

Small Press Network's MOST UNDERRATED BOOK AWARD 2018

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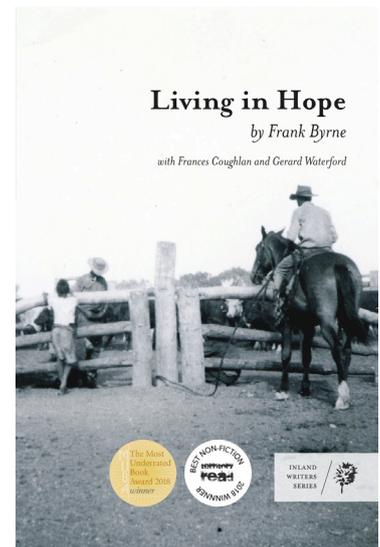
Living in Hope by the late Frank Byrne (with Frances Coughlan and Gerard Waterford) wins the 2018 Most Underrated Book Award.

- Frank Byrne is the first Indigenous Australian author to win the award.
- *Living in Hope* is the first memoir to win the award.
- *Living in Hope* named 'Best Non-Fiction' title at the 2018 Territory Read Award (NT).
- *Living in Hope* forms the first three chapters of Frank's life story forthcoming from Ptilotus Press in 2019, to be distributed by NewSouth Books.

The late Frank Byrne has been awarded the Small Press Network's (SPN) 2018 Most Underrated Book Award (MUBA) for his memoir, *Living in Hope*. Trevor Byrne accepted the award on behalf of his father at the MUBA18 event held on the first night of the SPN Independent Publishing Conference in Melbourne.

A child of the Stolen Generations, Frank was moved from place to place after being taken from his mother, a Gooniyandi woman from Christmas Creek. *Living in Hope* is a record of Frank's enduring determination throughout his childhood, dotted with moments of joy that defied the overwhelmingly harsh and unjust treatment experienced by the Stolen Generations.

Judges Sarah L'Estrange, Megan O'Brien and Toni Jordan said that *Living in Hope* is an 'important story of survival and hope' and that they 'hope the award provides some measure of comfort to his family'.



Frank's son, Trevor Byrne, and co-authors Frances Coughlan and Gerard Waterford spoke of the importance of telling the stories of the Stolen Generations and noted that *Living in Hope* is a story of colonisation that is of international relevance.

'It is very important for people to learn what happened back in them days, the way the government system was authorised to take kids away from their parents. People need to learn from that history. The MUBA win gets our dad's story out there and people need to understand his story doesn't just reflect what happened to Aboriginal people here, but what has happened to Indigenous Peoples across the world.'

– Trevor Byrne, son of Frank Byrne

'Frank wrote this story to have an impact on what is happening in the current world. He wanted his own kids, his grandkids and the families around him to actually know what happened to the Stolen Generations. He wanted it recorded for history. He was absolutely outraged by John Howard and others making claims that children were being rescued not stolen. That was painful for him to hear. That denial of truth was a reason why he was driven to have this story out. His story and stories like this are really important.'

– Gerard Waterford & Frances Coughlan, co-authors

In writing the book, Frank hoped to draw attention to the history of the Stolen Generations and the devastating intergenerational impacts of institutional care. Co-author Gerard Waterford said that he hoped the attention from the MUBA would 'invite people to talk about it and to heal each other' and that these conversations 'will be one of the things Frank is most proud of'.

About the authors:

Frank Byrne was born in 1937 at Christmas Creek (Fitzroy Crossing) to a Gooniyandi woman and an Irish stockman. In 1942, he was taken from his mother and sent to Moola Bulla native station. In 1944, Frank was sent to Beagle Bay mission, before returning to Christmas Creek in 1951 to become a stockman. In 2000, Frank began formal enquiries into where his mother's remains were laid to rest and in 2015 worked with Gerard Waterford and Frances Coughlan on *Living in Hope*, with the early chapters drafted during a trip through the Kimberley region. Frank was diagnosed with cancer shortly after returning from the Kimberley region and, as his book neared completion, Frank's life was also drawing to an end. He died on 20 October 2017.

Frances Coughlan is a social worker who has worked in Mparntwe/Alice Springs for over 20 years, in the beginning with Tangentyere Council and now with the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress where she is employed as a 'Bringing Them Home' counsellor in the Social and Emotional Wellbeing program. Her practice is influenced by narrative and family therapies which place people as the experts in their own lives, and draws on the resilience, humor, compassion and creativity that people bring to survive through hard times.

Gerard Waterford is a social worker, counsellor and writer based in Mparntwe/Alice Springs. He is a co-founder of the Central Australian Narrative Therapy Group and works at the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress as a 'Bringing Them Home' counsellor. In this role, he has assisted many survivors of the Stolen Generations in writing memoirs, including Alex Kruger's *Alone on the Soaks* (2007 IAD Press).

About the publisher, Ptilotus Press:

Ptilotus Press (pronounced ty-LOH-tus) was established in 1996 and is a not-for-profit publisher based in Mparntwe/Alice Springs. Managed by a collective of writers, Ptilotus Press is an advocate for Central Australian writing, with surplus funds from book sales going towards supporting the local literary community.



Ptilotus Press

'Frank Byrne may no longer be with us but the lessons of his resilience in surviving the Stolen Generations are alive in this book. As emphasised by his family and co-authors, Living in Hope is not just a record but a call to action. It is not just a memoir but a concrete tool in the pursuit of justice. We can see here how a literary process that centres the expertise of First Peoples' lived experience has the power to expose the distortion of history by dominant colonial narratives and transform writing into an agent of healing.'

– Olivia Nigro, Ptilotus Press

Ptilotus Press has supported the Indigenous Literacy Foundation and the Red Dirt Poetry Festival, and is a partner of the NT Writers' Centre. NT Writers' Centre Program Manager Fiona Dorrell said the MUBA18 win affirmed the value of community-driven literature.

'Seeing Living In Hope win a national award is a huge affirmation of the unique ways of working embodied in this book. Its legacy is stewarded by so many members of the local community and ultimately by the immediate and extended family for whom the intricacies of this story continue to be held and lived. To receive national acclaim and attention impacts so many people and reminds us of the importance of community-driven literature.'

– Fiona Dorrell, NT Writers' Centre

A note on cultural protocol:

The SPN recommends care be taken when reporting on deceased members of Indigenous communities. The following content warning is suggested by Ptilotus Press wherever features on *Living in Hope* or Frank Byrne are published:

'Warning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, this content contains images and/or voices of deceased persons.'

More information on cultural protocol can be found in the NITV/SBS Greater Perspectives guidelines.

Futher information:

- **The co-authors and members of the Byrne family will be available for interview** in the days following the Most Underrated Book Award event on 22 November 2018.
- For media requests and more information on *Living in Hope* (including photographs and pre-recorded interviews with family members), contact Ptilotus Press project manager Olivia Nigro: olivia.nigro@ptilotuspress.com / **0405 406 731**.
- For information on MUBA or the Small Press Network, contact SPN general manager Tim Coronel: timcoronel@smallpressnetwork.com.au / **0418 696 786**.