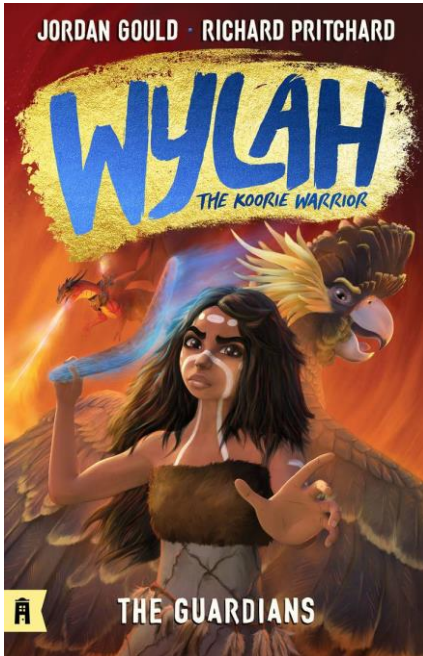




ALLEN & UNWIN

Wylah: the Koorie Warrior by Jordan Gould and Richard Pritchard



'We want people to know that Indigenous media and storytelling can be FUN, and it can be mainstream. We wanted to teach language, art and culture alongside a commercial acceptance of Indigenous culture. Wylah is aimed at both Indigenous people – to feature a young, determined heroine who looks like them – and non-Indigenous people, who want an enjoyable entry point to learn more. We are so proud of this book.'

Jordan Gould and Richard Pritchard

After a competitive auction, Allen & Unwin are thrilled to announce an exciting new acquisition: *Wylah: the Koorie Warrior*, a new Indigenous middle-grade fantasy adventure series for ages 8–14. *Wylah* is an entirely original adventure story that is inspired by First Nations history and grounded in culture.

Co-author and Peek Whurrong man Jordan Gould is Indigenous Australian. Richard Pritchard, the co-author and illustrator, is an Indigenous Pacific Islander who grew up in New Zealand before moving to Australia. Both creators live in Warrnambool, Victoria.

In 2020, Jordan and Richard launched a [Kickstarter](#) campaign for a special edition of *Wylah*, meeting their \$20,000 goal in three days and sparking national media interest. A video on SBS about *Wylah* now has over half a million views. Over two hundred people have financially backed the series, with thousands leaving positive comments.

Jordan and Richard recognised the importance of doing a series of cultural consultations with First Nations women, and they formed a Koorie story trust team that would ensure sensitivities to the culture were overseen. They visited museums, galleries, parks and heritage sites to inform their story.

Their main character, Wylah, is a Peek Whurrong girl from the Maar Nation. She is a funny, smart and relatable young hero. Growing up in New Zealand, Richard was inspired by the strong, feminist Samoan culture, where women are as much warriors as men. He wanted to tap into that under-represented side of Indigenous Australian culture, and together with Jordan's cultural knowledge, *Wylah* was born.

Fast-paced action, compelling characters and fabulous illustrations on every page make this Indigenous story a positive and highly commercial reading experience.

About the book:

Meet Wylah: warrior, hero and friend. Her adventures have been 40,000 years in the making!

Wylah is brave, clever and strong-willed, and all her best friends are animals. But she isn't a warrior. Not yet, anyway.

Then comes the day when her family is stolen by the dragon army, and her life is forever changed. She must find the courage to set out on a journey to save them.

What will it take for Wylah to become a warrior, like her Grandmother before her?



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'Wylah is the kind of character I longed to read about when I was a kid – gutsy, determined and kind. I love her. And I love her world – full of adventure, humour, animal friends ... and megafauna! I know kids all over Australia will revel in Wylah's amazing adventures, and I couldn't be more proud to be publishing this series.'

Susannah Chambers, Albert Street Books Publisher

'As a New Zealand born Samoan, I could see connections with Pacific Islanders, Maori and Indigenous Australian cultures. In New Zealand, we have very strong female characters in our heritage and history. Traditionally women are as much warriors as men. Jordan had always wanted to bring his Ancestor's stories to the mainstream media. With both of us coming from different but similar cultural backgrounds, we decided to team up and bring Wylah to life. Jordan named our hero 'Wylah' based on the word 'Wilan', the Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoo – which is his tribe's totem.'

Richard Pritchard

About Jordan Gould and Richard Pritchard:



Jordan Gould is a Peek Whurrong man from Warrnambool, Victoria. He performs welcome to country ceremonies at corporate and private gatherings. He is passionate about teaching and talking to groups about culture, language and reconciliation.

Richard Pritchard – a New Zealand-born Samoan man – has had a dream of writing books since he was a teenager. His passion for visual storytelling has led him to work in film, animation, commercials and video games. He has worked on feature films such as *The Great Gatsby*, *Happy Feet*, *Mad Max: Fury Road*, and *Prometheus* as a visual effects artist.

PUBLICATION DATE: 31 May 2022 **RRP:** \$15.99 **IMPRINT:** A&U Children **CATEGORY:** Fiction

AGES: 8–14

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