

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ABORIGINAL LITERACY FOUNDATION

ALFABET

SUMMER 2020

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World Literacy Summit 2020

Northern Book and Library Project

Ear Health Awareness Book

2019
in Review

and looking ahead to 2020!

ALF students at exhibition held in Ballarat in June 2019

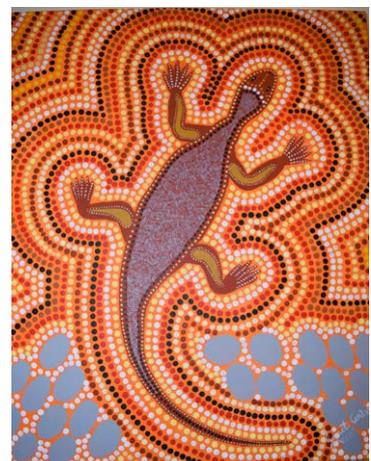


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Limited edition prints

Donations of \$250 and over to this year's End of Year Campaign, will receive a limited edition print of one of the works below, painted by Janet Curtain and Tarikka Campbell.



CEO's Report

2019 has been a wonderful year for the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation. Our Books to the North program has been an overwhelming success in the Northern Territory and also in Queensland. We are now in the process of forwarding books to remote Aboriginal schools in the north of Western Australia. By the end of the program, some time next year, more than 140 schools will have been provided with books and approximately 10,000 remote Aboriginal children and their families will have benefited. One of the local papers remarked, "This is the single largest campaign of its type", and we are proud to have been the provider.

Our Digital Literacy Hub, an online library for remote Aboriginal schools has now more than five hundred books that can be viewed online at remote schools. The program is now moving to a new stage where we are hoping to record remote languages which are in danger of becoming extinct. While there are still major languages such as Arrernte and Pintinjatjajara that are spoken as a first language by thousands of Aboriginal people, there are about 150 other languages that are spoken by 100 people or less and it is our aim to prevent

the tragic loss of language that will occur when the Indigenous speakers die out.

Our association with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons continues with the forthcoming publication on our book on ear infection and the often tragic results such as meningitis and many other brain diseases. Through our wonderful supporters, we hope to print more than 100,000 copies and send these to all remote schools and community groups in northern Australia. If parents and teachers are alerted to the dangers of ear infection, approximately 5% of Aboriginal children can be saved from this tragedy which also can affect reading skills and learning outcomes.

In April 2020, the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation will be represented at the World Literacy Summit at Oxford University in England. This is an important gathering of all the world's non-government literacy organisations and represents more than 300 organisations in 56 countries. It's a wonderful opportunity for us to share our experiences with similar organisations in the developing world and also in the declining

inner-cities of the West where literacy is once again an issue. An important role for the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation will be representing Australian literacy in the World Literacy Parliament which occurs on the last day of the conference.

We wish to thank all our supporters again for the wonderful support over the last year, without your help none of our work would be possible and it should be emphasised we received no government funding for our work which is recognised as being vital by not only Aboriginal communities but education departments in three states.

We wish you a wonderful holiday season and New Year.

Dr Tony Cree,
CEO



Pictured: Dr Tony Cree with Brent Watkins

Books to the North WA

Following the success of our Books to the North Program in the Northern Territory and in the north of Queensland we are now extending into Western Australia. There are over one hundred remote Aboriginal schools over an area extending from The Pilbara and Hamersley Ranges to the Kimberly and north to the Northern Territory border. This area covers some of the remotest communities in Australia and also represents the largest group of endangered Aboriginal languages.

The Aboriginal Literacy Foundation has a long tradition of working with other organisations and community groups in Western Australia - we are a major supplier of books to the Department of Child Protection and Family Support and also to the Shire of Hall's Creek and the Poonindie Community Learning Centre. We also have an ongoing partnership with Fremantle's Discovery Book Club which does fantastic work in Indigenous communities.

Part of our Books to the North Program will be to try to identify and keep oral records of languages at risk. We are most fortunate in having the

cooperation of most of the schools in the areas where dual language exists. It is quite common for children to have their Indigenous language at home and to have English as the school lingua franca.

An important part of The Books to North Program has been the community aspect of a newly created school library. For many remote communities, the acquisition of a library with several hundred books on subjects of interest to Aboriginal people is a great addition to the community. We would like to especially thank the schools in Melbourne and Sydney who have supported us through book drives and have provided us with more than one hundred thousand books in the last five years. We would also like to thank the sponsors of the Program, including The Coca-Cola Foundation, The Coopers Foundation and the Wellington Foundation.

Also in WA

Next term we will be trialling our online tutorial service at the remote Kununurra Primary School, in Northern Western Australia.

Our thanks to Bronwyn Covil from needatutor.com.au for her work in coordinating this project.



Thank you

Once again, we have been delighted with the community support from around Australia for our book distribution programs. We have had donations from families, businesses and many schools. Some notable contributions we would like to acknowledge are: QANTAS, the Point Cook RAAF Base, IBM (Melbourne and Ballarat), the International Society for Human Rights, Genazzano FCJ College, Deepdene Primary School, Orbon College, Sholem Aleichem College, Cambridge Primary School, Wildfire Parkville (Monash University), ANNECTO Ringwood.

Pictured top to bottom:

ALF's Jacinta with Amy from Point Cook RAAF
Ethan and Gillian
Gai and Dilnesh from ANNECTO Ringwood

Fremantle, WA

Thanks to the ALF for providing great quality second hand books for our most vulnerable children, who have so little. Education and life outcomes for children in care are distressingly poor. The ALF books are helping us to give access to books and reading to those who need it most.

We have a 5 year old child who has just come into care, now living with a foster family. The social worker Ellie was going out to visit for the first time. Before she left she came and selected a book to take with her.

Ellie took the book to read to the little girl as an icebreaker. It can be awkward and scary for little children to meet another new adult, especially when they have already lived through difficult times. While Ellie read the book to the little girl, the other children in the family also gathered around to hear the story with her.

The book about a mother chicken was full of rhyme, rhythm and repetition and would have helped ease the worried feelings. Reading the book provided a great way to have a positive introduction, reduce stress and was the start of building a positive relationship. This is important as Ellie will need to be discussing serious things with the child in the future and the book has paved the way for a friendly and trusting relationship. The little girl who came into care with nothing, was so happy she even got to keep the book when Ellie left.

Thanks ALF for your continued donations of books. They are gratefully received and have multilayered benefits.

*Olivia,
Child Protection and Family
Services, WA*

Regions covered

Pilbara

Kimberley

Hamersley Range

Hall's Creek

Wynham – Northern most town of the Kimberley

Hununurra – North west, close to NT Boarder

Dampier Peninsula – Far North

Coral Coast – Far North

Meekatharra – Mid west



EAR HEALTH *Awareness*

Supporters were contacted recently in our appeal to help fund a new addition to our Healthy Living Series, focusing on awareness of hygiene habits to prevent chronic ear infection and disease.

Indigenous children are seven times more likely to require surgery to repair damage to ear drums and surrounding tissue than the wider population. On average, non-Indigenous children will spend about three months of their childhood suffering from ear infections; **Indigenous children will spend 32 months of their childhood enduring these conditions.**

Towns like Jigalong, located on the edge of the Little Sandy Desert provide an insight into the nature of the problem facing remote communities: Paige Taylor, the Indigenous Affairs Correspondent for The Australian recently reported that nine out of ten children in the community of 300 children are already suffering from chronic ear infections.

Taylor writes, “The infections were so prevalent that many parents believed that weeping ears were a normal part of childhood.”

The Aboriginal Literacy Foundation, with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons is undertaking a program to make Indigenous families in regional and remote Australia aware of the dangers of ear infections in children. The most common ear disease affecting Indigenous children is Otitis Media: left untreated, this disease can lead to deafness resulting in delayed speech and poor education outcomes. In severe cases, ear disease can lead to life threatening extra cranial infections such as meningitis.

In recent years the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation has had considerable success with its publication of the Healthy Living series of books, and we will aim to distribute one hundred thousand copies of the book in northern Australia. If ear infection is dealt with immediately using antibiotics, then it presents no long term health issues and the purpose of this book is to alert families to the dangers and make them aware of how easy it is to deal with this type of disease. We believe this is a really important issue and we are grateful for our supporters helping us to fund this project.



The infections were so prevalent that many parents believed that weeping ears were a normal part of childhood.



As with previous editions, books will be specifically designed to engage with Indigenous children. Cover art has been done by ALF art student, Tarikka Campbell.

If you would like to support this program, please visit givenow.com.au/earhealthawareness

Job Ready Program

Recent research has provided strong evidence that the high rate of Indigenous youth unemployment is directly related to two factors: poor literacy skills and a lack of general information about obtaining employment.

Due to recent occupational health and safety legislation, a base level of literacy is necessary for an employer's legal compliance.

Many young Indigenous Australians have never had the opportunity to undertake paid employment; which leads to a lack of understanding of how to approach their job search and requirements once they have a job. These may seem straight forward enough, but may not be so apparent to someone without experience: for example, the requirement to observe the hours stated on the employment contract, the need to accept current

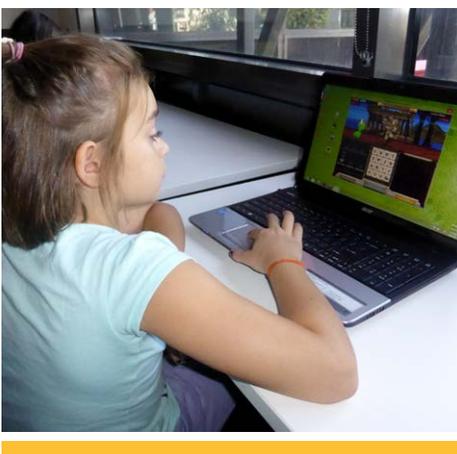
employment etiquette (including dress, relationships with workmates) and understanding the role of management in employment.

We've had considerable success with our Job Ready Program in inner city Melbourne and we are now about to extend it to rural areas. Our experience has been that the improvement of literacy skills, particularly in areas relating to employment, and the ability to write a letter of application and include a resume has made an enormous difference in the chances of finding employment. In more remote parts of Australia, many positions are tagged for Indigenous people, and often the local community is not aware that this is the case. A wider understanding of Indigenous employment opportunities will also have a very positive effect on employment outcomes.

It is our belief that employment provides the best opportunity for young Indigenous Australians to improve their lifestyle and health.



Digital Literacy Hub



Over the past five years, the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation has been developing a Digital Literacy Hub. This is an online library that is available to more than three hundred Aboriginal schools in Northern Australia.

It should be noted that more than five hundred books of interest to Aboriginal children and adults can be read or downloaded from this digital platform. We are extending the library to include not only books but magazine articles and an oral and video library. The addition of oral and video material is significant as it will enable us to record Aboriginal languages in northern Australia. This facility will allow us to further support the preservation first languages - so vital in the awareness of Indigenous history and tradition.

We regard this as a very important development and we are most grateful for the support we've received from the ALF community. The provision of early funding by the Wellington Foundation from Boston enabled us to get this project underway and we are keen to find another philanthropic supporter to allow us to continue this work.

In years to come the preservation of Aboriginal languages by the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation may be regarded as one of our most important legacies.

Western Victorian Tutoring

Beaufort After School Programs

Tutoring

The Aboriginal Literacy Foundation and Principal Mrs. Tameeka Rush are excited to be introducing an After School Tutoring and Mentoring program at the Beaufort Primary School at the commencement of Term 1 in 2020. This will assist Beaufort's Indigenous students within the areas of most need of improvement, particularly literacy and numeracy.

The latest NAPLAN statistics show that the 'gap' between Indigenous and non-Indigenous education has not shifted in the last two decades. The ALF's After School Tutoring and Mentoring Programs are aimed at raising Indigenous literacy levels by 2.1 reading years to that of the non-Indigenous population, and to be able to provide Indigenous students with the confidence to enter into secondary education on an equal footing.

When a student falls behind, catching up to their peers becomes increasingly difficult. Children will often become bored, discouraged or suffer from poor self-esteem or other negative attitudes that stem from "feeling dumb".

We believe opportunities such as our After School Tutoring and Mentoring Program play an important role in keeping Indigenous students engaged in their education and the confidence to pursue further education or training.

Art classes

The Aboriginal Literacy Foundation's Heritage and Art Classes have been very successful, prompting art exhibitions and further requests for the talented students' work. We are very pleased to announce that we have established our Heritage and Art Class at Beaufort Primary School. Principal Mrs. Tameeka Rush informs that there is a genuine interest and eagerness for attending the Heritage and Art Class Program amongst their Indigenous students.

Initiatives such as our Heritage and Art Class Program help to connect Indigenous students with their heritage, and this is widely regarded as one of the most effective ways to keep Indigenous students engaged and invested in school life.

The program will allow us to create connections with Indigenous families and establish a rapport with the local community (in Beaufort and surrounding areas). It also allows the ALF to then introduce other programs, such as the After School Tutoring and Mentoring.

The Aboriginal Literacy Foundation has long advocated the need for a holistic approach to Indigenous education and one that recognises importance of culture and art to a student's school experience.



World Literacy Summit

April 5 - 8, 2020

In April 2020, the World Literacy Summit is being held at Oxford University in England. This conference attracts a worldwide contingent of literacy organisations and individuals. Approximately 250 literacy organisations belong to the World Literacy Council. These are mostly non government organisations who are often working in the most remote and difficult to reach parts of the world. The aim of the World Literacy Summit is to address literacy issues on a worldwide basis. It is of course quite shocking that nearly 50% of Australian Indigenous people are functionally illiterate (up to 70% in the justice system), but an equally shocking figure is that approximately one quarter of the world's children do not attend traditional schools, and if they do attend it is only for a short time. Some countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan and many Middle Eastern nations have a 50% plus illiteracy. Unfortunately this is often related to gender and cultural factors where it

is not considered suitable for women and other community groups to be educated. Perhaps a worse situation occurs in many African countries where due to the breakdown of their administration, schooling has almost come to a halt. Some countries such as Zimbabwe that had over two thousand secondary schools twenty years ago are now down to less than half that number with teachers complaining of poor or non existent salaries. It is in these environments that the volunteer organizations have to play an important role in education, and it should be noted that in some countries these organisations and church groups provide the bulk of education that's available to ordinary people.

The conference also examines the state of literacy in the developed West, and it is of some concern that literacy levels in some inner cities have been dropping. This is thought to be partly due to the lack of provision of good schooling and teachers, but another

factor is the much wider use of mobile phones, and other non writing means of communication. As Marshal MacLuan predicted in the 1970's, "in a video culture it may not be necessary to know how to read and write".

An important task of the conference is to monitor these developments, report them back to the wider community and raise an awareness of what the long term consequences of this might be.

World Literacy Parliament

An important part of the conference is the World Literacy Parliament. This is an opportunity for every country represented at the World Literacy Summit to make a report on the state of literacy in their country. At the 2018 World Literacy Summit, more than fifty countries were represented and it is expected an even larger number will be in attendance at the forthcoming conference.

The Aboriginal Literacy foundation is proud to be a member of the World Literacy Council which represents 250 literacy organisations around the world. The Literacy Summit is held every 2 years and is funded by attendees.



Bequests to the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation

The Aboriginal Literacy Foundation is most grateful to individuals or organisations who choose to make a bequest. We would recommend that you inform your solicitor to include a bequest in your will – If you prefer, you can use the form provided below.

I _____ wish to bequeath _____ dollars to the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation.

I would like this bequest to contribute towards:

- A library for a remote school
- Extending the tutoring program
- To provide a school or post-school scholarship
- All work currently undertaken by the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation
- Other (please specify)

If the donation is towards a school library or a school in the Northern Australia, we can arrange for a small named plaque to be placed at the school receiving your donation. Please tick below.

- Yes, I would like a plaque to be placed at the school.

Please forward a copy of this form to your solicitor and a copy to the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation at info@aboriginalliteracyfoundation.org

or

P.O. Box 315 Flinders Lane
Melbourne, Victoria, 8009

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