

Walk With Us

AUTHORS

ADAM GOODES AND ELLIE LAING

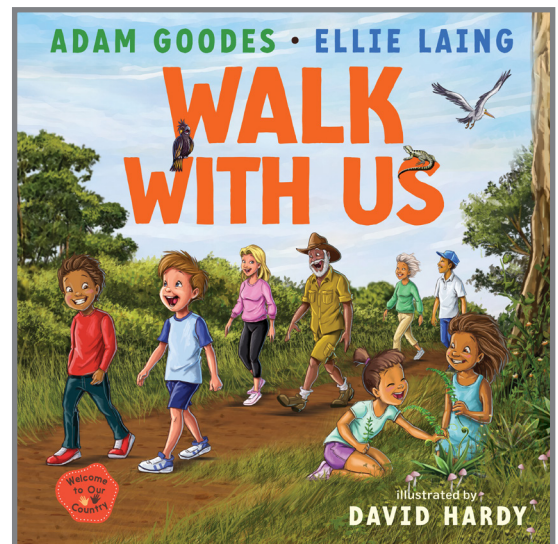
ILLUSTRATOR

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Mid Primary



SYNOPSIS

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.'

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 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 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 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).

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

BEFORE READING

- Before reading, show your class the *Walk with Us* front cover and ask students to respond to it by discussing the following questions:
 - Who do you think these people might be?
 - Who do you think the 'Us' might be in the title?
 - What do you think they are doing?
 - Where might they be walking?
 - Do they look happy?
 - What do you think might be making them feel happy?
 - The book's title is *Walk with Us*—what do you think this story is going to be about?
- Turn to the endpapers, and listen to the traditional language of the Cammeraygal people via the QR code (located on the Imprint page) while pointing at each image.

WHILE READING

- Read the story through once and allow students time to think about what they have heard. Read it a second time, and after finishing, invite students to talk about how the story made them feel and what they liked best about it.

Learning About Country

- According to Jude Barlow, a Ngunnawal Elder (Source AIATSIS website), “‘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.’
- Look at an AIATSIS map of Indigenous 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?

Ancestors

- Ask your students if they remember Uncle Boris using the word ‘ancestors’ in the book and if anyone can explain what he meant by it. You may want to open the book to where Uncle Boris sings to the ancestors, where they looked at the canoe tree, and where Uncle Boris explains how Manly got that name.
- Explain that Uncle Boris’s ancestors lived on Cammeraygal Country for many thousands of years. Explore just how long ago that was by going outside (alternatively, use your school’s hall or gym) with a 60m tape measure. Show the students the tape measure and explain that it will help measure time. Unroll the tape measure and explain that 1mm will represent 1 year. That means that 1 cm will represent ten years, and 10 cm 100 years. See if students can measure out how old they are on the tape measure. How many years would their hand be? How many years would their height be?
- Have the students sit down in a group. Ask one 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:

- When they were born. (This student will be very close to the person holding the end!)
- When the First Fleet arrived in Australia. (235 years ago, or 23.5cm)
- When the pyramids were built. (4500 years ago or 4.5m)
- When writing was invented. (5400 years ago or 5.4m)
- When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people first started living in Australia. (This was at least 60,000 years ago, or 60 m away.)

Caring for Country

- Explain that for all this time, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have lived on and cared for Country. Talk about examples in the book that showed how Uncle Boris's ancestors lived on Country and looked after it. Examples include:
 - 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.

Connecting with Country

- Take students for a walk outside to discover the land, waterways and sky around them. Choose a comfortable and peaceful place to sit. Acknowledge the traditional custodians of the place in which you are sitting and encourage deep engagement by asking them to list:
 - Five things they can see.
 - Four things they can feel.
 - Three things they can hear.
 - Two things they can smell.
 - One thing they are feeling.
- Ask your students to stand up and have a stretch. Remind them how everyone in the book felt 'quieter and slower' after spending some time in the bush and whether they feel the same? Remind them that Harvey's Mum said, 'I feel like all my senses have been switched on,' and ask if they feel the same and whether they can explain what she might have meant.
- 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.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS: TRUE OR FALSE

- Harvey learned to acknowledge Country while watching TV.
- For Uncle Boris, singing or acknowledging Country is a way to communicate with the ancestors.
- Uncle Boris's people use the leaf from a lemon myrtle tree to make canoes.
- Uncle Boris is great at finding small creatures hiding under rocks or in holes.
- The bark from gum trees is used by Uncle Bob's mob to heal cuts and scratches.
- The First Fleet saw Uncle Bob's ancestors on the big headland called Garangal when they sailed through the Sydney Heads.
- Fire is never good for Country because it scares off all the animals looking for food.
- Spending time on Country with Uncle Boris makes everyone feel calm and happy.
- The two birds that follow Harvey and his mum are a sparrow and eagle.
- Harvey's mum thinks the ancestors liked them visiting Country.