



NEW LEAF: Author and artist Jill Dodd shows off her work.

## Author releases books in her Birri language

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AUTHOR and artist Jill Dodd has ventured into the world of publishing to share a collection of children's books that promote and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

Ms Dodd released her first volume in February, *Dhalgari Ganjarri Badhal* or *Plenty Hungry Grub* that was adapted and translated into Birri language from the classic children's book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.

The story follows a hungry grub who eats his way through a variety of food before pupating and transforming into a butterfly.

Apart from *Dhalgari Ganjarri Badhal*, Ms Dodd re-

leased three other children's books last month, adapted from nursery rhymes and translated into Birri.

"These books aim to raise awareness of the crucial role languages play in people's daily lives and encourage readers to have a greater appreciation and respect for the significance of language," she said.

She said each of the stories was presented in such a way that young readers could understand as they learn Birri at the same time.

She said she was inspired to write the books to raise awareness and preserve her late grandfather's native language.

"My grandfather Reginald Dodd Snr was a Birri and Widi Elder and he fluently spoke his native Birri tongue," she said.

"Aboriginal language isn't a written language, it's a spoken language and hard to adapt.

"With last year being the International Year of Indigenous Languages I thought I really needed to promote Birri language.

"The preservation and revitalisation of the original languages of Australia is priceless, not just for indigenous peoples, but for everyone."

Ms Dodd was one of six children born in Rockhampton. She was raised here by her maternal grandparents, Kate and Reg Dodd Snr in an extended family of aunts, uncles, cousins and siblings.

She was descended from the Birri (Collinsville area), Wirri (Urannah area) and Kaanju (Cape York) peoples of Central and North Queensland

In 1992, she left Rockhampton and moved to Brisbane with her two young sons to work in the public sector, mainly with housing.

She said she never thought she would write or publish a book or do illustrations.

"It's a great feeling to create something," she said.

"I had a specific vision for my books and how I wanted them to be. As a self-publisher it gave me full creative control.

"I was going to get my grandchildren to draw the illustrations, but because they were busy with school projects, I had to draw them, which was a great learning experience."

She dedicated her books to her four grandchildren.

The books can be bought from Amazon, Barnes & Noble or [www.jilldodd.com.au](http://www.jilldodd.com.au).