

# Wollemi: Saving a Dinosaur Tree

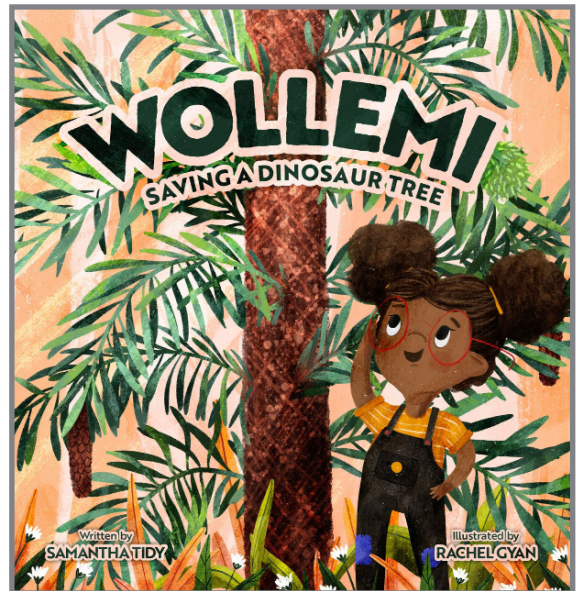
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**RECOMMENDED FOR:** Lower to Mid Primary



## SYNOPSIS

Deep in the forest, an ancient wonder is about to be found. Descended from a family of trees going back 200 million years, the Wollemi pine has survived ice, fire and the passing of many generations.

Will a bushfire be the final threat to this living fossil? And how will we protect it, now that everyone wants a dinosaur tree? How can we make sure the Wollemi's secret location is not discovered and damaged?

*Wollemi: Saving a Dinosaur Tree* explains the unique and critically endangered status of the Wollemi pine and explores what actions can be taken today to contribute to the conservation of this rare and beautiful tree.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Samantha Tidy is an award-winning children's author who seeks out stories that connect her readers with the natural world and each other. A passionate permaculturalist, gardener and chicken fancier, she lives in Canberra.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Rachel Gyan is an illustrator passionate about artful storytelling. Rachel enjoys studying Australian flora and wildlife, drawing inspiration from her surroundings to capture the beautiful and sometimes quirky nature of Australia in her work.

## THEMES

- Ancient Australian trees
- Critically endangered species
- Conservation and protection

## STUDY NOTES

### BEFORE READING

- Show an image of the Wollemi pine to the class. Ask students what kind of tree it looks like.
- Why do they think the Wollemi pine is described as a 'living fossil'? Brainstorm the responses and record for future use. After reading the story, are they able to add to this list?

## WHILE READING

### Science

- What kind of plants might you find in a rainforest? Find images of rainforests to help students identify different plants. Brainstorm and record.
- Rainforests have four layers. Can you name them? (Answers: Forest floor layer, Understorey layer, Canopy layer, Emergent layer)
  - Research and draw one or two plants or animals that might live in each layer.
- What is taxonomy and what is it used for? Why is it important?
  - There are eight groups in taxonomy beginning with domain and ending with species. Can you find out the other groups and put them in order? (Answer: Domain, Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, Species)
- What is the scientific name for the Wollemi pine and who was it named after? (Answer: *Wollemia nobilis*. Botanists named the tree after park ranger David Noble and the national park he found it in.)
- Find some plants and trees in your local area. Research and record their scientific name.
- The Wollemi pine is closely related to the kauri, Norfolk Island pine, bunya pine and the monkey-puzzle tree. Find images of each tree to compare with the Wollemi pine. What is the same? What is different? Record your answer as an infographic (graphic visual representation) or Venn diagram.
- In groups, research each stage of the life cycle of the Wollemi pine. Organise your information into a graphic representation to show your classmates.

### English

- *Wollemi: Saving a Dinosaur Tree* is a narrative non-fiction picture book. Can you name some of the language features which show that it is different to a fiction picture book?
- How have the stunning illustrations in the book added to the interest and understanding of the story? Do the words and the illustrations work well together?
- Imagine you are a park ranger in the Wollemi National Park. Write a diary entry of one day in your job. What might you do, see, hear, touch and find? What tools or vehicles might you need?

### Sustainability

- In the story how did the botanists protect the Wollemi pine in the rainforest? Do you have other ideas of how the Wollemi pine could be protected?
- The firefighters sprayed red fire-retardant around the grove of Wollemi pines but not on the trees. Why? Can you find out more information about fire-retardant?
- The firefighters also laid a series of irrigation pipes on the ground. How do irrigation pipes work?
- Invite a park ranger or country fire service officer from your local area to visit your school to talk about their job. Before they arrive, brainstorm a list of questions you would like to ask them, for example:
  - What does a typical day at work look like?
  - What training do you need to do your job?
  - How do you prepare for unexpected or dangerous situations?
  - What do you love about your job?
  - What are some of the challenges?
  - What role do you play in conserving the environment you are working in?
  - How do park rangers and country fire service officers work together to protect the natural environment?

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

- Wollemi is an Aboriginal word meaning 'look around you, keep your eyes open and watch out' and is from the language of First Nations peoples of the area where the tree was first discovered. Can you discover and make a list of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander words for some of the plants and animals in your local area?

### Visual Arts

- Using mixed media such as natural materials, crayons, paint, pencils and coloured paper scraps, construct a collage of a rainforest surrounding a Wollemi pine on A3 paper or cardboard.
- Create a rainforest diorama showing the four layers of the rainforest surrounding a Wollemi pine.

AUTHOR OF NOTES

KATHRYN BEILBY

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