

WALK WITH US

Written by ADAM GOODES and ELLIE LAING

Illustrated by DAVID HARDY

Published by ALLEN & UNWIN

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country on which we work, live, learn and engage. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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THEMES: First Nations, Indigenous Australians, Aboriginal culture and knowledge, Country, bush walking

RECOMMENDED FOR: 4–8 years old. A book for preschool to Year 3

NOTES WRITTEN BY: Cool Australia

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ALLEN & UNWIN

ABOUT WALK WITH US

Harvey and Mum are heading to their favourite park for a walk on Cammeraygal land. 'Time to awaken the ancestors,' says Uncle Boris. 'Every time we sing or acknowledge Country, the ancestors are listening.'

What do you know about the Country where *you* live?

Inspired by the Uluru Statement from the Heart, *Walk With Us* is an invitation to go on a journey of learning and appreciation – with family, with friends, and with our nation – together.

ABOUT THE WELCOME TO OUR COUNTRY SERIES

Welcome to Our Country is a series of books designed to connect young children, parents and educators with First Nations history and culture. The series is a collaboration between Adnyamathanha and Narungga man Adam Goodes (former Australian Rules footballer, Australian of the Year in 2014 and co-founder of the GO Foundation), political advisor and former journalist Ellie Laing, and Barkindji illustrator David Hardy.

Together the creators hope the series will be an invaluable tool for children, parents and educators to start conversations and better understand our shared history.

A WORD FROM THE CREATORS OF WALK WITH US

Walk With Us, like all books in the Welcome to Our Country series, is an invitation to learn. And like all our books, it's written not just for kids, but for adults too.

You might have noticed the phrase 'walk with us' also features in the final line of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which reads: *We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.* So, as the title suggests, this book is about inviting readers to go on a journey of learning and appreciation together, to ultimately advance our nation.

You will see the story features members of a non-Indigenous family (Harvey and his mum) being led on a walk on Country by an Aboriginal elder (Uncle Boris).

The walk not only teaches Harvey and his mum about Aboriginal customs, but also helps them reflect, feel calm, and connect with Country and their ancestral spirits. Ellie's late father, Hugh, to whom this book is dedicated, was a keen fisherman who always hoped to return in a new life as a pelican. And, as Adam says, 'The black cockatoo has followed me around ever since I moved to New South Wales twenty-five years ago. My family tells me

that the black cockatoo is there to remind me that I am not alone, and this bird is a symbol of my mother and Aunties watching over me.'

Look closely, and you'll spot a pelican throughout the pages.

The story takes inspiration from Ellie's personal experiences, and the role her son Harvey had in sparking her own learning journey. Uncle Boris was also an important person in Adam's life, teaching Adam many things, and you can see in this book how much joy Uncle Boris gets from sharing his culture and knowledge with others.

Walk With Us features the traditional language of the Cammeraygal people, and we thank the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council for their valuable assistance with cultural language and knowledge.

So please enjoy *Walk With Us*, and we hope it inspires you to take your own walk on Country soon.

Adam Goodes, Ellie Laing and David Hardy

IMPORTANT INFORMATION BEFORE READING WALK WITH US

Language and using language

Using a new language for the first time is tricky for everyone. You might be concerned about mispronouncing words, using them incorrectly or accidentally causing offense. Much like learning any skill, you'll make mistakes at the start and will improve with practice and as your confidence increases. The effort and intent are much more important than the level of skill. Just do your best and use this as a role-modelling opportunity for your students.

In this book, the characters walk on Cammeraygal Country. Cammeraygal Country consists of much of the North Shore of Sydney. You can find the glossary of traditional language used in this book inside the front cover. To hear this glossary spoken and a reading of the story, you can scan this QR code.



What words do you know of the language spoken on your Country? Is the language of your home different to the language of your school? You may be familiar with this map (<https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia>), which can help you identify where you are. When you start exploring the First Nations languages of Australia, you may be unable to find certain words you are looking for, or you may find several spelling or pronunciation variations of a word. Some Countries are on a journey of recovering language, which is often achieved through oral storytelling, memories, and accounts written down by European settlers. There will be variations and gaps. Most languages are growing and evolving. Think of how many new words your students add to their vocabulary every year! Just use the words that have been shared to the best of your ability and with the best intentions. Speaking Language keeps it alive and gives it the space to grow. Pre-colonisation,

there were over 250 languages in Australia, and of the 145 left, 110 are critically endangered. (source:<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islanders-australias-first-peoples#:~:text=Australia%20is%20home%20to%20the,history%20with%20openness%20and%20honesty>) By sharing language with your students, we add life to that language.

Protocols

Protocols are an important part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Different clan groups will have different protocols and ceremonies. A commonly used protocol in Australia is an Acknowledgment of Country, like the one spoken by Harvey at dinnertime in the book. Anyone can speak an Acknowledgement of Country, whether they identify as a First Nations person or not, and it is a way of showing respect for the Traditional Custodians of the land. Uncle Chris demonstrates another protocol when he sings in Language to awaken the ancestors. Later in the book, he encourages Harvey to keep singing, and this is an excellent example of Uncle Chris sharing protocol and culture.

The correct way to find out more about the protocols of the Country you are on is to contact the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP), or the Local Aboriginal Network (LAN) for your area. Your school may have an established relationship and protocols in place already. You may be able to join a learning experience like the walk led by Uncle Chris in the book. It's important to acknowledge that in learning and cultural sharing opportunities like this, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people use their own time and intellectual property and should receive appropriate remuneration. While you may have First Nations students and staff at your school, the onus to meet protocol should not sit with them. They may not be from the same Country as your school, they may not have the authority to answer your questions, or they may not be comfortable on a personal level.

(Reference: <https://vpssc.vic.gov.au/workforce-programs/aboriginal-cultural-capability-toolkit/aboriginal-protocols/>)

Useful Questions

Ask yourself these questions before reading...

1. Why have I chosen this book to read with my class?
2. What do I hope to share with my students from this book?
3. Who do I think would benefit from reading this book?

...and questions to ask after reading:

1. Who is this book written for?
2. What is the explicit message of this book?
3. What is the implicit message of this book?
4. What will my students take home from reading this book?

Personal Check-in

Before diving into new content with your students, there is an opportunity to stop and reflect on your own knowledge and understanding. What are your connections, experiences and prior knowledge when it comes to Australia's First Nations peoples? We encourage you to be honest and vulnerable when reflecting on your situation. It may help to identify any biases or stereotypes you hold and remember that what we term 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' in modern Australia is made up of nearly 150 different language groups. Protocols, traditions, culture, and customs are specific to each Country, and we should avoid generalisations.

Cultural Safety for Children

Walk With Us, like all of the books in the *Welcome to Our Country* series, is an invitation to learn. Just as Uncle Boris creates a safe and welcoming environment for Harvey and his mum to learn, we invite you to create a safe and welcoming environment for your students, whether they are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent or not. You may have students in your class who feel connected to their history and ancestors in a way they want to celebrate. You may also have students and families who are on a journey of learning about their culture and heritage and what this means to them and their identity. It's important to be mindful of students, and their individual situations.

There are a few steps you can take before starting this lesson to support your students:

- Consider what you know of students and their families. Start conversations and create safe, non-judgemental spaces for sharing and building understanding. Use your professional judgment and knowledge as an educator to support your students' wellbeing. No one knows them like you do!
- Identify the support services your school and community have for students or their families who need that extra care. Your school may have counsellors, Aboriginal support staff, quiet spaces, or mindfulness opportunities for students who need them.
- Build relationships with your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. A good place to start is by reaching out to your Local Aboriginal Network (LAN), or your area's Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP), or other local Aboriginal services. In these interactions, it is important to be patient as many of these groups are small, with many requests for their time and knowledge.
- Take on available opportunities to build your knowledge and understanding. You can also develop your understanding through your own research. We recommend snaicc.org.au, reconciliation.org.au and aiatsis.gov.au as good places to get started.

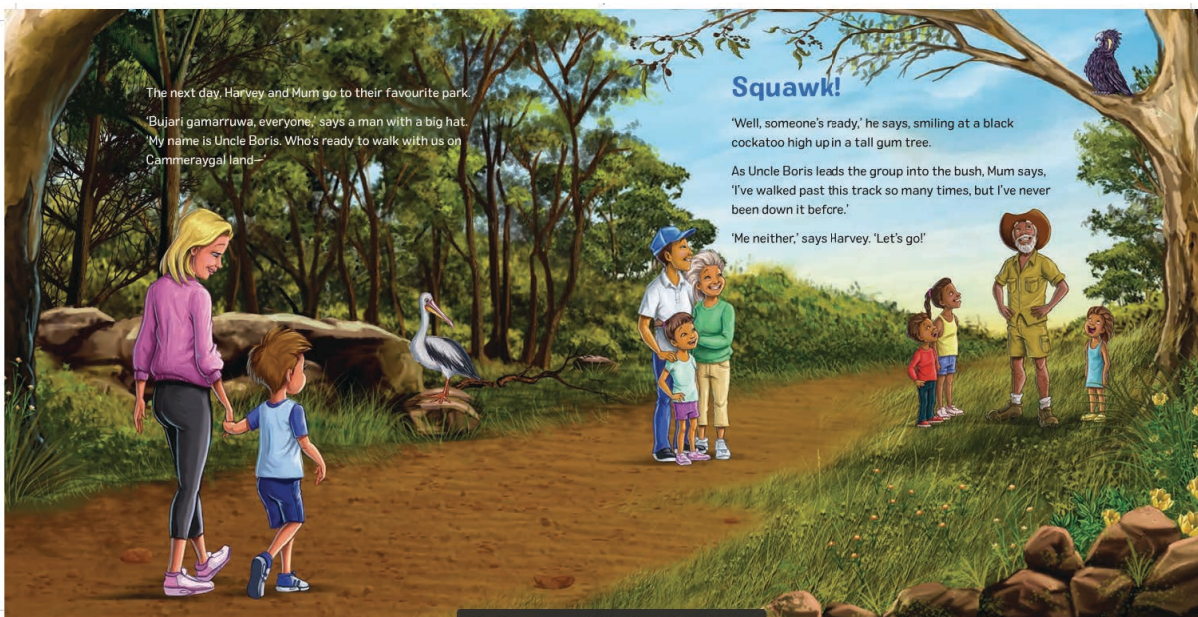
LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Let's look at the book!

Step 1: Show students the book and work together to read the *Walk With Us* title. Ask students:

- Who is 'us'? Who are we walking with?
- Who can you see on the cover of this book?
- What are they doing?
- How do you think they feel?
- Is there anything else on the cover that you notice? (plants, animals, etc)
- After looking at the cover, what do we think the book will be about?
- Have you been for a walk through the bush before?
- What do you like about being outside in the bush?
- Who wants to read this book with me?

Step 2: Read the book through from start to finish. You might like to pause after reading the following pages to discuss the book with your students.



P4: 'Bujari gamarruwa, everyone.' What could this mean? If your students need some hints, ask them, what do we usually say to someone when we see them for the first time at the start of a day?

'Time to awaken the ancestors,' says Uncle Boris, pausing in a clearing. 'Every time we sing or acknowledge Country, the ancestors are listening.'

Then, in a loud voice, Uncle Boris sings in language.



P7: Ancestors. That's a big word! Do you know who your ancestors are? Uncle Boris's family have lived on Cammeraygal land for a very long time, so his ancestors are here.



Further on, Uncle Boris hands everyone a leaf from a lemon myrtle tree.

'Crush it,' he says, rolling his leaf into a ball. 'Now smell it.'

Harvey breathes in. 'It's lemony.'

'We call it tologurā,' says Uncle Boris. 'Our people use these leaves to heal cuts and scratches.'

Mum smiles. 'We need a tree like this at home.'

P9: What do we put on cuts and scratches to clean and heal them? Some people, like Uncle Boris, know how to find resources like food and medicine in the plants and animals around us. I wonder what other plants in the bush are useful?



PI3: Wow! Remember when Uncle Boris talked about ancestors earlier? Hundreds of years ago, Uncle Boris's ancestors took their axes and carefully cut this bark away from the tree. They folded and wrapped the bark up to make a boat, a canoe! What do you think they did with the boat? Travelled? Fished? They must have been very careful when they cut the bark all those years ago because the tree is still alive and healthy today. Why do you think they looked after the tree and made sure it would stay healthy?



PI5: Why is the left side of the page in colour and the right side in black and white? What does it mean? If the colour page is 'now' and the black and white page is from long ago, who are the people in the canoes? Maybe they are Uncle Boris's ancestors, the ones who cut the canoe from the tree and the ones he sang to when they started walking.

Step 3: When you have finished the book, start a discussion with the students. You may want to look back through the book with the students as they answer.

Ask your students:

- What was your favourite part of the book? Choose some students to share their answers and turn back through the pages to show their favourite moments.
- Harvey says the black cockatoo and the pelican have been following them the whole time. Did you see them? Can we find them on the pages?
- We have talked a lot about the ancestors in this book. On page 15, Uncle Boris says, 'After the First Fleet sailed through those Heads, that area was given a new name, because of how "manly" our men looked up there.' So the Cammeraygal ancestors were here long before the First Fleet arrived. Who are the people who have been living in Australia since before the First Fleet? Students may suggest various terms, including Aboriginal people, First Nations people, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- So the Aboriginal/First Nations people in the book are the Cammeraygal people. Do we know the name of the Aboriginal/First Nations people who live on the Country we stand on today? Uncle Boris spoke some words of the Cammeraygal people. Do we know any words of Language for the Country we are on today?

Note: Remember when we were talking about protocols earlier? Some people prefer the term First Nations peoples, others prefer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and others prefer Indigenous peoples. We encourage you to find out who the traditional custodians of your area are and what their preferred terminology is before the lesson so you can share this with your students. Not all of these terms are acceptable to use in every Country!

Extension: Read the inside dedication, which explains the significance of the pelican to author Ellie Laing and the black cockatoo to author Adam Goodes. From here, you could read other books in the Welcome to Country series and identify other animals and how they are significant to characters in the book. Does the pelican or black cockatoo make further appearances?

Learning support: Read through the book the first time, cover to cover, without creating discussion or asking questions. This allows the students to absorb the story and build familiarity with the characters. Once you have finished the story, read it a second time, pausing on each page and discussing what we can see and what is happening.

Curriculum Links

Being, Belonging and Becoming

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

Children respond to diversity with respect

Foundation - English

- Share ideas about stories, and images in literature, reflecting on experiences that are similar or different to their own by engaging with texts by First Nations Australian authors and illustrators ([AC9EFLE01](#))

Year 1 - English

- Discuss how language and images are used to create characters, settings and events in literature by First Nations Australian authors and illustrators ([AC9E1LE01](#))

Year 2 - English

- Discuss how characters and settings are connected in literature created by First Nations Australian authors and illustrators ([AC9E2LE01](#))

Year 3 - English

- Discuss characters, events and settings in different contexts in literature by First Nations Australian authors and illustrators ([AC9E3LE01](#))

Cross-curricular priorities

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures: People, Culture, Country/Place, Identity and Living Communities.

General Capabilities

- Literacy, Ethical Understanding, Intercultural Understanding

Activity 2: Long, long ago

Note: For this activity, you will need a very long tape measure, at least 10m, but ideally 60m.

Step 1: Ask your students if they remember Uncle Boris using the word 'ancestors' in the book. Who can remember what the word 'ancestors' means? You may want to open the book to page 6, where Uncle Boris sings to the ancestors, page 13, where they looked at the canoe tree, and page 15, where Uncle Boris explains how Manly got that name.

Step 2: We will need a big open space for this step, so it's a great opportunity to get outside. Don't forget to bring the tape measure! Explain to students that we will explore just how long Uncle Boris's ancestors have lived on Cammeraygal Country. Show the students the tape measure and explain we will measure time. Unroll the tape measure and let the students look at it. On the tape measure 1mm will represent 1 year. So 1 cm is ten years, and 10 cm is 100 years. See if students can measure out 100 years with their hands. How old are they? Can they put two fingers on the tape measure to measure their age in millimetres? How many years would their hand be? How many years would their height be?

Step 3: Have the students sit down in a group. Ask one student to stand up and hold the end of the tape measure. They are 'now' at the present time. A second student will hold the tape measure and unroll it as we move back in time. One by one, ask students to come up and mark the following dates on the tape measure:

1. When they were born. (This student will be very close to the person holding the end!)
2. When your teacher was born. (We all know teachers are always 21, so 2.1cm)
3. When your school was opened. (This might take some research!)
4. When the First Fleet arrived in Australia (the year 1788, so 235 years ago, or 23.5cm)
5. When the first King was in England (the year 827, so 1196 years ago or 1.2m)
6. When the pyramids were built (from 2550B.C., so 4500 years ago or 4.5m)
7. When writing was invented (5400 years ago or 5.4m)
8. When you could walk from Australia to Tasmania (12,000 years ago or 12m)

Let's look at when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people first started living in Australia. This was at least 60,000 years ago, or 60 m away. Wow! See if your students can measure out 60m. You might not have room to make it all the way, depending on how big your area is!

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have lived on and cared for Country for all this time. In the book, we saw some examples of how they lived with the land and looked after it. Can anyone think of some examples? Students might come up with:

- Collecting bark to make a canoe and leaving the tree alive
- Using tologurā (lemon myrtle) to heal cuts and scratches
- Using fire to encourage new growth
- Reading the signals of animals from their sounds, homes and tracks.

Extension: Students could take this timeline one step further by creating a display where other students and families can see it, such as in a hallway or in the gym. Using a streamer or a string, mark out the 60,000 years and place pins with explainer cards along the line with significant historical events for your local community.

Learning Support: For students who have trouble with the abstract nature of the tape measure, try taking steps instead, where one step is one year. Start everyone on one line and take as many steps as their age. Then as many steps as the teacher's age. Keep going through milestones until you reach 100 steps. Can we double that and go back in time to when European settlers first arrived in Australia? How far would we have to walk to reach 60,000 steps? You could try wearing a pedometer and see if you can hit 60,000 steps in a week (or two weeks!)

Curriculum Links

Being, Belonging and Becoming

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

Children respond to diversity with respect

Foundation - Mathematics

- Identify and compare attributes of objects and events, including length, and duration, using direct comparisons and communicating reasoning ([AC9MFM01](#))

Year 1 - Mathematics

- Describe the sequence of events using years ([AC9M1M03](#))

Year 2 - Mathematics

- Recognise, represent and order numbers to at least 1000 using physical materials and number lines ([AC9M2N01](#))

Year 3 - Mathematics

- Measure and compare objects using familiar metric units of length and instruments with labelled markings ([AC9M3M02](#))

Cross-curricular priorities:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures: People, Culture, Country/Place, Identity and Living Communities.

General Capabilities:

- Numeracy, Ethical Understanding, Intercultural Understanding

Activity 3: Walk on Country

Step 1: Today, we are going to take our own walk on Country. Before we leave the classroom, let's think about a few things.

What do we mean when we say Country?

Students may talk about Australia or other countries around the world, but when we use Country as a proper noun, it has a different meaning. This article [Common Ground: What is Country?](#) is an excellent resource for building your understanding.

What might we find on our walk?

Students may mention plants, insects, birds, animals, and rocks. If they mention rubbish, suggest taking a rubbish bag to clean it up!

What rules should we follow?

Stay together, follow your teacher, and don't touch any animals. Stay on the path so we don't crush plants or insects, and don't move rocks or logs because animals may be hiding under them, and you might break their homes.

What should we remember?

Our hats and water bottles. The quieter we are, the more we will see that we are in the homes of the plants and animals, and we should be respectful.

Step 2: Take the students on a walk through a natural area on the school grounds or in a nearby area. Pair each student with a buddy, make sure everyone has been to the bathroom, and then let's go! While walking, encourage students to point out things they notice to their buddies. Look for interesting leaves, flowers, sticks, and rocks. Can you find any signs of animals? Sometimes the animals can be elusive, but you might find feathers, fur, tracks, scratch marks or poo. Remind students not to touch the poo, but we can try and guess which animal it came from.

Step 3: When you reach an open spot where students can sit down, tell the students we will take a moment to see what we can notice. Let students know they won't be talking during this time but will be noticing quietly by themselves. Ask students to put their hands on their tummies and take three slow, deep breaths. Work through the list below, giving students time to do their noticing.

1. Five things you can see. (e.g. the sky, a big tree, a stripy rock, a yellow leaf, a curvy stick)
2. Four things you can feel. (e.g. the sun on your face, your hat on your head, the ground underneath you, your feet inside your shoes)
3. Three things you can hear (e.g. birds, distant cars, wind in the leaves)
4. Two things you can smell (e.g. gum trees, damp soil)
5. One thing you are feeling (e.g. rested)

Step 4: Ask the students to stand up and have a stretch. Remind students how everyone in the book felt at the end of the walk, 'quieter and slower'. Do they feel the same? Mum said, 'I feel like all my senses have been switched on.' Do they feel the same?

Extension: Students can look at the different places they walk through and find out who looks after them. Are there groundskeepers for the school, is the area looked after by the local council, or is there a Landcare or 'friends of' group who looks after the area? Additionally, what can the students do to look after the area? Maybe they can remove rubbish or weeds or put up a sign warning people to leave nesting birds alone.

Learning Support: Getting outside in nature has been shown to have huge benefits for students regarding wellbeing, focus, and mood. If the walk or mindfulness activity is not possible for some students, just getting them outside and paying attention to what is around them is a win. You could try giving them colour cards with the task of finding something of that colour in nature. Greens, browns, and yellows are easy, reds and oranges are a bit harder, and blues, pinks and purples are the ultimate challenge.

Curriculum Links

Being, Belonging and Becoming

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

Foundation - HASS

- The importance of Country/Place to First Nations Australians and the Country/Place on which the school is located ([AC9HSFK04](#))

Year 1 - HASS

- How places change and how they can be cared for by different groups including First Nations Australians ([AC9HS1K04](#))

Year 2 - HASS

- The interconnections of First Nations Australians to a local Country/Place ([AC9HS2K04](#))

Year 3 - HASS

- The ways First Nations Australians in different parts of Australia are interconnected with Country/Place ([AC9HS3K04](#))

Cross-curricular priorities:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures: People, Culture, Country/Place, Identity and Living Communities.

General Capabilities:

- Ethical Understanding, Intercultural Understanding, Personal and Social Capability



ABOUT THE 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 communications professional, and former political advisor and journalist, who lives on the lands of the Cammeraygal 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 has recently completed studies in Traditional Aboriginal Cultures.

DAVID HARDY is a Barkindji man, author and artist with more than a decade 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 Never Land*. 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).



ABOUT THE WRITER OF THE NOTES

More than 175,000 educators trust Cool Australia to bring real-world learning into their classrooms. We provide free lesson plans and accredited online professional development courses centred around environmental, social and economic sustainability topics. Quality teachers have one of the most significant impacts on student learning outcomes; our mission is to support teachers to be the best they can be so that all students have access to high-quality education and a successful future.



We are backed by research and evidence. We know that after using our resources, 98% of students increase their knowledge and awareness of real-world issues, and 93% of students are more likely to take action. Using Cool Australia's resources has a positive impact on teachers: 91% say using our resources has increased their confidence in teaching environmental and social issues.

We partner with organisations that share our passion for education. Together, we create high-quality educational content about contemporary issues. Like us, our partners want our education system to empower students to address big environmental, social and economic challenges. We cover a wide range of topics and upskill educators so they can engage with and empower students.