

STRONGER TOGETHER



**First Stories
Collective**

A bold, national, Blak-led initiative building the relationships and resources First Nations storytellers and publishing professionals need to thrive.

FIRST STORIES COLLECTIVE



First Stories Collective is led by Blak & Bright and Magabala Books, Australia's two leading organisations for the promotion and elevation of Blak literary voices.

Bringing together First Nations writers, storytellers, illustrators, editors and publishing professionals, the Collective facilitates networking and advocacy, provides professional development and hosts a variety of events designed to strengthen relationships and share knowledge.

OUR VISION



Through Blak leadership and self-determination, we're building a strong and connected First Nations literary ecosystem.

"We are not a plantation;
we are an old growth forest"

This metaphor by Wiradjuri writer, poet and academic Jeanine Leane, shared at the inaugural First Stories Collective gathering, describes the Collective we seek to nurture: one that is intentionally slow, intergenerational, deeply rooted in Country and nourished through care, not extraction.

THEORY OF CHANGE



First Nations storytelling is brilliant, staunch and award-winning. It's time the infrastructure around us matched our strength.

Writers and illustrators often work in isolation. Culturally safe editorial expertise is scarce. The responsibility of sustaining culture and creativity within a hostile industry falls on individuals rather than the systems that should support us.

First Stories Collective exists to change this.

Through national gatherings, cultivation initiatives, professional development and sector-wide collaboration, First Stories Collective brings together storytellers, writers, illustrators, editors, publishers and communities to create, innovate, share knowledge and build enduring Blak literary power.

First Stories Collective acknowledges sovereignty was never ceded. This always was and always will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land.

WAYS TO SUPPORT

First Stories Collective was created in 2025 through a multi-year Creative Australia Delivery Partnership. Government investment established the Collective, but philanthropic support will determine how we grow.

Access and Participation

Fund a regional or remote First Nations writer, illustrator or freelance publishing professional to attend the First Stories Collective gatherings in Magandjin (Brisbane) or Warrang (Sydney), or to participate in the professional development labs.

Range: \$2,000 – \$5,000

Allocation: travel, accommodation and per diems.

Seeding Stories Fund

Seeding Stories resources Blak-led collaboration across the sector. It recognises that creativity flourishes when people are given the resources and trust to shape their own collaborations.

Range: \$10,000 – \$20,000

Allocation: Grants of \$10,000 to First Nations storytellers, writers, illustrators and freelance publishing professionals working collaboratively on a project. Funding may cover creator fees, on-Country trips, travel, project materials or editorial costs.

Founding Partnership

First Stories Collective is just getting started and there is much work to be done. The Collective has the ambition to become a peak body for First Nations literature. Founding Partners will help build our future, investing in the people, infrastructure and Blak leadership needed to create lasting change.

Range: \$50,000 – \$200,000

Allocation: Operational costs, including salaries and fees for First Nations staff and creatives, production costs, marketing, administration and overheads to grow the Collective nationally.



First Stories Collective

@firststoriescollective
firststoriescollective.com



"First Stories Collective is a literary intervention on our terms, Blak-led, Blak-built and unapologetically ambitious. We know what's possible when First Nations creatives have the resources and authority to determine what comes next. We're looking for partners with the courage to invest in that future with us."



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