

PRACTITIONER PRESENTATION

Development of the Koolbardi Bidi Garden Learning Program to promote interactive, nature-based play as a method of encouraging lifelong learning in children of all ages

Helen Coleman, City of Mandurah

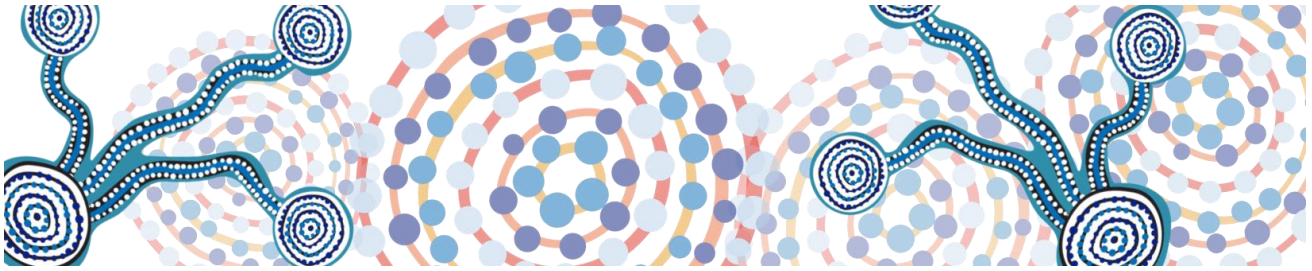
Abstract

This one hour workshop explores the concepts underpinning the development of the Koolbardi Bidi Garden Learning Program. Using the natural world as a classroom, visitors of all ages are encouraged to breathe, observe, record and wonder.

Printed and online resources share the many uses of local plants as traditional foods, medicines and tools, and as art materials in the hands of contemporary artists. Garden signage encourages mindful activities and simple engagement opportunities such as smelling a leaf, thinking like a magpie or rubbing a flower on a page.

Two booklets created for the KB Learning Program will be provided to attendees. Participants of all ages can respond to provocations in the Walking With Magpies journal, such as saying out loud a few words from the Noongar word wall, or following a vine and imagining it wandering across their page. The Six Seasons Journal invites participants to observe and record changes in weather, plant and animal activity throughout the year, encouraging a deeper connection to the environment and understanding of traditional Noongar culture.

In alignment with the Conference theme, a focus of the workshop will be on observing change – the movement of shadows and what this tells us about time, weather and navigation; the seasonal cycle and indicators of our six Noongar seasons. Through exploring these everyday observations, noticing, questioning and analysing data, we inspire curiosity and encourage new ideas. We develop a stronger connection to the environment and assign a greater value the complexity and fragility of the ecosystems around us.



Acknowledgement

Helen Coleman acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet and pays respects to their Elders past and present.

Walking With Magpies Response Journal has been produced in collaboration with the Mandurah community. CASM would like to thank George and Lee-Anne Walley, Barbara Pickett, Iris Woods and the Koolbardi Talking Group for their support and assistance with cultural content.

The journal features artwork created by young people as they responded to the Koolbardi Bidi Garden. Special thanks to Cindy Wright and the 2020 RT Kids: Alyssa Greay, Abigail Thomas, Chloe Gaw, Brooklyn Dicker, Slade Ryland, Benjamin Saj, Dominika Sajova, Chloe Craig, Bodhi Hosking, Addison Zanik, Evie Major, Benn Buckland, Hannah O'Keeffe, Lukas Raymond, Jayde Franks, Giaan Bartley, Emily Beeson, Amy Stockdale, Juliana McDonnell, Eden Chung, Haylee Patchett, Samantha Samuels, Hannah Paton, Mia Hart, and Lilli Hunt.

Walking With Magpies Response Journal was inspired by aesthetics and concepts developed by Lilly Blue (Manager, Learning and Creativity Research) at the Art Gallery of Western Australia, in partnership with Dr Jo Pollitt and Professor Mindy Blaise at Edith Cowan University School of Education. To experience the original Response Journals and research, and to find out more about the Art Gallery of WA's resources and creative learning programming visit artgallery.wa.gov.au.

Speaker Profile

As the Manager of the Koolbardi Bidi Garden, Helen Coleman combines a background in science with a passion for encouraging lifelong learning in others. Coleman's career includes research roles for Dept of Agriculture, Dept of Conservation and Land Management, the WA Herbarium and Alcoa Australia. Coleman also manages an independent art practice, exploring the artistic potential of natural pigments.

Website links

→ <https://www.mandurah.wa.gov.au/explore/arts-and-culture/casm/Cultural-garden>

