

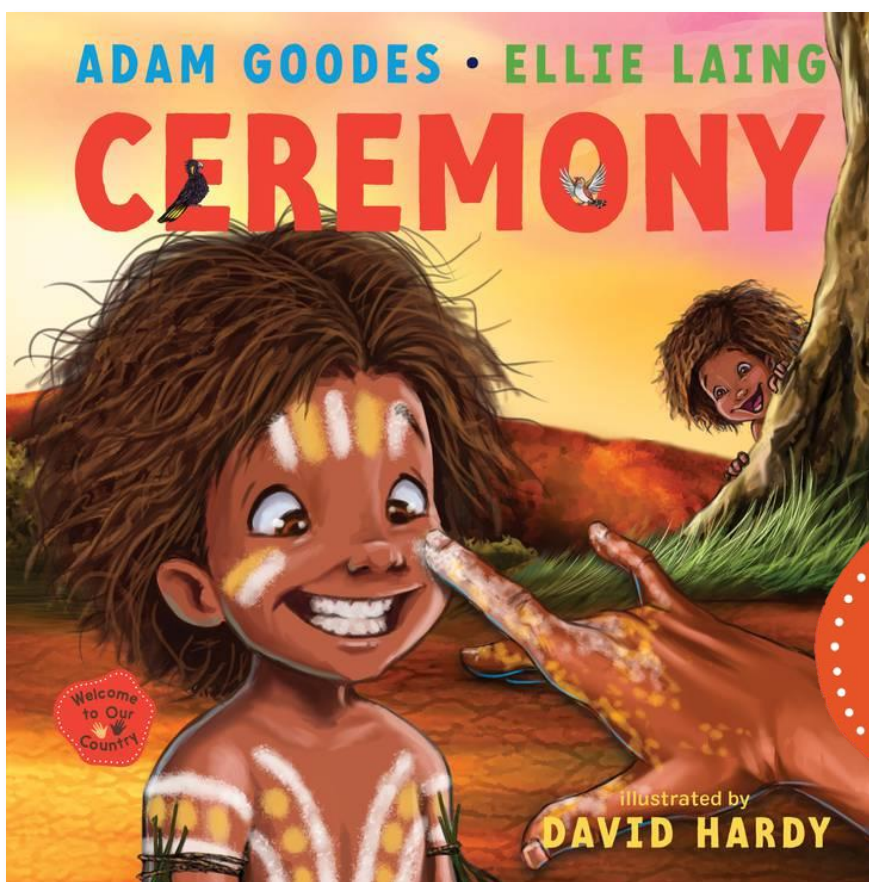
READING RESOURCES BY CULTURE IS LIFE

Culture
is Life

CEREMONY

By Adam Goodes and Ellie Laing, illustrated by David Hardy

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.



Recommended for ages 4–8

Preschool to Year 3

Themes: First Nations, Indigenous Australians, Australian History, Adnyamathanha culture, Traditional First Nations ceremony, dance and music.

Welcome
to Our
Country

ABOUT THE RESOURCE DEVELOPERS: CULTURE IS LIFE

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 wellbeing of Aboriginal young people.

ABOUT CEREMONY

Ceremony is a delightful story shared through the eyes of children, sharing the traditional customs of ceremony and celebrations of Aboriginal people. The ceremony in this book is a celebration of the change of season, an ancient cultural practice of the Adnyamathanha people and many other Aboriginal clan groups around Australia. It is a true illustration of the connection to community, Country and culture that is not just in the past, but is celebrated today.

The story told by Adam Goodes and Ellie Laing, together with David Hardy's illustrations, creates a sense of wonder to further explore the protocols of First Nations people. As you turn each page, you are immersed in the joy of ancient songlines, beliefs, beauty and ceremony. Embedded in the book is the language of Adam Goodes' people, the Adnyamathanha people, commonly known as Yura ngarwala, for you to learn and share.

The creators and publishers hope the book will be a prompt for readers to take a deeper interest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights and issues and explore the many other books, documentaries and films that are available. Adam Goodes worked in consultation with senior cultural advisors when writing *Ceremony*.

ABOUT 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. *Ceremony* is the second book in the series, and is a joyful celebration of the ancient and ongoing traditions of Adnyamathanha people and other clans, participating in Ceremony together. The first book, *Somebody's Land*, acknowledges the hurt of the past and joins together the community as one, with a precious shared history.

The third book in the series, *Back On Country: Welcome to our Country*, will be published in November 2022.

FROM THE RESOURCE DEVELOPERS, 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 to and appreciation of 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 – they 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 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**

A WORD FROM THE **CREATORS** OF **CEREMONY**



'I am really excited to share another piece of my culture with the world. As we share these stories I too am learning from my elders about my own culture.'

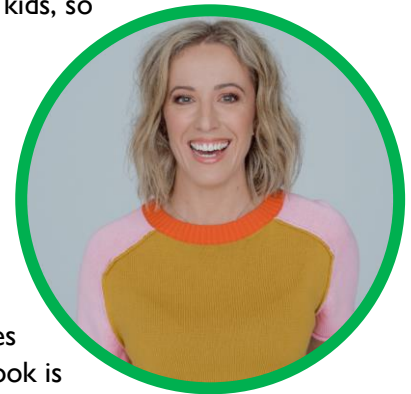
Ceremony is a fun look at a special time of the year for my people. I think we all can relate to the ceremonies we have for the different seasons in modern Australia.'

– Adam Goodes

'When we set out writing *Ceremony*, we were keen to create a book that was fun, and had a great sense of humour. We also love reading rhythmic books to our kids, so thought it would be good if we could achieve that too.'

Before we started writing, Adam and I were discussing how Aboriginal people have an incredible sense of humour, love a laugh and often display a cheeky streak. So we set about trying to bring that humour to life in our book.

Ceremony is set in Adam's Country, and highlights some of the ceremonial aspects of his culture, as well as his Adnyamathanha language. The combination of the English and Adnyamathanha languages was something that evolved throughout the writing process, and the book is no doubt richer for it.



Ceremonies are how people connect, learn culture and share stories. Every person, every community has their own unique ceremonies. As you'll see, *Ceremony* aims to depict the ceremonies of Adam's family; however, it also shows that there are elements of ceremonies – like music, dance and food – that are in fact common to us all.'

– Ellie Laing



'I thought it would be nice to keep the two main characters (young boy and girl) from the previous book *Somebody's Land* as the main focus for this book. This is a really fun story and I had a lot of fun illustrating this book. It is area-specific based in Adnyamathanha country (Flinders Ranges, South Australia) so we had to do a lot of research.'

– David Hardy

In understanding and honouring the survival and strong presence and cultures 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.**

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 educators value the benefits of young people's understanding and connection to place, belonging, community and kinship in strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. To know our world's longest surviving culture is a gift to be appreciated!

USEFUL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER AFTER READING

1. What is this book about? Who is the book intended for?
2. What messages and learnings are obvious in this book? What messages and learnings may be more deeply embedded?
3. Why is it important for children in my care to read this book?
4. What changes do I want to see? What role can I play in facilitating 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 knowledge 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 providing 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.

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.

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 the children in your care and consider their wellbeing and backgrounds. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in your care may well 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. Stories of removal and dispossession can be triggering. As a carer or parent, you know your children best to make these considerations when reading and having related conversations with them.

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 RECOMMENDED READING FOR ADULTS

On Adnyamathanha People and Anangu Society

[Aboriginal people of South Australia: Adnyamathanha \(State Library of South Australia\)](#)

[Men's and women's business – Anangu society \(Parks Australia\)](#)

On Aboriginal Maps and Seasons

[AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia](#)

[Indigenous seasons calendars \(CSIRO\)](#)

On Dreaming

[Understanding Aboriginal Dreamings](#)

[Aboriginal Dreaming stories, birds and the local environment \(A Strategy for years R–5\)](#)

On Aboriginal Culture

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

[First Nations Kinship](#)

[Uluru Statement from the Heart](#)

[Aboriginal Spirituality – eight aspects of religion](#)

On Songlines

[Songlines: the Indigenous memory code \(All In The Mind, ABC Radio National\)](#)

On People and Moiety

[Skin, Kin and Clan: Moiety Names in South-Eastern Australia \(ANU\)](#)

[The Australian Dream Educational Resources](#)

On Aboriginal Books

[Koori Curriculum – Aboriginal childrens books and more](#)

On Aboriginal Art Creation

[Grinding Ochre – an activity \(by Aunty Lynn Chapman\)](#)

BEFORE READING *CEREMONY*

The preface

The preface on the dedication page is important to note. It explains to adults that this book features a traditional non-ritual ceremony of the author's Country – the Adnyamathanha people of the Flinders Ranges in South Australia.

It also depicts the structure of that society and the importance of moieties and the role they play.

Yura ngarwala language used within the book.

Throughout *Ceremony*, Yura ngarwala is used – this is the common term used for the Adnyamathanha people's language – when literally translated, it means 'people speak'. Yura ngarwala has been embedded for children to be exposed to and to learn language. Adnyamathanha people are members of the Thura-Yura language family.

The QR code in the Foreword links to a recording of the story and glossary. This will help with learning the pronunciation of the Adnyamathanha words. Alternatively, head to the audio link on the A&U website:

[Ceremony audio link.](#)

Nangga! Nangga! Yakarti!

On every spread the Adnyamathanha words 'Nangga! Nangga! Yakarti!' are written, meaning 'Welcome children come'. It's a beautiful repetitive use of language that naturally encourages children to read along with you when you are reading to them.

Teach your children how to say Nangga! Nangga! Yakarti! correctly, by listening to the recording outlined above. Ask students why they think the words Nangga! Nangga! Yakarti! were chosen and used on every double page.

Find out what the young people in your care already know about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures by asking questions such as:

- Who were the First Peoples to live on the land we now call Australia?
- What do you know about how Aboriginal people lived? (Encourage a broad discussion, including music, art, food, history, language, ceremonies and culture.)

In understanding and honouring the survival and strong presence and cultures 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.

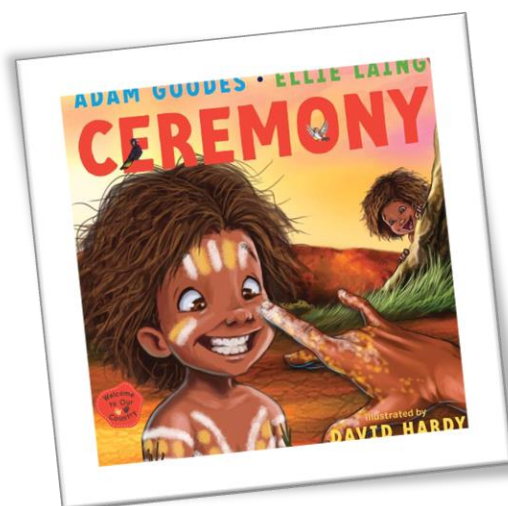
- What are different names for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples? What does Indigenous, First Nations and First People mean?

It is important for children to understand these names can be used for the same group of people. It can be appropriate to use either term or their specific clan or language group if known. The best way to know how a specific person prefers to be referred to is to respectfully ask. This book refers to Aboriginal people as a term for the collective of many groups of First Peoples from mainland Australia.

CONSIDERING THE COVER

Show children the front cover of *Ceremony* and give them plenty of time to absorb the illustrations and title. Encourage them to think deeply about the cover by asking questions such as:

- What does the title *Ceremony* tell you about this book?
- What is a ceremony?
- Who are Aboriginal people?
- What do you know about their cultures?
- How does this front cover make you feel?



NOW IT'S TIME TO READ AND DISCOVER TOGETHER

Enjoy reading this delightful book with your children, appreciating the beauty of Aboriginal culture shown through the excitement of children preparing and enjoying a traditional Adnyamathanha ceremony of the change of seasons. Cuddle up and enjoy the magic!

HERE ARE SOME FUN AFTER-READING ACTIVITIES TO DO

Create an Indigenous Map

Look at an [Indigenous Map of Australia](#) from AIATSIS on the internet or order one for yourself. Together, find where the Adnyamathanha people's Country is on the map.

You may like to print a small one and glue it into a project book and add information, language and pictures, about the Adnyamathanha people and your local Aboriginal peoples, as you learn together. Children can share it with other members of the family or their class at school.

Ceremonies

In the book *Ceremony* you see a ceremony where the whole community and other clans come together, to celebrate with a mix of ancient knowledge and joy.

Talk to your children about ceremonies your family and culture celebrate together and some of the rituals you do together, so they will learn and pass them on to the next generation too.

Kinship

Explain the concept of kinship and Aboriginal peoples relationships with people, animals and Country. You can learn more about traditional kinship structure [here](#).

- What roles do Elders, Aunties, Uncles, men, women and children play in Aboriginal communities?
- What do you see them doing in their roles in the book?
- How is this similar or different in your life?

Birds

Aboriginal people have a deep respect for birds and many believe they bring 'cultural signs'. For example, telling people when food is available, when good or bad things are going to happen, predicting weather and signalling when certain kin are coming to visit.

- Take your children outside and get them to lie on Country with their eyes closed and listen to what the birds are saying. If you don't happen to have any birds that visit, prepare or find a recording of local birds to play as a back-up, when their eyes are closed.
- Record and create a soundscape of the birds to use as you wish.
- Paint a picture of how the sounds of birds made you feel.
- Are there any birds of significance in your culture?

Songlines

[Damian Coulthard's paintings](#) tell the Creation stories of the Flinders Ranges in South Australia. The Flinders Ranges are culturally significant to the Adnyamathanha people. His paintings evoke songlines where his people performed ceremonies and rituals.

Songs and dances are and have been performed during the travels on the songlines on this land for thousands and thousands of years.

- Explore [Damian's artworks](#) on the internet or in person if you are lucky. Look at how he shares the beauty of his culture and songlines of the Adnyamathanha people through art.
- Visit a local Aboriginal art gallery and explore the artwork of a local Aboriginal artist together.

You may be surprised to learn that many of the highways and major roads you may have travelled on are ancient songlines of Aboriginal peoples.

All Aboriginal Art is covered by copyright and cannot be reproduced. Please use the art for inspiration and education purposes only.

Dreaming Story

The Kingfisher Story is an Adnyamathanha Dreaming story: a journey of Yurlu, the old kingfisher man, to Ikara (Wilpena Pound). It tells of the role that smoke and fire plays in his journey to a ceremony that leads to the formation of Wilpena Pound, the planet Mars, the Turkey and Kingfishers. Read the full story here: [The Kingfisher Story – Wilpena Pound Resort](#)

The Sharing Stories Foundation is an organisation that works with 17 different language groups around Australia including Adnyamathanha people.

They have created a touch book of a collection of Aboriginal stories you can share with your children: [Yulu – The Kingfisher Man](#) will be available in 2022.

Sacred Places

The story of Akurra the Snake is a very important Creation story of Lake Frome, to the Adnyamathanha people. Check out this incredible image and the story of Akurra: [Legends of the North – Akurra, the Snake](#).

Understanding Ochre

- Learn about ochre painting and ceremonies with Aunty Lyn Chapman: [Grinding Ochre](#). This practical activity explains ochre painting and ceremonies and includes an activity to grind rocks, or chalk, on paper to understand how traditional paint works.
- Explore these images of the Adnyamathanha peoples' use of ochre in the Flinders Rangers [Aboriginal Cave Paintings at Yourambulla, South Australia](#)
- The use of ochre is best used under Aboriginal guidance. Connect with your local Aboriginal community to learn more about ochre and find out if your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples used ochre.

Remember to consider the cultural protocols of the Country that you are on when engaging in cultural practices.

Seasonal Calendars

The seasonal calendars of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples show the deep knowledge and connections they have to Country and the environment they live in.

They are often very different to the four seasons we typically have in Australia, often six or more seasons in a year.

- There are many seasonal calendars available to learn from; the CSIRO are constantly working closely with different language groups to record more. Have a look at the seasonal calendars on their website: [Indigenous seasons calendars](#).
- Share these with your children and contact your local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander corporation, to see if they have one for your local language group.

Ceremonies to celebrate the change of the seasons often are (and have been) held like the one in the book *Ceremony*, to embrace and enjoy the coming season together.

Local Connections

As a family unit, try to attend local festivals and celebrations run by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or your council and immerse yourselves in the culture and beauty.

Listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander podcasts to hear true lived experiences, watch movies to share in their truth and read books written by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to read perspectives. There are so many ways available for you to start making a connection and gain a deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia's history, culture and beauty.

Dance in Ceremony

Aboriginal ceremonies incorporate dances that are designed to celebrate culture, pass on knowledge, and teach lore and survival. They are a connection to spirituality and Country, and are an important part of culture and everyday life. They are different and unique throughout the many language groups and some are sacred and often not shared with the wider community.

After reading *Ceremony*, sit together and watch Adam Goodes dancing in 'The Vigil 2021' at the Sydney Festival: [Adam Goodes in the Spirit of Indigenous Warriors](#) on SBS (from 00.25.55 to 00.28.24).

DEBRIEFING AND ONGOING CONVERSATIONS

It is important to allow space for ongoing conversations.

Some questions you could ask the children in your care are:

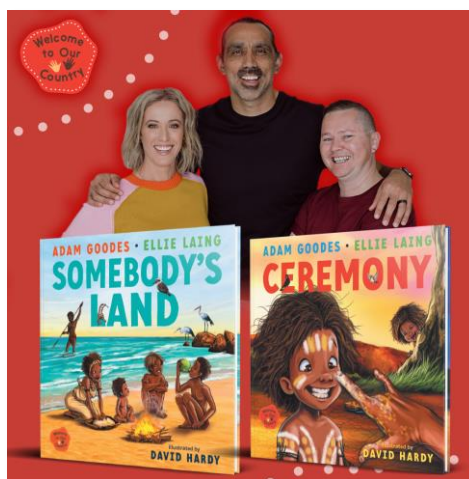
- What did you learn or remember from what we read and discussed?
- How do you feel?
- Why might this feel (insert positive response)?
- Why might this feel (insert negative response)?
- What would you like to do and/or learn more about?

Reinforce the title of the book, *Ceremony* and how we can honour and be respectful to the ceremonies performed by Aboriginal people in the past and today.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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 has recently completed studies in Traditional Aboriginal Cultures.



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

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 *Somebody's Land* and *Ceremony* (written by Adam Goodes and Ellie Laing), *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 ART STYLE

Creative license has been taken with regard to historical accuracy. Clothing and other details reflect the sensibilities of a contemporary audience. The culture depicted in the illustrations are of the Adnyamathanha people preparing for and enjoying a traditional ceremony of the changing seasons, and is set on their Country in South Australia around the Flinders Ranges.