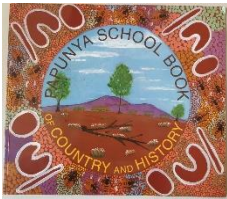


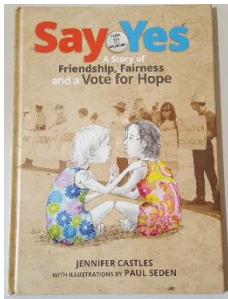
Indigenous Australian picture books and resources

A selection of picture books and resources for celebrating the culture of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia.

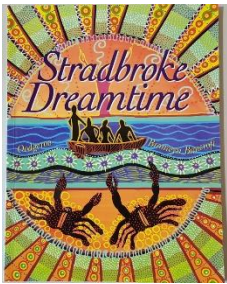


The Papunya School Book of Country and History, produced by staff and students at the Papunya School.

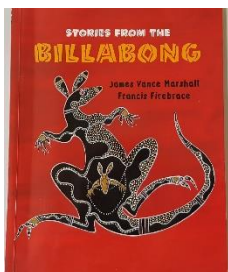
Beautifully illustrated and explained, the book helps to develop understanding of Australia's history and the people who lived, and live, in it. These understandings help build connections that strengthen reconciliation.



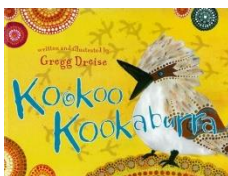
Say Yes, A Story of Friendship, Fairness and a Vote for Hope by Jennifer Castles tells of two young girls whose friendship is strong despite the attempts of segregation to keep them apart; and of the 1967 referendum in which Australian people voted overwhelming for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be recognised *as people* in the Constitution. It is a beautiful picture book with much to discuss.



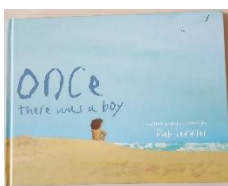
Stradbroke Dreamtime is a collection of stories by Indigenous author, poet, and political activist Oodgeroo. The stories, beautifully illustrated by Bronwyn Bancroft, tell of Stradbroke Island and of the Old and New Dreamtime. Some stories are from Oodgeroo's own life, and others from those of her ancestors.



Stories from the Billabong are ten traditional stories of the Yorta-Yorta people retold by James Vance Marshall and illustrated by Francis Firebrace. In addition to the Dreamtime stories, the book includes information about Aboriginal Australians, a glossary, and a guide to Aboriginal symbols and their meanings. Children will enjoy hearing stories of creation, including *How the Kangaroo got her Pouch* and *Why the Platypus is such a special creature*.

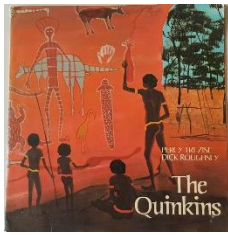


Kookoo Kookaburra, written and illustrated by Gregg Dreise, inspired by the stories of his people, is a modern story of kindness, respect and friendship.

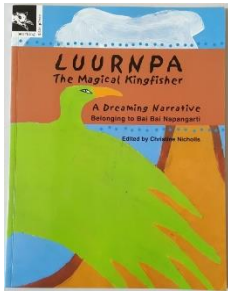


Once there was a boy, written and illustrated by Dub Leffler, is a beautiful book about a boy living alone on an island until, one day, a girl comes. When the boy leaves to gather food, he tells the girl to not look under his bed. Should he trust her? Can she overcome her curiosity to honour his request? This book about friendship, trust, temptation, and reconciliation has many themes to discuss.

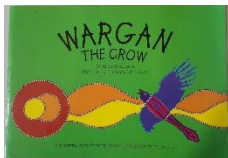
Many books retell stories from the dreamtime, for example:



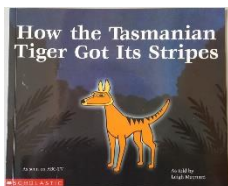
The Quinkins, by Percy Trezise and Dick Roughsey, is a story about mythical dreamtime creatures, the friendly Timaras and the evil Imjims.



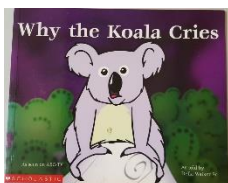
Luurnpa The Magical Kingfisher, told by Bai Bai Napangarti, is a dreamtime story of the Kukatja people of Western Australia.



Wargan the Crow, retold by Cindy Laws, is a dreamtime story of the Boorooberongal/Darlingjung people of New South Wales.



How the Tasmanian Tiger Got Its Stripes, told by Leigh Maynard, is a dreamtime story of the Nuenonne people of Bruny Island off the coast of Tasmania.

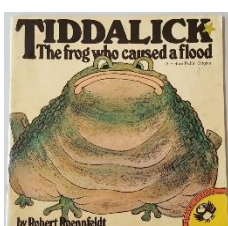


Why the Koala Cries, told by Della Walker Sr, is a dreamtime story of the Yaegl people of New South Wales.

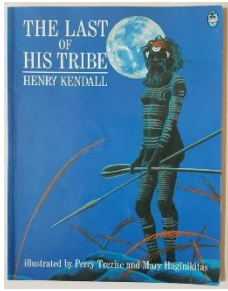
A popular series of Aboriginal dreamtime stories retold by Pamela Lofts include:



When the snake bites the sun
How the birds got their colours
The echidna and the shade tree
Dunbi the owl



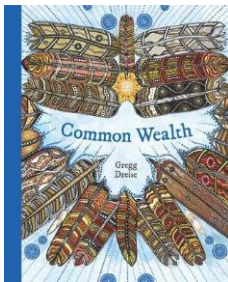
Tiddalick The frog who caused a flood, by Robert Roennfeldt is a retelling of an Aboriginal dreamtime story.



The Last of His Tribe, a poem written by Henry Kendall in 1864 and republished with illustrations by Percy Trezise and Mary Haginikitas, is a sad but beautiful reflection on a history of loss and loneliness.

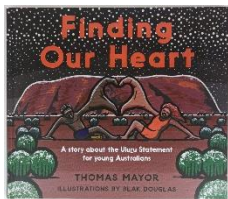
Titles added May 2022

Books for Reconciliation



Common Wealth by [Gregg Dreise](#) is a book that challenges us to acknowledge our true history and to 'break down the barriers of division ... by discussing without ammunition, a willingness to listen ... to a true common wealth vision.'

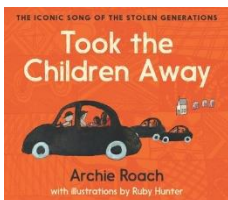
The book may not be as suitable for sharing with our younger children, but it makes valuable reading for us anyway as it can empower us in our knowledge and discussions.



In *Finding Our Heart* by Thomas Mayor and illustrated by Blak Douglas, Mayor assures us that the heart of the nation is to be found in truth but that it won't be found until 'First Nations voices are heard'. He invites young readers to take action by asking the question, 'Will you help find the heart of the nation?'

The final pages of the book include information about the Uluru Statement, some suggestions for helping to find our heart and the words of the Uluru Statement.

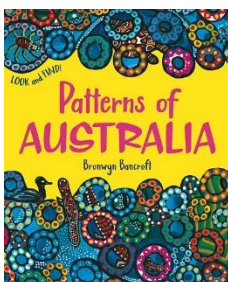
Books about the Stolen Generations



Took the Children Away by Archie Roach contains the words to Roach's iconic song of the same name. It is beautifully illustrated by his wife Ruby Hunter in a mix of dark and colourful images to match the mood of the text. It also includes stories and photographs from Archie's life. Although so much of the story is of a dark and tragic past, it leaves me with a feeling of hope. Perhaps, through his story, we will learn to understand and empathise and ensure there is never a

reason for such atrocities to happen again.

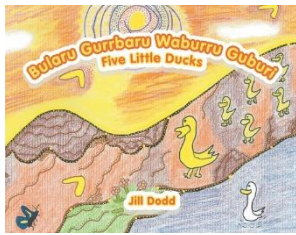
Books about Art



Patterns of Australia by Bronwyn Bancroft will encourage children to look into the detail of the illustrations to find all the animals, plants and objects hidden within.

In the introduction to the book, Bancroft says that although the illustrations are not traditional Aboriginal art, they are influenced by the stories and artwork of her ancestors. She encourages young readers to look beneath the patterns, below the surface to find stories in the layers.

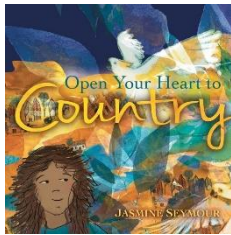
Books with First Nations Languages



Bularu Gurrbaru Waburru Guburi, Five Little Ducks written and illustrated by Jill Dodd

This book is written in Birri Language which is spoken in Eastern Central Queensland. It is an adaption and translation of the well-known nursery rhyme *Five Little Ducks*.

A list of the Birri words and their English translation is included in the front of the book, and the text of the rhyme is presented in both Birri and English on each page.

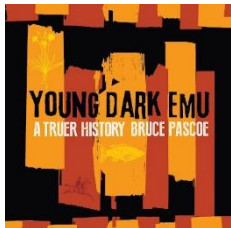


Open Your Heart to Country by Jasmine Seymour

This text of lovely book, written as a poem, is accompanied by brilliantly coloured and gorgeous illustrations. As well as its English text, each page has words written in the Dharug language which has been spoken across the land we know as Sydney for thousands of years. At the back of the book, the author has included a pronunciation key to use when the pronunciation of Dharug

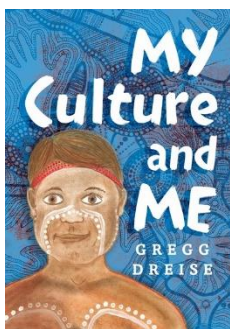
words differs from that of English. The book has an important message for appreciating and maintaining language.

Books about History



Young Dark Emu A Truer History by Bruce Pascoe is not suitable for our younger children in its entirety. It "is taken from the book *Dark Emu*, written for older readers. It includes many quotes from people in the past. At times words are used to describe Aboriginal people that are now considered inappropriate."

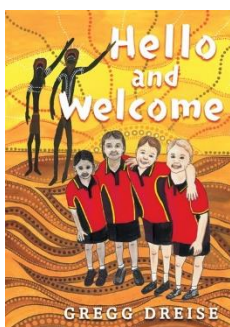
Books about Culture



My Culture and Me by Gregg Dreise is a wonderful display of pride in heritage and culture. Gregg's colourful illustrations complement his words and portray the joy and hope he feels as he says,

*"We need to always remember,
to keep our culture glowing inside.*

*We must learn our traditions,
and always be filled with pride."*



In *Hello and Welcome*, Gregg Dreise gives thanks and pays respects and encourages us all to live in harmony.

At the back of the book, he uses illustrations of actions and words of the traditional Gamilaraay language of the Kamilaroi people to teach us how to give a 'Hello and welcome to our gathering' greeting. He also thanks all the schools and organisations that begin their gatherings with a Welcome or an Acknowledgement to Country.

Check out your school and local library for these and other titles. Ask the librarians for their recommendations.

An internet search of “Youtube Aboriginal Legends” will produce a list of many videos. Be sure to preview them for suitability before showing to children.

Other useful resources include:

[Magabala Books](#) (accessed 15 May 2022), an Indigenous publishing house based in Broome W.A. “committed to publishing quality, culturally significant literature”, is a great place to source stories by Indigenous authors and illustrators. Their website includes classroom resources that support many of their publications. Some Magabala publications are on my list.

[Little J and Big Cuz](#) (accessed 15 May 2022), an animated series for early years children (K – 2). The series is about Little J, who’s five, and Big Cuz, who’s nine. They live with their Nanna and Old Dog and, with the help of Nanna and their teacher, learn about culture, community and country. Each episode is supported by numerous teaching suggestions and resources for both classroom and home. While the resources, developed by [ACER](#) (Australian Council for Educational Research) and Indigenous Educational Consultants, were written with Indigenous Australian children in mind, the stories will have wide appeal.

The website [Creative Spirits](#) (accessed 15 May 2022), holds a wealth of information about Australian Indigenous culture, including many free resources for teachers and students. The website is curated by Jens Korff, an Australian-born German who, faced with the lack of readily available authentic information about Indigenous culture, decided the situation needed to change. Jens says, “My decision for Creative Spirits was to write quality articles, fully referenced, and give voice to Aboriginal people as much as I can.”

Indigenous Literacy Foundation

If you haven’t already followed the [Indigenous Literacy Foundation](#) and signed up to their newsletter, I recommend you do. They are a great source of information and provide many ways in which you can become involved. The Great Book Swap is a great way for schools and community organisations to become involved. As this is the first year of UNESCO’s Decade of Indigenous Languages, in each newsletter, they are teaching us a word from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language. How important is that.

Reconciliation Australia

I also recommend the [Reconciliation Australia website](#) and newsletter for its wealth of information and educational resources. In their current newsletter, they have this message for educators:

“Reconciliation Australia challenges all educators to 'Be Brave' in their teaching and tackle the unfinished business of reconciliation so we can 'Make Change' in our classrooms, around our schools and early learning services, and in our communities.”

Know Your Country

There are also wonderful resources available on the [Know Your Country](#) website.

ABC Education

ABC Education also lists many other useful resources when teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. You can find them [here](#).

I hope you and your children enjoy finding out more about the history of our country and our First Nations as much as I do. The books and resources listed here are but a mere fraction of what is available. There is much to explore and learn.

*“Here in Australia we’re fortunate enough to have **one of the richest and oldest continuing cultures** in the world. This is something we should all be proud of and celebrate.”*

Dr Tom Calma AO, Co-Chair Reconciliation Australia