



Heart-warming story for third in tale of Stroogle

"It's cold, it's grey - and it won't go away." Springwood author and illustrator, Dr Cameron Stelzer, launched his newest children's book *The Stroogle Warms Winter* last week. News journalist Bryony Triggs reports.

HAVING a warm heart can defrost even the iciest winter, according to local author Dr Cameron Stelzer.

The Springwood resident launched his third book documenting the adventures of his Stroogle character last Friday night at the Logan Art Gallery.

Entitled *The Stroogle Warms Winter*, which he described as "a simple story about having a warm heart", it follows his original book *The Stroogle* and his second, *The Stroogle's New Home*.

Dr Stelzer, who has a PhD in Visual Arts, a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Graduate Diploma in Education is a world apart from the professor-style of person the title "Dr" can sometimes conjure.

The 29-year-old's youth, energy and true passion for his Stroogle creation are evident in his sweeping illustrations and rhythmic rhymes that make up his published works.

"I really enjoy it," he said.

"I love narrative, I love storytelling.

"Anything I do now, I think, 'how could I translate that to a story?'"

The Stroogle, a rainbow-coloured, chicken-like character with a human face, was born out of Dr Stelzer's time working at the Natural History Museum in London in 2002 and 2003.

Exposure to the many "weird and wonderful" prehistoric animals combined with London's rainy days got his artistic cogs turning and his sketches eventually became *The Stroogle*.

"I was even working in a dark, cold and grey spot," he said.

"I wanted something to contrast to it."



■ Stroogles galore

Dr Stelzer's artistic escape turned out to be something more than fun.

With the inclusion of a read-along CD with his latest story, to aid in children's comprehension, he aims to deliver an educational element in his books.

This term he will travel from Cape York to Cairns, Blackwater and Wide Bay, visiting schools and workshopping with primary and secondary students on the art of writing and illustrating.

Dr Stelzer said one of the highlights of having published work was to know children were reading and observing it.

"There's so much work involved," he said.

"Once it's published, the whole thing is being appreciated."

The fact that children read his work drove him to strive for perfection.

"If you're not happy with it, you'll fix it," he said.

"You're thinking about your audience the whole time and how they'll perceive it."

Dr Stelzer's future plans include taking *The Stroogle* to the world of outer space, as well as completing a Masters degree.

"I really enjoy the whole learning thing," he said.



■ True passion ... Cameron Stelzer of Springwood with his third Stroogle book, *The Stroogle Warms Winter*.

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