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Title of project/innovation/initiative	One Title, One Townsville
Date initiated	November 2010
Date completed	29-30 May 2011

The issue/challenge

Our challenge in 2011, was to select a book that:

- was about Townsville or by a local author
- had literary merit and in print; and
- would be enjoyed by the widest possible audience.

After reviewing a number of titles we selected *Affection* by Ian Townsend, a work of fiction with local identities as characters and Townsville historical events as the central theme. It was a popular work that was well written and would be well received by the widest possible audience.

Another issue arose when we tried to purchase the book as it turned out to be out of print. We had been told that copies were available but not how many! This caused some delays in obtaining the book as the book had to be reprinted. This was achieved with the author's support and through negotiation with the publisher.

Also a challenge is gaining a large audience for the big book club session. We had marketed the program widely through our networks and through our quarterly *Learn Discover Connect* magazine, local media and through local bookshops. Despite the wide advertisement of the events the big book club session attracted a smaller crowd than the previous year. In 2012 we plan to host the event on a Saturday afternoon rather than a Monday evening and call the event "An evening with .." instead of a Big Book Club Session in an endeavour to gain a bigger audience. However those that did attend the session enjoyed it immensely.

Project details

Our annual One Title One Townsville program, during CityLibraries May, Month of Learning attracted a great response from the community this year. Our aim is to encourage as many Townsville readers as possible to read the one book and participate in the big book club event and other related activities with the author. This year CityLibraries brought the author of *Affection*, Ian Townsend, to Townsville to participate in a number of activities centring on his book. These were a community-

wide book club event, two writers' workshops and a bus tour of sites connected with the outbreak of plague in Townsville, the theme of *Affection*.

This is the second year we have delivered One Title One Townsville. Last year's title, was *Journey to the Stone Country* with author Alex Miller. The objective of the program is to engage people from the local region in lifelong learning through a recreational activity - reading. Through this program we have also strengthened our partnerships with local bookstores, writers' groups and James Cook University. The project has promoted literacy while building community cohesion by encouraging people to join together in reading and discussion of the book and in participating in other connected workshops and activities.

CityLibraries purchased 120 copies of *Affection* for borrowing. The book was borrowed over 700 times during the three months leading up to May and members of our book clubs all read and discussed the book. Readers of the book enjoyed an opportunity to meet the author at the big book club session and question him about the book and his writing. This session was held in the theatre space at Riverway and local *Bulletin* journalist, Mary Vernon hosted the event.

Ian presented two workshops for emerging Townsville writers. One entitled, *Writing Fiction from Historical Events* for people who wanted to write about a historic event or write their family history in a non-boring way. Ian talked about the tension that exists between writing fact as fiction and develop the story in an engaging way. In the other workshop, *Investigative Journalism and Research for Writers*, Ian provided advice and getting started with research and where to look for information. Both were well received by emerging writers and the Townsville community generally. The bus tour of the sites mentioned in Ian's book with our Lifelong Learning Officer, Trisha Fielding and the author was interesting and very informative and certainly placed events in the book within the context of Townsville. The trip was valued added by the provision of a booklet *Townsville's first plague year 1900* written by Trisha. This extensive booklet on the history of the outbreak will be made available through the Council website in the near future.

One Title One Townsville is a great way to promote lifelong learning in our community and to develop Townsville as a learning community. We are now searching for our One Title One Townsville book for 2012.