

This book belongs to

SLINGSBY

- Journey In Wonder -

The River
That Ran Uphill

AS TOLD BY EDGELL JUNIOR

EDUCATION RESOURCE



- Our History -

About Slingsby

Founded in 2007, Adelaide based theatre company Slingsby creates emotionally powerful storytelling that invites audiences of all ages into immersive theatrical realms. Each Slingsby show is an invitation into a magical world, transporting audiences to a time and place that is at once breathtaking, and familiar. By telling stories of wonder, hardship and hope Slingsby builds connections and joy within our community. With an international reputation as a distinctive and cherished company with seasons at some of the world's most prestigious festivals and venues including repeat invitations to New Victory Theater, New York, Dublin Theatre Festival, Edinburgh International Children's Festival and Sydney Opera House.

Ten of Slingsby's original productions have now toured regionally, nationally and/or internationally across Australia, USA, Canada, Singapore, China, India, Norway, UK, Ireland, New Zealand. A brace of local, national, and international industry awards is testament to the company's renown for excellence in theatre making and life long impact on the lives of audiences of all ages.

About the Flying Squad

Slingsby's Flying Squad is a team of five multi-skilled artists, travelling around South Australia, collaborating and sharing performances and workshops with remote, regional and metropolitan communities. The Flying Squad is a co-investment made by the Federal Government's RISE Fund and the Government of South Australia's Arts Recovery Fund, as a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the recognition that modern theatre requires innovation and highly adaptable ways of working.

The Flying Squad explores, creates, performs and facilitates, engaging with audiences and participants of all demographics through workshops and performances.

Green Touring Model

Slingsby is committed to tackling the climate emergency and being active in protecting the environment by creating real, sustainable and measurable change. We aim to eliminate more greenhouse gas pollution than we create.

As part of this commitment to the environment Slingsby has developed Slingsby's Green Touring Model, as it considers the global climate impact of creating and touring work. The model aims to reduce the company's climate footprint towards net Climate Positive impact. Slingsby is positioned as an industry leader towards a secure climate for audiences and artists of the future. The model has the following focus areas:

1. Measure emissions (remove, redesign, offset)
2. Set goals
3. Pre-tour planning
4. During tour (transport, food choices and waste linked to methane)
5. Post-tour (set repurposing, measuring emissions, offset where/when necessary and affordable)
6. Report and set future targets
7. Hands-on landcare and tree planting

- Synopsis -

The River That Ran Uphill

A triumphant true tale of a tiny girl, as she finds strength to survive the wildest of winds and raging rivers in the Cyclone that devastated the Pacific Islands.

This is a story of the power of nature and humanity when they collide, showing us how communities can come together in their weakest moments to rebuild, reminding us of the global climate emergency, and that the seemingly impossible remains just possible if we work together.

This is a true story from Slingsby's Flying Squad ensemble member Edgell Junior, a proud Ni Vanuatu man from Pentecost Island, who experienced and survived the ferocity of Cyclone Pam in 2015.

This new theatre work by Slingsby's Flying Squad drops the audience in the eye of the storm. As the waters rise, this production will be a message of warning and perhaps, a raft of hope.



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- The Cast -



Edgell Junior

Edgell is a proud Ni-Vanuatu man (from Pentecost Island), now living in Adelaide. From 2011–2019, Edgell was a core ensemble member of internationally-renowned Wan Smolbag Theatre (Port Vila, Vanuatu), who work year-round producing, devising and touring plays, films, short videos, workshop programs and educational resources.

Vanuatu based NGO Wan Smolbag Theatre plays an important role in Edgell Junior's life, story and experience of Cyclone Pam. To read more about this incredible creative and community organisation visit:

<https://www.wansmolbag.org/>



**Evyenia (Jennifer)
Stefanidis**

Evyenia 'Jennifer' Stefanidis is a multidisciplinary Greek-Australian artist working on Kurna Country, South Australia. A recent alumnus of the Flinders University Drama Centre, she has continued her collaborative, ensemble-based practice as a touring member of Slingsby's Flying Squad. Evyenia undertook a directorial secondment with State Theatre Company of South Australia on *Antigone* (2022), for which she performed various offstage roles before stepping in as an understudy. Her acting credits include *The River That Ran Uphill* and *This Tree is a Story* (Slingsby Theatre Company), *The Seagull*, *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again.*, *Reckless, Our Town* and *Pre-Paradise Sorry Now* (Flinders Drama Centre).



Elleni Karagiannidis

Elleni Karagiannidis is a local artist living and working on Kurna land, Adelaide. As a first generation Australian from a Greek Cypriot family, Elleni has always been surrounded by music, dance, and stories of wondrous places both afar and home. It was therefore inevitable that her fascination for storytelling would lead her to a love for the theatre.

Since graduating from the Flinders University Drama Centre in 2007, Elleni has utilised her skills, knowledge and passion for the arts as an actor, puppeteer, director, facilitator and program coordinator.

Elleni has recently returned to Adelaide with her new family after living in Melbourne for five years. She is thrilled to be working with Slingsby as an ensemble member of The Flying Squad, bringing new, captivating, and beautiful theatre to audiences around our gorgeous state.

- The Creative Team -

Andy Packer

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/DIRECTOR

Andy is a director of theatre, music theatre and opera. He has also worked as creative producer of multidisciplinary arts programs, producer of large-scale events and festival director. In 2007 Andy co-founded Adelaide-based theatre company Slingsby. The company's productions have received 16 industry awards and toured to more than 100 theatres in over 70 cities and towns across 12 countries.

Andy is renowned for creating original live performance moments that are emotionally powerful and visually bold. His work across theatre for young audiences, opera, cabaret, music theatre and symphonic concerts has pushed him to develop a distinctive theatrical form that is at once personal and epic.

Clara Solly-Slade

REHEARSAL DIRECTOR

Clara Solly-Slade trained at The Adelaide College of the Arts (2013) then undertook further training at the Acting Shakespeare Course at RADA, London. In 2017 she trained in La Mama Experimental Theatre Company at their Umbria Symposium.

Clara was awarded the Helpmann Academy's Neil Curnow Award (2018) where she interned in the USA (The H.E.A.T. Collective, Working Classroom and La Mama Experimental Theatre Company).

Clara has worked as a facilitator and director with young people for ACT NOW Theatre for Social Change, Australian Theatre for Young People, Australian Refugee Volunteers and Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre.

Clara worked for two years full time as an Emerging Director Fellow with the State Theatre Company of South Australia and State Opera of South Australia. In 2021 Clara directed at Adelaide College of the Arts in *Lemons, Lemons, Lemons, Lemons* and for *Dream Big Children's Festival* with *Everything They Ever Said* with *Fingers Crossed Behind their Backs* for the SAYart's Youth Ensemble.

Quincy Grant

COMPOSER

Quincy's work includes music for plays such as *The Tragical Life of Cheeseboy* and *When The Rain Stops Falling*, many works for orchestra that have been played in Germany, Canada, and by leading Australian orchestras, and soundtracks for films and documentaries broadcast on the ABC and SBS. He also writes for concert performance and film and plays in many groups: from rock to new music and most recently, wild gypsy music with Golonka.

- The Creative Team -

Wendy Todd

SET DESIGNER

Wendy is an Adelaide-based designer of theatre, events and spaces. Recent productions designed by Wendy Todd (Set & Costume Designs) include *Lighthouse* 2020, set only (Patch Theatre), *North/South* 2019 (Australian Dance Theatre), *Picaresque* 2019 (Robyn Archer, Adelaide Festival), *Seashore* 2019 (Sally Chance Dance/Dream Big), *Rabbits* 2017 (Steel & Brown/ State Theatre Company), *Emil & the Detectives* 2017, set only (Slingsby), *Long Tan* 2017 (Brink, STC), *The Young King* 2016 (Slingsby), *Touch'N'Go* 2016 (Sally Chance Dance), *Cabaret* Opening, Closing & Family Galas 2018 & 2016 (Adelaide Festival Centre), *Blinx Bar* Adelaide Festival (Adelaide Festival of Arts) 2015.

Darian Tregenza

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Darian is a lighting, vision, and multiskilled technician and designer from South Australia. Since graduating from Adelaide College of the Arts' technical production course, he has gained valuable experience through his time working in local venues, with local theatre and dance companies, at festivals, on installations, and events. He has toured nationally with shows such as Patch Theatre's *Yo Diddle Diddle*, Anna Goldworthy's *Piano Lessons*, Slingsby Theatre's *The Young King*, *Emil & The Detectives*, and *The Boy Who Talked to Dogs*.

Production Credits

CREATED BY SLINGSBY'S FLYING SQUAD

Edgell Junior, Alexis West,
Evyenia Stefanidis, Delia Olam,
Elleni Karagiannidis & Joshua Campton

DIRECTOR

Andy Packer & Clara Solly-Slade

COMPOSER

Quincy Grant

DESIGNER

Slingsby's Flying Squad & Wendy Todd

LIGHTING DESIGNER/TECHNICIAN/
PERFORMER

Darian Tregenza

- Writer's Note -



Edgell Junior

What is the place of story-telling in Vanuatu?

To me storytelling is everything.

What I mean by that is since the beginning of time, our old people and knowledge keepers used stories to teach our forefathers.

Knowledge is passed on orally through stories, singing, sand drawing and cultural ceremonies.

These things were passed on to our fathers and mothers who read the night skies, moon, wind, the birds' and animals' behaviour, so that we, their sons and daughters are prepared for what each new day brings.

Through these teachings, we learn when it is the right time to go fishing, hunting, to plant new crops, or if a cyclone or bad weather is coming.

We are taught everything we need to know in order to survive in our homeland and look after our families.

Nothing was written down.

When schools were introduced to us, we were forced, for the first time to open books in order to learn the alphabet, reading, writing and modern history.

In these books we read about how Captain James Cook discovered Vanuatu, about the Queens of England, about Australia's Great Barrier Reef and how Neil Armstrong landed on the moon.

We read many things about many foreign places, were told we were learning the true history and that this was the way forward.

But the real knowledge our children need about our culture and way of life, is not in these books and is not taught at school.

One thing we know for sure is that when something is written down, it can be lost, misplaced, or if in the wrong hands, be changed or deliberately misinterpreted for personal gain.

When a story is told to you, it can never be lost or misplaced, it becomes a part of you, it runs through your veins, enters your DNA and is with you forever, until the day you die.

What challenges did you face when bringing your personal story to life for this show?

Firstly English is not my first language, it is my fourth language.

Secondly, I am a storyteller, not a script writer.

Now you understand where I am coming from.

One day I asked Boss Man (Slingsby's Artistic Director, Andy) if he had ever heard of a tale about a river that ran uphill.

He had not, but he said that 'the river that ran uphill' would be a great title for a theatre show.

When we were still rehearsing our last show, one day we were talking about disasters and Cyclone Tracy that hit Darwin in the 80s, came up in the conversation.

Boss Man asked me if natural disasters were big in Vanuatu as well.

I said yes and that there were volcanic eruptions, landslides, earthquakes, tsunamis and cyclones in Vanuatu.

I explained that I had experienced all of these disasters, but the one that would always stay with me was Cyclone Pam.

Partly because it was a devastating category 5 cyclone and partly because during this destructive storm, I witnessed something that I didn't fully understand and that until this day, is still strange and mysterious to me.

During Cyclone Pam I also witnessed the fickle and fake world of foreign aid and apparently well-meaning expats and volunteer workers.

I told Boss Man my story, my experience of Cyclone Pam and once I had finished, he said that this story would be our next show.

The task of writing my story in English was not easy.

It was much easier for me to tell my story than write it down.

Once I handed over my written story, I thought it would then be given to a script writer and be developed in to a theatrical script.

I was surprised to learn that my written story became the script.

At first this did not sit right with me, it is not how I am used to working.

I had to trust the process which is not easy for me (trusting people....hahaha).

But with Boss Man's guidance and vision I knew we would get there.

- Director's Note -



Andy Packer

What inspired you to bring Edgell's story to an audience?

Within the first few weeks of commencing work with Slingsby's Flying Squad ensemble, Edgell asked me "do you know the story of the river that ran uphill?". I didn't but I was instantly intrigued! Edgell later told us about his incredible experience of surviving Cyclone Pam in 2015.

Vanuatu and the Pacific community are on the frontline of the impact of climate crisis, and it is an incredible privilege to have Edgell share his first-hand experience of living through a category 5 cyclone and how his community came together to support each other.

I hope that through sharing this story, we can provide both a wake-up call and a glimmer of hope, that if we follow the example of the Ni Vanuatu community, and work together, we may find a way to survive the challenges that are now upon us.

What does symbolism do to/for an audience?

The use of symbolism invites an audience to consider a bigger, global story. By representing moments in a story with symbolic images we allow an audience to step away from the domestic reality and see the situation in a new light, hopefully on a grander scale that has deeper emotional resonance as it interacts with and knits together with the audience members' personal lived experience.

The River That Ran Uphill uses symbolism in many ways. The way we present the image of the girl, almost as a religious icon, suggests that the girl in the story is a messenger of some sort, and not simply a small girl that Edgell met. Likewise, the use of tarpaulins is both a realistic representation of tarps buffeted by the wind, whilst also being symbolic of rising sea levels, the power of weather systems and climate crisis more broadly.

How do you make decisions about what to leave in a script and what to cut and what elements help the story to move along?

In the editing process I am looking for poetic language or suggested images in the text that we can sustain and amplify through sound, music and image on stage.

In Slingsby's theatre making there is a lot of space.

We use words to trigger images in the audience members' minds and then present those words alongside a compelling image that augments, but doesn't directly replicate the spoken text. This is then greatly enhanced by the music and sound world.

As I edit I am conscious that we need the text to make the story clear and give us an understanding of the characters' state of mind, but for the audience to be inside that experience we also need space. Sometimes the writing may describe a situation in multiple ways: what is happening, what it looks like, and what it sounds like. In making a moment of theatre we may only need the words to convey one or two of those elements. Ultimately, we are looking for a balance of text, image and sound to transport an audience into the dreamlike world of theatre.

- Interviews -

Direction, design and composition have been used in *The River That Ran Uphill* to organise the production and create a deliberate effect to realise the aims and intentions of the creative production team. These elements have been used to encourage and lead the audience through the work. The following interviews with the cast, Director, Assistant Director, Composer, Set Designer and Lighting Designer provide an insight into the process.

Edgell Junior

What is your role in the performance, and how is it important to the story?

"I want to share something with you. Something... you know what... come... I'll take you back... way back to the beginning... come."

I am a storyteller.

I take the audience on a journey.

It's not going to be easy.

We will face many challenges along the way.

A journey many may not want to go on, in fear of losing their silver and gold.

But for those of you who choose to join me on this journey,

I salute you all, for you are the warriors.

The big warriors the world desperately needs right now.

So please, with respect, I ask you to hear my small voice.

Listen to my story.

Really listen.

What do you hope audiences will take away from *The River That Ran Uphill*?

What I really want audiences to take away is that the only way forward is to work together, for the good of all of us.

There is an old saying: *'If you want to go fast, go alone but if you want to go far, we go together'*.

What parts of Ni-Vanuatu culture were especially important to you, to include in this show?

Language.

Singing and music.

Images of home - both places and people.

That in both good times and in bad times, the spirit of togetherness and sharing is inherent in Vanuatu's culture.

To share the laughter and smile of Vanuatu.

It's also an important reminder for me, that no matter where I go, or how far away I am, these things are always with me, are a part of me, so I will never forget my home and where I come from.



Image: Emma Luker

- Cast Interviews -

Evyenia/Jennifer Stefanidis

What is your role in the performance, and how is it important to the story?

The Flying Squad members, besides Edgell, make up a smaller ensemble or 'chorus' in the piece. Our job is to support Edgell's storytelling as best we can. In the piece, this is often with image-based sequences using techniques like shadow play and miniaturisation, for which Slingsby is known and beloved. There are also moments in which we deliver text as a quartet, bringing the sense of community that Edgell describes and invites us into, into the theatre space.

What makes this play & production unique?

One moment that Edgell and I share in the play opens up a rich conversation about western intervention in the Pacific, which I find to be truly unique. I'm proud that our piece is critical and curious about non-profit organisations that visit places like Vanuatu because the complexity of these relationships is vast. It's important for us to be engaged in discourse about privilege and humanitarian imperialism,

and the theatre is a great space for this. It's also not often that a South Australian work will utilise simple, everyday materials to create theatre magic that can be brought into schools.

What are the main themes or ideas in the play and why are they important for the audience to connect with?

There are many themes and ideas embedded within the piece, but the amount that will be interpreted and taken away by audiences is infinite! The dramatic provocation that we worked from in the early development of *River* was, "We can only survive this all together." From this initial discussion, more granular ideas about the environment, humans, science, magic and survival emerged. Although Edgell tells a true story, the 'storms' in the play are both literally and poetically symbolic of climate crisis. The play also acknowledges that where there is science and the explainable, there is also magic and the unexplainable, which we too often ignore. The play also touches on Australia's relationship with the Pacific and our responsibility to one another, which is first and foremost, to listen.



Image: Emma Luker

- Rehearsal Director's Interview -

Clara Solly-Slade

What was the process for developing and creating the shadow and miniaturisation in the show, from experimentation and play to performance?

We had an extensive period of creating images in the rehearsal room to discover the theatrical language that made it into the final production. Shadow Play and Miniaturisation are two core components of the work that Andy creates with Slingsby Theatre Company so they were always tools that we continuously explored and experimented with. We took moments from the script and tried to explore many different techniques/ideas we could use to present each part of the text. Then we would make prototypes of the puppets or props that we needed and would continue to explore and refine these ideas. The final step of this would be our production designer Wendy making the actual pieces for the show and detailing and repeating the ideas in the lead up to our production.

How do you use blocking and choreography to transition the settings and characters in the show?

Often this is a process that begins instinctually and as a director you have a period where you let the actors explore the text onstage and see what natural impulses arise. Then you start to shift and move things a bit to make sure the clearest story is being told from the outside (who is in the position of power, does the stage feel balanced, what relationship are we trying to create with the audience in this moment etc). Then there are often logistical challenges you need to solve within a scene or transition e.g. this milkcrate need to be downstage for the next scene so that often becomes the next step. Deeply-considered blocking and choreography during a transition or scene change can be a great way to reveal the inner emotional lives of the characters, and that is an opportunity you really want to capitalise on as a director.

As the Assistant Director how do you support the Director and cast?

This is a role that can vary widely depending on the project that you are working on and your relationship with the director. Throughout this project during the early stages of development I was working independently with the squad to experiment and discover many of the key images that went into the production stage of the show. Then once we started to set the structure of the show more Andy would shape a scene and I will often work to continue rehearsing it to find the detail and lock it into the actors' bodies through repetition. Common roles of an Assistant Director might include helping the cast to learn lines, taking notes to give to the performers, creating props lists, running sound cues, recording blocking, standing in if a performer is away and working to bring our understudy/swing actor into the show.



Image: Emma Luker

- Composer's Interview -

Quincy Grant

When you are composing for a new production where do you start?

I always start with the general atmosphere of a story: the general feeling of musical landscape, and the genre of a work. Is it a modern story, a horror story, a romantic story, is it set in a particular time and place? So I begin by making many, many sketches of music, sitting with a piano or guitar, and try to get some material that seems to fit the musical landscape for the story. Along with this I'll be thinking of what sort of instruments will be playing (which is always part of thinking of the genre) - is it going to be for an orchestra, a rock band, a choir, solo voices, solo piano, a brass band, a jazz band?

With *The River that Ran Uphill* the atmosphere is dramatic and mysterious. And it is set on Vanuatu, so I wanted some elements to reflect that. I've used two instruments which are common in Vanuatuan music: the ukulele (building a ukulele orchestra) and the bamboo slit drum, and then mixed those with synthesiser sounds, and piano and strings.

What music and sounds inspired you when creating the immersive island soundscape for the show?

I started with listening to weather and storm sounds, sounds of the sea, and to sounds of Vanuatu and other Pacific islands. I also listened to music from Vanuatu: the string bands, the 'water slapping' music, the choirs and singers. I also think of music that depicts rivers, oceans and storms, like Smetana's *Ma Vlast* and Mendelssohn's *Hebrides Overture*.

How did you approach creating the sounds of a cyclone and perfecting the level of intensity for audiences?

Since we do not have the cyclonic winds, waves and rain of a cyclone, the only element we have to evoke it is the sound of the cyclone: so we wanted to use that to really give the audience some sort of visceral experience that could hint at the ferocity of the storm.



Image: Emma Luker

- Set Designer's Interview -

Wendy Todd

What is your starting point when you are beginning to design a set for a new production?

The era the story is set can be a starting point. This story is a true and recent story, so the contemporary is where it is set. The Director will often have some vision already in mind, so it is a critical conversation between Designer and Director. The Designer rarely would design a show and then present it to the Director. There will be opportunities to bring ideas to the table and the discussion is continuous and open.

Other points for starting a design can be references to film, art works, architecture, historic events. Style, colour, texture, mood, all influence the design.

A Designer is the curator of all things on the stage, but equally, of all things NOT on the stage. This is important to understand because there are always choices about what is seen. These all impact the feeling of the show, whether it is perceptible or not. These are conceptual elements to Design.

There are also practical elements to Design. A key element is 'Sightlines'. Can the audience see all that is happening on the stage? Do you want the audience to see how things enter/exit the stage? Do you have crew to facilitate the set moves or do the cast need to do this as part of the performance? Can all these things be made/achieved within the budget?

What did you need to consider when designing the set and props for a production that would be touring into schools?

The set and props all need to fit into the touring van. Also, the size of many school halls where the performance will be shown, is not greater than about 6m x 6m. This also restricts the size of set and props.

The advantage of fabric and soft materials like tarpaulins, is they fold up and fold out. Easy to pack up and pack up small, but can have a large impact visually and can be readily installed. Some of the props need to be collapsible and stored for transport. In some instance, the props have their own storage made to accommodate unusual shapes.

How did you design a set that captured the look and feel of Vanuatu and island life?

Vanuatu is in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, nothing but water surrounding it for great distances. The blue tarps reflect this, immersing the audience in a sea of blue.

Vanuatu is a place that is often thought of as 'undeveloped', all about nature and the sea and palm trees, if you look at brochures. In reality, there is modernity mixed into this world. Port Villa, the capital, has industry, traffic, western-style housing and many of the elements of industrial cities. Corrugated iron is often used in the construction of houses. Tarps are often used when cyclones blow that roofing away.

The other design elements such as plastic tubs and polycarbonate sheeting brings us the reality of Vanuatu. These are items that are part of everyday life in Vanuatu. The design also re-purposes some of these, making miniature buildings from old plastic tubs and disused corflute signs. Cardboard woven in the style of indigenous houses and raffia brings the natural elements of Vanuatu in the miniature house compound.

The design also supports the concept of the story, where climate change and industrialisation are clashing. The manufacture and use of plastic has long been understood to impact the worlds' natural state.

- Lighting Designer's Interview -

Darian Tregenza

How did you approach creating a cyclone on stage using lighting and what did you need to consider from an audience perspective?

Strobe lighting is definitely the go-to lighting effect when it comes to trying to recreate the dramatic look and feel of a storm on stage and it's certainly an effect I have employed extensively here. I've been conscious of not overusing these types of lighting effects however as it can become quite distracting and fatiguing to the audience, as well as lessening its overall visual impact. In the end it's really the combination of sound, lights, and performance that sells the overall effect.

What do you need to consider when designing for a performance where the performers manage the lighting transitions?

One of the big challenges of this show from a technical design perspective is that it's being toured and operated by non-technicians. In an hour-long theatre show you could expect to have close to 100 lighting cues being triggered by

an operator. To avoid too many 'go' cues for the performers we've had to try and drive most of the lighting sequencing from the soundtrack of the show rather than discrete cues.

What are the key techniques and methods used to stage a show that uses shadow and miniaturisation elements?

Shadow and light has always been a big part of all of Slingsby's shows and this production is no different. Over time we've found that creating clean shadow imagery really requires a single point source of light in order to work well. In this production we make extensive use of hand-held torches with their lenses removed, as well as a projector which also opened up some other interesting creative options. Torches really allowed us to create some visually interesting and intricate images with shadows which would be difficult to achieve any other way.



Image: Emma Luker



VANUATU



"Australia and Vanuatu have a strong and enduring bilateral relationship, based on shared values and interests in a prosperous and stable region."

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
– Australian Government

The following activities provide students with an opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding about:

1. Vanuatu
2. Cyclones in this region
3. The impact of climate change on Vanuatu.

Having this background knowledge will allow students to focus on the performance and connect with the message.

What do students know about Australia's neighbouring country Vanuatu?

- our similarities and differences
- how we all do things differently
- culture is different in different contexts.

Working in small groups, students take 5-10 minutes to record what they know about Vanuatu including:

- location and geographical features
- climate
- flora and fauna
- language/s spoken
- food
- industries
- money
- government.

After groups share with the whole class what they have recorded and discuss:

- did they know much and if there were any gaps in their knowledge
- what they wonder about Vanuatu
- any surprises.

Vanuatu: 2nd happiest place in the world

The Happy Planet index ranks countries using:

- life expectancy
- human wellbeing
- damage done via a country's environmental footprint.

Vanuatu ranks highly because its people identify as being happy, live to nearly 70 and do little damage to the planet.



Travel to Vanuatu

While Vanuatu's economy is based primarily on small scale agriculture, which provides a living for about two thirds of the population, fishing and tourism are the two other mainstays of their economy. In 2017 Vanuatu had more than 330,000 visitors. However, tourism has struggled after the most popular island for tourists, Efate, was damaged by Cyclone Pam in 2015.

The intention of the following activity is for students to develop their knowledge and understanding of Vanuatu including:

- location and geography
- culture
- economy
- ecosystems
- flora and fauna
- environmental concerns and challenges.

The travel brochure

Working in small groups, students undertake research to create a travel brochure promoting Vanuatu as a holiday destination. Importantly, the travel brochure should promote how travellers can help, protect and preserve the resources and culture of Vanuatu.

The brochure should include:

- location and travel details
- what makes it unique
- how to respect the environment and culture
- what to go and see
- cultural traditions
- language/s spoken
- fauna and flora
- money
- food
- clothes to take.

What is a travel brochure?

Travel brochures are designed to inspire travellers to plan a trip to a destination as well as educate them about sights to see and things to do after they've arrived.

Consequences of tourism

While tourism is an important contributor to the economy of Vanuatu, there are a number of negative impacts on the people and the land.

To develop knowledge and understanding of the impact of tourism issues, each group will:

- read one or more of the following articles
- discuss how they will include information in the brochure for travellers about the need to be aware of and responsive to a range of issues when visiting Vanuatu.

ARTICLES

Consequences of Tourism – Vanuatu

<https://tourisminvanuatu.weebly.com/consequences.html>

Sharing the Riches of Tourism in Vanuatu

<https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Sharing-the-riches-of-tourism-in-Vanuatu.pdf>

3 Ways Tourism Impacts Poverty in Vanuatu

<https://www.borgenmagazine.com/poverty-in-vanuatu/>

Observations from Edgell Junior about the *3 Ways Tourism Impacts Poverty in Vanuatu* article:

While it is true that many people in Vanuatu live beneath the 'national poverty line' and may be perceived as 'poor' - in Vanuatu there are no homeless people, there are no beggars and there is no such thing as a homeless shelter.

I find it interesting that in most wealthy countries, when I look around, Australia is a 'rich' country, with plenty of financial government support, homeless people, people asking for money in the street are everywhere and most cities have multiple shelters and services for those in need.

Apart from a few taxi drivers and bus drivers and a local tour operators who try to get as much as they can from tourists / inflating their prices for tourists, this is the only form of 'begging' / asking for money in Vanuatu.

I have one hot tip when students are thinking about their travel brochures -

If you're a tourist or arrive in Vanuatu on a tourist boat - the first thing I suggest you do is hide your lanyard and try to look as local as possible. Next, jump on a local bus go to the money exchange or ATM & get some Vatu (local currency) as if you are going to buy from a local or local business you cannot use a Credit Card. Now, go straight the main market in Port Vila and buy a hot 'Tuluk' (a super yummy, hand made traditional meat & onion filled manioc parcel wrapped in coconut leaves & baked in hot stones) and drink a fresh green coconut. Now that you are at the market, you are in the perfect place to start a conversation, ask questions & make friends with a local. In Vanuatu, if you share your beautiful smile you can get away with anything.

Looking at images

Images are an important part of a travel brochure. Working with students, explore what they see when they look at images used in online travel brochures of Vanuatu.

Step One Select two or more brochures to compare and contrast.

Step Two Display the online brochures for students to view on a screen.

Step Three Explore and discuss the following questions.

- Q1. What is happening in the images in the brochure?
- Q2. What can you see that makes you say that?
- Q3. Look even closer what else can be seen?
- Q4. What story do the images tell about Vanuatu?
- Q5. Is there anything missing from the images?
- Q6. Have any of the brochures suggested how a traveller could care for the environment and culture while visiting Vanuatu?

Working in their small groups, students discuss:

- If the brochures communicated environmental and cultural information that travellers should know about
- What they would do differently
- How they would communicate with travellers.

Create the travel brochure

Groups complete research, gather images and maps and write content for their travel brochure.

Free online travel brochure template Canva

<https://www.canva.com/create/brochures/>

Adobe

<https://www.adobe.com/express/create/brochure/travel>

What makes a brochure appealing and attractive?

Photos, charts, graphs, and the use of persuasive writing techniques.

TRAVEL BROCHURES

Vanuatu – Discover What Matters

<https://www.vanuatuspecialists.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/VANUATU-DESTINATION-BROCHURE.pdf>

Flight Centre – Vanuatu travel guide

<https://www.flightcentre.com.au/vanuatu/travel-guide>

Answer the Call of Vanuatu

<https://www.vanuatu.travel/en/planning/digital-brochures>

Very Hungry Nomads – Vanuatu Travel Guide

<https://www.veryhungrynomads.com/vanuatu-travel-guide/>

World Travel Guide

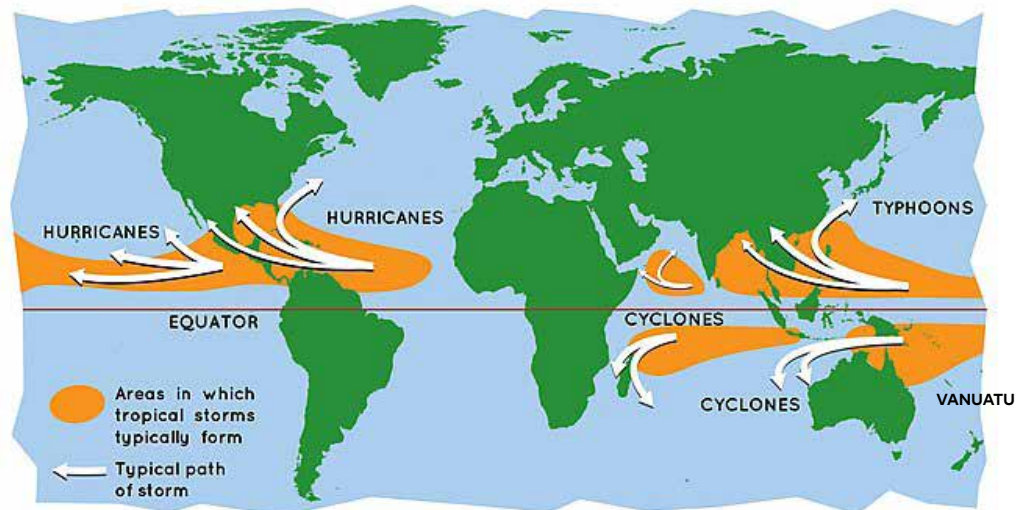
<https://www.worldtravelguide.net/guides/oceania/vanuatu/>

Arrival Guides – Vanuatu

<https://www.arrivalguides.com/en/Travelguides/Oceania/Vanuatu/Vanuatu>

Lonely Planet

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/vanuatu>



CYCLONES IN VANUATU

On average Vanuatu has approximately 2-3 cyclones per year. The tropical cyclone (TC) season starts around November through to April of the next year, with the greatest frequency in January and February.

Today, the word hurricane is one of three names for giant, spiralling tropical storms with winds of at least 119 kilometres per hour.

Hurricanes, cyclones and typhoons are essentially the same thing. The name is different depending where in the world they occur.

The origin of the word **hurricane** is from hurakā (*pronounced: "hoor-ab-KAH"*) from the Taíno, the Arawak First Nations people of the Caribbean and Florida. Hurakā was the evil spirit of the wind.

European explorers' first contact with the Taíno was in the late 14th century. They adopted the use of the word hurakā to describe the storms that battered their ships in the Caribbean.

What's in a name?

Location of a storm changes it's name.

Hurricane - North Atlantic, central North Pacific & eastern North Pacific

Cyclone - South Pacific & Indian Ocean

Typhoon - Northwest Pacific

Interesting Facts about Cyclones

- Average life of a cyclone is about one week.
- Cyclones are given names chosen from an alphabetical list.
- Cyclones in the southern hemisphere spin clockwise and hurricanes and typhoons in the northern hemisphere spin anticlockwise.

Etymology - *hurricane*

hurakā (Taíno) – huracán (Spanish) – hurricane (mid-16th century)

Essential ingredients for a cyclone to form

1. Sea temperatures of at least 27°C.
2. Converging winds near ocean surface causing air to rise and form storm clouds.
3. Winds not varying greatly, allowing storm clouds to rise vertically to high levels.
4. Distance from the equator for a spin to take effect.

Think like a meteorologist

After watching the BtN story, students investigate Cyclone Pam, the cyclone central to the story of *The River That Ran Uphill*.

The following questions are suggested to guide the investigation:

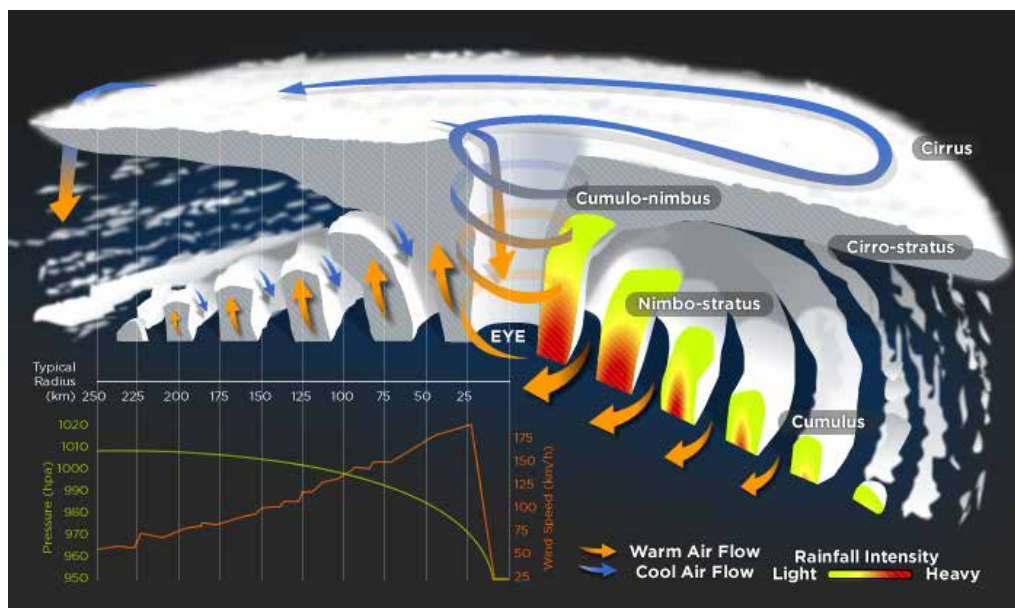
- Where did the cyclone form?
- Where did it travel? (Use a map of the region to mark the path of the cyclone.)
- What wind speed did the cyclone reach?
- What category was this cyclone?
- How long did the cyclone last?
- What damage did it cause inland?

Cyclones Explained

Watch the following *Behind the News BtN* – ABC episode to find out more about cyclones and how they work

<https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/cyclones-explained/10925372>

Broadcast 25 March 2019



IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE - VANUATU

Vanuatu is recognised as being one of the most vulnerable countries in the South Pacific regarding climate change.

Because Earth's climate functions like one big connected system, a change in the ocean's surface temperature change how these storms form. It is predicted that while there will be a reduction in the number of cyclones, the strength of them will increase. The added heat also leads to greater windspeeds and water-carrying capacity, which means cyclones are far more destructive.

When Cyclone Pam, a Category 5 cyclone hit Vanuatu in 2015 it:

- killed 16 people (some reports are higher)
- destroyed or damaged over 17,000 buildings
- displaced over 65,000 people.

At **COP26, Glasgow** - Vanuatu called on world leaders and negotiators at COP26 to prioritise "action over politics, resilience over economic gain, and justice over inequality."

"Every year, and every degree brings the Pacific Islands new levels of climate extremes and climate suffering. We need to heed the science. Human-caused climate change is undermining Vanuatu's right to sustainable development, and global efforts to protect planetary biodiversity and the future of our oceans."

EXCERPT - VANUATU STATEMENT TO COP 26,
AMBASSADOR SUMBUE

No one can stop climate change alone. Individuals, communities and institutions must learn to work together in harmony.

What is COP 26

'COP' refers to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ('UNFCCC'), the peak decision-making body for the world's climate change commitments.

COP 26 was held in Glasgow – November 2022.

What is climate change?

It is a change in the average conditions such as temperature and rainfall in a region over a long period of time. NASA scientists' observations show Earth's surface is warming, with many of the warmest years on record being in the past 20 years.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Vanuatu

High Level Segment Statement COP 26 - <https://unfccc.int/documents/310886>

Vanuatu – Ecosystem and Socio-economic Resilience Analysis and Mapping

https://www.griffith.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0023/528080/vanuatu-ecosystem-socio-economic-resilience-analysis-mapping.pdf

Tropical Cyclones and Climate Change: Factsheet

<https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Cyclone-Factsheet-UPDATED-December-2020.pdf>

The global climate system

<https://www.climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/global-climate-system>

Centre for Science Education – classroom activities

<https://scied.ucar.edu/activity>

Understanding the impact of climate change on water cycles

<https://scied.ucar.edu/teaching-box/climate-water>

Sustainable Schools - resources to help students understand how they can investigate energy use and develop actions to be energy efficient. This can help them to contribute to reducing potential climate change

<https://www.sustainableschoolsnsw.org.au/teach/climate-change>

Understanding climate zones

<https://scied.ucar.edu/activity/climate-postcards>

Australia's commitment to strengthening climate and disaster resilience in the Pacific

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/vanuatu-australias-commitment-to-strengthening-climate-and-disaster-resilience-in-the-pacific>



THE PERFORMANCE, THE STORY AND THE IMPACT

After attending the performance of *The River That Ran Uphill*, students reflect on the performance, the story, and the impact it had on them and others in the audience.

Direction, Design and Intent

The responses to questions by the Director/s, Designers & Cast will support students in their understanding and their responses.

Direction, Design and Composition Intent

Direction, design and composition have been used in *The River That Ran Uphill* to organise the production and create a deliberate effect to realise the aims and intentions of the creative production team. These elements have been used to encourage and lead the audience through the work.

The responses to questions with the cast, Director, Assistant Director, Composer, Set Designer and Lighting Designer at the beginning of the education resource provide an insight into their ideas, techniques, skills, and artistic choices. These will assist students to draw links and make connections between aspects and key moments of the performance.

Questions for Year 4 – Year 8

Questions for students to consider, discuss and write about after seeing *The River That Ran Uphill*.

- What did *The River That Ran Uphill* make you wonder?
- What moment in the performance had the most impact on you? Describe this moment.
- How did the music, costumes and set support the telling of the story?
- What questions would you like to ask the director of *The River That Ran Uphill*?
- What questions would you like to ask the members of the Flying Squad?
- How would you describe the performance of *The River That Ran Uphill* to someone who was going to attend the performance for the first time?

Questions for Year 10 – Year 12

A range of questions to select from for students, to guide them in the analysis of the performance.

- What events and surrounding environments do you think influenced the creation of *The River That Ran Uphill*? For example, natural events, economic situations, historic events, world events, social movements. What effects did these have?
- What emotional response did you have to the performance?
- What message did the performance communicate to you?
- What objects, places or scenes were easily recognisable and assisted the audience to orient themselves to the story? How are these objects, places or scenes presented – realistic, miniaturised, exaggerated, stylised, suggested, blurred, focussed, distorted, simplified?
- What props and important visual details are included in the performance that are important to the storytelling?
 - costumes
 - adornments
 - motifs
 - architectural elements.
- What abstract elements are included in the design of the set, props, costumes or shadow work?
- What key objects or images have symbolic meaning or provide a cue to making meaning in the performance?
- How did the performance build tension?
- What is the overall mood of the performance? For example is it positive, energetic, serious, peaceful, calm, melancholic, tense, uneasy, uplifting, foreboding, calm, turbulent? What choices in music, set, lighting, spoken word, movement, help to communicate this mood? For example, the weather conditions.
- How might your own cultural background and beliefs influence your interpretation of the performance?
- Are you able to make any connections with other performances? Provide examples.
- Have other directors explored similar stories in a similar way? Provide examples.
- Is *The River That Ran Uphill* part of a larger body of work by Slingsby? Is this performance typical of the work that Slingsby is known for? Provide examples.

Voices for the future

The action young people around the world are taking shows their awareness of the challenges and risks associated with climate change.

The following examples, along with the performance of *The River That Ran Uphill*, are provided to inspire students to find their own voice and message to share.

A Study in Leadership and Action

An example of young people in Vanuatu taking environmental action at a community level. As part of a community project, they are restoring a lagoon ecosystem.

Tanna: A Study in Leadership and Action

YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBm5V2C12ek>

(Runtime 13 mins 26 secs)



After viewing the film students discuss in small groups:

- reactions and thoughts about the short film
- what they wondered after watching the film
- questions they have.

Climate Change Theme Song

The following song, featuring Vanessa Quai, Stan Antas and Sheila Wills, highlights Vanuatu's initiative to ask the International Court of Justice to deliver an Advisory Opinion on the obligations of States under international law to prevent significant harm to human rights and the environment.

As a whole class, watch *Climate Change Theme Song*

(Runtime 5mins 14secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRGh7FwK3aQ>

After viewing the film, students discuss in small groups:

- reactions and thoughts about the song
- what they wondered after watching and listening to the song
- questions they have.

Youth voice at the United Nations

Kenyan climate activist Elizabeth Wathuti delivered a powerful message at the UN Climate Change in Glasgow in 2021. Not only is it a call to global leaders to open their hearts to those suffering the devastating impacts of climate change, it is a message of hope and a call to action.

<https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/voices-of-change-elizabeth-wathuti>

After viewing the film students discuss in small groups:

- reactions and thoughts about Elizabeth Wathuti's message to the United Nations
- what they are wondering
- the actions they could take
- questions they have.

Vanuatu ICJ Initiative

The Republic of Vanuatu is building a growing coalition of States seeking an Advisory Opinion on Climate Change from the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

<https://www.vanuatuicj.com/>

The core group of nations Vanuatu is leading includes:

Antigua & Barbuda, Costa Rica, Sierra Leone, Angola, Germany, Mozambique, Liechtenstein, Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Bangladesh, Morocco, Singapore, Uganda, New Zealand, Vietnam, Romania and Portugal.

- Australian Curriculum Links -



LITERACY



CRITICAL AND
CREATIVE
THINKING



ETHICAL
UNDERSTANDING



PERSONAL
AND SOCIAL
CAPABILITY



INTERCULTURAL
UNDERSTANDING

General Capabilities icons appear in the
Education Resource where relevant

The Arts – Drama

Year 4 Drama

Explore where, why and how drama is created and/or performed across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts. - AC9ADR4E01

Year 5 & 6 Drama

Explore ways that the elements of drama are combined to communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning in drama across, cultures, times, places and/or other contexts. - AC9ADR6E01

Year 7 & 8 Drama

Investigate ways the elements of drama and/or conventions are used to communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning in drama created and/or performed across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts. - AC9ADR8E01

Year 9 & 10

Investigate use of elements of drama, performance skills and/or conventions to communicate and/or challenge ideas, perspectives and/or meaning in drama across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts. - AC9ADR10E01

Science

Year 4 Science

Consider how people use scientific explanations to meet a need or solve a problem. - AC9S4H02

Year 5 Science

Investigate how scientific knowledge is used by individuals and communities to identify problems, consider responses and make decisions. - AC9S5H02

Year 6 Science

Investigate how scientific knowledge is used by individuals and communities to identify problems, consider responses and make decisions. - AC9S6H02

Year 7 Science

Examine how proposed scientific responses to contemporary issues may impact on society and explore ethical, environmental, social and economic considerations. - AC9S7H03

Year 8 Science

Examine how proposed scientific responses to contemporary issues may impact on society and explore ethical, environmental, social and economic considerations. - AC9S8H03

Year 9 Science

Analyse the key factors that contribute to science knowledge and practices being adopted more broadly by society. - AC9S9H03

Year 10 Science

Examine how the values and needs of society influence the focus of scientific research. - AC9S10H04

- Australian Curriculum Links -

Humanities & Social Sciences

Geography

Year 4 Geography

The importance of environments, including natural vegetation and water sources, to people and animals in Australia and on another continent. - AC9HS4K05

Year 5 Geography

The management of Australian environments, including managing severe weather events such as bushfires, floods, droughts or cyclones, and their consequences. - AC9HS4K05

Year 6 Geography

The geographical diversity and location of places in the Asia region, and its location in relation to Australia. - AC9H6K04

Year 7 Geography

Identify a strategy for action in relation to environmental, economic, social or other factors, and explain potential impacts. - AC9HG7S05

Year 8 Geography

Identify a strategy for action in relation to environmental, economic, social or other factors, and explain potential impacts. - AC9HG8S05

Year 9 Geography

Develop and evaluate strategies using environmental, economic or social criteria; recommend a strategy and explain the predicted impacts. - AC9HG9S05

Year 10 Geography

Develop and evaluate strategies using environmental, economic or social criteria; recommend a strategy and explain the predicted impacts. - AC9HG10S05

Year 11 and Year 12 SACE

Stage 1 & 2 English

In English students:

- Consider social, cultural, economic, historical, and/or political perspectives in texts and their representation of human experience and the world.
- Have opportunities to reflect on their personal values and those of other people by responding to aesthetic and cultural aspects of texts from the contemporary world, from the past, and from Australian and other cultures.

Stage 1 & 2 Drama

In Drama students:

- Learn as artists and as creative entrepreneurs through their exploration of shared human experience, which is at the heart of the study of Drama.

SLINGSBY

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slingsby.net.au

Slingsby acknowledges that we create, gather and work on Kurna Meyunna Country and pay respect to Elders past and present. We recognise and respect the Kurna People's cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with country, and acknowledge their continuing importance to the Kurna people living today.