



## RECOMMENDED FOR

Ages 7 to 12; years 2 to 6

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## KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning Areas:** English, Art
- **General Capabilities:** Creative and critical thinking; Ethical understanding; Literacy

## REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- A very funny illustrated story that will keep children at all reading levels entertained
- Great next series for beginner readers who are ready for a slightly longer chapter book
- Perfect for Australian girls who love series like Wimpy Kid or Tom Gates but would like to read a book that reflects their own lives
- Very Australian school setting with references to Aboriginal culture, the Australian environment and Australian history
- Positive examples of helping a friend, being resilient and kind, coping with bullies, and practical and creative problem solving

## PREPARED BY

Random House Australia

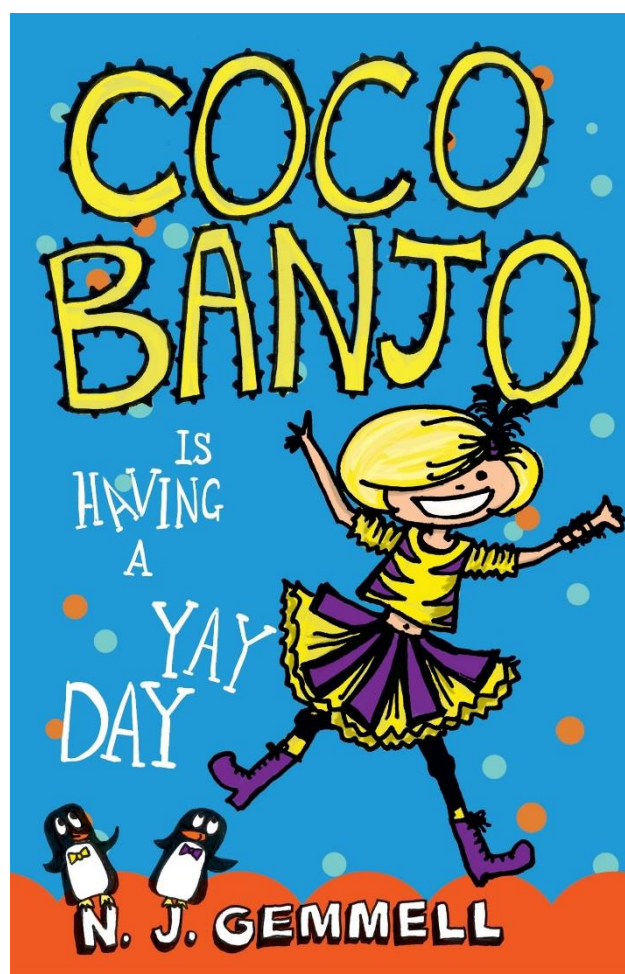
## PUBLICATION DETAILS

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9780857987341 (ebook)

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## Coco Banjo is Having a Yay Day

Written and illustrated by  
N.J. Gemmell

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Coco Banjo does not want to go to school today. Instead she's planning a Yay Day of fun on her secret island home on Sydney Harbour, with her friends.

But wait . . . what's that Secret Signal?

Coco's best friend N is in danger.

Coco needs to head to Banksia Bay Public after all.

And headmistress Miss Trample will not be happy.

**Coco Banjo is a laugh-out-loud series from bestselling author N.J. Gemmell!**

## PLOT SYNOPSIS

Today is a gorgeous sunny day, and Coco Banjo doesn't want to go to school. Instead she's planning a 'yay day' of fun at home, playing with her animal friends, swimming, designing a cool fashion outfit, drinking hot chocolate and doing handstands.

Coco lives on a secret island home in the middle of Sydney Harbour. Her fashion stylist mum, Clem, is often away, and although Clem asks an old family friend (aging rock star Rick Ragger) to look after Coco, Coco prefers to be left to her own devices. She and her best friend, Narianna (known as N), send each other secret signals about what they're doing each day.

But N sends Coco a secret signal from school, and Coco knows it means that N is in trouble. She sets off in her rowboat for Banksia Bay Public School, wearing a uniform that she has customised herself – including a gladiator skirt and a hat with jellybeans on a string.

N isn't in their classroom, and Coco finds out that N has been sent to the principal's office? Why? Because apparently N has stolen a precious and very expensive iPad from someone else's school bag. Coco knows that N would never do such a thing, because she is always good. She suspects that their classmate Belle has set N up. Belle hates N because N is so smart – and Belle is very good at running to the teachers to tell tales on other kids. Belle never gets in trouble because her mum donates a lot of money to the school.

Coco's big character defect (according to some) is that when someone she loves is in trouble or the world seems horribly unfair, she acts quickly to help . . . without properly thinking it through.

So Coco runs in to Miss Trample's office, where N's parents are meeting the headmistress, and she announces that she was the one who took the iPad out of the bag.

Trouble ensues, with cranky Miss Trample determined to get to the bottom of where Coco's parents are, where she lives and how she should be punished.

There's a surprise in store, though, when Coco's carer, Rick Ragger, is called to the school – and it seems that there might be a way out of this mess after all!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

N.J. Gemmell is the bestselling author of seven novels and four works of non-fiction for adults under her full name, Nikki Gemmell. Her work has received international critical acclaim and been translated into many languages. Nikki is currently a columnist for the *Weekend Australian's* Saturday magazine, and a Friday regular on the *Today* programme in Australia. Born in Wollongong, Nikki lived in London for many years but has now returned to Australia with her family.



Her first books for children, *The Kensington Reptilium* and *The Icicle Illuminarium*, are about the adventures of four Aussie bush kids in London.

Nikki has written and illustrated her latest series for children, *Coco Banjo*.



## AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

*N.J. Gemmell was inspired to write the Coco Banjo series when she was trying to find books that her seven-year-old daughter would like to read.*

*She says:*

My daughter went straight from reading books like Billie B. Brown in kindy to funny books like the Treehouse series, Big Nate and Wimpy Kid. She couldn't find anything in between to read that grabbed her, to my incredible frustration. And the class readers she was given at school were so earnest and 'p.c.' – and had such drab illustrations. It was a chore to plough through them.

I wanted **something fun and zippy, that an advanced reader would have a chuckle over (like a comic), but an early reader would find clear and easy to read, too.** I can't underestimate how desperate a lot of us mums are to have our kids read a book, any book. I leap on a new Wimpy Kid or Treehouse as another distraction from wretched screens, because my daughter will not put those books down when she



gets them in her hands. I dream of avid readers like that for Coco, too, who just devour the book in one or two sittings.

I wanted to **reflect life as it is in a typical Aussie primary school** (I've had three kids in the system, and am about to have a fourth enter it). So, from the scary principal's office to the glories of the bush tucker garden, the joy of the swimming carnival to the giddy exhilaration and traumas of the school camp, to the politics of who can park in the teachers' carpark – these are all topics that the Coco Banjo books will cover.

I wanted **parents to have a giggle of recognition** as they read, too. (Which I think is a big factor in Wimpy Kid's success – it makes me laugh as well as my child.) So in Coco Banjo we get the terrifying principal who's still madly in love with the seventies rock god called Rick Ragger – who just happens to be Coco's godfather. We get the mummies in swoons over the young male teacher with the hairy chest (that all the kids think is too hairy – uuurgh). We get the crazy fashion-plate teacher, Miss Bonkiss, whose clothes are always checked out by parents and children – and tut-tutted over by an appalled headmistress, Miss Trample. We get the obsessive helicopter parents who insist on tutoring their child from kindy, in the shape of Mr and Mrs N.

I wanted a book that **empowers young girls** in this age of being 'unfriended' by the cruelties of playground politics. A book that has an imaginary female prime minister as a **positive role model**. I want mums to say, 'Yes! Coco is my kind of girl. A chick for my daughter to love. Smart, empowered, kind, considerate, always helping out her mates, a leader (in a good way) – with a big, huge heart. She dusts herself off when she's down, and she never gives up.'

The series takes in a lot of 'E.Q.' lessons that the primary schools are teaching kids right now, about **resilience and tolerance, difference and kindness**.

For all Coco's trials and tribulations, I wanted her to have a deep, deep love of her little Aussie primary school – and hopefully librarians and teachers will recognise that. That the series has **a good heart**.

## THEMES

- **Resilience** – sometimes bad things happen in Coco's life (like her mum being away for work, or getting in trouble at school), but she never lets them get her down!
- **Bullying and fairness** – Coco isn't about to let her friends get bullied. She will always speak up and keep things fair.
- **Kindness** – Coco tries to be kind to everyone, from the school's bush tucker gardener to her classmates. One of her role models is her teacher Miss Bonkiss, because Miss Bonkiss sees what is special in each student, and she celebrates it.
- **Resourcefulness and problem solving** – Coco likes to solve problems and help her friends. (Sometimes she jumps in before she thinks things through, though!)
- **Humour** – Coco makes sure that she has plenty of fun in her life!
- **Fashion** – Following in her mum's footsteps, Coco loves to design and make her own clothes. Her school principal, Miss Trample, isn't too happy about Coco customising her school uniforms, though!
- **Family** – Coco loves her mum, but she's often away. And even though Coco thinks she can cope on her own (thank you very much), she appreciates the support of her godfather Uncle Rick when she is in trouble at school and Rick comes to help.
- **Activities and learning** – Coco's life is full of activities, including swimming, drumming, cooking lessons, gardening and drama club, and she loves to learn new things. Coco sets a great example to readers on how to have fun while learning new skills!



## Meet Coco Banjo!

What do you know about Coco Banjo?  
Fill in this sheet as you read the story.

Who are Coco's animal friends?

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Who is her best friend?

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What does Coco's mum do?

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Where does Coco live?

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What is the name of Coco's school?

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Who is Coco's teacher?

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Who else is in her class at school?

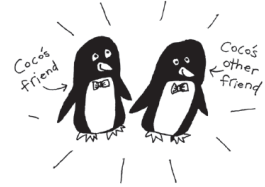
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What does Coco like doing?

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What things does Coco NOT like?

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## My Yay Day!

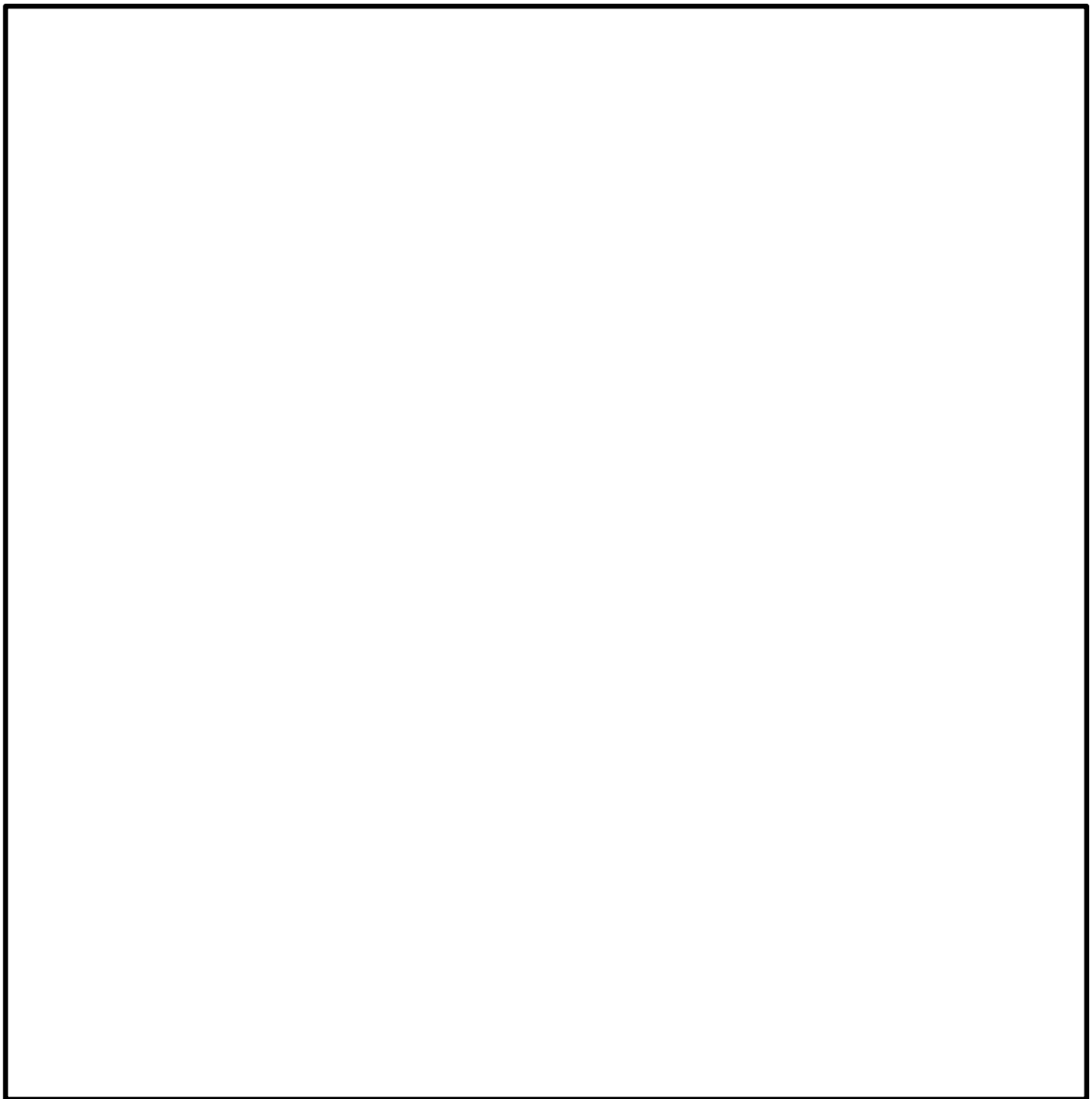
You can find Coco's idea of a perfect day on page 12. What's yours? Draw pictures inside the imagination bubbles of what you would do if you had a **Yay Day**. What food would you eat? Where would you go? What activities would you plan?

A feast of  
**FABULOUSNESS**  
was planned.



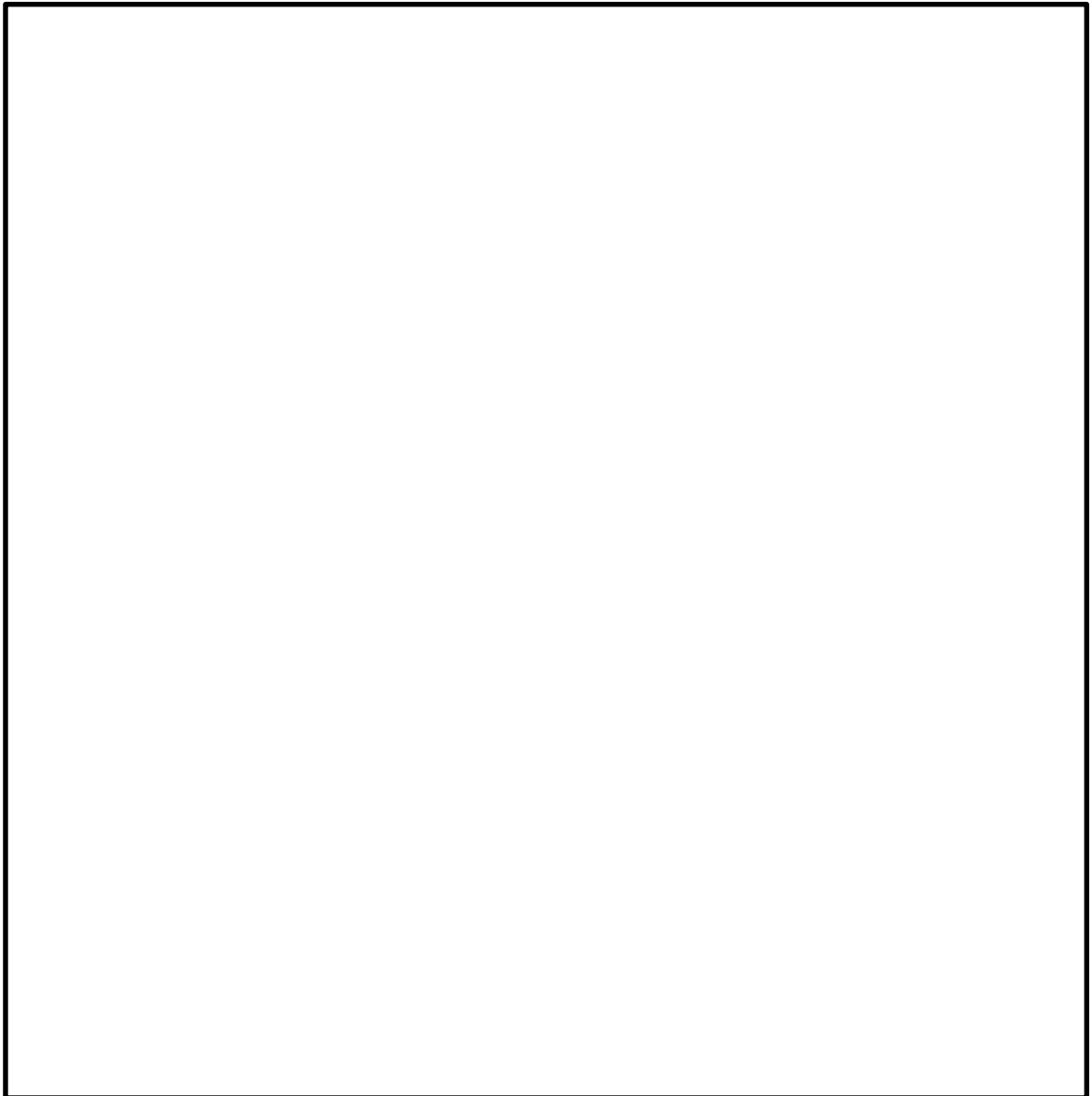
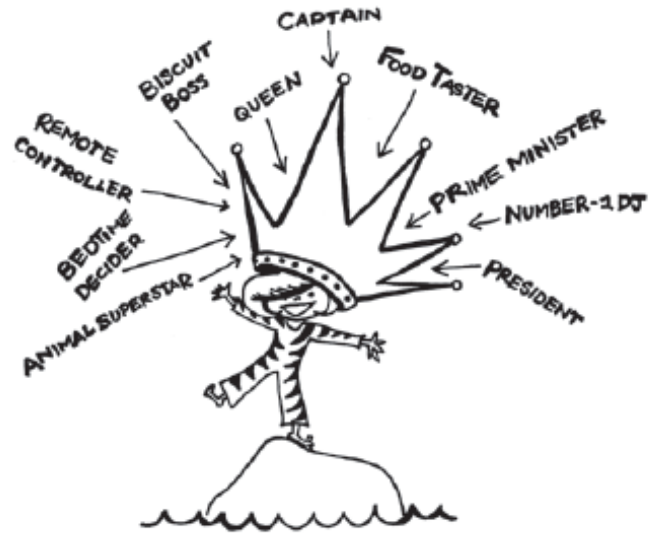
## Fashion designer to the stars!

Imagine you're going to a concert for your favourite singer or group. What would you wear? Design a dream outfit for yourself – or design a costume for a pop singer to wear on the stage!



## Who am I?

Here is a mind map of some of the ways Coco would describe herself. Now draw a picture of yourself and add all the ways **you** could describe yourself. Like Coco's, some of them might be things you dream about or that you'd like to be!





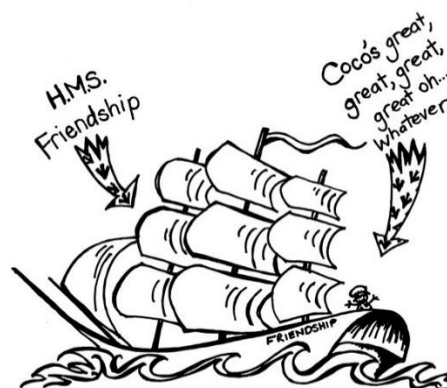
## More activities

Find out more about bush tucker and make a garden for your school.

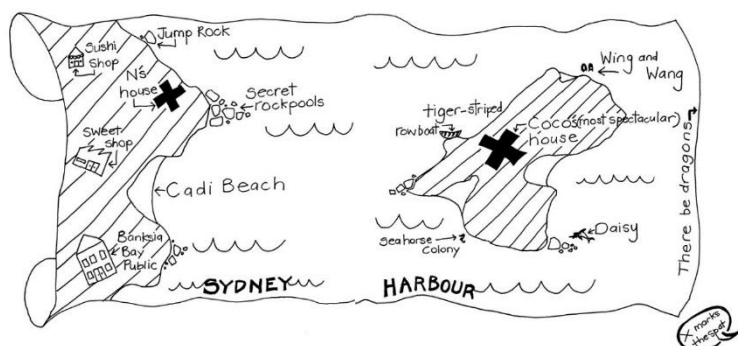


Learn more about the First Fleet and Australia's convict past.

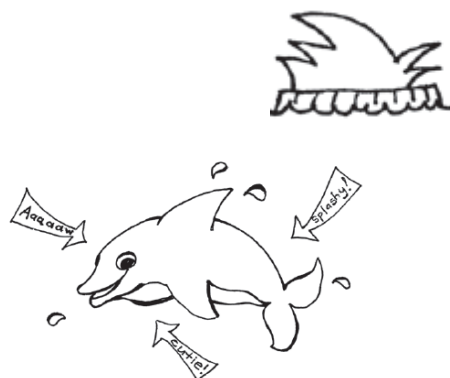
The class was in the middle of a lesson on **CONVICT** history.  knows all about that already. She has an ancestor who was on the *first fleet*. 



Draw a map of your neighbourhood, including all your favourite places.



Research the marine wildlife of Sydney Harbour, including dolphins and little penguins. What else can Coco see from her island home?





## ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QUANTITY	TOTAL
Coco Banjo Is Having A Yay Day	N.J. Gemmell	9780857987334	2-6	\$14.99		
Coco Banjo Has Been Unfriended (Sept 2015)	N.J. Gemmell	9780857987358	2-6	\$14.99		
The Kensington Reptilarium	N.J. Gemmell	9780857980502	4-7	\$16.99		
The Icicle Illuminarium	N.J. Gemmell	9780857985675	4-7	\$16.99		
<b>TOTAL</b>						

PLEASE NOTE THAT PRICES ARE RECOMMENDED RETAIL ONLY AND MAY HAVE CHANGED SINCE THE TIME OF PRINTING. PRICES ARE GST INCLUSIVE.

NAME: _____ SCHOOL: _____ ADDRESS: _____ STATE: _____ POSTCODE: _____ TEL: _____ EMAIL: _____ ACCOUNT NO.: _____ PURCHASE ORDER NO.: _____	PLEASE SEND ORDER FORMS TO YOUR LOCAL EDUCATION SUPPLIER.
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