

☆ Read the information below, cut it out and paste it into your book. Now choose one other Australian heroine to research who you think has made a courageous contribution to Australian society.

# Truganini

In 1803, the first white settlers arrived in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) and began clearing and farming the land. Over 4000 Aborigines lived there at that time, and fighting between the two groups began and continued for many years. During this time hundreds of Aborigines and Europeans were killed.

Amidst this chaos, Truganini was born. By the time she was 17, her mother had been murdered by whalers, her sister had been abducted and shot by sealers, her husband-to-be had been murdered by timber fellers, and she herself had been raped.

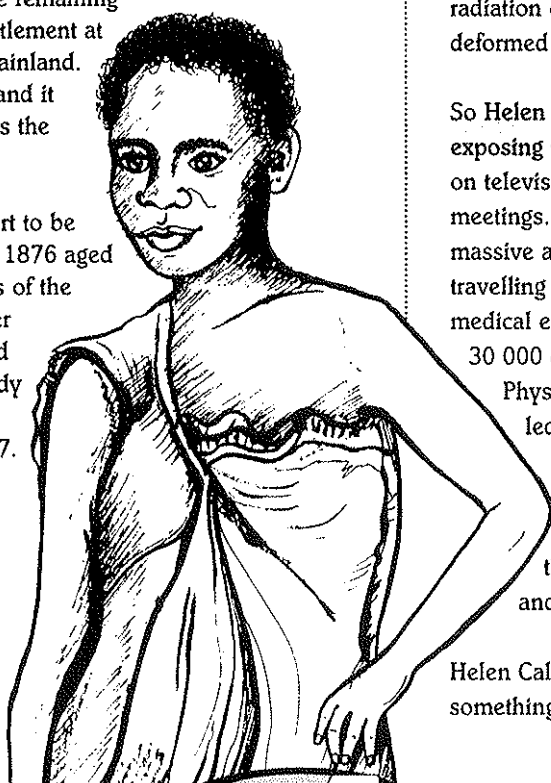
By 1830, the fighting was so widespread that George Augustus Robinson, an untrained preacher, was sent by colonial authorities to find the remaining 300 Aborigines known to be residing deep in the Tasmanian bushland. His job was to convince them to move to a nearby island.

Truganini and her father helped Robinson because they believed that his promise of adequate shelter on Flinders Island was the only way for their people to survive. Robinson had also promised that their people would be free to return to their homeland in the future. Whilst there was initial resistance (Truganini saved Robinson from hostile spears and drowning), by 1835 all remaining Aborigines had agreed to move to Flinders Island.

Robinson was not a man of his word, however, and the island became a prison. Many Aborigines became sick and died. In 1847, Truganini and the 45 other people remaining were moved to an abandoned settlement at Oyster Cove on the Tasmanian mainland. Conditions here were worse still and it was not long before Truganini was the sole survivor.

In later years she moved to Hobart to be cared for by a friend. She died in 1876 aged 64 and was buried in the grounds of the female convict gaol in Hobart. Her dying wish was that she be buried behind the mountains but her body was exhumed and her skeleton displayed in a museum until 1947. Finally, her ashes were scattered on the waters of her tribal land, 100 years after her death.

Truganini was a proud and courageous survivor whose indomitable spirit lives on.



## Helen Caldicott

Born Helen Mary Broinowski in Melbourne in 1938, Helen Caldicott went on to become one of the world's leading anti-nuclear activists.

Helen was raised to believe in the importance of ideas, books and music. While she did well at school, she found it difficult to make friends. Her childhood hero was Robin Hood and she dreamt of one day helping people in some way.

In 1956, she was one of only a few women accepted into the Medical School at the University of Adelaide. She married a fellow doctor, had three children and moved to the United States to work at Harvard Medical Centre, treating children with cystic fibrosis. This experience made Helen realise just how precious and special life was.

On returning to Adelaide three years later, Helen became angry when reading about France exploding nuclear weapons over the Pacific atoll of Mururoa. She had always been scared of nuclear weapons since reading the book *On the Beach* by Neville Shute, and since learning how radiation changes genes, causing cancer or deformed babies.

So Helen wrote a letter to her local paper, exposing the dangers of testing. Soon she was on television and radio and speaking at public meetings. For the next ten years Helen led a massive anti-nuclear awareness campaign, travelling around the world to expose the medical effects of nuclear war. She recruited 30 000 doctors worldwide to form the Physicians for Social Responsibility, which led a revolution of thinking in America.

People began to demand an end to the build-up of nuclear arms and the threat of war. Slowly the world changed and in 1990 the Cold War ended.

Helen Caldicott believes that if you decide to do something you can do it!