
Background

The Little Big Book Club's primary goal is to promote the love of and importance of reading to children from a very early age. We aim to support parents and carers in providing children with a crucial early base for lifelong literacy, success in formal schooling and improved life chances.

Since 2006, The Big Book Club Inc through *The Little Big Book Club* project has developed and produced a number of early childhood resources. These include: *It's Rhyme Time*, *It's Bed Time*, *It's a b c Time*, *See me Move*, *Baby Gets Dressed*, *Boom Bah*, *Cat* and *Baby, Baby*.

The Big Book Club Inc has received funding from Australia Council for the Arts to project manage the development and production of three Picture Books written and illustrated by emerging Indigenous authors and emerging Indigenous illustrators. The books will be published and distributed nationally by Allen & Unwin.

In 2009, The Little Big Book Club and The University of South Australia conducted a pilot research project, *My Favourite Book*. The focus of the research was to understand what Indigenous children like to read.

The findings from this group of families indicated that ...*When the children's favourite books are good quality literature which appeals after numerous rereading and is much-loved by people of all ages, genders and cultures, then positive interactions with reading and literature take place.*

Books that proved popular with the families:

- Encouraged interaction between the child and the book, eg, lift the flap
- Required interaction between the reader and the child, eg, the use of funny voices
- Were plot based, that is, the story was more than captions or simple repetitive text

We see this project as a unique opportunity for all involved to produce an outstanding children's picture book.

Concept

- To produce three high quality, commercially viable, picture books suitable for children up to 5 years of age.
- Establish a small team within the early childhood literacy and development sector who would act as advisors in product development.
- Engage 3-6 emerging Indigenous authors and illustrators to write and illustrate the picture books.
- Emerging refers to someone who may have one or no published works. Ideally the authors and illustrators will have an interest in early childhood literature.
- The identification and selection of emerging artists will occur in two ways:
 1. A formal brief and expression of interest to be released to a variety of channels
 2. A series of workshops to take place at Community Centres
- Engage established authors and illustrators to act as mentors to support the professional development of the emerging artists.
- The production of the books will take place in a workshop type situation at locations to be determined by the Advisory Group

Objectives

- To significantly contribute to the literacy experiences of all children by providing them with appropriate and enjoyable picture books.
- Provide professional development opportunities for emerging Indigenous children's authors and illustrators.
- Increase availability of books by Indigenous authors and illustrators.

Desired outcomes

- An increase in picture books written and illustrated by Indigenous peoples leading to more sales.
- Encourage and promote the importance of reading to children from birth.
- Greater awareness within publishing industry of Indigenous authors and illustrators.
- Additional funding sourced for research component.
- Additional funding sourced for production of an E-book to be available on The Little Big Book Club website.