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## NEWSLETTER

# NUMBER 4 August 2003

### LAUNCHING OUR FIRST BOOK

### --- BECOMING A REAL PUBLISHER ---

We North Queenslanders are making the rest of Australia sit up and take notice. Here at Black Ink Press we have launched our first book, *Crow Feathers: an Indigenous collection of poems and images*.

The book features twenty-eight emerging Indigenous writers and artists. Edited by Rebecca Edwards and Janelle Evans, it was launched by Florence Onus, chair of 4K1G, at the Townsville NAIDOC Day Celebrations on Friday July 11. This was held at the Queens Park in North Ward.

People have commented on the high quality of the poems, and this is no accident. Many of the poems were short-listed from the inaugural Black Ink Writers and Illustrators Awards, the others selected soon after. The poets and artists come from Queensland, Victoria and NSW.

The book was enthusiastically endorsed by Boori Monty Pryor who said "Reading through this collection of poetry is like riding through history on the back of an echidna." And one of our artists, Bindi Waugh, was also Artist of the Year and designed the NAIDOC poster 2003. Bindi is working on illustrations for another book for Black Ink.

Some of the poets are available for interviews and readings about the book. This is an opportunity to promote themselves, to further cultural awareness and to conduct poetry workshops in schools and groups. For some of these writers and artists it is a first time, and we hope it is the beginning of a successful creative career.

Sadly Colin Daisy died in prison before he saw his first work published and the book is dedicated to his memory.

The project is supported by Arts Queensland, the Foundation for Young Australians, the Australia Council for the Arts, Caritas Australia and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission.

*People involved in the production and launch of Crow Feathers, starting top right: Lena Adams as MC & poet, Florence Onus guest of honour, John Paiwan poet, Robbie Paul designer, Jenny Pilot launch organiser, Rebecca Edwards editor, Janelle Evans co-editor poet & artist, and Lurleen Blackman Director with Jeanie Adams coordinator.*



# PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE

**GUDJAL LANGUAGE DICTIONARY** and several Gudjal picture books compiled and illustrated by **William Santo**



**BIDDY** (working title) written by **Bridget Priman** illustrated by **Robbie Paul**



**HOW THE CASSOWARY GOT HIS HELMET** (working title) told by **Trevor Fourmile** illustrated by **Lillian Fourmile**



**Mitakoodi story books** and **MITAKOODI BUSH TUCKER** by **Margaret Ah Sam & Cassy Nancarrow**, photos by **Dale Rackham** being published jointly with **Mitakoodi Juhnjar Aboriginal Corp.**

**TURTLE EGG DAY** by **Ruth Thompson &** with illustrations by **Bindi Waugh**



**THROUGH MY MIND'S EYE** (working title) autobiography by **Glenda Andrew** illustrated by **Kate Oates**



**MOLLY THE GREY KANGAROO** written and illustrated by **John Lewis Clark**



## NEW MEDIA ARTS PROJECT

The Australia Council has funded Black Ink for a project envisioned by Bridget Priman and Robbie Paul, to make an interactive CD-ROM for language learning.

*"the Yalga Binbi Institute for Community Development ATSI Corp received a \$40,000 New Media Arts Board (NMAB) grant, to assist in the creation of an interactive, multimedia language learning resource. The work will combine visual art, writing and linguistics to develop high-quality multi-media interactive games and programs which are effective Indigenous language learning resources."*

Melinda Holden has devised the concept and is writing the story, Bridget Priman has compiled a list of words and phrases in Warrgamay language, Scott Leathers will do the animation and multimedia production, Cassy Nancarrow will provide educational design and editing, Robbie Paul will draw images, probably in the computer.

The project is also supported by a State Government \$15,000 Community Skills Development Program, ICT Training grant. This will allow us to create a web page and provide training in small communities in the region.

We have decided to use Warrgamay language in Stage 1 then the model will be applicable to many other languages in Stage 2.

# ANNOUNCEMENT: ILLUSTRATING WORKSHOPS.

**Book your place now.**

Phone: 07 4773 5077 Fax: 07 4773 5307  
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## WHO IS IT FOR?

Old or young, from beginners to skilled artists, anyone who likes to draw and wants to try illustrating books. This will be a practical course and will be individualised for your needs.

**MATERIALS** will be provided.

## WHERE?

At Black Ink, Yalga-binbi Institute, (Shalom College)  
190 Hervey's Range Road, Condon QLD 4815

**TRANSPORT** can be arranged

**WHEN** - Starting in September 2003,  
Tuesday & Thursday mornings  
9.30 to 12.30



## TOPICS

- improving drawing skills
- planning with story boards & dummy books
- trying some different media
- finding the best materials
- working with a story
- discussing professional issues
- using computer graphics
- and computer communications

## STORYTELLING WITH LENA ADAMS

Lena who did Work Experience with the Black Ink Project in 2002 is pictured on the day of her graduation with a Graduate Diploma in Communications from JCU.

Lena writes:

So far this year I have been involved with quite a number of things for the project and it's been slow but I've enjoyed it.

The greatest excitement for me was the launch of our first publication, "Crow Feathers" our book of poems. I was very excited and also very nervous, as I was to be the M.C. Special thanks goes to Florence Onus.

I received a call from the Indigenous Radio Stations in Townsville and Cairns for on-air interviews about my poem in "Crow Feathers". I was so thrilled to be asked to talk about one of my poems and on radio.

Early on in the year, I travelled to Palm Island to do some work with Brother Bill Coolburra. He wanted to tell his life story for his family. While on Palm I met and spoke to Mrs. Veronica (Bonnie) Noble, she too has started to write her life story. I will be keeping in touch with these two elders to assist them with their stories.

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I met one of the teachers (Charlie) at the Palm Island T.A.F.E. centre. Hopefully Black Ink will do a workshop with them in the near future.

I have met up with some very interesting elders of our community who are interested in wanting to tell their stories about their lives. So far I have already started with one person Mr. Arnold Ryan and I will soon start with our favorite radio personality Mr. Tonky Logan.

I have two more people to meet and spend some time with. So it seems I will be very busy collecting stories and also traveling to Palm Island for the rest of the year. I would like to say 'Hello' to the people of Palm Island as many of you know what I do now, and why I come to your beautiful island home.



Looking forward to meeting up with more people and collecting your stories, poems and pictures.

Happy writing and drawing.  
See ya soon.

# Crow Feathers

an Indigenous collection of poems and images.



## Ideas for using the book in your school or community group

- ⊙ This book is equally appropriate for Indigenous and non-Indigenous readers
- ⊙ Give it away as a gift to a visitor or as a reward for excellence, effort or cooperation.
- ⊙ Read a poem each week in assembly or parade, or to open a language or art session.
- ⊙ Invite a local poet, writer or artist to come in and read their own work and talk about their writing - perhaps it could be one of these artists.
- ⊙ Read through the book to see how many different viewpoints are represented.
- ⊙ Talk about the meaning of *Crow Feathers* as a title, (see the Introduction) and discuss the cover design of the book.
- ⊙ Reading from a class set, take a poem or an image as a basis for discussion, or compare two poems for language, rhythm, tone and theme.
- ⊙ Explore themes such as incarceration, healing wounds, finding paths in life, exploring identity, valuing the environment, fear of ghosts, secrecy, history, abuse and stereotyping.
- ⊙ The artworks and poems in this book were made independently of each other. Try creating an illustration for one of the poems, or writing a poem about one of the images.
- ⊙ Take a poem or an image as a model for the students' own work, pointing out strong features. As a group, create your own anthology or collection.

## MORE HINTS ON WRITING POETRY FROM REBECCA EDWARDS

After a working trip to Japan this year, Rebecca has now moved to Brisbane where she is still pursuing her writing and art.

**This is a continuation of what Rebecca wrote in our last newsletter.**

Poetry is about renewing the idea, however small or big it is, so that people can remember to hear it and feel it for themselves.

This is why I suggest to poets that they play around with form, as well. A poem doesn't have to rhyme. If it does, it can rhyme in infinitely different patterns. To just rhyme every second line with the one above is plain lazy.

Read widely, and you will find that poets who use rhyme vary their rhyming patterns and rhythms all the time, so that they don't send their readers' ears to sleep (or listeners' ears). There are lots of books on writing poetry which give examples of various kinds of rhyme. Experiment. Play. Don't expect to get it right first time.

A good way of avoiding clichéd, or hackneyed, rhymes and rhythms, is not to try to rhyme at all. Then you are free to find the word that really fits the image you have in your mind, not just one that has the right amount of syllables, or which conforms to the rhyming scheme.

To return to the art of cliché-busting: it helps to go through your poem and underline anything that is, or might be, a cliché. To give you an example from my own work: I was very proud of the expression 'the choking dust' until another poet pointed out to me that, well, it's not a very original combination of words. He suggested changing it to "the poison dust". I did, and the poem went on to win me 1000 dollars in a national competition.

I don't know if you ever get used to taking editorial advice from other people. It's your poem, you love it. When you are ready to show your poem to someone else, find a person that you can trust to give you an honest opinion. Someone who reads poetry, and understands it, so that you feel confident in their judgements. Someone who is not destructive ("It's a piece of rubbish!" is rarely very helpful advice) but not too kind either ("That's very sweet dear," is just as useless). Someone who can give you some idea of which parts are strong, and which are still weak.

Good questions to ask yourself, when redrafting, are: does every line, every word, pull its own weight? Is it working hard? Does it propel the music of the whole poem? Where does my poem fall down? Where does it trip, and stub its toe?

You might not have many changes to make, or you might end up having to really push bits of the poem around, before it dances with its own energy, its own being. But when you have a poem that hums, you will know. And it's worth the pain of re-drafting.

