



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

This article was originally published in printed form. The journal began in 1973 and was titled *The Aboriginal Child at School*. In 1996 the journal was transformed to an internationally peer-reviewed publication and renamed *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*.

In 2022 *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* transitioned to fully Open Access and this article is available for use under the license conditions below.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

ACTIVITY DAY AT MALLAN SCHOOL

*Adelaide Kirby

On August 23, the Aboriginal educators, Kathy, Bruce and myself, and the cultural officer, Doug Nicholls, spent the day at Mallan School, which is about 20 minutes drive from Swan Hill into New South Wales.

When we arrived by bus the children, parents and teacher had the fires already going. Doug and Bruce, with the help of half of the students, put the clay balls in the fire while Kathy and I organised the other half of the students to paint one another's faces along with the teacher and the parents. After everyone had their faces painted, they checked to see if the clay balls were hot enough to cook their lunches. Their lunches ranged from fish, chicken, duck, potatoes to eggs.

After putting the tucker on to cook, Doug and Bruce led everyone for a walk through the bush, showing them scarred trees and finding some red ochre. Bruce showed the children how to mix the red ochre with water.

When we came to the end of our walk, the students were asked to gather some bark to make a shelter. As soon as the shelter was made, we all headed back to the school where some of the students had their lunches while some of the girls cooked dampers.

Guess what, the educators did not even think to take lunch so we just settled for some damper with butter and jam and a lovely mug of billy tea, which was enjoyed by all.

When everyone had eaten we took the children and parents and divided them into two groups. The boys went with Doug and Bruce to be shown the artifacts, didgeridoos, and clap sticks, while Kathy and I showed the girls how to grind seeds.

* Aboriginal educator at Special Developmental School in Swan Hill. This is the only position in the state that is held by an Aboriginal worker, so Adelaide has particular skills in the field.

The above program is run by the local Aboriginal Education Committee in an effort to provide Aboriginal Studies Programs in as many rural schools as possible.

They all gathered together on the oval and each had a go at throwing the boomerangs. Although the day was windy and raining at times, it did not seem to worry the children as they really enjoyed having the Aboriginal educators going to their school. It was also great to see how the parents came along and helped with the making of the fires and cooking. This is the first time I have ever spent the day at a small school. I was very nervous at first but after getting to know the students and talking to the teacher and parents I really enjoyed the day, and one day I would like to do it again.

.....

CONTRIBUTORS

The Aboriginal Child at School is designed principally to be a national forum whereby teachers of Aboriginal learners may exchange insights about their students' learning, and teaching strategies they have developed that have proved successful.

Readers of the journal find particularly valuable the practical teaching ideas developed by teachers in the field to cater for specific characteristics of their students, school and community.

The journal is able to accept articles and ideas in almost any form - handwritten text/notes, typed or printed material (LINE AND A HALF OR DOUBLE LINE SPACING, PLEASE), tape recordings, can be transcribed and prepared for publication.

Photographs - PRINTS - colour or black and white - are also appreciated.

Please share your ideas and successes.

.....