

**Genre: Australian History, bushrangers**

**Readership: mid to upper primary**

**Themes include: bushrangers, capital punishment, crime doesn't pay, squatters and selectors**

## **Outlaw Son: The story of Ned Kelly**

**By Paula Hunt**

### **About Ned and the book**

Ned Kelly, a thief, armed robber and murderer, has become something of a national icon. Over time, the Kelly story has become a mix of both history and mythology. In addition to many books, songs and poems about him, there have been at least two movies (starring Mick Jagger and, more recently, Heath Ledger), as well as the theatre production, *Ned Kelly, The Musical!* It is therefore important that students have some knowledge of Ned and his family, and his place in Victoria's and Australia's early history.

*Outlaw Son* provides primary students with an excellent resource that is both accessible and engaging. The story is presented chronologically in two-paged chapters and is filled with highlighted quotations, maps, photographs and paintings. A cleverly constructed timeline runs along the bottom of every page; there is also a glossary and an index.

*Outlaw Son* should have great appeal to students. From a teacher's perspective, it is valuable as a cautionary tale — crime doesn't pay! The book also provides students with the opportunity to consider related issues such as capital punishment.

### **Learning Activities**

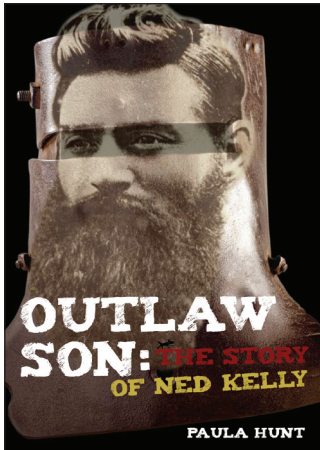
The activities below are for Literacy, Integrated Studies and Creative Arts (art and drama). Activities suggested for one Key Learning Area may be applicable in other areas as well.

#### **Literacy:**

##### ***The book's format and features***

As the subject-matter is factual, students need to be familiar with the book's format and features in order.

- The title: Brainstorm what the class know about Ned Kelly.
- Read the blurb on back cover.
- Contents: Draw students' attention to the Glossary and Index at the back of the book.
- Draw student's attention to the timeline that runs along the bottom of pages 8–29.



### **Visual Literacy**

Describe the scene in Patrick William Marony's painting on p. 5, including how the coach passengers are reacting to the hold-up, and what mood the scene conveys.

- List the ways that Sidney Nolan's painting on p. 19 is different from the Marony painting.
- Which painting do you like most? Why?

### **Story-telling**

Write a story about someone, real or imaginary, who is as game as Ned Kelly (p. 29).

### **Poetry**

Reread the highlighted break-out box p. 29.

- What is the moral of these sentiments?
- Write your own four-line verse with the moral that crime doesn't pay.

### **Debate**

Ned Kelly deserved to hang.

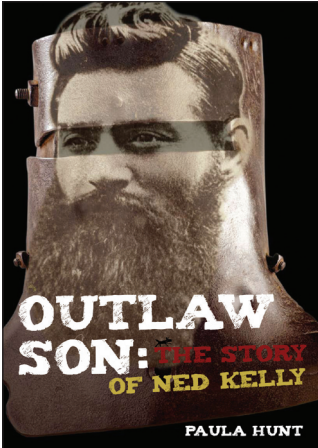
### **Discuss: Such is Life**

These were reportedly the last words spoken by Ned Kelly before he was hanged (p. 28) What do you think he meant?

### **Vocabulary**

What is the difference between the following words? Use them in a sentence about Ned to show you understand the different meanings.

- brave and bravado
- outlaw and terrorist
- murder and manslaughter



### **Integrated Studies**

#### ***Then and Now***

In groups, make a list of the differences in everyday life between then and now, for example, there was no electricity or TV in Ned's day. Discuss how different your life would have been if you had lived then.

#### **History: Victoria from 1850 –1861**

Using the timeline that runs through the book as a starting point:

1. Research and describe three historical events in the state's history that occurred during this period.
2. Two sporting traditions began during this period in Melbourne – Aussie Rules football and the Melbourne Cup. Choose one and find out more about its origins.

#### **Geography and the environment: Kelly country**

Begin by referring to the map on p. 7

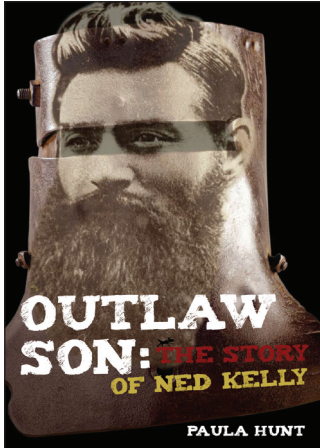
- Choose one of the following towns — Glenrowan, Beechworth or Euroa. Find out some interesting information about the town. Include:
  - The town's population.
  - The main business that the townsfolk are involved in.
  - Any notable physical features in the town or nearby: river, forest etc.

#### **Crime in the 1800s: Horse stealing and cattle duffing**

- Why was horse stealing considered such a serious criminal offence in the 1800s in Victoria? What role did horses play in day-to-day life in Victoria, especially in the countryside, that made them such a valuable possession?
- Similarly, why was cattle duffing considered such a serious criminal offence in those days?

#### **Internet Research: Victorian Crime Families**

The Kellys are not the only family to engage in criminal activity in Victoria. For example, more recent times have seen the rise and fall of Melbourne's notorious Moran and Williams families — Lewis Moran and his sons Jason and Mark; George Williams and his son Carl.



- What were their crimes and what has happened to them.
- Compare these families with the Kelly family's criminal activities.

### **Creative Arts**

#### **Art**

Create an A4-sized, hand-drawn or computer graphic 'wanted' poster for the capture of Ned Kelly. Display artwork in classroom.

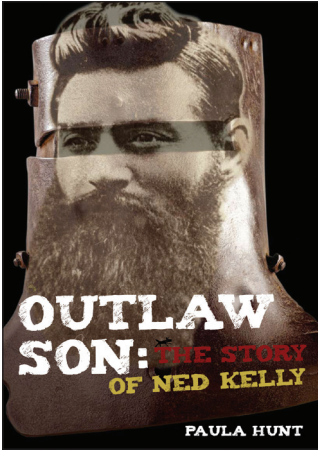
#### **Drama**

Role plays in-the-round

- Give each student a character from the list below to role play.
- Have students prepare notes for a three minute monologue on what they think their character would have to say about Ned Kelly, based on the book references and, importantly, their imagination. Rehearse at home. Note: they must present their monologue without any notes.
- Sit the class in a circle. Students should begin by saying who they are and must act in character. They might like to bring a prop of some sort, or wear an item of clothing, to identify the character.

List of Characters:

- The Catholic priest who christened Ned (p. 10)
- A squatter (p. 9–10)
- A selector (pp. 9–10)
- The mother and/or father of little Dick Shelton, who Ned Kelly has saved from drowning that very day. (p. 10)
- Harry Power (p. 11)
- Passenger(s) in a stage coach hold-up and armed robbery (painting p. 5 and p. 11)
- Constable Fitzpatrick (pp. 14–15)
- Ned Kelly sympathiser(s) (pp 18 & 28)
- The National Bank manager at Euroa after the robbery (p. 20)
- Donald Cameron, politician (p. 21)



- Edwin Living, bank accountant in Jerilderie (pp. 22–23)
- The recently widowed: Mrs Kennedy and/or Mrs Lonigan and/or Mrs Scanlon (p. 18)
- Joe Byrne's mother after Aaron Sherritt's murder (p. 25)
- Thomas Curnow, teacher at Glenrowan (p. 26)
- An escaped hostage from the Glenrowan Inn (p. 26)
- Kate Kelly after her brother Dan and Steve Hart's suicides (pp. 14, 16, 17 & 26)
- One of the Wangaratta police who captured Ned Kelly (photo p. 27)
- Judge Redman Barry (pp. 15 & 28)
- Ellen Kelly in prison after Ned's hanging (pp. 14, 15, 16 & 28)

#### **About the author**

Paula Hunt is first and foremost an AFL football tragic who has written a book on the history of Aussie Rules for children and co-authored another on footy slang.

A qualified engineer, she worked in the corporate world for a time, and has even dabbled in politics. Somewhat fortuitously, she now works at the mecca of the football world - the MCG in Melbourne in the Health and Safety field - and waits for her beloved Blues to win the premiership flag.