

## Background

In this special episode, presenters Luke Carroll, Miranda Tapsell and Hunter Page-Lochard give an Acknowledgement of Country celebrating Australia's first people.

Produced in collaboration with Aboriginal Early Childhood Education Consultant, Jessica Staines and Early Childhood Education Consultant, Dr Red Ruby Scarlet, the joyful provocations throughout this episode share knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and highlight the importance of caring for Country together.

The stories, songs, music, dance and creative projects included in the episode can extend perspectives around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture for young children and their families.



## Follow up

In this episode we learn how each presenter and the new Play School toy Kiya, say "hello" in their traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages:

Hunter is from <b>Bundjalung</b> Country	<b>Jingiwalla!</b>
Luke is from <b>Wiradjuri</b> Country	<b>Yaama!</b>
Miranda is from the <b>Tiwi Islands</b>	<b>Awana!</b>
Kiya is from <b>Noonga</b> Country	<b>Kiya!</b>

Find out about the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Country and language group of your local area.

As a starting point, enter your location into the [First Languages Australia – Gambay Map](#). This resource helps to link some regions to their nearest Aboriginal Language and Cultural Centre.

Taking a collaborative approach when incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and perspectives into your ongoing early childhood program is important. Community partnerships can be strengthened even further by reaching out to local Elders - facilitating opportunities to share knowledge, build meaningful relationships and embed understandings.



## Meet our new Play School friend, Kiya!

Kiya was created in collaboration with Play School, Western Australia company Awe & Wonder, the ABC's Indigenous unit, Aboriginal Early Childhood Consultant and advisor Jessica Staines and Early Childhood Education Consultant and advisor Dr Red Ruby Scarlet. Kiya is not the first Aboriginal toy cast member of Play School and will be joining the beloved Dan, a play school toy veteran. Kiya will be included in upcoming episodes along with the rest of our Play School favourites.

When creating Kiya, collaborators carefully considered the new toy's character and appearance. There was a consensus that Kiya should have a strong connection to country and be reflective of the contemporary identities that Aboriginal children have today. Kiya is from Noongar country, in the southern corner of Western Australia.

Kiya's clothing is made with fabric designed by artist Kiya Watt, who had this to say about her design;

*"The ocean has strong connection to Menang Noongars. The symbols and dots throughout the middle represent the strong spirit and movements of the ocean. The dark blue lines outlined with white dots show the waterholes (ngamar) where we would fish from to provide food for our families. The ocean, like boodjah (land), is our mother and we must honour and protect, and only fish enough to provide for our family."*

### Acknowledgement of Country

There were lots of ways to Acknowledge Country in this episode. Each of them shows a connection between your body and the earth. By enacting this connection between the earth and us we begin to understand how and why care for Country is so important to Aboriginal people as the first people of the land.



The words and actions led in this Play School Acknowledgement of Country were created by **Aunty Tracey Linn Bostock** – a descendant of the Bundjalung Nation which is her Grandmother's and Grandfather's country.

***We would like to Acknowledge the Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.***

***Together we touch the ground of the land.***

(TOUCH GROUND)

***We reach for the sky that covers the land.***

(RAISE HANDS)

***And we touch our hearts to care of the land.***

(TOUCH CHEST OVER HEART).

**Does your setting give an Acknowledgement of Country?** Consider the importance of this daily inclusion and consider implications for your Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

For more information visit:

<https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/>

<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/>



### Experience – How to introduce an Acknowledgement of Country in an early learning setting:

Read *“Where the Forest Meets the Sea”* (1998) by Jeannie Baker.

This story is about a young boy and his Father who travel by boat to a special place where the forest meets the sea. As the little boy wanders through the forest, he imagines it is hundreds of years ago and visualises the animals that once lived there, or perhaps still do?

The little boy happens upon an ancient tree and ponders whether Aboriginal children once played there as well.

It is at this point that educators can elaborate and explain that Aboriginal people were the first people that lived in Australia and that they lived in harmony with country. Educators may like to pre-source photographs that highlight the ways that Aboriginal people lived showing traditional houses, food etc.

The story concludes with the boy and his father sailing away questioning *“Maybe I’ll come again someday, but will the forest still be here when we come back?”*. The illustrations echo this sentiment showing the forest being partially logged and buildings taking its place.

This book is a great way to help explain who Aboriginal people are and their connection to Country. It’s a springboard for discussion about how Aboriginal people would feel if their home and country weren’t being respected and protected.



Educators can continue the discussion with children by brainstorming ways that they can be a custodian of Country. This experience supports educators and children to reflect on Acknowledgement of Country and understand that it is not just something that we say but something that we do.

Link this experience to The Early Years Early Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF):

#### Principles and Practice -

- Respect for diversity
- Holistic approaches
- Intentional teaching
- Cultural competence

#### Outcome links include -

1. Children have a strong sense of identity: 1.3
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4
4. Children are confident and involved learners: 4.3, 4.4
5. Children are effective communicators: 5.1, 5.2.



## Experience – Building connections to country:

Explore the illustrations in Dr Bronwyn Bancroft's book *"Colours of Australia" (2018)*, then go for a walk on country in your local area. Encourage children to notice and observe the colours of country around them.

Get children to pick a favourite tree and draw a sketch. As children draw, educators should be asking questions supporting children to look and think deeper. *What does the tree feel like? Is it rough or smooth? What colours are the leaves? What do they smell like? What can they hear around them? Can they see any birds or insects in the tree?*

Revisit the same place and the same tree regularly repeating the same experience. Through revisiting and engaging in a process of noticing and observing we are supporting children to become more in tune with country and perhaps notice seasonal indicators by the behaviours of plants, animals, birds and insects.

## Extend ...

Find a quiet spot out on country to lay and be still. Ask children to close their eyes and take ten deep breaths as they relax their body. Once relaxed, ask them to focus of what they can hear. *Can they hear birds? Can they hear insects?*

Guiding children through relaxation experiences out on Country supports them to develop a relationship and feel more connected to the Country that they live on. Before we can respect and acknowledge Country we need to have a love for it first.

Link experiences to (EYLF) Principles and Practice:

Holistic approaches  
Responsiveness to children  
Learning Environments  
Intentional teaching  
Cultural competence

Outcome links include:

2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world: 2.1, 2.3, 2.4
4. Children are confident and involved learners: 4.1, 4.3, 4.4.
5. Children are effective communicators: 5.1, 5.2.



The beautiful trees featured on the Play School set were painted by artist, author and proud Bundjalung woman, **Dr Bronwyn Bancroft**.

Dr Bronwyn has been friend of Play School over many years and her trees will become a wonderful addition to future Play School episodes!

Explore Dr Bronwyn's art and stories further through her collection of vibrant children's books. Check out some of her recent titles including;  
*'Colours of Australia' (2018)*.  
*'Patterns of Australia' (2019)*.  
*'Why I love Australia' (2016)*.  
*'Remembering Lionsville' (2016)*.



## Music

Title: "Aboriginal People are the First People"  
Tune: "Going to the Zoo"  
Composer: Lousie Grigg  
Publisher: Unknown

Title: "Bonjour Mes Amis - Hello my Friends"  
(adapted lyrics)  
Composer: Traditional (French)  
Publisher: ABC Music Publishing

Title: "Care for Country"  
Tune: "Freres Jacques"  
Composer: Margaret Gleeson  
Unpublished

Title: "Bags, Bags, Bags"  
Composer: Don Spencer  
Publisher: Unpublished (APRA/AMCOS)

Title: "Here's a House (Gunyah)"  
Composer: John Fox/Warren Carr  
Publisher: ABC Music Publishing

Title: "Hand in Hand"  
Composer: Tracey Linn Bostock/Hunter Page-Lochard/Sophie Emtage/Peter Dasent.  
Publisher: ABC Music Publishing

## Credits

Special guest musician:  
The Yidaki (digeridoo) was played by Matthew Doyle.

Told story: **The Gunyah Gift**  
Adapted from the story by Merindah (Min) Rivers.  
Written in consultation with Wiradjuri Elders and knowledge holders and endorsed by Dr Stan Grant AM Snr.

### Senior Producers

Bryson Hall  
Sarah Dabro

### Early Childhood Advisors

Jessica Staines  
Dr Red Ruby Scarlet

### Executive Producer

Jan Stradling

### Series Producer

Sophie Emtage



Welcome to the Play School crew Kiya!

## Additional resources

- To learn more out about embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in your ongoing early childhood curriculum, visit: <https://kooricurriculum.com/> <https://aboriginalecc.com/>
- For more information about Australia's first Aboriginal Nations and languages, visit: <https://www.firstlanguages.org.au/>
- To learn more about Wiradjuri language (incorporated throughout **The Gunyah Gift** told story) visit: <https://www.wiradjuri-language.com/>