

19 May 2020

2020 black&write! Fellows

Reconciliation and diversity were the resonant themes in the children and early reader stories selected for State Library of Queensland's 2020 black&write! Fellowships.

Eunice Day from Queensland and West Australian Carl Merrison were each awarded the \$10,000 fellowships today.

Eunice Day is a proud Aboriginal woman descended from the Yimen Eaglehawk people and Lama Lama people. Her story *Rabbits by the Fenceline* is an illustrated children's story about reconciliation. The tale follows a group of rabbits split by small differences but eventually find a way to come together.

West Australian Carl Merrison won the second fellowship for his early reader series *Backyard Sports*. Carl is a respected Kija man from the Halls Creek area. His stories follow adventures that begin when a ball goes over the fence and show the diversity of First Nation childhoods in the Kimberley.

Based on the strength of the applicants, the judging panel has also awarded four highly commended entries: Charles Passi from Queensland for *Eyes of the Sea*; Edoardo Crismani from South Australia for *Finding Billy Brown*; Nicole Jones from Queensland for *I Am As You Are* and Darren Green from New South Wales for *Baloo Murri*.

black&write! is supported by the Australian Government, through the Australia Council for the Arts, publishing partner Hachette Australia, the Copyright Agency Cultural Fund and The Lionel & Yvonne Spencer Trust.

Quotes from Minister for the Arts Leeanne Enoch:

"In a year of record entries, I congratulate winning writers Eunice Day and Carl Merrison as this year's black&write! Fellowship recipients."

"These Fellowships introduce us to exciting new voices in literature, and make an important contribution in expanding contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writing."

"Now, more than ever in this time of global change and disruption, we need our stories to be told."

Quotes from State Librarian and CEO Vicki McDonald:

"We're proud of the national reach and outcomes from the black&write! program – especially in 2020, when so many creative outlets have been cancelled."

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“The program is the first of its kind in Australia and it plays an important role in bringing the talents of Aboriginal and Torres Strait writers into the spotlight.”

“This program exemplifies State Library’s vision, which is to inspire possibilities through knowledge, stories and creativity.”

“The stories published through this program have the potential to inspire generations of Australians to listen to the stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.”

Quotes from Publisher, Robert Watkins, Hachette Australia:

“As a publisher, we are determined to work with and produce books from authors of cultural significance.”

“Having the opportunity to work with black&write! provides Australian publishers like Hachette with a welcome pathway to discovery for authors from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background. Without such a route it is possible that the reading public would not have the opportunity to read some of our most culturally essential texts.”

Quotes from 2020 black&write! Fellow, Carl Merrison:

“Winning this Fellowship means a lot. I'm gobsmacked. The recognition, and the chance to have my story published is incredible. The story will be around longer than me, I hope.”

For more information about black&write! visit www.slq.qld.gov.au/get-involved/fellowships-awards-residencies/blackwrite

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