

Writing inspired by
State Library of NSW
collections



OUR *collection* OUR *stories*



Story
FACTORY

 **NASCA**
CULTURE EDUCATION COMMUNITY


STATE LIBRARY®
NEW SOUTH WALES

The State Library of New South Wales
acknowledges the Gadigal people of the
Eora nation, the traditional custodians of the
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We pay our respect to Aboriginal Elders past,
present and future, and extend that respect
to other First Nations people.

We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal
cultures and languages across NSW.

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Congratulations to all of the students who participated in this project from these schools:

- Airds High School**
- Alexandria Park Community School**
- Glenmore Park High School**
- Kingswood High School**
- Richmond High School**
- Tempe High School**
- Thomas Reddall High School**
- Windsor High School**



Foreword

In June 2021 a select group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from eight schools across Sydney, visited the State Library of NSW on Gadigal land. Supported by their teachers and NASCA staff, the students were introduced to the Library and its collections, many for the very first time.

After a whirlwind tour with Library Education Officers, the students sat down with Melissa Jackson and Kerry-Ann Tape from the Library's Indigenous Engagement branch. Melissa and Kerry-Ann had selected a range of objects from the Library's collections and as they shared the items' backstories, the students asked questions, took pictures and started to make personal connections with these physical manifestations of history.

Richard Short, Lamisa Haque and Kevin Ngo from the Story Factory led the students in a series of activities to creatively respond to these items, asking questions such as 'If this item could talk, what would it say?' These thought-provoking questions inspired students to write

imaginative texts based on their chosen object. This publication showcases a selection of these creative responses to items from the Library's collections. From an angry boxing glove to a lonely, lost coin, these works showcase fresh perspectives from our talented young people and bring these artefacts to life.

We would like to thank all the staff from NASCA, the Story Factory and the schools who made this program possible, as well as the State Library of NSW Foundation, which provided funding for the program. Most of all we would like to thank this incredible group of young people, whose vivid imaginations are responsible for everything contained in this publication.

Alicia De Audney — Education Officer, Learning Services



As I am sitting in the dark, cramped, confines of my owner's bag,
I feel the anticipation of the training.

When they pull me out they don me like a gauntlet.

I feel the rage surfacing.

Then we get to the punching bag and get into position.

As I first hit the bag I feel the impact. It makes me feel alive.

I haven't felt this in a while as I hear the THUNK! THUNK! of me hitting the bag.

It's like I'm at a gun range. It feels painful but also good. I love this feeling.

I may hate most things but I love this.

Diesel — Glenmore Park High School

'Whack!'. My sweet leather skin
hits the opponent and they
fall to the ground, then I hear
'Ding, ding, ding!' Another
match won.

My owner takes me to the
dressing room to give me a
pep talk and to dry off, ready
for the next match.

The next match comes and we
start fighting. We get knocked
down but we can recover. We
keep fighting and eventually
it's next point wins.

The opponent climbs on the
side and jumps but my owner
and I move just in time. We
tackle him but he gets up.
Once again, he jumps off
the ropes and this time,
he gets us.

We fall to the ground and
we can't get up.

'One, two, three...', the Coach
counts. We lost our first
match.

I get so angry that I move
my owner's hand and punch
the guy I was fighting in the
face and then my owner and
I go home...

And that was the story of
how I lost my first match.

Talon — Airds High School

I am a boxing glove. I am an Aboriginal glove.
I was made for my owner and it was made from
Aboriginal colours to give him extra strength
and power. The glove wants to be famous and
well known.

The glove gets excited the moment the hand
is placed inside. The anger, power and strength
came alive, ready to hit hard. Making the glove
super powerful and dangerous.

So I live in the library but when the lights are
down, I come out with my angry grip and punch
the books and start fights.

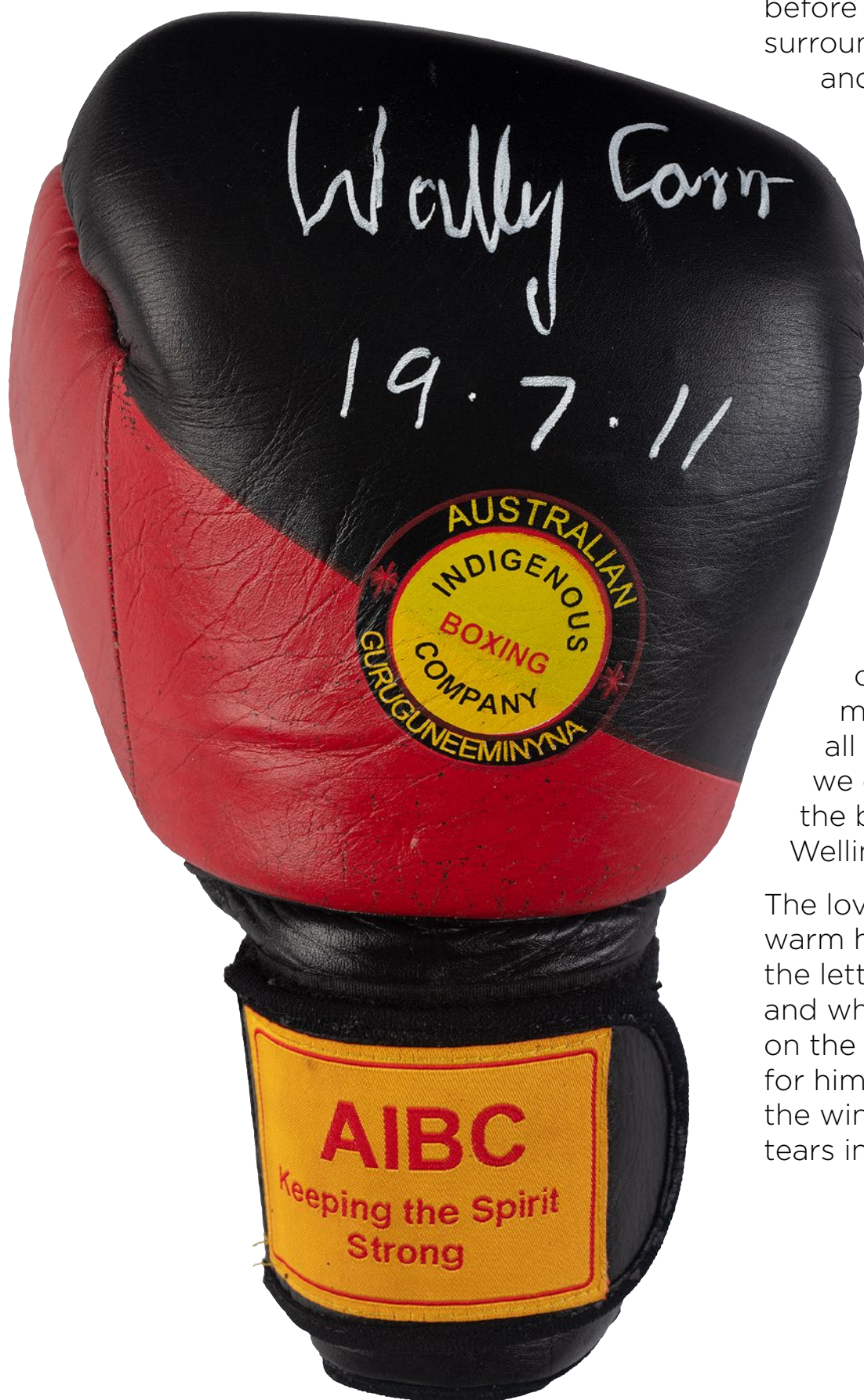
When the day begins I'm put away to hide,
waiting and hoping for the next night to come
alive. I get stronger each fight I have, and I get
excited when I win. When I come out to see
everyone, I want everyone to know that I am
famous. So, at my last big fight I knocked the
whole bookshelf down and it felt good!!

But now I'm alone, locked in a room by myself
at night, in a room by myself at night, waiting
and hoping to get another fight.

Racheal — Thomas Reddall High School

As the locker opens, sand falls from my wrist guard, sweat and blood dripping from me. I didn't want to fight ever again, as I tear apart, I give up. I haven't been cleaned for weeks. After a while, my owner decides to throw me out, then I sit there in the bin in disappointment.

Luke — Richmond High School



I was finally chosen from the small rack by the fearless fighter Wally Carr. We walked for a mile before making it back to the place he stayed surrounded by new things. Bugs, a bed, curtains and a desk. Wally placed me down on the wooden desk. I felt his tears hit my paper as he passionately wrote to his mother. I felt him shaking as he wrote, worried she would be mad he didn't say anything.

I felt bad not only for Wally but for his mother. I couldn't imagine the feeling of not knowing where your child is.

He held me tight as he walked me down to the large metal box. He placed me in there. I looked around to see many sad letters to mothers all around the world. Letters from husbands and sons to the women they care about. I felt a hand grab me, stuffing me in a bag, throwing me around with all the other letters. For hours and hours we drove, having one letter at a time leave the bag. Finally, I arrived at 13 Parlee St, Wellington, NSW, Australia.

The lovely woman, Claudia Carr, held me in her warm hands. I felt her begin to cry as she read the letter from her son. She grabbed me harder and whispered, 'Good luck', before sticking me on the fridge. I watched every day as she waited for him to arrive home. She watched every fight, the wins and losses. She read me every day with tears in her eyes until her son arrived home.

Hannah — Kingswood High School

Boxing glove belonging to professional First Nations boxer Wally Carr (1954–2019) red and black leather, made for promotional use, and signed by Wally Carr in 2011.



I am... rusted like a worn-out car. I'm rough like sandpaper and smell like mouldy tea bags.

I feel pride in the knowledge I contain. I am proud to know that I'm sacred yet useful and peaceful to know. I am used for great and good purposes.

I've been on many travels from the windy humid weather of Sydney and the scorching wax burned roads of Darwin.

I've been everywhere around New Holland learning the ways of old and the emerging lessons of life. There have been a few troubles travelling, like finding a massive rock, to being ambushed by wild dogs. Another trouble is being able to read by myself. I make sure everyone and everything is asleep then I begin my reading. You could practically say I am bilingual knowing all these languages, trilingual even and I hope others can and will learn from me.

Louis — Alexandria Park Community School

Sitting on the same boring shelf. In the same boring room. Looking at the same beige wall. I needed an adventure, I needed to escape this boredom. I needed to escape the basement stacks.

So I set off, landing straight on my title, Comparative Vocabulary of Australian Languages. I flipped and flopped on the box. My pages flying everywhere. When, suddenly I froze as someone walked in. It was a lady with a small bag. She saw me and said 'tisk tisk, people don't know how to put things away', and she placed me back on the shelf. Back to where I started.

The lady turned around to go back up the stairs when her bag hit me and sent me plummeting to the ground. I still don't forgive her for that. She went to pick me up and a water bottle fell out of her bag, splashing me with cold, wet water.

The lady panicked, rummaging through her bag to find a cloth to fix her mess. She whipped me off and placed me back on my shelf. She then quickly scurried off so she did not get blamed for the hideous stain she caused upon me.

Stacey — Kingswood High School

Kangaroo	Menindie	Mungahla Creek	Parago River	Parago River	Upper Paroo	Middle Paroo	Lower Paroo	Paroo	Paroo	Paroo	Paroo	Paroo
Opadum	72	143	143	143	143	143	143	143	143	143	143	143
Tame dog	Tullala	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
Emu	Pilla	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
L. Jackass	Kallie	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
	Tholmukie	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
Native Companion	Koolookoo	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
N. Cockatoo	Kinkie	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
Egg	Kertie	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
Wash	Boondoo	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
Wagtail	Boondie	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
Yellow	Kingaroo	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
A Black	Kimbria	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
A Lubra	Konga	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
Boon	Kindole	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
1	Kukie	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
2	Barkolo	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
3	Barkolo	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
Lathe	Barkolo	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
Mother	Barkolo	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
Dead	Barkolo	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora	Boora
Eye	Makie	Tilly	Dillek	Dealie	Telli	Tidilie	Trickey	Mu-a	Milparlos	Mungaroo	Megie	Megie
Ear	Urie	Mungah	Mungah	Mungah	Mungah	Mungah	Mungah	Mungah	Mungah	Mungah	Mungah	Mungah
Mouth	Yelka	Ta	Yurna	Dah	Ta	Ta	Ta	Ta	Ta	Ta	Ta	Ta
Thunders	Pindie	Tekol	Barrine	Burrie	Barri	Thagoro	Bimdy	Punde	Tulpi	Tulpi	Tulpi	Tulpi
Tongue	Taringa	Tullea	Dulline	Dalang	Talain	Talain	Talain	Talain	Talain	Talain	Talain	Talain
Breasts	Boondolo	Onaga	Humnoon	Humnoon	Humnoon	Humnoon	Humnoon	Humnoon	Humnoon	Humnoon	Humnoon	Humnoon
Brain	Pulla	Boon	Boon	Boon	Boon	Boon	Boon	Boon	Boon	Boon	Boon	Boon
Lat	Murrie	Thomee	Thomee	Thomee	Thomee	Thomee	Thomee	Thomee	Thomee	Thomee	Thomee	Thomee
Has spear	Yonta-bulgee	Yonta-bulgee	Yonta-bulgee	Yonta-bulgee	Yonta-bulgee	Yonta-bulgee	Yonta-bulgee	Yonta-bulgee	Yonta-bulgee	Yonta-bulgee	Yonta-bulgee	Yonta-bulgee
Scum	Yuko	Yuko	Yuko	Yuko	Yuko	Yuko	Yuko	Yuko	Yuko	Yuko	Yuko	Yuko
Room	Pichua	Tillgan	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch
Clab	Pullie	Tandool	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch
Walt	Kookoo	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch
Smoke	Boondoo	Toga	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch
Rain	Mookra	Tillgan	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch
Les	Yah	Ma	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch
Is	Mapah	Urda	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch
To walk	Thannan		Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch
To see	Wingara		Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch	Deekarch

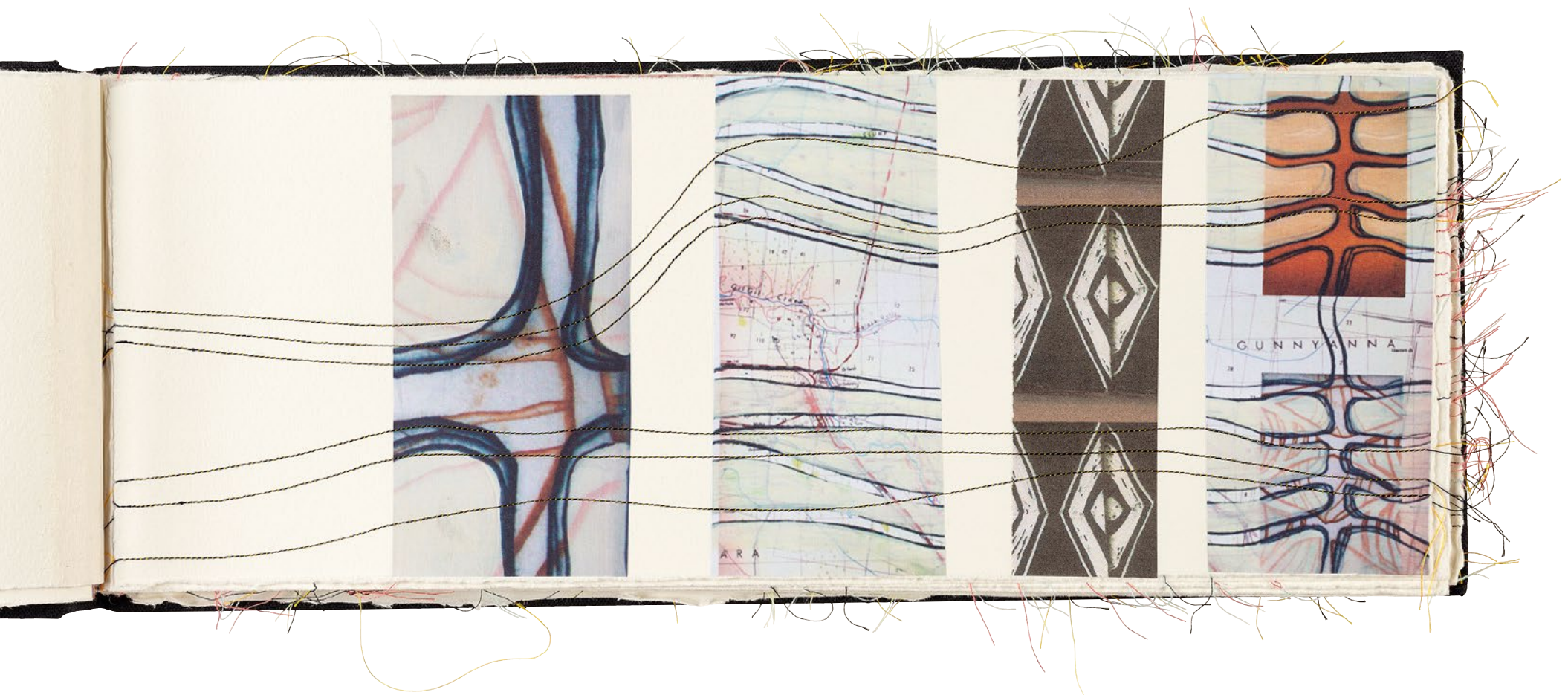
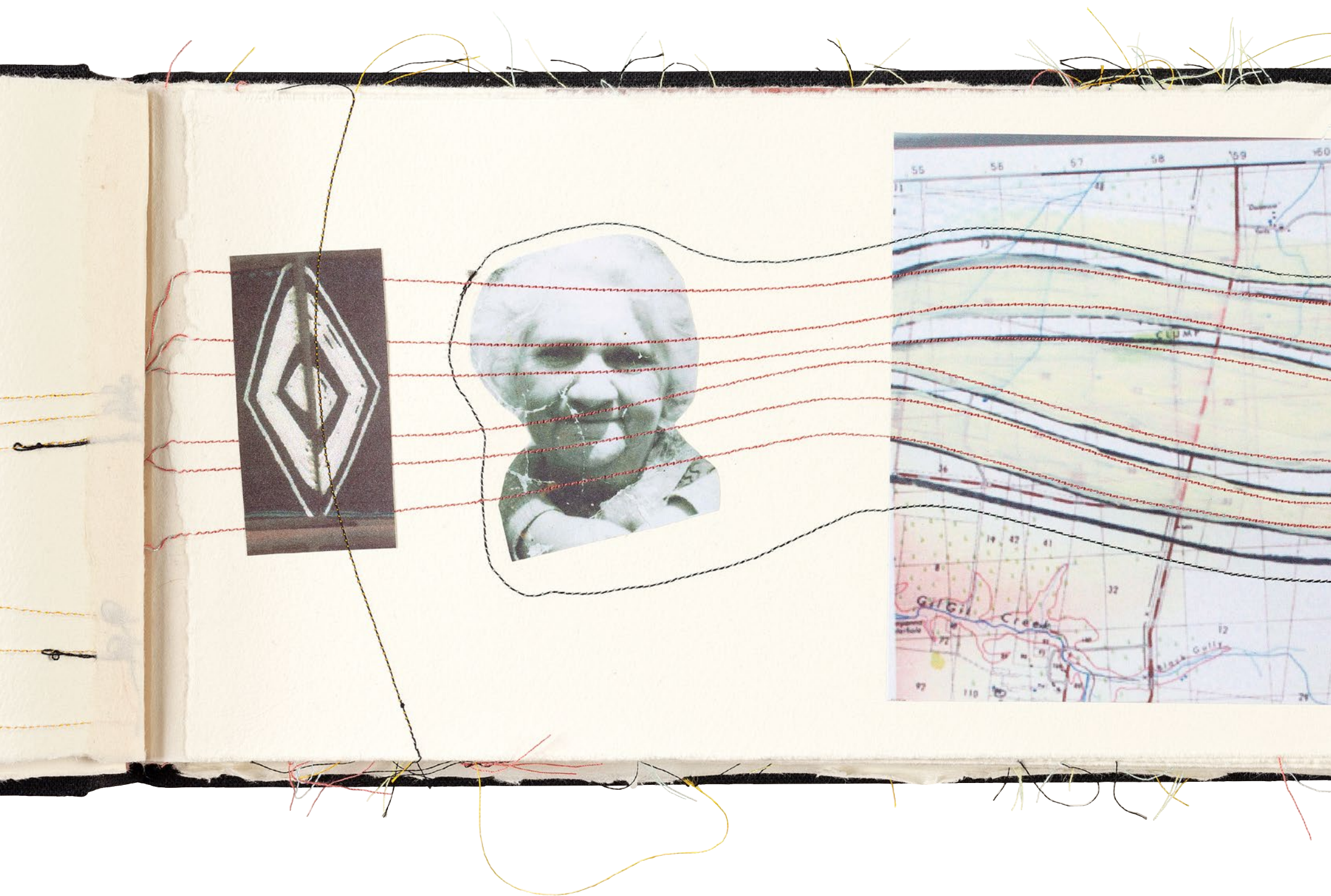
I'm moving places again.
I'm scared that I'm going to
get destroyed. I don't want to
get torn. It is extremely scary
when you can't see where
you're going. When I emerge
from the bag once again,
it is very awkward seeing a
number of Aboriginal Elders.
It feels different when the
Elders start to write — the ink
feels different.

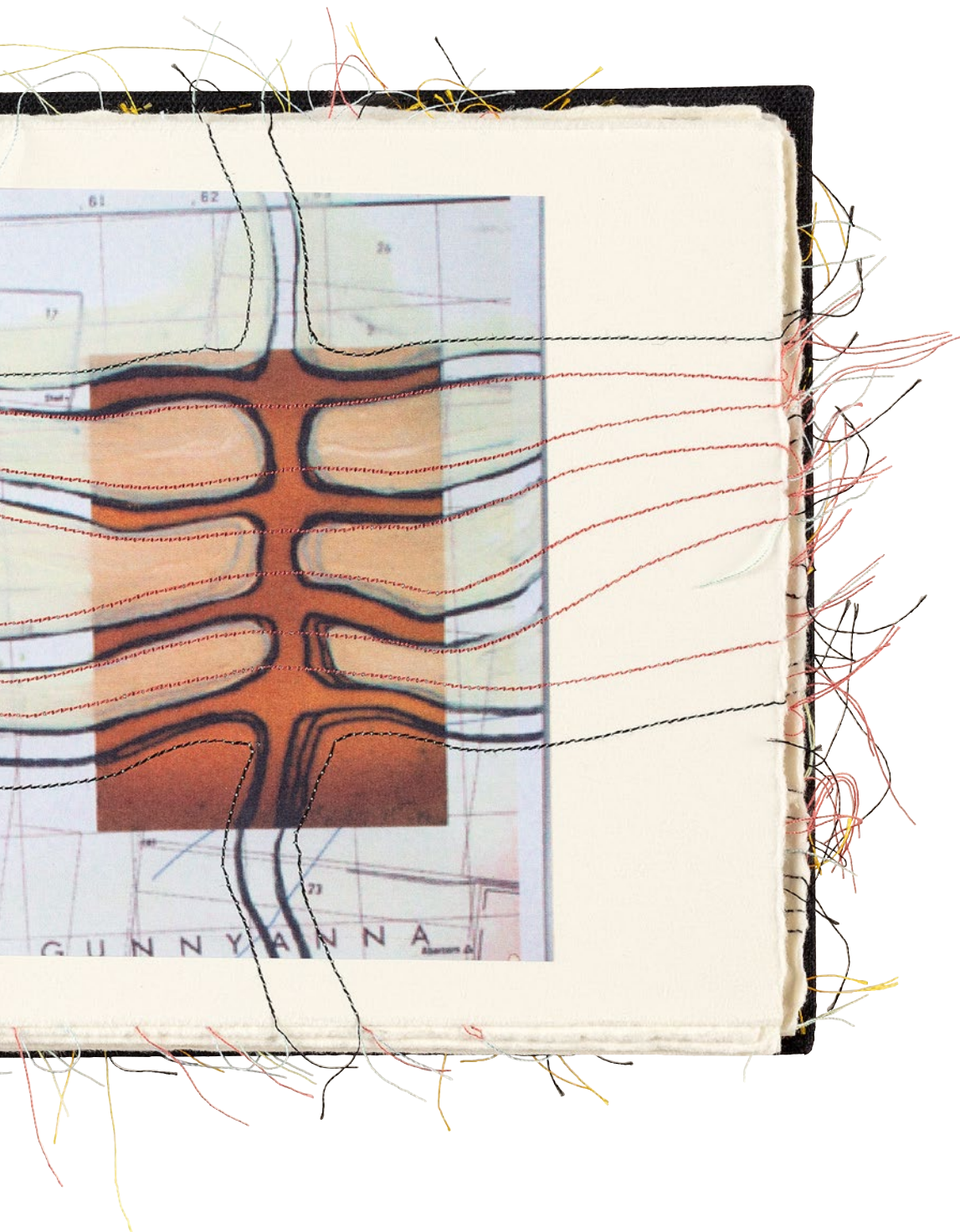
Justice — Airds High School

The left side shows the corruption, anger, disgust,
deep misery and frustration
with the neglect shown over the years.
The right side shows charm,
precious value
and treasure hidden in its passages.
The background represents
how the text is looked at and how unique
this book is.

Natalia — Glenmore Park High School

Australian Comparative Vocabulary by
Edward M Curr, 1881, volume 1, cover and inside
page, from the Curr family papers and station
records, 1838-1937, MLMSS 2286/Box 3X/vol. 1





I am a long rectangular book. I am creamy light brown like an oak tree. I am rough to the touch, like carpet from an old lady's house, and smell mouldy like an old cheese sandwich that has been left in someone's bag for three years.

Being this book is great. It makes people happy when they see the family tree because it connects their family to people and to each other. Before reading me, people never knew they had certain other people in their life.

But sometimes it can be hard, because when people go through me and see people that have passed, it makes them sad that they'll never get to meet them even though they've heard so much about them.

I was lying on a tray minding my own business when a kid that looked like Dennis the Menace picked me up and carried me around and threw me near the bin.

Around closing time security walked around the building to make sure no one was hiding and then found me beside the trash can and picked me up and placed me back on the return tray.

Karleish — Alexandria Park Community School

I was born in 2013, the last place I remember being was at my owner's house, she was the one who made me. She made sure I was safe and sometimes I would be given to other people. When I would be returned to her, she would walk me home and place me on my shelf. It was like this with daily check-ups, I started to get dizzy, until a couple of years later. I found out I had 'copies' of me, but why? And soon we stopped travelling and I was given to another person and the place I was at was called 'a library'. When the 'Librarian' took me on a walk I easily got lost, I didn't know if this was the last time I would see her. I became confused and worried but it's not all bad, for people still read my, no, our stories and it's become really fun. It may feel lonely but I know I'm useful. Oh here they come, here I go again and off the shelf I go!

Chantai — Kingswood High School

Mapping Genealogy, artist's book, one of five copies by Penny Evans, HF 2016/14. This is based on the artist's proof of concept 'Proof' held at SLNSW HF 2016/15.

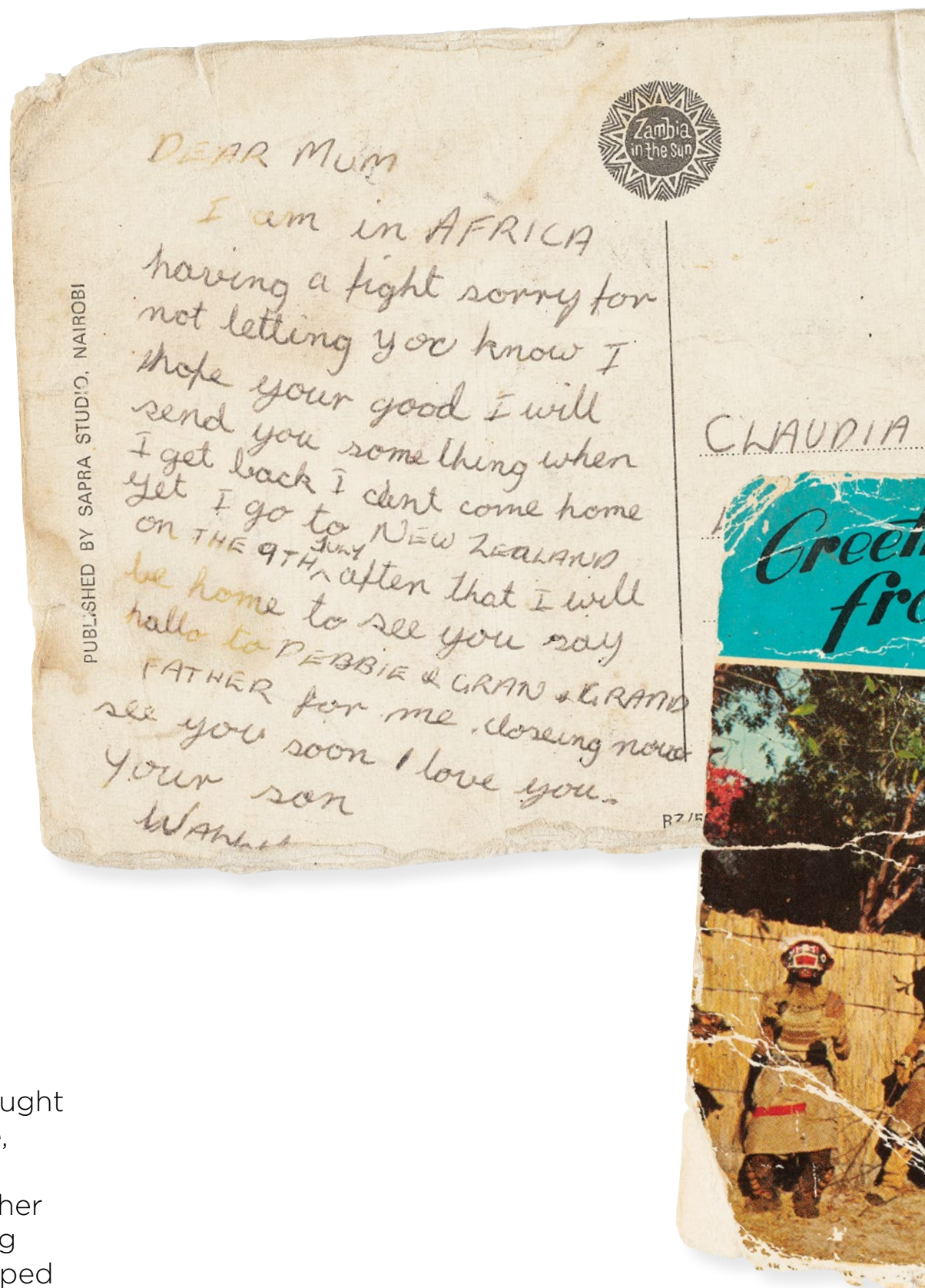
Collage and hand-stitching are used to represent the artist's maternal family history and explore identity through songlines (Bengerang NSW, near Mungindi). Pages are hand-torn and book bound by artist.

I remember the day like it was yesterday. The day I got my colour printed on me was also the day I got shipped to Africa. I sat on the shelf for weeks upon weeks, watching my friends and family all slowly leaving. I sat there and wondered, 'Why wasn't I chosen? Where were they going? Is it my turn yet?' Until one sunny Tuesday morning, this man came into my shop, he had different features than most of the people who have entered the shop. He picked me up, gave me a big smile, then got out his pencil and began to write on me. Although, that is all I remember of my memories with the man because before I knew it, I was thrown into this dark, cold, red bin looking thing. The red bin looking thing must have been moved or something while I was asleep because when I had woken up, I was in the very enormous building with so many boxes, cards, everything! I wasn't there very long, though. I think the next morning or so, I was thrown again into a bag and again into a box outside another building.

That evening the box had opened up.

A lady, similar looking to the man who bought me, got me out. Read the words upon me, and tears came running down her face. I spent years with this woman, placed on her cupboard. I watched so many things going on, I never got bored. Until one day I stopped seeing her and everything around me was changing. I saw the man who bought me, he picked me up, and he also began to cry, just like the lady did when she first saw me. That was when I got placed in a box with many other things, and now I see many people, but I haven't seen the lady or the man for a very long time...

Lisa-Marie — Kingswood High School



'I love you, your son Wally.' Postcard written by Wally Carr and sent to his mother, Claudia Carr, in Wellington, NSW, from Zambia, Africa in July 1976.



I have finally been chosen. Out of all the postcards, today is my day. It all started when this man came up to the rack of all the postcards. I was sitting there hoping that it would be my turn, and I was right.

I was taken home by the man and he started to write. The message was for one of his loved ones. I could tell that he was putting a lot of time and effort into this as he took his time to write. After all that time, he had finally finished writing the message and all that was left was to write the address. That's when I realised that I was about to travel across the world.

Before I knew it, I was put into a dark place with no one around me. I was stuck for what felt like ages before I was then let out of the dark area.

The man passed me to a lady who was behind the counter. She shoved me down into a dark place, but this time I wasn't alone. There were other postcards that were travelling to the same place. We had been sitting and talking for a while when we were lifted into a loud moving object.

It was travelling really fast and I was a little bit scared if I'm being honest, but I made it out alive. I was moved from this loud object into a small bag. They then threw us all into the back of a car and I was then dropped off into a box. I waited for a while before I met this lovely lady when she found me, she immediately started crying when reading me. That was when I realised that this was going to be my next home.

Lara — Kingswood High School

Hello, I'm the Ricketty Dick coin.
At least that's what people
refer to me as. I'm small
and golden with a
somewhat old look.
I almost look like
a metal/tin newish
or brand new
horse shoe.

I'm fairly
introverted since
I spend most
of my time in
someone's drawer,
pocket or wallet,
left with no-one to
talk to, but I'm okay
with that. I actually really
like being by myself. The
only person I like is my lonely
owner, but something happened to
me... I'm lost. Everything feels so distant
yet so familiar at the same time.

As I look at my surroundings and I feel I've been
here before, somewhere in a distant memory,
but the light... it's too dimly lit for me to
recognise anything.

I sit there for what feels like years. I feel the
hope of my owner slowly slip away with
every second.

Is this really how I'm going to spend the rest
of my life, sitting on my ass in the dark, waiting
for someone. But then the light flickers on and
I hear boom, footsteps, and the next thing
I know I'm being held in my owner's hand.
The hope I feel is overwhelming my heart.
Who knew a simple coin could feel so happy
just being found.

Rose — Tempe High School



I am a random, old, rusted
gold coin with someone's face
on me.

I am one of many and for that
no one cares about me.

I have been found and lost,
dirtied over time.

I have been created for one
reason and one reason only.

To be used by everyone that
has been close to me but
I don't want to be used.

I want to have feelings,
a voice.

I am angry, I am broken, I had
chips of my gold taken away
from me.

I need justice, I need friends.
I need to know why people
think they can do anything
they want to me.

Like the time I was thrown into
one of those donation buckets
at the shops.

You know how long I stayed
in there for?

One and a half weeks.
ONE AND A HALF WEEKS!

Finally, when I got taken out
of that bucket I got stuck
in some guy's pants.

Then I got thrown into the
washing machine.

That just proves how bad
people treat me.

It is just darkness everywhere.

Hopefully there is light at the
end of the tunnel.

Jasmine — Tempe High School

Ricketty Dick medal from the Sir William Dixon
numismatic collection. 22 mm, bronze gilded,
struck after 1872 SAFE/DN/M 589.

I am gold and round shaped. People use me to pay for goods and I am kept safe either in a register or wallet.

It happened so fast, one minute I was laughing with my brothers, awaiting to see what our destination was and the next, I felt myself roll.

I screamed and bounced from the seat to the door and fell onto a soft but dirty track road.

It was a warm summer night, it was so dark that the moon couldn't even illuminate the whole dirt track that continued for miles.

Not a tree, grass patch or house in sight. Just the trail and the metal railings marking where to drive.

I felt abandoned and lonely.

I had no-one; I was sitting by myself on the ground.

I was so dehydrated I couldn't cry and the fear of not even seeing the other side of the railing because it was so dark.

I was cold, I started to run because the puddle next to me eventually made its way to me.

That was 5 years ago... now I'm six feet under where I started, I haven't seen the light since.

Ray — Tempe High School

I am the most special coin in the whole wide world. I was one of the first coins made in Australia, and I have an Aboriginal man carved on me. The only problem is no one sees that I get lost all the time, and people don't seem to understand my importance. But soon they will. I will get out of this drain. I was dropped by my previous owner down here. I have not seen any other coins down here nor do I know how to get out. But I think I have a plan... wait... no I don't. I'm trapped down here. So cold... so dark... even though I can't feel heat. But still, how can I get out?

'Oi!'

'Who said that?'

I saw a small 5 cent roll out of the darkness.

'I'm Tick. What's your name?'

'Well I... Uhhh... I don't know.'

'What?'

'I never thought of it before. People just call me Coin.'

'Well I heard you wanna get out?'

'Yeah, I'm a special coin.'

'Yeah, sure Bud.'

'No, look at me.'

'Where were you made?'

'Well it's been such a long time, I lost track.'

'Well let's both try and get out of this dump.'

Bowen — Windsor High School



I am... a lovely photo at the state library. I am dull, soft and delicate to the touch. There are stories in me.

It makes me feel upset but it's important because it gets the word out. People will know what happened even if it makes them feel upset.

I am going to travel back in time to see how people acted and how the enslaved people felt.

I shake to the movement of light. I leave a flame trail on the wall.

When I arrive it smells of smoke and I see a lot of depressed and angry people where things didn't go their way.

Antwon — Alexandria Park Community School

Who inspired you to become an activist?

How did you feel when you travelled through Walgett and Moree?

What was your family and younger life like?

Where did your family originate from?

How did it feel to be socially excluded?

How many Aboriginal languages could you speak or understand?

How did you cope with racism and discrimination?

What went through your mind whilst talking in front of thousands?

Melonie — Richmond High School

Images of student activists protesting segregation; from the Freedom Rides SAFA (Student Action For Aborigines). SAFA campaigned for mob to be let into swimming pools, hotels, shops, cinemas, and public parks. Trip 17-26 February 1965; negatives from the *Tribune*, the Communist Party of Australia newspaper, published 1939-91





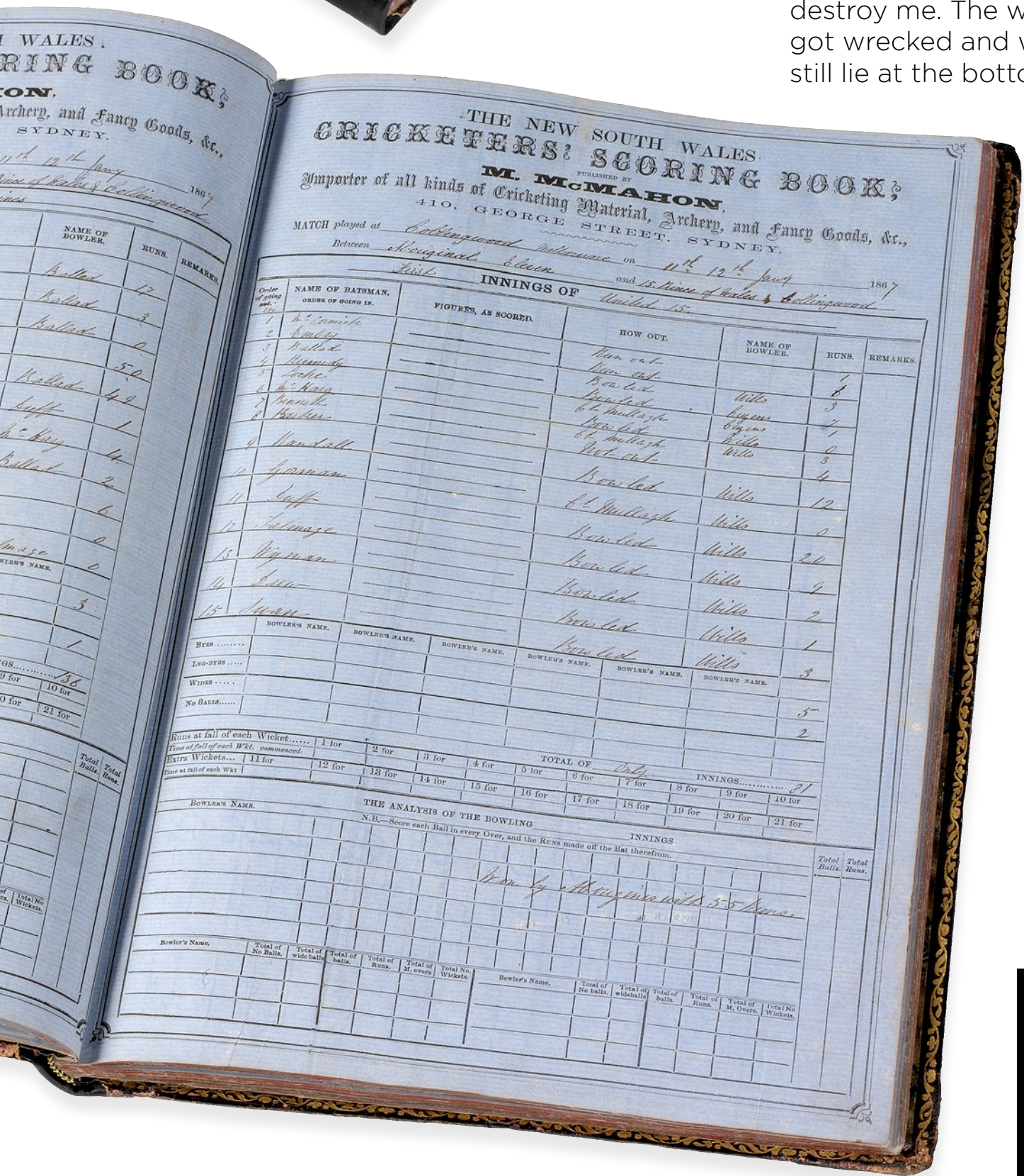
I carry information about the first Australian cricket team that happened to be Aboriginal. I am a book with lines for my information. I am written in cursive, messy and hard to read.

I was trying to run away from the library because I thought it felt like a jail cell. I have been here since 1867 — 154 years. I needed a break from being looked at and touched. I would rather keep being used for my purpose, which is scoring.

As I was crossing the road, near the middle of Sydney, I got hit by the car when I wasn't looking. I felt sore! I had tyre marks all over my face.

I got back up and started to walk to Sydney Harbour. I was strong but an old book. I was at Sydney Harbour until I saw a big, humongous wave, and there I saw the tsunami that would destroy me. The waves hit me and my pages got wrecked and wet. I was lost forever. I may still lie at the bottom of the harbour today.

Jasper — Thomas Reddall High School



The Aboriginal Eleven cricket team were the first Australian cricket team to tour internationally, to England in 1868. The team consisted of 19 Aboriginal cricketers. While on tour they played a total of 47 matches and had 14 wins, 14 losses and 19 draws.

Aboriginal Eleven Cricketers Scoring Book, Charles Lawrence, from the tour of England 26-27 December 1866, 4-5 February 1868, MLMSS 7772 (Safe 1/260).

