

Top 10 Aboriginal children's books for Victoria

Here are our top 10 children's books written by Victorian Aboriginal people who feel a sense of belonging to their nations, clans, land and culture.

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1. Our Home, Our Heartbeat

Adam Briggs / Kate Moon (illustrator) / Rachael Sarra (illustrator)

Briggs is a well-known and well-accomplished Yorta Yorta rapper from Shepparton in Victoria. *Our Home, Our Heartbeat* is his first children's book, and is adapted from his song 'The Children Came Back'. In a celebration of Indigenous culture, this book features Aboriginal people who have achieved and succeeded in a variety of fields. It's a fantastic resource to use in an early learning setting because educators and teachers can engage children through the music as well as the inspirational story. The National Gallery of Victoria has recorded Briggs reading his book, which can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/OurHomeBook>



2. Djambi: The Different Kookaburra

Damian Amamoo

This storybook is set in the bush in Barmah on the Murray River and is based on a family of kookaburras. Djambi, the main character, finds it difficult to express his feelings and emotions, and his squawk sounds different to the other birds. This book has been written to address the topic of autism in a way that is culturally relevant and sensitive, and there are numerous culturally-specific references –

both traditional and contemporary – that help make this book warmly familiar to Aboriginal children. It's a positive, insightful and engaging book for teachers, families and young children, and delivers an important message about appreciating diversity. A PDF version of the book can be accessed for free:

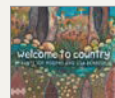
<http://bit.ly/DjambiBook>



3. Adventures of the Little Black Trackas

Merle Hall / Gary Saunders (illustrator)

The *Adventures of the Little Black Trackas* is a cultural education kit for children in the early years, aged 0–8 years. Words used in the book are in both English and Bangerang language. The kit contains five books and includes a CD with each story, as told by a different child. Each book is beautifully illustrated and features a little black tracka tracking a variety of animals, insects, bird feathers, water animals or family members. The books are packaged together in a folder that also contains activity ideas for use by early childhood educators.

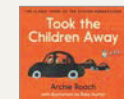


4. Welcome to Country

Aunty Joy Murphy / Lisa Kennedy (illustrator)

Welcome to Country, written by Wurundjeri Elder Aunty Joy Murphy, is a storybook that gently teaches children about

the importance of understanding where we come from and how to relate to the land and water surrounding us all. Woiwurrung words, such as 'wominjeka', are introduced through the story, and we are offered an insight into how Aboriginal communities relate to one another through acknowledging territorial boundaries, seeking permission to enter other lands and performing Welcomes to Country. A video of Aunty Joy reading her book can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/WelcomeToCountryBook>



5. Took the Children Away

Archie Roach / Ruby Hunter (illustrator) with paintings by Peter Hudson

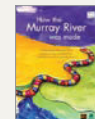
Took the Children Away is a story written by well-known singer Archie Roach, and illustrated by his late partner Ruby Hunter. It tells the heartbreaking story of Uncle Archie's experience of being forcibly taken from his family when he was two years old. Many people will have heard Uncle Archie's award-winning song of the same name, on which this book is based. This book can be used to introduce the topic of the Stolen Generations to children. A video of Uncle Archie talking about and reading his book can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/TheyTookTheChildrenAway>



6. Auslan and Yorta Yorta Language

Merle Miller

This is a unique book that teaches readers about both Auslan and Yorta Yorta language. Each page displays a photograph of a young, deaf Aboriginal girl who demonstrates how to sign Auslan for phrases such as, 'Hello how are you?' It then describes the Yorta Yorta language for the same phrase. There is also an accompanying explanation on each page of how to sign using Auslan. This book is great for teaching children in education and care services about people who have hearing impairments and the different ways in which we all communicate.



7. How the Murray Was Made: A Bangerang Story

Irene Thomas / Robert Brown (illustrator)

This is a book that explains the creation story of how the Murray River was made. It tells of how an old woman was walking

with her dingos, looking for grubs and berries. She walked for a long time dragging a digging stick behind her, which made a track along the ground. The sound of the stick woke the snake, and he became very angry and thrashed to and fro, causing the track to get bigger. Soon after, it rained and this was how the Murray River was made. This is an engaging and interesting way for educators and teachers to introduce the topic of belief systems.



8. Respect

Aunty Faye Muir / Sue Lawson / Lisa Kennedy (illustrator)

Aunty Faye is a Boon Wurrung and Wamba Wamba Elder who wrote this book with Sue Lawson, an award-winning children's author. This book teaches us how to respect our Elders, our family, our friends, the Country on which we live, and most importantly – ourselves.



9. Family

Aunty Faye Muir / Sue Lawson / Jasmine Seymour (illustrator)

Family is a follow up to *Respect*, and both books are part of a four-book series called 'Our Place'. This book teaches us about the different roles people in our families play in forming who we are now and who we become in the future, through an Aboriginal perspective. It also introduces the idea of diversity amongst people, families and communities, using the concepts of language and Country.



10. Wilam, A Birrarung Story

Aunty Joy Murphy / Andrew Kelly / Lisa Kennedy (illustrator)

This book tells the story of Melbourne's beautiful Yarra River, and features Woiwurrung language to explain its rich history. Bunjil, the wedge-tailed eagle and creator spirit, is a key character, along with other animals. It's a wonderful storybook to use with children in an early childhood setting because it's a culturally-inclusive way to think about an important landmark in Melbourne.