

19 October 2021

### **Landmark First Nations publishing project celebrates 10 years**

The rise of First Nations storytelling will be celebrated with a new showcase at State Library of Queensland that opens 23 October.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of State Library's black&write! project, an initiative that is helping to address the underrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in literature and support the rise in reader demand for First Nations books and perspectives.

Each year black&write! offers two fellowships for unpublished manuscripts by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander writers. The winning fellows work closely with black&write! editors to develop their manuscripts for publication.

The *Sovereign stories: 10 years of black&write!* showcase will map the history of the project and track the careers of fellowship winners and editors; with many going on to win accolades and awards.

The program was the first of its kind in Australia and plays an important role in bringing the talents of Aboriginal and Torres Strait writers into the spotlight. From children's books and poetry to science fiction, these are great reads that illustrate the dynamic storytelling within contemporary First Nations literature.

Research in 2016 by Macquarie University and the Australia Council for the Arts found that 63 per cent of Australians think books written by Indigenous Australians are important for Australian culture, and 59 per cent agree that First Nations publishers are important for books about Indigenous Australian cultures.

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

Full list of [current](#) and [past fellowship winners](#).

#### **Quotes from Minister for the Arts Leanne Enoch:**

"Over its first decade, black&write! has been a real game changer in the national literary landscape."

"The program has helped a wide community of First Nations writers to establish professional careers and tell their stories of heritage, history, country and culture."

"The Queensland Government supports State Library of Queensland to cultivate our storytellers and elevate First Nations arts. This is an important step in our journey towards truth-telling."

### Quotes from State Librarian and CEO Vicki McDonald AM:

“State Library is proud to champion and support the work of emerging writers and editors whose unique voices and perspectives have long been excluded from the national literary canon.”

“First Nations stories and truth-telling are crucial to understanding who we are as Australians and their voices need to be heard.”

### Quotes from curator Grace Lucas-Pennington:

“*Sovereign stories: 10 years of black&write!* highlights the strength of First Nations people reclaiming their narratives as well as showcasing the diversity of contemporary First Nations storytelling.”

“The showcase explores our collective ideas of story, voice and writing and challenges the Australian national narrative.”

“It is also a celebration of all the authors and editors that have come through the project over the last decade.”

*Sovereign Stories: 10 years of black&write!*

23 Oct 2021 – 15 May 2022

Open daily 10am–5pm | Free entry

kuril dhagun, level 1 | State Library of Queensland, Cultural Centre, South Bank

[slq.qld.gov.au/sovereignstories](http://slq.qld.gov.au/sovereignstories) | #slqSovereignStories

Images available here: <https://spaces.hightail.com/space/mCKi4BPvIQ>.