

Media Release

Steve Dimopoulos MP

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events
Minister for Creative Industries



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PRESTIGIOUS FIRST PEOPLES ARTIST FELLOWSHIP AWARDED

Mutti Mutti, Wamba Wamba, Yorta Yorta and Boonwurrung woman Maree Clarke has been awarded the prestigious Yalingwa Fellowship, a \$60,000 award for a Senior First Peoples artist living and working in Victoria.

Minister for Creative Industries Steve Dimopoulos today announced Ms Clarke as the recipient of the Fellowship which celebrates her outstanding contribution to First Peoples creative practice. The fellowship will support Ms Clarke to undertake research and development and create ground-breaking new work.

Based in Naarm/Melbourne, Ms Clarke grew up in Northwest Victoria. With a creative career spanning more than three decades, she is recognised as a pivotal figure in the reclamation of southeast Australian First Peoples art practices, notably for her work making traditional possum skin cloaks and kangaroo teeth and river reed necklaces.

In addition to being a teacher, curator and mentor, Ms Clarke has shown her work nationally and internationally including in a major solo exhibition at the NGV in 2021 and exhibitions at the Art Gallery of South Australia and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.

Yalingwa, a Woiwurrung word meaning both 'day' and 'light' is a program backed by the Andrews Labor Government designed to celebrate and strengthen First Peoples visual arts in Victoria. It was developed in collaboration with Victoria's First Peoples arts sector and launched in 2017.

Delivered in partnership with the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA) and TarraWarra Museum of Art, Yalingwa includes the Fellowship, the employment of First Peoples curators, and the development and presentation of a major exhibition of First Peoples art.

Maree Clarke is the third artist to receive the fellowship, with the inaugural and second awarded to trailblazing artists Destiny Deacon (2018) and Yhonnie Scarce (2020).

The next Yalingwa exhibition titled *Between Waves* opens at ACCA in July. Curated by Jessica Clark, who was appointed curator through a highly competitive process, the exhibition includes new work by Maree Clarke alongside commissions by leading First Peoples artists. For more information on Yalingwa, visit [acca.melbourne](https://www.acca.melbourne).

Quotes attributable to Minister for Creative Industries Steve Dimopoulos

"The Yalingwa initiative is one of the ways we are working to develop and promote First Peoples leadership in the creative industries, and back the careers of First Peoples artists and arts workers."

"Maree Clarke is one of our most respected and important artists and a well-deserved recipient of this Fellowship. I hope this opportunity enables her to reach even greater heights and introduces her work to a wider audience."

Quotes attributable to Yalingwa 2023 Fellow Maree Clarke

"I am honoured to accept this award. This is an incredible gift, which will allow me to focus on long term projects and conduct further research in the UK that will inform my new body of work."

"I am passionate about arts and culture in the Southeast, and I want to recognise how important the investment of the Yalingwa arts initiative is in nurturing, promoting and making visible arts and culture here in Victoria."

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