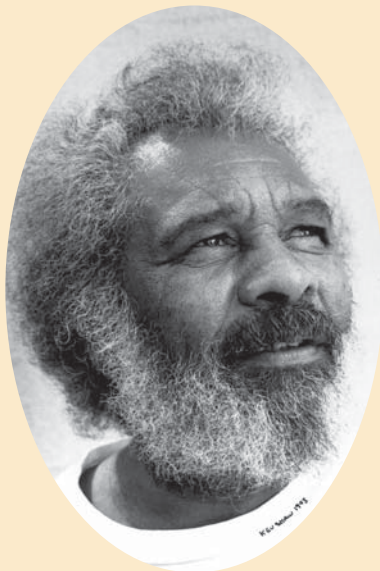


Our Camp at Freshwater Bay



Koori Bodney
Photo Kevin Shaw 1993

Hello, I'm Koori Bodney

Koori in our local language means spider, though in other parts of Australia it means blackfellas. When I was born, I had extra long legs and arms so they called me Koori.

I was born in 1932 in the bush off Alfred Road – it's currently the Swanbourne Primary School. We camped all through that part of the country and my mother had camped there when she was young. It's been a camping ground for Aboriginal people for thousands of years, you know.

Down by the river here was one of our main camps for fishing and crabbing. Our people were fish eaters – mullet, cobbler, bream, crabs and prawns.

It was beautiful here in the summertime. We'd sleep in the long grass - didn't worry about blankets. We got water in an old kerosene bucket from a tap at the back of the police station.

My mother used to do washing and ironing for the ladies around this area. One of them was Mrs Sherwood who made us kids beetroot cordial. We thought it was a real treat.

Everyone needs to respect the river – it's important because it's part of the Waugal dreaming track.



1. Koori Bodney in Class 4 at the old Swanbourne Primary School on Devon Road.

2. Koori and Toopey's father, Bill Bodney (front right), as part of the first Aboriginal deputation to Premier Collier in 1927-28. They wanted better conditions for Aboriginal people. Bill Bodney was mixed heritage but was brought up as an Aboriginal.

Even in third grade at Swanbourne Primary School, Toopey Bodney was recognised as one of the best artists in the school. He painted this later after working on a station north east of Carnarvon.

Courtesy Toopey Bodney



The Bodney family in 1935: Melba Bodney with Koori, Toopey, Betty and Christine. The family's traditional connections to this area are through Melba Bodney.

Photos courtesy Koori Bodney

Waugal painting courtesy artist Christopher Pease and Perth Convention Exhibition Centre

Koori Bodney's story based on oral history interviews with Koori Bodney, 2007 and 2008, held Claremont Museum and used with permission from Koori Bodney