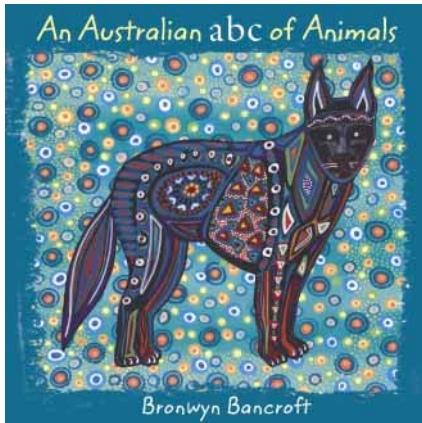


An Australian ABC of Animals

Bronwyn Bancroft



Summary

An Australian ABC of Animals is a delightful picture book, which can be used to introduce Aboriginal Perspectives to young children. It works on several levels, being both an introduction to the alphabet, and a unique exploration of Australian wildlife—some familiar, others more unusual—as seen through the eyes of an indigenous artist. The book will appeal to young children who are fascinated by the animal world around them. It is also a valuable book for older students examining Aboriginal art. Bancroft's

detailed artwork on each page is a perfect starting point for exploring colours and styles used by indigenous artists.



About the author/illustrator

Bronwyn Bancroft is an artist and designer whose artworks have been collected and shown by galleries throughout Australia and around the world.

A descendant of the Bundjalung people, Bronwyn grew up in the small country town of Tenterfield in northern NSW. After studying at the Canberra School of Art, she

became involved in fashion and design, eventually starting Designer Aboriginals, training Aboriginal women in arts and craft. Bronwyn was one of the founders of Boomalli, the Aboriginal Artists' Cooperative, was a board member of the Council of the National Gallery of Australia, has been Chair of the Visual Arts and Crafts Committee for the NSW Ministry of the Arts, and is a well-known speaker on Aboriginal art and advocacy issues. Since 1993 Bronwyn has illustrated several award-winning children's books, including *Fat and Juicy Place* (by Diana Kidd), *Big Rain Coming* (by Katrina Germein), and Oodgeroo's *Stradbroke Dreamtime*.

Bronwyn lives in Sydney with her children Jack, Ella and Ruby Rose.

Bronwyn Bancroft on *An Australian ABC of Animals*

“The paintings in this book are a personal journey inside myself, an exploration in line and colour. My artwork is not traditional, but when you are an Aboriginal artist, you're not ‘just’ an artist—you're a teacher, a facilitator, an activist. So although I live and work in the city now, I know that my artistic talent descends from my Old People—they have gifted it to me—and I feel very honoured by that.”

Learning Activities

- Explore each page and discuss the animals represented. Research unfamiliar animals such as the quoll and perhaps the yabby. Where do these animals live? In what kind of habitat are they found? List interesting features about each animal.
- Brainstorm other known native animals to create a personal Australian Animal Alphabet Book for the classroom.
- Create graphic alphabet flashcards by inviting children to draw or paint animals similar to Bronwyn Bancroft's. Learn the alphabet using these flashcards.
- Make masks of various animals based on Bancroft's illustrations (such as kangaroo, owl, dingo, mouse and possum). Using these masks, create a simple play to present.
- Traditionally, indigenous people were very resourceful. They took from the land in order to survive but never depleted their resources. Which of the animals from the book do you think were a source of food or perhaps clothing (pelts) for Aborigines?
- Investigate Bancroft's style of painting. Look at the patterns and colours used. Identify various shapes and lines in each painting.
- Experiment with Bancroft's style of painting using dots and lines. Supply children with animal templates and invite them to draw lines and shapes within the templates, to create an x-ray effect. Fill in the spaces with dots.
- Choose an animal and either (i) model a descriptive piece of writing, or (ii) research to jointly construct an information report. Invite children to illustrate their published writing.
- Examine Bancroft's illustration for the letter S. Introduce children to the story of the Rainbow Serpent. Does the snake in the book resemble the Rainbow Serpent? Invite children to paint their own Rainbow Serpent.

