

HOW THE BROOME NATIVES GOT FIRE

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Joongabilbil (chicken hawk) was a koojangooroo womba and used to make fire by flapping, flapping, flapping his wings. (flapping = kartgart.) He would rise high, high up (kalbu) and flap, flap, flap, and then rush down and set the grass a-light. The womba (men) tried to catch the fire, but it always went out before they reached it. Joongabilbil lighted a fire again and again, and the womba would run and run and try to catch it, but it always went out. Then Joongabilbil lighted a marrju (big spreading fire - bush fire) and went up in a tree, and when the womba saw the marrju, they cried, "Oh, look at the fire. Where did it come from?" Then they ran again and tried to catch it, for they were always having to eat their meat raw, but though women and men tried to catch the fire, they could not reach it before it went out.

Next time they watched Joongabilbil and when they came near to him he said, "Where's your fire?" "We have none," said the womba, "and we have to eat our meat raw."

The little hawk went to a jimmain baalu and broke some branches off and then he flew up and fluttered his wings over the jimmain tree and set the baalu a-light, and the womba were able to get the fire from the jimmain tree and cook their meat with it. Joongabilbil said to them, "I will put the fire in the trees so that you need not eat raw meat any more," and he put the fire in the jimmain, ngalli mungal, reerrwal, kooling-irrub (paper bark,) kandileeb (mangrove,) and kalgal trees and he showed the womba how to get the fire kallibur (sawing) method from those trees.

Langoor (opossum) was a pindana (inland) womba, and he saw the koojangooroo fire and he said, "I will make woongalga (fire by upright method or drilling) from all the trees that Joongabilbil has put the fire into," so he got the jimmain and tried woongalga, but no fire came. Then he tried all the other trees in turn, but the only one that would make the woongalga fire was the ngalli mungal. All the others must be made by kallebur.