

OUR FOOD CONNECTIONS





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Illustrated by Maddy Connors (Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung and Gamilaroi) and Jacob Komesaroff

"Our food sources have always connected us to land, place and each other. This story shows how this connection has been cut, and the importance of restoring this."

– Fiona Mitchell, Mununjali, Bundjalung

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Foreword

Ngatta (which means hello in my traditional Gunditjmara language)

Healthy food helps our boorais (children) grow up strong – and is a key ingredient to helping create thriving, healthy, and happy communities.

Prior to European contact, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had sophisticated and sustainable farming and agricultural systems that nourished entire Communities for generations, whilst supporting positive physical and mental wellbeing. The ongoing impacts of colonisation has disconnected us from our land, Culture and traditional foods. Unfortunately, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people now face significant challenges when it comes to accessing nutritious and healthy food.

Unhealthy food marketing is one of those challenges, and sadly the damaging messaging disseminated by fast food companies is causing great harm to our Community. I am particularly concerned about the prevalence of targeted, and unhealthy food marketing in online spaces where our Mob like to gather, connect and have fun.

This book is about breaking cycles and empowering the next generation to fight for their right to healthy food, and healthy food environments – and make healthier food choices along the way.

Now is the time to be bold and brave if we are to restore the health and wellbeing of our people. Let's close this nutrition gap once and for all.

Jill Gallagher AO, CEO VACCHO.





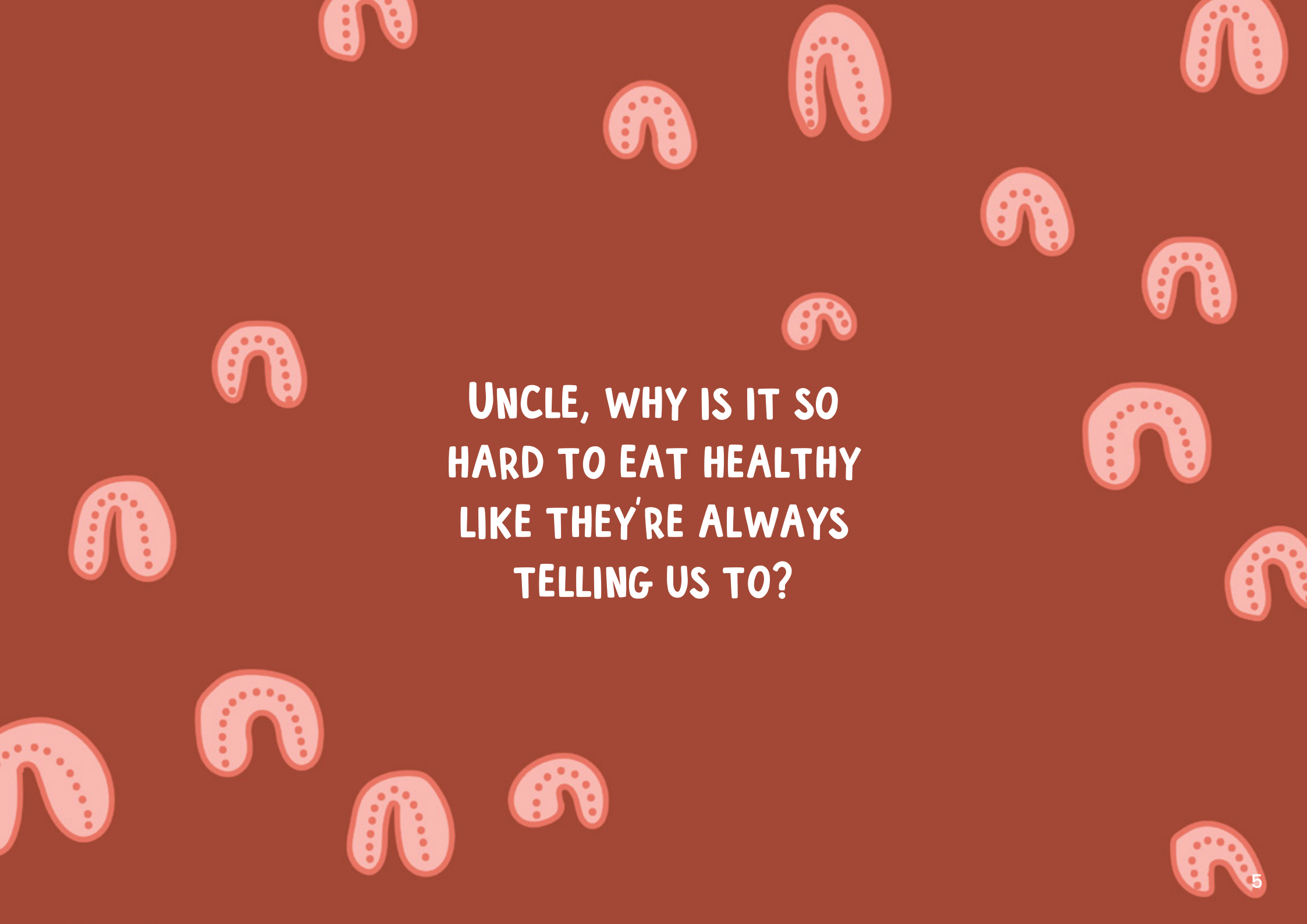
My name is

I am years old

I'm from and

I live on Country.

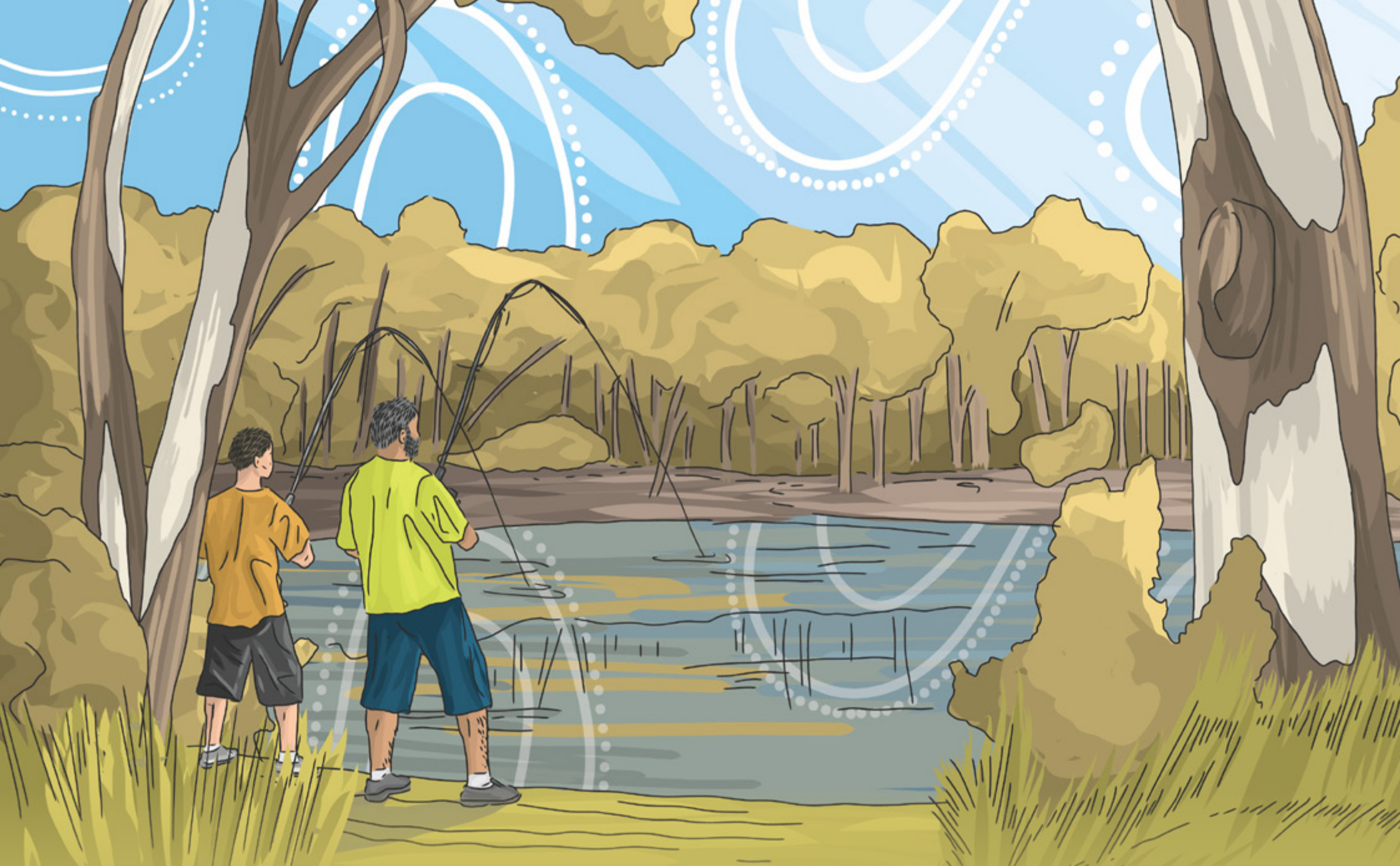




**UNCLE, WHY IS IT SO
HARD TO EAT HEALTHY
LIKE THEY'RE ALWAYS
TELLING US TO?**

WELL NEPHEW, SEE, TIMES HAVE CHANGED FOR OUR PEOPLE IN THE LAST FEW HUNDRED YEARS.

COME ON,
I'LL SHOW
YOU.



THIS IS HOW MOB LIVED BEFORE WHITE MAN CAME, YOU SEE.



**WE HUNTED,
WE GATHERED.**

WE WERE THE FIRST AGRICULTURALISTS, YOU KNOW.



**WE PROVIDED FOR THE
WHOLE COMMUNITY.
WE ALL HAD A PLACE.**

**THERE ARE SO MANY LAYERS,
BUT WHEN WE PEEL
IT ALL BACK, WE CAN
SEE THE WAY OUR
ANCESTORS LIVED OFF
THIS LAND.**



**WE WERE
HEALTHY AND
STRONG.**

**YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT COLONISATION, HEY UNCLE?
WHAT DID IT DO TO OUR FOOD?**



HERE,
LOOK.



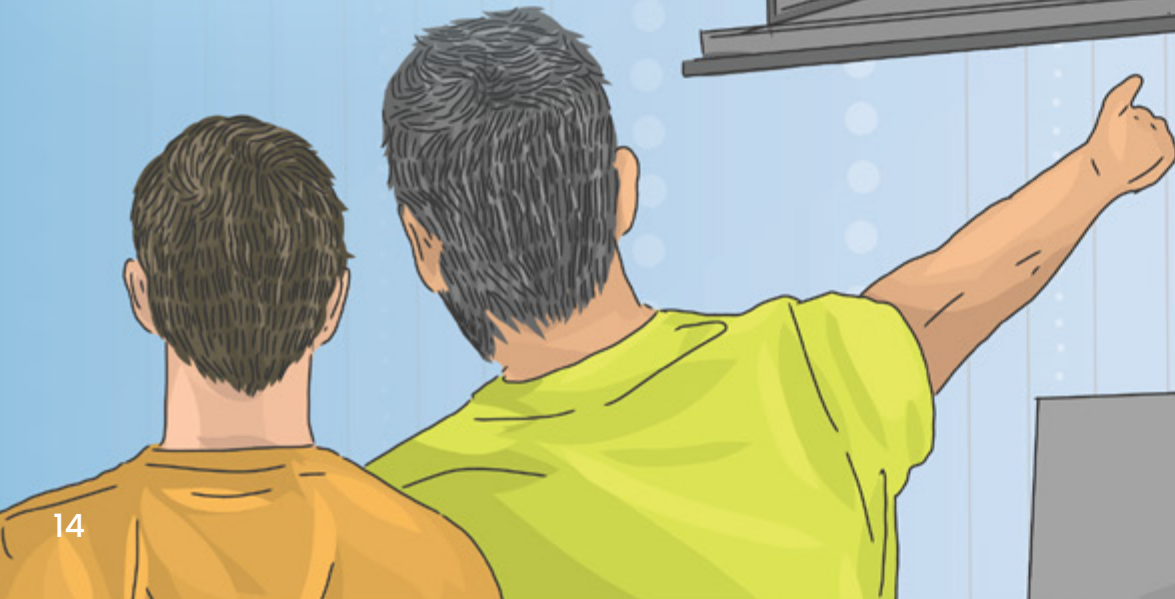
**ALL WHAT WE KNOW TO BE NORMAL TODAY IS
MAKING US SICK. BUT WE ARE BEING TRICKED, SEE.**

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BEING TRICKED? I LOVE THAT ICE CREAM.

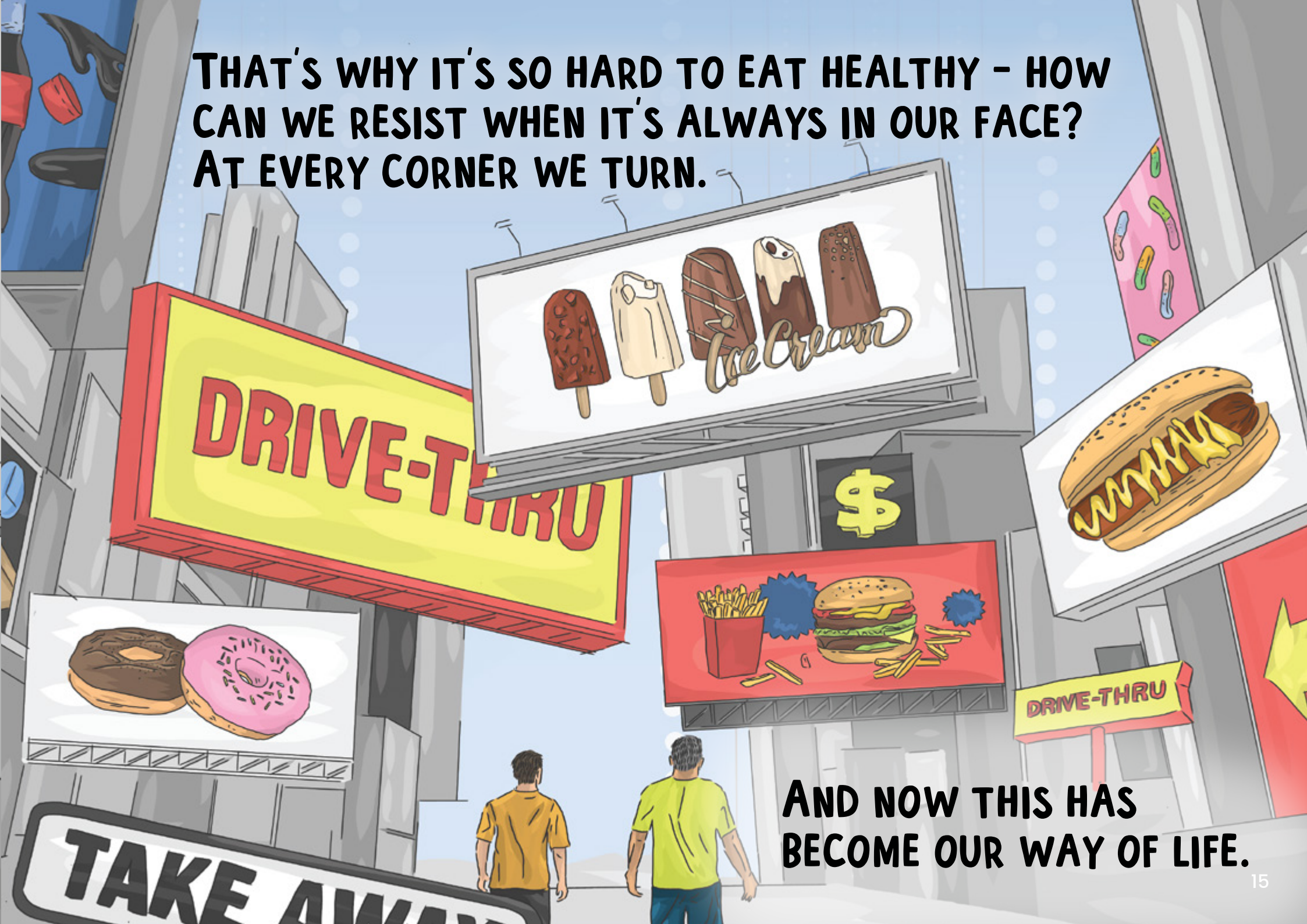


**THEY PUT IT THERE
ON PURPOSE EVEN
THOUGH THEY
KNOW IT'S NO
GOOD FOR YOUR
HEALTH.**

**WE'VE ALL BECOME
PRODUCTS OF OUR
ENVIRONMENT.**



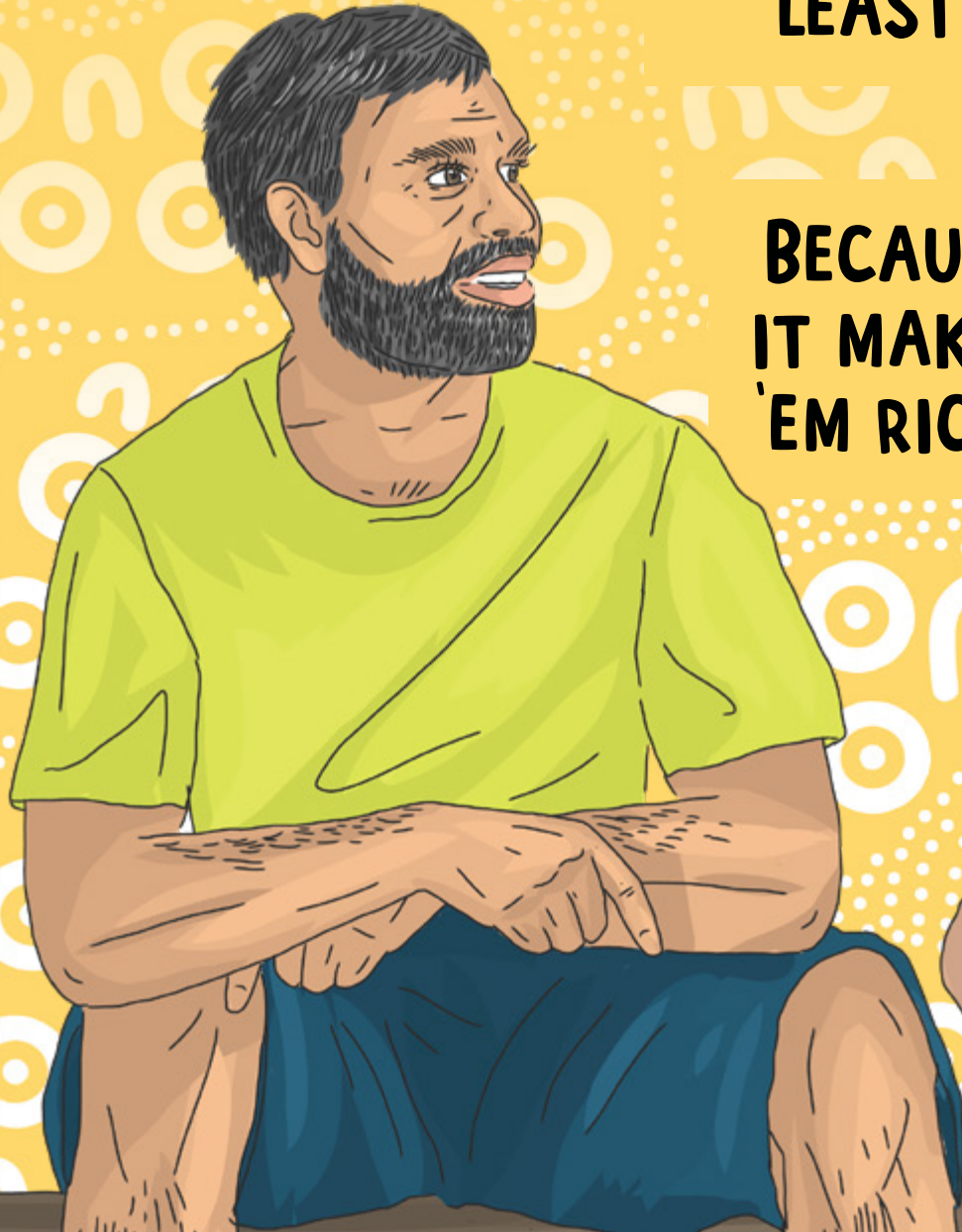
THAT'S WHY IT'S SO HARD TO EAT HEALTHY - HOW CAN WE RESIST WHEN IT'S ALWAYS IN OUR FACE? AT EVERY CORNER WE TURN.



AND NOW THIS HAS BECOME OUR WAY OF LIFE.

SO WHY DON'T THEY TAKE AWAY ALL THE THINGS THAT MAKE US SICK? OR AT LEAST STOP PUTTING IT IN OUR FACES?

BECAUSE IT MAKES 'EM RICH!



An illustration of a man and a boy fishing in a river. The man, with a beard and wearing a yellow shirt and blue shorts, is holding a fishing rod. The boy, wearing a brown shirt and black shorts, is also holding a fishing rod. They are standing on a grassy bank. The river is blue with white splashes. In the background, there are green trees and a blue sky with a sun. The text is overlaid on the scene in white boxes.


**DON'T WORRY,
NEPHEW, OUR
CULTURE EVOLVES.**

**WE CAN'T GO BACK,
BUT THE MORE WE LOOK AT INDIGENOUS WAYS
OF BEING, WE'LL ALL BE BETTER OFF,
BLACK FELLAS AND WHITE FELLAS.**



**WE MUST ALWAYS LISTEN
TO OUR OWN WISDOM,**

**THE WISDOM OF
OUR ANCESTORS.**

An illustration of a hand holding a green plant with a yellow flower head. The plant has several long, serrated green leaves radiating from a central yellow flower head. The hand is shown from the palm side, with fingers spread, holding the plant. The background is a vibrant red with yellow and orange patterns, including wavy lines and dots.

**IF A FLOWER DOESN'T
BLOOM, YOU FIX THE
ENVIRONMENT IN
WHICH IT GROWS,
NOT THE FLOWER.**

**REMEMBER, WE DON'T OWN
THE LAND, THE LAND OWNS US.**



The background is a solid red color. Scattered across it are several stylized sunflowers. Each sunflower has a bright yellow center with a smaller red circle in the middle. The petals are represented by red, curved, hook-like shapes arranged in a circular pattern around the center. The sunflowers vary in size and are positioned at different angles. In the top-left corner, there is a vertical strip of a lighter red color with a white dotted pattern.

**I'M GONNA MAKE
A CHANGE, UNCLE,
YOU WATCH.**

Background to the story

Prior to colonisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people cared for and cultivated this land in ways that were nurturing and connecting.

Aboriginal people sourced foods from Country that nourished themselves and the lands, seas and waterways. Aboriginal people were fit, strong and healthy in body, mind and spirit, and drew strength from connection to Culture, Kinship and Community.

Colonisation has disrupted Aboriginal people's connection to Country, Culture and Community, and the foods that nourished us for thousands of years. There have been major changes to the food environment including land sovereignty and changes to that way land is cultivated (and by who), the increasing cost of healthy food, the rise of unhealthy food marketing, supply chain pressures due to global events, and the increasing effects of climate change. Fast food outlets have sprouted up across the state, and supermarket layouts have been designed to attract young children to the sweets and sugary drinks which are at eye level and encourage impulse purchases at the checkout.

Often without even realising, we are being influenced by our food environments and the sneaky marketing tactics used by the food industry that seek to profit off the sales of unhealthy food and sugary drinks.

By listening to Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing, and sharing stories about our connection to land and Culture, we can learn how to make better changes for ourselves, our families and our Community.

Scan this QR code
to view this story
as an animation:



Be guided by these questions and have a yarn

These questions have been designed to draw out some of the key messages from Our Food Connections.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and Culture

- How do you think lifestyles have changed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?
- What do you think has influenced this change?
- Why is it important to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Culture and Country?

Healthy eating

- Why is it important to eat healthy foods?
- What is your favourite vegetable or fruit? Where does it grow? (ground, tree, bush)
- Do you find it hard to eat healthy sometimes?
- Think of 2-3 ways that might help you to eat healthy food.
- What are some foods/meals that you like to eat with your family/community?

Unhealthy food marketing

- How might unhealthy food marketing 'trick' you?
- What are some of the ways that unhealthy food companies advertise their foods?

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHAT THE FOOD ENVIRONMENT LOOKED LIKE FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES BEFORE AUSTRALIA WAS COLONISED?

BE TAKEN ON A JOURNEY WITH A YOUNG ABORIGINAL BOY AS HIS UNCLE PASSES DOWN KNOWLEDGE ON HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED OVER TIME, AND THE IMPACT THIS HAS HAD ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES HEALTH AND WELLBEING. LEARN ABOUT HOW THE UNHEALTHY FOOD INDUSTRY IS TRICKING US INTO EATING FOODS THAT ARE MAKING US SICK.



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