

## BUSH ANIMALS HELP CHILDREN DEAL WITH FAMILY SEPARATION

An innovative new publication is helping Australian children deal with the various personal issues caused by family separations, by examining the ways Australian bush animals raise their young.

The book, *Bidge's Mob*, is a beautifully illustrated story which has been especially written for Australian children (and their parents) to tackle separation issues in a unique and very Australian way.

The book was launched by the Attorney General, The Hon Robert McClelland and is set to become an invaluable resource for families and professional support services alike.

"The story follows an aboriginal child who goes for a visit with his grandfather and extended family in the country, and learns about the many different kinds of animal families and support structures used for raising their young," notes Karen Morris, CEO of the Interrelate organisation.

"Bidge finds many similarities between the animals and his own situation, and the book examines his feelings and the importance of extended family in his life. It's a message that would no doubt resonate with many thousands of children Australia-wide."

### UNDERSTANDING A NEW FAMILY STRUCTURE

- Examples of animal structures in the book:
  - **Nuclear families:** Dingoes, Brolgas, Parrots
  - **Nuclear with extended family assistance:** Kookaburras, Magpies
  - **Community rearing:** Penguins, Dolphins
  - **Absent parent families:** Tiger snakes, Crocodiles, White sharks
  - **One parent, multiple partners:** Lyre birds, Bower birds
  - **Single Fathers:** Emus, Cassowaries, Mallee fowls
  - **Single Mothers:** Koalas, Wombats, Tasmanian Devils, Bats, Echidnas
  
- *Bidge's Mob* written and illustrated by Gaye Dell
  
- *Bidge's Mob* published by **Interrelate Family Centres**.  
Interrelate began helping communities back in 1926, when it created the 'Father and Son' movement. Since then, its services and programs have expanded and evolved so that now it provides assistance to over 50,000 children and family members every year. This unequalled experience with families, has allowed Interrelate to develop new resources to assist, and keep in step with, the families of today.
  
- TO ARRANGE INTERVIEWS – AND COPY OF THE BOOK, CONTACT Rachel Evans, *Executive Manager Relationship Services*  
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