

# Outdoors

Bridgewater Kindergarten is nestled away from the main thoroughfare amongst a hills setting with sloping topography and our own bushland blocks on either side which support a range of natural learning environments.

Bridgewater Kindergarten has a strong focus on outdoor learning. We know that it is essential that children experience and enjoy exploring and playing in stimulating outdoors environments, regardless of weather conditions. We have created access to places for quiet and active activities, places for individuals or both small and large groups and places where children can be involved in hands-on activities. Children can feel, explore, discover, imagine, create, share, respect and otherwise engage with nature with enthusiastic educators who provide for their learning and development.



Being a hills environment in a rural township, there is a mix of native and exotic vegetation, introduced weeds, cultivated plants and fruit trees and vegetables, all of which provide inspiration for learning. The main building is situated near the top of the hill, and it has a large paved courtyard area, but the rest of the block slopes down with pathways and terraces located at strategic points to enable access and ease of use. They have a large sandpit area, a slide constructed within the plants on the hill, a boat for imaginative play, mud play kitchen, climbing trees and moveable equipment, a sensory garden, lawn areas and the adjacent bush blocks.

## Paintyi-illa Ngangkiparri

### Bridgewater Kindergarten's Bushland



The bushland block adjacent to the kindergarten is a wonderful outdoor classroom. Working bees with parents have enabled them to remove weed species and, in partnership with Arbury Park Outdoor School (APOS), they have audited the plants in the blocks and planted more than 30 species local to the area.

Interpretive signs have been installed encouraging the community to access the **Paintyi-illa Ngangkiparri** offering ideas for interacting in the environment and introducing plant species. Information about many of the native plants includes Aboriginal uses of them.

The kindergarten children explore **Paintyi-illa Ngangkiparri** discovering evidence of animals who use it, watching the flora as the seasons change, building cubbies

and listening and noticing. Tweezers, magnifying glasses and torches add to the exploration. Paper, pencils, clipboards and taking photos allow the children to record their findings.

In Spring **Paintyi-illa Ngangkiparri** comes alive with Native Orchids. It is exciting to watch them flourish.

**Paintyi-illa Ngangkiparri** is a special place. It is a calm place. It is a wonderful place to develop an understanding of the Kurna and Peramangk peoples respect for the environment and for us to accept the responsibility to care for it.

Walk to the top of **Paintyi-illa Ngangkiparri** and you can select a book to enjoy from **Taikkurringka Pirrku**, Bridgewater Kindergarten's Street Library. The books change regularly as the local community take a book and give a book.

