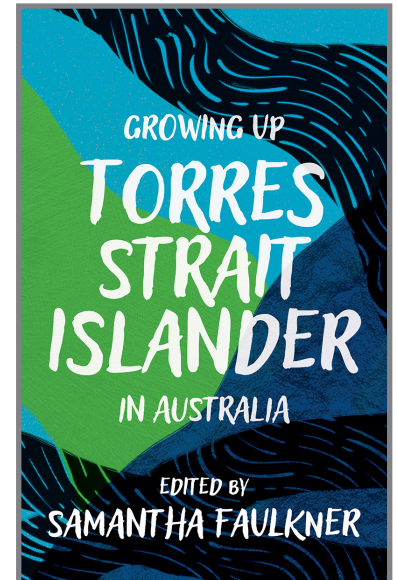


Growing Up Torres Strait Islander in Australia

EDITED BY
SAMANTHA FAULKNER



SCIS: 5485823

ISBN: 9781760644420

RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid to Upper Secondary

SYNOPSIS

Growing Up Torres Strait Islander in Australia is a collection of stories that celebrates the strength, pride and culture of Torres Strait Islander communities. The collection represents a diverse range of voices: emerging and established writers, Elders and young people, men and women, people living on the Islands and people living on the mainland, contemporary writers and writers from the past. Many of the stories highlight the rich fabric of Torres Strait Islander culture, the impact government acts and policies have had on people's lives, and the resilience of Torres Strait Islander people in the face of these challenges.

A strong theme throughout the collection is the importance of speaking back to continuing stereotypes and negative positioning of Indigenous people in Australian society and affirming Torres Strait Islander identity and culture. The authors in this collection do this by providing counternarratives that showcase culture, family, the achievements of Torres Strait Islander people, and an enduring connection to the land, seas and skies of the Torres Strait.

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Samantha Faulkner is a Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal woman, from Badu and Moa Islands in the Torres Strait and the Yadhagana and Wuthathi peoples of Cape York Peninsula, Queensland. Her poetry and short stories have been published nationally and internationally, and she is the proud author of *Life B'long Ali Drummond: A Life in the Torres Strait* (Aboriginal Studies Press, July 2007) and editor of *Pamle: Torres Strait Islanders in Canberra* (2018). She also is a member of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Network, MARION (ACT Writers) and the treasurer of First Nations Australia Writers Network and Us Mob Writing Group. In 2023, she was the Torres Strait Islander curator for the Brisbane Writers Festival.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Antoinette Cole is a proud Torres Strait Islander descendant, with family connections to Boigu Island and Erub (Darnley Island) in the Torres Strait. Antoinette leads with her heart to inspire hope and a shared vision among her colleagues. She advocates for a future where reconciliation endures and, where improvements in learning and teaching, pave the way for equitable opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students to achieve and celebrate success. She has demonstrated outstanding service within and beyond the Catholic Education community for almost thirty years, and has shown integrity as a formidable leader. Antoinette is currently undertaking her PhD at the University of Queensland, focusing on Culturally Responsive School Leadership.

THEMES

- Identity and intersectionality: diversity; socio-economic status
- Culture: community; language; tradition; customs; protocols; resilience; pride; loss; two worlds; giving back
- Australian history: colonisation; assimilation; blood quantum laws; missions; stolen generations
- Torres Strait Islander people
- Representation
- Racism: blood quantum laws; exclusion (school and social); skin colour; stereotypes
- Kin: care; connectedness; family.
- Resilience
- Activism: political activism; social activism; resistance; role models
- Country: connection to Country; significance of place.

STUDY NOTES

BEFORE READING

Country/Place

- Who are the traditional owners of our school, and what is the traditional name used by the area's traditional owners?
- What is the traditional name of the land where you were born or grew up?
- What are the groups and languages in the Torres Strait and what is the connection between languages and groups?
- How does this connection tie in to culture and identity for Torres Strait Islanders?
- What does this tell us about the diversity of Torres Strait Islander identity, culture and perspectives?
- Why are Torres Strait Islander people's perspectives and connection to Country/Place important?

People

- Ask students to choose a Torres Strait Islander role model and trailblazer—eg. Eddie Mabo, Ellie Gaffney or Charles Meme—and research and write an essay about their lives. Students may also identify authors from the previous activity as role models.

WHILE READING

Country/Place

- Allocate a chapter to each student group (depending on the class size, there will be two to four students reading and analysing each chapter). Ask students to explore how the author(s) describes their connection to the Torres Strait using the following inquiry questions:
 - How did the author(s) describe their connection to the Torres Strait and its significance? What did you notice?
 - What multilayered meanings are in these connections?
 - What themes are discussed by the author(s) in relation to their connection to the Torres Strait (eg. family, Country/Place, relocation and employment)?
 - What words and language are used by the author(s) when writing about specific themes (eg. when writing or speaking about holistic values and belief systems connected to land, sea, sky and waterways)? What strikes you about the language they have used?
 - How are connections to place and country associated with understanding Australian history?
 - Describe what the significance of place means to you?
 - What are the similarities and differences between how you describe the significance of place and how the author(s) describes significance of place?
 - In what ways are connection to Country (and, in some cases, disconnection from Country) unique to the histories and experiences of Torres Strait Islander people in Australia?
 - How does the author(s) represent unique ways of being, knowing, thinking and doing in this text?
 - Why is it important that Torres Strait Islander people tell their own stories?

People

- Allocate two chapters to each student group (students should be given different chapters than were allocated to

them in previous activities). Depending on the class size, there will be two to four students reading and analysing each chapter. Students will create a presentation that critically examines how the authors communicate their identity as Torres Strait Islanders using the following subheadings:

- Identity: How does the author(s) you examined talk about their Torres Strait Islander identity?
- Australian history: What aspects of Australian history (eg. colonisation, assimilation, disconnection, mission life, move to mainland during World War II and the 1936 Maritime Strike) are discussed in the chapter?
- Speaking back: In what ways does the author 'speak back' to stereotypes about Torres Strait Islander people?
- Other key themes (eg. racism).

Students are to use scholarly sources to further support their presentation when introducing key topics.

- Allocate one of these chapters for each student to read (students should be given different chapters than were allocated to them in previous activities):
 - 'The Ties That Bind'
 - 'Thriving Spaces'
 - 'Complexion'
 - 'Duality'
 - 'The Other Indigenous Australian'
 - 'Cultured Pearl'
 - 'A Torres Strait Islander Mainland Story'
 - 'Two Different Worlds'

Ask students to write a report on the author's discussion of the impact of racism on Torres Strait Islander people in Australia. The following inquiry questions will assist students to shape their research on the topic of racism, and to engage in understanding their own privilege or marginalisation in Australian society:

- How does race shape our lives?
- How often do you think about race in your day-to-day life?
- Why is it important to understand your own biases and assumptions?
- What strikes you about the author's experiences of being stereotyped?
- What is one thing we can do to address stereotyping in our school community, and outside the school gate?
- How does the media influence the public's perception of racism in Australia?
- What could the media do to counter racism in Australia?

Culture

- Ask students to engage with the inquiry questions below, in relation to the chapters they read in previous activities:
 - How do the authors' voices and experiences capture the diversity of Torres Strait Islander histories, stories and languages?
 - Why is it vital to acknowledge, appreciate and understand the diversity of Torres Strait Islander people and culture?
 - How can I better acknowledge, appreciate, understand and celebrate the diversity of Torres Strait Islander people and culture in my school community, and outside the school gate? What would be the next steps to do this?
- Allocate two chapters to each student group (students should be given different chapters than were allocated to them in previous activities).
 - How do the authors represent unique ways of being, knowing, thinking and doing in the text?
 - What are the perspectives and experiences of the authors in relation to parts of Australian history such as 'invasion', 'colonisation' and 'settlement', and why do they continue to be contested within society today?
 - Why is it important to acknowledge and understand the impact of assimilation policies and exclusion (school and social) from the voices and experiences of Torres Strait Islander people?
 - What are some events and issues, today and in the past, that have impacted Torres Strait Islander people and cultures?
 - Why is it important to appreciate and celebrate the resilience of Torres Strait Islander people and cultures?

AUTHOR OF NOTES

ANTOINETTE COLE