

BLAK BOOK OF THE MONTH

YEAR 5 & 6

'**Blak Book of the Month**' is an initiative to support the inclusion of First Nations children's books regularly throughout the year in all Australian classrooms. This initiative can be led by individual teachers in their classrooms or taken up across the whole school by downloading the other 'Blak Book of the Month' resources for:

- [Early Childhood and Foundation](#)
- [Year 1 and 2](#)
- [Year 3 and 4](#)

The following books have been carefully selected to cover a range of First Nations themes/content such as identity, the Stolen Generations, land management, art, music and activism; as well as link to all subject areas in the [Australian Curriculum](#). Books have also been carefully chosen for particular months to align with significant dates within each month, e.g. the book *Our Race for Reconciliation* was chosen for the month of June to coincide with National Reconciliation Week (27 May-3 June).



You can purchase the following books from Riley Callie Resources, an Aboriginal owned and run educational online shop/business. Books can be purchased individually or Riley Callie Resources and I have partnered to create a '**Blak Book of the Month - Year 5 and 6 Book Pack**' for your convenience. To purchase the book pack head on over to the Riley Callie website [here](#). Use the discount code **NGANGAANHA** for 5% off!



Several of the books listed are also read online by First Nations storytellers on the [Story Box Library](#) (SBL) website and app. If you have a subscription to SBL, click on the SBL icon next to each book to take you there.

By downloading this document you are agreeing to:

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JANUARY

FOR 60,000 YEARS

Marlee Silva & Rhys Paddick

In 2021, Gamilaroi and Dunghutti woman Marlee Silva wrote a poem about January 26th which was a reflection of First Nations history, survival and her hopes for the future. She posted it on Instagram and now it's a powerful children's picture book with stunning illustrations by Yamatji man Rhys Paddick. A perfect text to explore First Nations perspectives for any discussions or lessons about [Australia Day/Invasion Day/Survival Day](#).

FEBRUARY

OUR HOME, OUR HEARTBEAT

Adam Briggs, Rachael Sarra & Kate Moon

Adapted from Briggs' celebrated song '[The Children Came Back](#)', *Our Home, Our Heartbeat* is a celebration of past and present First Nations legends, as well as emerging generations, and at its heart honours the oldest continuous cultures on earth.

Listen to 'The Children Came Back' and make connections to Archie Roach's song (and book) [Took the Children Away](#) for the anniversary of the [National Apology to the Stolen Generations](#) (February 13).



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MARCH

FREE DIVING

Lorrae Coffin & Bronwyn Houston

Free Diving is a tribute to the Aboriginal men and women who worked in the pearling industry as 'free divers' in the late nineteenth century in Western Australia. The fictionalised lyrical narrative is based on the celebrated song '[Free Diving](#)' by singer-songwriter [Lorrae Coffin](#). It sensitively reflects the emotional journey of a young man who leaves family and [Country](#) to work on a lugger with Japanese and Malay divers by his side - a unique Aboriginal perspective that a lot of Australians do not know about!

APRIL

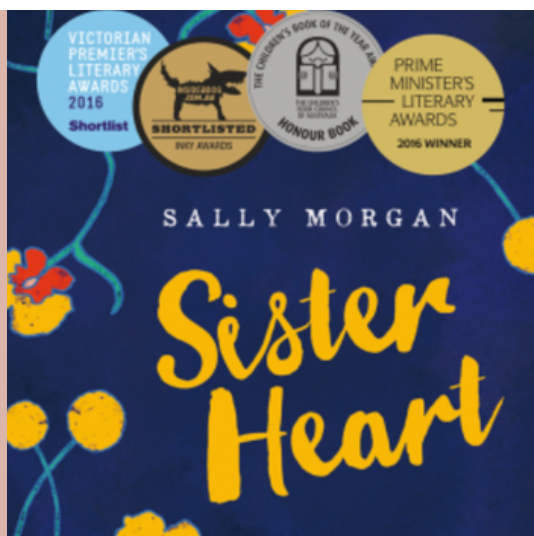
ALBERT NAMATJIRA Vincent Namatjira

Award-winning artist Vincent Namatjira tells the life story of his great-grandfather, Albert Namatjira, one of Australia's most iconic artists. Vincent's witty and moving paintings are accompanied by evocative text, which records the pivotal moments in Albert's life. View and discuss artworks by both Albert and Vincent Namatjira. Explore how their art reflects the world around them at the time. Use the [planning flowchart](#) from the Art Gallery of South Australia to engage students in an appropriate art activity (that does not involve copying their work).



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MAY

SISTER HEART **Sally Morgan**

Sister Heart is a verse novel about a young Aboriginal girl who is taken from the north of Australia and sent to an institution in the distant south. There, she slowly makes a new life for herself and, in the face of tragedy, finds strength in new friendships. Poignantly told from the child's perspective, *Sister Heart* provides an insight into [the Stolen Generations](#) and affirms the power of family and kinship. Read this book in preparation for [National Sorry Day](#) on the 26th of May.

JUNE

OUR RACE FOR RECONCILIATION **Anita Heiss**

Our Race for Reconciliation is a novel about a young Murri girl and her family on their way to attend Corrobooree 2000, the same year Australia hosts the Olympics. They embark on an incredible journey and witness Australians coming together to celebrate Australia's First Nations heritage and acknowledge past wrongs. Read this book for [National Reconciliation Week](#) (27 May - 3 June). Use this book to link to the Health and Physical Education Curriculum by exploring physical activities that enhance health and wellbeing in natural and outdoor settings such as long distance running!



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JULY

LOOKING AFTER COUNTRY WITH FIRE Victor Steffensen & Sandra Steffensen

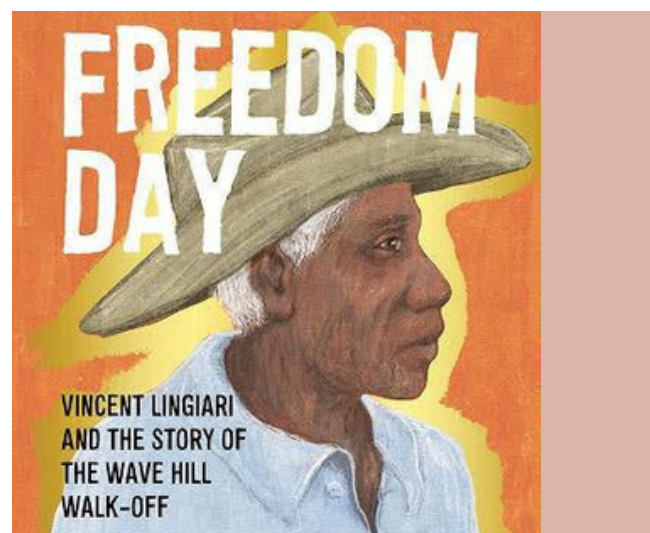
This book is a powerful and timely story about Aboriginal burning knowledge. *Looking After Country with Fire* offers a respectful way forward for future generations to understand different ways to manage our landscapes. Join Uncle Kuu as he shows readers how to listen to the land, look after plants and animals, and learn how to live with fire. This book links perfectly to Science outcome [AC9S6U01](#) and Geography outcome [AC9HS5K04](#) in the [Australian Curriculum](#) - not to mention two [cross-curriculum priority areas](#) (Sustainability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures)!



AUGUST

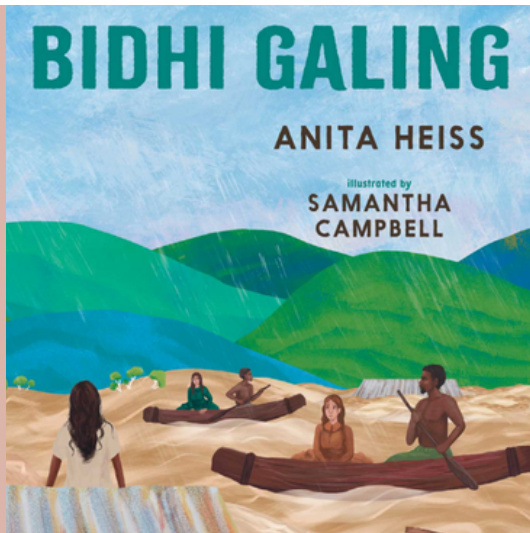
FREEDOM DAY Thomas Mayor, Rosie Smiler & Samantha Campbell

Freedom Day is a book about Vincent Lingiari and the [Wave Hill Walk-Off](#). In 1966, more than two hundred courageous Aboriginal people walked off the Wave Hill Cattle Station in the Northern Territory. Led by Vincent Lingiari, these stockmen and their families were walking together to fight for equal pay and land rights. This is a great book to read on the 23rd of August (the anniversary of the Wave Hill Walk-Off). [From Little Things Big Things Grow](#) is a wonderful partner text for *Freedom Day* and provides a great opportunity to listen and discuss the iconic [song](#).



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SEPTEMBER

BIDHI GALING

Anita Heiss & Samantha Campbell

This is the story of the Great Flood of Gundagai in 1852 and the Wiradyuri heroes, Yarri and Jacky Jacky, who paddled bark canoes through raging floodwaters, risking their lives to save countless others. This is a brilliant book about [Country/Place](#), Wiradyuri culture, truth-telling, history, Wiradyuri language and caring for each other. You may choose to listen to Anita Heiss read the story using the QR code found at the front of the book. This is a perfect text to support History outcome [AC9HS5K02](#) and Geography outcome [AC9HS5K04](#) as well as [World Rivers Day](#) on the 29th of September!

OCTOBER

BLACK COCKATOO

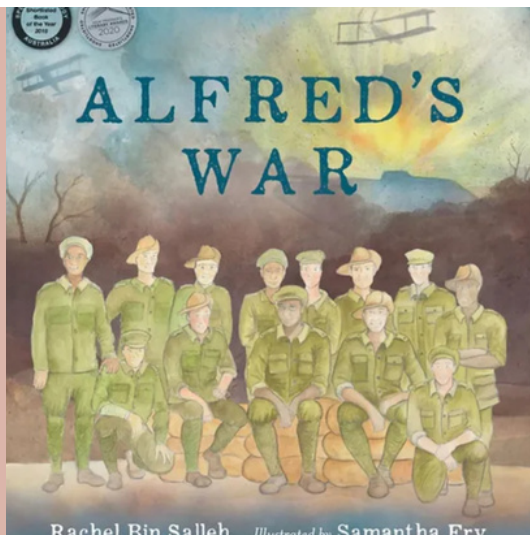
Carl Merrison & Hakea Hustler

Black Cockatoo is a vignette that follows Mia, a young Aboriginal girl as she explores the fragile connections of family and culture. Mia is 13 years old and from a remote community in the Kimberley. She feels powerless to change the things she sees around her, until one day she rescues her totem animal, the *dirran* (black cockatoo), and soon discovers her own inner strength. This is a great text to read for [National Bird Week](#) this month!



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NOVEMBER

ALFRED'S WAR

Rachel Bin Salleh & Samantha Fry

Alfred's War is a powerful story that unmasks the lack of recognition given to Australian First Nations servicemen who returned from the WWI battlelines. While Alfred experienced mateship in the trenches, when he returned home, he was not honoured as a returning soldier because he was an Aboriginal man and Aboriginal people were not recognised as part of the Australian population until 1967. This story opens our hearts to the sacrifice and contribution that First Nations peoples have made to Australia's war efforts, the true extent of which is only now being revealed. Read this book on [Remembrance Day](#) (11 November).

DECEMBER

WE ARE AUSTRALIANS

Duncan Smith, Nicole Godwin & Jandamarra Cadd

Finish off the year by reflecting on what it means to be an Australian citizen. Australia is home to people of different walks of life, and all these aspects are brought to life through the vivid illustrations and strong, meaningful phrases on each page of *We Are Australians*. We are reminded to honour and respect the history and cultures of First Nations peoples as the original custodians of this land.

