



Kokey Koala's anniversary just in time for Tokyo Olympics

*Strategy.
Action.
Results.*

Children's picture book with a difference delightfully explores the Australian bush.

The family of Trixie Whitmore has re-published her sell-out children's adventure picture book, *Kokey Koala and the Bush Olympics*, 20 years after it was first launched to coincide with the Sydney Olympics, and as a tribute and legacy to the late author.

Then nominated as a recommended resource by the NSW Education Department, *Kokey Koala and the Bush Olympics* is the story of a cute koala who, with determination and courage, participates in a series of Bush Olympics sports with the hope of winning an Olympic Gold Medal.

Just in time for the Tokyo Olympics and guaranteed to appeal to a new generation of children, the hardcover book's exquisite hand-painted illustrations accurately detail fauna and flora that are special in each of Australia's states and territories.

This enables an intricate 'find and discover' experience to captivate and educate readers as they follow Kokey Koala on his enduring quest to win 'Gold'. Answers are provided at the back of the book to confirm the animals, insects and plants are correctly identified.

Hundreds of Kokey's friends can be found including a dunnart, platypus, phascogale, echidna, antechinus, cicada, pademelon and scores of colourful birds.

"The book is fun and engaging for children and adults alike with heart-warming rhyming poems throughout," said Trixie Whitmore's daughter, Elizabeth Hamilton.

"Trixie's love of the Australian bush inspired her to create this book to show off our unique Australian fauna and flora whilst highlighting a variety of Olympic sports including diving, swimming, relay, canoeing, sailing and gymnastics.

"Along with the wonderful illustrations and my mother's rhyming poems, the book contains the overall key message of, 'Keep trying Kokey, be brave and bold, and soon you'll win Olympic Gold'."

The poem for canoeing reads:

The canoeing was another story,
He thought at last he'd found glory.
But up from the bottom rose a snake,
He screamed, the canoe tipped into the lake.

Each story scene is illustrated over a double page and incorporates hundreds of native animals, insects and plants.

For example:

In New South Wales (swimming event), readers are asked to find 24 friends including two Long-nosed Bandicoots, a Darter, two Brown Gerygones, two crayfish and an Eastern Water Dragon. In Queensland (diving event), readers need to look for 23 inclusions including a Diamond Python, three Northern Brown Bandicoots, a Golden Orb Spider, a Platypus, a Paradise Kingfisher and Golden Bowerbird, and the Cooktown Orchid, the floral emblem of Queensland. In Kosciuszko National Park (medal ceremony!), Kokey's friends include an echidna, two Corroboree frogs, a Broad-toothed rat, Dusky Antechinus plus many more. The large format book, 305mm (H) x 245mm (W), is illustrated by Claire Yerbury and Marlene Nash and published by Ocean Reeve Publishing.

"We hope to bring a bit of Trixie's soul back to life by republishing this book as a tribute to her courageous spirit, determination and infectious go-getter attitude. Twenty years on, we are excited to share 'Kokey' with a new generation of children for them to delight in the wonders of the Australian bush," Elizabeth Hamilton added.

Kokey Koala and the Bush Olympics is available from www.kokeykoala.com.au which includes a sneak peek of some of the pages. The RRP is \$24.99 (hardcover) and \$19.99 (softcover). It is also available from online bookstores in softcover only (reduced size of 280mm x 216mm) and the Kindle e-book is \$5.99.

The Aussie Ark Conservation Program is receiving five per cent of book sales (excluding reduced-size soft cover version and e-book). <https://www.aussieark.org.au>

A handmade, wooden 15-piece jigsaw puzzle, using the Tasmanian scene in the book with answer key on the back, been created by Platypus Puzzles with a RRP of \$39.99 and is also available on the Kokey Koala website.

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Note: A book launch is taking place at Dymocks in Chatswood (Sydney) on 1 July at 6pm and you are invited. Register at: www.kokeykoala.com.au

Recent review by Pulitzer Prize winner, Geraldine Brooks AO

"I love everything about this book, from the gorgeous, intricate drawings of our wildlife to the message of endurance, resilience and sportsmanship. The clever rhyming text suits beginning readers. But it is the fun of finding and identifying four hundred exquisitely drawn native animals and plants that will have parents and kids of every age reaching for it as a favourite bedtime book. Very few picture books are as ambitious as this one, travelling

through all our states and territories, offering a primer on the Olympic Games and its diverse sports, and providing a visual feast along the way. I intend to give it to every child I know.

Recent review by Assistant Principal East Lindfield Public School NSW (2012-2020),

Julie Pitt

“As an educator for over 30 years, I was delighted and enthusiastic to put to use the story of Kokey Koala and the Bush Olympics into my classroom program. I was honoured to be given a copy of the book by Trixie for this purpose and it has remained a key component of my classroom literacy resources since 1999.

The story provided me with an engaging way of covering not only many aspects of my literacy program such as reading, writing, spelling, phonics etc, but also topics such as self-esteem, resilience and perseverance all pivotal to student wellbeing and a major component of the Department of Education’s PDHPE syllabus. I also was able to incorporate aspect of my science and geography program which allowed my students to really gain a deep knowledge and understanding from tasks set as they made meaningful connections between the text and the task at hand.

In summary, the story is easily and effectively embedded into all Key Learning Areas of any primary classroom across all stages. The high standard of work produced by my students based on the text and the delight they had in exploring the book and all it has to offer them gave testimony to me of the high calibre of the collaboration between the author and illustrators and their outstanding end result.”

About

Kokey Koala and the Bush Olympics by Trixie Whitmore was published in 1999 to coincide with the Sydney Olympics. A 20th anniversary edition has now been published by the author’s daughter Elizabeth Hamilton and grandchildren Lauren and Grace.

Web: kokeykoala.com.au Instagram: [kokeykoala](https://www.instagram.com/kokeykoala) FB: [KokeyKoala.ChildrensBook](https://www.facebook.com/KokeyKoala.ChildrensBook)

If you would like any high res images or would like to interview Elizabeth Hamilton, please contact me.

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