

Year 9-10 Student Guide

The Evolution of Surf History

The Torquay Museum Without Walls
In conjunction with Deakin University



Torquay
MUSEUM
Without Walls Inc.



Introduction

As you know, Torquay is renowned for its surf culture around the globe, and it is because of this that Torquay is now known as the 'mecca of surfing' in Australia. But just how did this come to be? This program presented by the Torquay Museum Without Walls (TMWW) in collaboration with Deakin University aims to explore just how Torquay's history is intertwined with Australian surf culture. Over the next four weeks you will be discovering just how much of an impact surfing had on the small coastal town of Torquay and how it helped the area evolve into what it is today. Since its introduction from Hawaii in 1918, surfing took Australia by storm, the nation's favourite beach sporting activity went from bodyboarding and swimming to surfing in a flash. Later on in the 50's, American intervention helped the sport's popularity grow throughout the country.



Figure 1. Photo Science Library, 'wave breaking engraving', E2700121, Photo Science Library.

As Australia found its footing in a post-war world, this shaped an identity behind the laid-back persona of the surfer willing to 'throw another shrimp on the barbie'. So too did youth culture which bloomed as teenagers became a prominent part of society in their own right.

Popular Culture of the 60's & 70's

Australia in the 1960's and 70's were times of change; conservative ideals were being questioned and revolted against throughout the Western world. The popularisation of peace after a time of war introduced new popular cultures to be explored. Being a teen in these times were more about self-exploration and finding one's own identity and independence more than ever before.

The ABC have compiled a few short videos to explain how changes throughout the world influenced popular culture and teenage life in Australia through these times. Take some time to listen to get a real idea of the content you will be learning about throughout the next few weeks.

[ABC's Popular Culture Post War](#)



Figure 2 John Watzig, unknown year

Link: <https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/digibook/618362/popular-culture-in-post-war-australia>

Hint: Chapters 6 – 7 are a great for setting the scene of what you will be looking into later on!

1.

These videos mention that through the 60's, teens were creating their own segment within society especially as consumers. What types of things were teens interested in and buying at the time? Compare this with your interests and what you purchase (or want to) regularly - is there a difference, are there any similarities?

2.

Chapter 8 explores a lack of interest in surf lifesaving clubs but a rise in interest in the surf culture teens had created. What are the differences between these two groups? Why do you think young adults are choosing to affiliate with one group but not the other?

Further Research

Now you will begin looking into four different components that influenced Torquay and Australia as a whole in the 1960's. The landscape of society in the 60's was swept up in a wave of changes, much like the rest of the world. With World War 2 behind us, Australia had a steady economy leading to greater spending and a better quality of life for many. Take your time to read through the provided resources and make note of which topics interest you as this will help you in the final assessment.

Globalisation in a Post-War World

The conclusion of WW2 in 1945 left Australia in an economic boom alongside its allies. As our spending changed, so did our culture; American influence found its way to Australia throughout the war and stayed with our nation long after.

Encyclopaedia Britannica explains the influence America had on Australia post WW2.

Take some time to read 'the ascendance of Australian popular culture' on this page and answer the questions below:

[Encyclopaedia Britannica on American influence in Australia](https://www.britannica.com/place/Australia/The-ascendance-of-Australian-popular-culture)

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Australia/The-ascendance-of-Australian-popular-culture>

3.

List at least two ways that America may have influenced Australian lifestyles and attitudes after WW2. Think about how these things may have shaped our culture; are they still present in our society today?

4.

Globalisation is a big concept and a large part of our life now. Globalisation is normally referred to when talking about companies and big businesses, but it actually runs through every aspect of the modern world, especially in our media! Research the definitions of globalisation and put it into your own words for better understanding.

5.

If we were to consider the stereotype of an Australian from an American's perspective what would that look like?

5.2

Given your answer on question 5, what parts of 60's and 70's popular culture shine through in this imagination of an Australian stereotype? Do you think these are true to the Australian identity?

Changes & Developments in Social & Cultural Ideas

As you now know from the ABC collection, the 1960's was a time of change; teens no longer kept to the conservative values of the 1940's and 50's. Surf culture was rising in popularity amongst young Australian adults and many flocked to Torquay to get a slice of the coastal life. The TMWW has a video from the ABC program '[Weekend Magazine](#)' interviewing young adults taking part in the surf culture; take a listen here <https://www.torquayhistory.com/our-collections/surfing/surf-culture/> and then read through the below tasks.

6.

Interviewees in this clip don't seem to be saying much of substance. From what you know about the popular culture and ideas in the 60's which rolled into the 70's; try inferencing some of the reasons that young people chose to reside in Torquay.

Extension:

7.

In this video, Rod Thomas shares his thoughts on the permanence of the lifestyle that surf culture presents to young Australians. Do you agree or disagree with his points? Try to find another resource that talks about the types of people Torquay attracted in this time to back up your thinking.

Economic Changes to Torquay in the 60's & 70's

The TMWW video mentions surfers “turned [the] successful businessman”, and shows footage of the plethora of board stores in the small town, even then. As you will all know, RipCurl is one of the most renowned companies to come out of Torquay and the TMWW has [a page](#) explaining its growth as a company in the late 60's and early 70's along with the companies own history page '[In the beginning](#)'.
<https://www.torquayhistory.com/our-collections/surfing/>
<https://www.ripcurl.com.au/company/history/the-beginning.html>

8.

'In the beginning' is broken up by the locations that RipCurl productions and sales took place around Torquay and the surrounding area. Maybe you know where these places are, what is there now? And if not, would you have imagined such places to be historically significant in the eyes of others as they are to the people of the area? Have a look at the link below and explore the locations of Ripcurl and also read more about its modest beginnings to where it is today
<https://www.torquayhistory.com/our-collections/commerce/surfing-industry/ripcurl-from-humble-beginnings/>

9.

In many resources we've looked at, Torquay is noted as a hub of surfboard makers (an industry that keeps the economy alive in the area). Are there any other industries that people were buying into in Torquay in the 60's and 70's and how do they relate to the popular culture of the time?

9.2

Consider the industries you've mentioned in your answer of question 9, how have they stood the test of time, if at all, and are these industries still growing or are they in decline?

Extension:

10.

RipCurl has curated their own recollection of the brands history. Consider how a bias towards the brand may have influenced the way this information is presented. How accurate do you believe the RipCurl history page to be?

Changes in Technology

The 1960's may have been a time when your grandparents lived through their teen years, when televisions were the new technology! But for many teens, new technology wasn't about electronic advancements but more about innovation of the things they already had. For many Torquay locals this meant the advancements in Surfboard technology to create Malibu style boards. Take a look at the Vic Tantu article in 'History matters' volume 17 (pg 24) and '[the first to surf Bells](https://www.torquayhistory.com/our-collections/surfing/the-first-to-surf-bells-beach/)' page on the TMWW website.

<https://www.torquayhistory.com/our-collections/surfing/the-first-to-surf-bells-beach/>

11. The creation and popularisation of shorter surfboards brought a significant change to surfing in Torquay. How did this advancement in surf technology change the area?

12. Vic Tantu organised the first surf competition at Bells Beach; when was this and what did this later become? How is this seen in the modern day?

Hint: find another page on the TMWW website to help answer this question.

Figure 3. Photo Science Library, 'surfboard illustration', F0250854, Photo Science Library



CREATIVE ASSESMENT TASK

In this assessment task you will be expected to grapple with at least two factors that have helped shape Torquay history (and maybe its present form). These could be anything that took your interest throughout the last few weeks - remember those notes! We hope you'll be able to utilise the resources available on the TMWW site but we implore you to also go out into the world wide web and make some discoveries yourself! This is about you taking the lead!

You will be expected to **choose one** of the below options to create either an article or a presentation.

Think about who you are presenting the information to; do they know the area as much as you do, or are they just here to visit?

Make it fun! This is a creative task so be as imaginative (or formal) as you see fit.

OPTION 1)

Create an article on the evolution of surfing within the Torquay area.

Pretend you are writing for a newspaper or blog for locals who many want to know more. What has changed in Torquay over the years due to surfing? What did it look like 'then' and what is it looking like now? How have the two factors you've decided to explore helped in changing Torquay into what it is today?

OPTION 2)

Create a 2-3-minute narrated presentation on the impact of surfing on Torquay.

You're an online travel guide and people want to know about your hometown! Your audience loves history and wants to know what surfing history has made Torquay into today. Explore how at least two factors have shaped a specific location in Torquay. Add in some historical research but you can also use personal experiences too.

Resources

ABC on teenagers in the 60's -

<https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/digibook/618362/popular-culture-in-post-war-australia>

Encyclopedia Britannica on Australian popular culture -

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Australia/The-ascendance-of-Australian-popular-culture>

RipCurl History - <https://www.ripcurl.com.au/company/history/the-beginning.html>

The first to surf Bells - <https://www.torquayhistory.com/our-collections/surfing/the-first-to-surf-bells-beach/>

TMWW surf collection - <https://www.torquayhistory.com/our-collections/surfing/>

TMWW surf culture - <https://www.torquayhistory.com/our-collections/surfing/surf-culture/>