

DAY BREAK

TEACHERS NOTES

Written by Amy McQuire

Illustrated by Matt Chun

Published in January 2021 by Little Hare,
an imprint of Hardie Grant Children's Publishing

SYNOPSIS

In this moving picture book a young Indigenous girl describes her family's journey back to Country, on Australia Day. There is not a day for picnics and celebration. It is a day for remembering and for visiting Country. In both text and image, readers observe this family sharing stories and drawing strength from each other.

This story interrogates the various narratives about 'Australia Day' and presents the Indigenous view of this national day of celebration, which in their history represents not a celebration, but a day of mourning.

Nevertheless, this is not a story which encourages sadness. It is a book which celebrates Indigenous survival and resistance. It honours the past, while looking forward to a brighter future.

This is a quietly confronting, honest and important story. It is designed to engage young readers in a crucial conversation about the true history of our country. It will encourage them to acknowledge the traditional owners of this land and to begin to engage in a meaningful reconciliation process with them.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amy McQuire is a Darumbal and South Sea Islander woman from Rockhampton in Central Queensland.

Amy is a freelance writer and journalist, and is currently completing a PhD at the University of Queensland into media representations of violence against Aboriginal women.

Amy began her career straight out of high school, completing a cadetship at the National Indigenous Times (NIT) newspaper. She later became editor of NIT, and for a short time political correspondent for NITV News. Amy has also worked at Tracker Magazine, New Matilda, Brisbane's 98.9 FM – where she presented the 'Lets Talk' current affairs show – and more recently BuzzFeed News Australia.

Over the past four years, Amy has co-hosted the investigative podcast 'Curtain' with human rights lawyer Martin Hodgson. The podcast puts forth the case for innocence for Aboriginal man Kevin Henry, who was wrongfully convicted in 1992.

Amy has a strong interest in writing about justice, culture and heritage and feminism.

For further information see: <https://www.amymcquire.com/about-1>



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ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Matt Chun is an artist and writer, currently based on unceded Tsleil-Waututh land, Vancouver, Canada. Living, travelling and creating with his 9-year-old son, Matt's work spans text, drawing, sculptural installation, children's books and comics.

Matt is the current Children's Literature Fellow at the State Library of Victoria in Naarm, Melbourne. He is also the current 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art's Emerging Writer.

Matt's first picture book, *Australian Birds*, was released in 2018 and is a Children's Book Council of Australia Notable Book.

Matt's essays have appeared in *Overland Literary Journal*, *Meanjin Quarterly* and *Runway Journal*. He is currently writing texts for *Art Monthly Australasia* and *Liminal Magazine*.

For further information see: <http://www.mattchun.com.au/>

WRITING STYLE

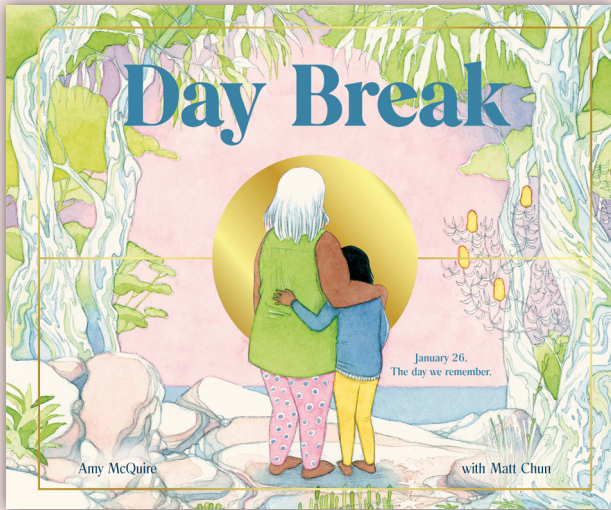
- Comprehension

Why is this book called *Day Break*? It begins at day break but does the author have another meaning in mind?

What is wrong with the image of the teacher instructing her class to draw the Australian flag? What else might they have been encouraged to draw?

- Writing Exercise

Write a short passage about what Australia Day could be.



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ILLUSTRATION STYLE

- Comprehension

Examine the aerial views of the action (p 3). What does this perspective reveal in this image?

- Illustration Exercise

Draw a picture of the narrator and her Nan, returning to Country.

THEMES

Several themes are canvassed in this picture book:

- Australia Day and Nationhood

Key quote: 'My teacher says January 26 is when we celebrate the settlement of Australia. She says white men discovered our country.'

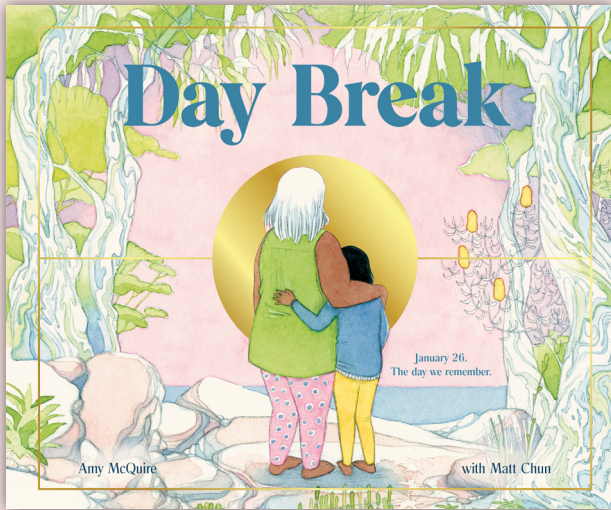
Key quote: 'Dad says: 'This isn't a celebration' and Nan says: 'We'll hold our own ceremony.'

The celebration of Australia Day is contested in Australia. Indigenous or First Nations people alternatively call it Invasion Day or Survival Day.

How should all Australians celebrate their nation's history?

On what day might an Australia Day be celebrated?

Is there a date which has significance for all Australians?



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· War and Nationhood

Key quote: 'My teacher says the Australian spirit was born in a foreign war.'

Images of our nationhood are tied to the myth of Gallipoli, a battle fought during WWI, and to the heroism exhibited by Australian soldiers in other wars. And yet we fail to acknowledge the tragedy of the Frontier Wars which pitted Indigenous people against their white invaders.

Should war be a source of celebration for a nation?

Every war has a perceived winner and a loser. But no one really wins a war. David Metzenthen and Michael Camilleri's book *One Minute's Silence* (2014) makes this point abundantly clear. Read and discuss in relation to this topic.

What occurred during the Australian Frontier Wars?

Visit the Australian War Memorial website, as a national institution commemorating war history.

· Indigenous History

Key quote: 'But Dad says we were already here. For tens of thousands of years.'

Indigenous people have been owners of this land for millennia. Their history and cultural practices were interrupted by the arrival of European settlers/invasors. Many lives were lost and many families separated over successive decades to the present day. Milestone events and movements have taken place and students might research any of them:

Frontier Wars

Stolen Generations

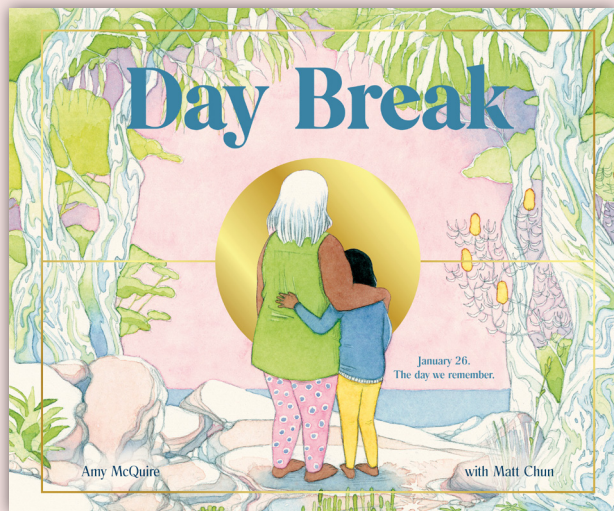
Freedom Ride

Reconciliation Movement

NAIDOC Week (First full week in July)

National Sorry Day (May 26)

Uluru Statement



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· Indigenous Culture

Indigenous people have always celebrated their art in dance, art and expression. One of the most exciting developments in contemporary arts has been the prominence of so many Indigenous artists, writers, actors, musicians, performers and directors. Invite students to read other picture books or fiction by Indigenous writers and illustrators; watch films or plays; and attend performances or exhibitions by Indigenous artists. [See **Related Reading**.]

Research the work of contemporary Indigenous writers and illustrators such as Bronwyn Bancroft, Sally Morgan, Boori Monty Pryor, Brenton McKenna, Dub Leffler, Aunty Joy Murphy, Lisa Kennedy, and Gregg Dreise.

Read books which include Indigenous languages. Share some of the books published by the Indigenous Literacy Foundation: 'Community Literacy Projects' <<https://www.indigenousliteracyfoundation.org.au/community-literacy-programs>>

· Ownership of Land

Key quote: 'The ancestors are still here, on this Country. 'And as long as you are here, on this Country, you will remember. It is our land. They were here before there was an 'Australia'. And one day, Nan says, she will join them. Always was. Always will be.'

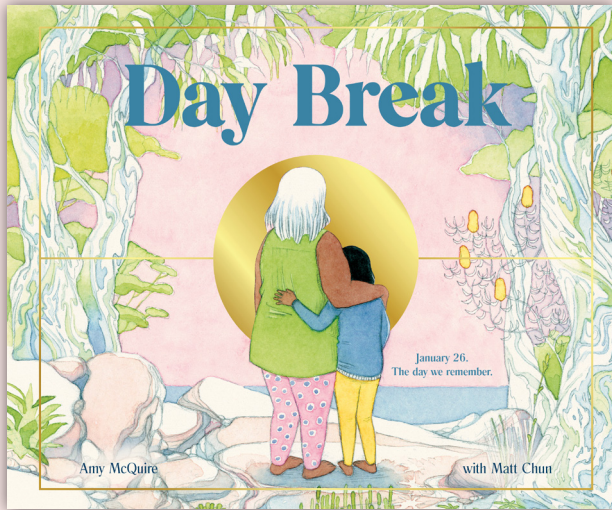
Research the relationship with the Land which Indigenous people hold sacred. What have been some key moments in that history? For example, research the Mabo Decision.

· Public Monuments and Memorials

Key quote: 'We don't need statues,' Nan says. 'We hold our memories on Country. This is where we remember our heroes.'

Statues often memorialise white heroes, whilst Indigenous heroes are often overlooked. But Indigenous people celebrate their heroes in their own way. How do they honour them?

Research the lives of significant Indigenous figures in our past such as Bennelong, Jandamarra, Pemulwuy, Truganini, Denis Walker, Oodgeroo Noonucal, Faith Bandler, Charles Perkins, Albert Namatjira, David Unaipon, Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri and Dick Roughsey.



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- Memory

Key quote: 'If we forget what happened to us,' Dad says, 'we lose a part of who we are.'

How important are memories and remembrance?

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

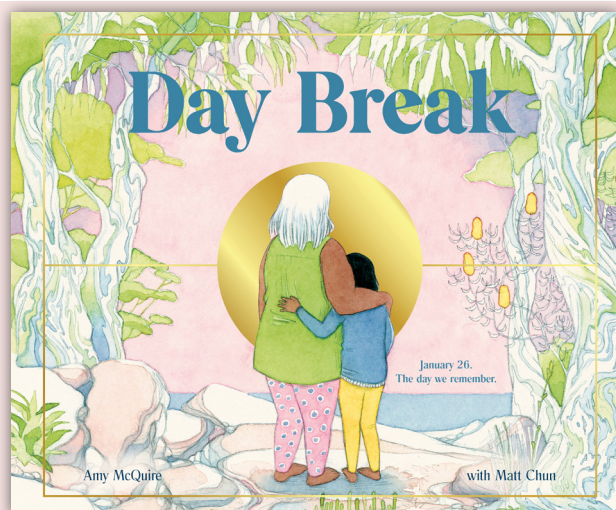
Mural: Create a classroom mural re-telling this story in the students' own images.

Book Cover: Design a new cover for this book.

Celebrate Australia: Bronwyn Bancroft's *Why I Love Australia* (2011) and Frané Lessac's *Under the Southern Cross* (2018) present their feelings about Australia. Create your own list of things you feel/love/don't like about Australia. Then illustrate that list.

Games: Research traditional Aboriginal games on sites such as: 'Traditional Aboriginal games & activities' *Creative Spirits*

<<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/sport/traditional-aboriginal-games-activities>>



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Picture Books:

Bancroft, Bronwyn *Coming Home to Country* Hardie Grant Children's Publishing, 2020.

Bancroft, Bronwyn *Remembering Lionsville* Allen & Unwin, 2016.

Bancroft, Bronwyn *Why I Love Australia* Hardie Grant Children's Publishing, 2011.

Bell, Johanna and Beasley, Dion *Too Many Cheeky Dogs (Bigismob Jigiwan Dog)* Allen & Unwin, 2020.

Bin Salleh, Rachel *Alfred's War* Illustrated by Samantha Fry. Magabala Books, 2018.

Briggs, Adam *Our Home, Our Heartbeat*. Illustrated by Kate Moon and Rachael Sarra. Hardie Grant Children's Publishing, 2020.

Briggs, Caroline *Barraeemal*. 2020.

Coombes, Debbie *Going to the Footy* Magabala Books, 2019.

Dreise, Gregg *My Culture and Me* Penguin Random House Australia, 2019.

Fox, Mem *I'm Australian Too* Illustrated by Ronojoy Ghosh. Scholastic, 2017.

Greenwood, Mark *Jandamarra* Illustrated by Terry Denton. Allen & Unwin, 2013.

Greenwood, Mark *Boomerang and Bat* Illustrated by Terry Denton. Allen & Unwin, 2016.

Kelly, Paul and Carmody, Kev *From Little Things Big Things Grow* Illustrated by Peter Hudson and the kids from Gurindji country. One Day Hill with Affirm Press, 2008.

Kwaymullina, Ezekiel and Morgan, Sally *My Country* Fremantle Press, 2019, 2011.

Leffler, Dub *Once There Was a Boy* Magabala Books, 2011.

Lessac, Frané *Under the Southern Cross* Walker Books Australia, 2018.

Mayor, Thomas *Finding Our Heart* Illustrated by Blak Douglas. Explore Australia, 2020.

Metzenthien, David *One Minute's Silence* Illustrated by Michael Camilleri. Allen & Unwin, 2019, 2014.

Muir, Aunty Fay and Lawson, Sue *Respect*. Illustrated by Lisa Kennedy. Magabala Books, 2020.

Muir, Aunty Fay and Lawson, Sue *Family* Illustrated by Jasmine Seymour. Magabala Books, 2020.

Murphy, Aunty Joy *Welcome to Country* Illustrated by Lisa Kennedy. Black Dog Books (Walker Books Australia), 2016.

Murphy, Aunty Joy and Kelly, Andrew *Wilam: A Birrarung Story* Illustrated by Lisa Kennedy. Black Dog Books (Walker Books Australia), 2019.

Pryor, Boori Monty *Shake a Leg* Illustrated by Jan Ormerod. Allen & Unwin, 2010.

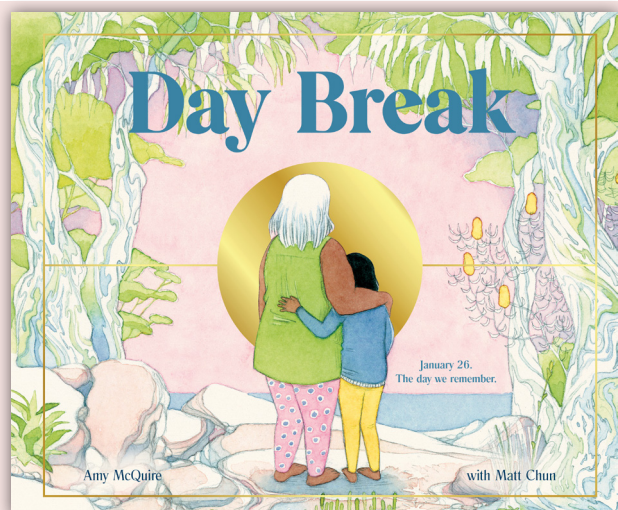
Roach, Archie *Took the Children Away* with illustrations by Ruby Hunter. Simon & Schuster, 2020.

Sedunary, Michael *The Unlikely Story of Bennelong and Phillip* Illustrated by Bern Emmerich. Berbay Publishing, 2016.

Tapsell, Miranda and Tyler, Joshua *Aunty's Wedding* Illustrated by Samantha Fry. Allen & Unwin, 2020.

Wheatley, Nadia *My Place* Illustrated by Donna Rawlins. Walker Books, 2008, 1987. 'a

I, Johanna and Beasley, Dion *Too Many Cheeky Dogs (Bigismob Jigiwan Dog)*



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See also:

'Australian First Nations Picture Books' *Readings*

<<https://www.readings.com.au/collection/australian-first-nations-picture-books>>

'Community Literacy Projects' Indigenous Literacy Foundation <<https://www.indigenouliteracyfoundation.org.au/community-literacy-programs>>

Junior Fiction:

Bell, Johanna and Beasley, Dion *Too Many Cheeky Dogs* (Bigismob Jigiwan Dog)
Allen & Unwin, 2020.

Hartley, David and Prince, Scott *Deadly D and Justice Jones* (Series) Magabala Books.

Heiss, Anita *My Australian Story: Who Am I?* (New Edition) Scholastic Australia, 2020.

McKenna, Brenton *Ubby's Underdogs: The Legend of the Phoenix Dragon* Magabala Books, 2011.

Saffioti, Trina *Stolen Girl* Illustrated by Norma MacDonald. Magabala Books, 2011.

Junior Non-Fiction:

Healey, Justin *Stolen Generations: The Way Forward* (Issues in Society #289) Spinney Press, 2009.

Muir, Aunty Fay and Lawson, Sue Nganga: *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander words and phrases*
Walker Books, 2018.

Our land, our stories: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures lower primary Cengage Learning in partnership with AIATSIS, 2019. [90 volume series.]

Pascoe, Bruce *Young Dark Emu: A Truer History* Magabala Books, 2019.

Wheatley, Nadia *Australians All* Illustrated by Ken Searle. Allen & Unwin, 2013.

Further Reading for Teachers:

Grant, Stan *Australia Day* HarperCollins, 2019.

Heiss, Anita, editor, *Growing Up Aboriginal in Australia* Black Inc, 2018.

Nelson Aboriginal Studies Cengage Learning, 2011.

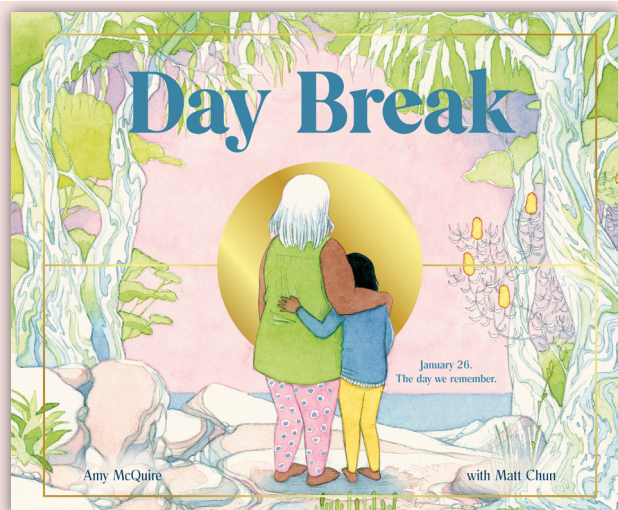
Websites:

'Aboriginals, Indigenous or First Nations?' *Common Ground*

<<https://www.commonground.org.au/learn/aboriginal-or-indigenous>>

Archibald-Binge, Ella and Wyman, Rhett 'Struggle and Survival: Three Aboriginal perspectives on Australia Day' *Sydney Morning Herald* January 24, 2020

<<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/struggle-and-survival-three-aboriginal-perspectives-on-australia-day-20200117-p53sgk.html>>



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'Australia Day' *Common Ground*

<<https://www.commonground.org.au/learn/australia-day>>

'Australia Day – Invasion Day' *Creative Spirits*

<<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/australia-day-invasion-day#:~:text=The%20meaning%20of%20Australia%20Day%20for%20Aboriginal%20people&text=Loss%20of%20their%20sovereign%20rights,the%20white%20people%20in%201788>>

'Australia Day What's the fuss about January 26?' *Australians Together*

<<https://australiantogether.org.au/discover/australian-history/australia-day/>>

'Australia Day Booklist Part 1- Picture Books' *Kids Book Review* 2016

<<http://www.kids-bookreview.com/2016/01/australia-day-book-list-part-1-picture.html>>

'First Nations' Australian Museum

<<https://australian.museum/learn/first-nations/>>

'8 War heroes you didn't learn about at school' *NITV* 22 April 2016

<<https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2016/04/21/8-war-heroes-you-didnt-learn-about-school>>

Haughton, James 'A short history of Australia Day, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reactions to it' *Parliament of Australia*

<https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/FlagPost/2018/January/Australia_Day_Indigenous_reactions>

'Mabo Decision' *National Museum Australia*

<<https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/mabo-decision#:~:text=The%20Mabo%20judgement%20also%20ensures%20that%20whenever%20there,Crown%20and%20the%20native%20title%2C%20the%20Crown%20prevails>>

'6 Ways to stand in solidarity with Indigenous Australians this Survival Day' *Edmund Rice Centre*

<https://www.erc.org.au/survival_day>

'Traditional Aboriginal games & activities' *Creative Spirits*

<<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/sport/traditional-aboriginal-games-activities>>