

Philanthropy supports journalism initiative with Indigenous affairs at its heart

Guardian Australia announces the agreement of a \$300,000 philanthropic grant from The Balnaves Foundation to the help deliver in-depth coverage of Indigenous affairs

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The Balnaves Foundation grant supports the Guardian Civic Journalism Initiative, an Indigenous affairs reporting and educational project, over three years from 2018-2020.

A key outcome of the project includes the appointment today of Guardian Australia Indigenous affairs editor, Lorena Allam. In this role, Lorena will increase Indigenous affairs reporting and investigations at the Guardian, build a diversity of voices and increase public discourse on critical issues.

Lorena Allam says:

“I’m delighted and honoured to join the team at the Guardian, who are making this significant public commitment to the coverage of Indigenous affairs, with the support of The Balnaves Foundation. Our stories matter. Now more than ever there’s a need to understand that Indigenous Australia is made up of many different experiences, viewpoints and voices on the issues that affect us all, whether they are political, cultural, social or historical. Being able to tell those stories and contribute to that understanding is a fantastic opportunity and responsibility.”

The grant comes as the future of investigative journalism is under threat and areas of specialist reporting such as Indigenous affairs are underrepresented in Australia’s media landscape.

Hamish Balnaves, general manager, The Balnaves Foundation, said:

“The grant will increase the diversity of voices in the media and provide an avenue for in-depth coverage of Indigenous affairs. We are proud to be supporting public interest journalism that will shed a light on untold stories and increase public discourse on Indigenous issues.”

All reporting published for Guardian Australia will be editorially independent and will clearly identify the support provided by The Balnaves Foundation through the Trust.

Lorena is an award-winning journalist with more than 20 years’ experience. She joins from ABC Radio, where she managed all Indigenous programming: on-air, online and via podcast. Lorena will also be involved in educational activities at the University of Melbourne’s Centre for Advancing Journalism, including student internships, a cadet mentoring scheme and guest lectures.

Lenore Taylor, editor, Guardian Australia, said:

“I’m delighted that Lorena is joining us to head our Indigenous reporting project, which aims to conduct in-depth investigations and surface a rich variety of Indigenous viewpoints and stories. We’re so pleased to be able to do this work with complete editorial independence through the generous support of The Balnaves Foundation.”

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Notes to the editor

About Guardian Australia

Launched in 2013, Guardian Australia is a premium digital news site in Australia, with a total reach of 2.711 million people each month (Nielsen DRM, June 2017). Guardian Australia is a trusted source of quality Australian news, with a particular focus on politics, the environment and social welfare. Guardian Australia offers national news coverage and has four bureaus located in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Canberra. Guardian Australia is also part of the Guardian’s 24-hour global news operation, helping to cover breaking international stories in all parts of the world.

About The Balnaves Foundation

The Balnaves Foundation is a private philanthropic organisation established in 2006 by Neil Balnaves AO to provide support to charitable enterprises across Australia. Dispersing more than \$2.5 million annually, the foundation supports eligible organisations that aim to create a better Australia through education, medicine and the arts with a focus on young people, the disadvantaged and Indigenous Australia.

About Lorena Allam

Lorena Allam is from the Gamilarai-Yawalaraay peoples of north-west New South Wales. She has worked in the media for 27 years, including as an investigative journalist and editor for the ABC and the BBC. She has presented and producing many ABC Radio National programs, including *Away*, *Background Briefing* and *Hindsight*. Lorena has also worked in print, writing for a range of history and social justice publications. She is most proud of her contribution to the *Bringing Them Home Inquiry* into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

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