

## BOOKS AND OTHER RESOURCES ABOUT THE HISTORY AND CURRENT DAY SITUATION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

### Highly recommended

***Welcome to Country*** by Marcia Langton (2018). This is an essential guide to exploring Indigenous Australia. It includes a comprehensive introduction to many aspects of Indigenous culture.

***Dark Emu*** by Bruce Pascoe (2014) puts forward an argument for a reconsideration of the hunter-gatherer tag for pre-colonial Aboriginal Australians. It turns most of what we learned at school 'on its head'. Evidence shows that Aboriginal people throughout the continent were domesticating plants, sowing, harvesting, irrigating and storing - behaviours inconsistent with the hunter-gatherer tag, which Bruce challenges as a convenient lie.

***Finding the Heart of the Nation*** by Thomas Mayor (2019). This book invites us to hear the stories of struggle and hope of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to learn about the journey to the *Uluru Statement* towards Voice, Treaty and Truth. Share the children's version of Thomas Mayor's book, ***Finding our Heart***, with the kids in your life.

***Talking to my Country*** (2016) by Stan Grant is his personal meditation on race, identity and history. It talks to every Australian about their country, what it is, and what it could be. Direct, honest and forthright, Stan is talking to us all. He might not have all the answers but he wants us to keep on asking the questions: is the country that we want to have? And now how can we be better off?

***Loving Country*** (2020) by Bruce Pascoe and Vicky Shukuroglou. *Loving Country* is a powerful and essential guidebook that offers a new way to travel and discover Australia through an Indigenous narrative. In this beautifully designed and photographed edition, co-authors Bruce Pascoe and Vicky Shukuroglou show travellers how to see the country as herself, to know her whole and old story, and to find the way to fall in love with her, our home.

***Decolonising Solidarity: Dilemmas and Directions for Supporters of Indigenous Struggles*** by Clare Land (2015), interrogates the often-fraught endeavours of activists from colonial backgrounds seeking to be politically supportive of Indigenous struggles. She argues that the predominant impulses that drive middle-class settler activists to support Indigenous people cannot lead to successful alliances and meaningful social change unless they are significantly transformed through a process of both public political action and critical self reflection.

***First Knowledges***. The National Museum of Australia is publishing a series of books under this title. Each one provides a deeper understanding of the expertise and ingenuity of Indigenous Australians. The first is ***Songlines: The power and the promise***, by Margo Neale and Lynne Kelly (2020). Song lines are the means of storing and learning knowledges, ancient and modern. They are stories embodied in the land, sea and skies to be remembered and passed on through song, dance, art, ceremony and, most importantly, through attachment to Country.

***Yalukit Willam, The River People of Port Phillip*** by Meyer Eidelson. This book might inspire us to encourage MPSC to undertake a similar an initiative to help people living on the Mornington Peninsula to learn about the history of the traditional owners of this land. Go to:

[https://issuu.com/copponline/docs/yalukitwilliam\\_12\\_december/68?ff](https://issuu.com/copponline/docs/yalukitwilliam_12_december/68?ff)

### Important website resources

**Reconciliation Australia** Go to: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au> Reconciliation Australia has also recommended a selection of 10 books on Indigenous cultures, histories and politics. Go to:

<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Rec-News-Ten-Important-Books.pdf>

**The Australian Reconciliation Barometer** is a biennial, national research study undertaken by Reconciliation Australia since 2008. It maps Australia's progress towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations, equality and equity, unity, institutional integrity, and historical acceptance. The 2020 Australian Reconciliation Barometer shows that support for a reconciled nation is higher than ever with steady improvement across most measures. However, inequality and racism against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples still stand in our way.  
<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/australian-reconciliation-barometer-2020/>

### **Biographies**

***Tell Me Why*** (2019) is a moving biography by Archie Roach. He was only a few years old when he was forcibly removed from his family. Brought up by loving foster parents until his early teens, his world imploded when he received a letter that spoke of a life he had no memory of. His story is an extraordinary odyssey through love and heartbreak, family and community, survival and renewal - and music. Overcoming enormous odds to find his story and his people Roach voiced the joy, pain and shining hope he found on his path through song and became the legendary singer-songwriter that he is today.

***Born-again Blakfella*** (2019) by Jack Charles is a candid and uplifting memoir from one of Australia's finest and most beloved actors. Uncle Jack Charles has worn many hats throughout his life: actor, cat burglar, musician, heroin addict, activist, and Senior Victorian Australian of the Year. But the title he is most proud to claim is that he is an Aboriginal Elder. Stolen from his mother and placed into institutional care when he was only a few months old, he was raised under the government's White Australia policy. The loneliness and isolation he experienced in those years had a devastating impact that he endured long after he reconnected with his Aboriginal roots and discovered his stolen identity.

### **National Reports**

***Bringing Them Home*** (1997) **reports the findings of the National Inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families:** Go to:  
[https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/social\\_justice/bringing\\_them\\_home\\_report.pdf](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/social_justice/bringing_them_home_report.pdf).

***The Wiyi Yani U Thangani Report (Women's Voices), 2020*** by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, June Oscar AO. This landmark report reviews the challenges and aspirations of Indigenous women and girls in Australia. It recommends an urgent focus on healing from intergenerational trauma; outlines a national plan of action to advance well-being; and the establishment of a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women and Girls Advisory Body.

***The Australian Government Productivity Commission 'Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Report, 2020'*** measures the wellbeing of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The report provides information about outcomes across a range of strategic areas such as early child development, education and training, healthy lives, economic participation, home environment, and safe and supportive communities. The report examines whether policies and programs are achieving positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.  
<https://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/overcoming-indigenous-disadvantage>

***The Interim Report of the Indigenous Voice Co-design process, 2020.*** Prepared for the Australian Government by Advisory groups comprising both Indigenous and non-Indigenous representatives under the leadership of Professor Marcia Langton AO and Professor Tom Calma AO. This report outlines proposals for developing an Indigenous Voice to enable Indigenous Australians to have a say on matters that impact on their lives and communities: [https://www.aph.gov.au/constitutionalrecognition/Interim\\_report](https://www.aph.gov.au/constitutionalrecognition/Interim_report)

### **Novels**

***Taboo*** by Kim Scott (2017) is a masterful novel on the frontier of truth telling. Taboo takes place in present day, rural South-West Western Australia. It tells the story of a group of Noongar people who revisit, after

many decades, a taboo place; the site of a massacre that followed the assassination, by these Noongar's descendants, of a white man who had stolen a black woman. They come at the invitation of Dan Horton, the elderly owner of the farm on which the massacres unfolded. He hopes that by hosting the group he will satisfy his wife's dying wishes and cleanse some moral stain from the ground on which he and his family have lived for generations. But the sins of the past will not be so easily expunged.

Miles Franklin Award winner, ***Too Much Lip*** by Melissa Lucashenko (2018), tells the story of Kerry Salter who grew up on Bundjalung country. She has spent a lifetime avoiding returning to her hometown and going to prison. But now her Pop is dying. She returns to her homeland where old family wounds open as family members fight to stop the development of their beloved river.

Miles Franklin Award winner Tony Birch's ***The White Girl*** (2019) is set on the fringes of a rundown mining town, in post WWII rural Australia. Odette Brown cares for her granddaughter Sissy at a time when the Aborigines Protection Act dictated the lives of First Nations people. A time when thousands of families were torn apart. This book causes the reader to not just pause and reflect, but to listen. It is essential that stories like these are heard.

Miles Franklin winner ***The Yield*** by Tara Jane Winch (2019) explores the legacies of colonial violence, shame, intergenerational trauma and environmental destruction. August Goondiwindi had lived on the other side of the world for 10 years. She returns home for her Grandfather's burial, wracked with grief and burdened with all she tried to leave behind. Her homecoming is bitter sweet as she confronts the love of her kin and news that her home town is to be repossessed by a mining company. She endeavours to save their land - a quest that leads her to the voice of her grandfather and into the past, the stories of her people, the secrets of the river. This is a story of a people and culture dispossessed, a celebration of what was and what endures, and a powerful reclaiming of Indigenous language, storytelling and identity.

### **Films, Podcasts and Audio**

Listen to Senator Pat Dodson's powerful and inspiring address at the 2020 **Swinburne Annual Reconciliation Lecture**. Go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNYjLTnkA00>

Listen to the podcast about the personal story of **Antoinette Braybrook**; her work with the Victorian Family Violence and Prevention Legal Service 'Djirra'; and her advice on how non-Indigenous people can support Indigenous women. Go to: <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bigideas/first-nations-women-fight-domestic-violence-and-winning-the-vote/12109950>

The ABC podcast series, ***Walking Together*** explores stories of Reconciliation between Indigenous Australians and the Pacific Island diaspora. <https://www.abc.net.au/radio-australia/programs/pacificbeat/walking-together/12289862>

Check out a great series ***First Australians***, a documentary on SBS on demand or on YouTube.

***In my Blood it Runs*** is a film about 10 year old Djujan, a child-healer, a good hunter and speaks three languages. As he shares his wisdom of history and the complex world around him we see his spark and intelligence. Yet Djujan is 'failing' in school and facing increasing scrutiny from welfare and police. As he travels perilously close to incarceration, his family fight to give him a strong Arrernte education alongside his western education. Walk with him as he grapples with these pressures, shares his truths and somewhere in-between finds space to dream, imagine and hope for his future self.

***Connection to Country***. This must-see documentary follows the battle of First Nations people in the Pilbara region of W.A. to preserve Australia's 40,000 year old cultural heritage from the ravages of a booming mining industry. Filmmaker, Tyson Mowarin shows the waves of industrialisation and development that threaten sites all over the region, and how he and the people of the Pilbara are fighting back by documenting the rock art, recording sacred sites and battling to get their unique cultural heritage recognised, digitised and celebrated. <https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/video/1010614851588>

Teacher resources are available for this program at [sbs.com.au/learn](https://www.sbs.com.au/learn)

Music buffs, check out the magic of **Indigenous musicians** showcased on radio ABC FM 105.9 played at 12.45 p.m. – 3 p.m. on Tuesday 23 June 2020 . Go to ABC FM radio website. This unique partnership between the Australian String Quartet and talented Indigenous musicians/composers includes: Stephen Pigram (guitar & vocals), Kate Moore, Lou Bennett (vocals), and William Barton, vocal and playing didge. This concert is also available on ABC's iView under the ARTS tab. "Quartet and Country: Australian String Quartet".

### **What's happening on the Mornington Peninsula?**

Indigenous people once lived all over the Peninsula yet public historical reference seems almost non-existent. **Look out for any MPSC historical signage** that refers to the history of First Nations peoples. Some signs are located at Mills Beach, Tanti Creek and Schnapper Point in Mornington, at Forest Drive Reserve, Mount Martha and also in Tyabb area. Alarming, local Tourist Information Centres don't have any relevant information on this. Please let SWAN's SNF sub-committee know if you find any more. Your 'research' would help us to encourage MPSC to liaise with Local First Nations groups to support the establishment of cultural trails to acknowledge Aboriginal history and colonial injustice.

Read the paper: '**Reasons for SWAN becoming an Indigenous Ally**' prepared by founding SFN members.

Learn about about the amazing work being undertaken by local First Nations organisations to provide services, strengthen resilience and empower their communities:

The **Warringinee Group** based in the Mornington Peninsula Shire Office in Hastings.

<http://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Community-Services/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-Support>

**Willum Warrain Gathering Place**, Hastings: <https://www.willumwarrain.org.au>

**Nairm Marr Djambana** Frankston Aboriginal Association: <https://www.djambana.org.au>

**Bunurong Land Council** Aboriginal Corporation, Frankston: <https://www.bunuronglc.org>

**Boon Wurrung Foundation**: <http://www.boonwurrung.org>

**Baluk Arts**, Mornington: <https://balukarts.org.au> Access the on-line arts store at:

<https://shop.balukarts.org.au>