

# Come to the Water

*A commissioned art work for Edmonton Catholic Parish, Cairns*

**Artist Name:** Susan Duliny Reys  
**Clan:** Daarrba  
**Cultural Group:** Guugu Yimithirr  
**Region:** Starcke River  
**Based:** Cairns, Queensland

## **Brief Biography**

Susan was born and raised in Cairns with her parents Diana (nee Barnes) and Stephen Stanley Reys who was a member of the Jirrbal cultural group. On her mother's side, through her grandmother Eva Sweetland Coates, Susan is a descendant of the Butchulla people (aka Batdjala) who were forcibly removed from K'gari (Fraser Island) to Yarrabah in 1904; her grandfather Charles Sweetland Coates was a Guugu Yimithirr man from the Daarrba clan around the Morgan River. Her Aboriginal name given to her is Duliny which means Owl. Susan's totems are the Waandaar (White Cockatoo) and Dolphin. She is privileged to know her family history and bloodline and to continue her people's ancient tradition of painting and storytelling from her home studio where she works with stoneware glazes, textile designs and canvas paintings. Her works are inspired by various symbols found on rock art and carved trees within her country, and the marks made in the sand during traditional story telling that continue to be practiced in the living culture. Susan has been exhibiting since 2000 and currently operates the successful retail business 'K'gari 3 Sisters'.

**Title of Work:** Come to the Water  
**Artist:** Susan Reys (Duliny)  
**Year Painted:** 2020

No matter where we come from in the world our ancestors have passed on to us traditions of spiritual virtue through story. We share this commonality of storytelling, and it is within these layers we interpret our existence and celebrate in the gift of life.

I was inspired to paint the *Pleiades*, a star cluster, in the centre of painting, as it is more luminous than the sun and visible to all from the earth's surface. Many nations around the world have their own meaning for this constellation. It is known by Aboriginal peoples across Australia as the *Seven Sisters*, an ancient Dreaming story.

The other elements in this painting are water, birthing areas, and 3 message sticks communicating the 3 *Lore*, which is: what is good for the land comes first; if you have plenty share; and lastly, don't take what doesn't belong to you.

The animals in this painting depict spirit totems and ancestors coming to celebrate in the gift of water which gives to us healing.

This painting is a story about the sacredness of a person's spiritual journey and celebrates the creation of life.