

# Burabi

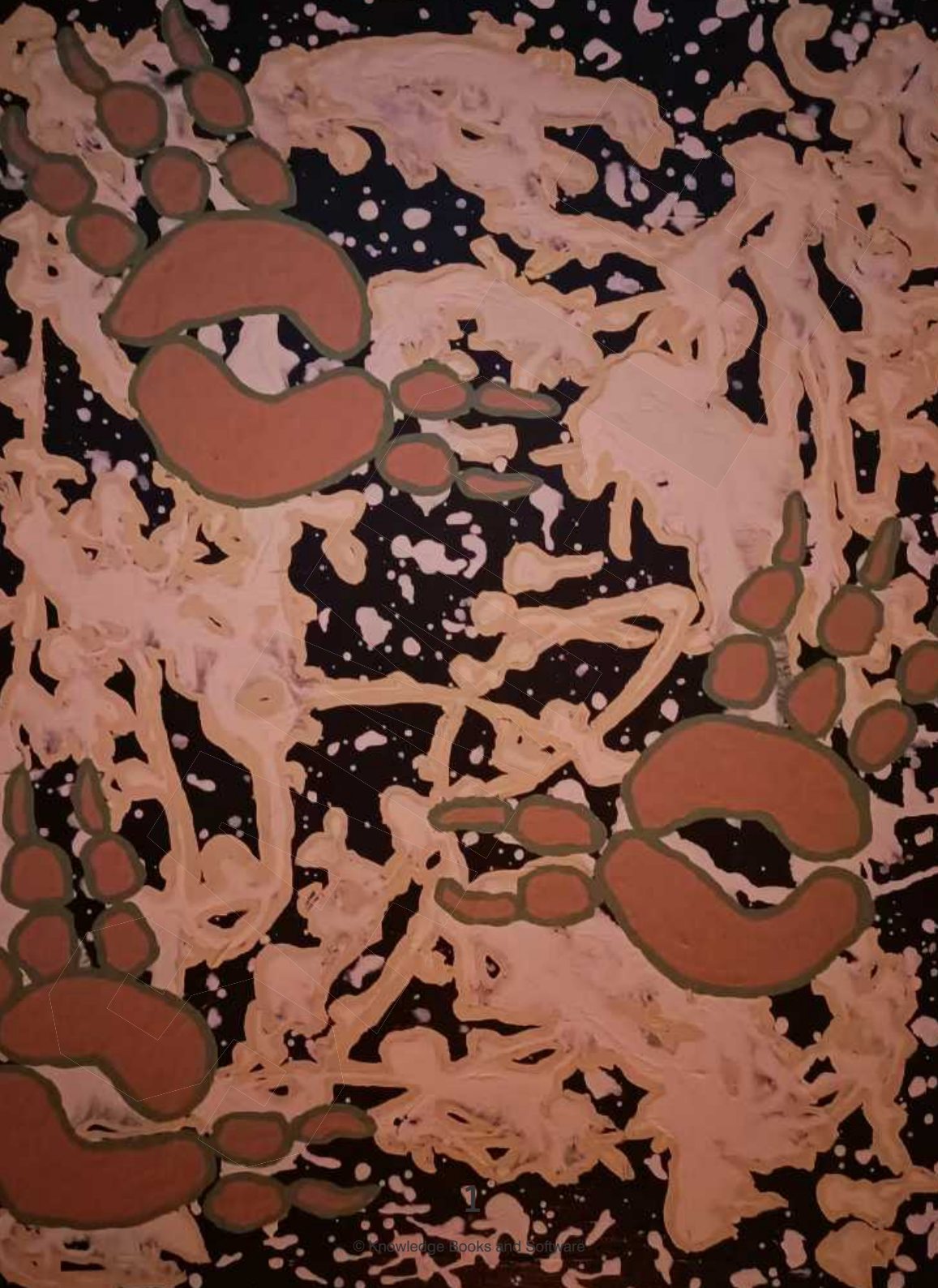
## The Koala

Mark Tirris



**KNOWLEDGE**  
BOOKS AND SOFTWARE

**OUR  
STORIES**



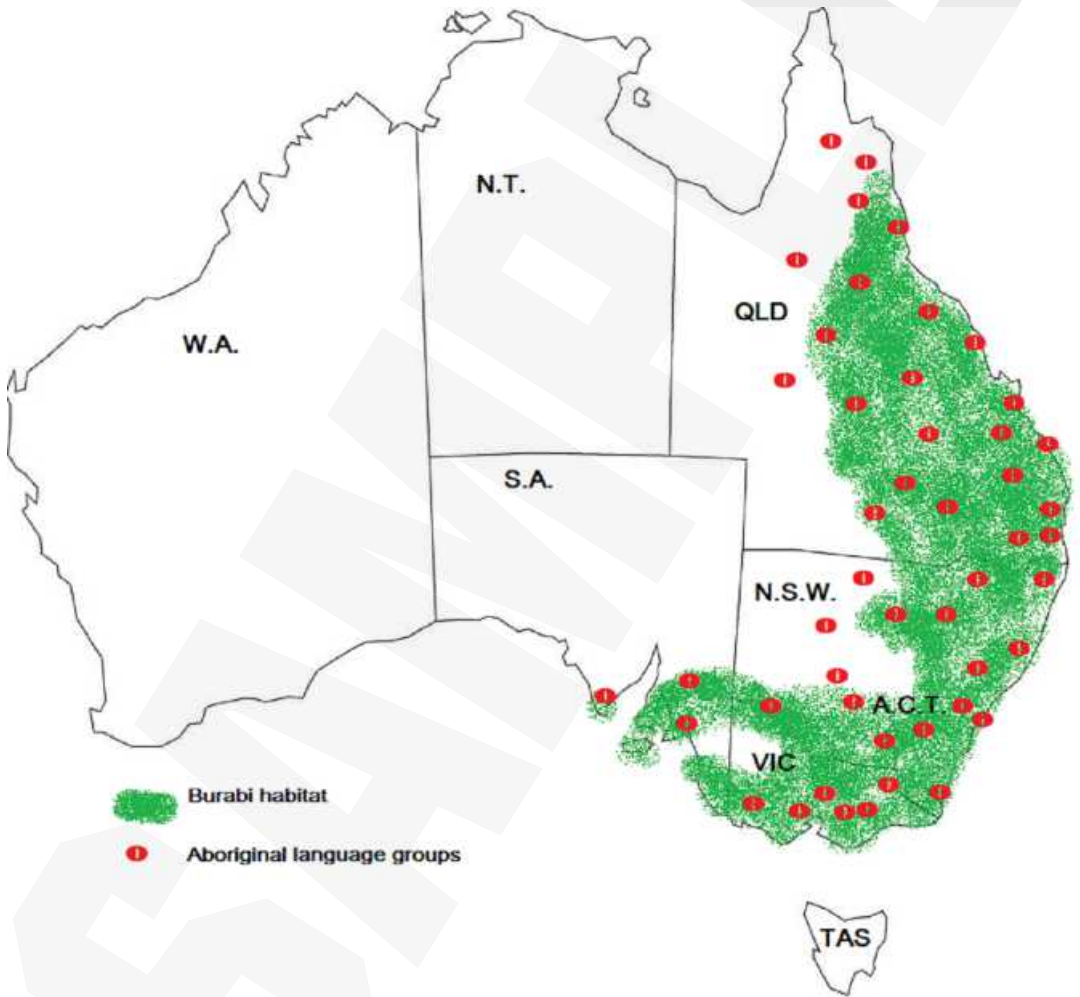
A long time ago lived a small boy whose parents had died. He moved and camped with his mean relatives. They would not give him much food or water. One day, everyone except the boy was out hunting and gathering. While the relatives were gone, he drank all the water. When the relatives returned, they were thirsty but had nothing to drink. In anger, they hit the boy and hurt him. He ran away and climbed a tall tree and made himself into a soft, furry koala. All he needed now were leaves and not water. He stayed high and safe where no-one could hurt him again.



When only the First Peoples lived in Australia, there were millions of koalas. Since then, lots of people have arrived from around the world and built roads and cities. The new people did not know about koalas. They wondered what to name these animals. Some people called them monkey bears. They climbed like a monkey and looked like a bear. They asked the Dharug people of Sydney what to call them. They gave them the name 'koala' which means 'no water' in the Dharug language.



Koalas are important to the First Peoples of Eastern Australia. Some people had them as a totem animal not to be eaten. To others, they were an important type of food. The people only took what they needed to eat. Different groups have different names for the koala. In this book, I call them burabi because I live in Bundjalung country. In Jagera you say, *dumbirrbibi*. In Yugarabul you say, *marrambi*. In Wiradjuri, you say, *barandang*.





First Nations people are alert to the animals and plants. They watch and learn from burabi. They learn about caring for children from the way burabi care for joeys. Small joeys stay safe inside the mum's pouch. When bigger, they ride on mum's tummy or back. When even bigger, they leave mum and find new trees to make their home. I used to have a job at a First People's place. It has the burabi mascot on its sign. My friend Greg started this place. He is an Aboriginal and Islander man. The burabi is like his special totem animal, so he protects them. This group helps Aboriginal and Islander families to care about each other and their children, just like burabi do.

## Burabi The Koala

Our beloved koala is in danger and in some areas of Australia, it has disappeared completely. So many things have impacted on our koala populations, including drought, bushfires and disease. We all need to work together to save this iconic Australian animal from the threat of extinction.



### Author's Bio:

Mark Tiris is a proud Wiradjuri (Central NSW) and European man. He is an active member of the Aboriginal Community around the Northern Rivers of NSW and is passionate about sharing his culture, art and stories. Mark is an experienced social worker, manages an Indigenous consultancy business and has master's degrees in both Indigenous Studies and Business Administration.

ISBN 9781922516008



**KNOWLEDGE**  
BOOKS AND SOFTWARE



The First Australians