

Tales from the Bush Mob: The Emu Who Ran Through the Sky

written and illustrated by Helen Milroy

OVERVIEW

Tales from the Bush Mob is a series of books about the Bush Mob, a group of animals who work together to solve problems. The first in the series *Willy-willy Wagtail*, introduced Willy Wagtail and Gusto the Wind, who save the animals from a bushfire. Each book shares a rich landscape of characters and places, including Lofty the emu, Eagle, Sugar Glider, Bat, Platypus, Koala, Wombat, Kookaburra, Echidna, Kangaroo. These stories emphasise the value of respect for First Nations culture and country, as well as the importance of courage, perseverance and wisdom to bind communities together.

The Emu Who Ran Through the Sky is the second book in the series. Lofty, a young emu desperately wants to win a big emu race, but he is slow and clumsy – and his first race ends in disaster! But, Lofty realises there is another way to win the race. He enlists the help of his Bush Mob friends Eagle, Sugar Glider and Bat – who are all excellent fliers – to teach him to fly. But it is Bush Mob's inventor, Platypus, who designs the Feathery Paraglider that allows Lofty to win the day!

- Award-winning author
- The second book in a unique series of books featuring Australian animals and First Nations philosophies
- Highly illustrated in full colour

ABOUT THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR

Helen Milroy is a born storyteller and a talented artist. She is a descendant of the Palyku people of the Pilbara region of Western Australia but was born and educated in Perth. She studied Medicine at the University of Western Australia, worked as a General Practitioner and Consultant in Childhood Sexual Abuse at Princess Margaret Hospital for children for several years before completing specialist training in Child and Adolescent psychiatry.

Helen is the WA State Recipient Australian of the Year 2021 and joint winner of the 2020 Australian Mental Health Prize.

THEMES

- Perseverance
- Integrity
- Innovation
- Problem-Solving
- Belonging
- Identity
- Teamwork
- Aboriginal Australians - Social Life and Customs
 - Stories
 - Community



AUDIENCE AND WRITING STYLE

Tales from the Bush Mob: The Emu Who Ran Through the Sky is a story told in three short chapters, making it suitable as both a read-aloud and independently read text. It shares the virtues of perseverance, teamwork, and inclusion, as well as the importance of identity and a sense of belonging. The wisdom of the Bush Council as it helps Lofty to problem-solve exemplifies the centrality of respect and community to Aboriginal culture. When Lofty finally wins the emu race after much dedication and support from his newfound friends, he does so with integrity, grace and humility. The Epilogue helps readers to make connections between the narrative and its themes, while the characters and their traits are extremely recognisable and relatable to younger audiences.

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

English

HASS

Science

Year level

F-3; 5

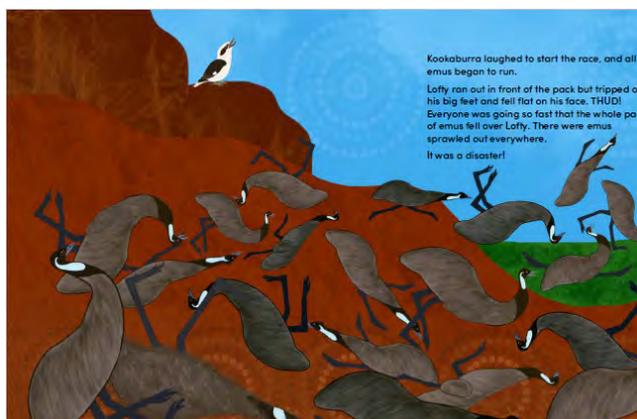
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The appendix highlights relevant content descriptions, cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities that relate to the text and classroom ideas provided.

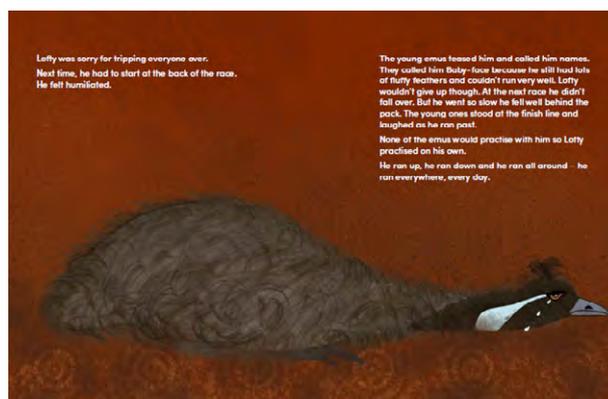
CLASSROOM IDEAS

- Before reading, discuss the title and cover of the book. Examine the end papers and character pages. If this is your first experience with the *Tales from the Bush Mob* series, what do you think the Bush Mob might be? How do the illustrations help us to recognise this as an Aboriginal story?
- With reference to the page opening below, discuss how the illustrations tell us about the commotion caused by Lofty's clumsiness. How does this episode provide the ongoing complication that underpins the rest of the story?



- How is *Tales from the Bush Mob: The Emu Who Ran Through the Sky* a book about acceptance, inclusion and belonging?
- Create a character profile of Lofty. What are his strengths? What evidence of these can you find in the text?
- What does *Tales from the Bush Mob: The Emu Who Ran Through the Sky* share about the importance of teamwork and perseverance?

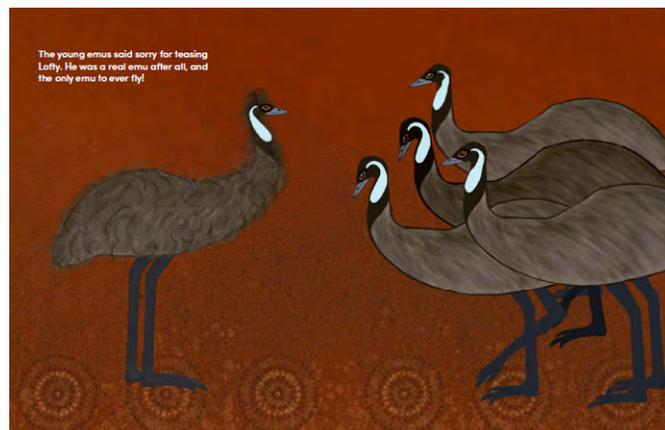
- Why does Lofty become good friends with Eagle? How do they help one another? What makes a good friend? How is this shown throughout the text?
- Discuss the characteristics of the other young emus. How do they grow and change as the story progresses?
- Create a graphic organiser to map the events that take place in the story. How do the actions of the animals help Lofty as well as the other emus?
- Why does Lofty continue to practise running even though he is not seeing much improvement? What does this tell us about the importance of perseverance?
- In a reflection, share a time when you had to practise a new skill many times before seeing results. How did you feel once this practice led to improvement?
- How does the illustration on the page below reflect so powerfully how Lofty is feeling? How do you feel when looking at him in this way? How does the text promote empathy? Make predictions about what might happen next in the story.



CLASSROOM IDEAS CONT.

- Why do Eagle and Lofty visit Sugar Glider and Bat? How do they fly? How does Platypus use such information to help design the flying suit?
- How would you describe Platypus's character? What evidence do you have to support your views? Why do the animals turn to him to help solve Lofty's problem?
- Why are councils such as the Bush Mob needed in communities? How do different members of the Bush Mob contribute to its success? Why is this important?
- Retell the *Lofty Wins the Day* chapter in the role of one of the other emus.
- Use *Tales from the Bush Mob: The Emu Who Ran Through the Sky* to stimulate an inquiry into various types of birds, including their differing abilities to fly. Why are eagles able to fly, while Lofty cannot?
- Find out more about emus and their unique abilities. What role do emus play in Aboriginal stories and culture?
- In the role of Lofty, write a journal about the first time you successfully use the flying suit.
- Use a Y-Chart to brainstorm what you would see, hear and feel once you can safely run through the sky.
- Retell the events of *Tales from the Bush Mob: The Emu Who Ran Through the Sky* in your own words.
- What role does the breeze play in this story? What does this tell us about the interconnectedness between nature and Indigenous ways of life?
- Create a retelling of one of the three chapters by using illustrations, but no words.
- In pairs or small groups, role-play a scene of your choice from *Tales from the Bush Mob: The Emu Who Ran Through the Sky*.
- Throughout *Tales from the Bush Mob: The Emu Who Ran Through the Sky*, the illustrations show concentric circles. What does this represent in Aboriginal artwork?

- When Lofty wins the race, he immediately decides to share his breakfast with everyone. Why does he do this? What does this reveal about Lofty's character strengths?
- Discuss the body language of the other emus in the illustration below. Role-play the apology by the young emus to Lofty. Why is it important to make genuine apologies, and to accept such apologies when they are offered?



- What advice would you give to the other emus about friendship and kindness?
- Create a Word Wall of new and interesting vocabulary encountered in the text (eg humiliated, flexible, swoop, harness, practise, bamboo)
- How does the illustration below help show the importance of friendship and teamwork?



- What do the other emus learn from Lofty? Why do they 'cheer and cheer and cheer' when they see him flying? What have you learnt from Lofty?



APPENDIX – LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

Year	Curriculum Area
F	English Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify some features of texts including events and characters and retell events from a text (ACELT1578)• Retell familiar literary texts through performance, use of illustrations and images (ACELT1580)
1	English Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss how authors create characters using language and images (ACELT1581)• Discuss features of plot, character and setting in different types of literature and explore some features of characters in different texts (ACELT1584)• Recreate texts imaginatively using drawing, writing, performance and digital forms of communication (ACELT1586)• Innovate on familiar texts by using similar characters, repetitive patterns or vocabulary (ACELT1832)
2	English Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss how depictions of characters in print, sound and images reflect the contexts in which they were created (ACELT1587)• Discuss the characters and settings of different texts and explore how language is used to present these features in different ways (ACELT1591)• Innovate on familiar texts by experimenting with character, setting or plot (ACELT1833) HASS Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples maintain special connections to particular Country/Place (ACHASSK049)
3	English Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss how language is used to describe the settings in texts, and explore how the settings shape the events and influence the mood of the narrative (ACELT1599)• 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) Science Biological Sciences <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Living things can be grouped on the basis of observable features and can be distinguished from non-living things (ACSSU044)
5	English Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts (ACELT1608)

