



The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature offers the freely available

Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Peoples Resource

Aim

The United Nations observed 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages. The aim of this year was to raise awareness of the consequences of the growing loss of Indigenous languages across the world and to establish a link between language, development, peace, and reconciliation. The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature (NCACL) is contributing to this focus by celebrating and promoting children's books by and about Australia's Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Peoples, including books in Indigenous languages.

Stage one of this Resource has been funded by the Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Education, Strong Quality in Child Care within the Child Care Services Program. This Program aims to deliver quality child care and early learning experiences for children, families and communities.

This funding enabled the NCACL to provide a comprehensive, freely available Resource, which provides unique insights into books written by and or about Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Peoples for young people from birth through eight years of age. Our aim has been to discover these books, provide information about them and identify resources that explore and expand them.

Since the launch of the Resource in July 2020, the NCACL has been fortunate to receive additional funding through the generosity of a private donor. From late March 2021 and continuing, the Resource is adding books suitable for young people from birth through secondary years.

Expertise

This Resource has been created by a team of knowledgeable people chosen by NCACL for their varying expertise and range of perspectives. This group included Aboriginal People and culturally diverse individuals of various ages, sexes, backgrounds and wide-ranging expertise. Individuals included teachers, teacher librarians, public librarians, parents, professionals in early learning and childcare centres, principals, publishers, editors, reviewers, booksellers, authors, illustrators, researchers and academics with knowledge of Australian children's literature and literacy. A Reference Group and the NCACL Project Team provided leadership and guidance throughout the project.

Searching Resources

This Resource includes books aimed at children from birth through eight years, while recognising that some of these books are also accessible to an older age range. Stage 2 of this resource researched and added books and resources to expand the coverage of books suitable for secondary school. No database such as this resource is ever complete. Updating will maintain currency and highlight new directions.

Initially, the NCACL researched and identified over 350 children's books by and about Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Peoples, published between 1974 and 2020 for young people from birth through eight years of age. Books are now being added that will attract an older readership. Each book in this Resource can be researched using a range of search filters listed below. Free text searching is also available. Collections of related books can be retrieved then shared with colleagues by using a combination of search filters listed below.

- bibliographic details
- subjects for each book
- audience including age range
- annotation highlighting content

- Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander creators' cultural background will be identified when such information can be identified
- story location and/or community information
- language(s), as appropriate to individual books
- identification of writing techniques and styles
- artistic media and technique
- curriculum links for the Early Years Learning Framework
- curriculum links for the Australian Curriculum
- teaching and other information resources related to the book

Audience

This Resource will be useful for Indigenous and non-Indigenous parents, caregivers, home schooling groups, teachers, librarians and others working with young people in childcare centres, early learning centres, health, social services and elsewhere. The Resource will be particularly useful to teachers addressing the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the Australian Curriculum as well as those adults exploring creative writing and art with young people. Researchers, academics, publishers, authors, illustrators, booksellers, and organisations bringing children and books together will find the Resource useful. Young people too may find this resource useful for locating books for particular interests and school assignments. Regarding books' availability should individuals wish to include these in personal or institutional collections, we recommend contacting local public and school libraries, publishers and booksellers.

Content and Style

The NCACL Resource aims to be comprehensive, provide information about these books and identify resources that explore and expand them. The content of these books varies widely. Different cultural practices are presented, a variety of Aboriginal languages included, and different communities presented with daily lives unique to a particular area.

This collection includes many stories and tales that are representative of the richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples culture, and their Dreaming and teaching stories, which form an important part of the collection. Included are wide-ranging storytelling techniques and presentation styles to engage and inform the reader. There are picture books, verse, verse novels, short stories, graphic novels, historical works, fantasy, allegories, memoirs, biographies, autobiographies, readers and nonfiction. Sometimes a mixture of these is present within a single book. Settings, time periods and cultural practices also feature thus providing additional perspectives on characters' lives and their culture.

In creating these books, authors and illustrators have used a wide variety of styles and media. These include photographs, postcards, relics, artefacts, artworks, manuscripts, historical records, interviews, posters, diagrams, maps, letters, glossaries of terms and language and other material related to the story. Wide-ranging artistic styles and media also feature.

Sources used to identify books for this Resource

The NCACL collection of books by and about Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Peoples is one of Australia's most comprehensive collections. Other comprehensive collections exist at the National Library of Australia and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). All three collections are located in Canberra, Australia. The NCACL also holds a reference collection about this topic and research files with material about the work of Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander People. Publishers in this field have assisted by providing older, currently in print and forthcoming books.

The NCACL also sourced online databases produced by educational bodies, tertiary institutions, professional organisations and others with recognised knowledge. Major national and regional and organisational bodies with select lists and awards for books for young people have been examined. Bibliographies produced by international, national and specialist organisations that feature Australian children's books have been examined. Published academic publications featuring potential books of interest have been examined along with bibliographies in general articles and academic studies. A team of individuals examined every book included in the Resource.

Exclusions

Stage 1 of this Resource includes books suitable for young people from birth through eight years of age. There are some books in this age range which are also suitable for older children. From March 2021 books suitable for young people from birth through secondary ages are now being added.

Invitation

We invite you to search our Resource and discover the wealth of material available. For those of you who prefer a user's guide, try our Quick Tips, which will guide you through searching techniques. We have also produced a one-page promotional flyer, which we invite you to share with interested colleagues and organisations.