

Bathurst Library Storytime On the **Road** Again!

Bathurst Library has a dynamic 'Storytime' team who are seeing over 100 pre-schoolers attend their sessions. Jane Cook has been donned 'the singing cataloguer', she even writes her own songs and music. Jane is a library technician in the Technical Services Section. Aniko Koro is the Outreach Program Officer who is a 'comedian extraordinaire' and an animated storyteller. The combination has created an open road into the Central West.

In September 2007, Jane and Aniko were invited to participate in events at Forbes, Condobolin and Orange. The Mobile Children's Services Association of NSW asked Jane and Aniko to provide a presentation of storytelling accompanied by music, at their 'Mobile Meet Workshop'. Their vision is 'for a society where all children, families and communities, particularly those in isolated and disadvantaged circumstances, have access to good-quality and well-managed children's services that assist them to achieve their life potential and personal goals as well as enable them to participate in community life'. Bathurst Library staff fully support this vision and believes they are generating an enthusiasm that is supportive in sharing their resources, social interaction and participation.

Thinking outside the square, Jane and Aniko don't just read stories; they also take the listener into the meaning of the story and help children reflect and understand why they respond the way they do. Their presentation was based

on the book *In Flanders Field* by Norman Jorgensen — originally a poem by John McCrae — which sends out the powerful message about the terrible conditions of war and the conflict that exists between sacredness and violence. War needs to be addressed from a sociological approach rather than psychological approach.



Jane Cook and Aniko Koro of Bathurst Library

Sociologists have been trying to say that people in the grip of prejudice rarely become this independently: they learn this behaviour. Children are not born with prejudice; they acquire it from those with whom they interact. So if 'the negative' impacts on the individual so powerfully what has happened to the impact of 'the positive'? Jane was able to use her own experience of prejudice during her teen years as an example, and she and Aniko put together songs for their workshop presentation to fit into their theme. Jane chose *Scarecrow* by Melissa Etheridge — a song about an American man brutally beaten because of his homosexuality.

Storytelling is the ancient art of conveying events in words, images, and sounds. People in all times and places have told stories. In the oral tradition, storytelling includes the teller and the audience: the storyteller creates the experience, while the audience perceives the message and creates personal mental images from the words heard and the gestures seen. Oral storytelling is an improvisational art form, one that is sometimes compared to music. Thus no two tellings of an oral story are exactly alike.

Aboriginal people use the power of words to tell their story, but they also use the power of music and dance to relate and teach their community of their history and tribal journeys.

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