

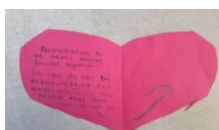


*We say Thankyou to the Biik (the Land), Thankyou to Wurru (the sky) Thankyou to the Bubups our friends.*

**Friends returning:** For the past month we have gradually welcomed all of our Weelam group friends back to preschool attending sessions, some joining sessions virtually and others coming to visit. There was great excitement as friends returned to explore the preschool spaces, renewed previous friendships and begin new connections as they played together again. We have been planning for many small group experiences both outside and under the verandah, and are gradually including the choice of inside time within most sessions. It has been very special to observe the depth of social connections between the individuals in the group, the children are engaging with each other for extended periods of time and even after a five hour session are wanting to continue their games together. The children have been very focused as they work together, they are sharing their ideas, inspiring each other and exploring many of their preferred and new experiences actively within all the learning environments. The children (and their parents) have been amazing with the new routines due to COVID 19. Our procedures for drop off require the children to farewell their families at the gate and join us for the session- we follow this procedure both at preschool and at Bush camp. Watching the children walk in with their friends, independent of their families support shows us how their confidence has increased, independence has developed and how important it has been for them to be back with their friends and within our learning environments. Permission was granted by the Education Department at the end of May for us to return to Bush camp. As we once again gathered under the trees we sung our acknowledgements to Country and danced to let Mother Earth we had returned. Everyone looked terrific in their wet weather gear which was quickly tested in the many puddles!



**Reconciliation Week In this together:** At Balnarring preschool we intentionally teach and take responsibility for reconciliation within all areas of our programs and all relationships with each other, the Land and the creatures. Engaging with First Peoples knowledge's and stories teaches us to respect all relationships and understand the importance of truth telling the history of this Country. Reconciliation Week this year allowed us to engage the children and their families with the historical truths and realities of the 1967 referendum and 1992 Mabo decision from First Peoples perspectives. The children created hearts. These were sent home with information about the referendum and Mabo decision. Their families are now adding their reconciliation messages and returning them back to us. These messages will be shared with Willum Warrain, the local First Peoples gathering place, Hastings. *Please return your heart when you have added your words.*



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## Learning and Living with nature

### Exploring our connections and relationships with Boon Wurrung Country:



*Virtually/ online, within the preschool art experiences and outside on the ground the children are exploring their connections with and sense of Belonging with Boon Wurrung. Their work reflects their growing knowledge and sense of connection with Country. We have been exploring the spaces that support their positive feelings of wellbeing and environments that are important to them. We feel this is especially important within these uncertain times of change.*

**Learning with the Aboriginal flag:** we are learning about the meanings within the Aboriginal Flag.



- **Black** – represents the Aboriginal people of Australia.
- **Yellow circle** – represents the Sun, the giver of life and protector.
- **Red** – represents the red earth, the red ochre used in ceremonies and Aboriginal peoples' spiritual relation to the land. The Red is displayed at the bottom of the flag.

*We will continue our learning further as the children are now becoming curious about the Australian flag and the Torres Strait Islander flags they see displayed within the preschool. The children are giving meaning to and asking about the shapes and colours they see on each flag. We will also be sharing this learning with our families soon.*

### Returning to Bush camp and the Beach: moments of Being and Belonging:



*The children are actively exploring and engaging in extended times of play both active and in quiet reflection.*

**Our Learning Reflections:** We are very aware that our families are presently unable to be with us within our learning environments and are missing you all very much- we look forward to the times you can return to join us within the program. We have been keeping our learning diary up to date and adding to each child's folder so hopefully you will be able to share in some of the mainly learning experiences that are happening each session. Please return your child's folder (if you haven't done already) so we can add further learning stories to your child's folder.



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**Barraeemal:** We have been learning about Barraeemal the emu, looking at the emu eggs and dancing together.



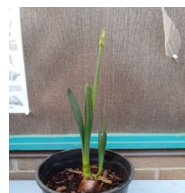
We have introduced the children to the book of the story of Barraeemal as written by N'Arwee't Carolyn Briggs, Boon Wurrung Elder and illustrated by the children who attended Balnarring preschool in 2019. The children in our group who had attended three year old programs last year were able to identify their names and share the story with others. Next term we will begin work towards illustrating the next book with N'Arwee't.



Look what is growing... at preschool and at home



How are your  
bulbs going?  
Can you see  
the flowers  
growing yet?



We are experimenting with how bean seeds grow. Can they grow without soil?

**Making Pumpkin soup with a pumpkin grown in our veggie garden.**



The children were very interested in the seeds they discovered inside, the soup we made for lunch was delicious.

**Extending our interests in Dinosaurs and Volcanos.** At Preschool and virtually online with friends.



We made dinosaur eggs by freezing 'dinosaurs' in ice. The challenge became to remove your dinosaur without bashing it. The children used salt, drops of warm water and the sunshine to slowly discover which dinosaur was in the ice egg. The children worked in pairs and celebrated when after their patient work their dinosaur was removed. We took our interest in Volcanos online when Cath's son Eddie created a volcano for our Zoom session together. We all watched carefully as Eddie made the volcano 'erupt' - thanks Eddie it looked amazing and was so exciting. Last week at story time we made a volcano in the sand pit as we told the story of dinosaurs long, long, long, long ago together.



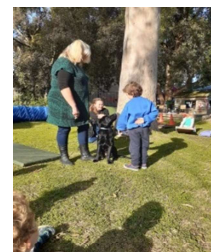
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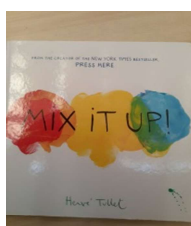
## Learning and Living with nature



**Jimbo update:** Mrs Karen joined us once again to show us what Jimbo has been learning as he continues his education towards being a Seeing Eye Dog. We had read the story about Seeing Eye dogs and the work that they do to support people who have vision impairments. Mrs Karen showed us how Jimbo is learning to touch her hand so he can one day learn to push the buttons on traffic lights, and show people where the seats are for them to sit on. Thanks Mrs Karen and Jimbo.



### Exploring Colours within many experiences:



The book 'Mix it Up' has inspired us to have fun with colours and explore the many ways they can be mixed to create new colours.



Throughout this term we have offered children at home the opportunity to engage with in many new challenges. We were sent many wonderful images from the rainbow challenge including this car rainbow

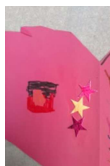


### Parent Catch up and Conversation times:

*I have begun to meet with parents to talk about their child's preschool year so far and to hear about how they are feeling about what has been happening within the program. Please contact me if you would like to make a time with me before the end of term. I really appreciate these opportunities to speak with you, especially when we have been going through these times of social distancing.*



### Reconciliation Victoria HART AWARDS 2020 *Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together*



These awards recognized local governments and community organizations/groups that are Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together and demonstrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal people working together. At Balnarring preschool we feel very honoured that we were the recipients of the school and early childhood award for 2020. We thank N'Arwee't Carolyn Briggs and all First Peoples that have supported us to learn and understand the importance of reconciliation in practice and intentional teaching First Peoples perspectives and knowledges within our program for the teaching team, the families and their children. *Please see Reconciliation Victoria website for more information.*

**End of term:** Last day of term will be 25<sup>th</sup> June. We will then take a two week break and return to preschool on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July. We wish everyone a relaxing break, enjoy your holidays and we look forward to being back together for term three for many more learning times and adventures.



*Our huge thanks goes to all Weelam group families for their support and patience throughout this term as we have developed and practiced new ways of delivering an early childhood program both at preschool and for children who were at home with their families. My personal and special thanks goes to all the teaching team members. Everyone has worked very hard to ensure we all have safe environments to be in together and they have created many experiences that have offered the children opportunities to explore, to wonder, be challenged and follow their interests as well as provide emotional care and support to all of us. We have all learnt new ways to work both at preschool and virtually with families at home. Enjoy the remainder of term two and please return your folders so we can add our learning stories and return them to you for the holidays. Let me know if you have any questions.*

*Thank you Ann and the Weelam group teaching team.*



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