**Teachers Notes**

**Age Group**: Early childhood – Grade 2

**Educator information**: The Mountain Cattlemen’s Association of Victoria started when a farmer, in 1834, crossed the Snowy Mountains in search of fresh grass for his cattle. Since then, families across Victoria have taken their cattle to the High Country each year for summer grazing.

Originally started as a way of keeping cattle in good condition, the practice evolved as Cattlemen realized that the grazing cattle also helped keep the dense bush undergrowth under control, meaning a reduced risk of intense bushfire.

There have been on-going battles with the State Government to keep grazing licenses (most have been lost) and the Cattlemen now consider themselves the only independent voice when it comes to better management of the Alpine National Park and State Forest, advocating and advising on a range of issues including feral animal control, weed management, retention of user-rights, bushfire management and much more.

**Basis of the book**: the story is a true one, based on the combined experience of our Mountain Cattlemen during the 19/20 bushfires when more than 17 million hectares were burnt. During that time Mountain Cattlemen needed to quickly bring their cattle home from summer grazing, many losing stock in the process. Many were unable to feed their cattle after the fires, with roads blocked and access only available via helicopter.

The story looks at the history of the Mountain Cattlemen, but also the impacts of the bushfire. The loss of cattle, the depression that followed for many, and the circle of life continuing with the next season. It is told from the perspective of a seventh-generation narrator, a young girl who lives on the family farm with her parents and grandparents. Included in this pack is a selection of questions posed at the end of the book to encourage discussion and gives more insight into the books content.

**The competition**: We want students to name our story because we want it to be a story that all ages feel like they have a connection to. This is a book about someone familiar – a family, a farmer, cousins in the city and everyone in between. Whether you submit one title suggestion per child, one per class or one per school is up to you. The top 5 entries will then be presented to the general public for a vote. Email your entries to **book@mcav.com.au.**

**The prize**: The winning class/student class will each receive a copy of the book (all schools that participate will also be given a copy for the class library). President of the MCAV, Bruce McCormack, will visit the school to present to the winner and will read the story aloud. In addition, we would love the winning school to provide either a photo, illustration or spiel (or combination of all three) about the impact students feel the bushfire had on Victorians. This will be included in the publication, helping students take ‘ownership’ of the project.

**Lesson ideas:**

**Show children the cover of the book (provided).**

**Some suggested points to talk about to ignite student’s imagination:**

* What do you think is happening in the picture?
* What can you see behind the cows?
* How do you think a bushfire might start?
* Why do you think the riders are doing with the cows?
* What do you think this book might be about?
* What do you think the book is called?

**Activities:**

* Horse colouring page (10 provided)
* Aerial water bomb colouring page (10 provided)
* Create a hand art campfire (activity instructions included)
* Encourage students to talk together about any experiences they have with fire
* For early years: Encourage students to set up a farm scene with toys, with orange and yellow cellophane used to demonstrate bushfire and blue cellophane to represent a dam/water
* For older students: ask them to draw/write a scene showing a landscape before, and after, a bushfire
* Invite your local CFA member to visit with students and explain what to do in the event of a fire
* If appropriate, allow students to light a small fire outside. Encourage them to feel the heat, watch it crackle and notice the colours. Cook damper or marshmallows.

**Early Years Learning Framework results:**

* 2.4- Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment
* 4.2 - Children develop and range of skills and process such as problem solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesizing and investigating.
* 5.2- Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts
* 5.3- Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media

**Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority:**

* VCELA145 – Explore the different contribution of words and images to meaning in stories and informative texts
* VCELA178 – Identify the parts of a simple sentence that represent ‘What’s happening, Who or what is involved’ and the surrounding circumstances
* VCELA180 – Compare different kinds of images and informative texts and discuss how they contribute to meaning
* VCELY210 - Engage in conversations and discussions, using active listening, showing interest, and contributing ideas, information and questions, taking turns and recognising the contributions of others
* VCELT205 - Discuss how authors create characters using language and images
* VCELT288 - Create events and characters using different media that develop key events and characters from literary texts.
* VCELY255 - Identify the point of view in a text and suggest alternative points of view.

More to explore:

Visit the Mountain Cattlemen’s website for further resources and suggestions. [www.mcav.com.au](http://www.mcav.com.au).

You will find:

* Student friendly videos of bushfire, animals and stockmen working cattle. Some videos include text/audio to prompt student discussion
* Banjo Paterson’s poem and video, the Man from Snowy River, based on Mountain Cattlemen.
* Additional colouring pages
* Short history of the Mountain Cattlemen’s Association of Victoria
* Extra pages of the book