



INDIGENOUS POETRY LIVE



The *Indigenous Living Poetry Narrative*, a recent collaboration between Bond University's Library Services and the Nyombil Indigenous Support Centre, offered a campfire-like poetry recital that celebrated the written works of Indigenous poets and raised funds for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation. **TIFFANY MITCHELL** tells us more.

In the cosy cavern of the library, the café chatter of students gradually faded as the narratives of Aboriginal lives were recounted in poems read by Indigenous students and staff. This recital of verses was a partnership between Bond University's two cultural centres – Library Services and Nyombil Indigenous Support Centre – to unearth Indigenous poetic works from the library's collection while raising \$540 for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation (ILF). Indigenous Literacy Day, held in September each year, is a national celebration of Indigenous culture, stories, language and literacy. The foundation's goal is to draw attention to the disadvantages experienced in remote communities, to help close the literacy gap and support initiatives to provide equal access to literacy resources for remote Aboriginal communities.

Funds were raised in one hour of poetic power by selling bouquets of bookmarks with artwork supplied by artist Narelle Urquhart – a Wiradjuri woman and Nyombil's Indigenous Cultural Support Officer. Money raised from ILF events will buy new books to be given to Indigenous communities that need them. In previous years Bond Library Services hosted two successful Great Book Swaps.

This year the library decided to showcase the growing Indigenous poetry collection and inspire students to discover Indigenous authors and recite poems that were meaningful to them.

Faith Considine, Nyombil student and President of the Student Society of Indigenous Awareness, chose a poem from *My People* by Oodgeroo Noonuccal. Until 1988, Oodgeroo Noonuccal was known as Kath Walker. Faith's carefully selected poem reflected the personal anguishes she endures being an Aboriginal person with white skin. Student Tahlia Cohen-Duke chose her poem from *Alice's Daughter: Lost mission child*, a recently published book by her aunt, Rhonda Collard-Spratt, and Nyombil's Narelle Urquhart recited her mother Iris Clayton's poem. Titled 'The Black Rat', the poem was about her grandfather, who was an Aboriginal Rat of Tobruk.

The Bond University community embraced the Indigenous Living Poetry Narrative, which highlighted how the poetic form – in which every word is carefully curated – can have an enlightening impact on everyone who hears it. For information on Indigenous Literacy Day and ideas for getting involved, go to (indigenouseliteracyfoundation.org.au). 🌿

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