

Kids mesmerised by magic of storytelling

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o Vicky Olds and Emma Fenton from Outback Children's Services Mobile - Broken Hill.

The magic art of storytelling to young children was demonstrated at a recent workshop at Nyngan organised by Bogan Bush Mobile and attended by early childhood educators from across Western NSW.

Creative arts and education consultant Anna Jarrett from Batemans Bay facilitated the workshop on the banks of the Bogan River. Under a silk-lined tent, and seated on rugs and cushions, the participants sang, clapped and acted out scenes as they learned how to best capture the minds of young children.

Bogan Bush Mobile director Nichole Jenkins organised the day and invited staff from mobile services at Bourke, Cobar, Tibooburra, Wanaaring and Broken Hill.

"Anna is an amazing story teller. She seems to be able to create something out of absolutely nothing and the children are mesmerised," Nichole said.

"I've been wanting to get her out to this area for a long time because what she does fits in so well with the way Bogan Bush Mobile relates to children. We aim to educate through creative play and in a way which relates to the children in our service."

Anna believes stories, songs, music, arts and crafts are all key components in early childhood teaching and the aim of the workshop was to develop the skills and imagination of the educators.

"Storytelling is fundamental to all learning, especially in the early years because it helps children to connect to language and in turn helps them to express themselves," she said.

"When young children hear stories they learn words, see images and form pictures. It helps them to develop their identity and their place in the world."

Anna uses music, art and drama to embellish her stories and to help "connect the words".

Storytelling is an art form which is popular in many cultures. It was while studying at university and teaching drama Anna learned to appreciate storytelling as a way of developing children's imagination and developing their social skills.



o Anna Jarrett storyteller with Oliver Sheather at Girilambone with the Bogan Bush Mobile.

"I have a passion for children's literature and started with books but as time went on I realised there is a whole culture and tradition of oral storytelling. It's an artform."

"I went to America for a year and spent time with traditional storytellers and travelled around San Francisco and New Mexico telling Australian stories."

Anna said children in isolated areas could often be shy, but she found she could relate to them through the storytelling experience.

"Every child and every situation is different. Most times when I go to a session I spend some time getting to know the children and developing a relationship with them. I then choose stories I think they'll most enjoy."

Anna demonstrated at the workshop how music, creative play and drama could all be incorporated into a story. She used musical instruments, puppets, found objects and songs.

Whilst visiting Bogan Bush Mobile, Anna facilitated story-telling sessions at Nevertire, Marthaguy and Girilambone. She also visited children at Girilambone Public School, Barnardos and Nyngan Pre School.

Anna's visit was funded by a grant from the Federal Government's Budget Based Funding (BBF) program.

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