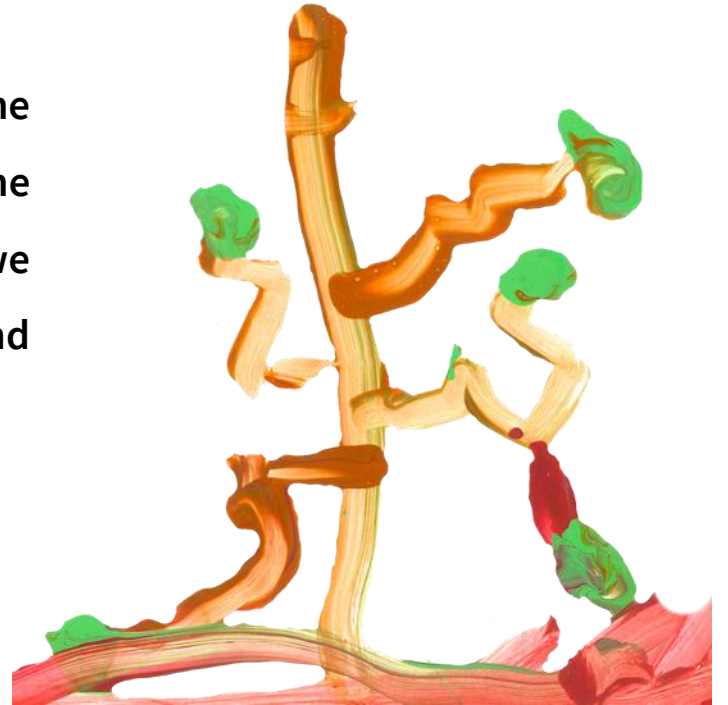


# The Talking Tree

## In dialogue with natures' artefacts

Trees dot the Awabakal Lands on which we live. They are the biggest plants on the planet and are integral to the production of oxygen. They provide so much to life as we know it in the Anthropocene, yet how do we know and connect with trees?



While co-researching the topic 'sustainability' it became apparent that the children understood trees as being more than dormant structures on the land.

Educators moved beyond human stewardship pedagogies to create opportunities for contemplation and posthuman thinking. The children responded to this by opening a relational dialogue with our Twin Maple trees. They sang the song...



*Trees, trees, trees.  
They're very useful things.  
If we didn't have trees,  
what would we use,  
to get our oxygen to breathe?*

Framing trees as an active, social, and knowledgeable form rather than an object prompted the children to observe and consider the life of a tree.

*Trees have patterns and they're all different, I think. I will have a look at all of them in the world to know that – Loula*

*I wonder if trees know about leaves. Do you think they get sad when they lose them? – Angus*

*They get sad when they're chopped. They bleed the sap which is the tree blood – Bodhi*

*One day I actually saw a tree get cut down, for real life – Ella*

*Sometimes a new one grows, and it takes a long time – Angus*

*Five hundred hours – Bodhi*

*Did you know when they shake their leaves, they're talking? – Bodhi*

*A tree is very wise cause they're very old. The talking tree told me that – Bodhi*

*All the leaves fall off all crunchy. I can hear them when I play – Violet*

*The tree is cold and it's losing it' leaves. We need to think of a way to keep it warm  
- Elliotte*







*Look up, look down, look around and around.  
What can you see? What can you smell?  
What do you think this tree is trying to tell?*

The children connected their storytelling to forms of theatrical and musical expressions. Educators noticed the voices of the children shift when expressing different elements of their theories.



*The leaves that fell were  
green. They weren't  
ready to go and fall off.  
The tree felt sad - Elliotte*



*Every year the leaves fell  
off. Forever and ever -  
Luca*

*He already found out  
that water grows new  
trees that made him  
bigger.  
He became bigger than  
anything. As big as  
mother nature  
- Bodhi*



The children's artwork began reflecting their theories of our twin Maple trees in the yard. Educators documented the children's voices and ideas as they continued to personify the trees by giving them human like features and characteristics through representational mediums.







*The leaves fall down  
on the ground  
sounds like this –  
Liam*

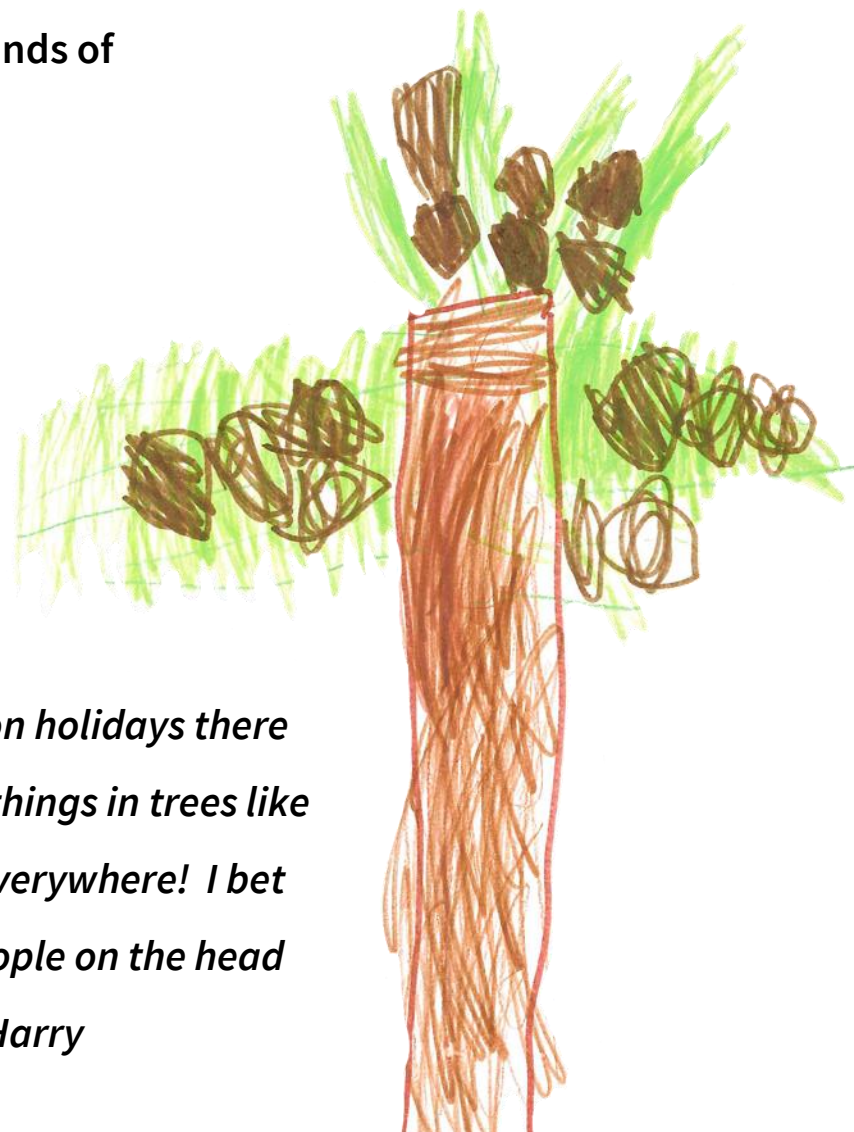


*Trees are like people, they can  
be tall, short, different colours.  
They like different things. Some  
get angry. Some are sad. Some  
are happy and make flowers –  
Sunny*



*Trees have birds that live in then a lot of the time – Maggie*

Maggie explored her observation by replicating the sounds of  
birds walking on tree trunks with a ukulele



*When I went on holidays there  
were growing things in trees like  
coconuts... everywhere! I bet  
they donk people on the head  
– Harry*



Storytelling became one of the main languages that the children utilised to share theories and observations of trees. The children would arrive each day to share with educators their theories of how trees move.

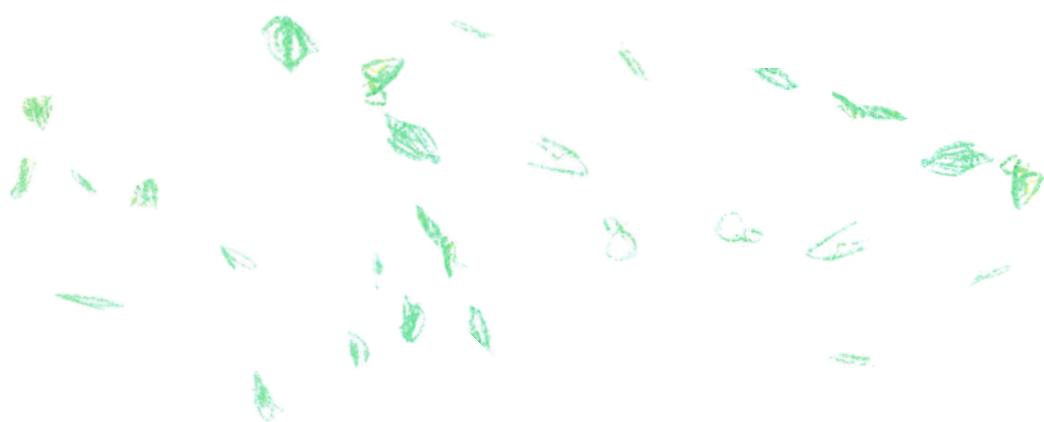


*I think the birdies  
move them when  
they walk. Then the  
wind goes shoo  
shoo shoo - Neo*



The protagonist of the children's story often changed appearance to reflect the children's evolving theories. As the children continued their drawings, educators began piecing together their theories, observations, and artwork to create a story. The children named this book 'The Talking Tree' which symbolises their connection and dialogue with our Maple tree observations and what they have learnt from trees throughout their research journey. Their voices began harmonising the repetitiveness journey of leaves growing on a tree.

*'Leaves growing here. Leaves growing there. Leaves growing every-where'*







*When trees move, it  
actually sounds like a  
snowstorm – Eli*

*I think it sounds really  
windy – Ari*

*Sometimes it can sound  
really heavy rain if you  
clothes your eyes - Angus*



## Moving Beyond Visible

There are many possibilities for documenting learning that has unfolded over a large amount of time. Our children are living in the digital age, where utilising technology in the learning environment presents opportunities for building positive relationships with digital technology. In the teaching-learning environment, we envisioned a multimedia display of the learning – or as the children call it, ‘a movie’.



Learning to animate became an immersive experience where learning came to life. The children’s learning evolved into new modes of representation, dimension, and artisanal expression.

