


Take 4 For the Shore

On August 21st, 2018, a dolphin named Highnitch died in the Swan River (or Derbarl Yerrigan to Whadjuk Noongar people). A plastic bag once used for garden mulch and a fishing net were entangled around her body. The plastic bag filled with water and acted like an anchor, forcing Highnitch to drown. Highnitch had an eighteen-month-old dolphin named Splash. Dolphin calves need to stay with their mothers for at least 3-5 years to be able to survive on their own. Tragically Splash died a week later, on August 28th.

As part of Attadale Primary School's Reconciliation Action Plan journey, we decided to produce a story, artwork and songs to not only share Noongar Culture, but to make our school community aware of the plastic pollution that is destroying the health of local fauna, flora and marine life in the Derbarl Yerrigan. This would help support teachers with the inclusion of not only Aboriginal perspectives into their daily teaching, it would provide information and learning regarding sustainability practices.

Our hope is that with the sharing of this story, we can better help our school and wider community understand the rich culture of our Noongar people and the plastic pollution that threatens the health of our land and river.

As teachers we cannot teach Noongar language, but we can share the language that has been shared with us from local Noongar elders and language teachers. We thank the Noongar Boodjar Language Centre for helping us do this with the respectful translation of the Noongar words used within our 'Take 4 for the Shore' story and songs. Thanks must also go to The City of Melville for their continued support and partnership with our school's sustainability projects and to The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions 'River Guardians' for their help in the printing of student posters and to our amazing art teacher Kathryn Power for her help and guidance. Our illustrator Beaconsfield artist Sharon Levine did an amazing job of connecting to our important messages. We could not have completed this project without them.



Take 4 For the Shore



Attadale
Primary School

Foundations for life



Moyitj is a water rat from the Whadjuk land of Jenalup and Dyoondalup. His home is next to the beautiful Derbarl Yerrigan and his dream is to stop plastic pollution.



Every day he walks along the shore collecting plastic rubbish with his friends and he always makes sure they at least pick up four bits of plastic each.



Sylvana the Swan has a long neck and gets into those tricky places like caves and the Samphire plant. Sylvana can reach here, reach there and reach just about anywhere with her super long neck. The Noongar name for Samphire is Milyoo and the Noongar name for swan is Maali.



Olga the Pied Oystercatcher is great at scooping up plastic water bottles and lids with her strong beak. The Noongar name for a Pied Oystercatcher is Koran-Koran.



Penny Possum or 'Penny Poss' as Moyitj calls her, uses a pair of binoculars to try and find food and plants for their bush FOGO. The Noongar name for possum is Koomool.



The four friends became the 'Take 4 for the shore team' and as they worked together, they would always say 'Take 4 for the shore, four for the team, four for the planet to keep it clean!'. When Frances the Fairy Tern heard the team from her Dyoondalup sandbar, she would sometimes come to help.



Time after time the team finds more and more plastic, and they worry about Jenalup and Dyoondalup and the pollution in the river.



One morning as Moyitj sat sadly looking at all the plastic waste, he heard the cry of a dolphin 'Help, help, please help me!' A huge plastic bag once used for mulch and some old fishing net was caught on her fin. Moyitj quickly swam to the dolphin and removed the plastic bag and the fishing net. They hugged each other and felt so grateful to be friends. The Noongar name for dolphin is Kwilena.



The little dolphin looked at Moyitj and said, 'We know about your plastic team, and we can always hear you say, Take 4 for the shore, four for the team, four for the planet to keep it clean! Thank you Moyitj, it means so much to us. Now climb onto my back and hold on tight!' Moyitj wrapped his little paws around the dolphin as they glided through the water and danced through the ripples.



'Where are we going?' asked Moyitj. 'We are going to find the wise old Tooart Tree' replied the dolphin. 'Tooart Trees love us and know the answer to every problem. I don't know what to do about all the plastic in our river, but Tooart Tree will know what to do' she said. Suddenly they swept through a huge white keyhole and down into the deepest part of the Derbarl Yerrigan, then quickly came up through a rainbow of beautiful flowers and trees.



'We have been waiting for you' said Tooart Tree, 'Thank you for looking after our foreshore. We love our Derbarl Yerrigan and people need to know about the plastic problem we have'. Tooart Tree, Biboolboorn, Kwel and the flowers and plants from Jenalup and Dyoondalup taught Moyitj songs about reducing, reusing and recycling waste and how to reduce the use of plastics.



What do you think Moyitj said to his friends when he got back? 'Take 4 for the shore, four for the team, four for the planet to keep it clean!' Moyitj and his friends want to remind us to love ourselves and to love and respect the land of the Noongar people. Let's all take 4 for the shore, because it takes a team to make a dream!