Moorditj — a Noongar word for "strong or excellent!”— is a multimedia CD-ROM on Australian Indigenous artists and their cultural expressions. Guided by TV personalities Aaron Pedersen and Justine Saunders, Moorditj features the work of 110 of Australia’s finest Indigenous artists, such as Sally Morgan, Bangarra Dance Theatre, Clifford Possum Tjapaljarri, Queenie McKenzie, Archie Roach and Yothu Yindi.

Moorditj challenges entrenched stereotypes about Indigenous art and culture by celebrating its richness and variety. Through nearly 300 diverse artworks and engaging interactions, all Australian students will discover new and stimulating things about their heritage. Non-Indigenous students will find a new appreciation for the significance of Indigenous culture as a source of artistic inspiration and spiritual renewal. Moorditj will also capture the interest of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (particularly those who have not, through circumstance, connected with their culture) enabling them to explore the work of artists from different regions.

WARNING SCREEN
Great care was taken in developing Moorditj to ensure that Indigenous protocols and beliefs were respected. The Warning screen alerts Indigenous users (particularly in remote communities) to the possibility that some of the artists they are about to see may have passed away. Teachers or students can instruct the software to “hide” any of Moorditj’s artists and their work. Details of the selection are stored on the host computer, and loaded automatically each time that computer is used. This must be done on each computer being used.

INTRODUCTION
The Introduction attempts to sensitise non-Indigenous audiences to important cultural issues such as cultural expressions, cultural diversity, traditional versus contemporary art, protocol and custodianship and the sharing of stories.

CONTENTS
Moorditj content was selected by an Indigenous selection committee drawn from all Australian states and territories. The committee adopted a guiding set of protocols for selecting the artworks: Country/Culture, Medium, Themes and Challenges. See below.

Country/Culture
Indigenous culture is strongly tied to land and community and Moorditj splits Australia into 18 “regions”, each comprising a gathering of similar cultural groupings. Content has been selected to reflect an equitable spread of artists and artworks across the regions so that students discover an equal richness of cultural expression in each. Students can browse the regions of their choice by entering Moorditj via the “Explore by Region” menus.

Students choosing, say, the Southern Riverina region will meet 11 artists whose interests include ceramics, charcoal drawing, children’s stories, music, film-making, poetry, photography and sculpture. Archie Roach, for example, presents three of his songs including Took the Children Away, his poignant reminder of the pain of the Stolen Generation.

Medium
Students can browse their medium of choice by entering Moorditj via the “Explore by Type” menus. Nearly 300 different artworks are presented in eight different areas: Visual Arts, Craft, Music, Media (Photography, TV, Film, Radio), Theatre, Dance, Literature, and Oral History. Each artwork is supported by a written description, an artist biography and interactions that enhance understanding. Many paintings carry explanatory keys; songs have lyrics; some sculptures can be rotated; literature and oral histories feature spoken extracts; films, plays and dances have visual extracts. Many names and titles have accompanying pronunciations.
A student selecting **Craft** will meet 20 artists with wide-ranging interests. Amongst Michelle Broun’s artworks, for example, is **Bush Barbies**, a piece produced for a wearable art exhibition that becomes an engaging vehicle for the story of her four-year-old niece and her discovery of discrimination through the metaphor of Barbie dolls. Students will love Ken Thaiday’s **Hammerhead Shark**, a magnificent dancing mask from the Torres Strait.

**Literature** explores publications from 13 writers. There are interviews with authors, including playwright Jack Davis; extracts from the poetry of Kevin Gilbert and Norm Newlin (In Memory of John Pat); Doris Pilkington’s Follow The Rabbit-Proof Fence; and the thrillers of Philip McLaren. Yami Lester recounts his memories of Maralinga; May O’Brien reads from her charming stories for children (How the Crows Became Black); and Sally Morgan reads from her best-selling *My Place*.

**Themes—major**
Indigenous consultants identified four major themes that influence contemporary Indigenous artists: Land, Law and Language; Ceremony & Cultural Maintenance; Embracing Other Cultures; and Social Justice & Survival. Guided by Aaron Pedersen and Justine Saunders, students will begin to appreciate some of the important issues and beliefs which have motivated and influenced the artists, and will develop a heightened appreciation of the inseparable nature of Indigenous art and culture.

In Social Justice & Survival, for example, Aaron discusses the impact on artists of issues such as deaths in custody, breaches of artistic copyright, land rights, nuclear testing and mining, substance abuse and domestic violence. Students can then explore a range of artworks that respond to these issues, including Lin Onus’s devastating mother-and-child sculpture *Maralinga*.

**Themes—keywords**
More subtle themes can be explored through the **Find/Collect** tool. Each artwork carries associated keywords (such as totems, ochres, bark painting, love and relationships, dreaming, creation and childhood stories). Students can gather artworks associated with one or many keywords and sort, edit and save their collections for subsequent presentation. **Native Title & Land Rights**, for example, includes Ellen Jose’s installation R.I.P. Terra Nullius, Yothu Yindi’s chart-topping song Treaty, and Mervyn Bishop’s photograph of Gough Whitlam and Vincent Lingiari. There are 150 keywords available.

**Challenge**
Students entering the **Challenge** section will find a navigable virtual reality environment where there are puzzles to solve and questions to answer. Students can test their knowledge of Indigenous art and culture by guessing the authors of mystery artworks, identifying musical instruments, naming regions and language groups, finding artistic themes and identifying Indigenous symbols.

**PATHWAYS**
Serendipity is a delightful possibility in Moorditj. At any stage a user can modify their path to follow their interests. Students selecting Explore by Region and entering the Kimberleys would find themselves exploring the diverse artworks of 10 artists from that region. This can be changed at any stage. A student enjoying the songs of the Pigram Brothers Band, for example, might decide to exchange the Kimberley artists pathway for a Music pathway and would find themselves exploring the artistic expressions of 16 musicians and groups. These range from the Christian hymns of the Ntaria (formerly Hermannsburg) Ladies Choir to the reggae rhythms of Footprince and the country and western songs of Troy Cassar-Daley.

You change pathway by clicking on one of the small icons below the Next Screen arrow.

**THE MOORDITJ MANUAL**
*Moorditj in Your Classroom* is a printed guide for teachers to help them integrate Moorditj and Indigenous issues into the curriculum. It provides advice on how to use the program; links to the Curriculum Framework (*the Arts, Society and the Environment* and *English*); teaching strategies and terminology; student worksheets; and planning a unit of work.

**MORE INFORMATION**
More detail about the Moorditj resources and site licensing opportunities is available from the website at: moorditj.net.au