Media Release

Adam Giles
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory

Gary Higgins
Minister for Arts and Museums

Arts grant for new Dion Beasley picture book

6 March 2015

The creator of the much loved ‘Too Many Cheeky Dogs’ concept is set to receive an arts grant from the Territory Government to help develop a second children’s book.

“I’m thrilled to announce a $9950 grant to support Tennant Creek artist, Dion Beasley, and Darwin based writer, Johanna Bell, develop a new picture book celebrating remote community life and supporting early childhood literacy development,” Chief Minister Adam Giles said.

“The duo’s popular first book, ‘Too Many Cheeky Dogs’ has sold more than 6000 copies since its release in 2013 and I know they are excited about doing it all again.

“Dion and Johanna are keen to collaborate on a second book which will extend their creative skills and boost the Northern Territory's reputation as a producer of high quality children's literature. This grant will help them on their way.

“Dion’s Cheeky Dogs book and T-shirt project is a great example of a home grown Territory concept and I know the people of the Barkly are hugely proud of all that he has achieved.”

Dion Beasley’s formal art career started in 2006 when the first Cheeky Dogs T-shirt line was launched. Since then, his reputation as an accomplished visual artist has grown from strength to strength.

Dion’s talents are particularly remarkable given he has muscular dystrophy and is profoundly deaf.

Johanna Bell has lived in between Darwin and Katherine since 2009 and started writing children’s books in 2011.

Her first picture book, written in response to Dion’s canine characters and targeted at remote children aged 2 – 7 years, has been nominated for a number of Territory and national awards.

Arts Minister Gary Higgins said the Territory Government supports the arts and culture sector with almost $6.5 million in annual funding through the Northern Territory Arts Grants Program.
“In this round, funding of $135,000 from the Arts Grants Program was awarded to 12 projects, including $64,120 for six Indigenous arts projects,” he said.

“The arts are for everyone to enjoy and the Northern Territory Arts Grants Program is a great way to support Territorians in realising their artistic aspirations.”

(attached: Chief Minister and Member for Braitling Adam Giles and Member for Drysdale Lia Finocchiaro with Dion Beasley in Tennant Creek)

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CM and Lia Finocchiaro with Dion Beasley