

## Book Reviews

September 17, 2018

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### **From Little Things Big Things Grow**

Illustrated by children from Gurindji country, with paintings by Peter Hudson  
by Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody, One Day Hill, 2008

This affirming and heart-warming story, based on Kev Carmody and Paul Kelly's song, celebrates courage. Big things grow when one takes action against exploitation and the abuse of power. This picture book, published a decade ago, remains an inspiring book, especially with the illustrations by Gurindji school children. It tells the empowering story of the Wave Hill walk off when Vincent Lingiari and his Gurindji people took a "little" strike action that ended up igniting the Aboriginal land rights movement in 1966. The book celebrates the struggle and solidarity of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land rights movement.

### **Nganga: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Words and Phrases**

by Aunty Fay Muir and Sue Lawson, Black Dog Books, 2018

Authors Aunty Fay Muir and Sue Lawson share their knowledge of "Nganga", the Aboriginal word meaning "to see and understand" through this glossary of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander words and phrases.

A word I enjoyed learning about was "Dadirri" — the practice of deep listening similar to prayer, meditation and mindfulness. "Dadirri" involves listening with your ears and your heart, being still, quiet and patient and connecting nature to people.

Nganga is a valuable resource that embraces the richness of Australia's Indigenous language, culture and history.

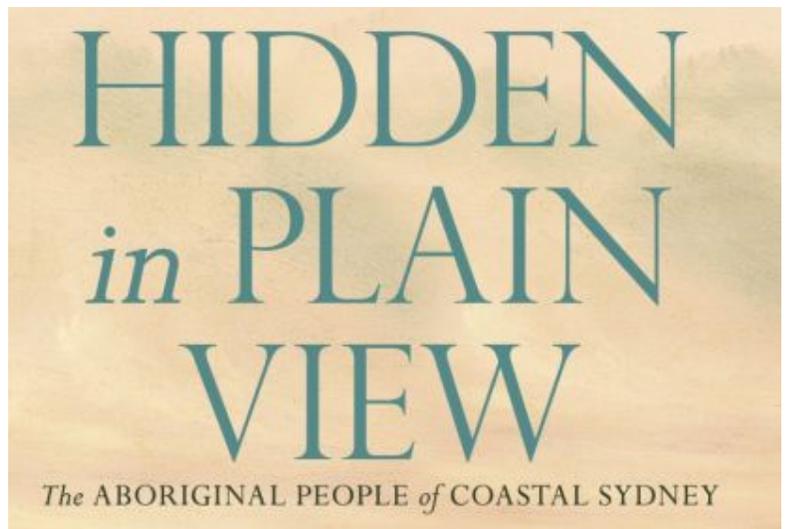
### **Hidden in Plain View: The Aboriginal people of coastal Sydney**

by Paul Irish, NewSouth, 2017

Historian Paul Irish brings to life the story of what happened to Sydney's coastal Aboriginal people following the devastating smallpox epidemic in 1789 and rejects the myth that the original inhabitants of Sydney disappeared.

Instead Paul Irish documents how Sydney's locally affiliated Aboriginal coastal people regrouped to live relatively independent lives in fishing camps around Sydney Harbour, as well as in other settlements like those at Salt Pan Creek on the Georges River and La Perouse on Botany Bay.

Sydney's Aboriginal people, Paul Irish explains, were "hidden in plain view". They certainly did not die out but lived in fishing camps, dotted around what is today's Sydney's eastern suburbs, well into the 19th century.



Sydney's Aboriginal people's lives also became entangled with a small number of influential colonial leaders, many of whom were of convict descent, who supported their access to land thus ensuring the Eora nation could continue their fishing traditions, so essential for food, trade, culture and survival.

When a generation of well known Aboriginal identities in the mid-19th century died out it was reported that "the last of the Sydney tribe" had died out, despite their descendants continuing to live in the Sydney coastal region.

It was only towards the end of the 19th century that these fishing camps around Sydney Harbour closed with the growing influence of missionaries; the bureaucratic intervention into Aboriginal lives; the relentless expansion of Sydney's population and suburbs; and the pollution that destroyed Sydney's rich fishing grounds. This time Sydney's coastal Aboriginal people were forced to relocate into the La Perouse mission.

With the emergence of the 1880s NSW railway system, an influx of Aboriginal people from across NSW came to live in Sydney. Many came as young, forced-indentured domestic servants, while others came to escape the oppressive regimes of mission life in regional NSW.

Despite Sydney's Aboriginal people's being rendered strangers in their own land, they showed resilience and ingenuity as they adapted and held onto their strong cultural attachment to the Sydney region, never ceding it.

All three books are available from Federation Library.

Janine Kitson is a Federation Life Member

## **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

### ***From Little Things Big Things Grow***

*English K-10*

Stage 2

Community and Remembrance

Outcomes

A student:

Identifies celebrations and commemorations of significance in Australia and the world HT2-1

#### ***Small group/pair discussion:***

1. What pictures in the book do you like best?
2. Why was the Wave Hill strike so important?
3. How is the Wave Hill strike celebrated and commemorated today?

#### ***Suggestions for learning activities:***

1. Invite an Aboriginal Elder to come into your classroom and read this story.
2. Sing the song 'From Little Things Big Things Grow' and act out the story.
3. Make a dance or artwork to celebrate and commemorate the Wave Hill strike.

### ***Nganga: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Words and Phrases***

*History: Stage 4*

Topic 6d: Aboriginal and Indigenous Peoples, Colonisation and Contact History

#### ***Small group/pair discussion:***

1. Which words or phrases do you like?
2. Which words or phrases are important?
3. Which words or phrases are you pleased you have learnt?

#### ***Suggestions for learning activities:***

1. Construct a timeline based on the words or phrases from *Nganga*.
2. Prepare and present speech for your school assembly using some of the words and phrases from *Nganga*.

3. *Nganga* opens with the Aboriginal proverb - "We are all visitors to this time, this place. We are just passing through". Create new proverbs based on the words and phrases from *Nganga*.

***Hidden in Plain View: The Aboriginal people of coastal Sydney***

History: Stage 4

Topic 6d: Aboriginal and Indigenous Peoples, Colonisation and Contact History

***Small group/pair discussion:***

1. What do you know about the Aboriginal people who lived in the Sydney coastal area?
2. Describe the suffering that Aboriginal people experience following the invasion of their land.
3. Why is this new book about the history of Sydney's coastal Aboriginal people so important?

***Suggestions for learning activities:***

1. Construct a timeline based on events from the book.
2. Interview some of the Aboriginal people about their connections to country.
3. Research the history Aboriginal people from your local area.