Clothing and religion

Many indigenous people who lived in hot countries did not need to wear clothes. However, they would dress up for ceremonies and clan gatherings. Each nation group had their own types of ceremonial dress. This helped them to connect with their spirit ancestors.

Men and women wore different decorations including headgear, necklaces, bracelets and armbands. Women often wore skirts made from emu or other bird feathers. All these special clothes and decorations were made from natural objects, such as shells and animal skins.

Lenore Dombasi (born 1955)

Lenore Dombasi is an Indigenous Australian fashion designer. She is called the Paperbark Woman after her people, the Kungarakan, who are known as the Paperbark people. Her designs are inspired by her culture, but she makes the clothes with modern materials.

Animal cloaks

Indigenous Australians in south-east Australia made and wore possum-skin cloaks. The cloaks were made from possum skins sewn together with kangaroo sinew. The Indigenous Australians often decorated the cloaks with important clan pictures and symbols. They rubbed them with ochre and animal fat to both decorate and protect the skins.

word bank

ceremonial dress special costumes and decorations worn only for ceremonies and celebrations

sinew tough piece of body tissue that connects bone to muscle. The Indigenous Australians used it for sewing clothes and shelters.