

## 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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## INTRODUCTION

*Bujari gamarruwa* and welcome to the *Walk with Us* Guide for Parents and Carers. Reading *Walk with Us* as a family is a great way to reflect on our connection to Country and to build our understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures, perspectives and knowledge. We invite you to *yana taka* (walk together) through this story and explore Cammeraygal Country with us. To help you on your journey, we've created this guide with information to support you and activities to extend the learning beyond the book.

Cool Australia

## 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.'

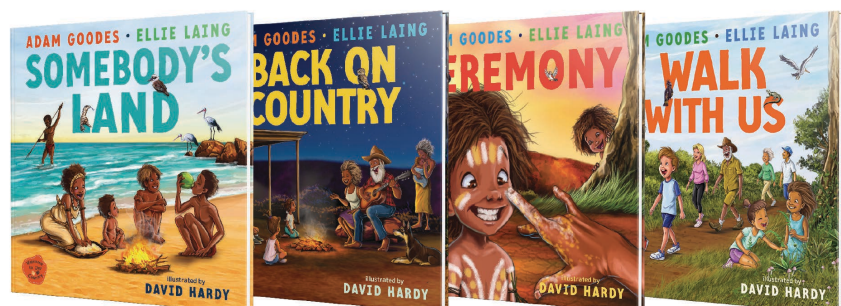
What do you know about the Country where you live?

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.



## 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 offence. 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 children.

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 where your children go to school, or where you go to work? 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 and this 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 slang words your children bring home from school! 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 is home to the,history with openness and honesty](https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islanders-australias-first-peoples-:-:text=Australia%20is%20home%20to%20the%20history%20with%20openness%20and%20honesty)) By sharing language with your children 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 are First Nations 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 best way to find out more about the protocols of the Country you are on is by contacting the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP), or the Local Aboriginal Network (LAN) for your area. They may run learning experiences like the walk led by Uncle Chris in the book. While you may know First Nations people in your community, putting your questions to them is not always appropriate. Just because a friend is a plumber doesn't mean they have to fix your toilet! And if they are able and willing to chat with you, just remember they are speaking from a personal point of view and not representing all First Nations peoples. It's also important to acknowledge that in learning and cultural sharing opportunities like this, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are using their own time and intellectual property and should receive appropriate remuneration.

### Useful Questions

Ask yourself these questions before reading...

1. Why have I chosen this book to read with my children?
2. What do I hope to share with my children 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 children take away from reading this book?

### Personal Check-in

Before diving into new content, there is an opportunity to stop and reflect on your own knowledge and understanding. What are your connections, experiences and prior knowledge regarding Australia's First Nations peoples? We encourage you to be honest and vulnerable when reflecting on your own 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 145 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 learning environment for your family. We hope you can use the examples set in the book to have open and honest conversations.

There are a few steps you can take before starting to support this learning best:

- Start conversations and create safe, non-judgemental spaces for sharing and building understanding. Use your best judgment and knowledge to support your family's wellbeing. No one knows them like you do!
- Build your awareness of organisations that can support you in this learning. A good place to start is by reaching out to your Local Aboriginal Network (LAN), 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](http://snaicc.org.au), [reconciliation.org.au](http://reconciliation.org.au) and [aiatsis.gov.au](http://aiatsis.gov.au) as good places to get started.



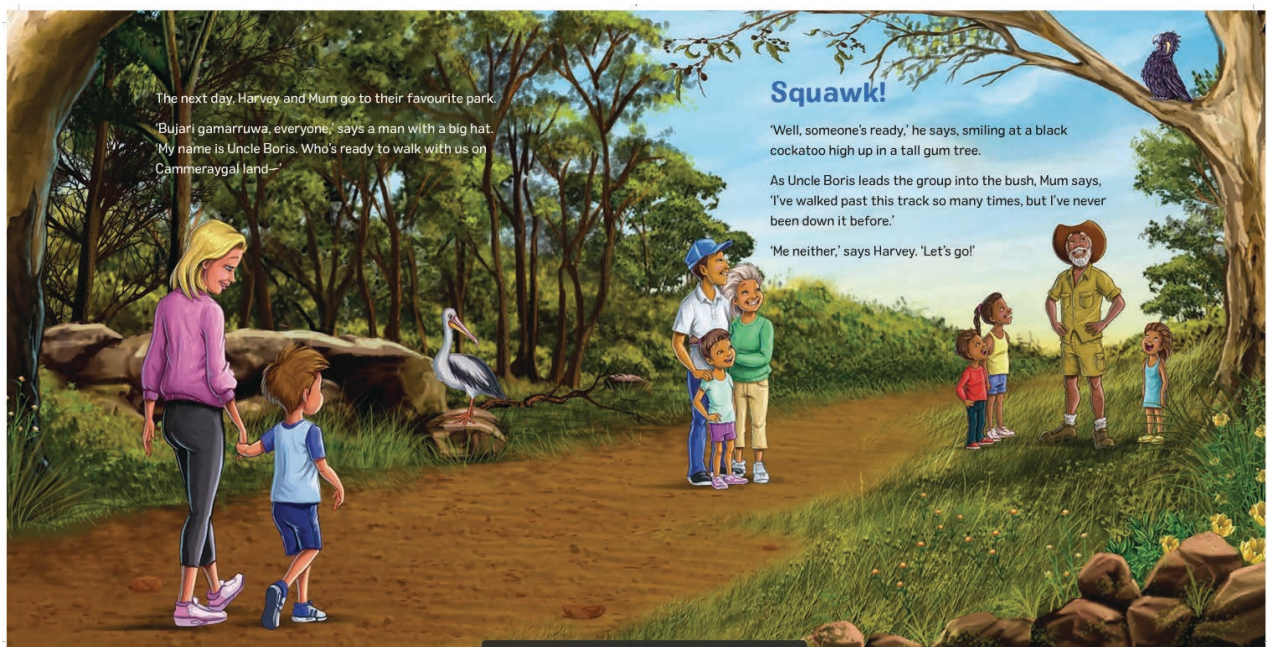
## LEARNING ACTIVITIES

### Activity 1: Let's get reading!

Let's work together to read *Walk With Us*. Before diving into reading, spend a bit of time discussing with your children:

- What can we see on the cover of *Walk With Us*?
- What do we think *Walk With Us* will be about?
- What do you like best about being outside in the bush?

Read the book all the way through. You might like to pause after reading the following pages to have a chat about what you have just read.



P4: 'Bujari gamarruwa, everyone.' What could this mean? If your children 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? Hint! Look inside the front cover for the glossary.

'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?

When you have finished the book, you may want to ask questions such as:

- What was your favourite part of the book? Turn back through the pages to share favourite moments.
- The story talked a lot about the ancestors. 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 a long time before the First Fleet arrived. Who are the people who have been living in Australia since before the First Fleet? Children may suggest various terms, including Aboriginal people, First Nations peoples, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- So, the Aboriginal/First Nations people in the book are the Cammeraygal people. Do we know who the Aboriginal/First Nations people are here, where we are 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 children. Not all of these terms are acceptable to use in every Country!

## Activity 2: Walk on Country

Let's go for our own walk on Country. Before we leave home, let's think about a few things.

### What do we mean when we say Country?

When thinking about the word 'country', we 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 of what we mean when we say Country.

### What might we find on our walk?

We might come across plants, insects, birds, animals, and rocks. And maybe rubbish, so let's think about taking a rubbish bag to clean it up!

### What rules should we follow?

Stay together, don't touch any animals, and stay on the path so we don't crush plants or insects. Don't move rocks or logs because animals may be hiding under them, and we 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.

### Let's go!

It's time to head out on a walk to a nearby natural area. While we walk, let's point out things we notice. Look for interesting leaves, flowers, sticks, and rocks. Can you find any signs of animals? Sometimes the animals can be elusive, but we might find feathers, fur, tracks, scratch marks or poo. Remind children not to touch the poo (eww!), but we can try and guess which animal it came from.

When you reach an open spot, sit down and take a moment. Rather than talking during this time, sit quietly and see what you can notice. Put your hands on your tummies and take

three slow, deep breaths. Work through the list below and give yourselves time to do your 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)

Stand up and have a stretch. Remember how everyone in the book felt at the end of the walk, 'quieter and slower'. Do you feel the same? Mum said, 'I feel like all my senses have been switched on.' Do you feel the same?

Getting outside in nature has been shown to greatly benefit wellbeing, focus and mood. If the walk or mindfulness activity is too much, just getting outside and paying attention to what is around you is a win. You could try using 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.

**Want to do more?** Why not find out who looks after the places you have walked through? Are there groundskeepers, is the area looked after by the local council, or is there a Landcare or 'friends of' group who looks after the area? Maybe you could join in with your local volunteers and help care for Country, too.

### Activity 3: Colours of Country

What do we need to be happy, healthy people? Some of our basic needs are fresh water, clean air, good food, medicine and shelter. Let's read *Walk With Us* again. Uncle Boris knows how to meet many of these needs using the natural resources Country provides. As you read the book, find the moments when he talks about natural resources. You might find

- *Tologurā* (lemon myrtle) to treat cuts - page 8
- Water to drink - page 10
- Plants to eat - page 12
- Gum trees for making canoes - page 13

You might also notice the ancestors on page 15 are sitting around a fire, and one is fishing with a spear. The natural country around us can provide many resources to keep us healthy and happy. Let's go outside and explore the natural resources.

**Before you go:**

Look at page 13 again. This tree provided perfect bark for making a canoe, but only one piece of the bark is missing. Why didn't Uncle Boris's mob take all of the bark from the tree? If they did that, the tree would die! They can keep the tree healthy and living by taking just a small part of the bark. This tree can still provide homes and food for animals and will continue to produce seeds so more of these trees can grow for future generations to enjoy. This is using the natural resources sustainably. When you go outside, keep this in mind and only take small parts of natural resources to keep the plants healthy and living.

Remember to take your hat and water bottle with you, and bring scissors, some blank paper and a few cups or containers.

Now that we're outside, what colours can we see? Don't forget to look at the ground, rocks, leaves, flowers, fruit, grasses, and everything else natural around you. There are so many colours! I wonder if we can paint with these colours? Choose three or four different natural materials.

If taking living material from a plant, take less than 10% of that part (for example, less than 10% of the flowers). Pop each material in a different container. Now we need to find a good stick! Make sure to grab a dead one from the ground rather than breaking a living stick off a plant. Use your stick to mash up the plants/rocks/dirt in each container. Add a little water and keep mashing until you have something you can paint with. You might need to add a little more water or a little more natural material to get a good consistency.

Using your stick as a brush, start putting some pigment on a piece of paper. You could put down lines or spots, twist the end of the stick, or roll the stick over the paper. Look around! What else could you use as a brush? You could try some grass, a feather, a flower or a leaf. Try painting, printing, or using the materials as a stencil and flicking the paint over it.

Do you get good, strong colours out of the material? Some things make better colours than others. Some natural resources that make great colours include:

- Tuff, a rock from volcanic ash, which is used to make ochre pigments
- Charcoal can be used both dry and wet for different textures
- Fruit from *rhagodia* (saltbush) species for bright pinks and reds
- Leaves from *Tetragonia* species, also known as warrigul greens, bower spinach or New Zealand spinach

- Dandelion and wattle flowers both produce beautiful yellow colours, but they can be very pale when put on paper

If you're struggling to get good results, you can try using a mortar and pestle to grind your natural material into finer pieces, using hot water instead of cold, or using an acrylic paint base instead of water.

## **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

## 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 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.

**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.