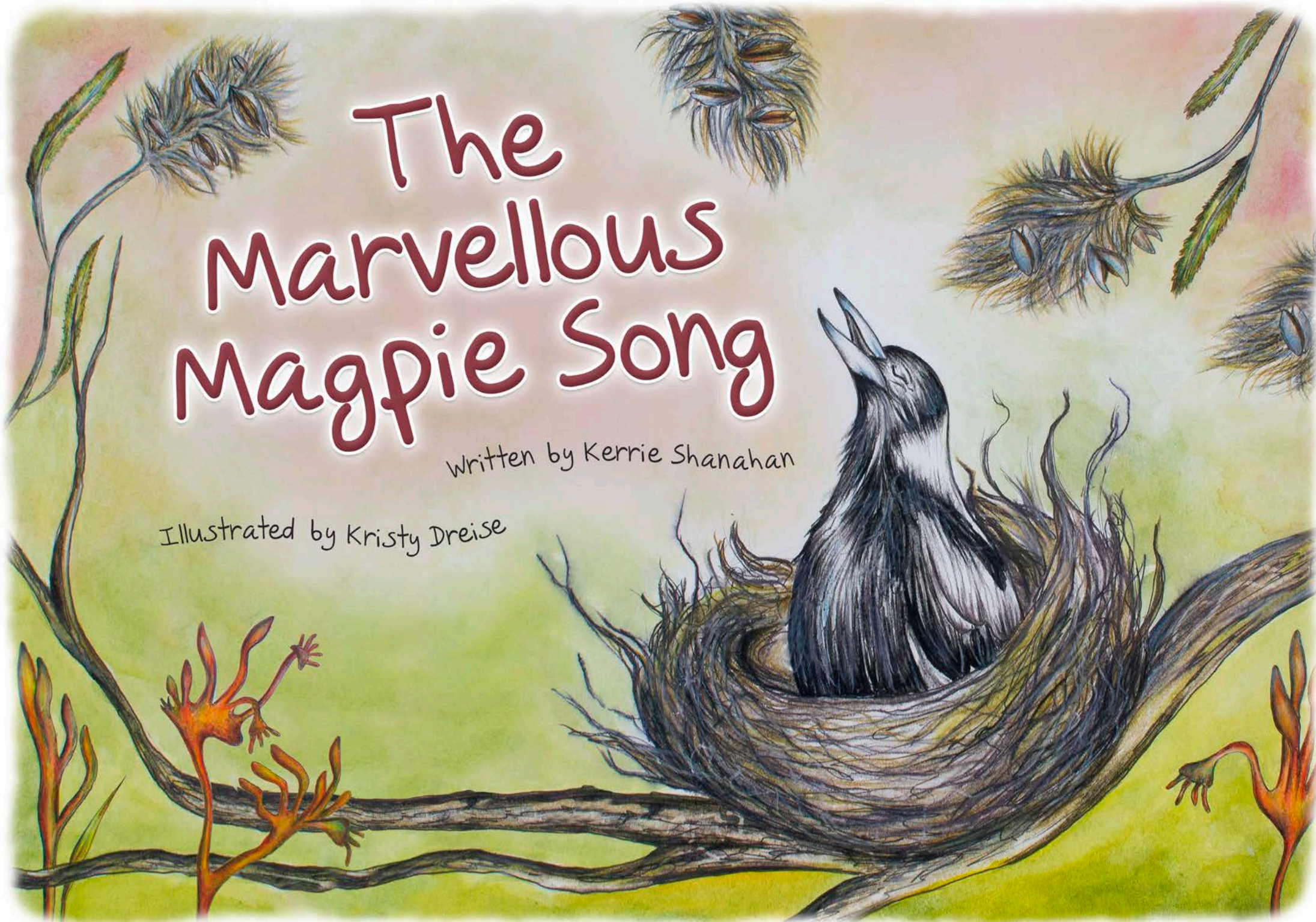# The Marvellous Magpie Song

Written by Kerrie Shanahan

Illustrated by Kristy Dreise

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Acknowledgment of Country

We, the English Language Learning for Indigenous Children (ELLIC) project, acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians and the first storytellers of the lands on which we live and work.

We honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' continuous connection to Country, waters, skies and communities, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories, traditions, education practices and living cultures.
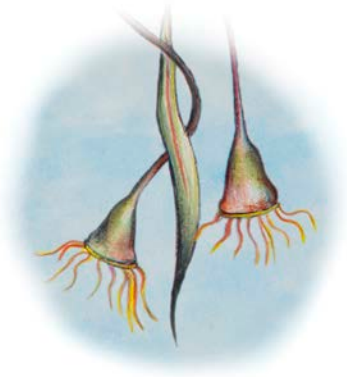
Every morning Maggie Magpie looked for food for
her three hungry chicks.

She flew high.

She flew low.

She flew up and down,
and all around.

She brought lots of food back to her chicks,
and they grew and grew and grew.

One morning Maggie Magpie had exciting news.

'It's time to learn to fly,' she said to her chicks.

'Yay,' said the first little chick.

'Let's go!' said the second little chick.

And they both jumped out of the nest …

The two little chicks flapped their wings.

They flapped and flapped and flapped,
until at last they were both flying.

They flew high.

They flew low.

They flew up and down,
and all around.

Then Maggie Magpie turned to the third little chick.

'Come on,' she said gently. 'It's your turn.'

The third little chick shook his head.

'I'm too scared,' he said with big, sad eyes.
'Can I stay in the nest and sing?'

'OK,' Maggie Magpie smiled. 'We will try later.'

From that day on every morning the first little chick
and the second little chick went flying with Maggie Magpie.

They flew high.

They flew low.

They flew up and down,
and all around.

Every day the third little chick stayed safely in the nest, singing his song.

He sang and sang and sang.

He sang high, he sang low.

Before long he had the most special
and amazing magpie song in the whole bushland.

No other magpie could sing like the third little chick!

One day the first little chick and the second little chick asked the third little chick to fly with them.

'Come with us,' they pleaded.

The third little chick shook his head.

'I don't want to fly,' he said. 'I just want to sing.'

'Singing is silly,' said the first little chick.

'Singing is boring,' said the second little chick.

And they laughed as they flew away with Maggie Magpie.

The third little chick sat all alone in the nest and sang.

Later that morning the clouds rolled in.

The sky turned dark,
the wind blew fiercely, and rain began to fall.

The third little chick stopped singing.

He was worried. He wished Maggie Magpie
and the other two chicks would come home soon.

Time went on and Maggie Magpie and her two chicks were still not back.

The third little chick wondered if he should look for them, but he couldn't fly ... or could he?

The third little chick took a deep breath.

He closed his eyes.

And then, he did the bravest thing he had ever done – he jumped out of the nest and frantically began flapping his wings.

At first the wind and the rain pushed him backwards, but he kept flapping his wings and before long he was flying through the stormy sky.

The third little chick looked for Maggie Magpie and the two little chicks.

He flew high, he flew low.

He flew up, he flew down and all around.

But it was too dark to see anything.

'I know,' he thought. 'I will sing. If they hear my singing they will know where I am.'

So the third little chick began to sing his special and marvellous magpie song.

He sang as loud as he could as he flapped his little wings.

And then, out of nowhere, Maggie appeared with her two chicks close behind her.

'We were lost,' she called. 'Can you show us where the nest is?'

The third little chick turned and flew back to the nest with the others following behind.

They landed exhausted in the safety of their nest.

The next morning the sun was bright, and the air was still.

'Thank you,' said Maggie Magpie to the third little chick.
'You were so brave.'

'Your singing saved us,' said the first little chick.

'Your singing is wonderful,' said the second little chick.

And from that day on, the third little chick loved to fly,
but singing was still his favourite thing to do.

About the illustrator

Kristy Dreise is a self-taught, multidisciplinary artist based on Gadigal land, New South Wales.

Descended from the Kamilaroi people of southern Queensland, Kristy was born and raised on the Sunshine Coast (Gubbi Gubbi country). Since a young age she has had a natural interest in drawing – grasping immense inspiration from the Australian landscape and its wildlife.

Her practice was refined through studying visual arts at colleges on the Sunshine Coast and in Sydney, where she was able to further her skills in painting, sculpture, printmaking and illustration.

Throughout her artistic career, she has thrived working across a variety of collaborative projects, such as as children's picture books, portraiture, and commissioned pieces for collectors.

What Kristy enjoys most about her art practice is the opportunity to share stories, express emotion as well as evoke feelings for her artwork's viewers. She looks forward to exploring more of her Indigenous heritage through her art, in hope to learn and pass on cultural history and traditions to future generations.

Are magpies special?

Of course! They are one of the most playful types of birds in the world. They love to roll around, breast bump, play fight, chase each other and hide from each other.

But they can be special in other ways.

Magpies are found in many parts of Australia and may have special significance to Aboriginal people in your community. Specific animals, birds and plants are totems for Aboriginal peoples who share the land with them.

Animals and birds will have differing cultural/spiritual meanings depending on whose Country they are located. They will form part of stories handed down through each generation.