

MEDIA RELEASE

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Triumphant return after exile and abandonment

The exile of the Indigenous population of Hope Valley in the coastal region of Cape York in far north Queensland during World War II is a shameful yet seldom-told chapter in the history of Australia's Indigenous people.

Roy McIvor was just 10 when he, his family and his community were rounded up by the military and shipped 1500km south to Woorabinda amid claims they were collaborating with the Japanese under the guidance of German Lutheran Missionary George Heinrich Schwarz.

Roy's community was deserted by the government and authorities, and more than a third of them perished during their seven-year exile. They were decimated by disease amid atrocious living conditions.

And yet *Cockatoo: My Life in Cape York* is an inspirational story of how Roy and his people triumphed over the hardships to which they were subjected, and eventually returned to their country now known as Hope Vale.

Roy's whimsical and poignant stories of Aboriginal spirituality and mission life are interwoven with stories of the violent massacres and reprisals that took place along the northern coast.

Throughout his life, art has been a guiding light. Today Roy is recognised as one of Cape York's leading Indigenous artists and *Cockatoo: My Life in Cape York* features full-colour reproductions of his work.

Roy is a Guugu Yimithirr man. The Guugu Yimithirr nation is made up of 32 clan groups. The clans are divided into two groups, distinguished by the white and black cockatoos. Today he lives at Hope Vale, 50km north of Cooktown, where he is chairman of the Hope Vale Arts and Cultural Centre and a stalwart figure in the promotion of Indigenous art and culture.

Roy's artwork is held in the National Gallery of Australia, the Queensland Art Gallery and the Fireworks Gallery in Brisbane. An exhibition of his work is running at the Vivien Anderson Gallery in Melbourne until October 2.

Cockatoo: My Life in Cape York is available in bookshops and online at www.magabala.com for \$34.95.

Launched in 1987, Magabala Books is a not-for-profit Aboriginal Corporation, based in Broome, that aims to promote, preserve and publish Indigenous Australian culture.

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