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Artistic Director, John Bell AM

MY GIRRAGUNDJI

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Teacher's Kit ©

**Containing lessons, activities and discussion material
for use before and after seeing the performance.**

Introduction

My Girragundji is the easiest of books to read for even the most reluctant child reader. It is thrilling and suspenseful in both visual presentation and writing style. It is a simple story of a complex childhood, advancing the reader through a wide range of emotions; yet it is multi-levelled for those mature enough to perceive it so.

Speaking clearly to all Australian children, the concerns of the story reach across all cultures. They relate to earth and spirit and the animal world, offering glimpses of the adult world through the eyes of a child, and taking the reader on a journey through the tough grind of relations with other kids each day in a sometimes hostile environment.

These notes in part analyse the book for adult understanding with reference to the author's autobiography, *Maybe Tomorrow* (Boori (Monty) Pryor, with Meme McDonald Penguin Books, 1998). *My Girragundji* contains references to many very mature concerns that are often part of the life circumstances of a young Aboriginal child. The notes are an attempt to understand these issues in a mature way and to offer ways of approaching these concerns with young children as suggested by Boori Pryor in the above autobiography.

In accordance with the new English syllabus set out by the Department of Education, the prescribed appropriate English outcomes are listed above each set of activities in this study guide, aiding teachers in the selection of exercises for his/her class. The outcomes are aimed at level 3, though corresponding outcomes can be applied for level 2 or 4.

Although the reading and activity sections are designated in weeks, the time frame is entirely up to the individual teacher, as is the depth and level of discussion for the exercises. Student activities can be done with the whole class, in groups, or individually as discussion, writing, or drama/art, depending on the needs of the students and the availability of time.

The Bell Shakespeare Company offers the wonderful opportunity for readers to see this story in a live, three-dimensional way in the theatre. It is our hope that the performance will give further pleasure, interpretative insight to the story itself and to all of its concerns, and that it will open up avid discussion and joyful activity for the young audience members.

WEEK ONE

Teachers' notes - for discussion during reading

The Dark of Night

In the story this is the physical darkness of night, as well as the darker aspects of man and the unknown. The adult world and youth react in a similar way to the dark. Our little hero says that the dark:

Makes grown-ups go stupid and call each other names. Maybe it's their way of scaring off the Hairyman. Maybe it's just the grog in them (p.14).

Fear

In *My Girragundji* the dark manifests fear for our hero and reader alike, even a fear of fear itself. Fear takes shape in the form of 'The Hairyman'.

To many of us, 'Hairy' could suggest wildness or animal qualities, and man is the human counterpart of the term, so at this point, our hero's fear might be here suggested as being a fear of the beast in man. Conversely, our hero's helper is also in the form of an animal, a little green frog. The 'grog' interestingly brings out beastly qualities in the adults but here grog is explained as a way of coping with the darker aspects of life. However, the Hairyman, clearly embodies a fear that exists and is felt and believed in by the community as a whole. It is clear later in the book that the Hairyman is a spirit that actually *exits*; it is even clear by then that this Hairyman is a catalyst of strength, and thus the Hairyman is seen quite differently by story's end than at the initial stages of the book.

Heat is an indicator of fear in the story. When our hero fears that the Hairyman is approaching, he feels heat wrapping him up like a blanket but then discovers it is only a frog. At this point in the story, it possibly is a fear of his own making and not a 'real' Hairyman. So perhaps are the other fears mentioned, such as fear of bullies, girlfriends, kissing, and the dark. As the story goes along, fear is presented as real enough and taken seriously by the adults, and consequently this leads to respect and understanding and empathy on the part of the reader.

Fear also manifests as an inability to speak, and this is illustrated when our young character describes what happens should you actually 'touch' the Hairyman:

You touch this kind of Hairyman and you lose your voice or choke to death or just die (p. 9).

Shame

There is also the suggestion that the dark is related to shame. The character in *My Girragundji* is clearly ashamed of his bed-wetting, which is a result of his fear of the Hairyman and the dark.

Some of his fear is related to a burgeoning pubescent sexuality. He imagines what it would be like to kiss and feels disgusted that tongues are used. He says: 'No wonder you have to do it with your eyes closed' (p.16).

Dreamtime/Timelessness

Interestingly, our hero constantly shifts tenses from the present to the past and into the future even in the one paragraph. As there are many references throughout the story to ancestors, spirits, and learning from elders, it seems perfectly appropriate that this should be mirrored in the writing style by a timeless quality in the language:

The rain poured down in the night. The water'll
be coming up under our house. You've got to
watch out for snakes this time of year (p. 16).

WEEK ONE STUDENT ACTIVITIES pages 9-16

Outcomes:	TS3.1	Communicates effectively for a range of purposes
		Participates in drama production
	TS3.2	Interacts productively, presents a rehearsed talk or act
	TS3.3	Recognises that English is spoken in different ways and relates to culture, location, time, etc.
	TS3.4	Discusses the nature and suitability of colloquial language
	RS3.5	Reads texts with increasing content demands and responds to themes and issues
	RS3.7	Analyses techniques used by writers to create certain effects
	RS3.8	Identifies use of tense in text structure
	WS3.9	Produces a wide range of literary ideas using different strategies
	WS3.13	Critically analyses own text, how effectively it presents the Subject matter

- Begin a list of words or expressions that are 'colloquial' Australian or Aboriginal expressions. Set them out in columns and continue this exercise as you progress

through the book. Try to work out your own explanation of their meaning and then do some research to check your accuracy. Compare with other students.

- Discuss your own fears in small groups. What is the most common fear among you? Make a mural with the most common fears written or pictured radiating from the centre to the less common ones on the outer rims. Paint or draw solutions or ways to surmount these fears.
- Discuss superstitions and beliefs in your family. Which ones are funny or light-hearted and which ones are taken seriously by your family?
- Who do you think the Hairyman is? Explain your own interpretation of this 'ghost'.
- Read carefully through this section and note where and why our hero feels ashamed. Discuss.
- Who is Sharyn? What are our hero's feelings for her? How do you think she feels about him? Why is our hero worried about having a relationship with Sharyn?
- What problem does our hero have with his sisters?
- Go through this chapter and list where the writers suddenly change tense, even in the same paragraph. Why do you think they do this?
- Create clay/plaster/plasticine sculptures of your fears or of ghosts you imagine or of how you think this Hairyman would look if you saw him.
- Write a poem or a short story telling of a dream you have had which calms your greatest fears.
- In groups find some interesting frozen moments from this part of the book. Hold your whole body completely still in that moment, including your eyes. Perform them for the class.

WEEK TWO

Teachers' notes - for discussion during reading

Elders

Our hero's father represents a wise and all-knowing figure in this story. His father tells him how to cope in fights and this consequently also applies to his fear of the dark: 'Never take your eye off the enemy' (p. 21). Later the Hairyman commands the boy to look at him.

In his autobiography, Pryor tells of the importance of respecting one's elders and the spiritual connection to one's ancestors. Later in *My Girragundji* it is clear that in a perilous environment one must listen to the warnings of one's elders or death may be a consequence. This is part of the traditional Aboriginal culture but also a manifestation of the everyday reality of their spiritual and practical lives. It seems to be a normal part of our hero's life to call for such aid and it comes in the form of a little girl frog.

Feelings and Violence

Fear is also related to fear of emotion and the potential for violence. *My Girragundji* explores a time when all the seeds of adult life begin to sprout and childhood begins to slide away. Pryor further explains in his autobiography how sport made this time easier, particularly as he was one of the first Aboriginal students to go to his particular school:

The transition from primary school to high school was made easier for me because I played football with a lot of the boys in the local clubs. Because I was good at sport, that let me have some faith in myself and helped me deal with my situation (*Maybe Tomorrow*, p. 42).

At the very beginning of adolescence, many concerns and preoccupations seem larger than life. There are so many feelings that seem difficult to deal with:

I'm not angry, honest. I just want to bust him up real bad (p. 21).

Anger is here personalised and sexed and is a source of power:

I take that anger and I push him down into my legs. I run with that anger (p. 36).

Pryor describes in his autobiography a very real threat, experienced by young Aboriginal boys, even as young as nine, from police and white male violence. It is his ancestors however, who help him to cope with this, not by eliminating the reality of it, but by giving him support. This issue of ancestral assistance will be explored further later in the study guide.

WEEK TWO STUDENT ACTIVITIES pages 18-21

Outcomes:

- TS3.4 Evaluates own oral presentation**
- RS3.5 Identifies and interprets ideas, themes and issues in literary text**
- RS3.7 Justifies opinions about the motives and feelings of characters**
- RS3.8 Discusses features of scripted plays**
- WS3.9 Writes a detailed discussion**
 - Contributes to joint text construction activities**
 - Writes about more complex and detailed subject matter**
- WS3.14 Evaluates own text structure to shape readers' understanding**

- What are the problems our hero faces each day? Discuss with reference to any experience of your own.
- What advice has his Dad given him about fighting? Do you agree or disagree? Explain your reasons. In our hero's position are there any alternatives to fighting?
- What new character is introduced in this section? How does he behave towards our hero? What insult does he hurl at our hero and what does it mean? How does our hero react? How does he justify his actions?
- Divide into groups and act out the small scene involving the new character and our hero.

WEEK THREE

Teachers' notes - for discussion during reading

Fear (Continued)

The following description is a metaphor for rising fear:

My voice gets stuck. He's got me... I can feel
his hands around my throat (p. 26).

Yet he discovers that the hands around his neck are actually his. Here, the young hero calls out to his ancestors for help.

Once he conquers his fear, because of the arrival of his Girragundji, there is a test. He has returned home from a trip to the mangroves and it is pouring with rain. He slumbers on his bed while the grown ups are talking in the house. He feels the Hairyman wrapping around his throat. He hears:

Don't be afraid. Just look at me (p. 58).

His little frog talks to him through her spirit:

'Remember our spirits are always together (p.59).

She also explains:

The Hairyman is no different from you (p. 61).

He is therefore encouraged to face his fears and to see them as part of his own make-up.

Elders (Continued)

Our hero talks to his frog as if she were a loved one:

You stay in here with me, you little darling.
We can look after each other (p. 30).

They look straight into each other's eyes and see into each other's hearts:

No one's ever looked at me like that. I feel safe (p. 30).

He feels she's been sent by 'those old people' (p. 30) to protect his spirit. He explains that she stays with him throughout the 'dark nights' (p. 31).

The effect of her presence, and therefore the presence of or help from his ancestors, is the softening of pain.

Thoughts of despair

This young boy attempts to deal with some of the more confusing areas of his life but he momentarily appears to lose hope, 'I'm wondering what's the point of living' (p. 22), when referring to all his accumulated problems - being bullied and living with the Hairyman and the drinking of the adults. The latter problem poses a poignant moment of reflection. In his autobiography, Boori Pryor recounts how the drinking problem in the Aboriginal community is singled out continuously as an 'Aboriginal problem'. He gives a delightful simile.

Now, say if you are at this school, someone walked past you one day and you had your finger up your nose. You were picking your nose, digging around for a big booga. And these people walked past and they said, 'Oh, yuck!'. They went and made up this big poster along with this newsletter and wrote, 'So and so picks her nose, don't shake her hand, she's disgusting.' And then they passed it all around the school so that when everybody sees you they go, 'Yuck.' No one would go near you... Then you say to yourself, 'Well, I s'pose everybody must pick their nose at least once in their lifetime, so there's nothing wrong with that.' But everyone makes out it's such a bad thing and you're the only one that does it. Would you like that? (*Maybe Tomorrow*, p. 55)

Considering the prevalence of Alcoholics Anonymous in western society, alcohol abuse does seem to be a universal problem. The media, however, focus on this issue as an 'Aboriginal issue' and therefore, give the impression that it is pervasive throughout the entire community. This form of substance abuse does exist and touches Aboriginal families but it is a result of long-standing political and national exclusion. Aborigines were only given the right to vote in 1967. In the context of broader Aboriginal experience, taking into consideration generations of displaced homes, stolen children, deaths in custody, domestic violence and police harassment, *My Girragundji* celebrates survival. Pryor says in his autobiography:

My adolescent years were confusing times on another level. Back then, Aboriginal people weren't regarded as Australians. The struggle for my people even to be regarded as human beings was intense, let alone having the right to vote (*Maybe Tomorrow*, p. 40).

Perhaps a truthful account of Australian history may give greater appreciation of the circumstances of the characters in *My Girragundji*.

WEEK THREE STUDENT ACTIVITIES pages 22 –30

Outcomes:	TS3.1	Participates in a class debate on local or cultural issues
		Explores ideas and topics in a group set up by teacher or peers
	TS3.2	Uses gesture, posture, facial expression, voice to interact and communicate ideas to an audience
	TS3.4	Recognises appropriateness of spoken language in spontaneous, planned and rehearsed situations
	RS3.5	Identifies themes and issues in text
	RS3.7	Discusses reasons for people's varying interpretations of texts
		Recognises how visual text changes can affect meaning
	WS3.12	Experiments with styles, size and colour of font for appropriate situations
	WS3.13	Discusses language choices for building topic information

- What has happened to our hero and how did his parents react? What other problems does the boy face in his daily life? How do you think he feels in his position? How would you feel?
- What literary technique are the writers using in this chapter and why? What effect does it have on you as a reader?
- Explain what happens to him. Earlier in the book something similar happens - what and to whom?
- Discuss the mention of safety and protection given by departed relatives. Does anyone feel like that about a departed grandmother or grandfather?
- It might be appropriate to discuss the children's perceptions of modern Aboriginal life. To what extent have the children been influenced by the media and by white 'folklore'?

- Is our hero's life really so different to that of a child from another culture? Discuss with reference to your own experience or with that of your peers.
- Make a puppet frog using a sock, or paper and strings.
- Prepare individual mimes of the whole of this chapter. Present to the class. Pick some music to accompany your mime or get a musical student to underscore while you perform. Make each moment real.

WEEK FOUR

Teachers' notes - for discussion during reading

Feelings and Violence (Continued)

Getting busted up at school doesn't hurt that much,
now I know she's there, my Girragundji (p. 33).

He treats his frog gently, gives her food and drink, and through this learns to nurture and love.

They communicate through the eyes:

You can tell a lot from eyes. When I look in
my Gundji's eyes, she speaks to me (p. 34).

As he might call to a spirit, our hero calls to his Girragundji for help:

And I laugh and call to my Girragundji
to take me higher (p. 36).

Change

The little green frog brings with her changes in circumstances for the boy. Our young hero is now able to go to the outdoor loo late at night in the pitch black. He is also able to counsel his frightened cousin Kev when usually it is the other way round.

Even when she is not present, the little green frog's 'presence' effects change. An analogy can be found in the landscape of the Bohle, which is a special place where the river meets the sea. Change here is therefore a meeting place between two forces which is perhaps what the frog represents between our hero's fading childhood and burgeoning adulthood. The Bohle is also quite simply a beautiful place in nature where the boy's heart grows with love and sense of self.

WEEK FOUR STUDENT ACTIVITIES pages 31-36

- Outcomes:**
- RS3.8** Identifies and discusses the effect of figurative language such as similes and metaphors in a text
 - WS3.9** Works with different text types to communicate ideas , eg poetry, drama performance
 - WS3.10** Uses knowledge of sentence structure and grammar to construct and edit own text effectively.
 - WS3.12** Uses different media, fonts, layout, to present texts
 - WS3.14** Critically edits and evaluates own text and how well it has achieved its purpose

- The writers use similes and metaphors to make the text more descriptive and interesting. List some of them, briefly explaining their meaning.
- Read this chapter carefully. Think of ways the boy feels different from other kids. Make a list of comparisons between your life and our hero's. Then write a paragraph about your feelings. What would it be like to be in 'his shoes'?
- Describe in a short paragraph of how Girragundji helps our hero deal with some of his problems and fears.
- What do you think the frog represents?
- Write a short story about your own communication and closeness with an animal and nature. What does this communication bring to your life that no family member can give? What problems does your animal friend help you solve?
- Discuss creative ways to deal with anger usefully. How many can you think of? How does our hero deal with his anger in a useful way?
- Discuss ways to deal with anger destructively. How many examples can you think of? What destructive use of anger does our hero make?
- Write a poem about a secret inner strength that gets you through any problem each day.

WEEK FIVE

Teachers' notes - for discussion during reading

The Body and the Spirit

The relationship our hero has with his frog is a sensual one and in this connects the spiritual quality of her presence with a real bodily reaction:

Then, plop, down onto my chest. The first touch of her feet shocks my skin. But the kind of shock that makes you tingle and suck your breath in with the thrill. Our hearts beat together (p. 40).

Change (Continued)

When the family go to the Bohle our hero feels different:

She said our spirits are always together (p. 46).

But there is danger in change and the mangroves represent this. It is important to know where to go and where not to go:

You don't listen, you die (p. 47).

The crocodile in the mangroves is another important animal in this story and represents very real danger. In his autobiography, Pryor relates the symbolism of the crocodile to drugs and alcohol and their ability to 'eat you up and kill you' (*Maybe Tomorrow*, p. 49). Yet the mangroves smell sweet:

Like the breath of the most secret place on earth (p. 50).

Change is a challenging time and here our boy calls his Gundji for strength to deal with it. His father proclaims it is time to learn to kill food to eat and this act teaches respect for life, 'all life'. He is warned never to kill unless for food and to never kill the woman crab or fish:

This woman fish I caught, big one too, I held him up and looked him in the eye and said, 'Lucky you not a man' (p. 53).

Pryor discusses, in *Maybe Tomorrow*, this very experience in his childhood when hunting turtles with his dad, and this may be a common Aboriginal childhood experience:

I was about six or seven. I had to smash its head and cut its throat. You imagine that turtle on its back gulping blood and squirming, and it's not a very good sight. He said, 'Come here, boy. You got to learn how to do this. This is what you got to learn (*Maybe Tomorrow*, p. 28).

He has changed when he returns from this trip and is now stronger in himself in dealing with his fears, as shown by his new attitude to his old fear of snakes.

Place

So much of this story revolves around feeling good with one's family and one's place on earth. A key phrase in the story is:

You can be yourself in a place you belong (p. 50).

This theme is reiterated throughout and our boy grows up feeling that he belongs equally to his family and to the earth which he calls his 'mother':

We grew up as a really good family, although we had our problems. Having a strong family unit as well as extended family, we drew strength from each other in the difficult times. We still went out bush nearly every weekend (*Maybe Tomorrow*, p. 41).

The family visit their white 'Aunt' and 'Uncle' whose property has mangroves; the family loved to be there and it is described in detail in *Maybe Tomorrow*:

That land was owned by two white people. We called them our Uncle Arthur and Aunty Joyce. The fact that they were white never entered our minds. We loved and cared for each other and that's what counted. They gave us free run of the place. We ran for miles up and down that beach. And there was beautiful rainforest there and bushland and mangroves. The smell was so sweet (*Maybe Tomorrow*, p. 2).

WEEK FIVE STUDENT ACTIVITIES pages 38 – 45

Outcomes:	RS3.5	Reads independently and responds to more demanding themes and issues
		Interprets and responds to a wide variety of literary texts
	RS3.7	Considers events in text from different points of view
	WS3.9	Writes more involved literary texts
	WS3.11	Uses a range of strategies to check spelling in own text

- Write a precis of the events of this chapter.
- Tell the class about your own favourite hide-out or special place in nature that you love. Why do you love it? Use as many descriptive words as you can think of.
- Who do you think at this stage Aunty Joyce and Uncle Arthur really are? They say the place near the Bohle really belongs to the boy's family and his dad agrees. What is meant by this?
- Using the last two chapters, write a list of the ways in which our hero feels more manly or more grown-up since he found his Girragundji.

WEEK SIX STUDENT ACTIVITIES pages 46 - top 53

Outcomes:	TS3.1	Explores ideas and topics in a group, participates in a debate, listens to others' points of view Rehearses and tells a story using approaches and strategies to engage the listener
	TS3.4	Discusses effects and appropriateness of colloquial expressions
	RS3.5	Evaluates and participates in sustained arguments
	WS3.9	Writes detailed descriptions and recounts
	WS3.10	Uses a range of adjectives and other language forms appropriate for a particular text type

- Write a short story on the hardest thing you have ever had to do in your life. What really tested your strength?
- Tell the class of a day that felt special even before it started. Describe the feelings using as many descriptive words as possible. What signs were there that told you beforehand that this day was going to be special?
- Go through this section and write out the colloquial phrases or the sentences where the writers use a more conversational style of English, rather than a formal style.
- Why do you think Girragundji says such a deep and lasting goodbye to the boy?
- What is really happening to our hero on this special day? Why is it such a big day?
- What do we learn in this section about Aboriginal culture, especially in respect of animals and the land? How are these attitudes different to white culture on the same subject?

WEEK SEVEN

Place (Continued)

When our boy returns from his trip to the mangroves his family are sitting drinking tea and discussing the Hairyman. His mother has seen it and believes it to be a 'whitefulla hairyman':

Aunty Lil reckons some bad people had done
bad things to our people in this place a long
time ago (p. 54).

In this story, a place, whether it is the land or a home, has the ability to remember, just as a person does. The family decide the house needs smoking to get rid of the Hairyman. It is their grandfather, Popeye, who will do this as 'He was taught by the old people' (p. 56). He also tells lots of stories, as places themselves also do. People and places can tell their story.

Feelings and Violence (Continued)

When our hero is confronted by the Hairyman in his room, he jumps out of bed to challenge his fear and his expression aligns anger with fear, if we remember that at other times he makes a similar determination regarding anger:

I grab that fear and push him down into
my legs (p. 61).

Tears are shed when he fears for his little frog and he cries as it pours with rain.

WEEK SEVEN STUDENT ACTIVITIES pages 53 – top 62

Outcomes:	TS3.2	Uses speaking strategies to convey a certain feeling or meaning Detects strategies that speakers use to influence the audience
	RS3.7	Recognises how people from different socio-cultural or minority groups are represented in texts and whether these representations are accurate, fair, stereotypical
	RS3.7	Explains how the structure of a text is related to its purpose

- 'The rain pours down and washes away the little fulla me.'(p.53) What western ritual does this remind you of?
- What do you think the rain represents in this part of the story?
- Do you think the 'Hairyman' is real? Who is he? Has your opinion changed since the beginning of the book?
- What family atmosphere is conveyed to you over this section? What picture of family life is our boy describing? Write out a list of descriptive words of your own which express this picture of family life.
- What has changed about the boy in this section? How is he different from before?
- This chapter is quite exciting to read. How have the writers achieved this? What literary strategies can you list?
- Does anyone tell stories in your family? Who? What are they? Tell the class one of these stories in the most interesting and exciting way, really trying to engage your listeners. You may want to use vocal techniques such as varying the volume from as loud as possible down to a whisper, or the pitch or the pace of your story.

WEEK EIGHT

Teachers' notes - for discussion during reading

Death

The night after the football match, our hero lies in bed. It is raining. He thinks over his successes on the field and 'Shaz' watching him. It is now, after having confronted so many fears, that he hears his Girragundji cry out:

It's her, calling out like death from under
the house where the water comes up (p. 66).

A snake has got his Girragundji. He grabs a torch, runs out into the night, without a thought for the Hairyman. However, he is too big to squeeze under the house to save her. Death and the end of his childhood are here entwined. He cries out:

Girragundji, my Girragundji, my darling Girragundji (p. 69).

and with his mind he tells her that he loves her. He hears her reply:

Our spirits...always...together...you are strong...
no matter what (p. 70).

He is comforted by his little sister and he apologises for being a bully. He says:

I won't be needing to do that no more (p. 71).

The earth is both a resting place for the dead and a living spiritual presence. Elements of nature hold memories and they are a living present reminder of loved ones. Our young man reflects that when the rain pours he listens out for the chorus of croaks. He still hears his Girragundji:

She's still there. Always will be. Protecting me (p. 73).

Manhood

Once our hero has confronted the Hairyman and seen the back of him, a weight is lifted and he feels as if fear has left him. Once the ordeal is over he says:

I sleep like a man this night (p. 62).

This is followed by a new attitude, particularly around girls. The next day, on the way to school, he sees Sharyn again. He is much cooler this time. They actually talk and they decide they're going to a match together:

I've got that fizzy sherbert in my belly.
I don't care. I reckon she has too (p. 63).

Later that month warts grow on his fingers. Sharyn is revolted and drops him but he doesn't care. He has started to like Jody Butler.

Spirituality and the Body

At the conclusion of the book Pryor and McDonald stream concerns around which the little Girragundji envelopes her protection and love: the heart and all its vulnerabilities; the voice, particularly when there's a need for assertiveness; the special places, such as the mangroves which are dangerous and beautiful; the night, particularly around the fire during storytelling time; and the painful times, such as when receiving a flogging from Dad.

Herein also are important adolescent issues suggesting that this story is very much about the anxiety of leaving childhood behind. Pryor and McDonald have therefore created a delightful story dealing with the very concerns young people have before they enter and pass through the teenage years. The story also highlights Aboriginal spirituality, which is connected to the earth and is a real physical experience, but certainly highlights far more, a universal spirituality which commonly describes the search for inner strength and which ultimately leads to greater self understanding and love of the self.

Storytelling is here in the book a spiritual tool and experience. Pryor tells in his autobiography:

Your telling of the story is caressing their inner self, their hearts and their souls and tickling them and laughing (*Maybe Tomorrow*, p. 17).

WEEK EIGHT STUDENT ACTIVITIES pages 62 – 74

Outcomes:	RS3.7	Considers events from each character’s point of view
	WS3.9	Produces a well-structured text appropriate for the purpose Explores and uses language features to write poetry effectively
	WS3.10	Uses grammatical knowledge to structure own text
	WS3.11	Uses spelling strategies competently
	WS3.12	Uses multimedia to create published works incorporating text, graphics, layout and choice of words to create a desired effect
	WS3.13	Evaluates own text and how it influences the reader

- List the ways in which our hero has really grown up since the beginning of the story. Is this what the story is really about? How is his relationship with Sharyn different now?
- What do you think the death of Girragundji represents in the boy’s life? Read carefully and find out how it softens him. Why?
- Write a list of the situations and matters that have been resolved since the beginning of the book.
- Write a book review of *My Girragundji*, telling your reader what the story is about, what techniques the writers have used to tell this story and what effect these have had on you. Give your opinion of the book using references from the book to support your view.
- Each small group should choose one favourite moment from the chapters studied and then perform them in sequence around the room. Perhaps underscore the scenes with music to convey atmosphere. Remember that ‘frozen’ means absolutely still, eyes included.
- Write a *haiku* about the loss of a pet animal.
- Design a cover for the book or an illustration for a particular page that inspired you.
- Retell the story from the frog’s perspective.

TRANSLATION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

Migaloo	White person
Quinkin	Spirit (general spirits)
Gulmra	Toilet
Jalbu	Woman or Young Girl
Yibulla	You Follow
Girragundji	Green Tree Frog
Wirrell	Shell Fish (For eating)