

Compelled by the country to connect

By PENELOPE ARTHUR

A COLLABORATION between two friends is providing visitors to the Roma on Bungil Art Gallery with a rare treat this Easter.

Glenmorgan based artist, Carol McCormack has teamed up with Roma poet, Jock Douglas, to produce the Connecting with Country exhibition, which will run at the Roma Gallery until May 4.

The exhibition follows the release of a coffee table book featuring Jock's poetry and Carol's paintings, *Collection - Connection*, recently released by the duo.

Mr Douglas and Mrs McCormack have clearly drawn upon their lives in the bush to create the book which takes the reader on a journey across remote parts of Australia through its beautifully crafted words and pictures.

"We have known each other for many years and quite a while ago I showed Carol one of my poems and she said that if I ever wanted to publish a book of poetry she would like to do the pictures," Mr Douglas said.

"I have been writing poetry for a long time. It's just about taking a thought line and distilling it in a moving form. Most of the poems in the book seem to be about people, land and horses."

The accompanying illustrations, many of which currently hang in the Roma on Bungil Gallery, were



Carol McCormack has teamed up with Roma poet, Jock Douglas, to produce the Connecting with Country exhibition, which will run at the Roma Gallery until May 4. The two friends have also created a book of their work, *Collection - Connection*.

largely painted by Mrs McCormack during caravan trips across Australia with her husband Ed.

"I started painting with the Glenmorgan Art Group in the 1970s and that group has produced several well-known artists and is still going strong today," she said.

"A lot of the paintings were actually done from the passenger's seat of the Land Cruiser while we were travelling. I gave up asking

Ed to stop and would just paint as the landscapes past me by."

Many of Mrs McCormack's paintings feature elements of Aboriginal art including traditional dot style work.

"I have been painting in remote parts of Australia for many years and was one of the first artists to visit Purnululu in 1986," she said. "This had a profound effect on my way of seeing our Australian landscape and I have been attempting to align what I see and what I feel in various ways ever since."

"When I am in their land, it seems to say to me, this is what I

am, this is how you paint me. It's almost a compelling force."

Maranoa Shire Mayor, Rob Loughnan, will officially open the Connecting with Country Exhibition on Easter Saturday evening.

Cr Loughnan will also officially launch Mr Douglas and Mrs McCormack's book, *Collection - Connection*, that evening.

The book will be on sale that evening and can also be purchased online at www.collection-connection.com.au

For more information contact Carol McCormack on (07) 4665 6798 or Jock Douglas on (07) 4622 1490.