

ABORIGINAL  
**WOMEN**



# Wonky Lines Counselling

Narrative Therapy and support services for all people of all cultures. Empowering communities to break Intergenerational trauma cycles one step at a time.



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Wonky Lines Counselling

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In every corner of the world, stories of remarkable women who have defied societal norms, broken barriers, and paved the way for change resonate deeply. Australia, with its rich Indigenous history and vibrant cultural heritage, boasts a tapestry of inspiring women who have made indelible contributions to both social and political realms

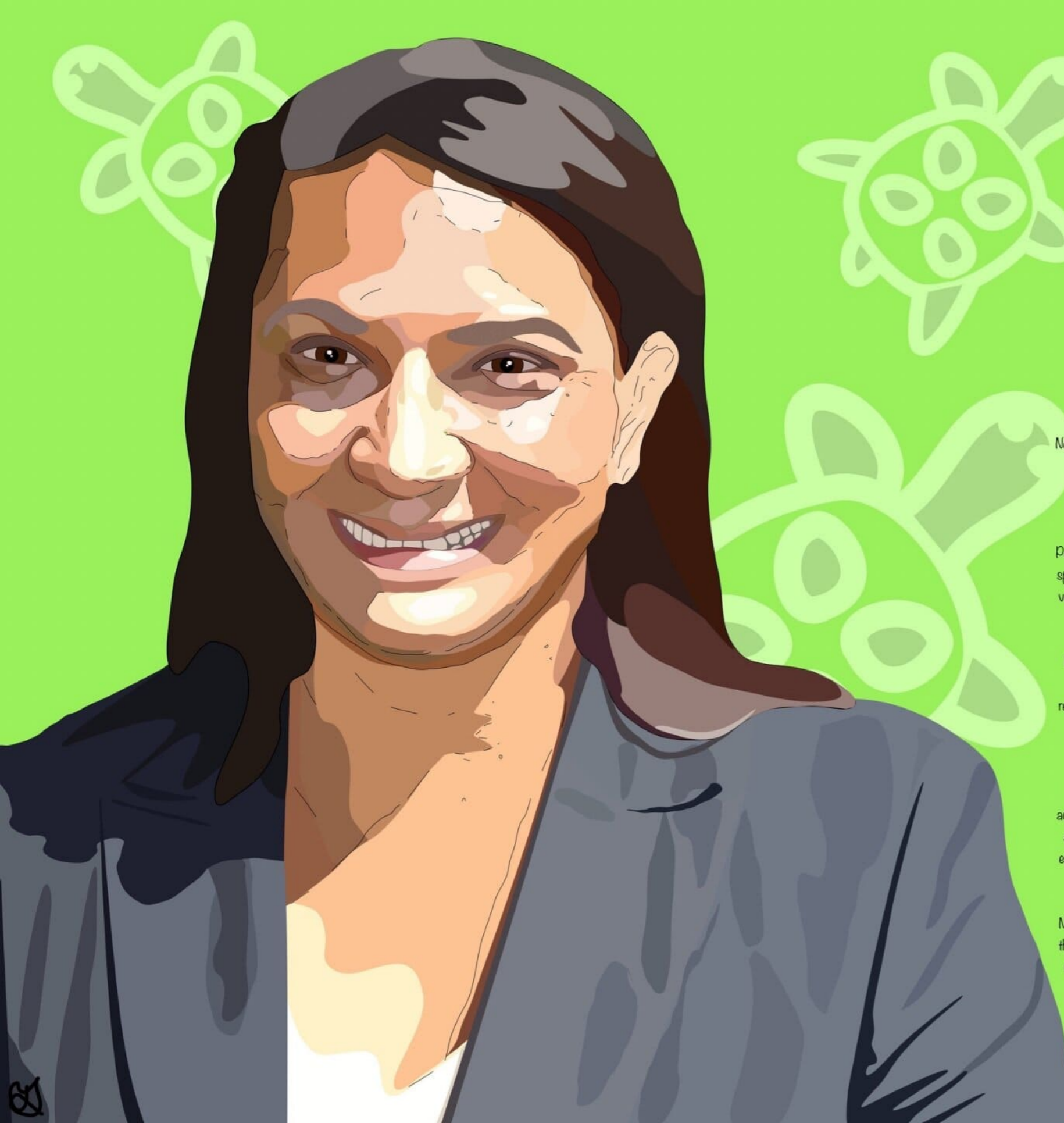
Their influential endeavors extend across various domains, encompassing social justice, politics, environmental activism, arts and culture, education, sport and more. Through their groundbreaking initiatives, these visionary women have reshaped narratives, challenged power structures, and advocated for the rights and well-being of Aboriginal communities, not only within Australia but also on the global stage.

May their stories inspire and ignite the hearts and minds of readers, urging them to recognise the immeasurable value of diversity, inclusivity, and equality, and to embrace the power of individual agency in forging stronger and more harmonious future.

*This book is dedicated to  
our matriarchs past and  
present.*

Let's shine a light on, and  
celebrate some of the most  
resilient and influential  
Aboriginal women of all time!





# NOVA PERIS

Nova Peris, born Nova Peris-Kneebone, is an Australian athlete and politician who has made significant contributions in both fields. Born in 1971, she became the first Aboriginal Australian to win an Olympic gold medal in 1996 as a member of the Australian women's hockey team.

Peris's sporting achievements extended beyond the Olympic Games. She was a skilled sprinter and represented Australia in athletics before transitioning to field hockey. Her versatility, dedication, and determination made her a formidable competitor and a role model for aspiring athletes, particularly for Indigenous Australians.

In addition to her athletic career, Peris made a successful transition into politics. In 2013, she became the first Aboriginal woman elected to the Australian Senate, representing the Northern Territory for the Australian Labor Party. During her time in politics, Peris focused on issues such as Indigenous rights, education, and health, striving to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Peris's advocacy work extends beyond the political sphere. She has been a vocal advocate for Reconciliation, the Stolen Generations, and the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage. Her dedication to social justice and equality has earned her respect and admiration from Indigenous communities and the broader Australian public.

Nova Peris's achievements both in sports and politics have broken barriers and paved the way for future generations of Indigenous Australians. Her impact as a trailblazer, role model, and advocate continues to inspire and empower individuals, highlighting the importance of representation and the potential for positive change.

# SHAREENA CLANTON

Shareena Clanton is an Australian actress known for her talent, versatility, and advocacy for Indigenous representation in the entertainment industry. Born and raised in Perth, Clanton has made a significant impact on both stage and screen.

Clanton's acting career took off when she landed roles in acclaimed television series such as "Wentworth" and "Redfern Now." Her performances were celebrated for their depth and authenticity, showcasing her ability to portray complex and compelling characters. She has also made an appearance in "Neighbours" further establishing her presence in the Australian television landscape.

Beyond her acting accomplishments, Shareena Clanton is a passionate advocate for indigenous rights and representation. She uses her platform to raise awareness about the issues faced by indigenous communities and works towards promoting diversity in the arts. Clanton has been vocal about the need for more indigenous actors, writers, and directors in the industry, advocating for increased opportunities and accurate portrayals.

Clanton's dedication to her craft and her activism have earned her respect and admiration from both her peers and the audience. Her commitment to challenging stereotypes and promoting inclusivity has made her a prominent figure in the Australian entertainment industry. With her talent and passion, Clanton continues to inspire and pave the way for future generations of indigenous performers.





# SAMANTHA HARRIS

Samantha Harris is an accomplished Indigenous model who has made significant strides in the fashion industry. As an Indigenous woman, she has become a symbol of representation, breaking barriers, and challenging traditional beauty standards.

Samantha has used her platform to promote diversity, inclusivity, and the recognition of Indigenous culture and beauty. Her presence in the fashion world has not only helped redefine conventional notions of beauty but also brought much-needed attention to the richness and diversity of Indigenous heritage.

Through her work, Samantha Harris has become an inspiration for aspiring Indigenous models and young people from marginalised communities. She has shown that it is possible to succeed in an industry that has historically been dominated by Eurocentric standards of beauty.

In addition to her modeling career, Samantha has been actively involved in advocacy and community work. She has used her platform to raise awareness about the challenges faced by Indigenous communities and to support initiatives that empower and uplift marginalised groups.

Samantha's success as an Indigenous model is a testament to her talent, determination, and resilience. Her presence in the fashion industry has opened doors for others, challenging the industry to embrace diversity and celebrate the beauty of all cultures. She has become a role model and a beacon of hope for those who aspire to make their mark in the fashion world while staying true to their heritage.

# MARCIA LANGTON

Marcia Langton is a prominent Australian academic, activist, and anthropologist who has made significant contributions to the fields of Indigenous studies and social justice. Born on October 31, 1951, Langton has dedicated her life to advocating for the rights and recognition of Indigenous Australians.

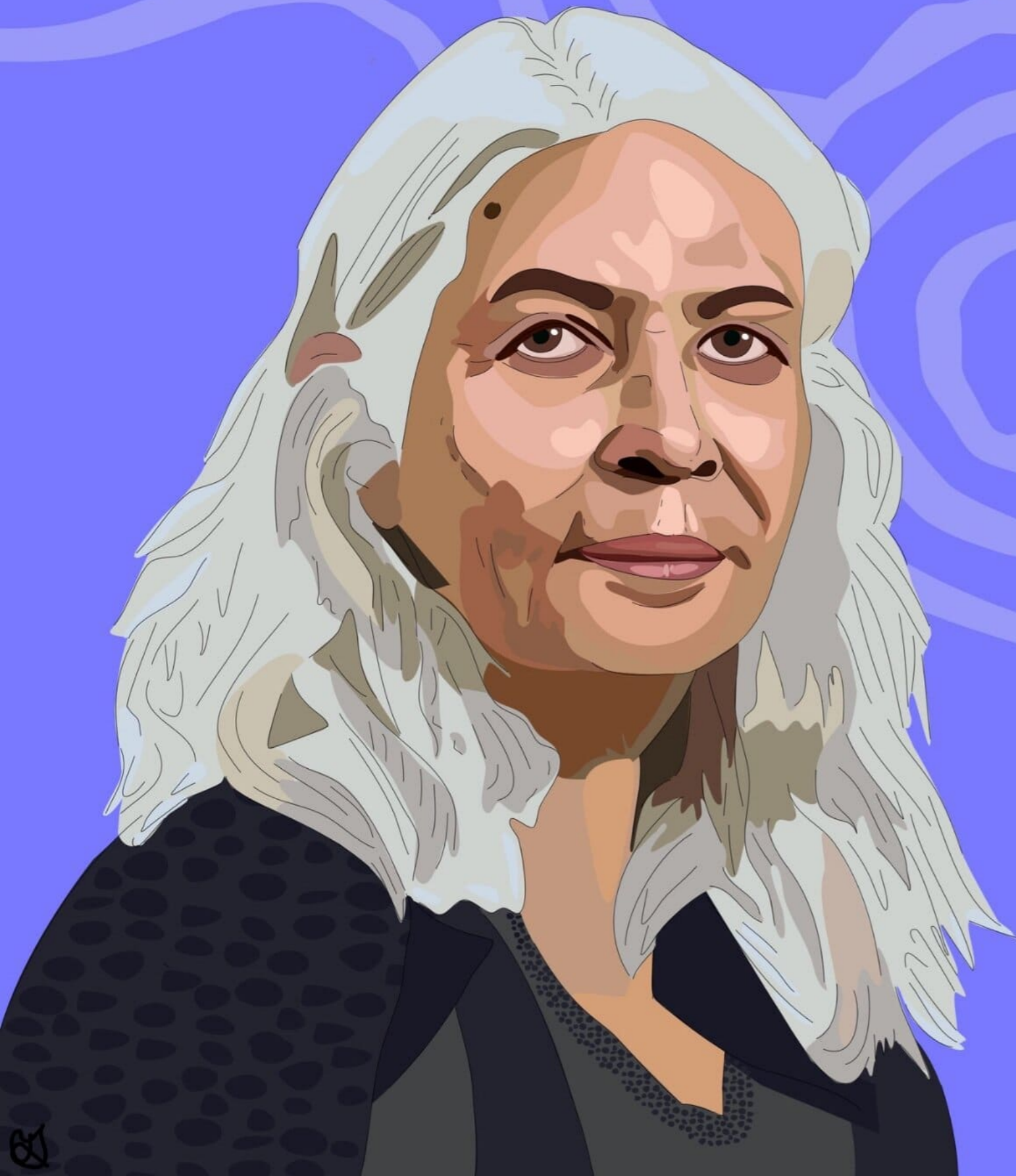
As an Indigenous woman herself, Langton's work focuses on Indigenous land rights, Indigenous cultural heritage, and the empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. She has conducted extensive research and published numerous influential works on these subjects, shedding light on the social, economic, and political challenges faced by Indigenous communities.

Langton's academic career has seen her hold prestigious positions at various universities, including the University of Melbourne and the University of Queensland. She has received numerous awards and accolades for her research and activism, including being appointed as an Officer of the Order of Australia.

Beyond academia, Langton has been a vocal advocate for Indigenous rights, working tirelessly to raise awareness about the ongoing struggles faced by Indigenous Australians. Her public appearances, speeches, and media engagements have helped bring attention to issues such as land rights, cultural preservation, and the importance of self-determination for Indigenous communities.

Langton's impact extends beyond Australia, as she has also worked on an international level, advocating for the rights of Indigenous peoples worldwide. She has collaborated with Indigenous communities and organisations globally, contributing to the broader discourse on Indigenous rights and Reconciliation.

In summary, Marcia Langton is a highly influential figure in the field of Indigenous studies, renowned for her academic contributions and advocacy work. Her dedication to advancing the rights and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians has made a profound impact, both within her home country and on the global stage.





# LINDA BURNNEY

Linda Burney is an Australian politician and a prominent figure in Indigenous rights and social justice. Born in 1957, she became the first Aboriginal woman to be elected to the Australian House of Representatives in 2016, representing the Division of Barton in New South Wales.

Burney's political career is rooted in her lifelong commitment to fighting for the rights of Indigenous Australians. She has been a strong advocate for Reconciliation in health and education outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and addressing the high rates of incarceration among Aboriginal people.

Before entering federal politics, Burney held various leadership positions, including being the first Aboriginal person to serve in the New South Wales Parliament as a member of the Legislative Assembly. During her time in state politics, she played a crucial role in implementing policies to address social inequality and improve Indigenous affairs.

Burney's personal experiences as a proud Wiradjuri woman have shaped her political vision and priorities. She has been vocal about her own family's history of displacement, assimilation policies, and the ongoing struggle for recognition and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Beyond her work in politics, Burney has been a tireless campaigner for social justice and equality. Her advocacy has brought attention to the need for greater representation of Indigenous voices in decision-making processes and the importance of acknowledging and celebrating Indigenous culture and heritage.

Linda Burney's contributions to Australian politics and Indigenous rights have been instrumental in raising awareness about the challenges faced by Indigenous communities and in promoting positive change. She continues to be a strong and influential voice for justice and equality, inspiring others to work towards a more inclusive and fair society.



# CATHY FREEMAN

Cathy Freeman is an Australian sporting icon, celebrated for her extraordinary achievements as an athlete and her significant contributions to promoting inclusivity and Indigenous rights. Born on February 16, 1973, in Mackay, Queensland, Freeman quickly rose to prominence in the world of track and field.

Freeman's breakthrough moment came at the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Victoria, Canada, where she won gold in the 200 meters. However, it was her performance at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games that etched her name into the history books. Competing on her home soil, Freeman captivated the nation by winning gold in the 400 meters, becoming the first Australian Aboriginal athlete to claim an individual Olympic gold medal. Her victory, adorned in her iconic hooded bodysuit, symbolized unity and reconciliation for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Beyond her sporting prowess, Freeman has been a tireless advocate for social change. She established the Cathy Freeman Foundation, which aims to improve educational opportunities for Indigenous children, particularly those living in remote communities. The foundation's programs have made a significant impact, empowering young Indigenous students to overcome barriers and achieve their full potential.

Freeman's achievements have garnered numerous accolades, including being named Australian of the Year in 1998. Her impact extends far beyond the realm of sports, as she has used her platform to champion causes close to her heart and inspire generations of Australians.

Cathy Freeman's legacy transcends athletic records, as she remains an enduring symbol of perseverance, unity, and social progress. Her remarkable journey serves as a reminder that with dedication and determination, barriers can be overcome, and dreams can be realized.



# DEBORAH MAILMAN

Deborah Mailman is an acclaimed Australian actress known for her exceptional talent and versatility on both stage and screen. Born on July 14, 1972, Mailman has become an iconic figure in the Australian entertainment industry, breaking barriers and leaving an indelible mark with her powerful performances.

Mailman's acting career spans over two decades, during which she has garnered numerous awards and accolades. She is widely recognised for her portrayal of strong and complex characters, often depicting the experiences of Indigenous Australians. Her ability to bring depth and authenticity to her roles has made her one of Australia's most respected and celebrated actresses.

One of Mailman's most notable performances was in the 1998 film "Radiance," where she played the role of Nona, a young woman reconnecting with her estranged family. Her portrayal earned her critical acclaim and the Australian Film Institute Award for Best Actress.

In addition to her film work, Mailman has made significant contributions to Australian television. She became a household name with her role as Kelly Lewis in the popular series "The Secret Life of Us." Her portrayal of an intelligent and witty woman navigating the complexities of relationships and careers resonated with audiences, and she won multiple awards for her performance.

Mailman's talent extends beyond acting. She has also made meaningful contributions as an advocate for Indigenous rights and representation. Her voice and visibility have helped raise awareness about the challenges faced by Indigenous Australians and the importance of diverse storytelling.

In recognition of her outstanding contributions to the arts, Mailman was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia in 2016. Her career continues to flourish, and she remains an influential figure and inspiration for aspiring actors, particularly those from Indigenous backgrounds.

In summary, Deborah Mailman is a highly accomplished Australian actress whose exceptional talent and advocacy work have cemented her as a revered figure in the entertainment industry. Her ability to bring depth and authenticity to her roles, combined with her commitment to representing Indigenous Australians, has solidified her place as an influential and respected artist.



# EVONNE GOOLAGONG

Evonne Goolagong, born on July 31, 1951, is an Australian tennis legend who left an indelible mark on the sport. As an Indigenous Australian background, she broke barriers and became an inspiration to millions around the world. Goolagong's remarkable skill, grace, and sportsmanship earned her a place among the all-time greats of women's tennis.

Goolagong's career was adorned with numerous achievements, including seven Grand Slam titles. She won the prestigious Wimbledon singles championship twice (1971, 1980) and claimed four Australian Open singles titles (1974, 1975, 1976, 1977). Her elegant playing style, characterised by lightning-quick footwork and exquisite shot-making, captivated audiences and fellow players alike.

Beyond her athletic prowess, Goolagong's impact extended far beyond the tennis court. As a proud Indigenous Australian, she became a symbol of representation and empowerment for Indigenous people across the globe. Her success inspired many young athletes from underrepresented communities, breaking down barriers and fostering diversity in the sport.

Goolagong's legacy is not only defined by her remarkable achievements but also by her humility and sportsmanship. She exemplified grace and dignity, both in victory and defeat, earning the respect and admiration of her peers. Her contributions to the sport were acknowledged when she was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 1988.

Today, Goolagong continues to inspire generations of tennis players and remains a role model for aspiring athletes. Her impact reaches far beyond the court, leaving an enduring legacy as a pioneer, champion, and ambassador for diversity in sports.



# TRUGANINI

Truganini, also known as Trugernanner, was an Aboriginal Tasmanian woman who lived from 1812 to 1876. Truganini's life was deeply impacted by the colonisation of Tasmania by the British and the violent conflicts that ensued.

Truganini experienced the devastating effects of European settlement firsthand. She witnessed the destruction of her people's traditional way of life, the loss of their lands, and the introduction of diseases that decimated the Aboriginal population. Tragically, she also suffered the loss of her family members to violence and disease.

Despite the immense hardships she faced, Truganini displayed remarkable resilience. She became a prominent figure in the efforts to preserve Tasmanian Aboriginal culture and worked as an interpreter and guide for European settlers. Truganini also shared her knowledge of Aboriginal customs and traditions, ensuring that they were recorded and preserved for future generations.

In her later years, Truganini advocated for the rights of Indigenous people and campaigned for the return of Aboriginal remains held in museums. Her efforts contributed to a greater understanding and recognition of the injustices faced by the Aboriginal population.

Truganini's life serves as a powerful reminder of the devastating impact of colonisation on Indigenous communities and the strength and resilience of those who survived. Her legacy continues to inspire and educate people about the importance of preserving and respecting Indigenous cultures.



Tamara Young is a proud Aboriginal Kamilaroi woman with Irish heritage also. She is a dedicated Narrative Therapist and the creator of Wonky Lines Counselling. Her mission is to empower individuals and communities by challenging false narratives. With her own lived experience and personal understanding of the impact of intergenerational trauma, she guides her clients through a transformative journey of healing and growth. Through her approach, she encourages the re-authoring of sad stories, helping people reclaim their agency and construct more empowering narratives.

This resource has been lovingly created for you.

Written and illustrated by Tamara

Growing up as an Aboriginal girl with fair skin, I faced the challenge of navigating two worlds and working out where I belong. Throughout my childhood, I struggled to recall any significant celebrations or meaningful discussions about Aboriginal women apart from my immediate family. However, as I got older, it was easier to see the radiant brilliance of Aboriginal women illuminating the path before me. Inspired by their strength, I wanted to create a book that pays homage to these remarkable women. Within its pages, I aim to honor not only their achievements but also their dedication to safeguard our cultural heritage. They dismantle misconceptions surrounding the identity and limitless potential of Aboriginal women. Together, we celebrate the resilience, wisdom, and empowerment of Aboriginal women, paving the way for a brighter future.

