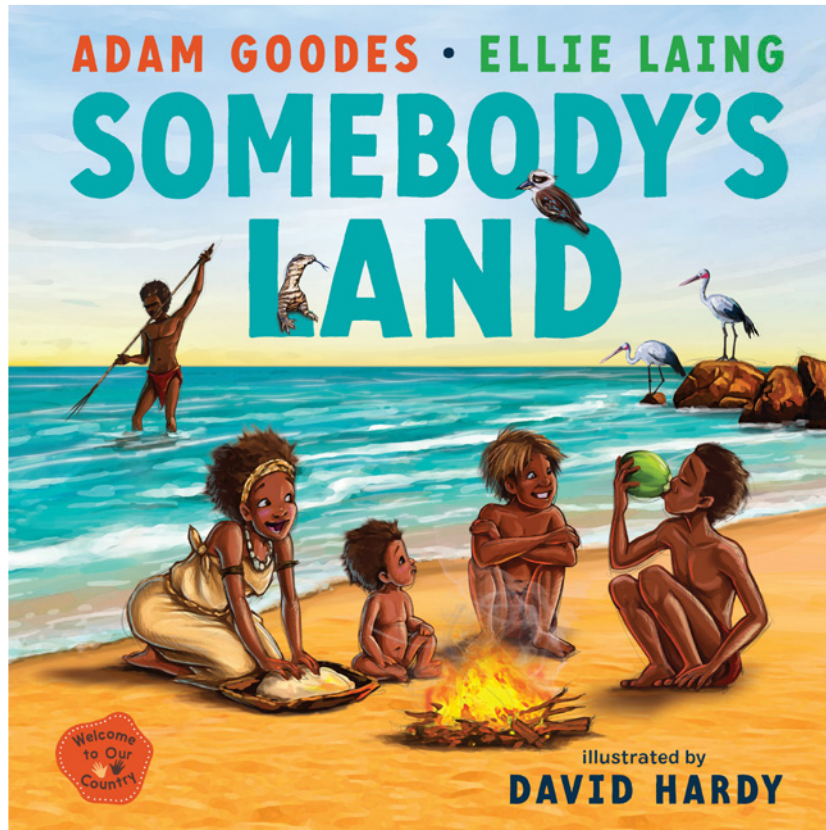


A Guide for Parents and Carers

by

Culture Is Life



We acknowledge the traditional custodians of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands and waterways. We pay respects to Elders both past and present and extend respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Culture is Life is an Aboriginal-led not-for-profit organisation that works to inspire change by supporting projects and programs that are anchored in cultural activities and expression. To address the prevalent issues of health inequity and to draw on growing evidence that cultural strengthening influences the health and well-being of First Nations peoples globally, Culture is Life backs Aboriginal-led solutions that deepen connection to culture and country for Aboriginal young people. The organisation's work aims to build awareness and educate the broader community to reframe the relationships non-Aboriginal people have with Australia's First Peoples, leading educational and advocacy change across key environments to strengthen the well-being of Aboriginal young people.



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About *Somebody's Land*



Somebody's Land is an invitation to connect with First Nations culture, to acknowledge the hurt of the past, and to join together as one community with a precious shared history as old as time.

The story told by Adam Goodes and Ellie Laing, together with David Hardy's pictures, full of life, invite children and their families to imagine themselves into Australia's past – to feel the richness of our First Nations history, to acknowledge that our country was never terra nullius, and to see the impact of colonisation from a First Nations perspective.

The creators and publishers hope the book will be a prompt for people to take a deeper interest in First Nations rights and issues and explore the many other books, documentaries and films that are available.

ABOUT THE ART STYLE

Creative license has been taken with regard to historical accuracy, and clothing; other details reflect the sensibilities of a contemporary audience. The settings are general, depicting the tropical north, central Australia, and scenes that reference colonial artworks in other states.

The Welcome to Our Country Series

Welcome to Our Country is a five-book series designed to connect young children, parents and carers with First Nations history and cultures. The second book in the series, *Ceremony*, is a joyful celebration of an ancient, and ongoing, tradition. It will be released in April 2022.



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A WORD FROM THE SOMEBODY'S LAND CREATORS



‘This book is a reflection of me. I’m incredibly hopeful. I choose to be positive, to help us heal as a nation.

Ellie and I saw an opportunity to create something we could be very proud of – a resource for parents and their younger children around Indigenous culture. As a new father, with my daughter now approaching the age where she will start school, I’m so proud to be publishing a series of books about Australia’s Indigenous history.’

ADAM GOODES



‘When my eldest son came home singing Indigenous lullabies and reciting an Acknowledgement of Country, I was so moved – I wanted to continue the conversation with him, to learn more and to ask questions.

We would love this series to become a conversation starter for people young and old, to understand the importance of acknowledging Country, the truth about Australia’s history, and the rich culture of the traditional custodians of the land we live in.’

ELLIE LAING



‘Growing up, I never received any education around the concept of terra nullius or the Acknowledgement of Country. *Somebody’s Land* was one of those stories where as soon as I read it, I thought – I have to do this.’

DAVID HARDY



RECOMMENDED FOR AGES 4–8
PRESCHOOL TO YEAR 3

THEMES: Aboriginal histories and culture, Caring for Country, terra nullius, ethics, unity

Frequently Asked Questions

Are children ever too young to learn about First Nations culture and history?

Children are born ready to learn. Think about how much they absorb and process in the first years of their lives and the natural curiosity they show about the world around them. The elasticity of their brains enables them to form neural connections at a phenomenal rate, so there is no better time to start talking about First Nations culture and history.

Why are books an ideal way to help young children learn?

Books are a pathway to empathy by inviting us into the lives of others. And empathy, in turn, helps us better understand and appreciate our similarities and differences, an essential first step to achieving reconciliation and a better and fairer Australia.

Why is *Somebody's Land* a great starting point for young children?

Somebody's Land invites young children and families to feel the richness of First Nations' history, to acknowledge that our country was never terra nullius, and to see the impact of colonisation from a First Nations perspective in an age-appropriate and easy-to-understand way.



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Important Information Before Reading

Please consider protocols and cultural safety in providing a safe space for young people to learn, ask questions and express their thoughts and feelings.

It is also important that parents and carers value the benefits of young people's understanding and connection to place, belonging, community and kinship in strengthening relationships with First Peoples. To know our world's longest surviving culture is a gift to be appreciated!

Useful Questions to Ask Yourself After Reading

1. What is this book about?
2. Who is the book intended for?
3. What messages and learnings are obvious in this book?
4. What messages and learnings may be more deeply embedded?
5. Why is reading this book important for young children?
6. What changes do I want to see? What role can I play in creating these changes?

Personal Check-In

We invite parents and carers to truly pause and reflect on your connection and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, traditions, customs, perspectives and knowledges before reading this book to children. We ask you to be vulnerable in reflecting on your experiences and prior knowledge of the traditional custodians of the land that you live on. Identify any areas where you can strengthen your understanding to ensure you are facilitating the most respectful and honest conversation in your home or place of care. A very useful Further Reading list is provided later in these notes.

Understanding Protocol

Protocols exist as standards of behaviour used by people to show respect to one another.

‘Cultural protocol refers to the customs, lore and codes of behaviour of a particular cultural group and its way of conducting business. It also refers to the protocols and procedures used to guide the observance of traditional knowledge and practices, including how traditional knowledge is used, recorded and disseminated.’

Extracted from The Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care, SNAICC, website.



Why Are Protocols Important?

As the traditional custodians of the land, it is imperative that the special position of Aboriginal people is recognised and integrated into official protocol so as to propagate the culture into the wider community and promote a better relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the general community.

A lack of understanding of the differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures is often the site for breakdowns in communication, leading to a misconstrued portrayal of Indigenous people.

Extracted from The Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care, SNAICC, website.

In understanding and honouring the survival and strong presence and culture of Aboriginal people today, when discussing Aboriginal ways in past tense, it is important for adults to confirm that Aboriginal cultural practices in this book are still strong and practised today. Even if this looks different, the topics are not just historic.

Cultural Safety for Children

This book was written from both an Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspective, with a shared vision for all people to better connect and understand the true histories, cultures and peoples of the land we now call Australia.

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It is important to first consider any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children reading this book and how the perspectives and themes could impact them. The significant impacts of past and current policies influence Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's journey, and knowledge and experiences differ between every child. It is also important to consider the experiences of any person reading this book, who could be impacted by the removal from their homelands, family, kinship and country.

Start conversations with children in your care and consider their wellbeing and backgrounds in facilitating these conversations. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in your care may relate and feel connected to these stories in a way that they want to celebrate. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are also directly impacted by practices and policies that impact their connection to culture, kinship and place, and stories of removal and dispossession can be triggering. As a parent or carer, you know your children best to make these considerations.

Connect with your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Build relationships in your community to hear local First People's perspectives and local knowledges. Take your children to cultural events, services or places, where appropriate, to deepen this connection.

Further Reading for Adults

[Uluru Statement from the Heart](#)

[AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia](#)

[Acknowledgement of Country – Common Ground](#)

[Terra Nullius, Treaties, Native Title and the landmark Mabo decision](#)

[Trade with the Makasar – NMA pre-European contact article](#)

[Aboriginal inventions: 10 enduring innovations – Australian Geographic](#)

[Why is it important for students to learn about Aboriginal culture?](#)

[My Australian Dream – Educational Resources](#)

[Uncle Archie Roach Stolen Generations Educational Resources](#)

[Indigenous Kinship](#)

[Aboriginal children's books and more – Koori Curriculum](#)

[Top 10 Aboriginal bush medicines – Australian Geographic](#)

[Grinding Ochre by Aunty Lynn Chapman](#)

[Australia's First Astronomers](#)

[The Arts – Dance. Narragunnawali](#)

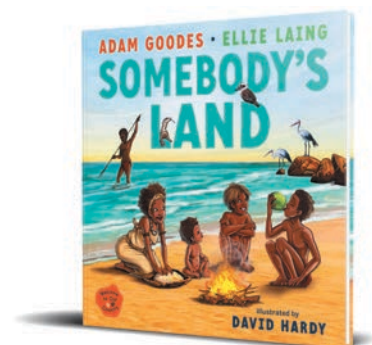
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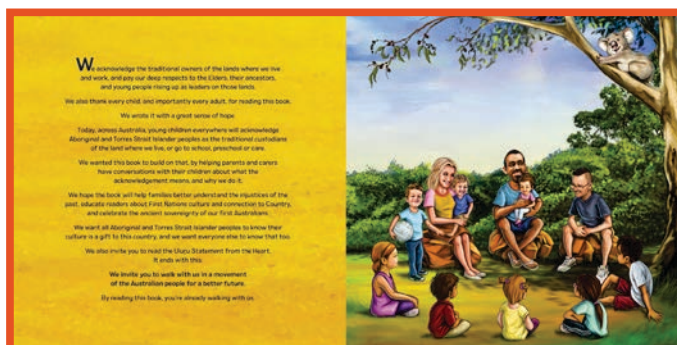
Reading Activities

Spend a little time **BEFORE** reading the story to explore the *Somebody's Land* front cover illustrations and title. Encourage young children to think deeply about the cover by asking questions such as:



- What animals can you see here? An alternative question for very young children could be: Can you find a kookaburra, goanna and brologas on the cover?
 - Where do you think this book will be set?
 - Who do you think the people might be? Might they be a family?
 - What do you think the mum and dad are doing for their family?
 - What might the baby be thinking while looking at the 'big boys'?
 - What might the 'big boys' be thinking?
 - Do the family look happy being together?
 - What do you think is making them feel happy?
- The book's title is *Somebody's Land*. Who do you think the *Somebody* in the title might be?

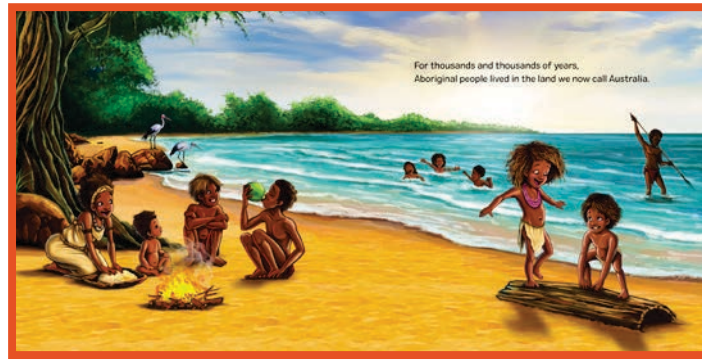
The Foreword



The foreword is speaking to adults about the purpose of the book. We highly recommend you read the message from the book's creators as it encapsulates what they hope to achieve.

However, we recommend you read out loud the Acknowledgement of Country in the first paragraph and spend a moment to talk about the image of the people sitting in a circle on the opposite page. Explain that the image is of the authors and illustrator of *Somebody's Land* with their own children and young friends and that they, too, always acknowledge Country when coming together.

Opening Spread



A key theme of the book is that Aboriginal people have been living for many, many, many generations in Australia so it is worth spending a little time discussing the sentence: 'For thousands and thousands of years, Aboriginal people lived on the lands we now call Australia.' As concepts of time can be difficult for young children, you can help them understand by asking:

•How long have you been alive?

•Guess how long I've been alive?

Explain that thousands and thousands is much, much, much more than if you added all the birthdays of all their friends, their friends' parents, and their friends' grandparents together.

In understanding and honouring the survival and strong presence and culture of Aboriginal people today, and when discussing Aboriginal ways in past tense, it is important for adults to confirm that Aboriginal cultural practices in this book are still strong and practised today. Even if this looks different, the topics are not just historic.

Look closely at the illustration and encourage empathy by asking questions such as:

• What are the children doing in the water?

• What are the two children doing on the log?

• How do you think these people feel about their life?

• Would you like to live like that?

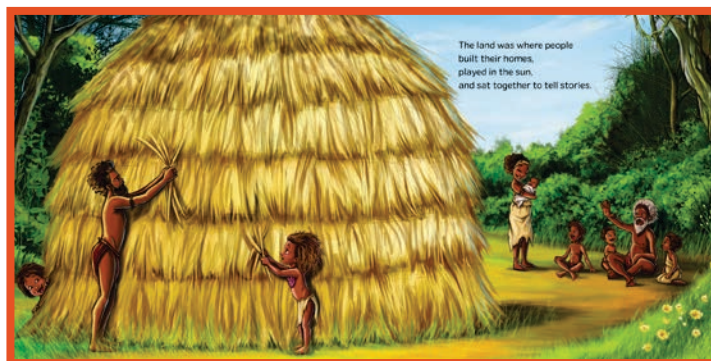
• Do they look like they are caring for the land and water around them?

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Next Spread



Another key theme in the book is that Aboriginal people did, and continue to, have a strong sense of home and kinship. Read the page and explore this idea further by asking questions such as:

- What does 'home' mean to you?
- How do you feel when you are at home?
- How does the home in the story look different from yours?

Point out the image of the young children sitting with the Elder who is telling them stories. Encourage empathy by asking:

- What are stories?
- Do you like hearing stories?
- Who's your favourite storyteller?
- Why are stories so important?



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Next Spread



The term Terra Nullius is very important in *Somebody's Land* because it was used to falsely claim that the land now called Australia belonged to no one when 'white people' arrived. It is worth spending time on this page to unpack this idea. Older children will be able to answer some of these questions more easily than younger, so you may need to adapt where applicable:

- Who are the 'white people' in the image?
 - Where did they come from?
 - How did they arrive in Australia?
- What other words might describe the people standing in uniforms on the sand? (1)
- How do you think these people feel about arriving and what makes you think that?
 - What are the Aboriginal people doing in this image?
- What might they be thinking and feeling watching the strangers arrive on their shore?
 - What does Terra Nullius* mean? (2)
- Why were the white people wrong when they said the land didn't belong to anyone? (3)

(1) Europeans, British, men from England

(2) Latin for 'land belonging to no one'

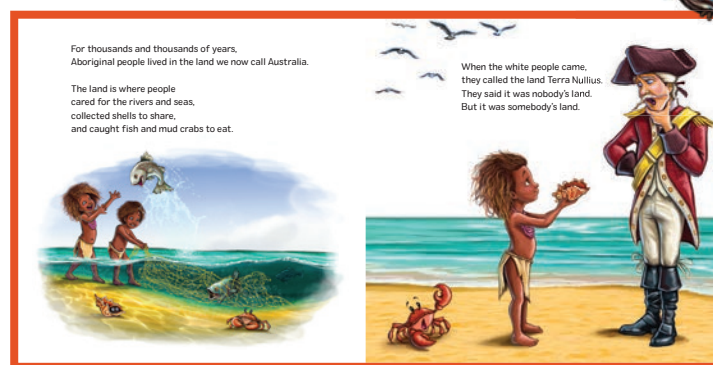
(3) It belonged to the people living on it before the 'white people' arrived.

The concepts of safety, community, strangers and colonisation can be discussed here.

It is important that children feel safe when having these discussions.

(refer to cultural considerations)

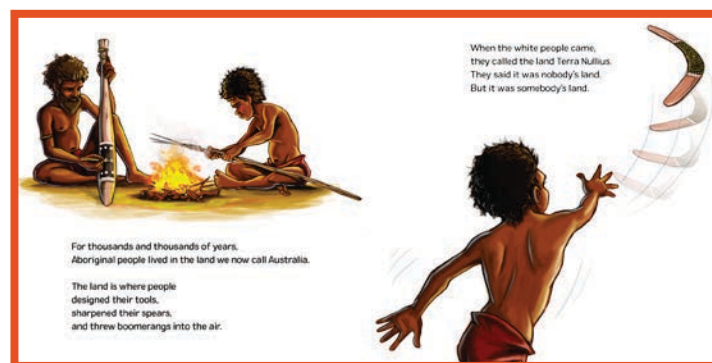
Next Spread



Caring for Country is at the heart of Aboriginal histories and culture, so take a moment to discuss the children using nets for catching fish to eat. Explain that they only take what they need so the land and waterways are never damaged, and that this is still a common practice.

- What does caring for the lands, waterways and animals look like? (This will be explored in a later activity)
 - What is the child offering the man?
 - Why do you think the child might be doing this?
 - What do you think the child is thinking?
 - What do you think the man is thinking?

Next Spread

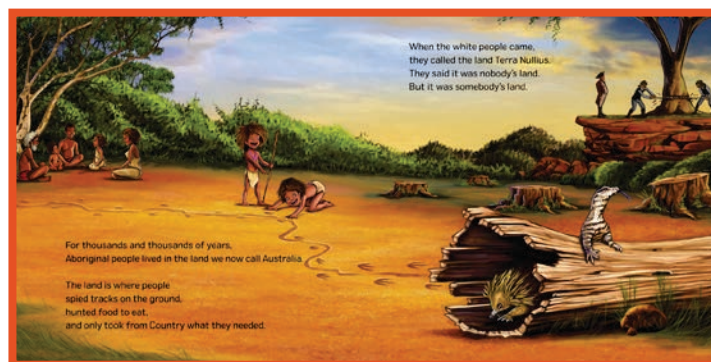


This page elaborates on the earlier theme that Aboriginal culture and history was, and continues to be, rich, unique and complex. Consider asking the following questions as a way to help children better understand this idea.

- What is the importance of fire? What is it used for?
- What could tools, spears and boomerangs be made out of?
- What is the man doing with the boomerang?

***It is important to understand present tense in these questions and conversations as cultural practices, including tool making and boomerang throwing, are still widely practised today.**

Next Spread



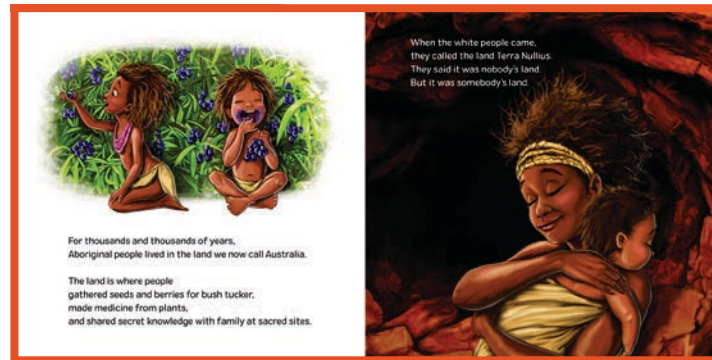
This page is important as it juxtaposes two distinctly different attitudes to Caring for Country. Try asking the following questions as a way to help children better understand the different attitudes:

- What are animal tracks?
- What animal do you see on the log?
- What animal is inside the log?
- What do you see the 'white people' (British/Europeans) doing to the tree?
- Who do you think is being kinder to the land here – the Aboriginal people or the white people?
- How does this image make you feel?





Next Spread

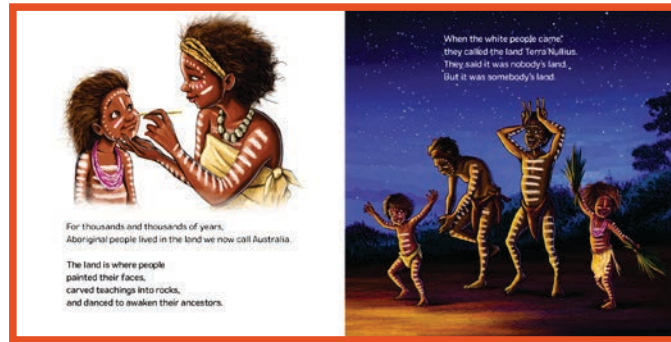


Ask the following questions to help children better understand the richness, uniqueness and complexity of First Nations culture.

- What is bush tucker?
- What types of berries might the children be eating?
- Where do the Aboriginal people in the story get their medicine and how is that different to where we go to get medicine?
- What sort of things might 'secret knowledge' be and why might you want to share it with your family?
- What does sacred mean?*

**Something really special and important to generations of people. So special that it's really important we look after it like we look after ourselves.*

Next Spread

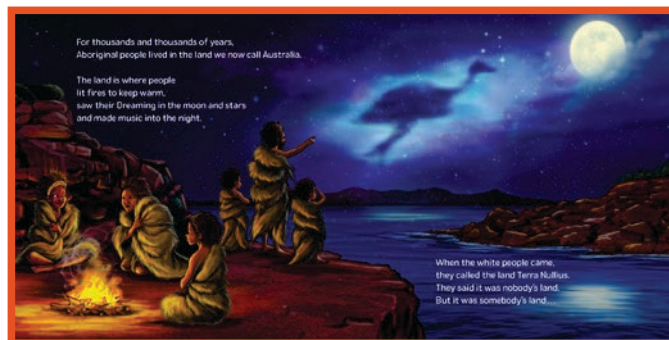


The following questions are a great way to help children better understand this section of the book.

- What do Aboriginal people use to paint their faces and skin?
(This will be explored in a later activity)
- What dance moves can you see the people making in the illustration?
- What might 'awaken their ancestors' mean?
- What instruments have you seen Aboriginal people use to create music?
(This will be explored in a later activity)



Next Spread



Continue exploring the images and text here by asking:

- What is meant by the word 'dreaming' here?
- What animal can you see in the sky?
- Have you heard an Aboriginal dreaming or creation story?

Final Spread



Spend some time exploring the final double-page spread's text and illustration as it encapsulates all of the themes in the book. Encourage discussion and deeper thinking by asking:

- What does Aboriginal land look like today?
- How has the land changed since the Europeans arrived?
- Can you find the authors and illustrator in the image?
- Why do you think *Somebody's Land* finishes with an illustration showing lots of different people living happily together?
- Look closely at the Aboriginal people pushing the pram. Can you recognise the flag on the man's tee-shirt?
- What do the words 'It was Aboriginal Land. It is Aboriginal Land. And always will be Aboriginal Land.' mean to you?



Ongoing Conversations

It is important to allow space for ongoing conversations for continued learning in your home or place of care. Encourage conversation by asking:

- What did you learn or remember from what we read and discussed?
 - How do you feel about what you've learned and discussed?
 - Why might this feel (insert positive response)?
 - Why might this feel (insert negative response)?
 - What would you like to do and/or learn more about?

Reinforce the title of the book *Somebody's Land*, and how we can honour Aboriginal Land, its cultures, histories and peoples, in our everyday lives.

Learning About Country

'Country is the term often used by Aboriginal peoples to describe the lands, waterways and seas to which they are connected. The term contains complex ideas about law, place, custom, language, spiritual belief, cultural practice, material sustenance, family and identity.'

Find out more about Acknowledging Country and order a copy of the AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia to discover:

- The Country your home or place of care is on
- The Country where you are from (if Aboriginal) or where the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people you know are from
- The Country where your child/the child in your care goes to school
 - The Country your family and friends live on
 - The Country where a favourite place is located
 - How many clan groups are in Australia today?



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DID YOU KNOW?

Australia Post has updated its address guidelines to include traditional place names. So next time you send a letter or parcel make sure you include the Country from which it is being sent, as well as the Country to which it is going. Find out more about [how this happened and guidelines for addressing.](#)

Acknowledging Country

'An Acknowledgement of Country is 'acknowledging when you're on the land of Traditional Owners [and] is a sign of respect which acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ownership and custodianship of the land, their ancestors and traditions. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples can show this form of respect.'

Find out the difference between an Acknowledgement of Country and a Welcome to Country.

Learn how to create an Acknowledgement to Country that is specific to your child's home or place of care. Choose between a spoken, written or signed (Auslan) version and get in the habit of using it when gathering together or celebrating significant events.

Welcome to Country



'Only the traditional owners can speak for and welcome visitors to Country or give others the authority to do so.'

Find out more about connecting with a local traditional Elder or custodian in your community and how to organise a Welcome to Country in your home or neighbourhood.

Connecting with Country

Take young children outside to discover the land, waterways and sky around their home, place of care or local park. Choose a comfortable and peaceful place to sit. Take off shoes and ground feet in the earth. Acknowledge the traditional custodians of the place in which you are sitting and encourage deep engagement by asking:

- What can you see around you?
 - Are there grasslands, waterways, hills, mountains?
- What can you feel/ smell/ sense/ hear when you close your eyes?
 - How does the earth feel beneath you?
 - How does being outside make you feel?
 - What animals might live here?

Caring for Country

Continue sitting to discuss why Caring for Country is important today and what happens if we don't Care for Country. Older children might want to discuss climate change here. Explain that First Nations people have Cared for Country for thousands and thousands of years and that they continue to do so today. While sitting, talk about how the people in *Somebody's Land* Cared for Country.

Come up with some practical suggestions about how you and your child/children/child in your care can Care for Country. Think about making Caring for Country a priority in your home/place of care with options to track or reward children for the work they do.

Get Cooking with Bush Tucker

Children love to cook, so spend some time together finding out about native foods, where they grow and how you can use them. Common examples of Bush Tucker include lemon myrtle, native thyme, macadamia nuts, barramundi and kangaroo – many of which can be found at larger supermarkets, specialty stores and online – but there are many, many more to discover in the link.

You will also find an abundance of simple Bush Tucker recipes that are suitable for young children to make with adult supervision – from simple teas to dampers, soups and pies. And for those with a sweet tooth there's a wattle seed ice cream.

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Bush Tucker & Medicine

Bush Tucker is also the source for many traditional medicines. Some native plants, for instance, have anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory compounds that are highly effective treatments and have been used by First Nations people for thousands of years before modern medicine.

[Find out more.](#)

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Flags

Remind children of the tee-shirt worn by the Aboriginal man on the last page of *Somebody's Land*. Find out more about the [Aboriginal flag](#). Explain to younger children the meanings of the three sections of the flag, or alternatively have older children find out the meanings themselves. And did you know that there is a [Torres Strait Islander flag](#)?

AFL's Aboriginal Origins

The Aboriginal traditional game 'marngrook' is believed to be the origin of Australian Rules Football, better known as AFL today.

[Marngrook](#), a Guditjmarra word for 'game ball', features punt kicking and catching a stuffed ball and eyewitnesses reported seeing it played decades before Australian Rules Football was codified in 1859.

Learn Some Kurna Terms

Kurna is the name of the language of the Aboriginal people who occupy the Adelaide Plains and surrounding districts. Watch this [video of Jack Buckskin](#) and learn some of the Kurna terms used in AFL.

Aboriginal Music

If your child/the child in your care likes to listen to music as they fall asleep, you can find beautiful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lullabies about the natural world on ABC Kids Listen. And for adults looking for a better understanding of Aboriginal music you can download a PDF on 'Aboriginal sound instruments' from the AIATSIS website.

Dreaming & Creation Stories

Remember the Emu Dreaming in *Somebody's Land*? You can read more about this dreaming story from Papunya, Northern Territory, as well as find out about how Aboriginal people were the first astronomers.

We encourage you to connect with traditional custodians in your local area to discover any local dreaming or creation stories.



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Somebody's Land Creators



ADAM GOODES is an Adnyamathanha and Narungga man and community leader. He is a former Australian Rules footballer, having achieved the greatest heights in the game, and was named Australian of the Year in 2014 for his public work in the fight against racism and his advocacy in First Nations affairs. Together with his cousin Michael O'Loughlin, Adam founded the GO Foundation, which supports and inspires the next generation of First Nations leaders. With a diploma in Aboriginal Studies and his own daughter approaching preschool age, Adam was motivated to publish a series of books for young children and families about Australia's First Nations history.

ELLIE LAING (nee Southwood) is a political adviser and former journalist and presenter who lives on the lands of the Gammeraygal people on the northern beaches of Sydney with her husband and two sons. When Ellie's eldest son Harvey came home from preschool reciting Acknowledgements of Country and singing Aboriginal lullabies, she was inspired to collaborate with Adam Goodes on a series of books aimed at helping families with young children to talk about Australia's First Nations history. She is currently completing studies in Traditional Aboriginal Cultures.



DAVID HARDY is a Barkindji man, author and artist with more than eight years of animation experience with Walt Disney Animation Studios. Married with two children, he is currently a Senior Gaming Illustrator/Animation Manager for Lightning Box Games. David has worked on twelve animated feature films, including *The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Beginning*, *The Lion King 3: Hakuna Matata* and *Return to Neverland*. His books for children include *Alfie's Search for Destiny* and *Alfie's Big Wish*, *On the Way to Nana's* (written by Frances and Lindsay Haji-Ali), *The Proud Foots 1: Shaka Shaka Hawaii* (written by Lucas Proudfoot) and *Aussie Kids: Meet Zoe and Zac at the Zoo* (written by Belinda Murrell).

Somebody's Land is published by **ALLEN&UNWIN**
www.allenandunwin.com

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About Culture is Life

Aboriginal people are the oldest known civilisation on the Earth. The land we now know as Australia has stories going back thousands of generations told through ancient songlines. As Aboriginal people we have a shared oral history, passed through thousands of generations, that has only been documented through writing since European colonisation began in 1788.

As Aboriginal people and educators it is important that we highlight and influence education settings, homes and communities to connect with and truly understand our history of strong cultures and peoples who lived harmoniously on this land for tens of thousands of years. It is also important that all people living in Australia understand our shared history of colonisation that caused devastating impacts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that continue to have impact today. Despite this, our cultures and connection to Country, meaning all spirits, land, waterways, sky, animals and people, still remain strong.

We hope to inspire an everlasting connection and appreciation to our beautiful culture, peoples and countries for yourself, young people in your care, family and wider community. In doing this, we believe in the positive impact and change that we can collectively create in shared story and truth telling.

Culture is Life acknowledges the ongoing work of so many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as First Nations peoples globally. Those who have paved the way for us to be seen, heard and truly appreciated for the value and knowledge that has lived in us for time immemorial. We also acknowledge all the people who walk beside us and choose to be a part of these important conversations, particularly those who inspire our next generation of leaders.

Culture is Life is grateful to play a role in supporting our young generations' education through your teachings and assisting in strengthening students' knowledge, awareness, and understanding of the First Peoples of the Country they live on.

We would love to hear from you with any feedback or insights into this resource and your journey at info@cultureislife.org



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