

FIRST

LIGHTS



Acknowledgement

The Fremantle Biennale acknowledges the Whadjuk Nyoongar People whose land we live and work on.

We acknowledge the nations we have worked with across First Lights, namely the Larrakia of Garramilla (Darwin), Menang of Kinjarling (Albany), Baiyungu of Nyinggulu (Exmouth), Wudjari of Kepa Kurl (Esperance), Wadandi of Cowaramup (Gracetown), and Gundungurra of Ngununggula (Bowral).

We acknowledge Elder's past, present and emerging for their part in the continuation of culture and care for Country. We are grateful for their passage of knowledge so we can move through Country with awareness and form collaborations that are meaningful and rightful.

About First Lights

First Lights is a place-responsive, choreographed drone light and sound event, presented by the Fremantle Biennale.

An epic spectacle of light, movement and sound, First Lights premiered with Moombaki at the 2021 Fremantle Biennale festival in a celebration of the Derbarl Yerrigan (Swan River). Moombaki saw a fleet of 160 drones take flight over the stage of the bilya (river) and wardan (ocean) to reveal connected and living stories of Whadjuk Nyoongar Country. With artworks created by Ilona McGuire and narrative guided by story and knowledge from Whadjuk Nyoongar Traditional Owners Moombaki launched the Fremantle Biennale's festival CROSSING 21.

A legacy project, destination event and unique sky show, First Lights has since travelled across Western Australia and Australia in 2022–2024. Led by Traditional Owners and First Nation artists from each region, First Lights pioneers new technologies and artistic practices to share ancient knowledge and the first stories of place.



First Lights: Moombaki

5 – 21 November 2021 Fremantle, WA
Presented for Fremantle Biennale festival, CROSSING 21
Artist: Ilona McGuire
Whadjuk Cultural Advisory Group: Doris Getta,
Marion Kickett, Karen Jacobs, Glenys Yarran,
Neville Collard, Stan Headland, Farley Garlett,
Walter McGuire and Brendan Moore.
Music and Sound Design: Josh Hogan and Ned Beckley
(Envelope Audio)
Animation: Armands Blumbergs (Basemotion)
Executive Producer: Tom Müller
Technical Partners: Stellar Lights & Elite Audio Visual
Production
Livestream & Videography: Kitecast

First Lights: Balarr Inyiny

19 – 21 August 2022 Darwin, NT
Co-presented with Darwin Festival
Artists: Jenna Lee in collaboration with elders from the
Larrakia community
Sound Design: Kuya James with compositions by Lena Kellie
Narrated by Christopher Lee and Lena Kellie
Animation: Jarrad Russell
Script Editor: Jennifer Kornberger
Technical Partners: Stellar Lights

First Lights: Cowaramup

25 March 2023 Gracetown, WA
Co-presented with the of Shire of Augusta-Margaret River
& The Farm Margaret River
Artists: Mitchell Hutchins and Viv Brockman-Webb
Sound Design: Envelope Audio
Animation: Jarrad Russell
Technical Partners: Stellar Lights & Elite Audio Visual
Production
Livestream & Videography: Kitecast

First Lights: Binalup

8 April 2023 Albany, WA
Co-presented with the City of Albany
Artists: Kim Scott with Menang Traditional Owners
Sound Design: Envelope Audio
Narrated by Kim Scott
Animation: Jarrad Russell
Technical Partners: Stellar Lights & Elite Audio
Visual Production
Livestream & Videography: Kitecast

First Lights: Nyngulu

19 & 20 April 2023 Coral Bay & Exmouth, WA
Co-presented with the Baiyungu Aboriginal Corporation,
Tourism WA as a part of the Dark Sky Festival
Artists: Hazel Walgar and Sonya Edney
Composer: Alice Humphries
Sound Design: Envelope Audio
Narrated by Hazel Walgar and Ilona McGuire
Animation & Videography: Jarrad Russell
Script Editor: Jennifer Kornberger
Technical Partners: Stellar Lights & Elite Audio Visual
Production

First Lights: Boodja Dwordak Wirn

12 & 13 May 2023 Esperance, WA
Co-presented with and created by Esperance Tjaltjraak
Native Title Aboriginal Corporation
Artists: Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal
Corporation with contributions from Kepa Kurl Wudjari
six family groups, the Dabb, Boxer-Rogers, Reynolds,
Yorkshire/Knapp, Bullen and Tucker families, and led by
local Wudjari artist Jennell Reynolds (Nannapa).
Narrators: Wudjari Nyungar Elders Kevin Reynolds Snr
and Annie Dabb.
Sound Design: Maatakitji (Clint Bracknell) and
Envelope Audio
Animation: Jarrad Russell
Technical Partners: Stellar Lights & Elite Audio Visual
Production
Livestream & Videography: Kitecast

First Lights: Buungbaa-ma-ndhu

25 – 27 June 2023 Bowral, NSW
Co-presented with Ngununggula
Artist: Kirli Saunders
Sound Design: Envelope Audio
Narrated by Kirli Saunders
Animation: Jarrad Russell
Technical Partners: Stellar Lights & Elite
Audio Visual Production
Livestream & Videography: Kitecast

First Lights: Kooranup (WA)

3 – 19 November 2023 Fremantle, WA
Presented for the Fremantle Biennale festival, SIGNALS 23
Co-presented with City of Fremantle, City of Melville and
Rottnest Island Authority.
Artists: Yabini Kickett, Cass Lynch, Ilona McGuire and
Tyrown Waigana
Whadjuk Cultural Advisory Group: Aurora Abraham,
Len Collard, Walter McGuire Jnr, Ezra Jacobs-Smith
and Glenys Yarran.
Sound Design & Composers: Envelope Audio and
Thalia Skopellos
Narrators: Jayden Boundry, Walter McGuire and
Mitch Walley
Animation: Jarrad Russell
Technical Partners: Stellar Lights & Elite Audio Visual
Production
Livestream & Videography: Kitecast

FIRST LIGHTS LOCATIONS



FIRST LIGHTS

Moombaki

Fremantle, WA

5 – 21 November 2021

An epic spectacle of light, movement and sound transformed the night sky for the Fremantle Biennale's presentation of Moombaki in November 2021.

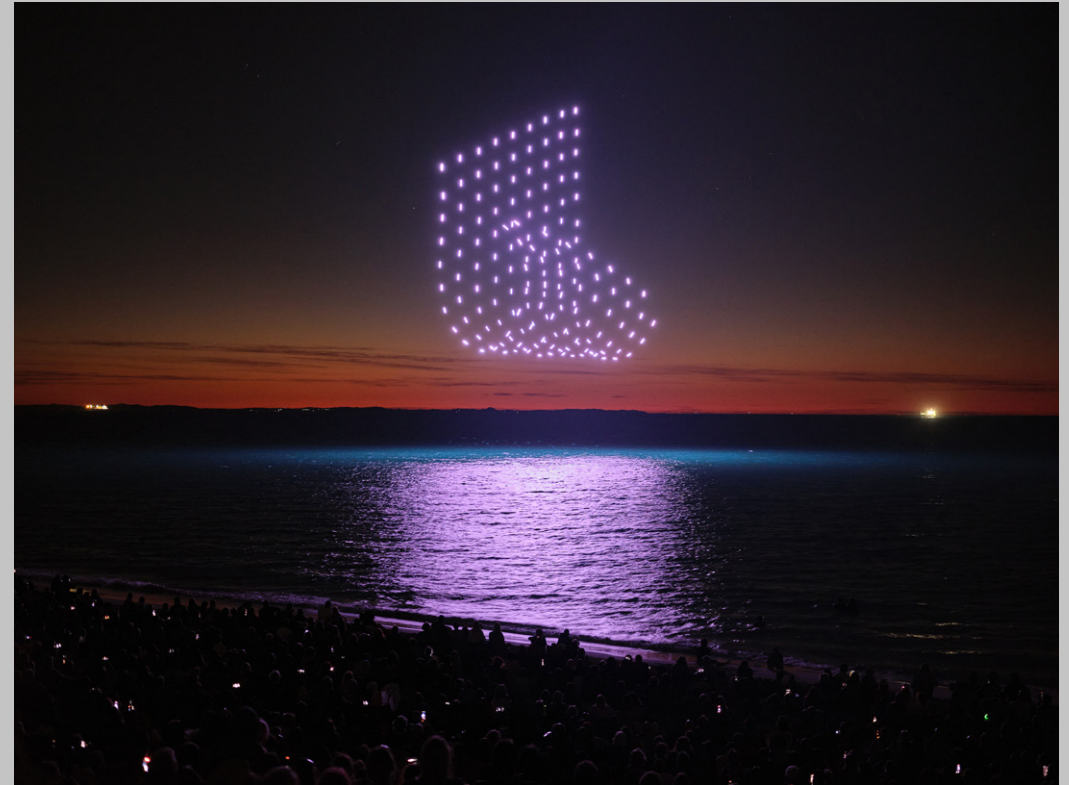
The Nyoongar word for 'where the river meets the sky', Moombaki was a choreographed drone light show re-creating the first stories of Whadjuk Nyoongar Country for all to experience.

With artworks created by Ilona McGuire and a narrative guided by story and knowledge held by Whadjuk Nyoongar Traditional Owners Doris Getta, Marion Kickett, Karen Jacobs, Glenys Yarren, Neville Collard, Stan Headland, Farley Garlett, Walter McGuire Brendan Moore, and project contributors Rohin Kickett and Grant Revell, Moombaki launched the Fremantle Biennale program in 2021.

Across eight nights and three locations in Fremantle, Attadale and Coogee, Moombaki saw over 160 drones take flight over the stage of the bilya (river) and warden (ocean), to reveal a series of connected stories.

An Australian first, this unique sky show pioneered new technologies to tell ancient and living stories of place.

Co-presented with City of Fremantle, City of Melville and City of Cockburn.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Ilona McGuire is a Bibbulmun Noongar and Kungarakana interdisciplinary artist. Her interests in all forms of creative expression manifests through culturally informed visual work, writing, performance and an open artistic practice. Ilona centralizes the Indigenous experience of Australia's ongoing systemic dysfunction by exploration of its historical, social and political impacts on her families and broader communities. Following her 2021 drone light show, Moombaki with the Fremantle Biennale, Ilona was awarded the Schenberg Art Fellowship for Hatched: National Graduate Show 2022 and residency at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA). 2022 and 2023 saw her work exhibited at Fremantle Art Centre, Stala Contemporary, Goolugatup Heathcote Gallery, John Curtin Gallery and in NSW for the National 4: Australian Art Now.

FIRST LIGHTS

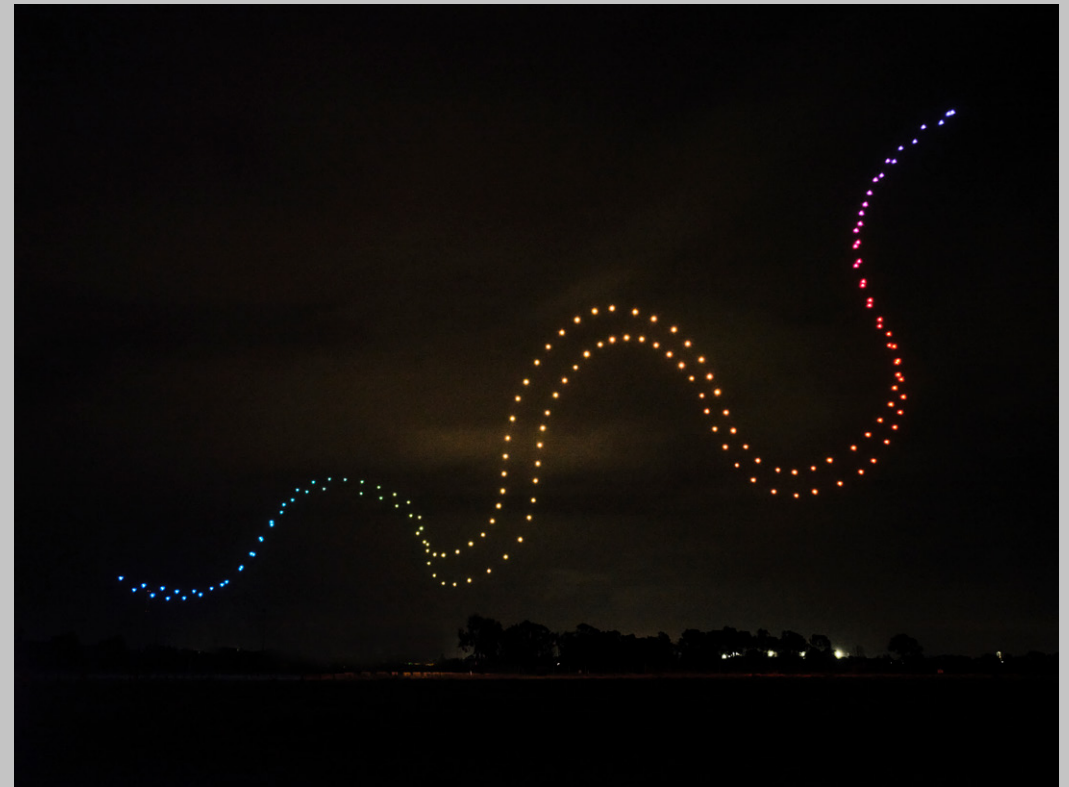
Balarr Inyiny

Darwin, NT
19 – 21 April 2022

Following on from the Australian premiere of First Lights with Moombaki in Western Australia, the Fremantle Biennale's choreographed drone light show journeyed to Darwin, transforming the night sky in an epic spectacle of light, movement and sound.

Co-presented with Darwin Festival in 2022 and led by Larrakia artist Jenna Lee in collaboration with music producer Kuya James and composer Lena Kellie, and supported by elders from the Larrakia community, this new experience titled balarr inyiny (bah-lahrr een-yeen-y), meaning light dreaming, saw 160 drones take flight from Jervois Park in a breathtaking choreographed sky show illustrating Larrakia songlines that run down Darwin's coastline.

Balarr inyiny used new technologies to bring to life ancient stories, transforming the way we understand Larrakia culture and our shared relationship to country.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Jenna Lee is a Gulumerridjin (Larrakia), Wardaman and KarraJarri Saltwater woman with mixed Japanese, Chinese, Filipino and Anglo-Australian ancestry. Using art to explore and celebrate her many overlapping identities, Lee works across sculpture, installation, and body adornment. She also works with moving images, photography and projection in the digital medium.

FIRST LIGHTS

Binalup

Albany, WA
8 April 2023

Award-winning Noongar author, Kim Scott, transformed the place of first light, Binalup (Albany) presenting a rhythmic arrangement of language and light to allude to old stories, including Mamang Koort, the beating whale heart. Guided by the Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation (AHRGAC), local Menang Custodians imparted their ancient knowledge of the lands and waters to bring audiences this deeply moving experience.

“This piece is inspired by some of the Creation Stories around the town of Albany. Riffing on rhythms of south coastal Noongar language and gathering energy from pools and pulsing water, it summons the great Mother to return with light and song and open up our world.” – Kim Scott

Co-presented with the City of Albany.

The artist would also like to acknowledge the trust and support of Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories, and to thank Noongar staff and students at Albany Senior High School, Great Southern Grammar, Mt Lockyer Primary School, North Albany Senior High School, Saint Joseph's College, and Spencer Park Primary School for their voices and the good fun.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kim Scott is an award-winning novelist, having twice won the Miles Franklin Award (for *Benang* and *That Deadman Dance*) along with many other Australian literary prizes. Kim was 2012 West Australian of the Year, is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, a member of the Western Australian Writers Hall of Fame and in 2022 was declared a State Cultural Treasure. He is currently Curtin University Distinguished Professor in the School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry.

Proud to be on among those who call themselves Noongar, Kim's is convenor of Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories (www.wirlomin.com.au) which is responsible for a number of bilingual (Noongar and English) picture books and regional performances of story and song. Two books, *A Companion to the Works of Kim Scott* (Camden House, 2016) and *Kim Scott: language, readers and interpretation* (UWAP, 2019) deal with aspects of his writing and career.

FIRST LIGHTS

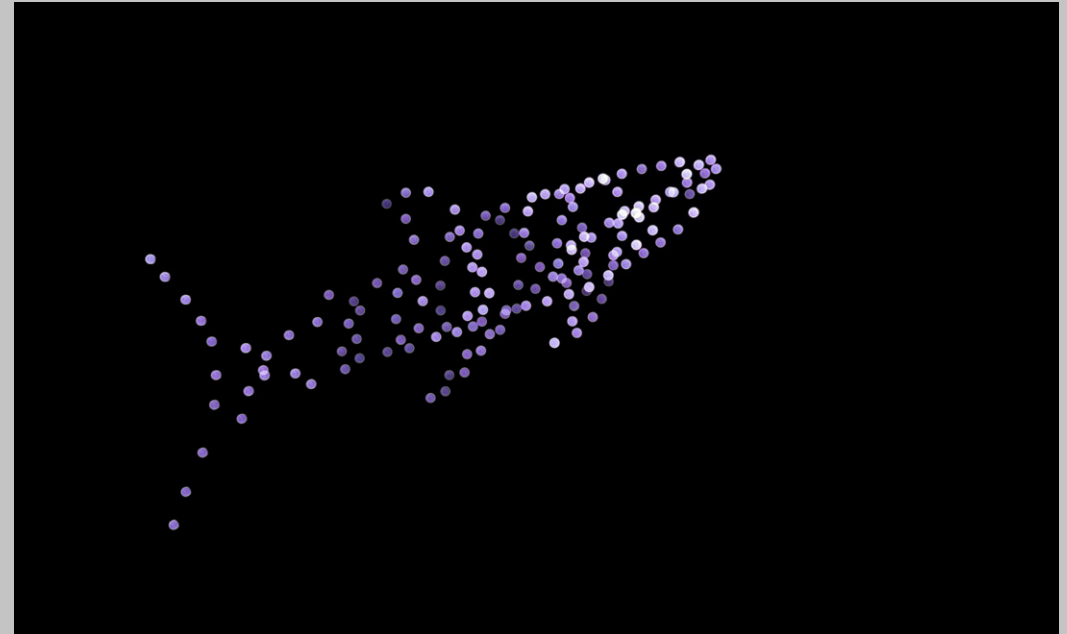
Nyinggulu

Exmouth, WA

9 April 2023

In April 2023, one of nature's most phenomenal occurrences, a Total Solar Eclipse, took place across the World Heritage listed Ningaloo (Nyinggulu) region. The shadow of the moon graced the tip of Western Australia, with the Exmouth region becoming host to the most accessible place on Earth to view this spectacle. Preceding and closing this occurrence, First Lights – Nyinggulu took place on Baiyungu Country at Cardabia Station followed by Town Beach at Exmouth. Guided by Baiyungu custodian Hazel Walgar of the Nyinggulu coast and Yingarrda-Wadjarri artist Sonya Edney, the spectacular Dreaming story of the great eclipse will resound across the night sky. A epic story born from silence, of Jirndarl and Willarda, the sun, the moon and their first encounter.

Co-presented with the Baiyungu Aboriginal Corporation as part of the Jamba Nyinayi Festival and Tourism WA as a part of the Dark Sky Festival.



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Hazel Walgar is a Baiyungu woman, traditional owner of the Ningaloo Coast and the cultural elder of the Baiyungu Aboriginal Corporation. As a Baiyungu woman her connection to country stems from her grandmother, Yingagurru, who belonged to the Nyingalara clan which is now known as Ningaloo. Her people have a strong connection to this Country that spans tens of thousands of years. She is the cultural adviser to the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) for the region as well as for the Museum of Western Australia.

Baiyungu Aboriginal Corporation

Baiyungu country extends from Point Cloates, north of Carnarvon along the coast to Point Quobba, then stretches east to Manberry Station and north to Winning Pool Station. A major area of significance is Coral Bay and neighbouring Cardabia Station. Cardabia Station is home to Baiyungu Aboriginal Corporation. The station is 2,000 square kilometers and is now a place of important cultural heritage, gathering and run as a pastoral property, by Baiyungu people.

Sonya Edney is a Yingarrda-Wadjarri artist born in Carnarvon in the Gascoyne region of Western Australia. Sonya started painting at Burringurrah community and now exhibits at Japingka Aboriginal Art Gallery, Fremantle.

FIRST LIGHTS

Boodja Dwordak Wirn

Esperance, WA
12 & 13 May 2023

First Lights - Boodja Dwordak Wirn, meaning 'Bringing Country's Spirit back to Life', was led by Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation and the six Wudjari families of Kepa Kurl (Esperance).

Across the white sand beaches and ancient granite domes of the Esperance foreshore, revealed were stories of deep connections and knowledge of sea Country. Of ancient rhythms between ancestors, wadarn (ocean) and the many creatures that call this place home.

Co-presented with Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

KEPA KURL (ESPERANCE) TJALTRAAK Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (ETNTAC) was registered by the Federal Court of Australia as the Native Title Body Corporate for the Kepa Kurl Wudjari people in September 2016. We are the first point of contact for government and other parties who want to conduct business with traditional owners in Esperance. Kepa Kurl Wudjari People are descended

from seven apical ancestors. Today, six family groups are recognised as the direct descendants of those ancestors and the elders of those families have the rights and responsibilities for the practice of Wudjari Nyungar culture and for passing it on to future generations.

The six family groups are the Dabb, Boxer-Rogers, Reynolds, Yorkshire/Knapp, Bullen and Tucker. Today, the majority of Kepa Kurl Wudjari people live within the Esperance region, though some live elsewhere in the southwest, including Perth, Albany and Norseman.

Whilst member-focused, we value inclusivity and offer our services to all locally based First Nations people. Indeed, our pro-social and localized approach, achieves tangible outcomes for the entire Esperance community.



FIRST LIGHTS

Cowaramup

Gracetown, WA
25 May 2023

Led by Wardandi matriarchs, Mitchella Hutchins and Vivian Brockman-Webb, First Lights — Cowaramup brought an ancient tale transcending space and time. This story takes place in the beginning, when life stirred into existence and formed a great assembly to decide who would be Custodian of all creation. Located on the shores of Gracetown, the bay was transformed, opening a portal to a time when the world was Dreaming.

Co-presented with The Farm Margaret River.

This event was generously supported by: The Farm Margaret River, Caroline de Mori, Simon Bedbrook, Justin Vivian, Marie Forrest, Chris Ryder, Vanya Cullen, Rodney Silberstein, Neil McKaracher, and Wayne Martin.



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Mitchella Hutchins & Vivian Brockman-Webb

Mitchella is a prominent Aboriginal businesswoman and mother of four children. She is the eldest grandchild of Vilma and George Webb who bestowed upon her the responsibility of cultural caretaker and knowledge sharer.

Mitchella was a presenter on GWN7's Milbindi program and has lectured at Western Australian university's on Indigenous topics and issues. She is a foster parent to over twenty children, manages her business, Waljin Consultancy, and created an online learning package for Indigenous cultural awareness training.

Mitchella wants community values to be rediscovered by caring for community and country and believes building a healthy community is essential to tackling many issues affecting people in the South West of Western Australia.

FIRST LIGHTS

Buongba-Ma-Ndhu

Bowral, NSW
24 June 2023

Award-winning Gundungurra raised Gunai writer and artist, Kirli Saunders (OAM), energised mugaru (cold winter) with her synchronous installation of language and light, Buongbaa-ma-ndhu meaning rise (as the sun), all of you. Remnant of a bedtime story told around the campfire, Saunders' poetic bi-lingual digital work roused audiences to collaborate and create a powerful future together, "to rise, like light from the fire, mountain top...whirlwind, diamond python, black cockatoo". Conjured with welcome dance from local First Nations families and community, this choreographed and responsive drone show was presented by Fremantle Biennale and Ngununggula for First Lights.

The artist would like to acknowledge language teachers, her great aunt, the late Aunty Velma Mulcahy (OAM), Aunty Sharyn Halls and through her the language teaching of Jim Barrett and Melissa Wiya and Aunty Sharyn for their generous teaching of the Welcome Dance as well as First Nations students from Bowral, Berrima, Mittagong, Moss Vale, Robertson and Tallong Public School.

First Lights – Buongbaa-ma-ndhu is presented as part of the MIDWINTER FESTIVAL at Ngununggula. A site-responsive festival that brings together nationally acclaimed artists to celebrate the cultural and social voice of the region.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kirli Saunders (OAM) is a proud Gunai Woman and award-winning multidisciplinary artist and consultant. An experienced speaker and facilitator advocating for the environment and equality, Kirli was the NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year (2020). In 2022, she was awarded an Order of Australia Medal for her contribution to the arts, particularly literature.



FIRST LIGHTS

Kooranup

Fremantle, WA

3 – 18 November 2023

“Kooranup, is the place beyond the horizon and past Moombaki, where the water meets the sky. It is the heavenly shore located in the far west. Our spirits final resting place in the Noongar Nyitting (Dreaming)”. – Ilona McGuire

As a part of the Fremantle Biennale’s fourth festival SIGNALS 23, First Lights: Kooranup was presented; a sequel to the stories shared through First Lights: Moombaki in 2021.

The Fremantle Biennale’s fleet of 160 drones took flight over the bilya (river) and warden (ocean), revealing the first stories of place across three weekends and three locations, created by artists Yabini Kickett, Cass Lynch, Tyrown Waigana, and Ilona McGuire, guided by Whadjuk Nyoongar Traditional Owners.

On the first weekend, as the saltwater lapped at the shores of Bathers Beach, Tyrown Waigana brought to life a witty reflection of an ancient story of ancestral beings and an epic battle that shaped our coastline. On the expansive grounds at the river edge, Yabini Kickett’s offering called us to attention within the natural landscape; from the echoing sounds of wind in the sheoaks to chirping frogs of the bilya (river), this was a story of kinship, interconnectedness and transformation.

The last chapter unfolded across the ocean, on Wadjemup (Rottnest Island), with a collective offering, led by Ilona McGuire and writer Cass Lynch. This closing chapter created a space for deep contemplation across land and water, weaving together the many stories across time, both beautiful and heartbreaking, that are held by the island.

Co-presented with City of Fremantle, City of Melville and Rottnest Island Authority.



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Tyrown Waigana is an emerging Noongar and Torres Strait Islander artist. Through his surreal concepts and abstract painting, Wardandi and Saibai Islander multidisciplinary artist and graphic designer Tyrown Waigana probes themes like identity, feelings, politics and art history.

Yabini Kickett is an artist with ties to Ballardong, Nyaki-Nyaki, Wadjuk people of the Bibulman Nation. Her work focuses on portraiture, endemic plant and fungal species, and stories from her kin.

Ilona McGuire is a Bibbulmun Noongar and Kungarakan conceptual artist. Historical truth-telling and cultural protocol informs her writing, performance, and visual work that encourage audience self-awareness of their place in our country’s shared histories. Ilona was the inaugural artist for First Lights with her ground-breaking show, Moombaki with the Fremantle Biennale in 2021.

Cass Lynch is a Koreng Wudjari Noongar woman descended from the families of Ravensthorpe in the Great Southern region. She is a writer and research fellow, and has a PhD in Creative Writing that explores Noongar stories that reference climate change.



Engagement

156,800+

Visitors to First Lights events

New works created by

20+ artists

led by First Nation cultural leads and communities across

7 language groups

from regional and remote WA, NT and NSW.

	First Lights Moombaki	First Lights Balarrar Inyiny	First Lights Binalup	First Lights Nyinggulu	First Lights Boodja Dwordak Wirn	First Lights Cowaramup	First Lights Ngununggula	First Lights Kooranup
AUDIENCE	55,500	24,000	25,000	17,000	4,000	1,600	4,500	25,200
ARTIST/S	1	3	1	2	6	2	1	4
CULTURAL LEADS	14	20	10	3	14	4	2	6
LIVESTREAM VIEWS	8,400	N/A	4,860	N/A	944	2,026	611	4,381

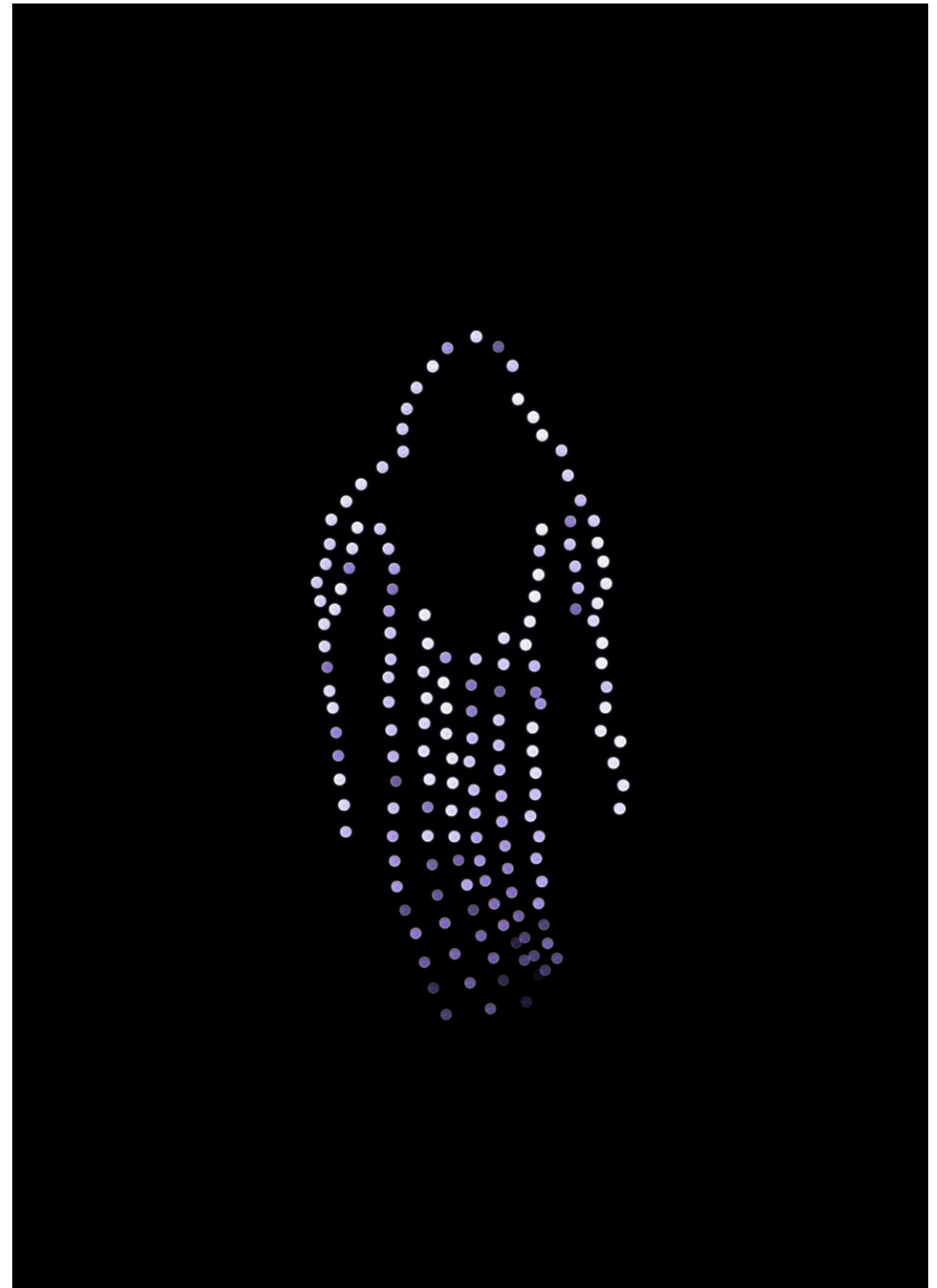
Media

225

Pieces of media coverage

1.37 MIL

Estimated views and engagement with a combined potential audience of 55.9 MILLION



Online

Launched in February and July 2022 the new [First Lights website](#), Instagram and Facebook pages were dedicated spaces for each First Lights project, complementing the Fremantle Biennale's and each regional partners existing websites and social media followings.

22,000+

Website visitors to First Lights

21,222

Livestream Views

6,700+

Engagements, likes and shares across social media

103,300+

Reach across social media platforms

Videos - Full Shows



FIRST LIGHTS
Moombaki - Kaanya Bidi
[Watch Here](#)



FIRST LIGHTS
Boodja Dwordak Wirn
[Watch Here](#)



FIRST LIGHTS
Balarr Inyiny
[Watch Here](#)



FIRST LIGHTS
Buungbaa-Ma-Ndhu
[Watch Here](#)



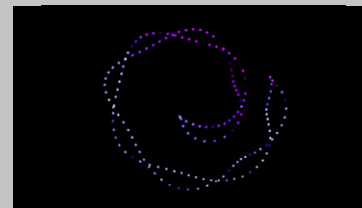
FIRST LIGHTS
Cowaramup
[Watch Here](#)



FIRST LIGHTS
Kooranup - Manjaree
[Watch Here](#)



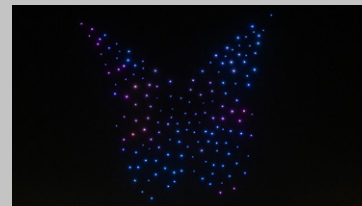
FIRST LIGHTS
Binalup
[Watch Here](#)



FIRST LIGHTS
Dyoondalup
[Watch Here](#)



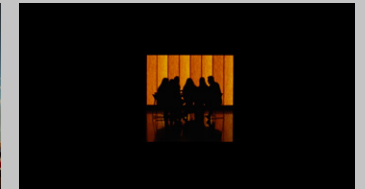
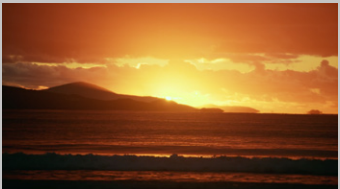
FIRST LIGHTS
Nyinggulu
[Watch Here](#)



FIRST LIGHTS
Wadjemup
[Watch Here](#)

Documentaries

Directed by filmmaker Luna Laure and produced by the Fremantle Biennale, these short documentaries offer behind the scenes insights from the lead artists, communities and Traditional Custodians around each of the stories told through First Lights – Binalup and Nynggulu.



FIRST LIGHTS
Binalup (Albany)
[Watch Here](#)

FIRST LIGHTS
Nynggulu (Exmouth)
[Watch Here](#)



From Our Artists, Partners and Audiences

“The project has helped to develop pride and confidence in the Kepa Kurl Wudjari community, who are able to share ancestral stories, culture and language with the wider community in new and innovative ways. The project worked towards changing the perceptions of some of our young people – who may dream about pursuing arts careers... Our storytelling also aimed to secure the sense of connection and belonging to Country which so many of our people have been dispossessed from”

Jennell Reynolds, ETNTAC on
First Lights - Boodja Dwordak Wirn

“I am grateful for the platforming of First Nations voices, and for the chance to hear a fuller story of our local history”

Audience member

“This project represents a significant opportunity for us to develop and expand new cross-sector partnerships and to develop a meaningful and relevant arts experience that pays tribute to our Traditional stories and culture, that connects broad audiences to engage with spiritual connection to place.”

Baiyungu Traditional Owner and Cultural Lead for
First Lights - Nyinggulu, Hazel Walgar

“Riffing on rhythms of south coastal Noongar language and gathering energy from pools and pulsing water, it summons the great Mother to return with light and song and open-up our world”

Kim Scott, Lead Artist on
First Lights - Binalup

“These miraculous motes of light might resemble animated dot painting. They might resemble skeins of glowing birds. But for many, the stories are part of their Dreaming. For the rest of us, they are permission to dream.”

William Yeoman, The West

“For the past three years, First Lights, a small yet visionary site-responsive contemporary arts festival has been working with First Nations storytellers and custodians to bring their stories of Country to life on what is the world’s most sacred canvas – the open-air night sky...In doing so, the Fremantle Biennale is realising one of its long-held goals, to see its site-responsive works go beyond densely populated urban centres and reach artists and audiences in remote and regional Australia.”

Jo Pickup, Artshub

“As a resident of Fremantle, I consider the Fremantle Biennale an absolute calendar highlight and this latest incarnation has been outstanding. The connection it has made to the Whadjuk Noongar people and their heritage is ground-breaking... Sitting on Coogee Beach amidst throngs of people from so many cultural backgrounds watching a stunning drone light show of Whadjuk story telling was something I will never forget. Bravo to the Biennale organisers for this brilliant bringing together of community.”

Audience member

“It’s an honor to work alongside artists like Ilona McGuire and Kim Scott for an East Coast iteration of First Lights, especially on the lands that raised me, here in the Highlands on Gundungurra lands at Ngununggula. Language is experiential, it’s felt and created in the body, it connects us and helps us find meaning. In this vein, this work, Buungbaa-ma-ndhuis an immersion. It’s a conversion to be a part of – something to soak in, to feel deeply and to know so we can forge paths and walk together. I feel really grateful to write in the language taught to me by the Late Aunty Velma Mulcahy (OAM) – my Pop’s sister, and also to center the wisdom of other language teachers like Aunty Sharyn Halls and through her the work of Jim Barrett. To see this work simultaneously be brought forth with First Nations students from local public schools, who are dancing a Welcome dance taught by Aunty Sharyn and local Arawkwal Bundjalung woman, Mel Wiya is really exciting. Ultimately, it’s these young ones who’ll be the carriers of our language, our dance, our art, our stories – it’s our young ones we’re carving out a nourishing future for.”

Kirli Saunders, Artist

Sponsors and Partners

PRINCIPAL PARTNERS



PRESENTING & INDUSTRY PARTNERS



Fremantle Biennale's First Lights is supported by the Australian Government through the RISE Fund, the State Government through the Regional Arts and Cultural Investment Program (RACIP), the Remote and Regional Festival Fund and the Regional Exhibition Touring Boost (RETB) administered by the Department of Local Government, Sports and Cultural Industries and supported by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, The Shire of Exmouth, and the Munderoo Foundation.

FIRST LIGHTS is owned and
produced by Fremantle Biennale Inc. (FBI)

ABN 27 981 489 421
Address 1A Pakenham Street
Fremantle WA 6160
Website www.fremantlebiennale.com.au
www.firstlights.com.au

Image Credits:

Page 1: First Lights – Boodja Dwordak Wirn, 2023. Photo: Jarrad Russell
Page 4: First Lights – Kooranup (Wadjemup), 2023. Photo: Jarrad Russell
Page 7: First Lights – Moombaki (Derbal Nara), 2021. Photo: Duncan Wright
Page 8: First Lights – Balarr Inyiny, 2022. Photo: Duncan Wright
Page 9: First Lights – Binalup, 2023. Photo: Jarrad Russell
Page 10: First Lights – Nyinggulu, 2023. Photo: Jarrad Russell
Page 11: First Lights – Boodja Dwordak Wirn. Photo: Jarrad Russell
Page 12: First Lights – Cowaramup (animation still), 2023. Courtesy the artists.
Page 13: First Lights – Buungba-ma-ndhu, 2023. Photo: Brian Rapsey
Page 14: First Lights – Kooranup (Wadjemup), 2023. Photo: Jarrad Russell
Page 15: First Lights – Moombaki (Derbarl Nara), 2021. Photo: Duncan Wright
Page 21: First Lights – Moombaki (Derbarl Yerrigan), 2021. Photo: Duncan Wright