

## Open your Heart to Country

By Jasmine Seymour

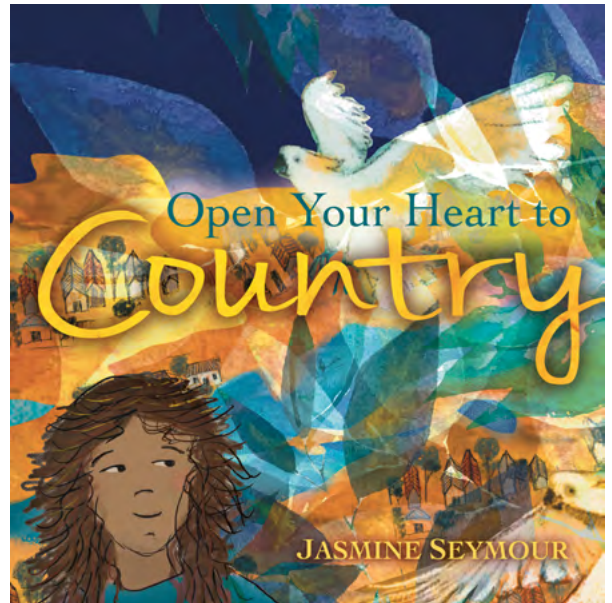
### OVERVIEW

From the award-winning creator of *Baby Business* (2019) and *Cooee Mittigar* (2019) comes a stunning bilingual story of healing and belonging. Told in English and Darug, *Open Your Heart to Country* is a moving account of reconnection to Country from a First Nations perspective. Sharing the nourishing power of returning home and being immersed in the language of Country, this picture book invites readers to reflect on the importance of place, not only for First Nations' peoples but for everyone. With exquisite illustrations and soft, lilting text, *Open Your Heart to Country* appeals to the very young, while sharing a deeper message for older readers. A book the whole family can enjoy.

- From the 2020 winner of the CBCA Award for New Illustrator
- From the winner of the Prime Minister's Literary Awards (*Cooee Mittigar*) and CBCA Notable Picture Book of the Year (*Baby Business*)
- First Nations bilingual story in Darug Language
- Beautiful collage illustrations that place you amongst nature
- Partnered with ALIA for Online Storytime
- Educational tool to teach young children about First Nations reciprocal relationship with Country.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR

Jasmine Seymour is a Darug writer, artist and teacher. She is a descendant of Maria Lock, who was the daughter of Yarramundi, the Boorooberongal elder who had met Governor Phillip on the banks of the Hawkesbury River in 1791. Maria was the first Aboriginal woman to be educated by the Blacktown Native Institute. She was married to carpenter and convict, Robert Lock and their union resulted in thousands of descendants who can all trace their Darug heritage back past Yarramundi. Jasmine is a member of the Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation.



It is Jasmine's wish that through her books, everyone will know that the Darug mob are still here and still strong. Jasmine is a primary school teacher in the Hawkesbury area of NSW. Her previous books include *Baby Business*, *Cooee Mittigar* and *Family* (illustrator).

### THEMES

- Country
- Language
- Identity
- Culture
- Spirituality
- Aboriginal Peoples – Social Life and Customs
- Perspective

### AUDIENCE AND WRITING STYLE

*Open your Heart to Country* is written and illustrated by Jasmine Seymour, which is targeted at a lower primary audience. Seymour has created a story on the significance of connecting with Country by combining minimal yet creative passages together in both Dharug and English language. Each short passage sparks imagination alongside with beautifully detailed illustrations. This story shares how Aboriginal peoples' connection to Country contributes to continuing their culture and customs, as well as the importance of remembering your roots.

## LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

This book and the classroom activities provided are primarily relevant to the following areas of the Australian Curriculum:

Learning area	Year level
English	Years 2-4
Art	Years 2-4

The appendix highlights relevant content descriptors and cross-curriculum priorities that relate to the text and classroom ideas provided.

## CULTURAL NOTES

Country to Aboriginal peoples is similar to the role of a Mother or teacher; the land is continuously teaching, healing and protecting. As Country provides a way of teaching and learning for Aboriginal peoples, it is crucial that on Country learning is implemented into Western education. For information about teaching Australian Indigenous content see Teaching Indigenous content with Magabala Books.

## CLASSROOM IDEAS

### English

- There is a small guide at the end of the book which assists with pronunciation of particular sounds in the Dharug language. Read each passage in both Dharug and English.
- Facilitate discussion on how Aboriginal peoples' form of communication differs to Western communication. Look at how oral stories play a significant role in Aboriginal peoples' and other First Nations peoples' cultures.
- Go through each of the sound pronunciations that are introduced in the book. Work through each sound pronunciation individually until students become familiar with what the sound is and what it looks like.
- Re-read through each passage and ask students to identify where the sound is and ask them to have a go at pronouncing it.
- After reading each passage, get students to read it aloud to themselves. Get students to think-pair-share about if Dharug language is similar or not similar to English language, why/why not?
- Encourage discussion on why Dharug language does not translate exactly to the same phrases as the English phrases. Think-pair-share and share their thoughts in a class discussion.
- Visit a local park if possible or sit in a grassed/flowered/dirt area within the school. Get students to close their eyes. Either re-read aloud *Open your heart to Country* or create your own story about Country for the students. Prompt students to think about how Country makes them feel.
- Facilitate discussion on what being on Country feels like to them. Get students to create a brainstorm about what Country is to them. They can either draw or write their brainstorm ideas.
- Get students to write a poem about a place that makes them feel at home. Go through the

descriptive language from *Open your heart to Country* and discuss how the language makes you feel. Think-pair-share about what Country means to them or what places make them feel at home. Prompt students with questioning:

- Are there certain things that remind you home whenever you are away? E.g., smell of toast, fresh cut grass
- Why do you think Country is important for Aboriginal peoples?!
- How can we help to look after Country?
- What makes a place feel like home?

### Art

- Look at the illustrations throughout the book. Think-pair-share on students' favourite image. Get students to share as a class.
- Get students to explore the images throughout the book and discuss the use of elements that are being used (e.g., shape, colour). Facilitate discussion on what the illustrations portray? What and how do the elements portray certain aspects?
- Get students to use different forms of art including ICT (e.g. iPad apps) to create their own versions of what Country looks and feels like to them. Ensure students are including various elements to represent their meaning. Students can include a written statement about their piece in regards to why they used certain elements.
- Get students to do a gallery walk to view their creations. Get students to facilitate discussion on what elements they think their peer used at each piece of work. Get students to provide 1 positive feedback comment and 1 comment about what they might do differently. Model an example of each type of feedback (e.g., I like the use of the colour ... for this illustration. I would use the ... colour to portray ... differently).

## APPENDIX – LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

Year	Curriculum Area
2	<b>English</b>
	<b>Language</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand that languages have different written and visual communication systems, different oral traditions and different ways of constructing meaning (ACELA1475)</li></ul>
	<b>Literature</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts, and share responses with others (ACELT1596)</li><li>• Discuss the nature and effects of some language devices used to enhance meaning and shape the reader’s reaction, including rhythm and onomatopoeia in poetry and prose (ACELT1600)</li><li>• Create imaginative texts based on characters, settings and events from students’ own and other cultures using visual features, for example perspective, distance and angle (ACELT1601)</li></ul>
	<b>Literacy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listen to and contribute to conversations and discussions to share information and ideas and negotiate in collaborative situations (ACELY1676)</li></ul>
2	<b>Arts</b>
	<b>Making</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exploration of, and experimentation with, the visual art elements of shape, line, colour, space and texture and how these are used in the environment (ACAVAM106)</li><li>• Experimentation with, and use of materials, media and/or technologies when creating artwork (ACAVAM107)</li></ul>
	<b>Responding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appreciation of the choices made when creating and displaying artwork (ACAVAR109)</li><li>• Personal responses, identifying elements of shape, line, colour, space and texture in artwork they view and make (ACAVAR109)</li></ul>
3	<b>English</b>
	<b>Language</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand that languages have different written and visual communication systems, different oral traditions and different ways of constructing meaning (ACELA1475)</li></ul>
	<b>Literature</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts, and share responses with others (ACELT1596)</li><li>• Discuss the nature and effects of some language devices used to enhance meaning and shape the reader’s reaction, including rhythm and onomatopoeia in poetry and prose (ACELT1600)</li><li>• Create imaginative texts based on characters, settings and events from students’ own and other cultures using visual features, for example perspective, distance and angle (ACELT1601)</li></ul>
	<b>Literacy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listen to and contribute to conversations and discussions to share information and ideas and negotiate in collaborative situations (ACELY1676)</li></ul>



## APPENDIX – LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

Year	Curriculum Area
3	<p><b>Arts</b></p> <p><b>Making</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exploration of artwork from other cultures, such as styles and symbols of Indigenous Australian and Asian cultures (ACAVAM110)</li><li>• Exploration of visual art elements, in conjunction with different materials, media and/or technologies, when creating artwork (ACAVAM111)</li></ul> <p><b>Responding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appreciation and respect for a variety of artwork (ACAVAR113)</li><li>• Personal responses discussing the use of visual art elements in their own and other’s artwork, and identifying meaning in artwork from other cultures (ACAVAR113)</li></ul>
4	<p><b>English</b></p> <p><b>Language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand that social interactions influence the way people engage with ideas and respond to others for example when exploring and clarifying the ideas of others, summarising their own views and reporting them to a larger group (ACELA1488)</li></ul> <p><b>Literature</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss literary experiences with others, sharing responses and expressing a point of view (ACELT1603)</li></ul> <p><b>Literacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use interaction skills such as acknowledging another’s point of view and linking students’ response to the topic, using familiar and new vocabulary and a range of vocal effects such as tone, pace, pitch and volume to speak clearly and coherently (ACELY1688)</li></ul>
4	<p><b>Arts</b></p> <p><b>Making</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of visual art elements and selection of materials, media and/or technologies to create specific artwork (ACAVAM111)</li></ul> <p><b>Responding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responses to their own and others’ artwork, reflecting on meaning using visual art terminology (ACAVAR113)</li></ul>

### Cross Curriculum Priorities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures; Sustainability

### General Capabilities

Literacy, Information and communication (ICT) capability, Critical and creative thinking, Personal and social capability, Ethical understanding, Intercultural understanding.

