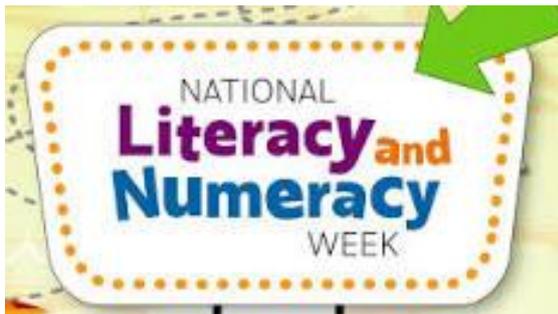
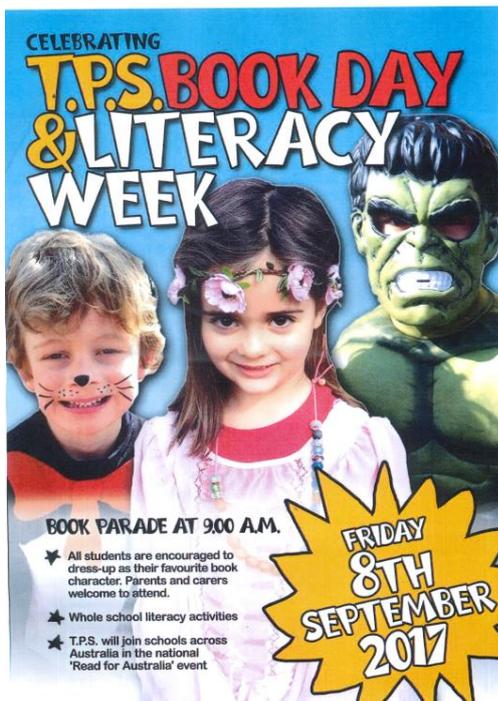


FOR THE LOVE OF READING!



National Literacy and Numeracy Week is held in the first week of September annually. The Week helps to raise awareness of the importance of literacy and numeracy at school and beyond.



Indigenous Literacy Day continues to be celebrated on the first Wednesday in September annually, and aims to raise funds to raise literacy levels and improve the lives and opportunities of Indigenous Australians living in remote and isolated regions. This year, Indigenous Literacy Day is on Wednesday 1st September.

In 2021, The Indigenous Literacy Foundation (ILF) is celebrating language and literacy in remote communities and the immense opportunities that positive community-led engagement can provide.

Check out the [Indigenous Literacy Foundation](#) website for events and activity suggestions.

This year, from 9am join ILF for over 40 short, inspiring and diverse video stories which will go live on this site. ILF invite you to select, share and immerse yourself in stories and language that highlights the diversity and richness of First Nations culture. There is something for everyone!

You will find delightful stories from kids on Country in remote Australia and enlightening stories from First Nations authors, musicians and artists such as Stella Raymond, Archie Roach, Wayne Quilliam, Jessica Mauboy, Brenton McKenna, Maureen Jipyiliya Nampijinpa O'Keefe, Natalie Ahmat, Larissa Behrendt, Jared Thomas, Anita Heiss and others.



Hold a fundraiser leading up to or following Indigenous Literacy Day and make a donation to the Foundation – some inspiring examples can be found on their website.

There are many ways to get involved in 2021, but when it comes to Indigenous Literacy, we believe that **EVERY DAY** should be about Indigenous literacy. There's a host of fantastic books written and illustrated by Aboriginal people across the nation.

A record seven Indigenous authors and illustrators were shortlisted in 2020 for the Children's Book Council of Australia awards.



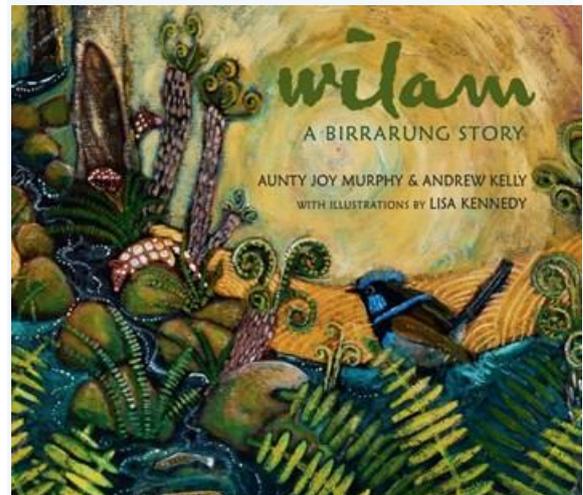
Bruce Pascoe's *Young Dark Emu: A Truer History* leads contemporary Indigenous perspectives on universal themes of identity and place, while three of the six books shortlisted in the award category of new illustrators are by Indigenous creators published by Broome-based Aboriginal publisher Magabala Books.

Magabala publisher Rachel Bin Salleh said there was a growing appetite in Australia and globally for Indigenous children's stories.

According to the [Sydney Morning Herald](#), Wurundjeri Elder and Author Aunty Joy

Murphy and artist Lisa Kennedy, whose collaboration *Welcome to Country* was a 2017 children's picture book hit, impressed judges again with their "breathtakingly beautiful tribute to the Yarra River" in *Wilam: A Birrarung Story*, flowing with Woiwurrung language words for the flourishing riverside flora and fauna, co-authored by Andrew Kelly.

Following are some of the books shortlisted.



Wilam: A Birrarung Story is one day on a vital, flourishing river. As *ngua* rises, *Bunjil* soars over mountain ash, flying higher and higher as the wind warms. Below, *Birrarung* begins its long winding path down to *palem warren*, *wilam* – home.

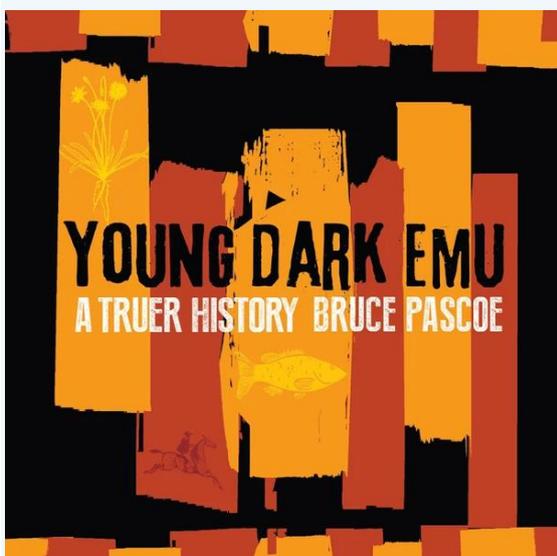
Yarra River-keeper Andrew Kelly joins award-winning picture book duo Aunty Joy Murphy and Lisa Kennedy to tell the Indigenous and geographical story of Melbourne's beautiful Yarra River, from its source to its mouth; from its pre-history to the present day.

Aunty Joy Murphy is a respected Wurundjeri Elder and author of the multi-award winning children's book [Welcome To Country: A Traditional Aboriginal Ceremony](#). Andrew Kelly is the Yarra Riverkeeper, part of an

international organisation of Riverkeepers. He has written numerous books for children and adults.

Illustrator Lisa Kennedy is a descendant of the Trawlwoolway People on the NE coast of Tasmania. Lisa was born in Melbourne and as a child lived close to the Maribyrnong River. Here she experienced the gradual restoration of the natural river environment alongside cultural regeneration and reclamation.

Published April 2019, by Black Dog Books of Walker Books.

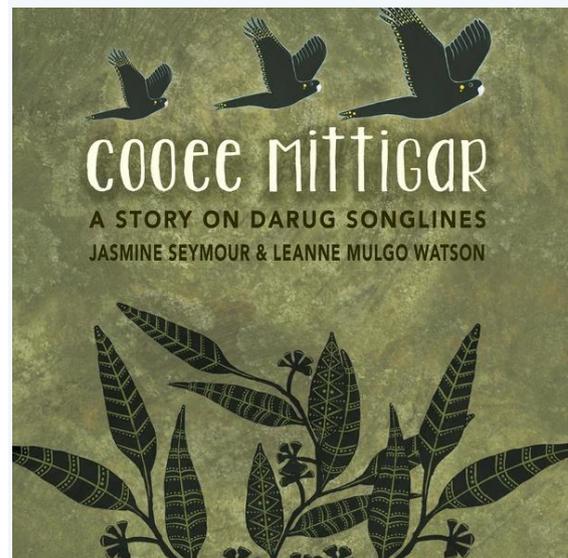


Winner of the 2020 Australian Booksellers Association Kids' Reading Guide Children's Book of the Year, [Young Dark Emu - A Truer History](#) by Bruce Pascoe is a journey.

Following the huge success of *Dark Emu* (2014), Bruce Pascoe has brought together the research and compelling first-person

accounts in a book for younger readers. Using the accounts of early European explorers, colonists and farmers, Bruce Pascoe compellingly argues for a reconsideration of the hunter-gatherer label for pre-colonial Aboriginal Australians. He allows the reader to see Australia as it was before Europeans arrived – a land of cultivated farming areas, productive fisheries, permanent homes, and an understanding of the environment and its natural resources that supported thriving villages across the continent.

[Young Dark Emu - A Truer History](#) asks young readers to consider a different version of Australia's history pre-European colonisation.



Cooee Mittigar, meaning Come Here Friend, is an invitation to yana, walk, on Darug Country, around Parramatta Sydney in NSW.

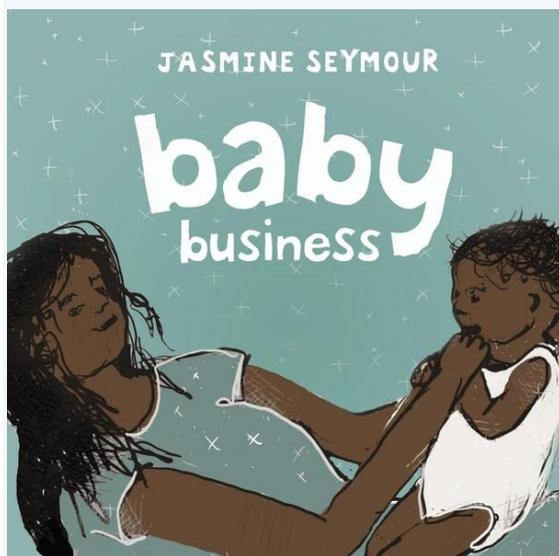
Cooee mittigar. Tread softly on our lands. Know that this dreaming was here. Is still here. Will be forever.

In this picture book, Darug creators Jasmine Seymour and Leanne Mulgo Watson tell a story on Darug Songlines, introducing children

and adults-alike to Darug Nura (Country) and language.

Greeted by Mulgo, the black swan, readers are welcomed to Nura. Journeying through the seasons, Mulgo describes the land, skyscape, birds, animals and totems. It is a gentle guide to how Darug people read the seasons, knowing when it is time to hunt and time to rest. It is also an appeal to remember, offering new ways of seeing and reading the lands of the surrounding Sydney region.

With Darug language interspersed with English and an extensive glossary throughout, Cooee Mittigar presents an important tool for [learning](#), told as a tender story with exquisite 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.

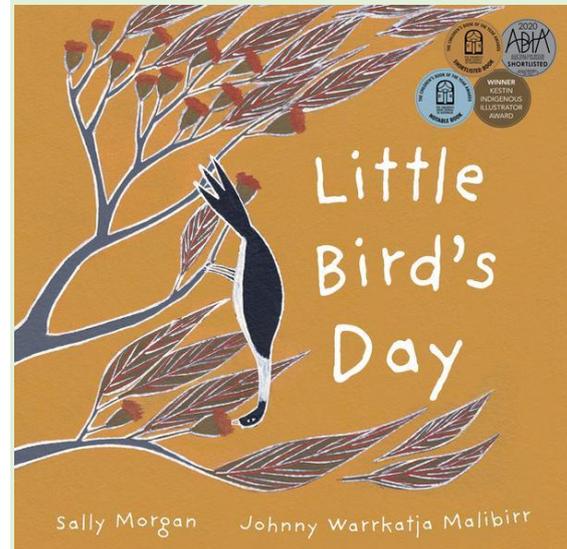


Warm smoke from the fire on your mouth. Keep our language on your tongue. Our words are the song of our ancestors and show the pathway to Dreaming.

[Baby Business](#) tells the story of a Darug baby smoking ceremony that welcomes baby to country. The smoke is a blessing – it will protect the baby and remind them that they belong. This beautiful ritual is recounted in a

way young children will relate to and is enhanced by gentle illustrations.

Central to this stunning book is a message of connection to Country and the need to care for it.



[Little Bird's Day](#) by renown Aboriginal author Sally Morgan and illustrated by award-winning artist Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr is a simple, universal story of a day in the life of Little Bird as she sings the world alive, flies with Cloud, travels with Wind, nestles with Moon and dreams of flying among the stars.

Sally Morgan's beautiful words and Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr's sensitive artwork combine to make this a beautiful, distinctive publication with global appeal.

Illustrator Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr was the winner of the inaugural Kestin Indigenous Illustrator Award in 2017. A Yolŋu man from the Ganalbingu clan he known for his paintings of Ganalbingu song lines as well as his mother's Wägilak clan stories. Johnny lives in the remote East Arnhem Land community of Gapuwiyak, where he is Chair of the Gapuwiyak Arts and Cultural Centre.

Illustrating the manuscript of author and illustrator Sally Morgan, Johnny worked with

Magabala Books to bring his fine-art aesthetic, traditional motifs and quirky sense of humour to Little Bird's Day. A simple, universal story of a day in the life of Little Bird as she sings the world alive, Little Bird's Day is now a best-selling 2019 release.

'When I heard I had won the award I felt really proud with my whole family. I like it that kids can learn reading and see my artwork. I hope kids around Australia will like this book.' - Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr.



Pictured: Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr's winning illustrations as published in 'Little Bird's Day'.

A must for young readers and dancers is children's book Dance with Me by Gunai Kurnai, Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung, Gunditjmara, and Wiradjuri author and educator Leann Graham.



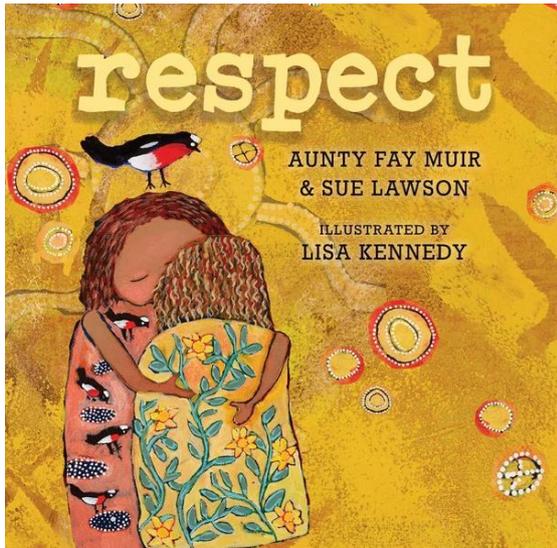
Dance with Me takes readers through a variety of animal dance moves, shared by a Koorie child who loves to dance, and introduces readers to Aboriginal cultural storytelling in a fun and interactive way.

Mother to four young children and a qualified early childhood educator, this is Leann Graham's first children's book, entirely self-published and released under her own label, Yarka Resources. Yarka is a Yorta Yorta and Bangerang word, meaning children.

Dance with Me introduces readers to Aboriginal cultural storytelling in a fun and interactive way. It is sure to be the first of many engaging and educational releases from Leann Graham and Yarka Resources.

Dance with Me is available directly from the author through Yarka Resources.





Boon Wurrung author Aunty Fay Stewart-Muir whispers soft and heartfelt messages in her latest children's books

Respect by Boon Wurrung Elder and teacher Aunty Fay Stewart-Muir and Sue Lawson, illustrated by Trawlwoolway artist Lisa Kennedy is the first title in the 'Our Place' series of four children's picture books by Magabala Books which welcome and introduce children to important elements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

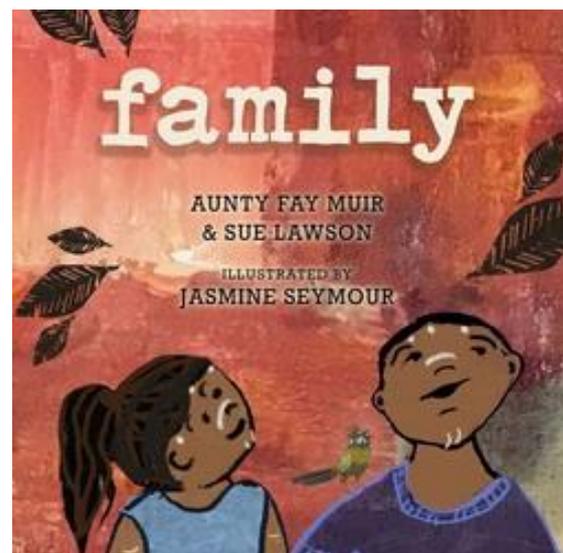
Respect whispers a soft and heartfelt message about the basic cultural principle that informs all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations throughout Australia. *Respect* is about a way of life that is older than flickering stars, about stories that shimmer through tall grasses, and redgum leaves that tumble to a parched and red earth. It teaches children the importance of family who show the way and how we need to listen, learn and share.

This eloquent and delicate story shows young and old alike, what *Respect* looks like for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

New off the presses *Family* by the same team. *Family* is thoughtful contemplation for all to learn the different ways that family makes us whole.

This beautifully illustrated children's picture book shows everyone that 'family' can be about heart and home; an endless sky; stories and songs. It 'learns' us how to be with each other and with Country. Families come in all shapes and sizes, and this remarkably simple story teaches us all, that family can be many things.

This is the second book from the **Our Place** series, that introduces young minds to First Nations' cultural philosophies that Aunty Fay Muir, a Boon Wurrung Elder holds close to her heart.

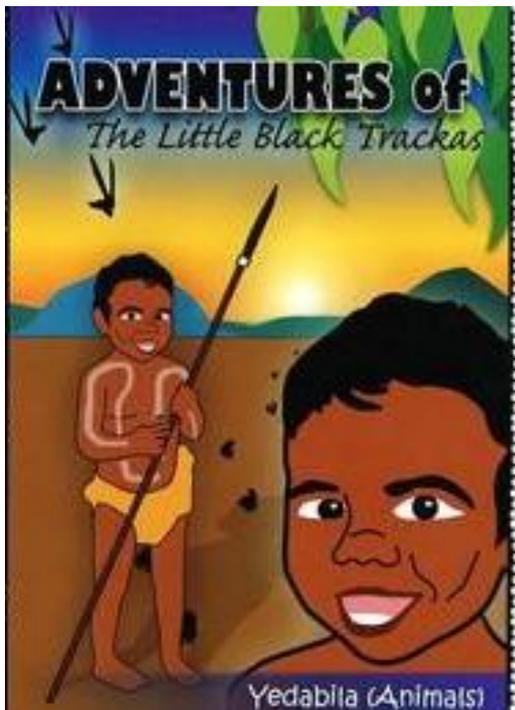


Throughout the year, explore a range of Aboriginal literature with your students. Children's stories like *TomTom*, fiction, plays, poetry, essays, and autobiographies like *The Black Swan: A Koorie Woman's Life* by Gunai Kurnai author and artist Eileen Harrison.

The Black Swan charts the way the policy of assimilation impacted on Eileen's family at Lake Tyers and her emerging talent as a painter.

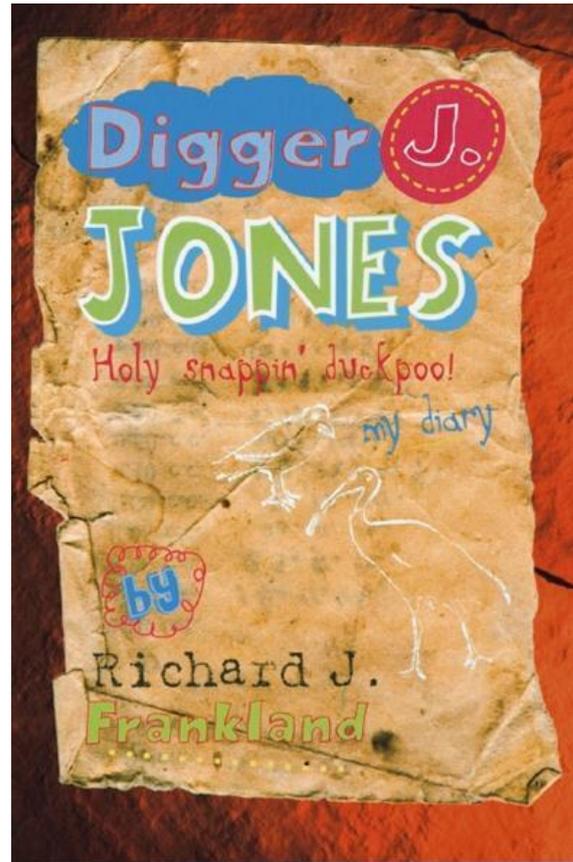
With much younger students, focus on stories such as those suggested on the [Better Beginnings](#) site: [Deadly books for little kids](#).

Also check out the adventures of [The Little Black Trackas](#) by Victorian Bangerang educator and author Esme Bamblett.



With older students study the highly readable novel [Digger J. Jones](#) by prominent Gunditjmara author Richard Frankland.

[Digger J. Jones Teaching notes](#) offer a range of class discussion points. Told in diary form, *Digger J. Jones* tells the story of Digger - an Aboriginal boy caught up in the events of the 1960s and the lead up to the 1967 Referendum which officially counted Aboriginal people in Australia as citizens in the eyes of the Federal Government.



Source or download a copy of [Nyernila: Listen Continuously – Aboriginal Creation Stories of Victoria](#) for a range of Victorian creation stories told by Traditional Owners.

The Macquarie Pen [Anthology of Aboriginal Literature](#), edited by Wiradjuri (NSW) writer Anita Heiss and Peter Minter is worth exploring with older students.

The Pen Anthology includes journalism, petitions and political letters from both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as major works that reflect the blossoming of Aboriginal poetry, prose and drama from the mid-twentieth century onwards.

Five Indigenous female writers who should be on school reading lists.

According to Wiradjuri writer, activist and social commentator [Anita Heiss](#), as we move into appropriately embedding Indigenous perspectives into the ... curriculum, and we increasingly recognise the need to move away from a homogenous reading experience, these are the women writers and their works that Australian educators in particular (secondary and tertiary) should be adding to their reading lists and class discussions. Here is a selection of the more powerful novels that should be considered for inclusion:

Mullumbimby — Melissa Lucashenko (2014)

Set in the northern NSW town of the same name, this is an emotionally powerful and impossible-to-put-down read. Through its main characters Jo Breen and her lover, the gorgeous Two Boy Jackson, readers get a glimpse into the complex meaning of connection to country, Bundjalung country specifically. Their relationship is offset against a story about native title, and the difficulties faced by many if not most claimants today, especially on the east coast that bore the brunt of colonisation. The novel has a raw honesty and is dotted with shocking but hilarious one-liners.

Home — Larissa Behrendt (2004)

Home won the David Unaipon Award in 2002 and the Commonwealth Writers' Prize in the South-East Asia region three years later. It is the story of three generations of removed children in NSW. Also recommended is Behrendt's second novel, *Legacy*, for a basic understanding of the meaning of sovereignty and the history of land rights.

The Boundary — Nicole Watson (2009)

Set in Brisbane's West End, *The Boundary* has everything: native title, community activism,

black bureaucrats, police thuggery and black deaths in custody, infidelity, and racism – all wrapped up in a multi-murder mystery. Eloquently written by a first-time novelist, Birri-Gubba, Yugembeh lawyer Nicole Watson, it won the *David Unaipon Award* in 2009.

Mazin' Grace — Dylan Coleman (2012)

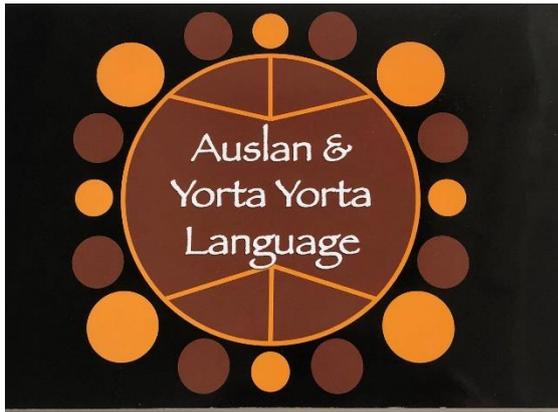
Coleman won the David Unaipon Award in 2011 with this, a fictionalised account of her mother's childhood at the Koonibba Lutheran Mission in 1940s and 1950s South Australia. It is one of the few novels by a First Nations writer that embeds her traditional language within the text.

Butterfly Song — Terri Janke (2005)

Janke's work is pretty much my idea of the 'great Australian novel'. It covers the geography from Sydney to Cairns and the Torres Strait, and manages to be a love story, crime novel, legal lesson, and a comment on contemporary Indigenous Australians who live in cities, go to university and contribute to every part of the nation's society. And it's a treasure trove of eloquent writing.

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/australia-culture-blog/2014/jul/08/five-indigenous-female-writers-who-should-be-on-school-reading-lists>

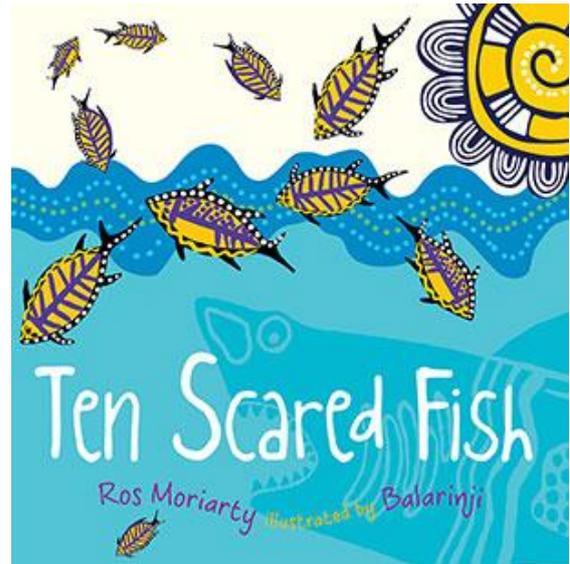




Auslan & Yorta Yorta Language

Aunty Merle Miller is a strong and proud Yorta Yorta woman, mother, grandmother, sister, aunty, cousin, friend and community member. She has worked as a teacher, early childhood educator, community development officer and more recently as a writer.

In her beautifully produced tri-lingual book *Auslan and Yorta Yorta Language*, we see Merle's granddaughter Pearl sign commonly used words and expressions in Yorta Yorta language and English, using Auslan. Published with the support of the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL), *Auslan & Yorta Yorta Language* is available directly from the author. Enquiries can be made through VAEAI.



Ten Scared Fish is an animal counting book with a difference. Following the river to the sea, the reader meets and counts the animals until finally ten little fish meet a big scary shark! By Ros Moriarty, author of *Listening to Country*, and founder of a non-profit organisation, Indi Kindi, supporting pre-literacy education.



And a final word ...

We are always seeking to improve our Koorie Perspectives in Curriculum Bulletins, Briefs and Features and to make them useful, relevant and highly readable. We invite you to email through suggestions including how you as educators incorporate Aboriginal perspectives, especially Victorian ones in your teaching and curriculum.

Our education resources, *Koorie Perspectives in Curriculum Bulletins and Briefs and Features*, are available on the [VAEAI website](#).

Produced by the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), September 2021.

Any enquiries, feedback and suggestions are welcomed, by contacting VAEAI on (03) 94810800 or emailing vaso@vaeai.org.au.

