

YARNUPINGS

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE OFFICE NEWSLETTER ISSUE #3 DECEMBER 2023



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It's the Christmas edition of Yarnupings and we're getting festive!

In this issue we see a gorgeous **Picture of Serenity** by Volunteer Robyn Law.

We farewell Kyle and Welcome Kahla to the AHO team.

The **Ocean Festival** is on late Nov/early Dec and the AHO Museum in Freshwater is open and showcasing ocean based artefacts. The **Volunteers** have had a cracker of a year and we let you know what we've been up to. Karen writes about **Connection to Sky Country** and Phil discusses **Cultural Burning**. Karen has put together fun activities to do over the Christmas holidays and we've added in a delicious **Christmas dessert** for you to enjoy

Please enjoy the fourth edition of Yarnupings for 2023.

The AHO Team— Dave, Phil, Karen, Susan, Kahla.



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Photo Credit: Robyn Law



This issue we farewell Kyle. An absolutely joyful team member, Kyle will be missed. We would like to welcome Kahla! We are delighted to have her join the AHO team. Kahla's the new Museum Officer, so drop by the AHO Museum and say hi!





30TH OCEAN FESTIVAL

26 NOVEMBER-3 DECEMBER

**LEARN HOW
ABORIGINAL PEOPLE
USED THE OCEAN.**

**AHO MUSEUM
29 LAWRENCE ST
FRESHWATER**

9AM-3PM



VOLUNTEERS 2023 IN REVIEW

The AHO Volunteer Program for 2023 has been awesome! We have seen a steady intake of new volunteers. Nothing like the heightened rush of the pandemic, but members of the public are discovering our program and are wanting to contribute their time and skills to helping preserve and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage.

So... Welcome to our 2023 volunteers! We're stoked to have you on board.

2023 also saw the refreshing of skills for our volunteers. We had a great turnout and the feedback was positive and we have seen some really useful reports, with great photos being submitted. Thanks to all the volunteers who joined in the skills refresh.

Our upskilled volunteers have helped to record and report harm of sites, such as new graffiti, which has led to action being taken

and sites being looked after.

During the second half of 2023 we hosted a documentary night for our volunteers at the Kugai Wildflower Gardens, in the lovely Kaley's Pavilion. We showed 'The Lake of Scars', a fantastic documentary about the largest scarred tree collection in the country, if not the world, and the challenges faced in trying to preserve and protect this invaluable piece of world history.

We have also spent a bit of time photographing our fabulous volunteers in their natural volunteering habitat. This was a really fun day! Thanks to everyone who donated their time.

2023 was our first full year without a Covid shutdown, so it has been so wonderful to build the volunteering team up again. We look forward to more education, conservation and social events in 2024.



Connection to Sky Country

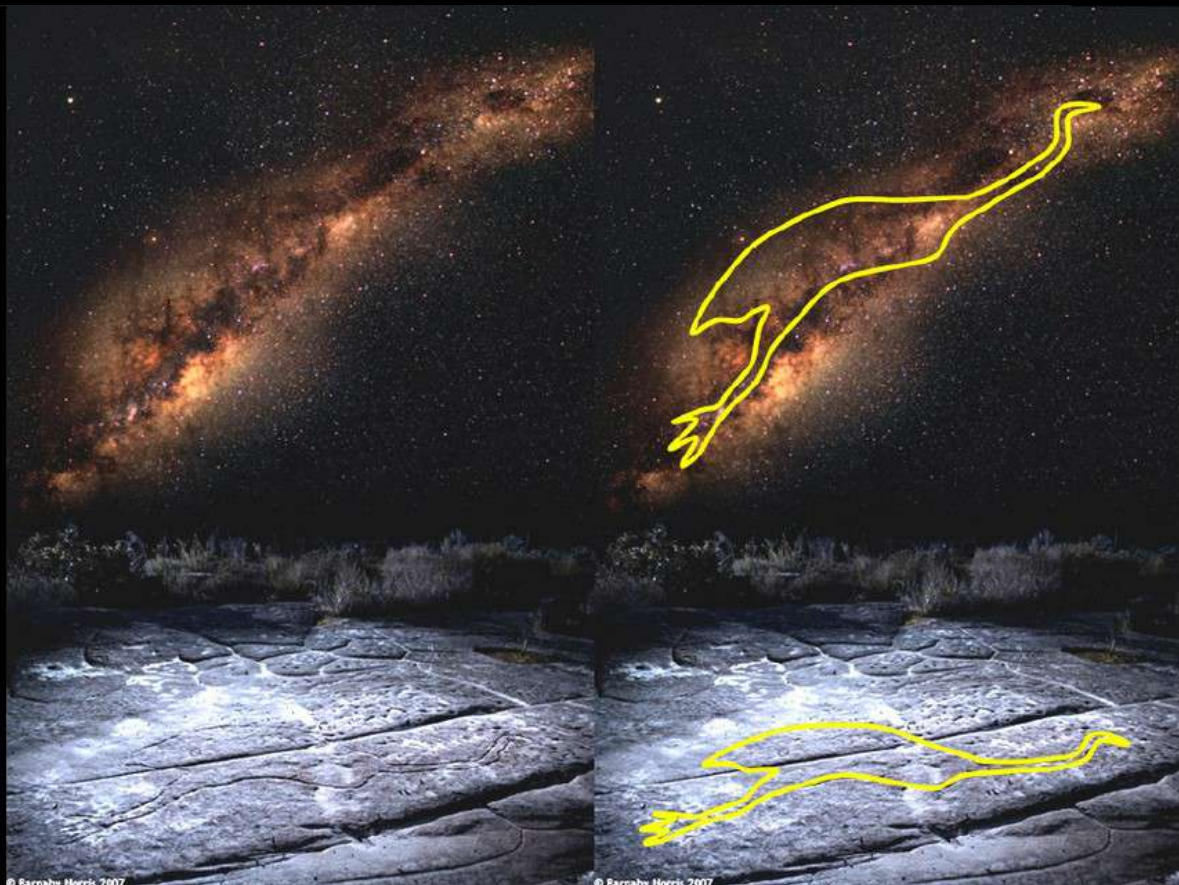
BY Karen Smith

Aboriginal people were able to travel Country through day and night because of their knowledge and intimate connection to Song Lines and to the stars and galaxies. We can see this connection in oral traditions, art and ceremonies, and cultural practices. This knowledge was important in navigation, calendars, and the harvest of food sources. Many Aboriginal peoples had connection to the Milky Way or the Dark Emu in the Sky.

The knowledge of the night sky in Sydney was taken from us because it wasn't considered important to record. All over Australia Aboriginal people are reclaiming this connection to the night sky.

In the Sydney Language we have some names for the stars in our heavens:

Milky Way – Warrawul



Moonhack—Coding the story of the Emu in the sky. <https://spaceaustralia.com/news/moonhack-coding-story-emu-sky>

Fuller, RS *et al.* The Emu Sky Knowledge of the Kamilaroi and Euahlayi Peoples. <https://arxiv.org/pdf/1403.0304>

<https://thamesandhudson.com.au/interconnectedness-and-the-celestial-emu/>

<https://kamilaroianationsidentity.weebly.com/the-dreaming.html>

<https://www.ayersrockresort.com.au/stories/emu-in-the-sky>

Connection to Sky Country continued...

A very long time ago, many thousands upon thousands of years ago, This Land was covered by the sea. Nothing grew here as we know it today, nothing lived here as we know it today. Only the Spirits of the sea inhabited the sea which covered This Land.

Kurrobori, the Spirit Woman, who comes from beyond the Rising Sun, from the Spirit Land which exists in the Morning Star, was passing by in her travels across the sky, and saw the water and the sea spirits.

Kurrobori stopped in her travels and caused This Land to rise up and the water to flow from the land. The sea spirits became very much afraid, and in their fear they left the river and valleys as their tracks, and pushed up the mountains as they fled to the retreating sea.

Kurrobori saw This Land and was pleased. She caused plants to grow to give her food, and caused trees to grow to give her shelter in which to rest, and caused the flowers to bloom on the plants and the trees to make her glad with what she had created. Kurrobori was happy, she had made This Land beautiful.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/blog/aboriginal-astronomy/>

This is a story that survived from Western Sydney and was part of the Enquiring Minds: exploration and discovery in colonial NSW which was on in Sydney. Retold through story and dance.

Galgalyung

This is the larger of the Magellanic Clouds and is a dwarf galaxy visible to the naked eye in the Southern Hemisphere. Astronomers believe that it's on its first orbit around the Milky Way.

By NASA/Ames Research Center - <https://web.archive.org/web/20070327105953/http://ails.arc.nasa.gov/Images/Astrobiology/AC87-0459.html>, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index>

Narangalyong

This is the smaller of the Magellanic Clouds and the smaller dwarf galaxy.

By ESO/VISTA VMC - <https://www.eso.org/public/images/eso1714a/>, CC BY 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?>



FIRESTICKS 2023

WORDS BY PHIL HUNT

In August the 2023 National Custodians of Country Gathering was held in Cairns, hosted by Wet Tropics Bama with Firesticks Alliance. This was the new version of the National Indigenous Fire Workshop which grew from the Cape York Kuku Thaypan Elders fire research project. Firesticks Alliance is an Indigenous-led body that supports Indigenous communities strengthen knowledge and the practice of 'Culture on Country'. It is probably the most respected organisation regarding cultural burning in coastal and forest country most relevant to the AHO region.

Attendees were from all parts of Australia and also Canada, the majority Indigenous but also people from government agencies, farmers and others. It was a privilege to be among so many people committed to improving their ability to care for Country. The knowledge in that space was amazing, as was the collective positivity. Victor Steffensen and the huge team of staff and volunteers created a fabulous event.

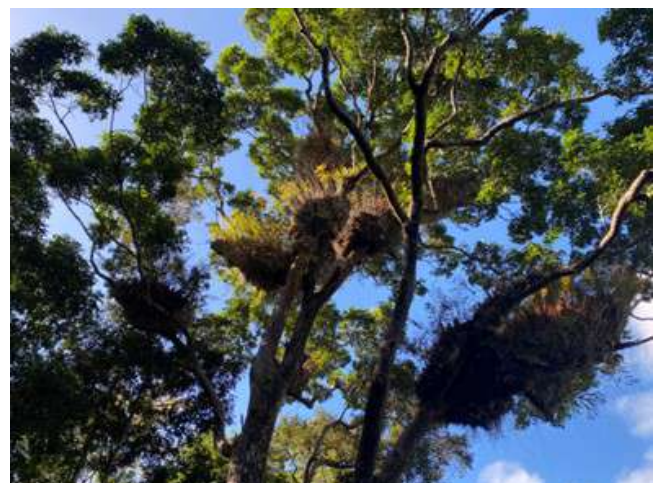
One day I was talking to an Atherton tablelands Gambir Yidinji fire practitioner and it reminded me of a patch of forest that I had visited in 1995 with a friend who was doing research on yellow-belly gliders. The open forest habitat was being invaded by rainforest due to the change in fire regime. The glider community was endangered from extensive land clearing. The rainforest was increasingly blocking their aerial pathways and choking their feed trees. Seeing this confirmed what I had found in my honours research about Aboriginal fire



Mountains behind Cairns



Firesticks cultural burn, Mona Mona



The canopy, not a place for fire

FIRESTICKS 2023

management and a changing landscape. Up at Mona Mona mission this year I mentioned the gliders and the location. I was very happy to hear that the GY practitioners knew about the gliders, could confirm that they were still around and that their team had been conducting cultural burns there. Another positive story!

Cultural burning, indeed, using fire for any land management, is challenging today with the extra ingredients of weed species that burn hotter and at the wrong season for natives, with the multitude of assets, with disconnected parcels of land, with multiple agencies and neighbours, and with the disconcerting effects of climate change. Australia is big. The areas that require careful management are massive. Cultural burning is an Indigenous practice that must be led by experienced and authorised First Nations practitioners. Just because an area could benefit from cultural burning doesn't mean all the conditions are currently in place to do so. We need to be patient and careful, and to follow the right advice.

During the event it dawned on me that the positive results of this workshop are endless. So many people there were aiming to improve their skills to look after their own local area not just for today, this year or this decade, but for as long as possible. Indeed, for as long as the land exists. Behind and beneath the buildings we knock down and replace on a whim and the trees and bushland we clear lies the ancient land that will outlive us all. Yet it still needs our help. If what I saw in Cairns is anything to go by, at least some of the future is in good hands.

Victor Steffensen on Yirraakanji Country at Dungarra - Redden Island. Credit: Annette Ruzicka.



Cooks River & Strathfield

There's plenty upcoming in Strathfield this summer. In December the Cooks River Exhibition commences on 14th December and runs through until the 11th February 2024. The AHO will be at the opening and Karen Smith, Education Officer, will also lead a guided walk in January along the new **Gurrundurrung Yana** (Paperbark Walk) at Ford Park, Strathfield South on the upper Cooks River.

Exhibition: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

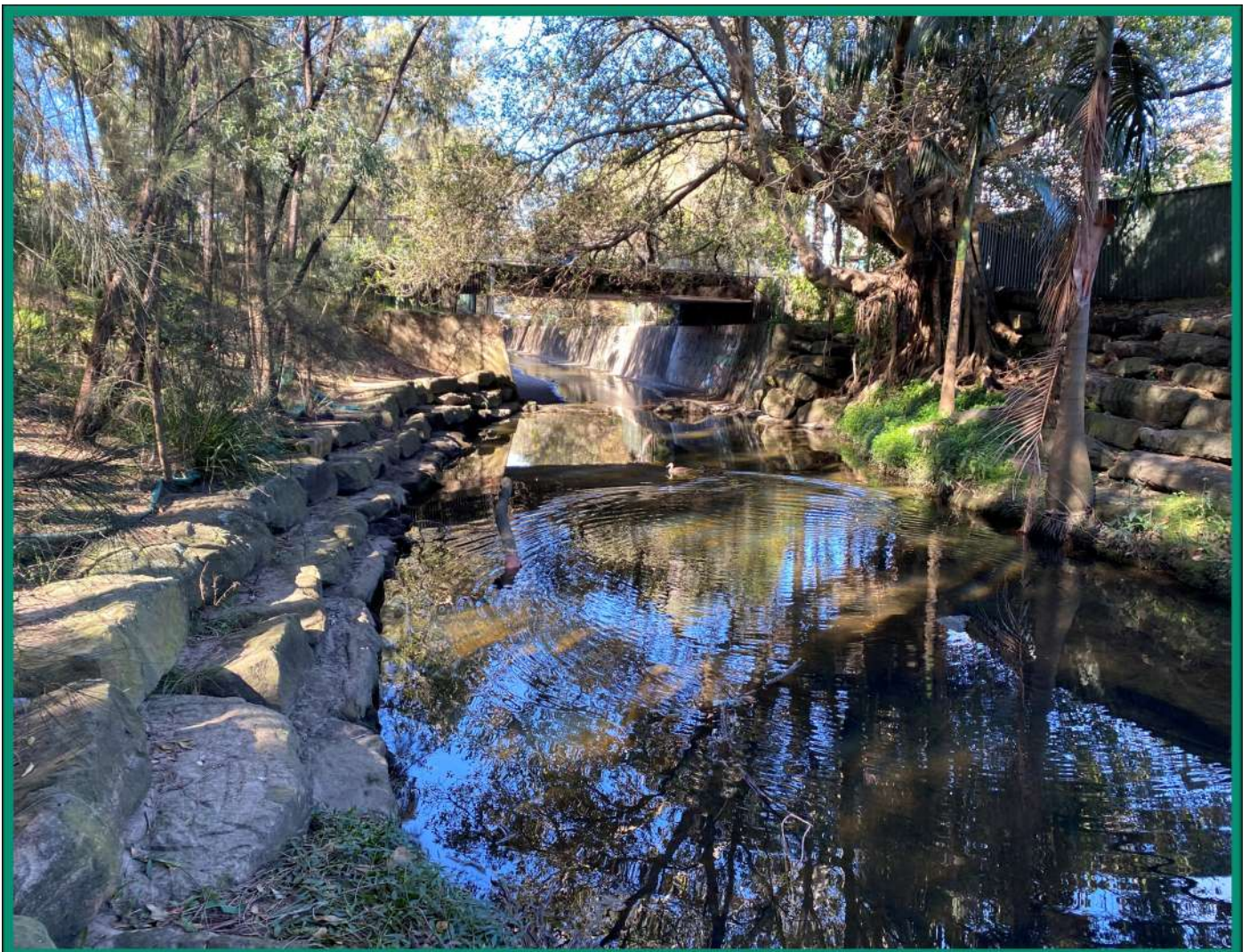
From its source at Yagoona to its mouth at Botany Bay the Cooks River passes through Wangal, Gadigal and Gameygal lands. It provides an important biodiversity corridor of vegetated habitat in parks, reserves and gardens adjacent to the river.

This exhibition will take you on a journey through the river's rich history culminating in recent projects and initiatives that protect and conserve the river and its biodiversity. How can you contribute to its future?

OFFICIAL OPENING:

14 December 2023, 4.30pm - RSVP essential

<https://www.strathfield.nsw.gov.au/event/cooks-river-yesterday-today-and-tomorrow/>



Cooks River & Strathfield



Gurrundurrung Yana

(Paperbark Walk)

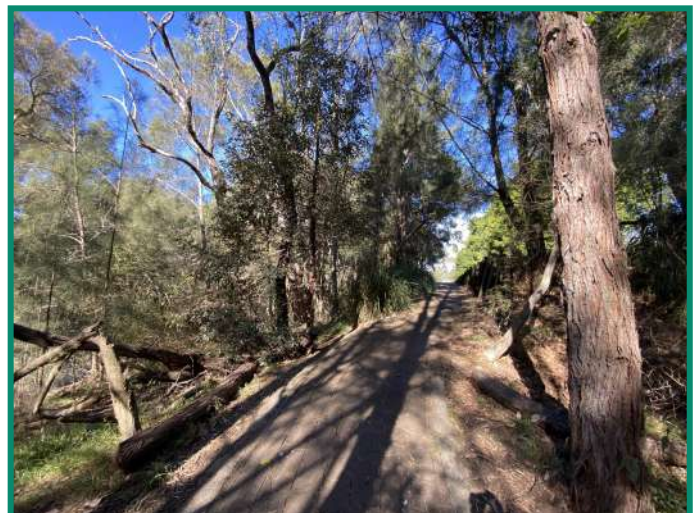
Wednesday, 24 January 2024, 9:30 AM-11:00 AM - bookings essential

This walk lead by Karen Smith takes people around a stretch of the upper Cooks River in Wangal Country. Bush tucker, Bennelong, burra (eels) and of course gurrundurrung (the inside bark of the paperbark tree) will be some of the topics discussed on this tour.

Cooks River Wurridjal Festival

During the month of March, Cooks River People gather for the Wurridjal Festival, to celebrate the strong communities and ecologies along the river. The festival marks the start of a season when thousands of mullet – known as ‘Wurridjal’ in the Aboriginal languages spoken in the Sydney region – enter the Cooks River during their pre-spawning migration along the east coast of Australia. For thousands of years the river was healthy and a source of food for Aboriginal people.

<https://cooksriver.org.au/wurridjal-festival-2024>



BOOK REVIEW

Words by Phil Hunt

Unsettling Australian Histories: Letters to ancestry from a great-great-grandson

David Denborough

David Denborough was invited by Aboriginal elders to talk to his ancestors. One of his ancestors, his great-great-grandfather, was Samuel Griffith, a 'founding father' of Australian Federation. He was closely involved in drafting the Australian Constitution. He was also a Premier of Queensland and the first Chief Justice of Australia. David also had ancestors who were involved in the Frontier Wars in North Queensland - not the 230 years ago of the First Fleet era but much closer to the twentieth century.

David starts writing letters to express his own turmoil and to ask questions. It is a fascinating book and grounded in the methods of the Dulwich Centre where he works which uses 'narrative approaches to therapy and community work'.

This book is not just relevant to those who may have ancestors involved in colonial violence. It provides a method to tackle issues of intergenerational guilt. After all, at some point younger generations will wonder what their ancestors did when faced with the complex issues of their time, whether at a frontier or a 21st century referendum.

Fun things to do over the Christmas Holidays

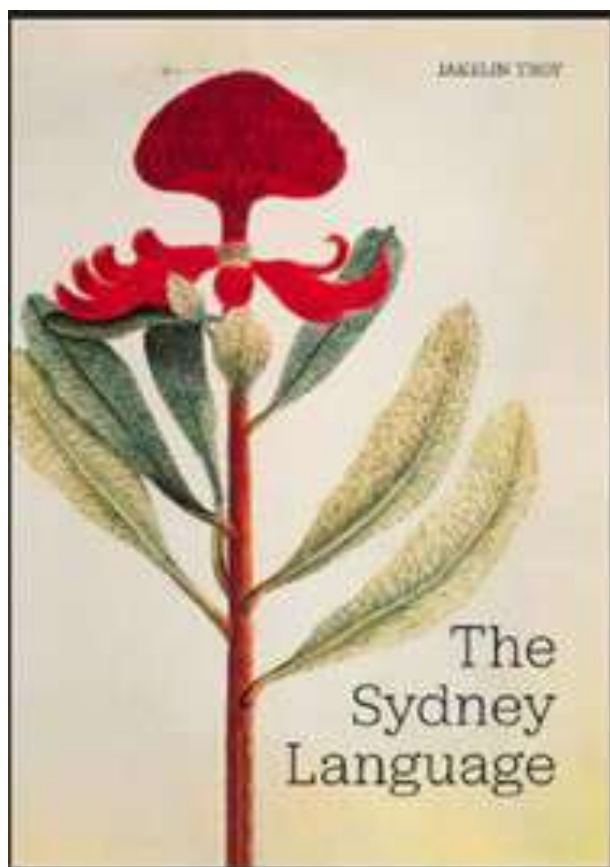
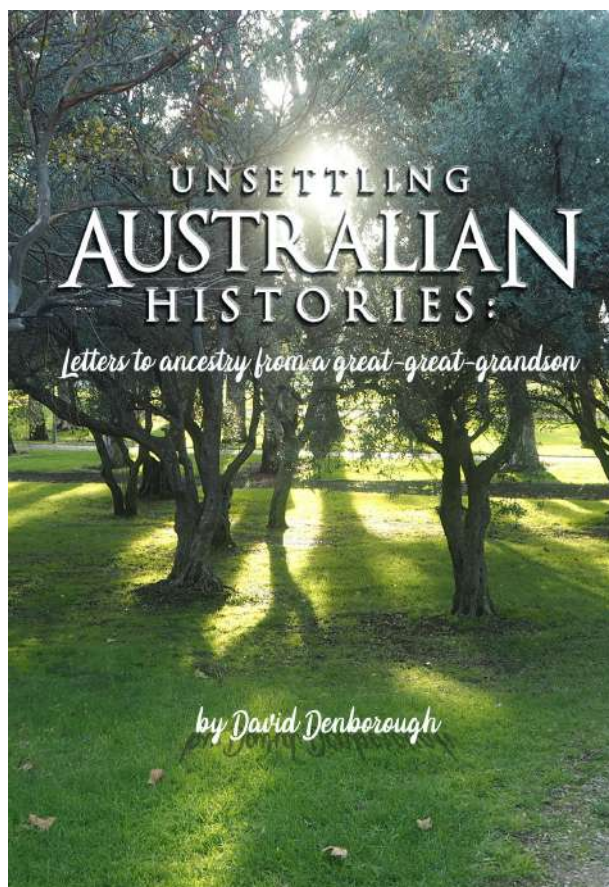
Karen Smith

Learn the Sydney Language

Buy Jakelin Troys Dictionary – 'The Sydney Language' and learn some fun words, help children answer some questions and learn some fun facts and do some colouring in with the children.

For example – the names of Birds and Mammals

Here are some to begin your journey...





Fun things to do over the Christmas Holidays

Karen Smith



Ring Tail Possum – Bugari

Where does Bugari sleep and what is Bugari's favourite habitat?

What colour is Bugari's tail and what is it used for?

What food does the Bugari like to eat?

When does Bugari wake up and sleep?

What does Bugari carry in her pouch?

What is a threat to a Bugari?

Sugar Glider – Djubi

How does the Djubi glide from tree to tree? What does Djubi use?

How does the Djubi use its tail?

What kind of Habitat does Djubi live in?

Where does Djubi sleep and when do they wake up?

What does Djubi like to eat?

Bat - Wirambi

Fruit Bats are also called Flying Foxes

What time of day does Wirambi wake up?

What does Wirambi like to eat?

How does Wirambi live?

What habitat does Wirambi like?

How many babies does Wirambi have?

How does Wirambi help plant trees?



Fun things to do over the Christmas Holidays



Karen Smith

Black Swan – Mulgo

Black Swans are the only fully black swans, are only found in Australia and have been introduced everywhere else.

Black Swans mate for life and live for up to 10-15 years in the wild, due to dogs, habitat breakdown fishing and pollution. But they can live 30 – 40 years in captivity.

Is Mulgo only black?

What does Mulgo eat?

Where does Mulgo live, in what habitat?

What kind of nests do Mulgos build?

How many cygnets/ baby swans can Mulgo have and how does Mulgo look after them?

Cormorant – Guwali

Sydney has a few Cormorants / Guwali species: Pied, Little Pied, Black-faced, Great, and Little Black Cormorants. They can suffer from ecosystem alteration and degradation, fishing line entanglement and hook ingestion.

What does Guwali eat?

Where does Guwali live, what habitat does Guwali like?

What kind of nests does Guwali build?

Why do we see Guwali drying their wings?

How many babies, and how does Guwali look after them.

Find some others and practice.

When you see the fauna, try to name them in the Sydney Language and talk about these fauna to your children or grandchildren.

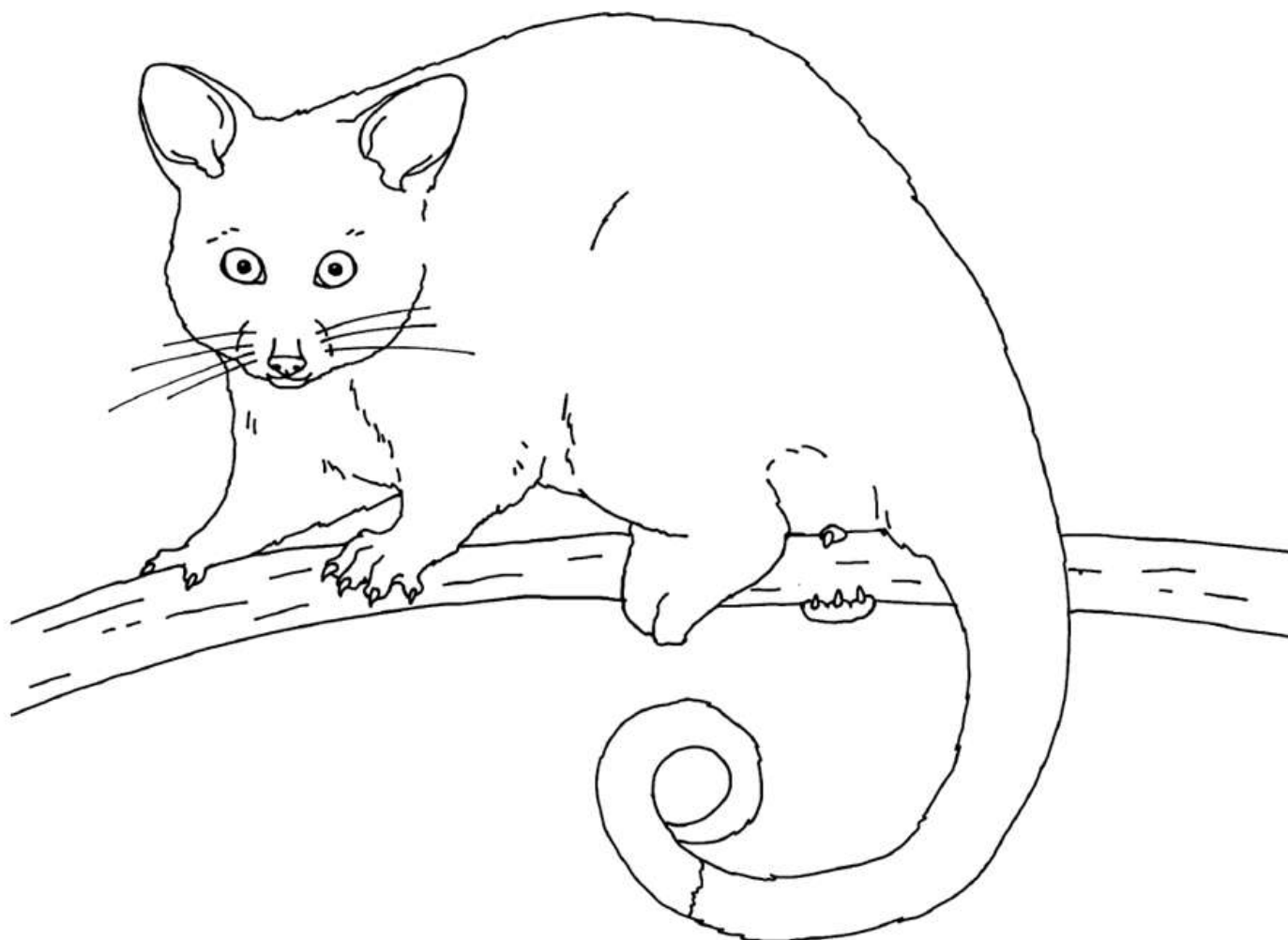


Fun things
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Christmas Holidays

Karen Smith



Ring Tail Possum – Bugari

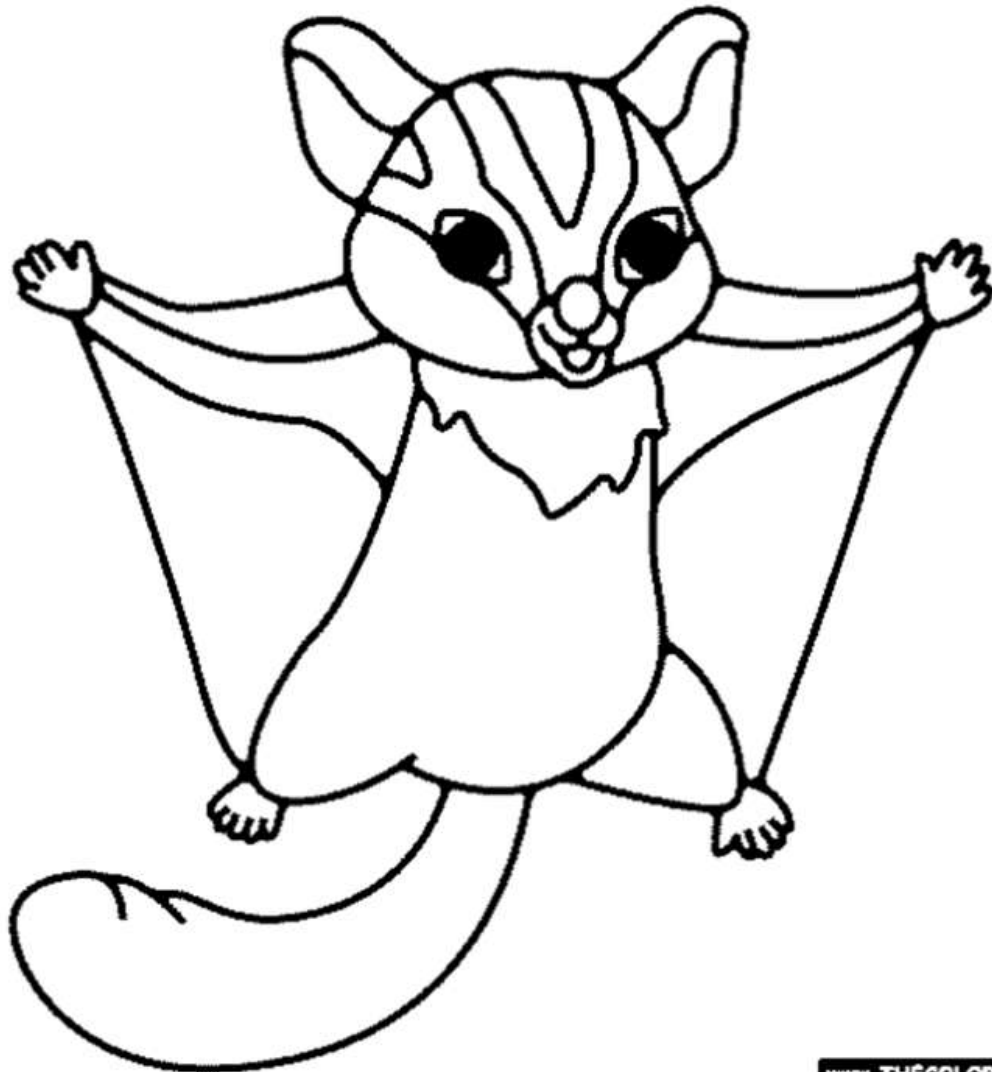


Fun things
to do
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Christmas Holidays



Karen Smith



www.THECOLOR.com

Sugar Glider – Djubi



Fun things
to do
over the



Christmas Holidays

Karen Smith

Bat - Wirambi

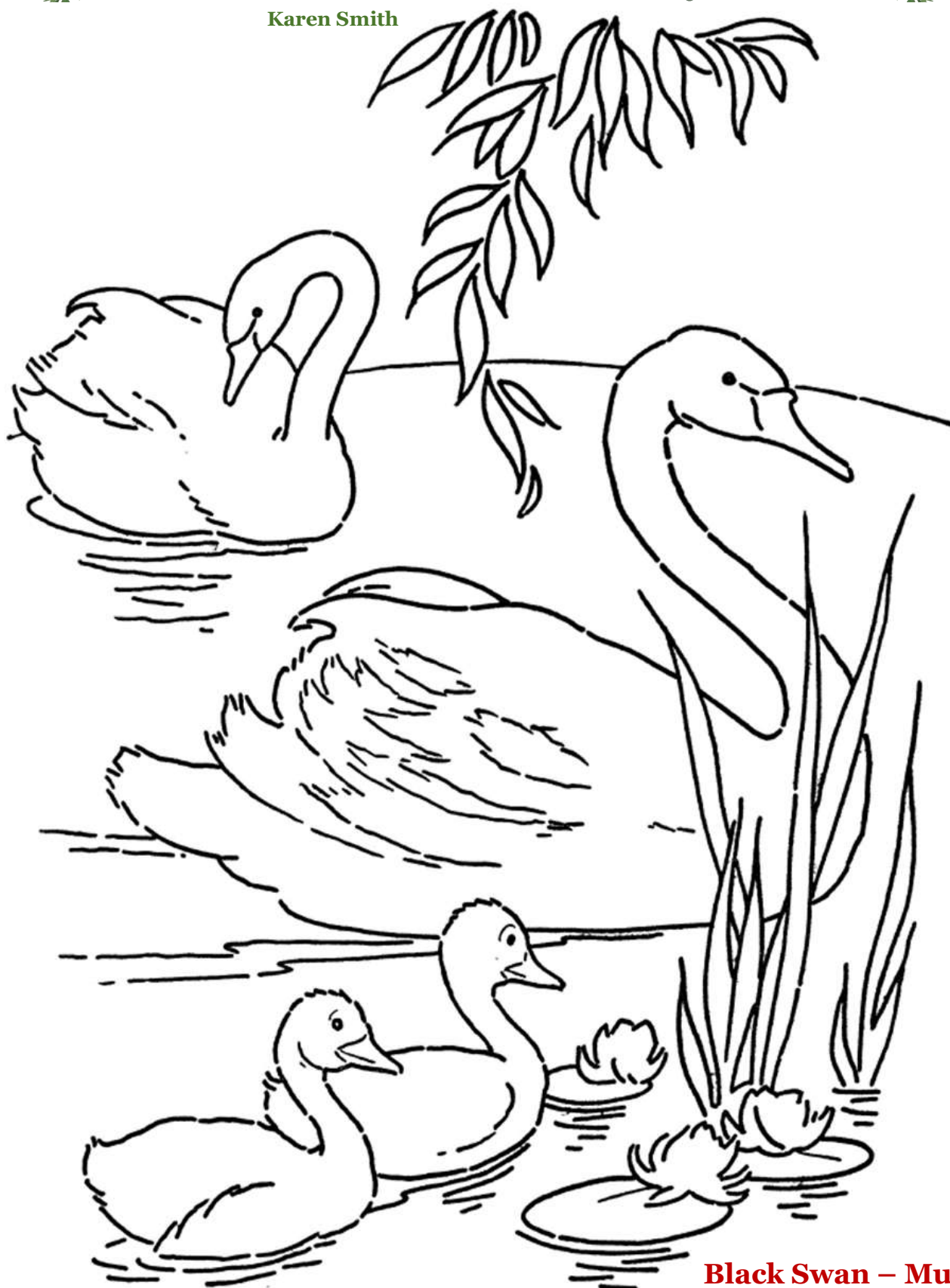




Fun things
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Karen Smith



Black Swan – Mulgo



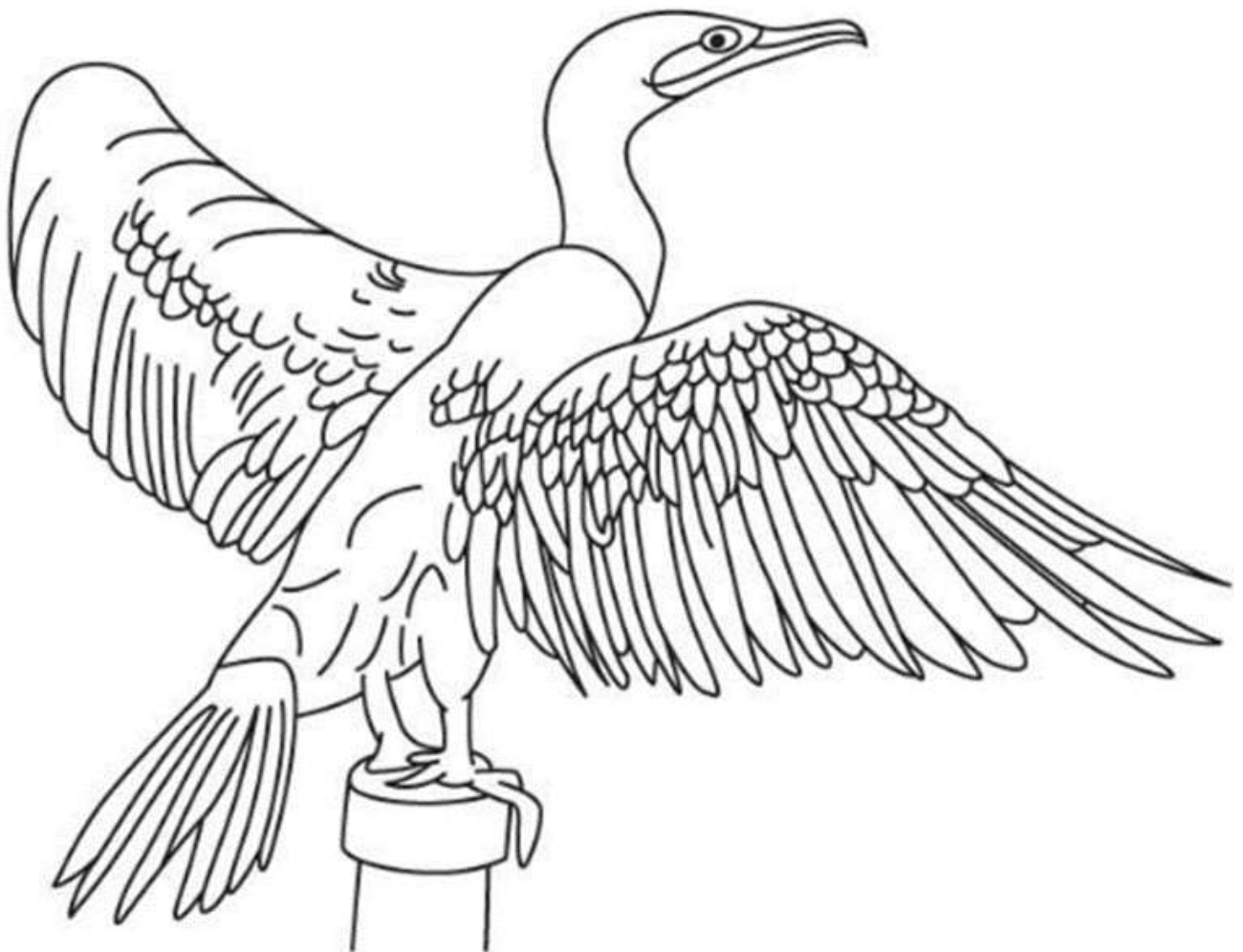
Fun things
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Christmas Holidays

Karen Smith

Cormorant – Guwali



LEMON MYRTLE PAVLOVA



This utterly delicious pavlova with crunchy macadamias, finger limes and lemon myrtle is a must add to your Christmas festivities this year.

Enjoy!

Ingredients

- 2 tbs corn flour, sifted
- 1 1/2 cups (330g) caster sugar
- 1/2 tsp ground lemon myrtle
- 1 vanilla bean, split, seeds scraped
- 6 egg whites, at room temperature
- 1/2 tsp cream of tartar
- 1 tsp white vinegar
- 300ml thickened cream, whisked to soft peaks
- Thinly sliced mango, roasted chopped macadamias and finger limes (from specialty grocers), to serve

Method

1. Preheat oven to 150°C. Grease and line a large baking tray with baking paper. Lightly dust prepared tray with 1 tbs corn-flour
2. Place sugar, lemon myrtle and vanilla seeds in a food processor and whiz until fine. Sift through a fine sieve into a bowl. Place the eggwhites and cream of tartar in an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment and whisk to soft peaks.
3. With the motor running, add 1 tbs sugar mixture every 30 seconds, whisking until well incorporated. Continue to whisk for a further 5 minutes or until thick and glossy. Gently fold through the vinegar and the remaining 1 tbs corn flour, then spread meringue onto prepared tray into a 22cm-diameter round. Using a palette knife, spread the sides upwards to make a slightly higher edge and a lower centre to create a well for the topping .
4. Place pavlova in oven, then immediately reduce oven temperature to 100°C. Bake for 1 1/2 hours or until dry and crisp. Turn off oven and cool with the door ajar for at least 2 hours
5. Dollop over the whipped cream and top with the mango slices and macadamias. Squeeze over finger lime pearls to serve.

Sourced from: <https://www.delicious.com.au/recipes/lemon-myrtle-pavlova/4KsMubvn>