**New Book Gives Aboriginal Kids a Voice**……..*”The Life of Tree”*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Darwin, Northern Territory / March 1, 2017** - Lucy Van Sambeek and Christine Burarrwanga have teamed up to self-publish a children’s picture book, aimed at helping Aboriginal kids talk about their experience of domestic and family violence. "The Life of Tree" ($25) is a 44 page fictional story that invites children on a safe, metaphorical journey about the ‘storms of life’.

About the story, Lucy says “Tree is living a peaceful life in the bush until a wild storm comes along and damages his environment. His friend, Jack is worried that Tree won't recover and be able to play with him again.  When Jack also lives through a wild storm in his home, he comes to realise just how strong they both really are.  Jack has strong cultural roots, just like Tree that brings hope and healing to his whole family.”

‘The Life of Tree’ is the result of a six year friendship and collaborative partnership between a non-Indigenous children’s counsellor and a Yolngu artist. Recognising the need for effective, culturally-safe therapeutic tools, Lucy set about using her interest in metaphors to create a story that would help Aboriginal boys in particular express their emotions.

This book will appeal to anyone who cares for, lives with or works with Aboriginal children who have experienced trauma such as social workers, psychologists, counsellors, case workers, domestic violence support workers, teachers, foster carers or family members.

Incorporating metaphorical narratives with traditional cultural imagery from Arnhemland, ‘The Life of Tree’ invites Aboriginal children into a safe place to tell their own story, celebrate their strengths and receive the help they need to recover. The book also includes author’s notes about the theoretical and methodological approach underpinning the creation of the story. The ‘How To Use This Book’ section offers questions for family members to explore with children in a 'Quick Yarn' and ways of ‘Extending Therapeutic Yarns’ for professionals.

To celebrate the release of ‘The Life of Tree’, Lucy and Christine have launched a crowdfunding campaign, to send free books out to Aboriginal communities across the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Queensland. It is Lucy’s goal to see that dedicated Aboriginal workers in domestic violence shelters across Australia have access to the book to support their conversations with children. The crowdfunding campaign and book will be released on Wednesday March 1. ‘The Life of Tree’ will be available for purchase through the author’s website at www.metaphoricallyspeaking.com.au/shop

**About the Author**

Lucy Van Sambeek has been practising social work in remote communities of the Northern Territory for 10 years. Lucy has co-developed other domestic violence resources with Aboriginal colleagues and presented these at the FRSA National Conference 2012, Child Trauma Forum hosted by the NT Children’s Commissioner and the SNAICC 2013 Conference.   She blogs about her work and life at www.metaphorically speaking.com.au/blog

 **About the Illustrator**

Christine Burarrwanga is a Yolngu woman from Yirrkala in NE Arnhemland.  Christine inherited her artistic talent from her mother, along with knowledge, lore and stories that keep her strongly connected to family and country. Christine’s priorities are to be a strong leader and role model for her children, giving them the best opportunity to access quality education whilst also fulfilling cultural responsibilities and traditions.

For more information or interviews, please contact Lucy Van Sambeek on 0417 927 657 or lucy@metaphoricallyspeaking.com.au

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