

# Thank you for supporting OUR YARNING via ALPINE ODYSSEY



## Impact Update: 18 Sept 2023

A huge thanks again for your generosity in supporting Our Yarning via Huw Kingston's Alpine Odyssey fundraising. We wanted to update you on how the more than \$65,000 raised has been used this past year since Huw completed his journey across the Australian Alps.

Our Yarning aims to address the disproportionate impact of illiteracy and low education attainment among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Our Yarning provides Aboriginal children access to stories and reading material that mirrors their own, varied experiences across Australia. Our research shows that children achieve more by reading stories that reflect the lived experiences of their community and history.

With access to culturally-relevant, age appropriate books, children can develop a love of reading from their earliest years. We know improved literacy leads to better education outcomes for communities, and contributes to healthier lifestyles, more productive communities, and unlocking opportunities throughout life.

### Writers' Workshops

Our Yarning Writers' Workshops are a powerful tool for engaging communities in the value of literacy while telling the stories that matter to them. Our Yarning works with communities to create culturally relevant books written by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for their children, that tell stories that reflect their lived experiences.

### From Story to Published Book

Stories are collected from Writers' Workshops in the form of manuscripts. From here, our in-house Publishing team undertakes thorough structural checks including copy editing, ensuring each book has accurate content, spelling and grammar, and meets curatorial requirements for reading level and across our various themes and content pillars. After this step each book is individually illustrated through our network of trusted illustrators bringing each story to life with culturally relevant imagery. Importantly, all titles undergo an audit with Cultural Advisor Dr Julie Owen, to ensure that the published books are relevant for children.

So far in 2023 we've run 12 workshops with a total of 120 participants. These workshops have been in various locations across Western Australia, Northern Territory, ACT and Queensland – and excitingly in June we gathered some of our first stories from the Torres Strait Islands.

### Books Published

To date in 2023, we've published 43 original books to the Our Yarning collection. This takes the total number of original books available on the app to 125, along with a further 114 licensed from other publishers.

As more books are published, they are added to the free Our Yarning app to be accessed by anyone, anywhere – including teachers, parents and children.

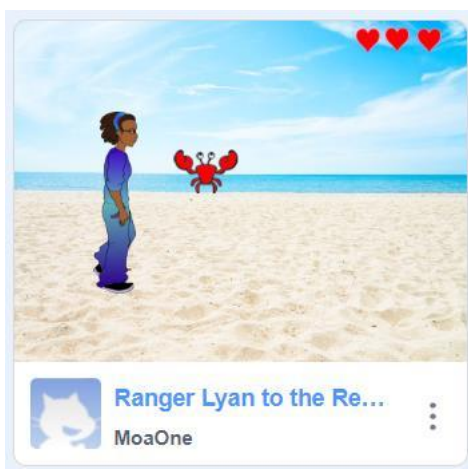
Each book has also been added to the [Our Yarning catalogue](#) and are available to purchase as printed books by schools, NGOs and community libraries. All proceeds from Our Yarning book sales are re-invested to support the program and Library For All helping us build a sustainable program that will continue to benefit communities in the future.

We've had strong and growing interest from a range of NGOs, schools and community groups to purchase printed books, with around 5,500 printed books distributed across Australia to date. These books have been purchased through direct connections and the dedicated online shop - [www.ouryarning.org](http://www.ouryarning.org)

### Growing Literacy and engagement with education

Along with Writers' Workshops, the Our Yarning team have invested efforts in 2023 to raise awareness of the free digital collection and option of buying printed books at relevant conferences and trade fairs, and with readings at daycare centres and preschools. The feedback received is overwhelmingly positive.

We're also seeing creative uses of our First Nations' authored titles across education. For example, a teacher in Queensland shared how he used the book *The Dreaded Net* that engages children on the impact of waste on ocean life, as a stimulus text for their coding class. The book provided the foundation for students to design their own games.



*One student's game involved a ranger collecting rubbish while dodging crabs.*

### Reaching 95,000 children in five years

Our focus has been growing the collection of published books to a size that makes it relevant to share as a collection for children that can engage and sustain their interest across levels, themes and interest areas.

We continue to grow the Our Yarning library, as we aim for a collection of at least 500 books – which research shows is optimal for growing children's literacy through a sustained reading runway. Furthermore getting Our Yarning books into children's hands by growing awareness of the app and building partnerships for printed book sales, remains a priority.

Thank you again for supporting Our Yarning. We couldn't do what we do without you!