p> <p>Use a range of software, including word processing programs, confidently, flexibly and imaginatively to create, edit and publish texts, considering the identified purpose and the characteristics of the user (ACELY1776)</p>
<p><b>Cross curriculum priority</b></p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture</p>		

## Preparation

Teachers should provide sufficient copies of the books, *A Man of all Tribes: The Life of Alick Jackomos* and *The Lone Protestor: AM Fernando in Australia and Europe* for each student to have their own copy. Teachers should also photocopy any resource sheets from the teachers' notes document before each lesson.

## Assisting students with their reading

When directing students in their reading, teachers may offer these activities to provide some variation.

- read aloud to the class
- nominate students to take turns reading aloud
- use either of the first two methods in small reading circles (in different learning spaces)
- assign periods of silent reading
- assign short (fifteen minute) intervals interspersed with other activities
- assign reading for homework

During group reading sessions, encourage students to:

- pause at times to discuss issues arising in the text
- pause to make predictions and reflections
- visualise specific settings, people and incidents described in the text
- use visualisation techniques to help students imagine characters and events
- note unfamiliar language and research word meanings

## TEXT 1: A Man of all Tribes: The Life of Alick Jackomos

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### Introducing the text

This book presents the biography of Alick Jackomos in a lively and engaging narrative style that perfectly suits the man himself. Alick was born in Collingwood to Greek migrant parents. His education came directly from his rich and varied life experiences. Here is a man who grabbed opportunities with both hands, but never to wring out of them advantages for himself. Rather, he took opportunities and used them for the good of others. He saw a need — he filled it. He saw suffering — he relieved it. He saw injustice — he fought against it.

Part of the richness of the book lies in its vibrant recollection of everyday life activities that have vanished from modern Australian life. The experiences of Australians at war and during its aftermath and the post-war social institution of the RSL, the fish and chip shop as a community hub, the wild and exciting world of tent boxing and the ubiquitous sideshow, local football derbies, playing the gumleaf and going to '50s dance halls, and the Depression years and what it was like to 'go without' — comprise a repository for vastly moving and entertaining storytelling. Better still, through the eyes of a true patriot, readers receive an authentic and captivating account of the childhood experiences of a generation of Australians now lost to us.

Alick was a Greek man with an Aboriginal family, named an 'honorary Koori' and quintessentially Australian. Fittingly, at his funeral, Alick's coffin was draped with three flags. In successfully and authentically crossing social and cultural boundaries between Australians, Alick showed us that it is our humanity that fails us, and not merely our politics.

## About the authors

Richard Broome is Reader/Associate Professor in History at La Trobe University, Melbourne. He's the author of the award-winning and best-selling *Aboriginal Australians* (2002) and the newly published *Aboriginal Victorians* (2005). He previously published *Sideshow Alley*, a book written with Alick Jackomos (1998).

Corinne Manning is a researcher and oral historian at La Trobe University, Melbourne. Her research was concerned with transitional Aboriginal housing projects in Victoria during the 1950s and 1960s.

Source: Advance information sheet, Aboriginal Studies Press, [http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/\\_files/asp/trade/ai/ai\\_alick\\_jackomos.pdf](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/_files/asp/trade/ai/ai_alick_jackomos.pdf).

## Preliminary contextual questions

Write point-form responses to these questions:

- 01 What are some common reasons that inspire people to migrate from their homeland? Jot down some responses from the class and discuss the most frequently mentioned ideas.
- 02 What types of physical, social and cultural barriers would Alick's parents have encountered before, during and after their migration to Australia?
- 03 Where is Collingwood? Locate it on a map and discuss the ways in which its position would have brought Alick Jackomos into contact with a variety of cultures.
- 04 What was the Great Depression? In what time period did it occur? Identify some ways in which the lives of ordinary Australians were affected during this period.
- 05 In what ways have Aboriginal Australians experienced the need to cross boundaries in the past?

## Key ideas about crossing boundaries

### Childhood

The first section of the book deals with Alick's childhood, young adult life, experiences in the war as a seventeen year old and the early years of his marriage to Merle Morgan.

**Q:** From Chapters 1-7, in what specific areas of life does Alick discover boundaries have been set up against him? What is his response to each of those barriers?

### Military service

Alick saw active military service in Borneo after lying about his age to enlist in the AIF (Australian Infantry Force).

**Q:** What does this episode tell us about Alick's character?

### Mateship

An outgoing and gregarious character, Alick embodied the value of 'mateship'. It doesn't do justice to Alick's attitude to call his view of mateship 'Australian' because that quality is certainly not the province only of Aussies. Sadly, it is not even the dominant ethos in view in Australian society today.

True mateship is fostered when folks have a right view of themselves in relation to others, and it is this quality of Alick's that is most remembered and most to be treasured. Alick never felt himself to be above others. For him, difference was never seen as deficiency. A true mate to his wife, his children, his parents, Alick has indeed earned the honour of being called 'A Man of all Tribes'.

Alick recounts his desire to 'be friends with Aboriginal people' for reasons he can't quite explain. His ties to the Aboriginal community in Victoria led him to learn first-hand of the struggles they faced against social injustice in those times. His political activism and advocacy always sprang from his relationships with people. His desire for change came from an authentic place - his own experiences and connections with people.



**Q:** Discuss your own experiences of 'mateship' in Australian culture. How do you experience friendships? Are they affected by culture?

### Education

Lack of formal academic credentials was a persistent hindrance to Alick's access to positions from which he could enact political and social changes.

**Q:** In what ways was Alick held back by his lack of education qualifications?

### Race

A man of action, Alick saw racial difference as completely immaterial to relationships. Alick's story shows what can be achieved through genuine partnerships between cultures. His relationships with people in working class inner-suburban Melbourne were marked by tolerance, commitment and compassion.

**Q:** How have race relations in Australia's major cities developed or declined since Alick's times?

### Work life

In his mid-teens, Alick was already a significant contributor to the family's income with his newspaper run, peanut-selling venture and mechanical apprenticeship. However, his biggest interests were to be none of those pursuits - but instead, wrestling and boxing. Tent events were popular in the post-war years, and Jimmy Sharman's Troupe ushered Alick into a young man's paradise where being strong, courageous and quick on your feet could earn you a living and, more importantly, respect and belonging.

**Q:** What does a strong work ethic and a positive view of work contribute to a person's life today?

How does work life today compare to the employment landscape of the Depression? What personal attributes would help a person from that time overcome barriers to employment?

### Activism

Alick worked with Pastor Doug Nicholls, who was one of the founders of the Australian Aborigines' League, which would later become the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI), of which he was the Victorian state secretary.

**Q:** What made Alick so well-positioned to work in these roles?

### Bringing people together

Alick recounts an incident where the non-Aboriginal meeting decided that the white people present should leave, in order that they not be included in decision-making about Aboriginal affairs being discussed. Alick was quite willing to leave, but spoke up in defence of those being ejected, saying

'Look, these people are married to Aboriginal girls. They're ostracised by the white community. They've got Aboriginal children. Why should they be separated?

Why should we ask them out? You know they're the parents of our future leaders.'

The meeting unanimously said the folks should stay.

**Q:** What does this incident tell us about Alick's vision for the future in Australian race relations?

## Analysing language forms, features and techniques

### Task 1

**Alick Jackomos is described in the extract below:**

"He was at different times a welfare worker and activist, a public servant in Aboriginal affairs, an historian archivist and genealogist. This man of little formal education collected a remarkable photographic archive of Aboriginal Victorians and, working with Aboriginal people, compiled over a thousand intricate genealogies, a powerful tool for members of the

stolen generation. He also wrote Aboriginal history and shared his knowledge with schools, universities and Aboriginal organisations.

Source: Advance information sheet, Aboriginal Studies Press [http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/\\_files/asp/trade/ai/ai\\_alick\\_jackomos.pdf](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/_files/asp/trade/ai/ai_alick_jackomos.pdf)→

What use has the writer made of the technique of **contrast** in this passage? Write your answer as a series of points of contrast from the passage.

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## Task 2

Read and annotate this interview with Richard Broome and Corinne Manning, using the following key to make your notations:

Language feature	Colour
emotive language	blue
positive evaluative language	red
nominalisations	black
abstract nouns	yellow highlighting

### Interview text:

*Richard, you'd worked with Alick Jackomos before, but sadly he died before this book was finished. What was it like, working with him on his own life?*

Alick and Richard worked on a book together in the mid-1990s called *Sideshow Alley*, now sadly out of print. It was a wonderful book about the world of boxing tents and sideshows of which Alick had been a part, full time for several years and for over twenty years part time. Alick's great interest in this project reflected his deep involvement with Aboriginal people and his common humanity. He recalled his life as a wrestler in the travelling boxing tents of the late 1940s as the best time of his working life.

While *Sideshow Alley* was in press in 1998 Alick and Richard agreed to work on Alick's life story in the new year. However, Alick fell ill and passed away within weeks before a start could be made. Therefore his life story became a different book, but one still informed with his rich voice as he had been interviewed numerous times, including by Richard and had left his own rich written record of his life.

*Alick seems to have been a person of indomitable spirit and generosity. Is that how he's remembered now?*

If you travel across Aboriginal Victoria and other parts of Aboriginal Australia and mention the name Alick Jackomos there is instant recognition from most adults. His welfare and political work with the Aboriginal Advancement League during the 1950s and 1960s put him in contact with many people and his photographic and genealogical collecting gave him an unparalleled understanding of the Victorian Aboriginal community into which he has married in the early 1950s. He loved people, being with them, talking and joking with them and seeking to understand them. He mixed with all types and all groups in a relaxed and fearless way as he was confident in himself as a man.

*Alick was pivotal in the politics of struggle for Aboriginal rights and lived through the period of assertion of Aboriginal control. Some of that must have been painful for him — to be considered an 'outsider'. How did he deal with it?*

Alick's aim in Aboriginal affairs was to gain justice for Aboriginal people. He knew that in the end Aboriginal people would need to do things for themselves. He was one non-Aboriginal person who knew when to step aside, and was content just to be there to assist when asked.

Source: [http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/\\_files/asp/book\\_files/broome/BroomeInterview.pdf](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/_files/asp/book_files/broome/BroomeInterview.pdf)

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## Task 3

Some of the expressions in the text reveal the ways that Standard English has evolved in the past decades. Identify two idioms on page xii of the preface and explain their meanings.

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#### Task 4

How is language like 'Dago' used in the text to convey relationship dynamics? Look at the dialogue on pages 4 and 13 to help you frame your response.

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#### Task 5

Identify five sensory images detailed on page 13. Create a table to show how each image selected appeals to one or more of the physical senses - sight, sound, smell, touch and taste. Then, think about the emotions that some of these images might evoke in readers.

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#### Task 6

If you were to create an opening sequence for a film version of the text, what symbols would you use? Explain your response.

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#### Task 7

What specific features of this passage are peculiar to Australian English spoken in past times? Refer to the Greek expressions found on pages 8-16.

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#### Task 8

Which passages particularly disempowers or excludes the protagonist, Alick Jackomos? Refer to the 'journalese' (jargon peculiar to journalism) on page 52 and pages 98-99.

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## Text 2: The Lone Protestor

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### Introducing the text

Written by historian Dr Fiona Paisley and published by Aboriginal Studies Press (ASP), *The Lone Protestor* was announced as winner of the 2014 Magarey Medal for Biography. The story of the first Indigenous activist to campaign overseas, *The Lone Protestor* documents the travels and previously unknown details of Anthony Martin Fernando who left Sydney in the early 1900s and travelled throughout Europe, publicising the plight of Aborigines in Australia.

Anthony Martin Fernando was a man ahead of his time. He saw that the flourishing of Australia's Indigenous populations hinged on the ability of government and the general public to reconcile the past with the future. This remains the key message of reconciliation. But Fernando went a step further than mere rhetoric. He realised that his country's acceptance as a valued member of the global community could be leveraged in Europe as a mechanism to force attention onto his protest. Australian authorities were portrayed as oppressors, far from the embodiment of their publicly stated ideals common to all liberal, parliamentary democracies.

Fernando clearly saw it his duty — his life's work — to force change upon history, and to compel ordinary people and their governments in European nations to call for moves that might one day repair the delicate cultural fabric for the benefit of future generations. For centuries, Australians have been accused of perpetuating a 'cultural cringe' before onlookers in Europe's capitals. Even today, Australian travellers sense a certain prejudice against them from their European progenitors, who cite thousands of years of recorded history as the basis of their claim to cultural greatness. Australians are impressed by the sense of dignified history as they take in the sights of the remnants of the world's great

civilisations — from the ancient Colosseum to Westminster Abbey. There was nothing cringing about A. M. Fernando. His public displays on the streets of Rome and Bern, and in London's Speaker's Corner were empowered by a pride and belief in values that were beyond culture. Whether in Rome, London or Sydney, to Fernando, the rise to power of Celtic-descended men in the twentieth century was temporary, arbitrary and unjust and he, for one, would not go quietly into history.

## About the author

Dr Fiona Paisley is an historian and associate professor in the school of Humanities at Griffith University. Her research interests include the history of human rights and the politics of race relations in colonial and early twentieth century settings.

## Preliminary contextual questions

Form small groups or pairs and discuss your responses to these questions:

- 06 What is unusual about an Indigenous Australian man travelling to Europe during the early twentieth century?
- 07 What other cultures were Indigenous Australians beginning to have more contact with during Fernando's time (in Australia)? How might this cultural diversity have influenced Indigenous people in their attitudes and values?
- 08 In what ways did the Australian government in Fernando's time prevent people from crossing boundaries — both physical and metaphorical?
- 09 Consult a map and mark the following places to trace AM Fernando's travels in Europe — London, Rome, Bern, Vienna, Trieste, Grossau and Katzenau. Fernando also travelled through Asia on his way to Europe. What impact do you think his travel experiences had on the development of his world view as a young man?
- 10 Analyse the image of AM Fernando on the book's back cover, commenting on its features as a visual text. What core message is communicated by this image?

## Key ideas about crossing boundaries

### Origins

Anthony Martin Fernando was born on 6 April 1864 at Woolloomooloo, Sydney, to Sarah and Mariano Silva. We know that his mother was an Aboriginal woman, but the ethnicity of his father is less clear. It is believed that he was Asian, possibly Sri Lankan. It was during his time in Italy that he adopted what he felt was 'an ordinary working Italian man's name', 'Fernando'.

**Q: In what ways was Fernando, like Alick Jackomos, 'a man of all tribes'?**

### Injustice

Fernando's witnessing of two white men murdering an Aborigine provided the impetus for his activism. He was refused the opportunity to testify as a key witness in the case and the murderers were acquitted.

**Q: How was Fernando able to turn a negative experience into a lifetime of positive action? What does this reveal about his character and intellect?**

### Personal mission

Fernando's mission to bring attention to the deplorable conditions facing Australia's Indigenous people was self-imposed. It would last nearly half a lifetime and would mark him out for unwarranted hardship and exclusion for much of that time.

**Q: What does Fernando say drove him to such extremes of sacrifice in his life as an activist?**

## The international reach of A. M. Fernando's message

Australia's geographical remoteness has been both a blessing and a curse in past times. In Fernando's time, Australians were not highly mobile. From the year 1890, he travelled through Asia and Europe, working at various times as a welder, toymaker, jewellery-maker, trader and servant.

Fernando's travels resulted in a dramatic compressing of the global village, meaning that Australia could not hide their shameful dealings with Indigenous people by remaining isolated in the international community.

**Q:** Why were Indigenous Australians among the least globally mobile people at that time?

## Key activism events

Fernando travelled far and wide in Europe, sometimes voluntarily and other times as a prisoner. Everywhere he went, Fernando's message centred on the ill-treatment of his countrymen. 'I have been boycotted everywhere . . . It is tommyrot to say that we are all savages. Whites have shot, slowly starved and hanged us'.

**Q:** Discuss the following events and the impact they had on Fernando personally, as well as on his cause:

- Imprisoned in Austria during World War I
- Attempted to present a private petition to the Pope
- Wrote a protest against Australian injustice towards Aborigines that appeared in a Swiss newspaper.
- Picketed Australia House in London.

## Fernando's use of visual symbolism

Fernando is believed to be the first Aboriginal person to protest the treatment of Indigenous Australians in Europe. His regular public appearances took various forms. He would distribute pamphlets on the streets, make rousing speeches in Hyde Park's Speaker's Corner, and drew the attention of crowds through his costume of choice - a long black overcoat, covered with tiny, white toy skeletons.

**Q:** Comment on Fernando's choice of white skeletons on a black background as imagery that represented his cause. Why was this such an appropriate and effective visual tool?

## Lost in bureaucracy

Fernando was unable to access support from British authorities in Europe, despite being a British subject (as were all Australians under the commonwealth structure). Instead, he was described as 'a negro' by the British Foreign Office. His request for assistance during his various imprisonments and deportations were rejected by the Australian government, which stated that there was no official evidence of his birth in the Australian registry, and hence, his appeal was rejected.

**Q:** Discuss the gulf between the 'letter' and the 'spirit' of the law in Fernando's case. Could authorities have fairly ruled on his case by relying on means other than official paperwork? Discuss what their abandonment of Fernando signals about the legal status of Indigenous Australians both in Australia and overseas at the time.

## An ally

For a time, Fernando worked as a servant and cook in England and enjoyed the friendship and support of his employer.

**Q:** What does Fernando's refusal of a stipend (income) from an English barrister say about his personality and values?

## A quiet strength

Mary Bennett's encounter with Fernando is described below: She reported that he was a small man with a gentle demeanor, self-educated, well spoken, with a command of many languages and a good knowledge of the Bible. Bennett found him to be sane, intelligent yet driven. The prison doctor agreed, reporting that 'although he held strong views about his race, there was no indication of any delusions', and no reason to commit him to an asylum.

**Q:** What legacy has Fernando left for people facing inequality on the basis of race in Australia and Europe today? Was he an agent of change?

## Analysing language forms, features and techniques

### Task 1

While in London, stories of A M Fernando's court appearances were reported in Australian newspapers including *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Brisbane Courier*, *The Advertiser* in Adelaide, *The Townsville Daily Bulletin* and *The Examiner* in Tasmania.

Source: <http://aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/m-fernando-notebooks>

Analyse the headlines of the six articles shown on the webpage at the link above. Write an explanation of the view of A M Fernando each one is suggesting, according to the **connotations** of the language chosen and the punctuation used. For example, the phrase 'brutality' carries the implication that the writer disbelieves or minimises the accusation of white brutality. Justify your response.

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### Task 2

Navigate to the following link in the Aboriginal Studies Press (AIATSIS) website.  
<http://aiatsis.gov.au/publications/products/lone-protector-am-fernando-australia-and-europe>

Locate three reviews by these academics:

- Dr Caroline Bressey, Director, Equiano Centre, University College London
- Professor Grant Farred, Cornell University
- Professor Heather Goodall, University of Technology Sydney

Print the three reviews and make your own annotations on the page in which you identify the following features:

Language feature	Colour
emotive language	blue
positive evaluative language	red
high modality words	green

Use the colour code suggested to identify each instance of these three techniques, then write a summary (one paragraph per review) of the overall effect of these techniques on the reader.

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### Task 3

In what ways are the authors' values on display in the emotive passage referring to the skeletons on page 100?

---

### Task 4

Evaluate these symbols for use on a website dedicated to publicising the cause of AM Fernando:

Give reasons for your opinions of each one's potential effectiveness.

- a candle in a dark room
- a lone dingo in a wasteland
- a group of children holding hands
- a skeleton
- a newborn baby resting in an adult's hands

- a close-up shot of a brown-coloured eye
  - a flock of wild, native birds
  - a fireside scene with family members socialising together
- 

### Task 5

In chapter 4, we find Fernando's 'Open Letter to the Swiss People'. Comment upon the language used by the officials in that chapter, particularly the ironic use of the word 'protection' (p 69).

---

### Task 6

This is a vocabulary task. Define these words from the preface (pages xiv-xv), paying special attention to the shades of meaning (connotations) of some, as well as their literal definitions.

- |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| • presence     | • progressive   |
| • itinerancy   | • frontier      |
| • inspiration  | • hierarchy     |
| • resolutely   | • myriad        |
| • diaspora     | • incarceration |
| • assimilation | • counterparts  |
| • commentator  | • federalism    |
| • critiqued    | • deployed      |
| • compelling   | • legislation   |
| • colonialism  | • affinity      |

Comment upon the effectiveness of the writers' choice of words to portray a noble vision of AM Fernando.

---

## THINKING INTERTEXTUALLY

### Composing responses to the texts

Write an extended answer to this question in your work book.

1. Which text is this quote about? Justify your conclusion.

*This is both an inspiring and painful story, built on a complex set of records, of a man who acted alone without the support of a community around him and who was partially destroyed by the harshness of his encounters with a world that was for the most part hostile.*

2. Which of the protagonists is this quote about? Justify your conclusion.

*He had an idealism that sometimes ignored cultural differences, which is an entirely separate issue, and his optimism that people should just always get along, putting their differences aside, sometimes spelled trouble.*

3. In what ways could this view of AM Fernando be applied equally well to Alick Jackomos? Write a point form explanation of some key similarities between the two men.

*Fernando understood empire. He insisted on metropolitan as well as settler responsibility for colonial violence and understood the ways in which imperial rule had impacted on daily life in Britain as well as Australia. He was a modern man.*

## Group discussion activities

### 1. Form groups of four or five for this task.

You will be given a printed copy of each book cover on an A4 page. Your group's task is to identify the key visual features, writing point form notes about their effects in the margins.

Analyse the book covers, commenting on their features as visual texts. What core messages are communicated by the text and images on each cover?

Can your group come to a consensus about the most important use of symbolism in the image? Discuss and negotiate your ideas.

### 2 This is a whole class discussion activity.

Navigate to the following link to the A M Fernando Notebooks.<http://aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/m-fernando-notebooks>

'During her research, with the help of her research assistant Dr Paisley uncovered three small handwritten notebooks kept by Fernando which describe his life as a street trader in depression era London. In July 2012, she donated the notebooks to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).'

These documents were written while Fernando was living in London in 1929 and 1930.

Source: The Lone Protestor wins Magarey Medal for Biography, AIATSIS 50 Years, <http://50years.aiatsis.gov.au/news/2014/lone-protestor-wins-magarey-medal-biography>

As a whole group, discuss the importance of the notebooks to the historical record. Why is it so critical to have a record of Fernando's own perspective on the events of his life in Europe?

## Extension activities

### Artwork evaluation

Search the internet to find out more about an artist called Penny Byrne. How is one of her works related to AM Fernando's story? Write an evaluation of the artwork.

### Personal response

Describe your personal response to the stories of Alick Jackomos and A M Fernando. What have these two men taught you about your role as an agent for social change?

### Speaking task

Present to a group of your peers a textual extract from one of the two texts you have studied. The extract should reflect an 'official' point of view about the protagonist. It could be an official letter, court document or news article.

Discuss the following aspects of the extract in a small group:

- the point of view present in the introduction
- the ways in which the Indigenous Australian person is represented
- the implicit assumptions of the writer or speaker
- the use of exclusive language to isolate the person or people affected

### Digital media project

Create a digital collage that precisely conveys the negative impacts that the language and imagery of exclusion continues to exert in Australian media today. Use a combination of text and graphics to present your ideas. Save your work in PDF format.



## Suggested resources

### Books and Journals

*Aboriginal Law Bulletin*, 2, no 33, 1988, p 4.

Bennett, M. *The Australian Aboriginal as a Human Being*, (London, 1930).

Beresford, Q. *Rob Riley: An Aboriginal leader's quest for justice*, Aboriginal Studies Press, 2006.

Brown, M. 'Fernando: the story of an Aboriginal Prophet', *Aboriginal Welfare Bulletin*, vol 4, no 1, 1964, p 7.

Horton, David. *The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, society and culture*, Canberra; AIATSIS. 1994.


Paisley, F. 'An education in white brutality', in A. Coombes (ed.), *Making History Memorable*, Manchester, England, (forthcoming).

### Internet material

A.M Fernando Notebooks: London 1929–1930, <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/m-fernando-notebooks>.

*Ecological humanities*, <http://www.ecologicalhumanities.org/index.html>.

Hall, C. Extract of a review from *Australian Historical Studies*, Vol. 44, Issue 2, May 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2013.793237>



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