

## Olivia O'Flynn's Professional Picks for the Eve Pownall Category

2020 AAA PD Conference - March 2020

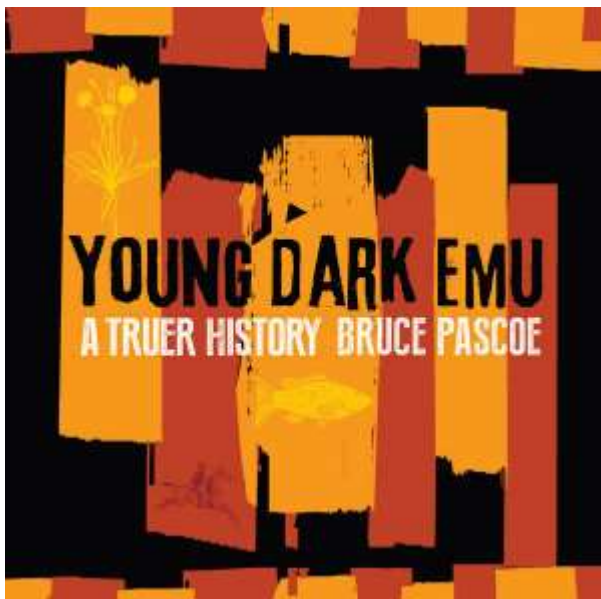
### Young Dark Emu

Bruce Pascoe has collected a swathe of literary awards for *Dark Emu* and his books are massive best sellers at our shop in Newtown.

In 2019 he 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, he 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.

Here's a review our bookseller Emma wrote when the book came out

*Like so many others, I adored Bruce Pascoe's Dark Emu and wish I'd been taught the truth about First Nations people sooner. I wish what I learnt in school wasn't based on justifying colonial – and present day – atrocities and ignorance. Like so many others, I hoped the book would become part of the national curriculum and that parents, teachers and leaders in education would encourage young people to read it. But guess what?! Bruce Pascoe has done one better! He's created a book especially for young readers – and there's no children's book I love more. Young Dark Emu: A Truer History is beautiful, insightful, compelling and retains all the charm that's made Bruce Pascoe an absolute legend of Australian literature. Suitable for upper primary onwards, it offers a different, truer way of seeing the country.*



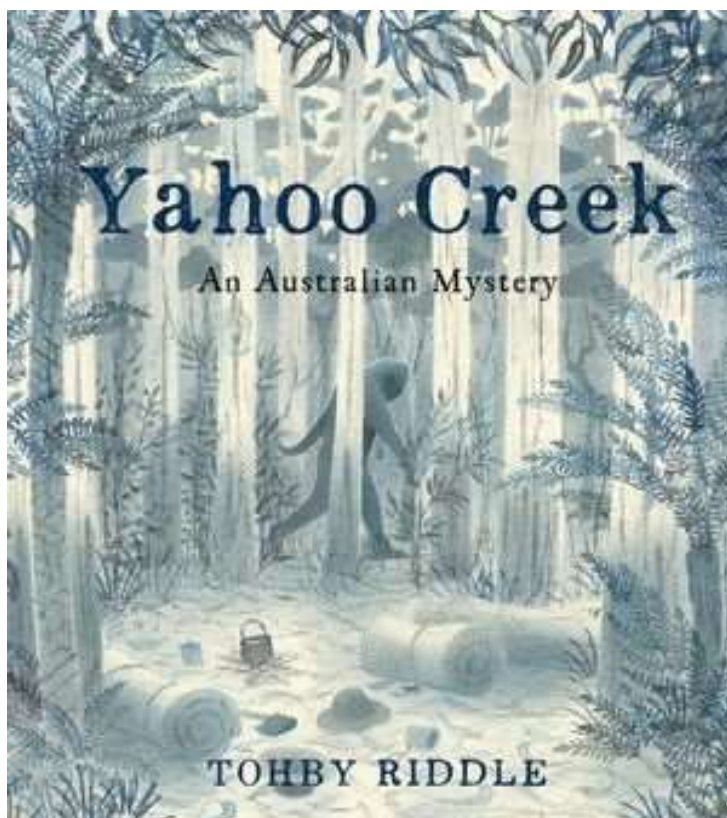
## Yahoo Creek

This beautifully presented book uses a range of texts, images and points of view – very useful for teachers demonstrating these aspects of texts to their students and for the general reader it's a clever way of validating an unexplainable subject.

Through the pages we learn of the many sightings of the Yahoo, Yowie or Hairy Man by Europeans in the form of newspaper articles. For over a hundred years there have been a huge number of reports by Europeans of encounters as the settlers moved into the Great Dividing Range. Fascinatingly there are numerous places including the word Yahoo along the range from Queensland down to and none outside the range. Obviously these inaccessible places were named for stories of sightings.

Importantly we hear from Indigenous reports too as Ngiyampa Elder, Peter Williams says, 'These are not my stories or your stories, they're *our* stories.'

According to Tohby the book was inspired by his move to the Blue Mountains, yahoo central for NSW, which led him to deeply research the subject and write this evocative, strange and fascinating book.



## **Playing with Collage**

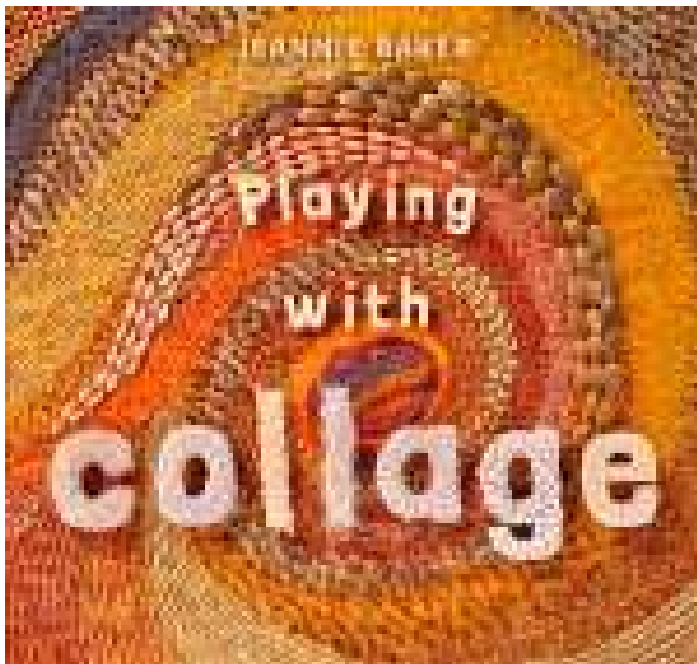
For many years Jeannie Baker has amazed us all with her highly intricate, tactile and beautifully illustrated picture books – each one greatly loved. Many a school teacher and student has been drawn to and fascinated by her work. When her book, *Mirror*, was published there was an exhibition of the original artworks at the Museum of Sydney and many, including me, went to marvel at the intricate artworks she creates.

The book 'Playing with Collage' explains her techniques in fantastic detail. It's a real 'How to' for anyone but especially teachers with students no doubt full of admiration for all or some of the 15 picture books she has created. I love that Jeannie has chosen to call it 'Playing' it really adds another level of enticement to the book. Who doesn't want to play?

Jeannie describes her work as 'collages...created from a combination of natural and artificial materials. Where I can I like to use textures from the actual materials portrayed such as bark, feathers, cracked paint, earth, knitted wool, tin so that their natural textures become an integral part of the work. The vegetation used is often natural. Using plants was a problem at first but I have learnt how to preserve them so they last and I add permanent colour.

The work is quite two-dimensional but I play with the little real depth the work has and a strong illusion of perspective is created.'

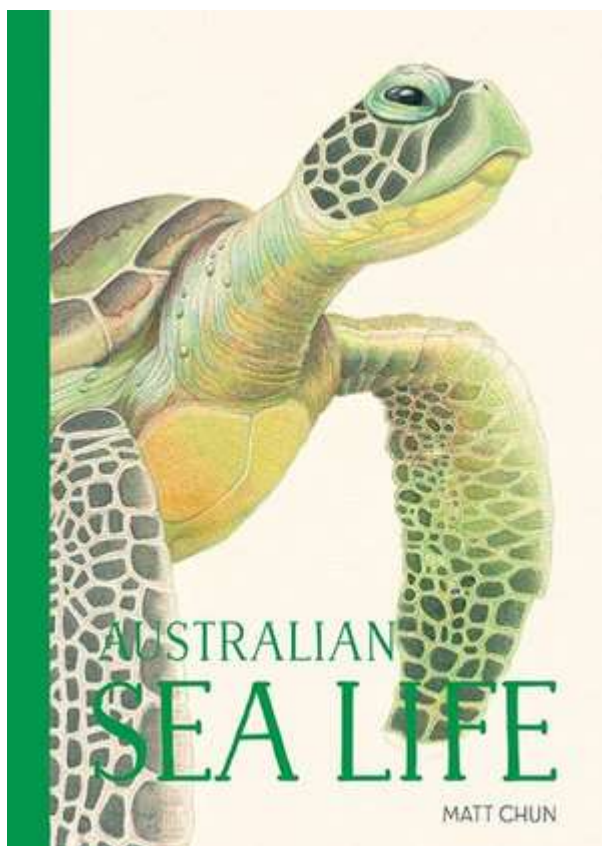
This book is a wonderful resource.



## **Australian Sea Life**

At Better Read Than Dead we were thrilled when Matt drew the turtle from the front cover of this beautiful book as a line drawing on our shop window. It attracted a lot of attention and we had a huge run on the book as soon as passing customers saw his amazing work – luckily we loved it so much we had plenty of stock. Thank you, Matt!

Like his Australian Birds of 2018, also a huge favourite in our shop, each of the 16 gorgeous oversized spreads has a colourful, detailed drawing on one side and easy to read but fascinating facts on the other. The drawings are lifelike and just plain stunning. A particular favourite of mine is the spider crab. This is the sort of book that as an adult you just sigh over and say ‘I wish I could draw like that!!’ We can’t wait to see what Matt does next.

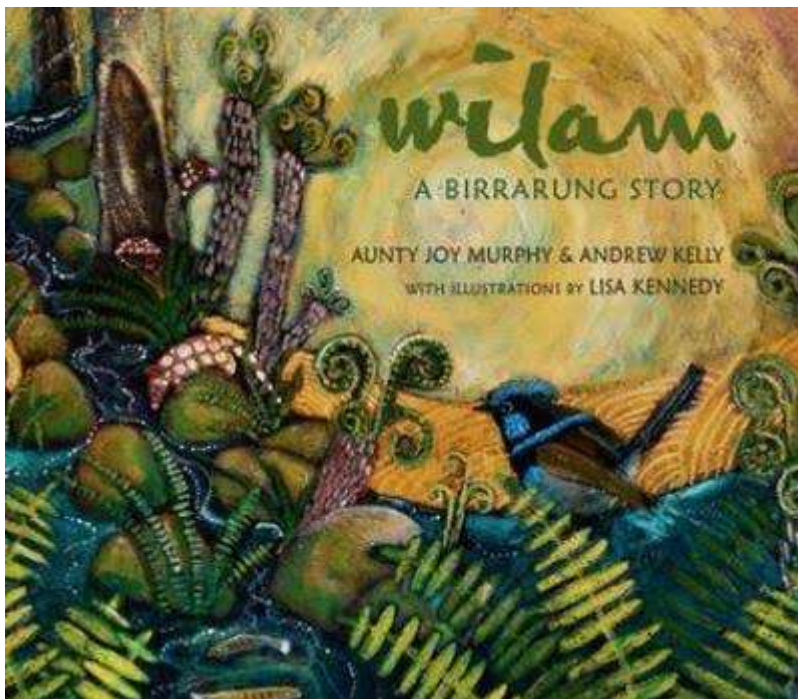


## Wilam

Wilam – A Birrarung Story translates to Home – a Yarra River Story. Words from the Woiwauurrung language of the Wurundjeri clan, are woven throughout the text. The book gives children the rare opportunity to learn more than 20 words from the Woiwauurrung language of the Wurundjeri clan, and the words appear again in the glossary at the back that helpfully includes a guide to pronunciation. You really feel that you are being involved in the traditional story of what we now call the Yarra in Victoria.

I love the vibrant and earthy tones of Wilam, it's a pleasure to turn each new page and ooh and ah at what appears. The beautiful and unusual illustrations by Lisa Kennedy, contain little stories in each spread with much to reward the observant reader and to tempt children and adults to re-read, each time perhaps spotting something new. The wildlife that lives along the river as it winds down from the mountains to the bay in Melbourne is featured in loving detail.

I think this book by Indigenous creators Aunty Joy Murphy, Senior Aboriginal Elder of the Wurundjeri People and Lisa Kennedy who collaborated with her previously on the picture book Welcome to Country (here they also work with Andrew Kelly, Yarra Riverkeeper) will stand the test of time and become a firm favourite with schools.





## **Searching for Cicadas**

This book is full of heart-warming illustrations that just make me smile. How lovely to see a little girl lying in the grass with her grandad watching the cicadas busily buzzing overhead – their warm relationship is palpable on the pages and their joint interest across the generations is inspirational and adds so much to the feel of this book. The illustrations of the cicadas themselves are great too.

As part of the narrative non-fiction Nature Storybook series, this is also filled with fun and interesting facts about cicadas. Their strange names such as Green Grocers, Yellow Mondays, Flourey Bakers and Black Prince and the noises they make which epitomise any Australian summer. There is also some additional information about cicadas at the back of the book and a useful index. One to enjoy for nature lovers and backyard explorers.

