

DREAMTIME STORY BRIEFS:

Why the crocodile rolls

One beautiful evening everyone in the settlement was happy and there was lots to eat. The girls were playing together, the women were preparing the meal and the men were teaching the boys how to become good men. Only one girl, Min – na – wee wasn't happy. She liked making trouble and often got into fights with the other boys and girls. Her face had a hard, scaly look and the elders said that something terrible was going to happen to her.

When she grew into a young woman, no one wanted to marry her and she would cause constant trouble in the camp. One day she picked another fight and the elders decided she had to be punished. The others caught Min – na – wee and she rolled around and around in the dirt. She escaped and ran into the river where she called on the evil spirits to transform her into an animal so that she could take revenge for her treatment. She was changed into a large crocodile and to that is why each time a crocodile catches its prey it rolls around and around in revenge.

How the kookaburra got their laugh

One day two little boys went off into the bush with their old uncle because they wanted to learn how to make spears, boomerangs and find the tracks of all the animals. Old Uncle thought they were too young because they were only eight but they were very impatient and asked him again and again until he accepted. He showed them how to find good straight branches to make spears but warned them never, never, to attack the Old River Lizard that lived in the long grass.

The two little boys were very proud of their spears and couldn't wait to use them. They went for a walk and found the Old River Lizard lying in the long grass, and decided to have a laugh. They tickled him with the points of their spears, first on one side, then on the other. Old River Lizard got very cross but the boys just giggled and giggled. Until the Old River Lizard really got cross and flattened them both with a sweep of his tail. Two kookaburras were sitting in a nearby tree watching the scene. They couldn't laugh before but when they saw what Old River Lizard did to the two impatient boys, they started laughing... and have never stopped!

How Tortoise Lost his Tail

Across the river of death lay the gigantic tortoise that formed a bridge over the river from the land of men to the land of souls. His tail formed the bridge, and his shell formed an enormous mountain. When a human died they had to cross the river to find eternal life, and the only way to cross it was over the tortoise's tail. But the tortoise would twitch his tail and make the person fall into the river, the river of purgatory. This meant that the dead person's soul would wander the rivers and the earth forever looking for eternal life.

One night the village sorcerer had a dream and a dead man's soul visited him, begging him to liberate his soul and find a safe way across the river. The sorcerer accepted and told the

villagers the next day that he was going to die, and that they should bury his axe with him. They did this and the following night the dead sorcerer went to the river of death. He ran so fast across the tortoise's tail that he didn't fall into the river, and then he chopped off the tortoise's tail. He then chopped down a nearby tree to form a safe bridge across the river of death for all the souls to get to the land of eternal life.