Alyawarr picture dictionary launched

Compiled by David Blackman and David Moore with members of the communities of Amperlatwaty (Ammaroo), Antarrengeny, Arnkawenyerr, Atnwengerrp, Ilperrelelham, Irrwelty, Mwengkart (McLaren Creek) and Wetenngerr (Epenarra).

The NSW government recently recognised that languages are integral to the sense of identity of all Aboriginal people, and that meaningful reconciliation must address issues to do with the maintenance of language and culture.

In Alice Springs, Australia's oldest independent Indigenous publishing house, IAD Press, is continuing its significant contribution to Australia's cultural wealth and knowledge base by launching the *Alyawarr Picture Dictionary*, the third volume in its highly acclaimed series of Aboriginal language picture dictionaries.

Over the last year, Alyawarr (pronounced 'al-YAH-wara') communities have worked with linguists David Blackman and David Moore to create the *Alyawarr Picture Dictionary*, a literacy resource based on aspects of Alyawarr culture.

'I believe that this dictionary will be a crucial tool in slowing the alarming rate of language loss among Alyawarr children,' says David Blackman, who has been studying Alyawarr for twelve years. And at Epenarra (NT), people have been saying, 'This will be really good for the kids.'

The Alyawarr region is large, stretching across the south-east of the Northern Territory and into western Queensland. The words included in the *Alyawarr Picture Dictionary* are those commonly used as far north as Ilperrelhelam (Lake Nash, NT) and as far south as the Plenty Highway.

Contributors to the dictionary include fifty-four people from the communities of Amperlatwaty (Ammaroo), Antarrengeny, Arnkawenyerr, Atnwengerrp, Ilperrelelham, Ilperrelhelam, Irrwelty, Mwengkart (McLaren Creek) and Wetenngerr (Epenarra).

The *Alyawarr Picture Dictionary* contains about 620 key Alyawarr words with 400 accompanying pictures. It draws on Alyawarr elders' knowledge of the ethnobiology and natural history of their lands, and of kinship and skin groups relating to their social structure. It also records some of the hand signs that older Alyawarr people use in place of words.

The *Alyawarr Picture Dictionary* was launched by Warren Snowdon (MP Lingiari) at Amperlatwaty School (four hours north-east of Alice Springs) on Wednesday 13 October 2004.

About IAD Press

IAD Press is Australia's national Indigenous publishing house. The purpose of the Press is to publish the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers and illustrators, promote the many and varied voices of Indigenous Australia, and to maintain and promote Indigenous languages and culture.

IAD Press publishes language dictionaries and learner's guides, indigenous art, oral histories relating to land and culture, biographies, books for children and young adults, fiction, poetry and short stories, and natural histories.

IAD Press is an Indigenous publisher based at the Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) in Alice Springs. The only Indigenous publisher in the Northern Territory, IAD Press has been producing quality books for more than thirty years. It has evolved into a national publishing house known for innovative and award-winning books.

For more information visit the IAD Press website at http://www.iad.edu.au/press/iadpresshome.htm, or ph 08 8951 1334, fx 08 8952 2527, sales@iad.edu.au. ■