



Business

India takes to talking game

ROSA ELLEN

A KANGAROO Flat publisher that specialises in helping people develop better conversation skills, has signed a distribution deal in India, one of the largest educational book markets in the world.

TAOC - or The Art of Conversation - started as a relatively small company, designing interactive card games for adults who wanted to improve their conversation skills, co-inventor and founder of TAOC Louise Howland said.

"It's really about teaching (people) how to communicate and how to listen," she said.

"We have done fairly well in mainstream stores.

"In 2006 (the game) went into the Angus & Robertson chain and became a best-seller."

Over the years the resource has expanded to teach children, people with autism and English as second language speakers.

TAOC was a finalist in the 2010 Inventors' Awards in Bendigo and was able to give Prince William a sample

of its products when he visited flood-affected towns in February.

The company had just sold 1000 copies of their conversation package to Canadian pharmaceutical company Roche when Indian book distributor Overleaf came knocking.

"We were exporting bit by bit," Ms Howland said.

"(Now) we are really excited by what's happened. There are so many people in the (India) market and we don't need to translate at this point because many speak English."

TAOC was started in 2006 by Ms Howland and Keith Lamb, lead singer of successful 70s glam-rock band Hush.

Mr Lamb began to develop the game after feeling lost in the ordinary art of conversation outside the high-pressure world of concert tours and fans.

"It's a nice thing to share," Ms Howland said.

"Gone are the days when being in Bendigo meant you'd have to leave for the city once your business grew."



DEAL: Louise Howland and samples of the Art of Conversation game being exported to India.

Picture: PETER WEAIVING