



### *Living and Learning together with Boon Wurrung Country*

Dear Weelam group 2022,

*As I reflect on the month of March there are many moments of learning, times being together as Weelam group and with our families to share with you. Our adventures have taken us to new places, friendships between the children have widen and strengthened, and we have all delighted in suggesting names for Sarah's baby. As I write this now, we are waiting for news of this little one's arrival and which name Sarah has chosen. During this month many families have joined us for sessions, they have participated in the experiences with the children and provided invaluable assistance to the teaching team. Family members have assisted us in many ways; participating at Bush camp as we explore and move between spaces, by cooking toast for Toast Thursday, reading books with the children, joining in craft experiences, preparing, and cooking the murrnong yams and ensuring our scones didn't burn in the oven. It has been fabulous to have this support and we encourage you to add your name to the roster so you can come and join us for a session and/or just an hour or so. Please just let us know what works for you. The children have delighted in sharing the special gathering times we have organized this month with their families too. These have included our Harmony Day picnic, our 'Baby Shower' for Sarah and it was terrific to see so many Weelam group families both past and present at the community festival, Womin djeka Balnarring Ngargee.*

### **Our Adventures: The children are becoming familiar with the many landmarks around them**



We have been venturing further at Bush camp, climbing higher, noticing changes with the season known to the Boon Wurrung Peoples as Manameet, and with the low tides have headed down to the rock pools along the many bush tracks along the foreshore. The low tides have allowed many to "walk to the end of the world" as one child exclaimed. The children are encouraged to look up, look down and listen as they go.



We have been talking with the children about the importance of being respectful as they move, make discoveries, and explore within all environments. This is especially important when we are down at the rockpools, these are the homes to many creatures, and we are visitors to their spaces. We encourage the children to walk with care, sit and observe the creatures they discover, watch how they move, wonder what they are, and if they do pick them up, to be gentle and ensure they return them to where they were found.



## Learning with Sticks: *we are discovering many ways to learn with sticks*



**The balancing stick:** At Bush camp the children have begun making many cubbies and exploring ways to build with sticks. This requires them to work with the challenges of balance, shape, length as they wonder where the next stick needs to go? One child discovered a V shape stick and wondered how it could be a roof. With Kim's help it was balanced on a branch, this led to many more wonderings about ways to balance sticks on each end

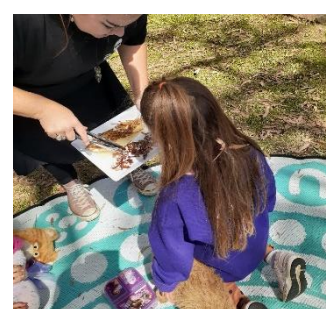


## Womin djeka Balnarring Ngargee: *What a terrific day for all at our Community Festival*



Weelam group was given the job of collecting the sticks to take to Bundjil's Nest for the Festival Day. The children were excited to have this responsibility and enthusiastically collected sticks at Bush camp and loaded up the trolley very high. They were asked to find two sticks each to carry then as a group we headed down the tracks to Bundjil's Nest. As the children had morning tea at Bundjil's Nest we told the story of the nest and why we needed lots of sticks to build the nest again. The nest was created by Balnarring preschool many years ago as an Acknowledgement that we are all learning with Boon Wurrung Country. Over the years many children have shared in this learning and have added their sticks to this nest. All who add a stick to the nest are asked to write their message of care for the Land and Bubuos to their stick as taught to us by the Boon Wurrung Peoples through the Law of Bundjil.

## Murnong Harvesting: *The time of Manameet means time to harvest our yams*



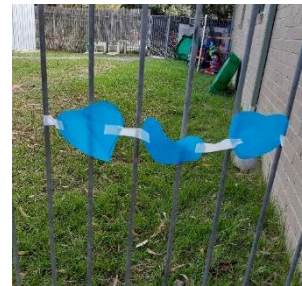
We have been wondering what is happening under the ground in our Murnong garden. The murnongs had died down so we collected a 'digging sticks', just as the First Peoples would have used and began to dig. There was great excitement when the first yam was discovered, then another and another. The children noticed the different shapes and lengths of each yam. Once they were washed, other children helped to prepare them to be cooked like 'chips'. Each child was encouraged to try some and experience this taste. In term two we will prepare our garden again for planting of the seed we gathered earlier in the year.

**Let's Dance:** *many experiences are unplanned by the teaching team and are created by the children as they engage together. This dance was practiced and extended to include many others over several sessions. The children asked for dress ups and instruments while others became their audience.*





**What is Harmony Week?** *Harmony Week is a time to celebrate Australian multiculturalism. The message of Harmony Week is everyone belongs. It is about respect and belonging for all Australians. We invited our families to join us for a picnic lunch and story time together. The children were very excited that the families were coming and asked to make decorations to make our picnic spaces look' beautiful'.*



*As the children worked on their decorations they showed how they were thinking of others, they expressed their joy that their families were coming and their want to make their kinder special. There was much discussion about how decorations could be made and sharing of skills to cut, stick and attach each one. We made a welcome sign too.*

**We asked which Countries does your families connect with?**



*The children worked with their families to create their own flag and talk about their ancestry and family history.*



**Recipes for Harmony:** *As we gathered around our big mat, we shared the stories of the flags we had made along with the recipes that were traditional to our families with each other. We discovered new connections between each other and the many countries we are all connected with through these recipes and flags. We will be making a recipe book for Weelam group with your recipes, please send your family recipe into me written or email, it is not too late.*



**We are all connected:** We ended our Harmony picnic and family time together with the String Story. As the story was told we all discovered how our ancestry connected each of us to others in the group. This was a complex web of relationships. We finished our story with the reflection that we are all connected as Weelam group. We all live and learn on Boon Wurrung Country.







**Being Curious and wondering:** We have been recording many times for your children of wonder and curiosity as they engage in the program. We have been placing these in your child's White Folder. The Folders will be sent home regularly as stories are added. Feel free to add your own stories and photos to the folder. This term we have been engaging with many experiments, with thanks to Kim these have been written up and put into your White Folders if you would like to try these at home. We will be repeating and extending these experiences at Kinder next term too.



*\*What happens when you add detergent to milk? \* How long will it take for the 'rain drop' to fall through the 'cloud'?*



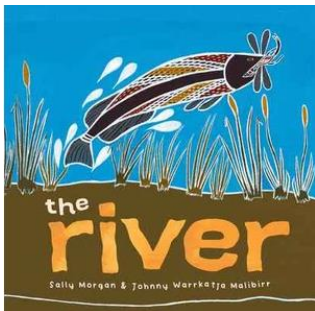
*\*Rainbow Volcano story*

*\*Making Ice Cities*

*\*How can I make patterns?*

*\*How can the boat float?*

## **Our River: Inspired by the River Books we created our own river**



*This experience began with our visits to the creek at Bush camp. After reading these books in both small and large groups with the children each child created their own piece of the river and/ fish, boats etc. At the end of our session, we created and told a story together about the boats journey down the river and back.*



**Thank you to everyone for making Sarah's last day before maternity leave full of so many wonderful surprises:** *The children created many treasures, cards, letters, and a group book about 'Being a great parent' that they happily gave to Sarah. Sarah was delighted with all the beautiful presents from the families and as a teaching team we also added to these gifts, Sarah thanks all for their kindness. We also recorded the children singing with the clapsticks for Sarah's baby to listen to at home. We thought the baby might be miss hearing us. I told this to the Boon Wurrung Elder Fay Stewart Muir and she suggested we record ourselves for the baby.*

**Quiet moments:** Within each session we create times for us to rest, engage in quiet experiences, just relax, and take deep breaths. School holidays provide us with these opportunities too, time to slow down, be with friends and families and share fun times together. We wish all our families a happy holiday break, enjoy Easter and we look forward to seeing everyone again for Term Two on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April at Bush Camp. Kind regards, Sarah, Kim, Suzy and Ann..

