



2019
ANNUAL
REPORT

Magabala
Books 

Magabala Books acknowledges Yawuru, the Traditional Owners and custodians of Broome and pay our respects to Yawuru Elders. We are privileged to share and walk this special country together.

Magabala also acknowledges the Traditional Owners of our many Nations across Australia. We recognise the unbroken connection to lands, waters and cultures. Through what we publish, we honour our Elders, peoples and stories — past, present and future.

We respectfully caution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers that this report contains images of people who have passed away.



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Magabala Books receives financial assistance from the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and the State Government of Western Australia through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.



Department of
Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries

Cover artwork and graphic elements by
Leanne Mulgo Watson from *Cooee Mittigar*

Overleaf: Edie Wright and Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr read
Little Bird's Day at the Barangaroo Early-Childhood Centre in Sydney.

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Moon
flying among the stars.

*'Seeing the finished book, and
people's interest in it, make me and
my family feel Maynmak (good)'*

– JOHNNY WARRKATJA MALIBIRR.

Magabala Books is Australia's leading Indigenous publisher.

Aboriginal owned and led, we celebrate and nurture the talent and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices.

Our vision

To inspire and empower Indigenous people to share their stories.

Our purpose

To celebrate the talent and diversity of Australian Indigenous voices through the publication of quality literature.

'I think where Magabala excels, like no other publishing house, is how we balance all our objectives – social, cultural and commercial. We work at so many levels and have cultural and political responsibilities to our mob to get things right; whether that's providing a platform for strong literary discourse, or how we handle significant, collectively-owned cultural stories.'

– RACHEL BIN SALLEH, PUBLISHER

33
YEARS

220
PUBLICATIONS

271
AUTHORS/
ILLUSTRATORS

2019

14
new releases

7
new
editions

128
reprints

314,553
books sold

19
new release
authors and
illustrators

40%
first-time
published

85
new titles under
development

6
strategic
commissions

77
festivals/
events attended

29
professional
development
opportunities

153
Indigenous authors,
illustrators and their
families receiving royalties

A message from the Chair



2019 was a massive year for Magabala Books.

We were recognised as the fastest growing small publisher in Australia (aggregated over five years), selling 314,553 books and achieving sales more than double our 2018 results.

Published titles included a diverse and dynamic list of 14 new releases and 7 new editions, and we achieved a record in the number of new manuscripts under development. We launched a new website, with improved access for customers, educators and supporters.

The Daisy Utemorra Award was added to our extensive program of creative development opportunities, and we continued the Kestin Indigenous Illustrator Award, the Kimberley Art Centre Series project, our Scholarships program and in-house professional development for our creators.

Our Cultural Fund supported the publication of *Young Dark Emu*, the re-editioning of the Yinti series and the development of new works of cultural significance. Small Seeds, our philanthropically funded program donated over 500 books to community organisations.

In September, we partnered with the Blak & Bright First Nations Literary Festival in Melbourne and throughout the year our authors, storytellers, illustrators and staff were represented at national and international events. Our books received numerous award nominations, short-listings and literary accolades, with *Blakwork* by Alison Whittaker among the most-awarded Australian books of 2019.

We were shortlisted for the Australian Book Industry Awards: Small Publisher of the Year, with an honourable mention, and were one of 13 candidates nominated from Australia for the 2020 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award.

In 2019 the Board came together to write a new Strategic Plan. This plan sets out clear goals for the next 5 years and the guiding principles towards Magabala 2050. Underpinning the Strategic Plan is the strong message that the 'time is now'. We believe

with the right investment, Magabala is poised to capitalise on recent growth to achieve even greater long-term success for our storytellers, authors and illustrators, and for the benefit of readers of all ages.

We take pride in having a diverse Board of Directors who bring exceptional skills, knowledge and experience to Magabala and prioritise succession planning to continue our very successful journey.

Thank you to the Board of Directors for your time, vision and courage. Although we are the faceless part of Magabala we all perform admirably to make the right decisions.

Magabala is a highly successful Indigenous publishing house and this is possible because all parties work as a team and continue to be the best they can be. I would like to sincerely thank our CEO, Anna Moulton for her visionary leadership and management of staff who are giving in their time and talents. I would also like to thank our Publisher, Rachel Bin Salleh, for her courageous and outstanding creative direction of Magabala's publishing and creative development programs.

Our funding bodies are to be acknowledged for their ongoing financial support and belief in Magabala to produce quality titles every year.

Thank you to the philanthropic bodies and sponsors who allow us to develop and support creators. Your contribution allows us to go above and beyond to grow talent that could have been lost to publishing.

Not forgetting the passionate booksellers and our loyal readers, members and public who have supported us tirelessly over the years.

Last but not least, thank you to our storytellers, authors and illustrators for trusting Magabala with your dreams and work.

Edith Wright

Chairperson

Highlights

- Fastest growing small publisher in Australia (no.1 in AC Nielsen's Top 10 Heatseekers list).
- Record sales: **314,553 books**.
- **Dark Emu** no.10 national bestselling title of 2019 (AC Nielsen) selling **140,597 units**, including 115,273 recorded on AC Nielsen Bookscan.
- **Young Dark Emu** a best-selling title of 2019: selling **46,432 units** (including 33,291 on Bookscan) in 6 months. Recognised among the 'top 5 fastest movers' (AC Nielsen) in August.
- **Dark Emu** and **Young Dark Emu** the two most searched for books of 2019 on 'TitlePage' (APA service for booksellers and suppliers to search titles).
- **Blakwork** by Alison Whittaker one of the most awarded titles nationally in 2019.
- Kirli Saunders announced as inaugural winner of the Daisy Utermorrah Award, for her junior verse manuscript **Mother Speaks**.
- Magabala Books shortlisted: **Small Publisher of the Year - Australian Book Industry Awards 2019**, with Honourable mention.
- Magabala one of 13 Australian candidates nominated for the 2020 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award.

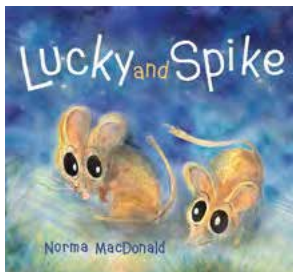
- **New Magabala website launched in October – improved access for customers, authors and supporters.**
- **Inaugural Kestin Award publication, *Little Bird's Day* launched at the CBCA NSW 'AAA' event.**
- **Charmaine Ledden-Lewis announced as 2019 Kestin Indigenous Illustrator. *Found* by Bruce Pascoe and illustrated by Charmaine Ledden-Lewis, will be published in 2020.**
- ***Baby Business* by Jasmine Seymour selected for the Facebook Regional Gift Guide 2019.**
- ***Dark Emu* selected, by public vote, for the inaugural Parliamentary Book Club.**
- **New partnership with the Blak & Bright Literary Festival. Magabala co-presented 5 events at the Festival in Melbourne, September 2019.**
- **Consolidated WA Museum partnership for Magabala representation in new WA Museum.**
- **Collaborations continued in Kalumburu, Warmun, Fitzroy Crossing, Mowanjum and Kununurra for the Kimberley Children's Art Centre Series.**
- **5 Creative Development Scholarships awarded, and 24 other professional development opportunities supported.**





Publications

New releases

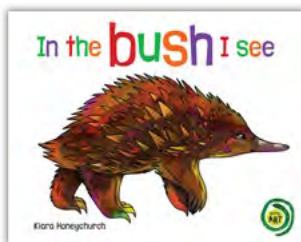


Lucky and Spike

Norma McDonald (WA)
Children's Picture Book

Lucky and Spike is the thrilling tale of two spinifex-hopping mice who leave their burrow each night to race across the plains in search of food. But avoiding predators is a risky business, especially when a feral cat and a ravenous owl are on the hunt. A joyous picture book for young readers.

'Captured in delicate watercolour washes with pencil detail—the illustrations give the adventures and frights of the evening the quality of dream.'
— NATIONAL INDIGENOUS TIMES

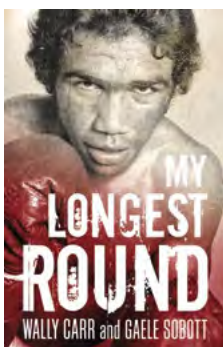


In the Bush I See (Young Art Series)

Illustrated by Kiara Honeychurch (WA/Tas)
Children's Board Book

In the Bush I See, a board-book for the very young, presents a playful ensemble of Australian creatures in bold pops of colour. Illustrator Kiara Honeychurch celebrates the beauty and character of each animal, reimagining their tones in changing light from sunrise to sunset.

'Talented teenager, Kiara Honeychurch, has created gorgeously coloured illustrations of Australian bush animals, inspired by her rural town in Tasmania.' — WRITING NSW



My Longest Round

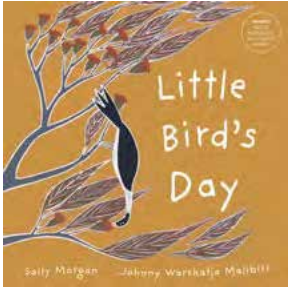
Wally Carr (NSW) with Gaelle Sobott (Vic)
Memoir

My Longest Round is the life story of Australian and Commonwealth champion boxer Wally Carr. A powerful memoir that follows Wally's journey from a young Wiradjuri boy dodging the dreaded Aboriginal Welfare Board to the mean streets of Sydney's Redfern and into the professional boxing ring.

'At times the text reads like slam poetry in rich Aboriginal English, Carr's voice unspooling in a rush of memories and digressions.'
— AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

IN MEMORY – Wally Carr

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Wally Carr in 2019. It meant a lot to Wally, his family and Gaelle that he saw his book published before he passed.



Little Bird's Day

Sally Morgan (WA)
Illustrated by Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr (NT)
Children's Picture Book

Little Bird's Day is an exceptionally beautiful book presenting a unique collaboration between Sally Morgan and Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr. The first publication outcome of the Kestin Indigenous Illustrator Award, *Little Bird's Day* perfectly melds text and illustration to tell a universal story of a day in the life of Little Bird.

'A simple but beautifully told story that celebrates the creatures of the outback and honours the elements in just the perfect amount of words and a handful of colours.' — THE SATURDAY AGE



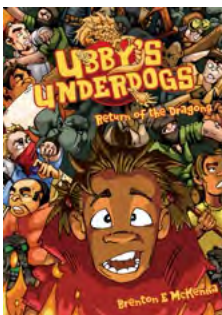
Kindred

Kirli Saunders (NSW)
Poetry

Kindred by Kirli Saunders is a stunning debut poetry collection that speaks to the universal themes and experiences of love and connection, while grappling with ideas of identity, loss, cultural regeneration and healing. A work filled with intimacy and tenderness, *Kindred* is underscored by a voice that, though soft, shakes with intensity.

'As you read Kindred, your body's rhythms match the beat of Kirli's words. They are unrelenting and nourishing...Just don't mistake its tenderness for gentleness. Kirli is fierce in her protection of kin and love.'

— ALISON WHITTAKER



Ubby's Underdogs: Return of the Dragons

Brenton E McKenna (WA)
Graphic Novel

The third and final instalment of the celebrated *Ubby's Underdogs* comic series by Brenton E. McKenna. Back in the Forbidden Zone on the Broome coastline in the late 1940's, *Ubby* and her gang desperately try to find their missing friend Sai Fong. What they encounter is worse than anything they could ever have imagined - and the future of humanity itself is at stake!

'The Ubby's Underdogs graphic novel trilogy is unlike anything else you'll find in comics...noteworthy not just because they established author/artist Brenton McKenna as Australia's first published Aboriginal graphic novelist, but for their massive multicultural cast, their iconic WA location and their mix of Aboriginal Dreaming and Chinese folklore influences.'

— WRITING WA

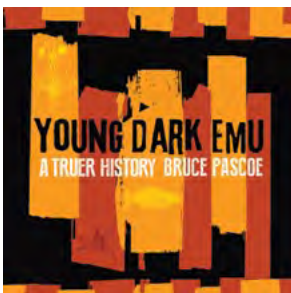


Baby Business

Jasmine Seymour (NSW)
Children's Picture Book

Baby Business is the enchanting story of a Darug smoking ceremony that welcomes baby to country. This beautiful ritual is recounted in a way young children will completely relate to, and is enhanced by stunning illustrations. Permeating the entire book is the message that we are connected to Country and need to care for it. It is a reminder to readers of all backgrounds about the importance of acknowledging and celebrating our ancestors and the land.

'Baby Business felt like being warmly invited to witness the very intimate occasion of a baby being welcomed into country as wisps of smoke bathes the newborn and connects them to their land, keeps them safe from bad spirits and encourages them to always remember their family, law, land and language.'
— CHILDREN'S BOOKS DAILY

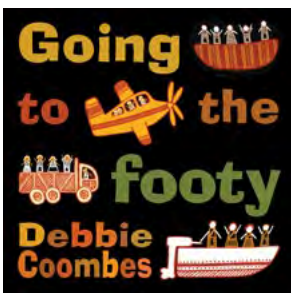


Young Dark Emu

Bruce Pascoe (Vic)
Junior Non-Fiction

In his seminal work *Dark Emu*, Bruce Pascoe compellingly argues for a reconsideration of the hunter-gatherer label for pre-colonial Aboriginal Australians. Abridged seamlessly and skilfully to retain the accounts of early European explorers, colonists and farmers, this beautiful edition for younger readers covers the salient points of its 'parent' title. *Young Dark Emu - A Truer History* asks young readers to consider a different version of Australia's history.

'Young Dark Emu is an illuminating and important non-fiction work for children. It is meticulously researched, and beautifully designed and compiled. The work highlights and challenges the whitewashing of Australian history, centring Indigenous knowledge, and articulating vital – if inconvenient – truths.'
— JUDGE'S COMMENTS, NSW PREMIER'S LITERARY AWARDS

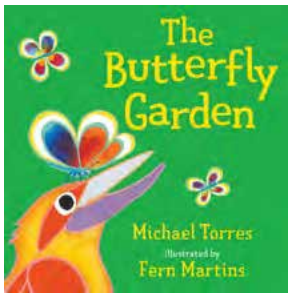


Going to the Footy

Debbie Coombes (NT)
Children's Picture Book

Going to The Footy is a richly illustrated early-childhood book delivering exactly what the title promises! Melville Island-based artist Debbie Coombes beautifully depicts the many ways she and her family get 'to the footy', introducing very young readers to familiar and new modes of transport. Whether you go to the footy in a tinny, a troopy or on a barge, *Going to The Footy* introduces an unforgettable journey to the game.

'Splashes of sap green, orange, white, yellow, and red make these delightful images jump off the page.'
— THE CANBERRA TIMES



The Butterfly Garden

Michael Torres (WA)
Illustrated by Fern Martins (NSW)

Children's Picture Book

The Butterfly Garden is an entertaining introduction to the life cycle of a butterfly – played out by a fat caterpillar, a hungry kookaburra and a supporting cast of beautiful butterflies. Spare and simple, this feel-good board book for the very young will bring a smile to all readers.

'This brightly coloured little book tells the story of the life cycle of a butterfly in such a fun and simple way...It's the story of a little caterpillar who hides inside a beautiful cocoon and a hungry kookaburra waitings laughing.' — GOOD READING NATIONAL

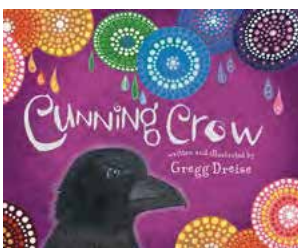


My Father's Shadow

Jannali Jones (Vic/NSW)
Young Adult

My Father's Shadow is a riveting YA thriller centring on the unfurling mysteries around young Kaya's family involvement in a court trial and her father's subsequent disappearance. Led by her mother into hiding, Kaya is caught in a web of uncertainty and distrust in a new place while attempting to recall the crucial evidence she might have to give before the courts.

'Jones has carefully plotted her thriller to keep the reader fearful and off-kilter.' — THE AUSTRALIAN



Cunning Crow

Gregg Dreise (Qld)
Children's Picture Book

Cunning Crow is Gregg Dreise's fourth book in his Silly Birds series presenting traditional Aboriginal stories as bright, entertaining children's picture books. *Cunning Crow* is the story of Waan, the crow, who wants to be more colourful than all the birds. Gorgeously presented with vibrant painterly illustrations, this is an engaging, funny and joyous book that invites young readers to be content with who they are.

'Dreise cleverly stitches into the storyline an essential message to our young people, to be comfortable in their own skin – a story we sometimes forget in our later lives. The story serves as a timely reminder that we should be proud of our differences and that 'true beauty comes from within'' — NATIONAL INDIGENOUS TIMES



Cooee Mittigar

Jasmine Seymour (NSW)
Illustrated by Leanne Mulgo Watson (NSW)

Children's Picture Book

Cooee Mittigar, meaning *Come Here Friend*, is an invitation to journey through Darug Country. With narrative guidance from Mulgo the black swan, children are gently introduced to Darug language, law, tradition and culture, while delighting in the visual feast of Leanne Mulgo Watson's illustrations. It is Jasmine and Leanne's wish that with this book, everyone will know that the Darug mob are still here and still strong.

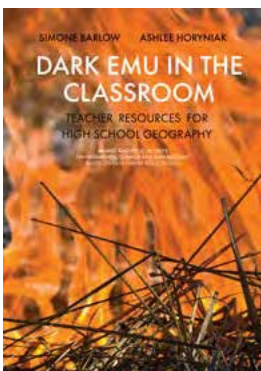
'Gorgeous paint and print tones combine in a style both contemporary and traditional to create pace and season with plenty of page layout left for dual language vocabulary.'

— CBCA READING TIME

'I have loved publishing our book (Cooee Mittigar), being a Darug language book is really important to me and I also know how proud my Mum is as she had the language taken from her. I have been really happy and surprised at the response, support and excitement surrounding our book.'

— LEANNE MULGO WATSON

Educational resources



Dark Emu in the Classroom

Ashlee Horyniak, Simone Barlow
Educational Resource: Secondary Level –
Geography

Based on the concepts in Bruce Pascoe's highly acclaimed book *Dark Emu*, this innovative resource offers teachers a supportive and fresh approach to teaching geography with the *Dark Emu* text. Includes well-organised lesson structure and high-interest, inquiry-based activities for students.

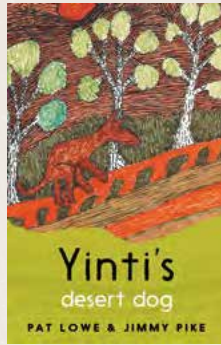
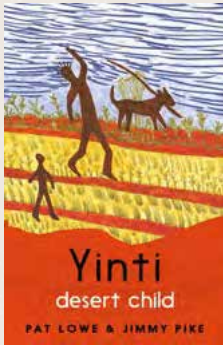
New editions

Yinti Series

Jimmy Pike (WA), Pat Lowe (UK)

Junior Non-fiction

First published as *Yinti: Desert Child* in 1992, *Desert Dog* in 1997 and *Desert Cowboy* in 2000, these revised editions present *Desert Child*, *Desert Dog*, and *Desert Cowboy* in a new accessible 'junior reader' format, ensuring these engrossing stories of Walmajarri life continue to delight new generations of young readers.



Yinti, Desert Child

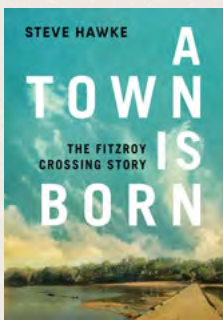
Yinti is a Walmajarri Aboriginal boy growing up in the Great Sandy Desert in the remote North West of Australia. *Desert Child* is the story of Yinti's coming of age – including his meeting with the first white man, first horse and first bullock. The vignettes from Yinti's childhood are based on people and events as told to Pat Lowe by Jimmy Pike.

Yinti's Desert Dog

When the dingo, Spinifex, is taken from her mother, she expects to be killed. Instead she is adopted and becomes a prized hunting dog. Based on stories told to Pat Lowe by Jimmy Pike, about a dog who lived with his family in the desert during the 1940s and early 1950s.

Yinti, Desert Cowboy

Desert Cowboy is the story of Yinti's return to the cattle station and of his life as a stockman. Over these years Yinti experiences joy, excitement, loss and tragedy, but never loses his sense of fun and inclination to mischief.



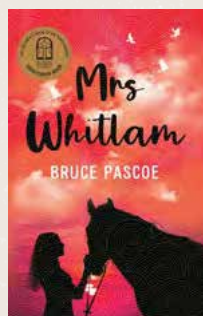
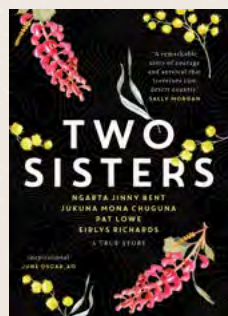
A Town is Born: The Fitzroy Crossing Story

Steve Hawke (WA)

Non-fiction

A Town is Born is the story of a town and so much more. The 1960s are remembered as a time of change and upheaval throughout Australia. No part of the country changed more in that decade than the remote pastoral regions of the north. At once narrative and oral history, this is a work that records the arc of many lives and was half a lifetime in the making.

First released in 2013, the new edition of *A Town is Born: The Fitzroy Crossing Story* includes a new format, minor revisions and a striking new cover – breathing new life into this important work of cultural history.



A diversity of voices



NORMA MACDONALD
Lucky & Spike



KIARA HONEYCHURCH
In the Bush I See



WALLY CARR & GAELE SOBOTT
My Longest Round



SALLY MORGAN & JOHNNY WARRKATJA MALIBIRR
Little Bird's Day



KIRLI SAUNDERS
Kindred



BRENTON E MCKENNA
Ubbys Underdogs: Return of the Dragons



JASMINE SEYMOUR
Baby Business



BRUCE PASCOE
Young Dark Emu

'When I write, I write to heal, to bring awareness to our nation's history, to find unity.'

— KIRLI SAUNDERS



DEBBIE COOMBES
Going to the Footy



MICHAEL TORRES & FERN MARTINS
The Butterfly Garden



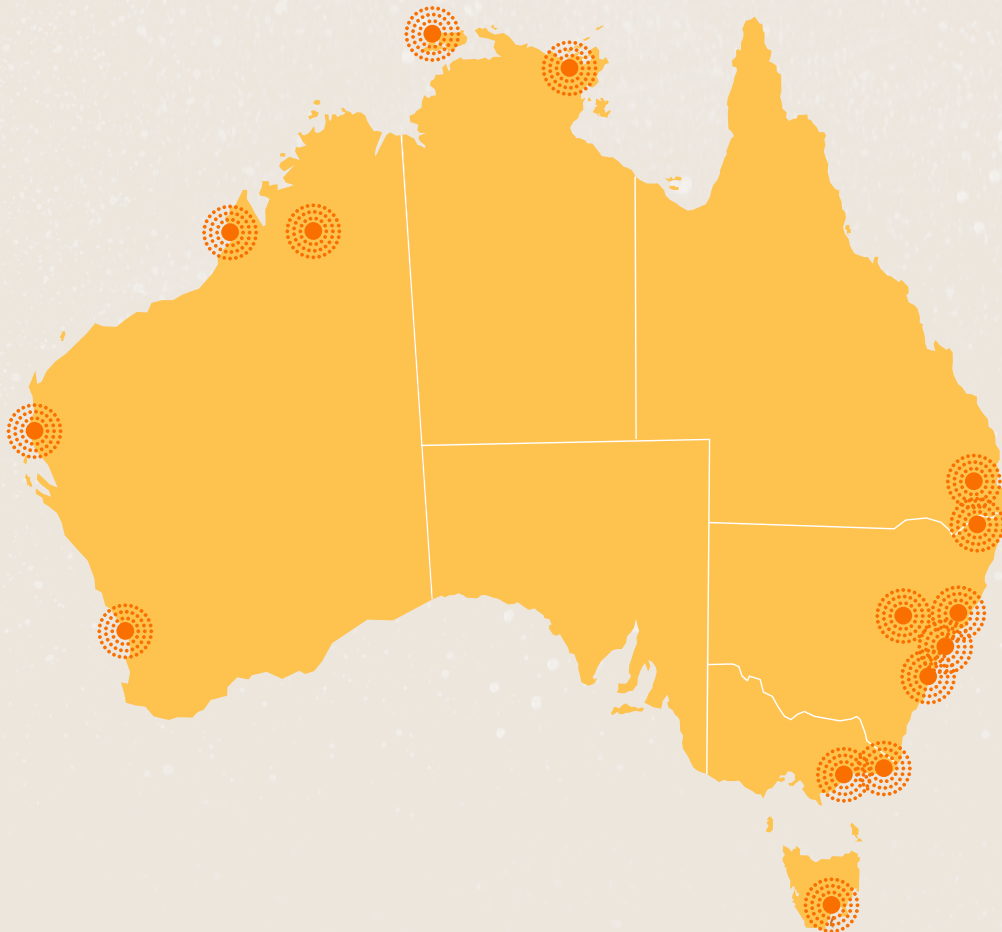
JANNALI JONES
My Father's Shadow



GREGG DREISE
Cunning Crow



**JASMINE SEYMOUR &
LEANNE MULGO WATSON**
Cooee Mittigar



Celebrating success

Queensland Literary Awards

- Judith Wright Calanthe Poetry Award
Blakwork winner
- Griffith University Children's Book Award
Black Cockatoo shortlisted

Victorian Premiers Literary Awards

- Prize for Poetry
Blakwork shortlisted

Prime Minister's Literary Award

- Prize for Poetry
Blakwork shortlisted

Adelaide Festival Awards for Literature

- Children's Literature Award
Young Dark Emu shortlisted
- John Bray Poetry Award
False Claims of Colonial Thieves shortlisted
Blakwork shortlisted

WA Premier's Book Awards

- Prize for an Emerging Writer
Gus Henderson, *The Wounded Sinner*, shortlisted

Children's Book Council of Australia

- Younger Readers Book of the Year
Black Cockatoo Honour Book
- Eve Pownall Award
Our Birds: Njilimurrungu Wäyin Malanyinha shortlisted

Australian Book Industry Awards

- Small Publishers' Children's Book of the Year
Black Cockatoo shortlisted
Alfred's War longlisted
- Small Publishers' Adult Book of the Year
Blakwork shortlisted

Mascara Avant-Garde Literary Award

- *Blakwork* winner

Readings Children's Book Prize

- *Black Cockatoo* finalist

Foundation for Australian Literary Studies: Colin Roderick Award

- *Simply Ing* longlisted

Australian Literature Society (ALS) Gold Medal

- *False Claims of Colonial Thieves* shortlisted
- *Blakwork* longlisted

Kids Own Australian Literature Awards

- Picture Story Book Award
Crabbing with Dad shortlisted

Speech Pathology Book of the Year Awards

- Birth to three years
In the Bush I See shortlisted
- Five to eight years
Clever Crow shortlisted
- Eight to ten years
Black Cockatoo shortlisted

Award-winning

WINNER

2019 Queensland Literary Awards (Judith Wright Calanthe Award for a Poetry Collection)

WINNER

2019 Mascara Avant-Garde Literary Award

SHORTLISTED

2019 Prime Minister's Literary Awards (Poetry)

SHORTLISTED

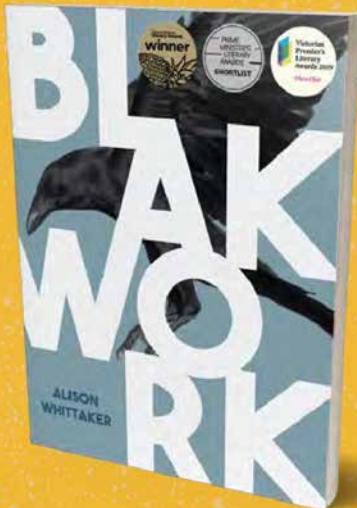
2019 Victorian Premier's Literary Awards (Indigenous Writing Prize)

SHORTLISTED

2019 Australian Book Industry Awards: Small Publishers' Adult Book of the Year

LONGLISTED

2019 Australian Literature Society (ALS) Gold Medal



'BLAKWORK wouldn't have floated at any other publisher than Magabala — nor with any other editor than the genius Grace Lucas Pennington. I must thank from the bottom of my heart both Magabala and Grace for co-conspiring with me to pull off a book that's so fundamentally weird and confrontational.'

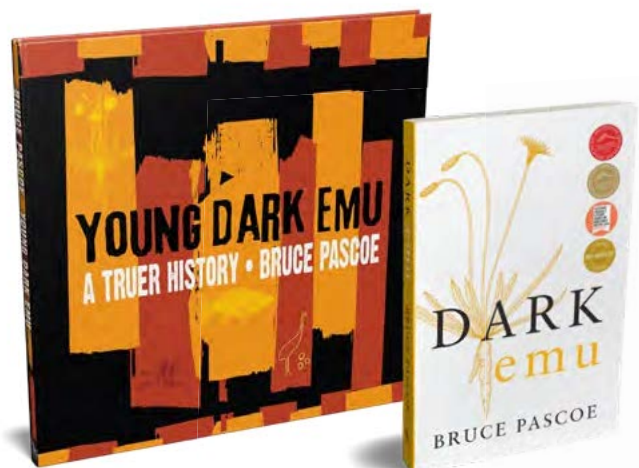
— ALISON WHITTAKER

on winning the Queensland Literary Award for Poetry, 2019

The unstoppable *Dark Emu*...

Two national best-selling titles in 2019.

187,029
combined copies sold.



Sharing our stories

**SOCIAL MEDIA
FOLLOWERS**

22,643



11,908



4,194



3,816



2,725

**NEW RELEASE
MEDIA COVERAGE
AND REVIEWS**

308

**NEWSLETTER
SUBSCRIBERS**

2,588

**UNIQUE
WEBSITE USERS**

74,811

**WEBSITE
PAGEVIEWS**

572,113

2019 Events

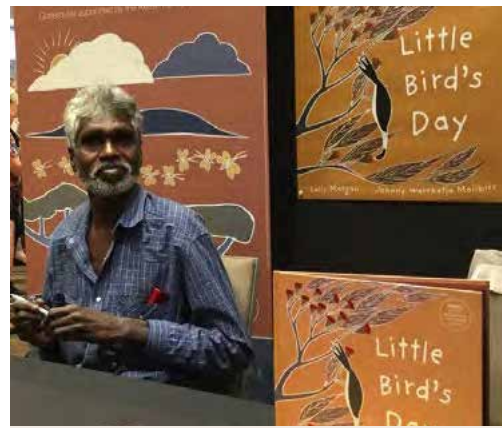
National: 73
International: 4



Lenka Vanderboom, Alison Whittaker and Edie Wright at the VPLA's.

Victorian Premier's Literary Awards Melbourne

- Alison Whittaker
- Lenka Vanderboom
- Edie Wright



Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr at the *Little Bird's Day* launch.

Between the Lines Youth Festival

Busselton

- Kamsani Bin Salleh
- Josie Boyle

Castlemaine State Festival

- Bruce Pascoe

CBCA NSW AAA Conference Sydney

Launch of *Little Bird's Day* and announcement of 2019 Kestin Indigenous Illustrator Award

- Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr
- Charmaine Ledden-Lewis

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH



Sam Fry signs books at Perth Writers Festival.

Perth Writers Festival

- Rachel Bin Salleh
- Samantha Fry
- Helen Ing Nellie
- Margaret O'Brien

The Stella Prize Longlist Party Sydney

- Alison Whittaker

2019 Events



The McKenna clan at the launch of *Ubby's Underdogs: Return of the Dragon*.



Kirli Saunders at the NT Writers Festival.

Annual Narelle Oliver Lecture

Books Links, Brisbane

- Bruce Pascoe

Australian Book Industry Awards

Sydney

- Edie Wright, Anna Moulton

Chinatown Discovery Festival

Broome

- Brenton Ez McKenna, launch of *Ubby's Underdogs: Return of the Dragons*

NT Writers' Festival

Alice Springs

- Charmaine Papertalk Green
- John Kinsella
- Kirli Saunders

Scribblers Children's Literature and Arts Festival

Perth

- Kamsani Bin Salleh
- Dub Leffler

APRIL

Newcastle Writers' Festival

- Alison Whittaker

Parrtjima Festival

NT

- Bruce Pascoe

Sydney Writers' Festival

- Alison Whittaker

Wheeler Centre F-Word Address

Melbourne

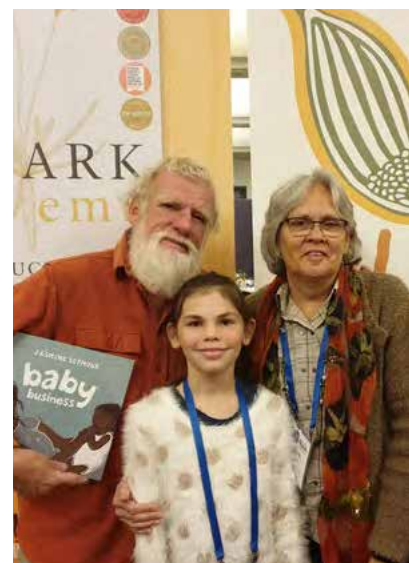
- Alison Whittaker

Blue Metropolis Literary Festival

Canada

- Bruce Pascoe

MAY



Bruce Pascoe, Edie Wright, Harriet Wright, Jasmine Seymour.

CBCA National Conference

Canberra

- Edie Wright, Anna Moulton
- Bruce Pascoe
- Jasmine Seymour

CBCA NSW NAIDOC Professional Development

Sydney

- Edie Wright

Woylie Aboriginal Kids Story Festival

Perth

- Josie Boyle, Kamsani Bin Salleh

Young Dark Emu book launch

Carlton North Primary School, Melbourne

- Bruce Pascoe

National Writer's Conference, Emerging Writer's Festival

Melbourne

- Alison Whittaker

Enough Said Poetry Slam

Wollongong

Kindred launch

- Kirli Saunders

Australian Literacy Educators' Association (ALEA) Conference

Melbourne

- Bruce Pascoe

Voices on the Coast: A Youth Literature Festival

Sunshine Coast

- Sue McPherson
- Kirli Saunders

City of Joondalup NAIDOC Week Events

Perth

- Josie Boyle

WA Premier's Literary Awards

Perth

- Kirli Saunders
- Rachel Bin Salleh
- Family representing Gus Henderson

Australian Embassy Jakarta and Bali Tour

Indonesia

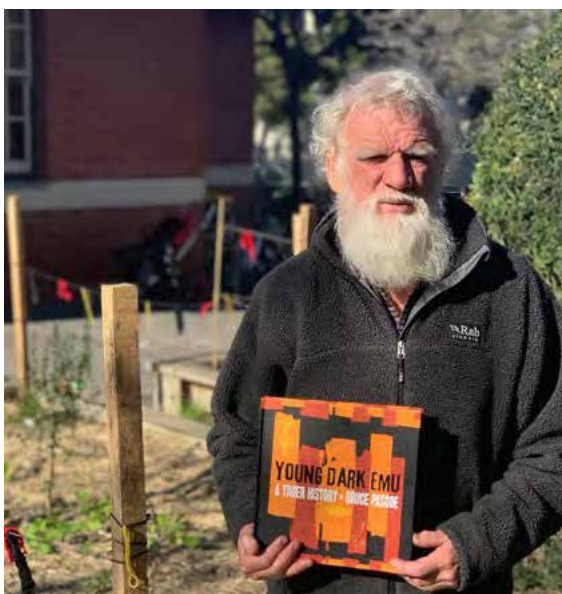
- Kirli Saunders

JUNE

JULY



Wright and



Bruce Pascoe launches *Young Dark Emu*.



Sue McPherson signing books.

Going to the Footy launch

Starwin Shopfront Darwin

- Debbie Coombes

My Father's Shadow launch Gleebooks

Sydney

- Jannali Jones

CBCA Book of the Year Awards Ceremony

Melbourne

- Carl Merrison
- Edie Wright

ACT Education Directorates Symposium

Canberra

- Edie Wright keynote

Byron Writers' Festival

Byron Bay

- Bruce Pascoe

Corrugated Lines: A Festival of Words

Broome

- Alison Whittaker
- Laniyuk
- Rachel Bin Salleh

Bendigo Writers Festival

- Sue McPherson



Debbie Coombes launches *Going to the Footy*.



Alison Whittaker in conversation with Laniyuk, Corrugated Lines Festival.

AUGUST

Queensland Poetry Festival

Brisbane

- Kirli Saunders

Library of Congress National Book Fair

Washington DC, USA

- Brenton E. McKenna



Brenton E McKenna in the USA.

SEPTEMBER

Blak & Bright Festival

Melbourne

- Jannali Jones
- Gregg Dreise
- Dub Leffler
- Rachel Bin Salleh

Brisbane Writers Festival

- Alison Whittaker
- Gregg Dreise



Jannali Jones



StoryArts Festival

Ipswich

- Gregg Dreise

Prime Minister's Literary Awards, Canberra

- Alison Whittaker

State Library New South Wales, Storytime

- Jasmine Seymour reading *Baby Business*



Leanne Mulgo Watson, Edie Wright, Hon. Linda Burney MP and Jasmine Seymour at the launch of *Cooee Mittigar*.

Cooee Mittigar launch

Hawkesbury Regional Library

- Jasmine Seymour
- Leanne Mulgo Watson
- Edie Wright
- Launched by the Hon. Linda Burney MP

ANKA Aboriginal Art Centres Conference

Katherine, NT

- Kate Rendell
- Margaret Whiskin

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER



Alison Whittaker launches *My Father's Shadow*.

Queensland Literary Awards

Brisbane

- Alison Whittaker

Small Press Network MUBA Awards

Melbourne

- Lenka Vanderboom representing Sue McPherson

Wollongong Writers Festival

- Kirli Saunders
- Alison Whittaker

Indigenous Comic Con

Melbourne

- Brenton E. McKenna



Nurturing trade and industry connections

Children's Book Council Australia

- Keston Indigenous Illustrator Award presented at the CBCA NSW AAA conference, participation at National and State conferences and ongoing engagement.

ATSI Education

- 2019 keynote address at the ACT Education Directorates 2019 Symposium (Edie Wright).

Blak & Bright Festival

- New partnership to present First Nations events.

Neilma Sidney Prize

- Rachel Bin Salleh, judge

Varuna First Nations Fellowship

- Rachel Bin Salleh, judge

Small Press Network Board

- Rachel Bin Salleh

Children's Publishing Committee of the APA

- Rachel Bin Salleh

ASA Mentor

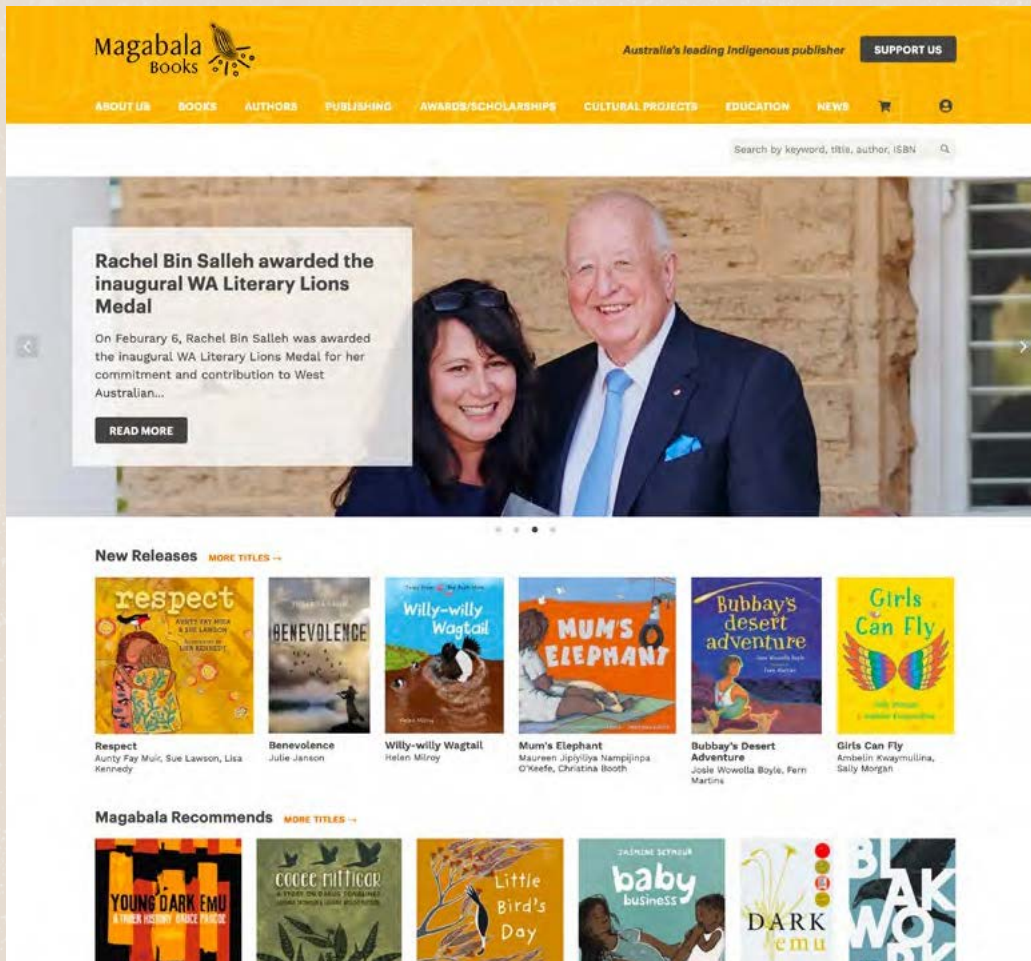
- Rachel Bin Salleh

Independent Publisher's Committee of the APA

- Anna Moulton

Ongoing working partnership with the First Nations Australia Writers Network (FNAWN)

New website!



In October, we released a new website with improved access for customers, authors and supporters. The culmination of many months of hard work, we are thrilled with the result and can already report significantly increased traffic, online sales and e-newsletter subscriptions. The website celebrates our unique identity as Australia's leading Indigenous publishing house, our strong cultural foundations and the full extent of our programs.

Investing in creative futures

Magabala Books is committed to nurturing and celebrating the talent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander storytellers, writers, artists and illustrators.

The Kestin Indigenous Illustrator Award

Launched in 2017, the Kestin Indigenous Illustrator Award is a national biennial award that identifies new talent in the art of children's picture book illustration. Awarded to an Indigenous artist or emerging illustrator, the winner receives \$10,000, a professional mentorship and the opportunity to illustrate a children's picture book by a renowned Indigenous author. The Award is generously supported by the Kestin Family Foundation.

2019 Award winner

Charmaine Ledden-Lewis was announced as the 2019 winner of the Kestin Indigenous Illustrator at an award ceremony in March. Charmaine is a Bundjalung freelance artist and mother of two boys from Blackheath, NSW.

Award judges Sally Morgan, Bronwyn Bancroft, Ann James and Rachel Bin Salleh said Charmaine's work 'showed great interpretation', 'incredible use of perspective', 'created a

strong sense of place' and revealed 'enormous potential.'

Charmaine was awarded \$10,000, a professional mentorship with Cathie Tasker and Deb Brown and the opportunity to illustrate Bruce Pascoe's first children's book. *Found* by Bruce Pascoe and Charmaine Ledden-Lewis will be published in 2020.



'I'm deeply humbled and grateful to be embarking on a venture of learning and collaboration with such a well-respected author as Bruce Pascoe, and for the industry experience and career guidance I will gain with the Magabala publishing team.'

— CHARMAINE LEDDEN-LEWIS

Left: Edie Wright, Charmaine Ledden-Lewis and Margaret Whiskin in Sydney for the Kestin Award announcement.

Opposite: Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr reads *Little Bird's Day* to students at Gapuwiyak Primary School.



‘The Kestin Family Foundation is thrilled. Johnny’s illustrations have given joy to children and adults from all around the world’ – HARRY KESTIN

Launch of Little Bird’s Day

The publication outcome of the inaugural Kestin Indigenous Illustrator Award, *Little Bird’s Day* by Sally Morgan and Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr, was launched with great fanfare at the CBCA NSW AAA Conference in Sydney in March. Attended by Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr, Gapuwiyak Art Centre Manager Trevor van Weeren (both narrowly avoiding a cyclone en route), Magabala Chairperson Edie Wright, CEO Anna Moulton and Editor Margaret Whiskin, the launch celebrated

Johnny’s journey into children’s picture book illustration and introduced Sydney audiences to Gapuwiyak country and traditions.

Little Bird’s Day was one of our best-selling titles in 2019. An exquisitely beautiful book, it is representative of what can be achieved when new voices are given the opportunity to excel. Johnny is now working on his second title with Sally Morgan: *The River*, forthcoming in 2021.

The Daisy Utemorrah Award

Launched in 2019, the Daisy Utemorrah Award recognises excellence in junior and YA fiction and seeks to grow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writing for younger readers. Generously supported by the Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund and the State Government of Western Australia, the winner receives \$15,000 and a publishing contract with Magabala Books.

In July 2019, Kirli Saunders became the inaugural recipient of the Daisy Utemorrah Award for her rhythmic junior verse-novel, *Mother Speaks*. Kirli Saunders is a proud Gunai woman, with ties to the Yuin, Gundungurra, Gadigal and Biripi people, and currently resides on Dharawal Country.

She is an international children's author, poet, emerging playwright and artist.

The Award Judges, Ambelin Kwaymullina and Rachel Bin Salleh, said of Kirli's winning work: 'Mother Speaks is a lovely, lyrical exploration of the wisdom of the earth. The gentle rhythm of the verse speaks to the patterns and cycles of the nature, and every line holds deep meaning that can be revisited many times over – this a story that will delight adults and children alike.'

Magabala Books will publish Kirli's winning manuscript as *Bindi* in 2020.



'It is a real privilege to be the inaugural recipient of the Daisy Utemorrah Award and to follow in the footsteps of a powerful poet and educator [Utemorrah] who spoke her truth.' – KIRLI SAUNDERS

The Hon. David Templeman, WA Minister for Local Government; Heritage; Culture and the Arts, with Kirli Saunders and Rachel Bin Salleh at the Premier's Book Awards.

Creative Development Scholarships

In 2019, Magabala awarded 5 creative development scholarships. Scholars were selected through a competitive application process and expressions of interest came from all over Australia. We congratulate the 2019 Magabala Scholars:



Robyn Jean (WA)

'I am a Noongar/Yamatji Yorga (woman) from the South West of Western Australia, living in Perth. I have had many roles in education and caring for people. I completed my Associate Degree in Contemporary Aboriginal Art and have always written stories and poems, many of them incorporated into my art. I have a book that I wrote with my daughter Sarah, *Tell me why!*

Robyn will undertake a writing mentorship to work on her poetry collection, themed around poetic responses to mental illness.



Neville Poelina (WA)

Neville Poelina is a Nyikina man from the Kimberley. He has lived in the Kimberley all his life and holds a wealth of knowledge of the region. He has traditional ties right throughout the Kimberley and Aboriginal culture and society is his life. He has been operating his own business Uptuyu Adventures since 2002.

Neville will undertake a mentorship to develop his life story into a manuscript through transcription and editorial support.



Rowena Morgan (WA)

Rowena is a Kija & Gooniyandi woman, who was born in Wyndham and grew up in Halls Creek. Rowena is a contemporary Aboriginal artist who developed her own style from a young age and continues to transform her designs into textile prints. She has worked with several art centres, trained with WA Art Gallery and continues to grow her art business, Nangarri Designs. Some of her artwork is featured in Bruce Pascoe's *Young Dark Emu*.

Rowena will undertake a mentorship to learn the art of book illustration and work towards producing a children's picture book.



Dub Leffler (QLD)

Dub Leffler has written two books for children and illustrated for over 20 publications, collaborating with the likes of Shaun Tan, Sally Morgan and Banksy. He is descended from the Bigambul and Mandandanji people of south west Queensland.

Dub will undertake a writing mentorship to further develop his writing for children and the sequel to *Once there was a Boy*.



Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr (NT)

'My name is Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr. I have illustrated one book called *Little Birds Day* with Sally Morgan, published by Magabala Books. I am also exhibiting and selling art through the (Gapuwiyak) Art Centre. I hope to expand my skills in the book creating process so I can share my stories and encourage other people to tell their stories.'

Johnny will undertake an illustration mentorship for a forthcoming children's picture book and work towards the development of his homeland story.

Previously awarded scholarships were also implemented throughout 2019, and 24 other professional development opportunities were supported, including festival attendance and remote illustration workshops.

In 2019, Creative Development funds also supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creators to initiate new creative projects, as part of our strategic commissioning policy. Two new works were funded.

Ensuring our cultural legacy is continued

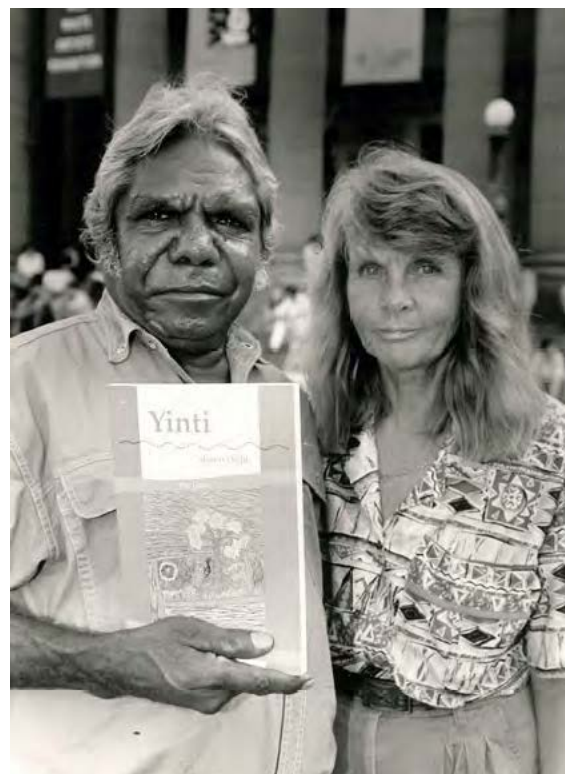
Beyond our regular publishing schedule, we initiate and deliver a wide range of cultural projects to ensure stories with enduring social, cultural and educational value continue to be read by new generations of Australians. In 2019 these projects included:

Old Stories, New Editions

New-editing includes redesigning and reformatting, to give older titles a new lease of life, in keeping with contemporary publishing developments. In 2019, with the support of the Cultural Fund, we re-edited and re-released the Yinti books by Jimmy Pike and Pat Lowe as a series (first published as *Yinti: Desert Child* in 1992, *Desert Dog* in 1997 and *Desert Cowboy* in 2000). The new editions bring these significant Walmajarri stories to new audiences. We also reprinted the cultural classic *Story About Feeling* by Bill Neidjie (first published 1989).

New editions in development, for release in 2020:

- *Bran Nue Dae: A Musical Journey* by Jimmy Chi & Kuckles (first published 1991)
- *Memoirs from the Corner Country: The Story of May Hunt* by Harold Hunt (first published 2006)
- *Ngay Janijirr Ngank - This Is My Word* by Magdalene Williams (first published 1999)



Jimmy Pike and Pat Lowe at the launch of *Yinti: Desert Child*, 1992.

Strategic Commissioning

With the support of the Cultural Fund, we were able to produce *Young Dark Emu* and *Dark Emu in the Classroom*. These strategically commissioned and culturally significant titles focus on the educational value of *Dark Emu* for Australian students and young readers.



Kimberley Art Centre Series

Commencing in 2017, the Kimberley Art Centre Series focuses on developing the skills of Kimberley Aboriginal artists in book illustration. As part of this project, Magabala is working with six artists to publish a series of children's picture books.

In 2019 work continued on the series, albeit slowly. A gentler pace was taken due to numerous extenuating factors affecting remote artists and art centres, including deaths in the family, sorry business, illness, cyclones and major exhibitions. At Magabala we understand that this work takes time. Throughout the year, Margaret Whiskin undertook two trips to the Kimberley and continued her mentorships with:

- Betty Bundamurra, Kiro Kira Arts, Kalumburu
- Jan Griffiths, Waringarri Arts Centre, Kununurra

- Kirsty Burgu, Mowanjum Arts
- Mervyn Street, Mangkaja Arts, Fitzroy Crossing
- John 'Prince' Siddon, Mangkaja Arts, Fitzroy Crossing
- Shirley Purdie, Warmun Art Centre

The first book in the series, by Shirley Purdie, will be published in 2020. This project is generously supported by the Kimberley Development Commission through a Regional Economic Development Grant.



Elders' Stories

Time is of the essence when recording and sharing our Elders' stories. We have sought to build up our philanthropic Cultural Fund to enable Magabala to respond promptly to requests for support to record Elders' significant stories. Current projects include:

A. Griffiths book project

Senior Ngarinyman Law man and artist A. Griffiths passed away in 2018. Not long before his passing, he had begun recording his life story for publication. With funding from the AESOP Foundation, Magabala is supporting the Griffiths family to continue the manuscript development of the A. Griffiths book.

Yorna book project

Donny Woolagoodja is a renowned Kimberley artist and senior Worrora Law man. With the support of the Cultural Fund, Donny Woolagoodja is working with Kim Doohan to tell his remarkable life story in *Yorna: An Artist*. To be published in 2020.

Uncle Max Harrison book project

Through the support of the Cultural Fund, senior Yuin Elder and Law man, Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison is currently engaged in story development for a book sharing his knowledge, law and life story.

Bill Dempsey book project

Former Australian rules footballer Bill Dempsey is currently recording his life story with Steve Hawke, thanks to the generous support of individual donors. Magabala is auspicing the fundraising for this project through our Cultural Fund – all funds have been raised by friends and supporters of Bill.

Planting seeds

Magabala is committed to publishing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories for young readers. We believe it's essential to encourage children to read widely and think critically. In 2019, we delivered or supported the following education and community engagement projects for young people.

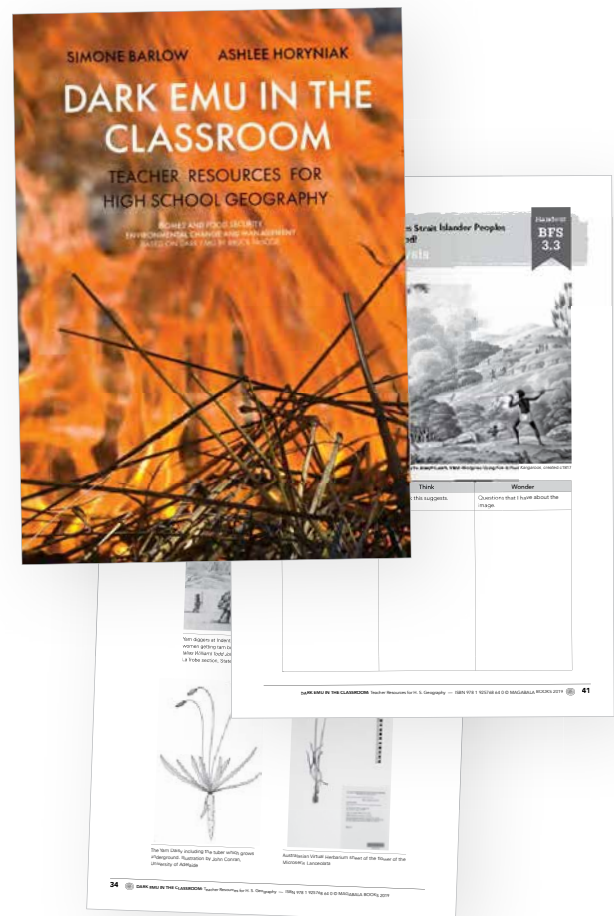
Education projects

Dark Emu in the Classroom

In 2018 we commissioned two education experts to write *Dark Emu in the Classroom*: a package of resources that offers teachers a supportive and fresh approach to teaching year 9/10 geography with the *Dark Emu* text. This education resource ensures Magabala is promoting best practice teaching and maximising the uptake of *Dark Emu* by secondary teachers.

Young Dark Emu

Perhaps the most universal comment by readers of Bruce Pascoe's multi-award-winning and best-selling *Dark Emu* was, 'we were never taught this at school.' When first discovering what was hidden in plain sight, Bruce made the same comment. Why was he never taught this at school? It was always Bruce's plan to correct that failing, and in 2019 we published *Young Dark Emu* to help redress that wrong for young Australian readers. Whether at school or home, *Young Dark Emu* invites young readers to consider a truer history of Australia.



Magabala Teacher's notes

Magabala commissions teachers notes for new release titles based on the education strategy for each title. Teacher's notes are written by qualified teachers and curriculum experts and are made freely available on our website.

Reading Australia Teacher's notes

A partnership between the Australian Literacy Educators' Association (ALEA), the Australian Association for Teachers of English and the Copyright Agency Limited, funded through CAL's Cultural Fund, the *Reading Australia* website provides teaching resources mapped to the Australian Curriculum to promote the teaching of Australian literature. In 2019, Reading Australia commissioned teacher's notes for the following Magabala titles:

- *Little Bird's Day*
- *Young Dark Emu*
- *Black Cockatoo*
- *Clever Crow*
- *Benny Bungarra's Big Bush Clean-Up*
- *Us Mob Walawurru*
- *Dark Emu*
- *Becoming Kirrali Lewis*
- *Songs that Sound Like Blood*
- *Ruby Moonlight*
- *Grace Beside Me*
- *Cooee Mittigar*
- *Baby Business*



Jasmine Seymour with a young fan at the launch of *Cooee Mittigar*.

School visits

Many of our authors and illustrators regularly do school visits and workshops. Kirli Saunders, Gregg Dreise and Josie Boyle were particularly active in 2019 – undertaking workshops, presentations and readings at many schools across Australia.

In 2019, Magabala publisher Rachel Bin Salleh visited Cable Beach Primary School, the Kullari ParentsNext playgroup in Broome and Hale School in Perth. St Mary's College students also visited the Magabala bookshop and had an introduction to publishing from Rachel.

New website – Education Resources

Launched in 2019, our new website contains a built-in search function for users, teachers and educators, to search for the teacher notes and titles based on year level and keywords.



‘Small Seeds is such a deadly program and we’re incredibly grateful. All four of our rooms now have stacks of new books by blackfulla Authors and Illustrators.’

— YAPPERA CHILDREN’S SERVICE

Education partners

In addition to a growing number of school and educational buyers, Magabala supplies books to, and partners with, the following organisations who support work with schools:

- Indigenous Literacy Foundation
- Books in Homes
- Scholastic
- Reading out of Poverty
- Healing Foundation – book packs within their School Resource Kits.

Small Seeds Big Reads

Our Small Seeds program supports early childhood literacy and ensures children across Australia have access to culturally relevant books they love. Small Seeds is a philanthropic initiative where 100% of donations go directly to purchasing and delivering books.

We gift book packs to organisations where children may have limited access to books. Requests come from playgroups, early childhood centres, parenting programs, out of home care facilities, women’s refuges, prisons, family support programs and many others. In 2019, we donated **563 books** to organisations across Australia including:

- Child and Family Wellbeing team, Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women’s Council – Western Desert, WA/NT/SA
- Yappera Children’s Service Co-op – Thornbury, VIC
- Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency – Melbourne, VIC
- Home-Start Program and Loddon Prison Playgroup, Baptcare – Bendigo, VIC
- ParentsNext Program, Kullarri – Broome, WA
- Family Bush-tucker Program, Marang Gunya Community Centre – Orange, NSW
- School Holiday Program, Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corp – Fitzroy Crossing, WA
- Family Support Program, Butucarbin Aboriginal Corporation – Mt Druitt, NSW
- Strong Culture, Strong Families Prison Program, Tjillari Justice Aboriginal Corporation – Canberra, ACT

‘These books are a great way to learn about culture...especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are in out of home care and are disconnected from family and/or culture. They are also a great resource for people who are not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander to get a better understanding.’ — VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE AGENCY



Young Wiradjuri girl Solonaima with her Small Seeds book *ABC Dreaming*. Courtesy VACCA.

Opposite: Actor and playwright Maurial Spearim reads Magabala books to children at the Blak & Bright Festival. Photo by TJ Garvie.

Partners

Our partnerships are vital to ensuring the diversity and dynamism of our publishing program is realised. We couldn't do all that we do without the incredible support of our major government, industry, corporate, community and philanthropic partners.

Our industry partners

Our thanks to:

- The wonderful team at our distributor, New South Books and also team at the warehouse, Australian Distribution Services (ADS), who took over warehousing and distribution from TLD in June. Thanks also to TLD for their support over many years for Magabala's work.
- The team at Ovato, (formerly Griffin Press), our Australian Printers, for their responsiveness and quality of their work.
- Booksellers, for being champions, we thank you all. We would particularly like to acknowledge the independent booksellers who represent the majority of our customers and contribute so much to Australia's vibrant literary culture. We couldn't do it without you and thank you so much for your embrace and championing of First Nations stories.



Rachel Bin Salleh launches *Ubby's Underdogs: Return of the Dragons* at Sun Pictures Broome during the Chinatown Discovery Festival.

Our funding partners

Magabala Books receives financial assistance from the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and the State Government of Western Australia through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. We are grateful to both the Australia Council and DLGSC for their significant investment in First Nations literature.

Our thanks to:

- The Kimberley Development Commission for their generous support of the Kimberley Art Centre Series through a Regional Economic Development Grant.
- Copyright Agency Limited, for their generous support of both the Reading Australia teaching resource projects and the Daisy Utemorrah Award.
- State Library of WA and the State Government of Western Australia for their generous support of the Daisy Utemorrah Award within the WA Premier's Book Awards.
- The Shire of Broome for their ongoing support of Magabala.

Magabala thrives on creating meaningful, long-term relationships with philanthropic partners who share our values and we acknowledge the following Trusts and Foundations for their generous support:

- Jon & Caro Stewart Family Foundation
- Spinifex Trust
- Kestin Family Foundation
- Donnelly Garner Foundation
- Oranges and Sardines
- AESOP Foundation
- Australian Executor Trustees (AET)
- Tate Family Foundation

We would also like to acknowledge the wide range of individual donors; whose generous contributions enable our ongoing cultural and social initiatives.



Department of
**Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries**



COPYRIGHTAGENCY
CULTURAL FUND



the **Aēsop** Foundation

**Kestin Family
Foundation**

Governance

Magabala Books is governed by a dedicated Board made up of Kimberley Aboriginal educators, business professionals, creative practitioners and leaders drawn from the Magabala Books Aboriginal Corporation general membership.

In May we farewelled two long standing directors, Julie Cobb who had served 15 years as director, and Trish Newton who was director and Treasurer for 6 years. We thank both for the exceptional commitment, professionalism, skills and experience that they brought to the Board and Magabala Books.

Clinton Benjamin joined the Board in May. He is a Bardi, Yawuru and Kija man who currently lives in Melbourne, where he is completing a law degree and working as a consultant with PwC's Indigenous Consulting.



EDITH WRIGHT
Chair



TONY LEE
Deputy Chairperson



STEVE KINNANE
Director



LENKA VANDERBOOM
Director



MARGY DIA
Director



CLINTON BENJAMIN
Director



RYAN ATKINSON
Director

Staffing and Operational

CEO — Anna Moulton

Publisher — Rachel Bin Salleh

Business Manager — Irene Huang

Acting/Marketing Manager — Gene Eaton

Project Officer — Kate Rendell

Publishing Assistant — Rebecca Ross

Sales Officer — Catelyn Dowell

Reception and Retail Officer (Trainee) — Enid Ketchell

Staff movement

In 2019 Magabala welcomed new staff Rebecca Ross (November), Enid Ketchell (September) and farewelled Paula Ellis who commenced in the role of Reception and Retail Officer early in 2019. We farewelled Lisa Burton as the Marketing Manager and thank her for her 5 years of wonderful service to Magabala and wish her well in her new career. Gene Eaton took on the role of Acting Marketing Manager and the position was advertised nationally in December. Irene Huang and Kate Rendell started at the end of 2018, and so we had a substantially new team in 2019.

Transition towards a new publishing packaging model

In 2019, Magabala expanded its publishing model, working with the following publishing professionals, increasing capacity and geographical reach across Australia:

- Margaret Whiskin
- Rachael Christensen
- Ballantyne/Rawlins (Maryann Ballantyne and Donna Rawlins)
- Michaela Skelly

In 2019 we also commenced planning for the creation and funding of a new Indigenous Publishing Cadet position for 2020/2021.

The new publishing model will be fully implemented in 2020/21 and includes a review of internal publishing and workflow processes with the support of a grant from AET.

Consultants and Freelancers

We would like to express our appreciation to our other regular consultants and freelancers including designers Jo Hunt and John Canty, and Publicists Anna Abignano and Jane Morey.

