

Professor Eric Willmot AM



<https://www.hillsfamilyfunerals.com.au/oldSite/tribute/ericwillmot/31.1.1936-20.4.2019>

Visionary, dreamer, celebrated Australian. Government leader, professor, drover, inventor, engineer, writer. Beloved husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather. A life lived fiercely, a star that burned bright.

“Turn down an empty glass!” - Omar Khayyám.

Wrote *Pemulwuy* in 1987 (what happened to my copy?).

Gave the Boyer lectures, 1986 To 1987.

Eric Willmot AM. Alumni Excellence Award Education, Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths Winner

Master of Education (Research), 1980

<https://www.canberra.edu.au/alumni/home/our-community/distinguished-alumni/2015-distinguished-alumni-award-winners/profiles/eric-willmot-am>



Eric Willmot is an Aboriginal scholar, educator and engineer. He was born in Queensland and spent his childhood on an island (Crib Island) which no longer exists. He is best known as an Australian author whose publications include *Pemulwuy – The Rainbow Warrior*, a landmark publication and a national best seller. It is used extensively in Australian schools and Tertiary institutions.

Eric began his career in education when he completed a Diploma of Education at Newcastle University, which led to work in the Northern Territory, NSW and Papua New Guinea. Eric then returned to Australia and to the ACT where he worked as a teacher and a Commonwealth education officer. At this time, he became increasingly involved in Indigenous education which he viewed as the most important and interesting part of Australian education.

Upon graduating from the University of Canberra, Eric served in a number of key educational leadership positions, including Director of Research at the ANU, Principal of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Professor of Education at James Cook University, and Chief Education Officer in the ACT Department of Education. On the basis of his research during this time Australia's national Indigenous education body took up one of his proposals as a recommendation for providing 1,000 Aboriginal teachers by 1990 (at the time there was 79 indigenous people holding such a qualification). This work was built into the Auchmuty Report on Teacher Education. It was one of the few recommendations of that committee to become Commonwealth Government policy. Eric also went on to serve as Secretary of the ACT Department of Education before being appointed Director-General of Education in South Australia.

Eric retired from public administration in 1994 and rejoined private enterprise in the field of engineering research. As Chief Engineer of an engineering research and development firm, Eric carried out significant research in the very different field of controllable variable motion in

mechanical engineering rigid body mechanisms. One important outcome of this work was the development of Australia's first and only petrol electric hybrid vehicle.

Professor Willmot has over 90 international patents in his name. In 1981 he was named Australian Inventor of the Year and twice won the Medaille d'Or Genève Salon des Inventions in Geneva in Switzerland for his invention of a continuously variable-ratio rigid body transmission. In 1984 Eric was inducted as a Member of the Order of Australia for services to Education and the field of Aboriginal Studies.

AustLit Entry

Biography

Eric Willmot is a leading Aboriginal scholar, engineer, administrator and author. During his primary school years he moved from school to school in Queensland and the Northern Territory. After leaving primary school he began working as a drover and horse breaker and returned to complete his education after a rodeo accident at eighteen which left him unable to work in that field. Willmot graduated from the University of Newcastle in 1968 with a science degree and worked as a maths teacher before gaining a Master's degree in educational planning. He has also worked as a public servant at state and federal level. During his academic career Willmot published in the areas of education and anthropology and gained awards for his inventions.

Willmot's appointments at tertiary institutions include lecturer in the School of Education at the Cuncerra College of Advanced Education; director of research for a project on indigenous teacher training at the Australian National University; principal of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra; professor in the School of Education, James Cook University, Townsville.

Most Referenced Works

- 1  [Pemulwuy : The Rainbow Warrior Eric Willmot](#) , McMahons Point : Weldons , 1987 novel historical fiction
- 2  [Below the Line Eric Willmot](#) , Milsons Point : Hutchinson Australia , 1991 novel science fiction
- 3  [Rainbow Serpent SBS Television](#) (publisher), [Richard Guthrie](#) , [Eric Willmot](#) , see more (dir. Richard Guthrie) 1985 series - publisher film/TV
- 4  [Dilemma of Mind](#) The Inaugural David Unaipon Lecture [Eric Willmot](#) , Underdale : Kurna Higher Education Centre. Aboriginal Studies Centre. University of South Australia , 1991 criticism
- 5  [Australia : The Last Experiment Eric Willmot](#) , Sydney : Australian Broadcasting Corporation , 1987 criticism

[VIEW ALL WORKS BY \(8\)](#)

Personal Awards

1984 [Order of Australia — Member of the Order of Australia \(AM\)](#)

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