

# PALM ISLAND & OUR PEOPLE

## Activity sheet for Palm Island & Our People

### Resources:

- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

<https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia>

### MANBARRA (TRADITIONAL OWNERS)

Palm Island, also known as Great Palm Island, or by the Aboriginal name Bwgcolman (pronounced Boog-a-mon or Boog-ka-mon) is the largest of 16 islands in the Palm Island Group.

The Traditional Owners are the Manbarra People (pronounced Mun-bar-rra) which includes the entire Palm Island Group as well as Magnetic Island. Research records that they are part of the Wulgurukaba Nation (pronounced Wool-gah-roo-kah-bah) and that Great Palm Island is known as Burgu'mah (Boor-goo-mah), in language. The islands are linked to the mainland through the creation story of the Carpet Snake or the Big Snake.

The first recorded European observations of the Palm Islands came from Captain Cook when in 1770 he sailed up the east coast of Australia. Cook sent some of his men ashore on Palm Island but they returned having nothing worth observing. It is estimated that the population of Palm Island at the time of Cook's visit was about 200 Manbarra People.

When non Aboriginal people started to exploit the land and sea around North Queensland, life for the Manbarra People quickly changed forever. In 1883 nine Aboriginal people from Palm Island were kidnapped and taken as circus exhibits to be shown in America and Europe. The remains of one of these people Kukamunburra (Tambo) was returned to Palm Island for burial.

### Activity Questions:

- Where is Palm Island?
- Who are the Traditional Owners?
- What is the Traditional Aboriginal name for this place?

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**DREAMTIME CREATION STORY**

**BIG SNAKE**

The Big Snake came down the Herbert River, went out to sea and broke up leaving parts of his body along the coast. The tail of the snake is at Halifax Bay, his body is at Palm Island and his head on Magnetic Island.

The snake dug a big lagoon on Palm Island. Young girls at Palm Island were not allowed near the big lagoon, but they wouldn't listen. The Snake swallowed one girl, and when her father came looking for her he couldn't find her. The father followed the Snake tracks to Mt Bentley and down the creek and the Snake made Carpet Snake Creek.

The father came to a little island now called Cordelia Rock, which is a small Carpet Snake. The small Carpet Snake told the father that the Big Snake had the little girl, and that he had gone to West Point on Magnetic Island. The father found the Snake.

The Snake asked the girl's father not to condemn him because the girl was alright, and that the father could take her out. The father was a clever man and he took the girl out of the Snake without hurting it. The father then took all the evil spirits out of the girl, cleaned her up and then took her back to Palm Island. The girl was sick but she was alive. The Big Snake kept on going, he went on towards the mainland and made the Ross River.

### Activities:

- Read and discuss the 'Big Snake' Creation story
- Investigate other creation stories from around Australia
- Listen and respond to the online stories and photos

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### Resources:

- The Orb: <https://www.theorb.tas.gov.au/living-cultures/fibres>



1.



2.



3.



4.

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## Activities:

- What do you think these items were used for?
- How do you think they were made?
- Explore and investigate what types of materials in your local area are best for making items like these.