

YEAR 6, ACTIVITY 3

MABO LEGACY

Read the text below and answer the questions.

“Mabo is an historic decision - we can make it an historic turning point, the basis of a new relationship between indigenous and non-Aboriginal Australians.

The message should be that there is nothing to fear or to lose in the recognition of historical truth, or the extension of social justice, or the deepening of Australian social democracy to include indigenous Australians.

There is everything to gain.

Even the unhappy past speaks for this.

Where Aboriginal Australians have been included in the life of Australia they have made remarkable contributions.

Economic contributions, particularly in the pastoral and agricultural industry.

They are there in the frontier and exploration history of Australia.

They are there in the wars.

In sport to an extraordinary degree.

In literature and art and music.

In all these things they have shaped our knowledge of this continent and of ourselves. They have shaped our identity.

They are there in the Australian legend.

We should never forget - they have helped build this nation.

And if we have a sense of justice, as well as common sense, we will forge a new partnership.

As I said, it might help us if we non-Aboriginal Australians imagined ourselves dispossessed of land we had lived on for fifty thousand years - and then imagined ourselves told that it had never been ours.”

1. List the ways that Aboriginal Australians have contributed to life in Australia, according to Paul Keating.

2. Keating calls Mabo ‘an historic decision’ that could be an ‘historic turning point’

- a) What do you think made Mabo ‘an historic decision’?

- b) What do you think Paul Keating meant when he said ‘an historic turning point’?
