

Preface

I belong to a traditional desert nomadic society. My parents were Ngaatjatjarra people, Western Desert people, and I have lived a semi-traditional life. My mother, her parents and grandparents saw white men for the first time in Purli Karil, the Rawlinson Ranges, in the 1950s. I was born in the desert and I have seen and heard all the stories and life ways of our old people. I am a member of a generation that experienced both the traditional ways of living in the desert and the modern ways of Western life in urban cities.

Being literate in English and having lived many years of my life in the white man's world, people from all walks of life have shown a lot of interest in my family, my society's ways of living and our worldview. All those comments and questions about my life experiences as an Aboriginal person have led me to writing this book. I'm tired of repeating myself; but it's more than that. I also wrote this book because Aboriginal people are the first nations people of Australia, but so much of our culture has gone. I wanted to record the stories about my life and my family's lives so that future generations will be able to learn about their culture and not lose their identity; to know and understand how life was for desert Aboriginal people and how we live our lives today. White men brought huge change to Aboriginal lives and our society. I experienced many of those changes and I want to share these experiences with my people and with anyone else who has an interest in Aboriginal people.



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Living both a traditional life and in Western society has helped me pass on our culture and language to the next generation, as well as help Indigenous and non-Indigenous people talk to each other and understand each other. And just being able to talk in my mother tongue is a blessing.

Lizzie Marrkilyi Ellis, 2016

