

Book reviews

June 19, 2020

Our Home, Our Heartbeat

Written by Adam Briggs

Illustrated by Kate Moon and Rachael Sarra

Published by Hardie Grant Publishing, 2020

Our Home, Our Heartbeat is a vibrant celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heroes. Every child can see themselves represented in the bright pages of the book, where Briggs gives a nod to significant events in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history. The diversity of the characters is the winner here, as the pages are alive with healthy, happy kids kicking goals.

The book is significant in creating positive representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have achieved success in a range of pursuits. It's important that not only the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community has this representation, but for people of all backgrounds to see. *Our Home, Our Heartbeat* is a perfect introduction to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories and activism, and the fact files at the back are a great starting point for those ready to learn more. The Mob represented in the book not only achieve their goals but also use their platform to give back to and advocate for their community.



The message of community unity and the importance of family connection are strong throughout the book, which ends on the important note of keeping our kids with their families. Our family connections are something that we really need, particularly when it comes to success in school. Briggs looked up to his Aunty Marlene Charles who helped him get through school. Although his teachers were nice people, they didn't always know how to connect with him or teach Aboriginal content in a positive way. Inspired by his song "The Children Came Back", the sequel to Archie Roach's "They Took the Children Away" the message is clear; our kids need to be home, with their family and community.

This is a must-have book for every classroom and school library. A great book for all ages, it's a perfect springboard for teaching and learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories. If you're a teacher who's feeling unsure of how to create a positive culture around teaching Aboriginal students and content with Aboriginal perspectives I recommend having this book on display. Created to fill the gap on the bookshelf that Briggs had when growing up, it's one I wish I could have read growing up too!

Nancy Penfold is an Aboriginal Councillor