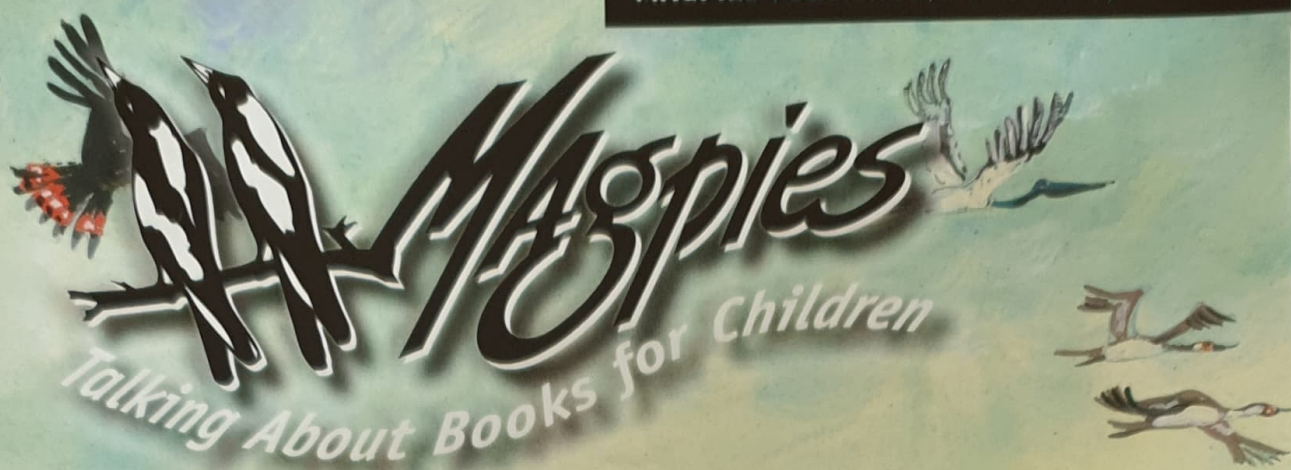


REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIA POST - PRINT POST PUBLICATION NUMBER 100002914



Talking About Books for Children

PAMELA FREEMAN AND LIZ ANELLI

DRY

to

DRY

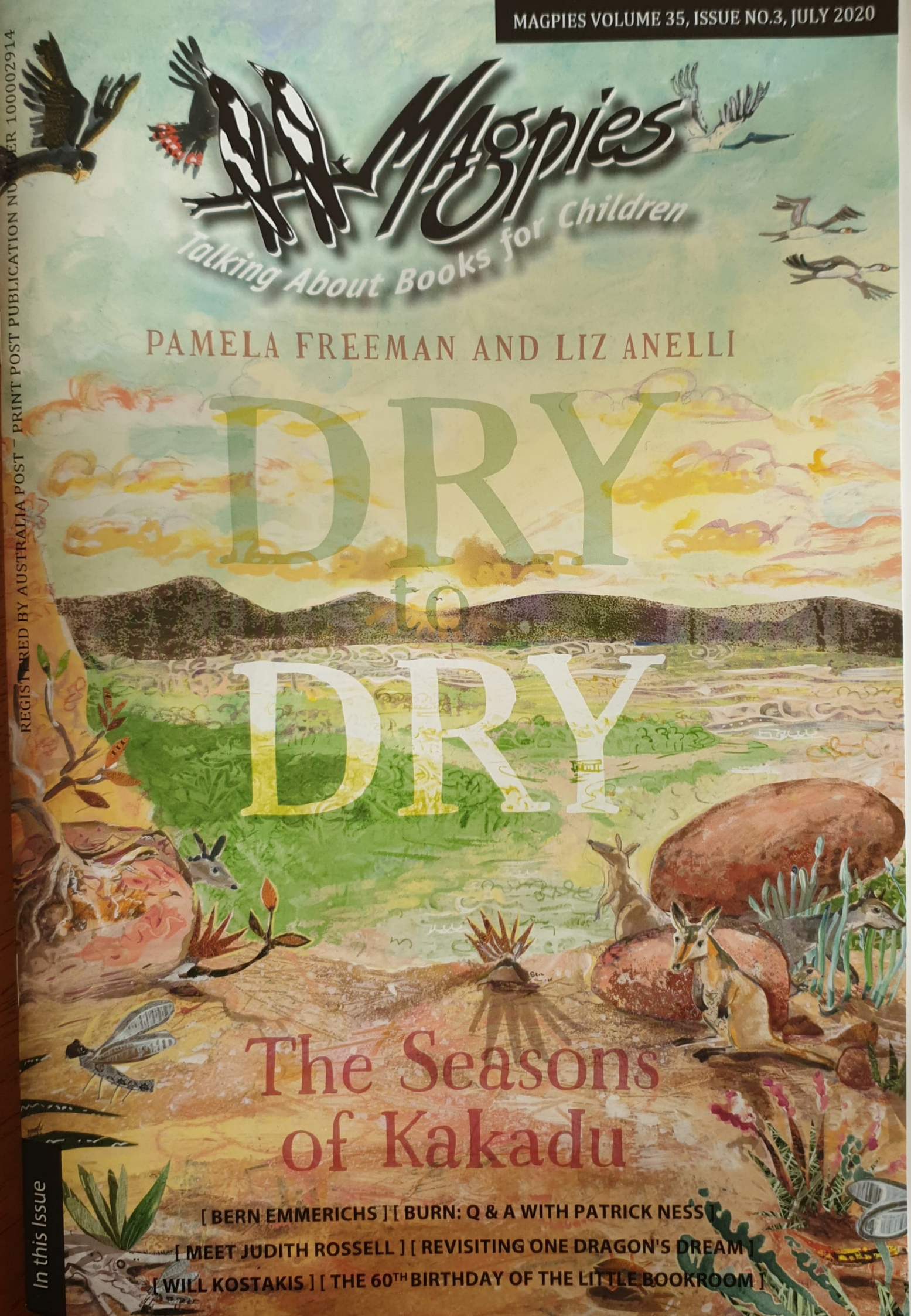
The Seasons of Kakadu

[BERN EMMERICHS] [BURN: Q & A WITH PATRICK NESS]

[MEET JUDITH ROSSELL] [REVISITING ONE DRAGON'S DREAM]

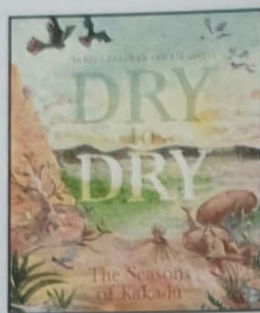
[WILL KOSTAKIS] [THE 60TH BIRTHDAY OF THE LITTLE BOOKROOM]

In this Issue



COVER BOOK REVIEW

by Allison Paterson



Dry to Dry: The Seasons of Kakadu (2020)

Pamela Freeman, ill. Liz Anelli,
Walker Books, 32pp. 978 1 760650 28 5
\$26.99 Hb

It is the Dry.

*Over the plains and cliffs and rivers
of Kakadu, in northern Australia,
the air hangs heavy.*

It's hot and very humid.

So begins the narrative of a journey into Kakadu in which readers are transported to Australia's largest national park and immersed in the cycle of seasons from the Dry, to the Wet and back again ... while also experiencing those seasons in between. Kakadu is a vast expanse of a stunning and challenging landscape; it is captivating and teeming with an array of wildlife, and a place of extraordinary natural and cultural value. **Dry to Dry** captures that sense of place in a fascinating interplay of language and images to deftly convey the unique landscape and flora and fauna that define Kakadu.

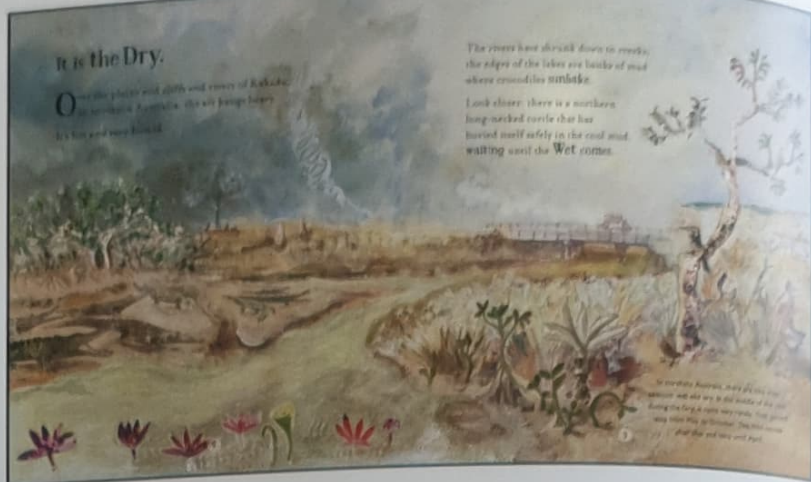
Rivers have turned to creeks and the long-necked turtle has buried itself in the mud as it waits for the Wet to come. From northern lands the flocks of birds begin to arrive. Storm clouds start to gather to darken the sky and bring *the first kiss of rain*. As the creeks begin to flow, birds build their nests, turtles and frogs emerge from their muddy havens and the wetlands come to life. Then the monsoon arrives. Pelting rain swells the rivers as the wetlands spread across the countryside and *towering cliffs become thunderous waterfalls* as animals take shelter in the trees. The rain stops as clear skies return, waterlilies blanket the pools and lakes and migratory birds take to the skies for their flight north. Wind storms blast the landscape as the sun once more blazes down upon Kakadu. The rivers recede and the long-

necked turtle finds its home deep in the riverbank to wait for the Wet once more. The yearly cycle of wet and dry seasons continues...

This is Pamela Freeman and Liz Anelli's second title in the multi award-winning and shortlisted collection of Walker's **Nature Storybook** series. The array of titles belonging to the series began in the UK but over several years has expanded to excellent releases from Australian creatives, which includes Claire Saxby and Graham Byrne's **Emu** and **Big Red Kangaroo**. Freeman and Anelli's first title in the series—**Desert Lake**—that explored Lake Eyre and its unique natural qualities, was a CBCA Notable and shortlisted book in several other awards including winning the Australian Standing Orders Librarians' Choice (Non-Fiction) Award. **Dry to Dry** is of like quality and provides a visual chronicle of one of Australia's most valued national parks.

Characteristic of these titles is the dual text of a lyrical and descriptive narrative of the environment that runs parallel to a factual text. The narrative style text is in a larger font with variations in size for specific descriptions and emphasis which have been carefully chosen. Kakadu lends itself to a diverse range of description and Freeman's use of adjectives reflects this with word choices that will be a delight to read aloud. The factual text appears in a smaller font and does not intrude on the narrative, it rests easily alongside the story, being clearly distinct and presenting as an option for the reader to dip into, or as a possibility for later exploration.

The combination of text and illustrations offers much for readers to explore. Double-page spreads capture the vastness and diversity of the landscape, while the adaptation of flora and fauna to the seasons is simply described both in language and images. Layers of paint, bold lines, fine lines, texturing and a careful use of colour in earthy tones convey the changing landscape and its



wildlife. An accurate sense of the vista is conveyed by a variety of perspectives, close up, distant and a birds-eye view. The human element is not forgotten with backgrounds unobtrusively depicting the arrival of visitors to the national park—a loaded 4WD, a bridge, people, road signs, a boat and man-made structures are subtly placed, with light line drawings almost camouflaged in the vast landscape.

The inclusion of the section *About Kakadu* in the final pages is a valuable addition and it is here that readers will discover more of the ancient Aboriginal connection to Kakadu, including the dating of rock paintings back 20 000 years. The depiction of the indigenous connection is not visible in the illustrations so this section provides an important source of information. The Aboriginal people's description of six Kakadu seasons rather than the Wet and the Dry provides an opportunity for discussion and prompts a return to the illustrations to further analyse the images. Each of these seasons: *Wurrngeng, Gurrung, Gunumeleng, Gudjewg, Bangerreng* and *Yegge* are briefly described and distinctly presented in the double-page spreads. The illustrator's map of Kakadu, along with that of Australia are useful additions to place Kakadu within the context of our country. The index will also prove useful for those readers seeking more information.

Dry to Dry is a valuable title for the school and public library collection and will be read time and time again. Australia is a vast and diverse nation. Experiencing all that our country has to offer is not always possible, but this narrative non-fiction title takes readers on a journey deep into the immense and fascinating landscape of Kakadu. Suitable for a range of ages, **Dry to Dry** provides a perfect level of factual content for the mid-Primary years and an informative and entertaining title for consideration of the environment, Australian landscapes and flora and fauna.
Highly recommended.