



Dreamtime stories from the Wugularr (Beswick) Community in Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory have been brought to life via a special website.

Dust Echoes is a series of beautifully animated stories from Central Arnhem Land, telling stories of love, loyalty, duty to country and aboriginal custom and law.

Originally made to be screened on the ABC, the animated films featured on *Dust Echoes* have also been screened at film and animation festivals all over the world, to great critical acclaim.

The stories, which were chosen by the Northern Territory Arts Centre, the Djilpin Arts Aboriginal Corporation and Indigenous consultant Tom E. Lewis, were recorded as audio and then interpreted as short animated movies by some of Australia's most talented emerging animators.

The *Dust Echoes* website aims to further explore these beautiful stories, to educate and entertain young people in order to instill a respect and thirst for the wealth of

Indigenous culture and stories on our door step.

"*Dust Echoes* is one way that we are bringing everyone back to the same campfire – black and white," says Tom.

"We are telling our stories to you in a way you can understand, to help you see, hear and know. And we are telling these stories to ourselves, so that we will always remember, with pride, who we are."



Last month, eight new animations were launched on the site: *The Bat and the Butterfly* (which has been nominated for a prestigious AFI Award in the Short Animation category), *Brolga Song*, *The Curse*, *Mermaid Story*, *Mimis*, *Moon Man*, *Spear and Whirlpool*.

The interactive aspect of the *Dust Echoes* site has the ultimate purpose of introducing young audiences to ancient stories of the Dreamtime. Audiences can explore the stories' narratives and even create their own versions of stories with a special application. They can delve



deeper into the history of the stories, learn Indigenous words from the glossary, or simply sit back and enjoy the animations.

The stories in *Dust Echoes* will also be broadcast on ABC2. You can check out *Dust Echoes* for yourself at www.dustechoes.com.au



PREPARATION BEFORE READING

Dust Echoes is a new series of online animated Dreamtime stories from the Wugularr (Beswick) Community in Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. The interactive website was created to introduce young people to these ancient stories.

Eight new stories have been launched on the website:

www.dustechoes.com.au

ARNHEM LAND



ACTIVITY 1: BROLGA SONG

The Brolga Song is a Dhuwa story that is told in Rembarrnga language in Central Arnhem Land.

In this story, Victor has no father or grandfather to teach him his proper place in life. He searches for the spirit of his fathers and finally finds them in the brolgas, Victor's dreaming-body which hold the message and spirit of his fathers.

Victor travels through the land singing the brolga song. All kinds of birds and animals listen to Victor as he sings: a goanna, a barramundi, a kangaroo and an emu. They feel sad because they can't help him and Victor is so lonely.

Victor sings the Brolga Song again and suddenly he sees the image of his father and grandfather in the clouds. Out of the clouds comes a flock of brolgas which land all around him. They dance with Victor as the goanna, barramundi, kangaroo and emu watch.

Victor is happy that he has finally been reunited with his fathers through the brolgas.



Skimming for main ideas

1. Why is Victor travelling through the land?

2. Which animals does he meet on his journey?

3. Why are they so sad?

4. Why was it such an important journey for Victor?



ACTIVITY 2: STORYBOARD

A storyboard is a series of drawings that tell a story.

Draw a storyboard to show six main parts of the Brolga Story.

1	2
3	4
5	6



ACTIVITY 3: INFORMATION REPORT: BROLGA

BROLGA

*Image from: John Gould
The birds of Australia 1840-48.*



CLASSIFICATION

Brolgas are a large grey crane. There are two kinds of crane in Australia: the brolga and the sarus.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Brolgas are pale grey, with long grey legs and a patch of red skin on their heads. When they spread their wings, the span is 2 metres from tip to tip.

HABITAT

Brolgas are found across tropical northern Australia, southwards through north-east and east central areas, as well as central New South Wales to western Victoria. They live in wetlands, grassy plains, coastal mudflats and irrigated croplands.

Outside of the breeding season Brolgas form large family flocks, sometimes up to a thousand birds.

DIET

Brolgas are omnivorous (feeding on both vegetable and animal matter), but mostly eat grass, roots, some insects, molluscs, amphibians and even mice.

LIFE CYCLE

Brolgas are most famous for their mating dance. The breeding season is in November or December. A pair of brolgas spread their wings and leap and dance gracefully before mating. Brolgas stay with the same partner for life.

After mating, the female brolga lays two eggs in a nest. The nest is a one and a half metre platform of grass and reeds. Both parents share the task of sitting on the eggs, which hatch after about 30 days. The young stay with their parents for about a year.



Reading for meaning

1. The brolga and the sarus are a type of crane.

TRUE

FALSE

2. What colour feathers do brolgas have?

3. How wide is their wingspan?

4. Where are brolgas found?

5. Brolgas eat plants and meat.

TRUE

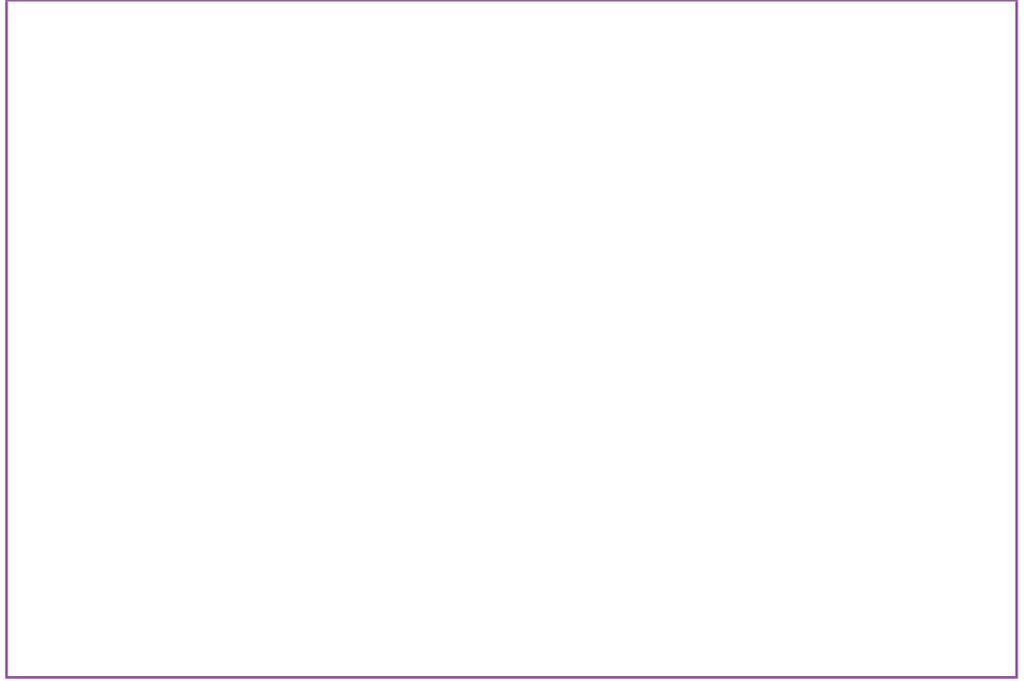
FALSE

6. What are brolgas most famous for?



ACTIVITY 4: DRAWING AND LABELLING

In the box below, draw an adult brolga in its habitat and label its colours, height and wingspan.



FURTHER READING

To read Brolga Song and more of the Dust Echoes stories, head to:

www.dustechoes.com.au