



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission

# kandomarngutta

'kan-do-marn-gut-ta'



All school-age groups (K–12)

Post-school age

## Background

In some parts of Australia children were allowed to use the bullroarer (whirlers), or small versions of it, as a source of amusement. In other areas the bullroarer had a special significance and was not used as a 'toy'.

In parts of Victoria a bullroarer called the *kandomarngutta* was used. This was a thin piece of wood, oval, about 10 centimetres in length and about 5 centimetres in width. It was tied to a string and swung to cause a humming noise. In the north-west central districts of north Queensland bullroarers were used by either gender and at any age.

In the Bloomfield River area it was called *teripa*, at Lower Tully *chachalmo*, and at Cape Grafton *birbobirbo*. These were playthings and varied in size from 8 to 15 centimetres in length. They were never engraved, although they were occasionally painted.

## Short description

This activity is related to swinging a 'bullroarer' to make a noise (roar).

## Equipment

- Either purchase or make a *kandomarngutta*. A typical toy bullroarer is made from a flattened, spindle-shape piece of wood, 8–12 centimetres in length and 5 centimetres in width. It is attached, by means of a hole drilled through one end, to a length of twine.

## Game play and basic rules

- The twine attached to the *kandomarngutta* is held in the hand and the *kandomarngutta* is swung rapidly over the head and with an extra effort it is made to 'roar'.

### **Variation**

- Experiment with different sizes and thicknesses of toy bullroarers.

### **Comment**

The humming sound of the bullroarer is produced by the blade alternately presenting its flat surface and sharp edge to the air. Care should be taken to ensure that the twine is attached firmly to the bullroarer.

### **Note**

Although sold as souvenirs some care should be taken to ensure that the use of a 'bullroarer' in a particular region is not of special significance or restricted to use by certain people. It is advisable to check with the local elders if the activity is to be undertaken as part of a program.

### **Safety**

Safety must be considered in all aspects of preparing and swinging the bullroarer.

### **Teaching points**

- Watch out for others. Spread out. Stand back.
- Ready. Go.
- Swing it hard. Faster, faster.
- Good.
- Stop. Next person.