

# Welcome to Our Country: Back on Country

AUTHORS

**ADAM GOODES AND ELLIE LAING**

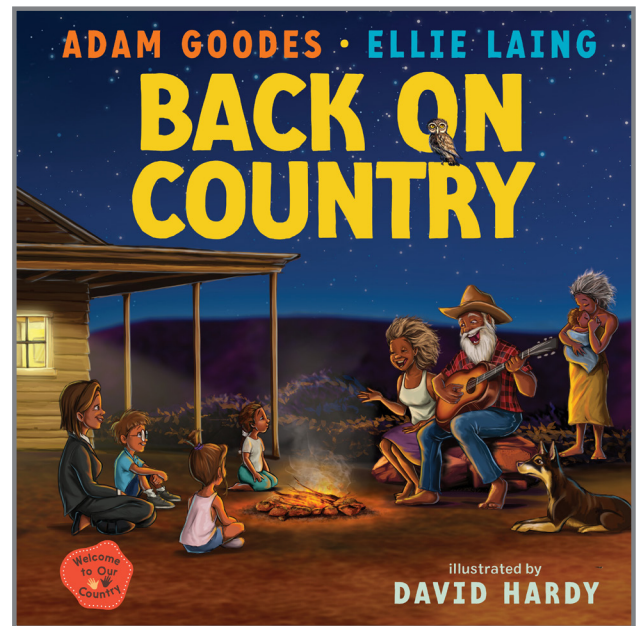
ILLUSTRATOR

**DAVID HARDY**

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



## SYNOPSIS

*'Where are we going again?'* asks Lucy.

*'Back on Country,'* says Mum. *'Where we're going is where your nanna comes from, where we come from. Our Country is special to us. You'll see.'*

It's Lucy and David's first time back on Country.

They meet their cousins and Elders, and see special places, learn local language words and hear stories as old as time.

Join them to feel the strength that comes from being back on Country.

## 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 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.

## 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 *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).

**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 THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCES DIFFER WITH 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.**

### STUDY NOTES

- Show your class the *Back on Country* front cover and ask students to respond to it by asking:
  - Who do you think these people might be?
  - Where might they be gathering?
  - What do you think they are doing? Do they look happy?
- The book's title is *Back on Country*, so what do you think this story is going to be about?
- Turn to the endpapers and listen to the Adnyamathanha words via the QR code, while pointing at each image.
- Listen to the story being read aloud via the QR code and after finishing ask students to answer the following True or False questions:
  - Going back to Country means leaving Australia. T or F?
  - Nangga, Nangga means 'Welcome' in Adnyamathanha. T or F?
  - Adnyamathanha people sing to their ancestors. T or F?
  - A 'wirra' is a river. T or F?
  - Alku is a type of face paint. T or F?
  - Alku is made from boiling plants. T or F?
  - Every cave drawing tells a story. T or F?
  - Stars are important to Adnyini and her family because they tell them about the seasons and guide them on their journeys. T or F?
  - David and Lucy's mum has only one ngami. T or F?
  - David and Lucy will be glad to leave Country. T or F?
- According to Jude Barlow, a Ngunnawal Elder, "Country" is the term often used by Aboriginal peoples to describe the lands, waterways and seas to which they are connected. The term contains complex ideas about law, place, custom, language, spiritual belief, cultural practice, material sustenance, family and identity.' (Source: AIATSIS website)  
Research an Indigenous map of Australia to discover:
  - The Country your school is on
  - The Country where you are from (if Aboriginal) or where the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people you know are from
  - The Country your family and friends live on
  - The Country where a favourite place is located
  - How many clan groups are in Australia today?
- Take students outside to discover the land, waterways and sky around them. Choose a comfortable and peaceful place to sit. Take off shoes and ground feet in the earth, just like Lucy and David do in the book. Acknowledge the traditional custodians of the place in which you are sitting and encourage deep engagement by asking:
  - What can you see around you?
  - Are there grasslands, waterways, hills, mountains?
  - What can you feel/smell/sense/hear when you close your eyes?
  - How does the earth feel beneath you?
  - How does being outside make you feel?
  - What animals might live here?

- The best picture books tell a story in words and a related, but different one, in images. The words in the story tell us about what Lucy and David discover when they are back on Country, but look closely at their mum. Compare early images of her clothes and hair with later ones and guess what her experience of returning to Country is.
- Ask students why they think Lucy, David and their mum enjoyed being back on Country.
- Incorporate an Acknowledgement of Country to the beginning of your class. Invite older students to take turns leading the Acknowledgement of Country.
- Invite a local traditional Elder or Custodian to deliver a Welcome to Country to your school and talk about the land that your school is on. Consider making this event outside of school hours and inviting parents and carers to attend. This creates an opportunity for greater community understanding and in-depth discussions in the home.