

NEWS

Language and picture books

Artists create illustrations for children

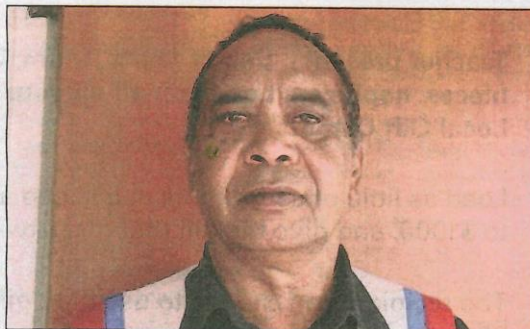
BY ANTHEA HASTINGS

KIA preschool in Moree was proud to be the first recipients of the long awaited Gamilaraay language and picture books. The two Gamilaraay/English language and picture books have been developed in conjunction with Library For All, aimed at early learners aged three to five years of age. Tracey Sharpley was warm heartened by her inspiration and love for language and culture in her illustrations.

She mentioned the illustrations in 'Lets Count By Two' were some of her first ever attempts at illustrating.

Page three depicts a Willy Wagtail which is known to the area as a messenger of good and bad news.

One shake of his tail feathers symbolises good news, where three shakes of the tail feather symbolises bad news.



Howard Gillon, much loved and acknowledged for his work. Picture supplied.

Tracy further explained her illustrations were produced in 2017.

So the launch has been well anticipated as she reflects back on her first ever illustrations.

Tracy is passionate about passing on her cultural heritage to the next generation of Gamilaraay/Kamillaroi/Gomeri children.

Her ideation is that language is the single most important connection we have to our identity.

"When we lose our language, we lose the connection to our ancestors," she said.

"So by creating these books, I feel I am creating a pathway back to our ancestors and our identity on

this land."

Howard Gillon the illustrator of "Colourful Birds" sadly passed not too long after creating his beautiful illustrations of local birds. His passion for art and culture shines through in his creative works. Howard's favourite mediums to work with, include drawing and painting.

His illustrations, often represented native wildlife and culture of his people and place. On the day of book launch Darleene Gillon was present in the absence of Howard, to witness the first readings in language and enjoy the beautiful illustrations.

The books have been produced in conjunction with Save the Children, Aboriginal Language Trust, Department of Education, Winanga Li Aboriginal Child & Family Centre and Library For All. The books can be purchased online @winanga-li.org.ag.



Tracey Sharpley with partner and fellow artist Mark Washington. Picture supplied.