

# THE CASE OF THE MISSING EMU



## Chapter 2

'Oh no, we've lost Emu again,' cried Kai.

Mila, Kai and Kangaroo chased Emu out of the park and up the street that led into the heart of town. They were standing in front of their local bank looking around, but Emu seemed to have vanished.

Over near the ATM, something shiny on the ground caught Mila's eye.

'Take a look at this,' she exclaimed. 'It's a 50-cent coin. I've never seen one this sparkly. It must be brand new.'

'Wow, that's a beauty,' replied Kai. 'I'd love that for my collection at home. I'm fascinated by the different

details on each one. I've noticed they all have the Queen's head on the back. Why's that, Kangaroo?'

'Great question Kai. It's because one side of the coin has an Australian symbol and the other side has the symbol of the monarch,' Kangaroo explained. 'A monarch is the ruling king or queen of the time. Her Majesty The Queen was our head of state and the Queen of Australia when this coin was made.'

Kangaroo continued. 'There are many other symbols of the monarchy found in Australia. Take the Australian National Flag flying in front of this bank, for example. Can you see its three elements on the blue background? The Union Jack, the Commonwealth Star and the Southern Cross. The Union Jack at the top left corner represents the history of British settlement in Australia.'

'Oh, that's starting to make sense,' Kai said. 'So does that mean other flags have symbols on them as well?'

'Hey, what's that on the bottom of the flagpole,' interrupted Mila. 'Another sticky note!'



Mila bent down to collect the note. The letter **A** was scrawled on it. 'That's Emu's next clue. I wonder how many more there are to find?' she asked.

'We haven't got much to go on,' Kangaroo pondered. 'Perhaps we should look at the other symbols on the Australian National Flag. The Southern Cross might be a good place to start. Let's head to the Observatory and I can show it to you in more detail.'

After arriving at the Observatory, Kangaroo pointed out the Southern Cross in the dark night sky of the domed ceiling.

'The Southern Cross is a constellation of five stars that can easily be seen from the southern hemisphere,' Kangaroo described. 'It's shown on the Australian National Flag in white and is a reminder of Australia's geography.'

'Look up there, I can see a sticky note next to the Southern Cross constellation,' whispered Kai.

'Yes, there it is,' replied Mila. 'It has the letter **E** on it. But

look, there are two sticky notes. I can see another one next to that really bright star. It has the letter **N**. What could that be for?'

'Ah, yes of course,' said Kangaroo, excitedly. 'There's one more element on the Australian National Flag, below the Union Jack – a white Commonwealth Star, or Federation Star. Its seven points represent the unity of the states and the territories of the Commonwealth of Australia. The star is also featured on the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, where Emu and I usually sit.'

Looking around, there didn't seem to be any other sticky notes, so they headed outside into the bright sunshine.

'Hey Mila, there's our school across the road,' said Kai, pointing. 'Let's go and get a drink from the water fountain. All this hunting has made me thirsty!'

After having a drink, they settled down under the shade of the large gum tree in the courtyard and thought about their next move.



'Where would Emu have gone next?' Mila questioned. 'We've covered all of the symbols on the Australian National Flag.'

'What about the other two flags flying next to the Australian one?' Kai pointed to three poles at the front of the school where the flags were blowing gently in the wind. 'What can you tell us about the red, black and yellow one Kangaroo?'

'That's the Australian Aboriginal Flag. It was designed by an artist named Harold Thomas in 1971.' Kangaroo said. 'Look at the flag's coloured rectangle. The top half of the flag is black to symbolise Australian Aboriginal peoples. The red at the bottom represents the earth and the colour of ochre, which has special ceremonial significance and the circle of yellow in the centre is the sun. Mr Thomas said that the colours of the flag represent Australian Aboriginal peoples' spiritual connection to the land.'

Kai jumped up. 'We have a huge mural of the Australian Aboriginal Flag in the playground. Let's go and check it out.'

'Yes, but before we do that let Kangaroo explain the other flag. I've always seen it flying but I've never understood its meaning,' Mila stated.

'Isn't it great?' said Kangaroo. 'It's the Torres Strait Islander Flag and was designed by the late Bernard Namok from Thursday Island.'

'I love the symbol in the middle,' agreed Kai. 'What does it represent?'

'The green at the top and bottom of the Torres Strait Islander Flag represents the land,' Kangaroo described. 'The blue is the sea and the black lines are the Torres Strait Islander people. The centre shows a white Dhari or headdress representing their culture.'

'Wow, it's so clever the way flags represent parts of a culture,' said Mila. 'Why is there a white star underneath the Dhari?'

'Good question,' agreed Kangaroo. 'The star is an important symbol for navigating the sea. The points of the star represent the five island groups in the Torres



Strait and the white symbolises peace.'

'Well, there are no sticky notes on the flagpoles this time.' Mila sighed. 'Let's go and check out the mural like Kai suggested.'

Mila and Kai raced off, with Kangaroo bounding closely behind. They arrived at the big mural on the side of the hall.

'Oh Kai, you are so clever!' said Kangaroo, with glee. 'Look, there is a sticky note next to the Australian Aboriginal Flag on the mural. It has the letter **O** on it.'

Kai collected the note and carefully placed it in his pocket with the others.

Mila sat down on the log next to the creek noticing another sticky note. 'Oh look, this one has the letter **E**,' she said. 'Perhaps Emu left it here because the creek has grass on either side, representing the blue and green on the Torres Strait Islander Flag. Gosh, we are getting really good at unravelling these clues.'

'Yes, but we haven't spotted Emu for ages and time's getting on,' said a worried Kangaroo. 'There's no time to lose. Let's keep going.'

