

Black Words and the Flinders University librarian trainee

Wai! Nyntu palya! My name is Yaritji Green and I am the first Indigenous Librarian Trainee at Flinders University. My mother is Yankunytjatjara (Central Australia) and my father is Djaru (Kimberley, WA). In 2006 I graduated from a Bachelor of Creative Arts (Creative Writing) and later that year I commenced work with Black Words <http://www.austlit.edu.au/specialistDatasets/BlackWords>, a subset of AustLit <http://www.austlit.edu.au> the resource for Australian literature. Black Words is Australia's leading online database of Indigenous Australian writing and storytelling.

Black Words has stretched AustLit's scope to include Indigenous knowledge; it also includes a list of Indigenous Elders recognised by their communities as keepers of knowledge/stories that have been passed down orally from one generation to the next. The Black Words database on Indigenous literature and storytellers is the first of its kind in the world.

The Black Words team is made up of five Indigenous women who each have a strong commitment to Indigenous literature in all its forms. Dr Anita Heiss, a multi-published author leads the team. Yvette Holt and Elizabeth Hodgeson have both won the David Unaipon Award while Josie Harp and I co-ordinated the Inaugural National Indigenous Writers Festival 2005. Black Words also has a newsletter generated by the team detailing books they have indexed.

Mid-2007, I met with Bill Cations, University Librarian, Catherine Brown, Associate Librarian, and Tom Snook, Metadata and Acquisitions Services Librarian. They introduced me to the Flinders University Library Trainee Program. By the end of 2007, I had started the Library Trainee Program, and have been working as a trainee while maintaining my role within the Black Words team. I currently work in the Metadata and Acquisitions Department in the Central Library.

Flinders University Library <http://www.lib.flinders.edu.au/> recognises the importance of Black Words and AustLit for its Arts and Humanities students. The Black Words subset however is useful for any student who would like to work with Indigenous communities. There is information about holdings on a large selection of Indigenous Australian autobiographies and biographies. These life stories that have been published in the past couple of decades give a different perspective to Australia's written history.

My library trainee position involves three days of library duties and two days where I work on Black Words. At the moment I am learning cataloguing and my co-trainers, Kylie Jarrett and Ingrid Birgden, have been very patient teaching me the ropes.

There are two aspects of my work I am very proud of in my position as an Indigenous Trainee Librarian. The first is the progressive move within the Flinders University Library catalogue search terms. I am changing Australian Aborigine to the more appropriate term: Australian, Aboriginal. This may seem a small irrelevant job but it is important because it makes the library members use appropriate words rather than

perpetuating old terminology. I see librarians as custodians of knowledge; it is our duty to ensure our workplace is culturally accepting of all people.

The second aspect I am proud of is the request by Catherine Brown and Tom Snook for me to place orders for books by Indigenous writers to expand the library's Indigenous literature. The work I have done with Black Words has increased my own knowledge on published Indigenous Australian literature which has helped me with my work within the library. Initially, I concentrated on South Australian Indigenous people and their works, but once that was done I expanded to all Indigenous Australian printed and audiovisual material in the past decade. By the end of May 2008 most of my orders have come in, been catalogued and are out on the New Books area in the Flinders University Central Library.

Three books from the Flinders University Library collection I recommend are: *Ngarrindjeri Calling* by Doreen Kartinyeri, *And the Clock Struck Thirteen: The life and thoughts of Kurna Elder Uncle Lewis Yerloburka O'Brien* as told to Mary-Anne Gale, and *Down the Hole* by Edna Tantjingu Williams and Eileen Wani Wingfield. They are life stories by Elders in the South Australian Indigenous community. I enjoy being the Indigenous Librarian Trainee at the Flinders University Library because I am proud of my heritage and it gives me the opportunity to share my culture with staff and students.

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Unveiling the Eddie Koiki Mabo Library

On Wednesday, 21 May 2008, the James Cook University Library in Townsville was officially named The Eddie Koiki Mabo Library in honour of one of the most influential figures in 20th Century Australian history.

Eddie Koiki Mabo, a Torres Strait Island man, is well known as one of the key players in the campaign for Native Title and land rights, and James Cook University (JCU) played a significant role in his struggle. While working as a gardener at the university during the Seventies, Mabo had a number of conversations with Professor Noel Loos and Henry Reynolds, which made him aware of the legal status of his family's land in the eyes of the government. In his attempt to make a difference he began attending lectures at the university, spending time in the library researching.

In 1981 Mabo spoke at a Land Rights Conference held at the university, in which he described the rights his family had to the island on which he was born; thus beginning one of the hardest fought and most significant legal battles in Australian history.

James Cook University is the largest regional university in Queensland and has the largest library in northern Australia. The University is enriched by having both of Australia's indigenous populations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, located in its region – an area that covers most of northern