

WOMBAT, MUDLARK AND OTHER STORIES

HELEN MILROY

ISBN (PB): 9781925815818

YEAR LEVEL: Y2–5

CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITY: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures; Sustainability

ABOUT THE BOOK

From a falling star to a lonely whale, an entertaining lizard to an enterprising penguin, these Indigenous stories are full of wonder, adventure and enduring friendships. Told in the style of traditional teaching stories, these animal tales take young readers on adventures of self-discovery and fulfilment.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Helen Milroy is a descendant of the Palyku people of the Pilbara region of Western Australia, but was born and educated in Perth. Australia's first Indigenous doctor, Helen studied medicine at the University of Western Australia and is currently Winthrop Professor and Director of the Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health at UWA, and a consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist with the Specialist Aboriginal Mental Health Service, Department of Health. Helen was recently appointed as the AFL's first Indigenous Commissioner. This is her first book for children.

THEMES

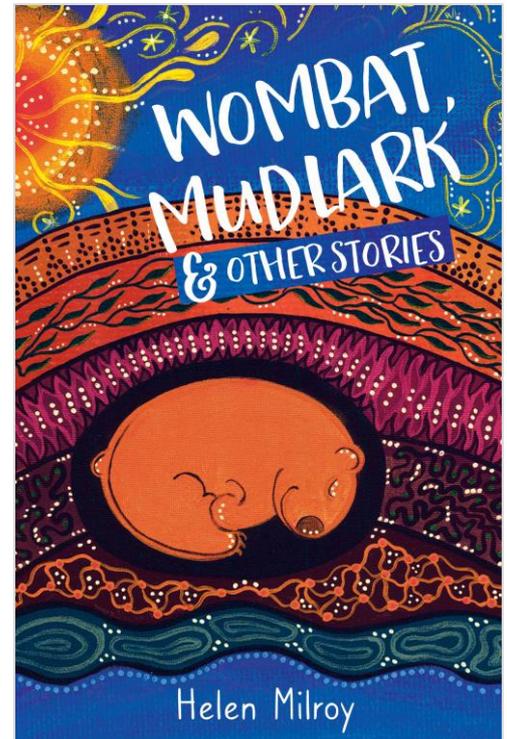
- Nature
- Friendship
- Storytelling
- Belonging
- Looking after country
- Australian animals
- Hope and positivity

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Y1–5 English

USEFUL WEBSITES

- Department of Education WA – Aboriginal Education Portal:
<http://det.wa.edu.au/aboriginaleducation/apac/detcms/navigation/lesson-plans/>



CLASSROOM IDEAS

Discussion questions

1. There is something special about the animals in each story that allows them to help others. For example, Gecko is brave and Mudlark can tell when her friend is upset. Which animal do you think you are most like?
2. Many of these stories are about looking after country so the animals who inhabit it can thrive. Think of a place in nature that is special to you – does it need to be looked after? What could you do to help protect it?
3. *Mother Earth was exhausted from looking after everyone else. Now she needed someone to look after her.* (p. 14). How does Wombat make Mother Earth feel better? What do you do to say thank you to the people who look after you?
4. In 'Mudlark and Sun', Mudlark knows just what to do to help her friend Sun when he is upset. Write or tell a story about a time you have helped someone, or when someone has known exactly what to do to cheer you up.
5. In 'Dingo and Moon', Dingo and Moon feel alone and scared at first. What sort of feelings do they get when they find each other? How do you feel when you are with your friends?
6. *No one had ever climbed so high before, but Gecko summoned up all his courage and bravely made his way up the mountain to reach the very top.* (p. 77). Think of someone you know who is very brave. What things have they done that show how brave they are? These could be things like jumping off something high up or getting a needle at the doctor's, or even things like speaking in front of the class or trying to make a new friend.
7. Dancing makes Brolga happy in 'Brolga and Little Star'. What is something you like to do that makes you really happy? Turn to a partner and share.
8. In 'Platypus and River', how does Platypus figure out how to solve River's problem? How do you solve your own problems?
9. *Frilly was always mucking about and trying to entertain everyone. He loved to play jokes on his friends and then run off into the trees laughing.* (p. 97). Does Frilly in 'Frillneck Lizard and Tree' sound like someone you know? What's something they do that makes you laugh?
10. Like all the animals in *Wombat, Mudlark and Other Stories*, every person has things about them that are special and unique. Write on a piece of paper something that you like about one of your classmates. Put them all in a hat and take turns reading them out.

Creative writing

1. In 'Wombat and Mother Earth', Wombat tells Mother Earth stories to remind her how much all the animals love her. Write a card for someone special to you to say thank you for something they do for you – you could even draw an animal on the front!
2. All of the stories in *Wombat, Mudlark and Other Stories* are about animals and other parts of nature working together to look after their world and each other. Think about the animals that are in the area where you live and make up your own characters to write a story about how they might be friends.

Indigenous cultures

1. Find out the name of the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people from the area in which you live and create a class poster showing the names of local animals, plants or places in their language.
2. Many Indigenous stories feature animals. Do some research about the culture of the Indigenous people of your area to find out what animals are important to them and why.

The **CLASSROOM EXPRESS** FREMANTLE PRESS
EDUCATION NEWS



fremantlepress.com.au/classroom-express



@FremantlePress



Sign up for enews



fremantlepress.com.au