

Red Ridge launches Two Sisters Talking book

Birdsville was buzzing on Sunday as Federal member for Maranoa, David Littleproud MP, launched a first-of-its-kind Aboriginal language children's book *Looking for Tucker (Murru manilhuku yukarnda)* as told and illustrated by locals 'Two Sisters Talking', Anpanuwa (Joyce Crombie) and Aulpunda (Jean Barr-Crombie) and published by Red Ridge (Interior Queensland) Ltd.

The book launch took place at Birdsville Community Hall, with more than 50 attendees with locals joined by visitors from across Queensland and interstate, helping swell the small town's population over the weekend.

Looking for Tucker is the first storybook in Wangkangurru, the language of the Wangkangurru/Yarluyandi people. With support from Red Ridge (Interior Queensland) it continues the trailblazing work of the Two Sisters Talking, as they work to promote and share their culture and language through art and stories.

Minister Littleproud said the book launch was an important day for all the people of western Queensland and led the way in how we share Aboriginal culture as a nation.

"We have an enormous opportunity to allow one of the most precious cultures in the world to be taught to all Australians, for this generation and for generations to come," Minister Littleproud said.

"By creating this book Joyce and Jean are doing just that, leading the way as custodians of a their culture. A lot of energy and love has gone into this book, and I congratulate the Crombie family on their continued drive and passion to share their culture."

For the Two Sisters Talking, *Looking for Tucker* carries on their parents' vision to preserve and teach their language and culture with important work started in the 1960s by their mother Linda and family friend Dr Luise Hercus of the Mobile Languages Team in Adelaide.

"There is a lot of emotion attached to the work we do, we grew up close to the land, learning the knowledge of country through mum and dad," Joyce said, "For decades mum and Luise worked on recording and preserving our language and we are proud to be able to share that through our book."

"It's been exciting to watch as our ideas come to life, we started with an alphabet book almost 10 years ago, and now when you walk around Birdsville you'll see our art on interpretive signs and we'll even have artwork in Canberra."

Jean added, "Our love of country is at the heart of our work and we hope you can see that in the pages of this book. We want to share the beauty of country with everyone – for our family, our community, and the thousands of people who visit our here... and more!"

"We've had great support along the way from our family as well as Red Ridge, the Mobile Languages Team and Diamantina council. We have lots of ideas and look forward to more projects and keeping Two Sisters Talking."

Blackall-based regional arts development organisation, Red Ridge (Interior Queensland), has been working with Joyce and Jean for the last 10 years, promoting and connecting Two Sisters Talking to opportunities to share and promote Wangkangurru/Yarluyandi culture.

"It is fantastic to see how far Two Sisters Talking has come as Joyce and Jean have grown in confidence and recognised their talent as well as the significant role that they play in their community and beyond," Red Ridge Manager Louise Campbell said.

“From simple beginnings the Two Sisters journey with Red Ridge is inspirational - from public art installations to publishing a simple alphabet book, and now to a story-book, and we have plans to do more.”

The language book is based on childhood experiences with the iconic Simpson Desert landscape captured through Joyce and Jean’s artworks and photographs. The book also includes a CD with the sisters joined by old brother Jim Crombie bringing the story to life in Wangkangurru as well as English.

The Wangkangurru language is one of the many languages traditionally spoken in the Lake Eyre Basin region, and it is also deeply associated with the Simpson Desert, the Kallakoopah Creek and the lower Diamantina.

The development of *Looking for Tucker* was supported through the Australian Government’s Indigenous Languages and Arts Program.

On behalf of the Directors, Staff and associates of Red Ridge, not to mention a room full of very excited Birdsville residents, I want to extend our heartfelt thanks for the marathon effort to launch “Looking for Tucker”, said Andrew Martin Chair of Red Ridge (Interior Queensland) Ltd. The successful launch will always be remembered as a very special occasion. Publishing and launching the book has touched the hearts of many very special people through everyone’s efforts, thank you.

Copies of the book can be purchased from Red Ridge online shop <http://www.redridge.org.au/books.html> facebook Red Ridge Interior Queensland Ltd or directly with Two Sisters Talking Joyce Crombie and Jean Barr Crombie.

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