



The CBCA
BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARDS

JUDGES' REPORT 2019





THE CBCA JUDGES' REPORT 2019

Category reports written by the CBCA Book of the Year Awards judges:

CBCA Book of the Year: Older Readers:

Pauline McLeod (QLD), Emma Phillips (SA) and Anne-Marie Strother (WA)

CBCA Book of the Year: Younger Readers:

Felicia Harris (WA), Margaret McKay-Lowndes (QLD) and Tricia Scott (TAS)

CBCA Book of the Year: Early Childhood:

Amanda Cooper (VIC), Claire Elliott (NSW) and Kristy Genetti (NT)

Picture Book of the Year:

Denise Cramsie (NSW), Jo Panckridge (VIC) and Kirrin Sampson (ACT)

Eve Pownall Award:

Julie Long OAM (ACT), Brook Tayla (VIC) and Kristin Twomey (NSW)

CBCA Award for New Illustrator:

Ngaire Brown (VIC), Kathy Kozlowski (VIC) and Marc Martin (VIC)

Statistics for the 2019 entries compiled by Rebecca Jessen

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The National Board of the Children's Book Council of Australia would like to thank:

The eighteen judges for their hard work throughout the year, in selecting and critiquing this impressive collection of books.

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The Children's Book Council of Australia is a voluntary organisation established in 1945 to promote children's literature and to encourage children to read. Membership of the eight state and territory branches is open to those interested in children's books: parents, teachers, librarians, students, publishers, authors, illustrators, booksellers and journalists. Membership applications should be sent to CBCA Branches:

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BACKGROUND

The Children's Book Council of Australia administers and presents the annual Children's Book of the Year Awards. Each year publishers enter books in the Awards and judges read, review and exchange reports on every title accepted for entry. The judging process is guided by the Awards category titles and criteria as stated in the Children's Book Council of Australia Awards Policy and set out in this publication. This document contains the judges' report on 488 titles published in the year 2018 and submitted by publishers for the 2019 CBCA Book of the Year Awards.

The 2019 Notable Books List was announced on 26 February with 'Night of the Notables' hosted by CBCA Branches in many capital cities. The 2019 Short List was announced on 26 March. The official announcement was held in Melbourne but CBCA Branches throughout Australia also celebrated the 2019 Short List with special events.

The 73rd CBCA Book of the Year Awards, consisting of one Winner and up to two Honour Books in each category, was announced in Melbourne on 16 August. This marked the beginning of CBCA Book Week 2019. The theme was 'Reading Is My Secret Power'. Access to the Short List Judges' Presentation is available from each Branch of The Children's Book Council of Australia.

CATEGORIES

There are five categories in the CBCA Book of the Year Awards:

a. CBCA Book of the Year: Older Readers

Entries listed in this category are outstanding books for young people aged between 13 and 18 years (secondary school level). Readers require a degree of maturity to appreciate the themes and scope of emotional involvement. Books in this category may be fiction, drama, illustrated text, poetry or graphic novels. Judging considers the literary qualities of the text, editing and book production.

b. CBCA Book of the Year: Younger Readers

Entries listed in this category are outstanding books published for children in the age range from 7 to 12 years (primary school level). Books in the category may be fiction, drama, graphic novels, illustrated text or poetry. Judging considers the literary qualities of the text, editing and book production.

c. CBCA Book of the Year: Early Childhood

Entries listed in this category are outstanding books suitable in content and style for pre and beginning readers or children in the age range 0 to 6 years (pre-school and infants level). These include works of fiction, poetry, wordless, board and concept books. The illustrations reflect all the text on the page and often do not add extra meaning to the storyline. The font size and style, rhythm and meter of the text are important. Clear design, layout and editing are also important.

d. CBCA Picture Book of the Year

Entries listed in this category are outstanding books of the genre in which the text and illustrations achieve artistic and literary unity and the story, theme or concept are enhanced and unified through the illustrations. Picture Books can be for any age. A picture book can be written and illustrated by a sole creator or a collaborative effort between two or more creators. The text and illustrations work cohesively. The illustrations are an integral part of, or extend the action on the page. The illustrations are either as important as the text or more important and can be enjoyed separately from the text. Illustrators who



have taken an existing piece of work and produced new illustrations that enhance that text can only be entered in this category.

e. Eve Pownall Award

Entries listed in this category are books with the prime purpose of documenting factual material. Consideration should be given to imaginative presentation, interpretation and variation of style. Books are judged on the balance and harmony of language style and presentation, graphic excellence, clarity, appropriateness and aesthetic appeal of illustrations, and the overall design of the book. Referencing of sources are important; books may include a contents page, index, bibliography and glossary which enhance the reader's experience. Autobiographies and biographies are entered in this category. The age range for this category is 0 to 18 years.

f. The CBCA Award for New Illustrator

Entries for this category are books where the illustrator is emerging or new to the field of children's book illustration. The entry must be the illustrator's first illustrated book published by a trade publisher where illustrations form a significant part of the book's narrative or information content. The age range for this category is 0 to 18 years. Illustrators who have taken an existing piece of work and produced new illustrations that enhance that text can be entered in this category.

JUDGING PROCESS

Judges are required to read all books entered in their category during the judging period, then discuss and write preliminary critiques on each entry using the judging criteria. An entered book will be judged only in the nominated category against the category criteria.

Books entered for the Awards are assessed primarily for:

- outstanding literary merit, including cohesiveness in significant literary elements;
 - language chosen for its appropriateness to the theme and style of the work with proper regard to the aesthetic qualities of language; and
 - originality in the treatment of literary elements as they apply to the form of the work.
- Consideration is given to the quality of illustrations, book design, editing, production, printing and binding.

Judges for these Awards commenced the judging process in May 2018 and finalised their deliberations in February 2019. This year the judging panels met via teleconference and came together for final discussion and report preparation in Brisbane and Melbourne for the CBCA New Illustrator Award.



THE JUDGES

CBCA Book of the Year: Older Readers



PAULINE McLEOD (QLD)

Pauline is the Children's and Young Adult Specialist at Riverbend Books, an independent bookstore in QLD. A Teacher-Librarian and former English and History teacher, Pauline worked for over a decade as a coordinator of UQL Cyber school. Her qualifications include a Master of Arts in Children's Literature (Librarianship) and a Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary). Pauline has presented to parents, students, state and national conferences, and offers professional development sessions for colleagues. In 2015 she was awarded the ABA Elizabeth Riley Fellowship for Children's Bookselling.



EMMA PHILLIPS (SA)

Emma was a bookworm from a young age and delights in being able to share her love of books. Emma gained her Bachelor of Arts and Graduate Diploma of Education, majoring in English and Modern History, teaching these areas fulltime in WA. Moving to Adelaide gave her the opportunity to pursue her love of writing and achieve a Master of Arts in Creative Writing, and a Graduate Diploma in Library and Information Management. Now working as a Teacher Librarian, Emma enjoys connecting teenagers with a diversity of books.



ANNE-MARIE STROTHER (WA)

Anne-Marie has a Bachelor of Education majoring in English from Edith Cowan University. Her English teaching career spans over 30 years and has stretched across the expanses of WA. In addition to English teaching Anne-Marie spent four years as a teacher-librarian in a K-12 school learning the depth and breadth of children's literature. Anne-Marie has judged in previous years for the CBCA including all categories 2014-2016, YR 2017 and OR 2018. She revels in the judging process and the delightful prospect of discovering wonderful pieces of literature.

CBCA Book of the Year: Younger Readers



FELICIA HARRIS (WA)

Felicia is currently a Teacher Librarian at the School of Isolated and Distance Education in WA. She has taught for 23 years in various schools throughout WA and the ACT. Felicia has developed Moodle forums and Saba lessons, enabling students from around the world, to write reviews and discuss their favourite books and authors. She also coordinated the Author Online series, enabling students from around the world to interact with Australian authors and illustrators. In 2015-2016 Felicia was a judge for the CBCA Eve Pownall Award. She is currently the Vice President of the CBCA WA Branch.



MARGARET MCKAY-LOWNDES (QLD)

Margaret has a Bachelor of Arts specialising in literature and history and a Graduate Diploma in Education. She taught English for many years in both secondary schools and TAFE colleges, before completing a Master of Education in Teacher Librarianship. Margaret has held Teacher Librarian positions in both secondary and primary schools and is active in the CBCA Queensland Branch, compiling the newsletter. She reads constantly, drawing from a wide range of authors and genres including children's literature and enjoys connecting children with their reading passions.



TRICIA SCOTT (TAS)

Tricia has a Graduate Certificate in Education and Graduate Diploma in Library and Information Studies (Hons.). Tricia currently works as the Teacher Librarian at MacKillop Catholic College in Tasmania. With over 20 years' involvement in school libraries she has gained extensive experience in sharing and promoting children's literature to children from three years of age through to college aged students. In 2015-2016 Tricia represented Tasmania as a CBCA Book of the Year judge.

CBCA Book of the Year: Early Childhood



AMANDA COOPER (VIC)

Amanda is a primary teacher with 35 years' experience, specialising in Art, Library and Music. She has a Graduate Diploma in Teaching and Children's Literature. Amanda has extensive experience working at Books Illustrated Gallery assisting with exhibitions, book sales and story-time. She is committed to providing quality literature activities to students from lower socio-economic areas. Amanda is also founder of 'Gallery for a Day' which is a travelling exhibition of original illustrations from many well-known Australian picture books. Artworks from her collection are exhibited together with the books forming the basis of an engaging interactive workshop incursion for primary aged students. Amanda loves introducing children to picture books, their illustrations and the creative process involved in their making.



CLAIRE ELLIOTT (NSW)

Claire has a Bachelor of Arts (Dip Ed), a Master of Education in Teacher Librarianship, a Master of Education in International Education and is currently studying for a Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Leadership. She is also an Australian School Library Association board member. As an educator and Teacher Librarian she is passionate about literature and reading. Claire has worked extensively overseas. She is an avid reader and values the contribution children's literature can make in supporting the curriculum and promoting positive reading habits in students.



KRISTY GENETTI (NT)

Kristy Genetti is a preschool teacher in Alice Springs. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from the University of Wyoming in America. Kristy taught for seven years at a Catholic school in America before moving to Australia. Kristy worked at the Alice Springs Public Library for three years, gave birth to her son Eli in 2014, and became an Australian citizen in 2015. She now teaches Preschool.

CBCA Picture Book of the Year



DENISE CRAMSIE (NSW)

Denise has a Master of Education and is married with two children and six grandchildren. She was a classroom teacher in Sydney and London before becoming a teacher-librarian for 27 years. Denise has been a member of the CBCA NSW Branch since the mid-80s and was a co-founder of its Southern Suburbs sub-branch. From 2011-2013 Denise was President of the CBCA NSW Branch and from 2012-2014 a judge for the NSW Premier's Literary Awards. In 2017 Denise was on the panel for the Aspiring Writers' Mentorship Program run by the NSW Branch. For the last 17 years Denise has been a volunteer with Vision Australia as an Audio-Describer of plays for the vision-impaired.



JO PANCKRIDGE (VIC)

Jo holds a Bachelor of Education and a Masters in Literacy and is currently the Head Teacher Librarian of the Campbell House Library, in the Junior School of The Geelong College. She has held this position for 16 years. Her chief role being that of immersing students from three to nine years of age in literature and fostering reading. Jo is also the Literacy Coordinator at the Junior School, supporting literature and literacy in classroom contexts from Early Learning to Year 3. The role enables her to highlight the value of rich literature as the foundation for literacy teaching and learning. Jo has contributed articles and papers to several publications highlighting the power of reading and quality literature for children.

KIRRIN SAMPSON (ACT)



Kirrin holds a degree in Economic History and Master of Teaching. She works for the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). Kirrin advises on national reading and literacy projects for ALIA, libraries and allied organisations, and is developing a national coalition to lobby government on the importance of early literacy development. Kirrin serves on the Management Sub-Committee of the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature and has judged the children's section of the ACT Writer's Centre Publishing Awards and the Australian Book Industry Awards.



Eve Pownall Award



JULIE LONG OAM (ACT)

Julie is currently a relief teacher in ACT and has a Bachelor of Education, majoring in Children's Literature. She has taught in various schools in Victoria, England and Canberra over a period of 45 years. Julie has been an active member of the CBCA ACT Branch since 1982 and held numerous roles. She was a reviewer for 'Reading Time' for over thirty years and spent three years as Assistant Editor. Julie was a CBCA Awards Co-ordinator 2012-2014. During 2017-2018 she was an Early Childhood judge and is looking forward to the challenges of judging the Eve Pownall Award entries.



BROOK TAYLA (VIC)

Brook has a Diploma of Teaching in Primary and a Graduate Diploma in Children's Literature. Brook currently works part-time as a librarian and runs her own children's literature review blog called 'Tell Tales To Me.' As a member of many writers' groups, prominent literary related associations, and reviewer for online children's magazines, blogs and publishers, Brook has a multitude of experience and expertise in her chosen field. She believes that books should evoke intrigue and joy, as well as develop an inquiring mind, and is therefore honoured to be a judge.



KRISTIN TWOMEY (NSW)

Kristin is a Librarian with 18 years of experience in public libraries. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Library & Information Science and a Bachelor of Arts in English & History. Kristin was awarded the Jean Arnot Fellowship by State Library NSW in 2017 and a winner of the Kath Knowles Young Leader Fellowship, awarded by Public Libraries Association NSW. As a progressive and proactive Library Services Manager and mother of two young boys, Kristin is a keen advocate of children's literature and literacy.

CBCA Award for New Illustrator



NGAIRE BROWN (VIC)

Ngaire holds a Bachelor of Arts, a Graduate Diploma Information Management and a Graduate Diploma Education. She is currently a Teacher Librarian with 15 years' experience working in school libraries, teaching English, English as a Second Language and Humanities. Prior to entering Teacher Librarianship, she worked in corporate libraries. Currently, she is the Coordinator of Library Services at Kolbe Catholic College Greenvale, in Melbourne's North West. Ngaire has an interest in Children's Literature particularly picture books. As an avid reader, she advocates for the use of picture books in the secondary curriculum. Ngaire has been on the Committee of the Victorian Branch of the CBCA for five years and has been Vice



President of the Branch for two years. She has also been a Clayton's judge for the CBCA Victorian Branch and Ballarat CBCA Branch.



KATHY KOZLOWSKI (VIC)

Kathy holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Diploma of Librarianship. She is a specialist children's bookseller at Readings Kids in Melbourne. Kathy has worked with children's and young adult books for over forty years, originally as a librarian but mainly in the book trade. She worked both in children's publishing and bookshops including seventeen years with the late Albert Ullin at The Little Bookroom. Other judging roles include with the Human Rights Commission Awards and Victorian Premier's Literary Awards.



MARC MARTIN (VIC)

Marc is an award-winning illustrator and author based in Melbourne, Australia, who has a wealth of experience as an illustrator. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Communication (Graphic Design). Marc works with watercolour, gouache, pencil, and computer, his work is a world of dense colour, rich textures and the odd scribble. He draws inspiration from his surroundings, nature, animals, and the city he lives in.



Judges' Report Introduction

Judges noticed an increase in new creators appearing in many categories (111 in total). This augurs well for the future of Australian children's literature. Of the 488 books entered, 43 were self-published. The judges were pleased to note that these books were of a higher publication quality than in previous years.

In many categories diversity is beginning to come through in the variety of cultures represented by the main and supporting characters. It is hoped that this will continue. It was pleasing to see that there were many books throughout the entries presented which make great reads and could be recommended for children but fell short on the criteria to be Notable.

The judges noted that as in previous years there still seemed to be many editorial flaws. These included spelling and punctuation errors noted amongst the entries received. Judges were disappointed that there was little high quality comedy. A lot of entries in this genre were reliant more on illustrations paired with dialogue via speech bubbles to convey humour and wit rather than using a humorous writing style.

Older Readers Judges' Report

The 2019 Book of the Year Older Reader category had 78 entries with a domination of contemporary fiction. Despite this, there was still a range of genres and forms in the entries, including dystopian, fantasy, historical and verse novels. The Older Readers category is one that frequently deals with harrowing, gritty issues and 2019 was no different, with themes such as loss, grief, suicide, identity, and domestic violence forming the core of several entries. The seriousness of these themes, and the confronting way that some entries deal with them, may require trigger warnings. Additionally, it is worth noting that the majority of the books are more suitable for years 15-18, as there was a preponderance of submissions for that upper age range.

Curating the 2019 Notables List to 20 books was a challenging task as the judges had to choose from a number of excellent entries. The final list contains an array of stories and storytelling styles, with vibrant engaging characters and storylines. Historical fiction (including an exploration of Australia's dark past), road trips, doomsday fiction, and reimagined fairy tales all found their way to the Notables List. It should be mentioned that *I Am Out With Lanterns*, *Tin Heart*, *The Centre of My Everything* and *Neverland* were worthy entries but unfortunate omissions from the final Notables List.

The 2019 Short List does represent the breadth of this year's entries. Despite all the books being contemporary and realistic in genre, there is a distinct range in form, content, gender representation and storytelling. There is almost an equal representation of gender in the protagonists of each of the shortlisted entries. The 2019 Short List also manages to address the differences in the age range with *Lenny's Book of Everything* spanning the entire age range.

Considering all the submissions this year, it was refreshing to see several entries, such as *Inside the Tiger*, *Out of the Cages* and *Between Us*, delving into larger, more political themes, including both sex and drug trafficking, asylum seekers and organ donation. Authors showed great skill as they wove a difficult issue into their story in a natural, organic manner rather than it feeling forced and laboured. These books engaged the reader in the issue, through strong characterisation, clear storylines and the inclusion of Australian perspectives. Cultural diversity was also fairly represented with several books including *Wraith*, *Catching Teller Crow*, *The Centre of My Everything*, and *Out of the Cages* authentically researching and representing not only the variance of Australian culture but of other ethnicities as well.



The issue of mental illness, a central concern of modern society, also had representation in the 2019 entries, to varying degrees. Some books, such as *P is for Pearl*, were very authentic in their representation and devoid of demonising stereotypes; others were problematic as they featured superficial coverage regarding the issues, characterisation, treatment and presentation. Suicide, the action and its consequences, was also an issue in several of the entries and in some the inconsistent representation was flagged as a concern by the judges as a possible flaw in the writing and hence the quality of the literature.

Within the Older Readers category, the treatment, discussion and inclusion of sexual and emotional relationships is often an area of concern, with writers sometimes leaning too far into clichéd and stereotyped representation. It was reassuring to find healthy representations of sex and relationships in many of the books, including those on the Notables List. *Changing Gear*, *Just Breathe* and *White Night* were just a few of the books that dealt beautifully and sensitively with adolescent sex and portrayed positive healthy interactions and relationships. However, there were a few entries that needed to address the idea of consent more fully and accurately, either in the storyline or as a theme.

It was also noted that the representation of LGBTQI characters had increased this year with many of the portrayals showing a greater sense of authenticity and realism. The judges welcomed this inclusion of real 'ordinary' same sex relationships and the demise of the stereotyped 'gay friend'. Books such as *Amelia Westlake* and *Small Spaces* had protagonists who were involved in same sex relationships as one part of character's narrative, not the entire storyline or theme.

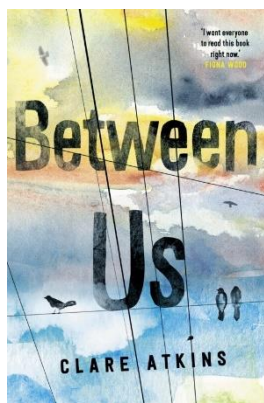
Though not a predominant genre, humour was to be found sprinkled throughout many of the serious and confronting storylines. It was often used by writers to successfully break the pathos or tension without losing the connection to the core of the story. *The Things That Will Not Stand*, *Girl Running*, *Boy Falling* and *The Finder* all had layers of humour that gave depth and realism to characters, relationships and situations.

Families, as usual, were front and centre of many of the entries. It was noted that the representation of masculinity, both in adolescence and adulthood, seemed more authentic and positive than in previous years. Fathers, whether present or absent, were often dominant in helping to present alternative ideas of masculinity. *Changing Gears* and *The Bogan Mondrian* demonstrated both positive and negative representations of masculinity but without preaching. Sibling relationships or the effect of absent (deceased) siblings was also a prevalent storyline with *P is for Pearl*, *The Art of Taxidermy* and *Lenny's Book of Everything* leading the way in exposition of this theme.

One of the criticisms the judges would make is in relation to production issues. There was often discord between the style and theme of the cover art and the content, storyline or theme of the book. This also extended to the blurb, which was sometimes vacuous or highlighted an insignificant or trivial aspect of the story. These elements are vital to the success of the book as judging a book by its cover is paramount to this age group, as is the immediate grab of the blurb. Additionally, there were several entries that suffered from a lack of effective editing, resulting in grammatical, structural and other errors that should have been corrected prior to publication, running rife through the text.



Winner



Between Us

Clare Atkins

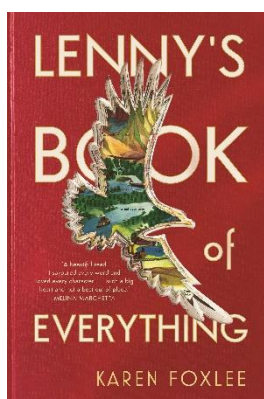
Black Inc.

ISBN: 97881760640217

A great strength of this novel is its characterisation. Atkins firmly establishes Jono, Ana, and Kenny, creating three distinct voices without resorting to stereotypes or clichés. The reader is privy to each character's internal motivations, thoughts and feelings, seeing how misunderstandings build. Giving Kenny, an adult, an equal position in this novel was a particularly clever strategy and not one that is seen very often in YA fiction. These three lives spiral toward a seemingly inevitable conflict as the tension builds in an exquisitely excruciating manner. Gut wrenching and horrendous, the events that occur to bring the novel to its climax will affect

the reader profoundly; while the well-crafted descriptions of the detention centre provide heart-breaking insight into the reality of life behind a detention centre's walls and fences. Atkins provides a voice for those who cannot speak. This novel offers an insight into a controversial humanitarian crisis.

Honour Books



Lenny's Book of Everything

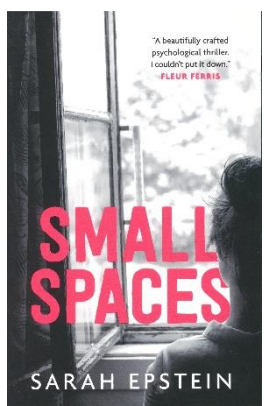
Karen Foxlee

Allen & Unwin

ISBN: 9781760529444

It might seem strange that a Queensland writer would set a novel in 1970s Ohio and yet, somehow, it all works. There is a tension running throughout the book; a sense of dread lurking just beneath the surface of a plot that unfolds in a gentle and beguiling manner exposing hidden depths. There are no big action moments in this plot, simply small moments of ordinary lives building to the climax the reader knows is coming, even as they wish it wasn't. Thoroughly engaging, Foxlee's writing style is spare and exquisite, building a sympathetic connection

between the reader and the characters, especially Lenny and Davey. Lenny feels authentic and appropriate to this young narrator looking back on her childhood — a child's memories with a tinge of adult recall. All the characters are rich, varied, and definitely their own.



Small Spaces

Sarah Epstein

Walker Books

ISBN: 9781921977381

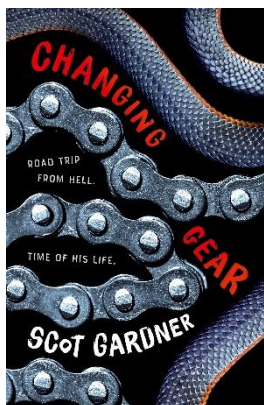
This well-crafted thriller quickly develops, maintains and intensifies tension, with action occurring in and around two fictional small towns on the mid-north coast of NSW. Epstein's writing style is outstanding; she knows when to push and when to hold back. She maintains firm control, demonstrating great skill to create highly engaging imagery, and insightful reflections on family dynamics. Characterisation is also a strength of this gripping tale. Tash, the potentially unreliable narrator, is a well-conceived, believable character; her insecurities, her need to please, and her growing paranoia leave her vulnerable and isolated. Adding to the tension, other

characters make readers question Tash's every action and underline the complexity of her situation. Her ongoing trauma at not being believed is very convincing. The creation of Sparrow as a character/memory



further demonstrates the author's skill. He's a frightening, sinister 'figment' likely to haunt the reader well after the final page.

Other Shortlisted Books



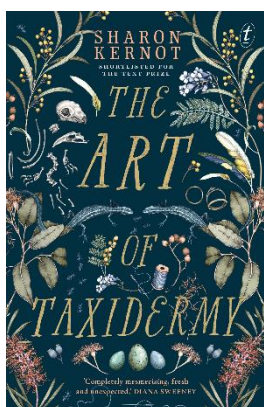
Changing Gear

Scot Gardner

Allen & Unwin

ISBN: 9781760631468

With a plot that evolves at a slow, 'walking' pace, this is a modern road novel, painted across a vast landscape yet occurring at a very intimate level. Gardner has evocatively captured the Wimmera region and through the pace of the novel, allows the reader the time to reflect on connection with country and the importance of place in healing and growth. Driven by a sense of dislocation from his parents and their new families, protagonist Merrick Hilton needs to escape; from the pressures of Year 12 and the grief he bears from the loss of his grandfather. Throwing caution to the wind, he impulsively sets out on his postie bike, Brunnhilde, and through his travels and relationship with unwilling mentor, Victor, eventually discovers a sense of belonging. Merrick's voice is engaging from the first page and Gardner approaches his journey with tenderness, empathy and larrikin humour.



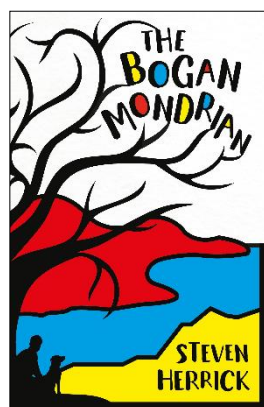
The Art of Taxidermy

Sharon Kernot

Text Publishing

ISBN: 9781925603743

There is a simple elegance in the author's writing that hides the complexity with which she presents heart-breaking yet also uplifting scenes. The plot gently pulls the reader in and holds them as the climax builds with each verse a snapshot into Lottie's world. The lack of understanding that Lottie experiences from her well-intentioned, but misunderstanding Aunt Hilda, as well as the absentminded support of her father, drive a great deal of the plot's development. The simplicity of the form adds to its deceptive depth which begins as a quiet story about Lottie living and making sense of her world and slowly develops into a series of portraits of everyone's grief. The beauty and desolation of the Australian bush are a metaphor for death which is alluded to in many verses. There are moments of absolutely exquisite descriptive writing that will take the reader's breath away.



The Bogan Mondrian

Steven Herrick

University of Queensland Press

ISBN: 9780702259982

Set in the Blue Mountains, this well-crafted novel embodies hope for the future but is not saccharine in its resolution. Herrick's writing is pared down to the absolute essentials; pithy and concise yet always authentic and nuanced. The well-constructed plot builds slowly but with a sense of anticipation, effectively keeping the reader engaged as the protagonist, Luke, comes to learn that looks can be deceiving. A tremendous character, Luke is kind and empathic, with a strong and motivating sense of social justice. Despite the loss he has experienced, he is not self-absorbed or pitying. The narrative is full of well-written, positive male role models, who are



flawed but real, providing excellent representations of how boys/men should view and treat girls/women as well as themselves. While Herrick conveys a mood of grief, frustration, helplessness and fear, he has finely balanced this with one of courage, hope and triumph.



Younger Readers Judges' Report

For the 2019 Awards the judges considered 121 titles in the Younger Readers category. This is a similar number to the number read in 2018. About one-third of the titles were received toward the end of the judging period, placing pressure on judges, which could be avoided by entering books earlier. On reading all the entries it was clear that few books aimed at the younger end of this category met the criteria of literary merit in plot, setting, character development or language required to achieve Notable status. Therefore, the Notables list is dominated by titles which would appeal to the upper end of this category.

The Young Reader authors were predominantly female and well-represented in both Notable and Shortlisted titles. The judges would love to encourage male authors to tackle this age group of readers and provide their unique, perspective of life through writing which meets a high standard of literary merit.

The Notables list features historical fiction, fantasy, and contemporary fiction as well as work which incorporates features of several genres, for example realistic fiction with a sprinkle of magic. Many of the Notables address personal and social issues which reflect reality for many young readers. Mental health issues such as depression suffered by the adults in the story e.g. *Mum or Dad*, were featured themes in several stories. Historical fiction with a World War focus was prevalent, with authors finding different angles such as storytelling through the eyes of a dog, (*The Dog with Seven Names*) focussing on the nurse's story rather than the soldier's (*In the Lamplight*) and telling the story of the impact of WW2 on Northern Australia.

The historical fiction presented broadened its focus to incorporate ancient civilisations. There is experimentation with point of view. For example, some stories are told through the eyes of an animal, or through several characters whether animal or human.

There are several books where the setting was an integral feature and was described vividly through imagery appealing to all five senses. This includes fantasy books where the 'world' of the fantasy was expertly created and supported with a detailed map. Authors cleverly used high quality imagery, and evocative settings which led the reader to feel as if they are immersed in that place or culture. *Fearless Frederic* was set in Paris; *The Adventures of Catvinkle* brought Amsterdam to life; *Black Cockatoo* was vividly evocative of regional Australia and the Outback; *The Girl, The Dog and the Writer in Provence* was set in regional France; *Swallow's Dance* presented Ancient Crete in glorious detail.

There are many highlights for readers of the Notables. As mentioned, different points of view were presented not only in *The Dog with Seven Names*, but also in *The Tales of Mr Walker*, which presented us with a very lovable Labrador. There was an abundance of quirky characters such as Catvinkle and friends in *The Adventures of Catvinkle*, Macbeth the bird in *Sweet Adversity* and Brindabella the kangaroo in the novel of the same name.

We were treated to an exceptional range of fantasy stories which moved away from the Harry Potter tradition to present unique world structures and characterisation. In *Shine Mountain*, Ellie embarks on a quest through a fantasy world, as does Ottilie in *Ottilie Colter and the Narrowway Hunt*. *The Slightly Alarming Tale of the Whispering Wars* not only presented the entertaining world of Kingdoms and Empires but also kept us laughing.

In choosing the books for Short List and Honours, judges felt that some books were worthy of an Honour but were unable to award it, as there can only be two Honour books as well as the Winner. *Leave Taking*



came so close. Additionally, there were a few titles where the literary quality was high but the titles were let down by the production values.

The Short List reflected the wide range of genres represented in the Notables: it is pleasing to see contemporary fiction, fantasy and a verse novel. Boys and girls were evenly represented in the gender of the protagonists with animals also featuring as protagonists. There was a high standard of presentation with some beautiful covers and carefully considered font, text and internal layout which will enhance the reading experience for children. It was pleasing to see that alongside well-established authors there are some new voices represented in the Short List.

The judges would like to see more books which encourage boys into reading — particularly at the emergent independent reader level. All books on the Short List and Notables would suit both genders but where were the high literary quality sport, comedy, adventure/action type books that tend to appeal to boys? Many of these genres were entered but were more suited to popular culture, designed to be visually engaging, rather than being of literary merit.

We were disappointed with the prevalence of toilet humour in the total entries received. Judges would like to encourage authors to balance this with other types of humour to engage readers, such as the lovely wit and whimsy of *The Slightly Alarming Tale of the Whispering Wars*, or *The Adventures of Catvinkle*.

In the area of literature for Younger Readers, it is clear that we need more books of literary quality for emergent independent readers, e.g. 7 to 8-year-olds. Noted was the presentation of books for these ages as picture books and we wondered about the reason for this.

Although there were some series books in the Notables, judges felt that a standalone story dominated in these titles. Additionally, there were many characters who were dogs. Is there research indicating that younger readers are attracted to these characters more than human characters?

In the area of presentation, the majority of books were well considered and of very high quality, but alas, judges were also disappointed to see so many books published with spelling and grammatical mistakes. More attention needs to be put into careful editing prior to publication. Formatting of many titles was poor. For example, books where the margins on each side of the page were uneven, and books published with very dense text, achieved through narrow line spacing and small font. The judges found these books difficult to read and feel that this type of presentation renders the book unreadable for the Younger Reader age group.

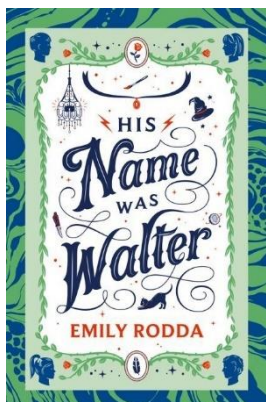
There was little high quality comedy. Two good examples were *Help Around the House* and *The Adventures of Catvinkle*. A lot of entries of this genre are reliant more on illustrations paired with dialogue via speech bubbles to convey humour and wit rather than using a humorous writing style.

Diversity is beginning to come through in the variety of cultures represented by the main and supporting characters. We hope this will continue. For example, diversity is seen in the illustrations in *Fairytales for Feisty Girls*, and a story told by a child with a disability in *Everything I've Never Said*.

Finally, most entries were suitable for both male and female readers, with exceptions generally due to presentation of the cover and title to appeal towards one gender (e.g. *Fairytales for Feisty Girls*). But overall all books can be enjoyed by both with good representation of male and female protagonists and supporting characters.



Winner



His Name Was Walter

Emily Rodda

HarperCollins Publishers

ISBN: 9781460756188

The high-quality presentation and production of this captivating, suspenseful story within a story, with its tactile hardcover, is immediately appealing. It is beautifully written with great depth of characters and the conventions of both a spooky story and a fairy tale. Intrigue is maintained throughout, with the reader making the connection between the tale and the real world at the same pace as that of the protagonists. This book provides an exemplary way of introducing literary devices to younger readers similar to the writing styles found in texts they

may encounter in later years such as *Animal Farm*. This treasure of a book is one in which you do not want to reveal too much so that future readers can experience and enjoy first-hand the mystery, mood and sense of intrigue that Rodda has skilfully woven. Readers are left completely satisfied with the resolution and can quietly pass it on saying, 'You must read this' and nothing else.

Honour Books



The Peacock Detectives

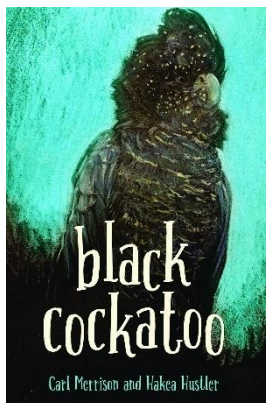
Carly Nugent

Text Publishing

ISBN: 9781925603705

A powerful, moving story that, while not shying away from hard truths and emotions, does not become maudlin, due to skilful and sensitive handling of mature themes through a child's eyes. The division into parts reflecting the seasons signifies that it will become dark (Autumn, Winter) before hope is seen (Spring and Summer). The inclusion of a sub-plot (Where are the Peacocks?) lightens the mood. Cassie's personality shines through her naive first-person narration, reminiscent of Scout from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a story to which

reference is made several times, along with other literary allusions, all told through a first-person young narrator. The naive illustration style complements the innocent tone. Supporting characters are well-rounded individuals whose struggles are evident to the reader, but not always to Cassie. Many aspects lead the reader to reflect on the role of story within our lives, as well as the effect of thinking on our mental well-being.



Black Cockatoo

Carl Merrison & Hakea Hustler

Magabala Books

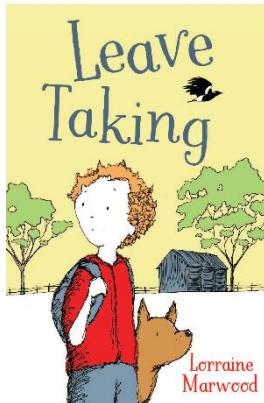
ISBN: 9781925360707

A delicate balance is maintained between presenting Indigenous culture in a way which inspires admiration and presenting the challenges faced in communities. Even though the issues are grave and there are descriptions of mild violence, the story is age appropriate, with cultural relationships clearly and concisely conveyed. Appeal to the younger reader is taken into consideration throughout, for example, when presenting the injured Black Cockatoo (Mia's totem) as a metaphor for Mia's feelings of entrapment. A sombre side of Indigenous problems



is presented through Mia's brother, who has lost his way. He succumbs to the pressure of his peers; like Mia, the solution lies in finding a way out of the trap. The incorporation of Aboriginal vocabulary is seamless, with a useful glossary at the back of the book. The final image of Mia being freed from her metaphorical cage just as the Black Cockatoo has been, is very powerful.

Other Shortlisted Books



Leave Taking

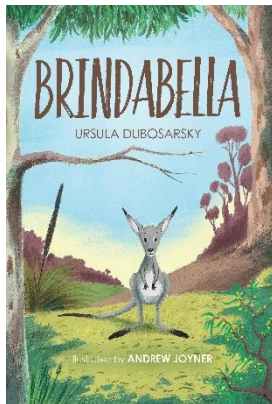
Lorraine Marwood

University of Queensland Press

ISBN: 9780702260117

Both the farm setting and the rhythm of farm life are evoked in detail in this verse novel, which uses onomatopoeia at times to convey industrial and environmental sounds. The protagonist is both innocent and wise and the family relationships feel authentic. The emotional nature of the plot draws the reader on to the community bonfire which brings in a tone of optimism and hope for the future. The production values are high with quality endpapers, supported by appealing illustrations interspersed throughout. High quality writing and utilisation of

appropriate vocabulary for younger readers results in the seamless blending of practical dairy farm life with Toby's reminiscences of his younger sister, Leah, and the lifestyle he is about to leave behind. The free verse incorporates so much in an elegant, well-formed way and invokes an array of emotions. Toby's grief journey is simply told yet so powerful.



Brindabella

Ursula Dubosarsky

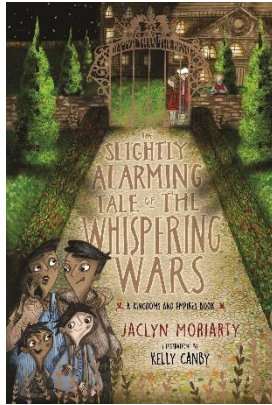
Illus: Andrew Joyner

Allen & Unwin

ISBN: 9781760112042

Set against the vividly described Australian bush, this is a sweet tale with a fable-like quality. The sepia font and illustrations combined with evocative imagery conjure perfectly the natural environment surrounding the farm. Pender is an engaging boy whose caring, sensitive nature, imagination and creativity will appeal to younger readers. His father is an equally appealing and well-rounded, believable character. The story tells of a unique friendship between Pender and

an orphaned kangaroo with a switch in point of view about half-way through the narrative. Alternate animal and human points of view maintain interest in an easy-to-read story which builds to a suspenseful climax and a hopeful ending. Each of the main characters has their own storyline, which weave together deftly. Brindabella faces the challenge of discovering where she truly belongs. Themes of compassion, creativity and finding your place are conveyed in a gently engaging story.



The Slightly Alarming Tale of the Whispering Wars

Jaclyn Moriarty

Illus: Kelly Canby

Allen & Unwin

ISBN: 9781760297183

Set in Spindrift, in the fantasy world of The Kingdoms and Empires, readers follow the fortunes of children from a poor orphanage, who are in conflict with posh boarding school students. The witty back-and-forth between the two narrators, Finlay and Honey Bee, provides much of the story's entertainment as events unfold. The imaginative, unpredictable story told through the alternating chapters deals initially with the tensions between the children, before delving into the greater threat of stolen children, and a deadly magical flu which results in the all-out Whispering Wars. The language is fresh and varied with clever humour maintained throughout. The characters are endearing and unique with relationships developing with every twist and turn. The richly creative setting is evoked expertly and populated with shadow mages, pirates, charlatans, witches, and sirens as well as two mysterious characters who visit from the future. High quality design and hardcover presentation with creative, humorous author and illustrator profiles.



Early Childhood Judges' Report

In 2019 there were a record breaking 121 books entered into the Early Childhood category. The majority of entries were of a high quality, which made selecting the Notables List of 20 titles a challenging task. There were a number of themes that dominated this category including animals, relationships, perseverance, and being true to yourself. There were also several books tackling difficult topics including grief, death and illness. There was a pleasing inclusion of a number of concept books about counting, shapes and the alphabet.

The books in the Early Childhood category need to be suitable in content and style for pre and beginning readers in the age range from 0 - 6 years old. They can include works of fiction, poetry, wordless, board and concept books. The illustrations in this category should reflect the text on the page and enhance the reading experience. Books are judged on literary merit which includes setting, plot, characterisation and themes. They also need to be age appropriate, well designed and adhere to the conventions of writing. In addition to this, the judges are looking for high quality design and production. This year the judges were impressed by the diversity of storylines and variations of illustration style and media.

In 2019, there were a high number of books featuring animals. There were several books about bears, including *Grumpy Bear*, *Grouchy Bear*, *Not So Scary Bear*, *Rainbow Bear* and the humorous, *Another Book About Bears*. There were also a number of books featuring dinosaurs, such as *Dogasaurus*, *Dinosaur Day Out*, and *Over is Out*. There were numerous animal books with a distinctly Australian theme, including *Chip the Lifeguard*, *Noni the Pony Rescues a Joey*, *Linda Jackson's Rainbow Menagerie*, *Can a Quokka Quack?* *Bush Birthday* and *Somewhere in the Reef*.

This year there were also a number of books that addressed family, relationships and love. These themes came through in *Love Makes a Family*, *Love Was Hiding*, *Wren*, *Tricky's Bad Day*, *It's Not a Scribble to Me*, *Rabby the Brave* and *It's Hard to Love a Tiger*. There were books featuring the diversity of families and the support, understanding and love that comes from a family and positive relationships.

It was also noted that many books featured perseverance and resilience. *Spirit*, *It's a Long Way to the Shop*, *Maya and Cat* and *What's at the End of This Piece of Rope?* all highlighted resilience and perseverance in solving problems and fixing issues. It was pleasing to see this was often done with collaboration and teamwork.

We were also delighted to see several books this year encouraging children to be true to themselves and to not change. *Upside Down Sid*, *The Man with Small Hair* and *Lucia and Lawrence* all highlighted that being different is unique and positive and that we shouldn't have to change. *Charlie and Alpacas with Maracas* were two other books which were humorous in highlighting the importance of marching to your own beat. *All The Ways to be Smart* stood out as a noteworthy book with a strong, positive message.

The judges also saw books tackling some difficult topics. There were books that looked at illness, the loss of a sibling, and war. *Finding Granny*, *Visiting You*, *Grandpa and Tuska* and *The Forever Kid*, all addressed difficult topics such as Alzheimer's, stroke and death. *Message in a Sock* was a heartfelt book about a girl on the homefront knitting socks for soldiers during WWI.

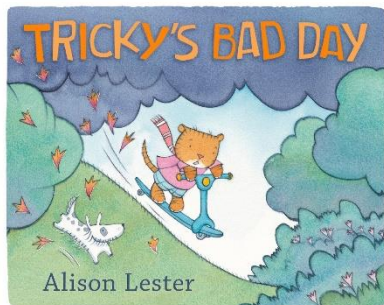
This year there were some interesting and engaging concept books. There were a few alphabet books. *Alphabeasts: An A-Z of Alphabetical Animals* was an engaging alphabet book which used the letters from each animal's name to create an image of the animal. There was also *Urban Alphabet* and *Learn with Ruby Red Shoes: Alphabet Book*. There were also counting books and a few board books. *Rhyme Cordial* was an



interesting board book with some quirky and funny rhymes. There was also one poetry book entered, *A Boat of Stars*.

The judges noted the high quality of design elements in many of the books entered. This impacted on the overall message that these books delivered. Overall, the judges were very impressed with the high quality and diversity within the category.

Winner



Tricky's Bad Day

Alison Lester

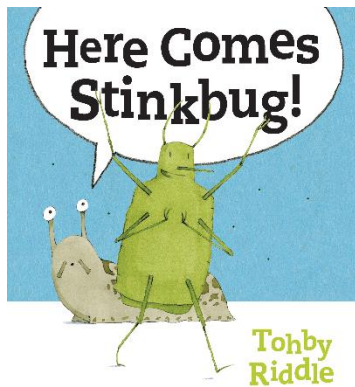
Affirm Press

ISBN: 9781925712513

This is a wonderful book with a lot to keep the reader entertained. Despite Tricky's best intentions, things do not seem to be going his way. With themes of forgiveness, love, relationships and family, it is an enjoyable read with a lovely rhythm and pace, aided by clever rhyme. Lester also sensitively tackles gender stereotypes throughout

the book. Tricky likes to wear high heels, wears pink and it is dad who looks after the children while mum is at work. The illustrations use a gentle pastel colour palette but are vibrant and create a clear sense of mood. This is a book perfect for the younger reader to tap into their emotions and feelings. They will be able to relate to Tricky and his rather disastrous day but will realise that ultimately even the worse day can finish positively with a little parental guidance and the chance to reset.

Honour Books



Here Comes Stinkbug!

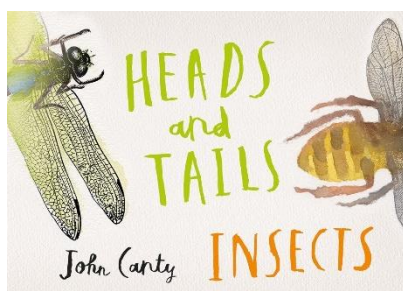
Tohby Riddle

Allen & Unwin

ISBN: 9781760523527

This story is deceptively simple but a delightful read. With text that is extremely sparse, Riddle tells a hilarious tale of a stink bug trying to find his purpose and place in the world. This book is driven by Stinkbug's name and the play on words works exceptionally well, adding to the humour of the book. The dialogue, via speech bubbles, also adds another layer to the text as the bugs interact with each other. This technique complements and expands the story. The ink and pencil illustrations are gently

cartoonish and the soft muted tones engaging. The insects are stylised with the line work which effectively gives great expression to the characters. The reader will enjoy this funny story but also learn how sometimes a negative can be a positive, especially when faced with a charming spider. They will find out just why Stinkbug stinks.



Heads and Tails: Insects

John Canty

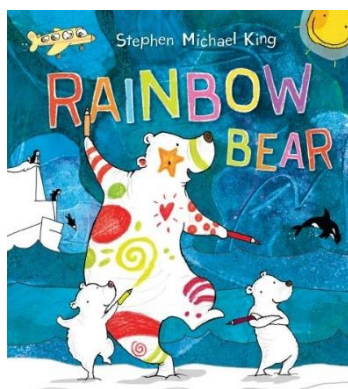
Berbay Publishing

ISBN: 9780994384164

This is the second book in the *Heads and Tails* series. It is an informative and creative book about insects for children aged two to five years. The large format highlights the beautifully executed watercolour illustrations, leaving plenty of white space for them to

stand out. The illustrations are highly detailed, with an almost scientific feel about them. The direct text encourages interaction from readers, with visual and written clues to 'guess' the insect. This book works so well as an introduction to the world of bugs, giving the reader an opportunity to predict which bug will be revealed over the page. The information, in the form of questions, is useful and appropriate to the age group. It is a thoughtful, artistic book with excellent design elements.

Other Shortlisted Books



Rainbow Bear

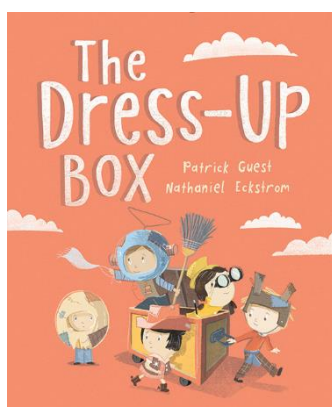
Stephen Michael King

Scholastic Australia

ISBN: 9781742997698

Young readers will delight in joining in the fun that this polar bear family have. It is written in the third person from the point of view of the father as he wakes up each morning trying to discover who has been covering him in rainbow designs. The text is clear and direct and easily followed by the very young at whom it is aimed, while at the same time the themes and concepts of family, creativity and travel lend a depth that gives the story further layers of meaning. The language is descriptive and lyrical, creating

the world that the bears live in and the happy family interactions that they have with each other. The mixed media illustrations are mostly vibrant and rich with details to pour over and contrast perfectly with the stark white arctic environment. This book is a celebration of family and excellent for reading aloud.



The Dress-up Box

Patrick Guest

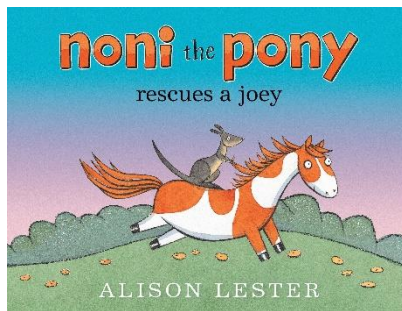
Illus: Nathaniel Eckstrom

Hardie Grant Egmont

ISBN: 9781760124922

Imagination, creativity and belonging are the themes of this book about moving to a new house. The strong narrative is relatable for young readers who have experienced the range of emotions of leaving a home where they have been very happy. The child-centred storyline is well thought out and engaging, as are the characters. The page design and the colourful and detailed illustrations rendered in acrylic paint, pencil and digital art give life

to the text. The colour palette is appealing, and careful consideration has been given to the placement of the text. The creative use of packing boxes by the children to help overcome their sadness in moving is depicted on the endpapers. This is a positive story about finding the good things that you can take with you regardless of where you are.



Noni the Pony Rescues a Joey

Alison Lester

Allen & Unwin

ISBN: 9781760293123

Noni and her friends are at it again. They find a poor lost joey and the search for Joe's family leads them through the bush where they meet a variety of other Australian native animals, creating a distinctly Australian feel. The bright watercolour illustrations are clear and are an excellent reflection of the text on each page. Younger readers will

find them engaging as there is lots to see and spot on each page. This short book has an excellent rhythm which makes for a melodious read. The rhyme is well done and works well to help provide excellent cadence for reading aloud. This book has themes of friendship, family, animals and perseverance. Readers will be able to relate to the joey's unfortunate predicament, perhaps having been lost themselves at some point. This book is ideal for early readers and will delight pre-schoolers and adults alike.



Picture Books Judges' Report

As in previous years, judges were delighted to see a large number of books entered in the Picture Book category, 149 in total, with several entered again in the Early Childhood and Eve Pownall Award categories. Recurring themes of friendship, the importance of family, social justice, the plight of refugees and war were explored in many books. Humour was also evident in clever and, at times, subtle ways through both illustration and text. We were impressed with the range of media chosen by illustrators and their appropriateness to the themes explored. It was also pleasing to see picture books spanning the category's broad age range appealing to multiple ages by offering multiple perspectives and parallel narratives.

The books on the Notables list showcase a range of creative authorial and illustrative styles and demonstrate a strong relationship between text and image and close collaboration in production. The list will appeal to a broad range of readers with narratives and themes open to interpretation, discussion and reflection. Illustrations cleverly and creatively enhance and augment storylines. The humour, pathos, mystery and high emotion are conveyed in detailed images; deep, brooding, playful and with evidence of an artistic use of strong colour palettes. In several books, the use of illustrations to carry the narrative, with little or no text support was noted.

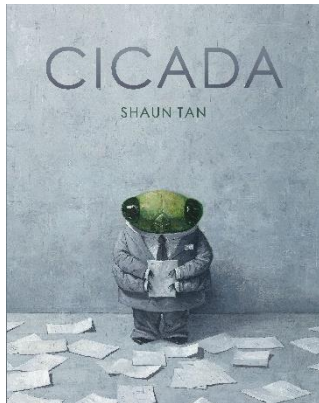
Evident in all books on the Notables list is the high quality of the overall production. Hard covers are tactile and original, endpapers reflect the story line and, in some books, are integral to the narrative. There is a considered approach to the placement of text and illustration, with thoughtful choices of typography lifting many of the selections into the Notables list. Illustrations in oil, acrylic and watercolour paint, collage, line and crayon show consistency throughout the books and demonstrate well the breadth of creative practice in Australian illustrations today.

The task of narrowing our Notables list of 20 highly original and diverse picture books to a Short List of six titles was quite challenging. The judges collectively acknowledge that this year, with a stellar list of potential winners, we struggled with our final list, having to refer closely to the criteria to make our decision, reviewing our thinking many times. Unsurprisingly, each of us was saddened to see personal favourites falling off the list. The discussion was robust, the passion evident, as we critiqued each picture book from various perspectives. Artistic and literary merit, the enhanced unification of illustration to text, the success of illustrations to extend the meaning on the page and the appropriateness and creativeness of illustrative media were carefully considered.

Of the themes explored in the Picture Book category, imagination and childish curiosity is noted in *When You're Going to the Moon, How Did I Get Here?* *Midnight at the Library*, *Chalk Boy*, *The Hole Story*, *The Last Peach*, and *The Incredible Freedom Machines*. War and displacement are reflected in *Room on Our Rock*, *The Mediterranean*, *The Feather and Sonam* and *The Silence* with themes of resilience, family and the support of family evident in *My Sunbeam Baby*, *Waiting For Chicken Smith*, *Maya and Cat*, *Why I love Summer*, *Girl on Wire*, *Cicada* and *Go Go and the Silver Shoes*. Consumerism is a new theme explored with humour in *The All New Must Have Orange 430* while *Drought* and *Why I love Summer* showcase the joy and treachery of the quintessentially Australian climate.



Winner



Cicada

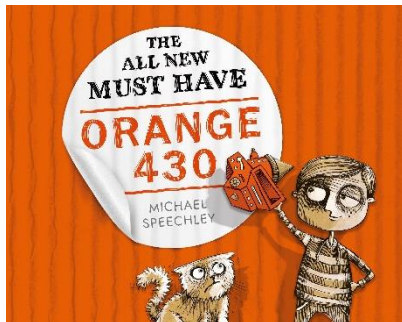
Shaun Tan

Hachette Australia

ISBN: 9780734418630

This award winner has produced a stunning masterpiece of minimalist social commentary that will resonate with adults and children alike. As an allegory for the lives of anyone who feels undervalued and underappreciated, the scene is set on the cover and front endpapers. Tall grey windowless buildings, reminiscent of an Escher maze foregrounds an image of Cicada alone in his work cubicle. Tan uses these emotive illustrations to hint at the loneliness and isolation Cicada feels in the world of humans. The solid monochrome of the full-page illustrations hangs over this book like an oppressive cloud. The text is spare; simple, yet expressive and rhythmic with just four lines in small font on opposite white pages to continue the feeling of insignificance. The story is told in the third person with non-English speaking grammar to further this sense of isolation. Tan has allowed his powerful illustrations to end the narrative. The addition of a haiku poem by Matsuo Basho on the back page is beautiful, as is the Cicada's repeated refrain: Tok! Tok! Tok!

Honour Books



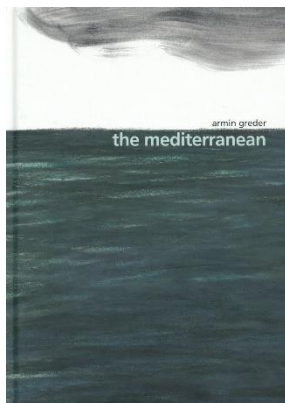
The All New Must Have Orange 430

Michael Speechley

Penguin Random House Australia

ISBN: 9780143788973

As an antidote for consumerism, this book shares a very important message in a way that is accessible to all readers. A brilliant orange cover prefaces a story with a dark theme — the must-have society blight the children have caught. A young boy must have the Orange 430 even when the box has 'Useless Object' in five languages printed on its side. Complementing the clever, witty text are detailed, chaotic illustrations. Told through images featuring a mix of greys, browns, oranges and a dash of white, and the cleverly integrated text, this is a remarkably layered book. It speaks to the power of marketing on consumerism. The reader is drawn into the pages of this humorous but dark tale, taking the story to another level. The main character grows satisfyingly, and his epiphany, shared with other children who similarly find they don't need as much, will invite connections with readers of all ages.



The Mediterranean

Armin Greder

Allen & Unwin

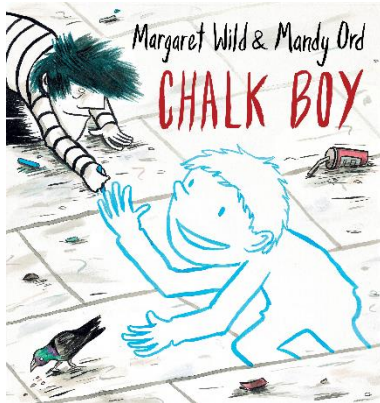
ISBN: 9781760630959

This book, a visually stunning condemnation of the treatment of refugees and the tragic loss of life in the Mediterranean Sea over the last twenty years, is not for the faint-hearted. Greder conveys grief, loss, agony and aggression through dark and foreboding double-page illustrations. He outlines the grimness of an unsavoury food chain and depicts a sombre, watery graveyard in dark, deep, blue-green using texture and shadow to build a feeling of uncertainty and convey chaos. The restraint of the overall design allows the reader to focus on



the story and works to elicit a visceral response. This is achieved through the largely monochromatic palette, clear text-based pages, ample use of white space and well-placed sans-serif type. This attention to detail begins with the bleak cover image, continues with white-framed illustrated pages and is completed by effective text placement in the final two pages. The detailed afterword from Alessandro Leogrande gives context, allowing further thought and reflection.

Other Shortlisted Titles



Chalk Boy

Mandy Ord

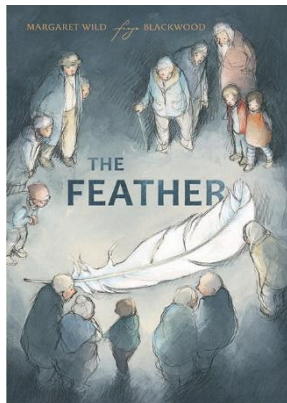
Text: Margaret Wild

Allen & Unwin

ISBN: 9781760630683

This multi-layered story is, on the surface, about a pavement character that comes to life. On a deeper level are more pressing social issues of friendship, belonging, homelessness and isolation. The simple, poignant narrative is told from the perspective of the titular character created by the pavement artist, Barnaby. The hand-drawn text, colour and placement of words on pages integrate with and enhance the

illustrations, in a way standard typography wouldn't. The illustrations are compelling, bold and dramatic, inviting close examination. The gritty colour palette of blues, browns and black reflect the story's urban setting, and the embossed cover and endpapers add a polished edge to this production. As the main character is in fact an illustration, this is an example where the book's images are crucial to adding meaning to the text, cartoonish in appearance they effectively build memorable, engaging characters and scenes, moving the story well beyond the words.



The Feather

Blackwood, Freya

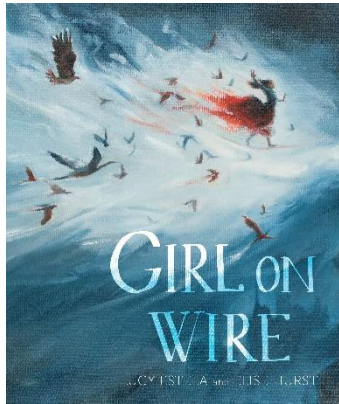
Text: Margaret Wild

Hardie Grant Egmont

ISBN: 9781760124212

Wild's story hints at an apocalyptic event having taken place and Blackwood's dark but gentle illustrations reflect this. It is a cold, monochromatic world, the muted tones underlining the awful truth of the children's lives. Into this world floats a 'majestic' feather surrounded by an aura of light. Wild has created a haunting atmosphere with superb word choices. Her text is beautifully crafted and pared back to allow the absolute essence of her meaning to be heard, thus

allowing the reader's own interpretation, inviting reflection and thought. Blackwood's illustrations are captivating and emotional. Her bird's eye view illustrations are particularly poignant in their characterisation of the townspeople. The essence of the feather is reflected in the movement and lines. This is an exemplary picture book about darkness and light, joy and suffering. It compares the insight and clarity of thought of children to the often-clouded thinking of adults, numbed by despair and hopelessness.



Girl on Wire

Elise Hurst

Text: Lucy Estela

Penguin Random House Australia

ISBN: 9780143787167

A poignantly beautiful story from a team with great pedigree; a simple yet brilliantly uplifting allegory of a young girl struggling to build her self-esteem and overcome anxiety. The language is concise and powerful and the illustrations stunning and quite hauntingly beautiful with dramatic colours that capture the feelings perfectly. The oppressive darkness at the beginning gives way to a golden light as the girl finds her confidence that

allows her to succeed. The atmospheric illustrations describe and extend Estela's spare but evocative text. The building-up of the storm and the wind are realistic in word and image and the poetic text leaves much to the reader's imagination and interpretation. Hurst's expressive portraiture of the girl beautifully conveys her fear, determination and finally joy: a metaphor for her struggle in finding her inner courage. A thought-provoking, memorable read.



Eve Pownall Award Judges' Report

In 2019 the Eve Pownall Award judges considered 51 books, which was a similar number to previous years. As in past years the number of entries the judges received grew significantly towards the end of the year. In general, publishers entered books of a high standard in terms of production and design elements which met the criteria set for this category. Some titles were outstanding in presenting and documenting informative material in a way that could challenge the reader to explore the topic further, while others would have benefitted from more accurate proofreading to correct errors of fact, grammar and page numbering.

With many books meeting the criteria, the judges needed to further assess the depth to which each book met the set standards. With publishers presenting information books in new and innovative ways, the role of judging became more complex. An example of this was using the endpapers as a form of the traditional index page — presenting up front what the premise of the book would be about. Many books began with a storytelling layer and ended with a wide variety of appendices that were different from the traditional glossary. The judges noted that for some books the traditional presentation style of the information book, with the inclusion of a Table of Contents and Glossary of Terms is still an effective way to support and/or introduce readers to this form of literature.

The judges noted a diversity of format, ranging from novels, suitable for older readers: *I am Sasha* and *Unmasked*; to books suitable for very young readers: *Look Up! Numbers, Colours and Shapes in Architecture* and *Heads and Tails: Insects*. Compilations were entered that focussed on famous Australians: *Shout Out To The Girls*, *High Five To The Boys* and *Amazing Australian Women*. Books mainly explored singular aspects of Australian culture, honing in on topics to provide readers with a greater, more in depth view, whilst others noted a link to Australia in some way.

Although the criteria in the Eve Pownall Award category is multi-layered and extensive, the judges would like to make note of some titles that stood out in particular areas:

For High Quality Production: *Creating Cuddlepie: The May Gibbs Story*, *Truth, Justice and the American Dream: The Men Behind Superman*, *My Modern Art Book*, *Make Believe: M.C. Escher for Kids* and *Australian Birds*.

For Outstanding Illustrative style: *Linda Jackson's Rainbow Menagerie*, *Digby and Claude*, *Dingo*, *When Water Lost her Way* and *Australian Birds*.

For High Standard Graphic Novel: *Truth, Justice and the American Dream: The Men Behind Superman*.

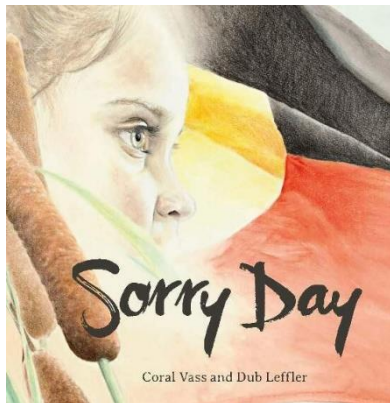
There were a wide variety of publishing houses that entered books into this section — institutions such as the CSIRO, National Library of Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria, ABC Books and Museums Victoria. Established publishing houses also continued to enter books into this category such as Black Dog Books, Lothian, Allen & Unwin, Scholastic, Windy Hollow Books, Penguin Random House, Magabala Books, Little Hare and Walker Books. New and upcoming publishers noted this year were Redback Publishing, Little Steps Publishing, Harbour Publishing House, Wild Dog Books (publishing as Louie and Ted), Brio, Little Book Press (publishing for Raising Literacy Australia), Berbay Publishing and Circles. There were also several self-published titles or titles which were supported by community funding, such as *Annie and the Waves* (supported by Ocean Beach Surf Life Saving Club and Surf Life Saving Australia), *My Pop was a Kangaroo ANZAC* (Regional Arts Development Fund Queensland and Southern Downs Regional Council) and *Creating Cuddlepie: The May Gibbs Story* published by the author.



The judges advise that this year there seemed to be many editorial flaws. These included spelling and punctuation errors noted amongst the entries received; these were not always small nor insignificant, but vital errors, impacting upon the information being conveyed. Another main area for improvement was a need to really gauge within the written text, what needed to be portrayed in the visual text — illustrations either reinforce what is written or add essential information for readers — and the reader can be really let down when the two do not merge. This is a point of difference between well designed books that motivate readers to engage further with the book and ultimately encourage further exploration or research of the topic. Lastly, it was evident that there was a distinct difference between books that had been thoroughly researched by a passionate author, giving an air of reliability to the reader and those that had relied on available online information.

Finally, the judges would like to acknowledge the publishers, authors and illustrative designers who realise the importance of Information Books. This is perhaps, in a way, even more important than it was in the past. Although young readers may have the internet at their fingertips to acquire information, it is important to know that in the book form the information is reliable, well researched and adequately sourced. The judges also encourage more publishers to submit entries into this category, particularly those with innovative, contemporary interpretations for children.

Winner



Sorry Day

Coral Vass

Illus: Dub Leffler

National Library of Australia

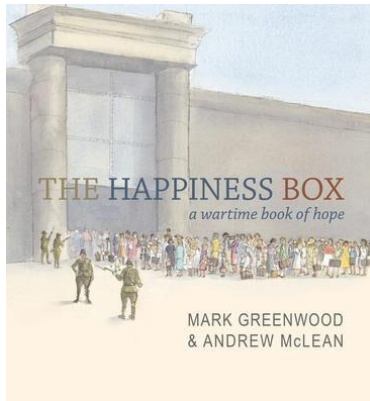
ISBN: 9780642279033

A story of the stolen generations told simultaneously with the story of the first National Sorry Day in Canberra. The story of modern Maggie is told in delicate colours with its own font and the not-so long ago story about the removal of Aboriginal children is told in italic font with sepia shades. The sepia tones suit the story of the past and the present tones show colour slowly coming back into the lives that were touched. This

helps make the following of each story accessible to quite young children while still explaining the pain and trauma of forced separation. The two stories have very precise, vivid language which creates the tension and then relief. A fold-out page at the end reveals the final words of the Prime Minister's apology speech, as well as information to accompany photos and a poster that are acknowledged as being from the National Library collection.



Honour Books



The Happiness Box: a wartime book of hope

Mark Greenwood

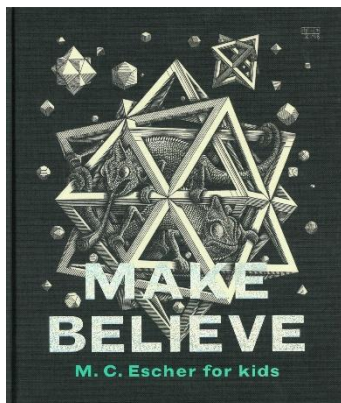
Illus: Andrew McLean

Walker Books Australia

ISBN: 9781925081381

Based on true events inside Changi Prison during WWII, this is a book about a book! Sergeant David Griffin, an Australian prisoner of war, joined fellow prisoners to make Christmas toys for child prisoners. A twist in events stopped delivery of the toys to the children and his story, which was meant to be destroyed, was buried in a tin box and returned to Griffin after liberation. The original has become a 'National Treasure'

and is housed at The State Library of New South Wales. It was published in 1947 and republished in 1991. The sepia tones with hints of colour represent hope against adversity. The focus on the book, toys and games makes this war story relatable to children. Although the writing doesn't shy away from the harsh facts of war, it is written with sensitivity. There is additional information about Sir David Griffin CBE and Captain (Herbert) Leslie Greener and the original book.



Make Believe: M. C. Escher for Kids

Kate Ryan

Illus: Cally Bennett

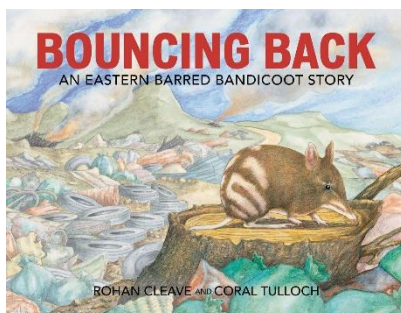
National Gallery of Victoria

ISBN: 9781925432558

Based on the M. C. Escher X nendo exhibition at the NGV in Melbourne, this book is an example of excellence at all levels. The cover is tactile and inviting and small details include rainbow-coloured paper edging that make this book stand out. It tells, chronologically, Escher's biography, both personal and artistic, including the development of his work. The information is accurate and sets the reader up for further investigation, not

only by evoking intrigue, but by including related activities and examples to further engage children. The large format of this book makes it possible to include works that are representative of the originals. The selection of pieces represents his life's work very well. This book is informative, instructional, interactive, interesting and fascinating. There is a contents page and an illustrated list of works that includes descriptive explanations that would be seen at an art gallery.

Other Shortlisted Books



Bouncing Back: An Eastern Barred Bandicoot Story

Rohan Cleave

Illus: Coral Tulloch

CSIRO Publishing

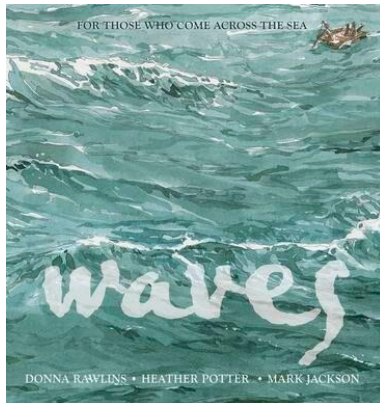
ISBN: 9781486308279

Miraculously, the Eastern Barred Bandicoot survived extinction. Being pushed out of their natural environment by human settlement throughout Victoria and parts of South Australia, a small population took up residence in the Hamilton tip where they found some

protection from predators in amongst dumped cars. A recovery team ensured their survival through a



captive breeding program and later released them back into safe, fenced bushland areas, some protected by Maremma dogs! The story is endearingly told from the bandicoot's perspective, in a simple, gentle, but powerful way. The white backgrounds make the visual and verbal facts stand out. Endpapers give readers an insight into the overall premise of the book. Also included is a note about conservation, an in-depth overview of the bandicoot's story and a glossary. The natural fight for survival and the way that experts can step in to save a species is a hopeful and inspiring story for children.



Waves

Donna Rawlins

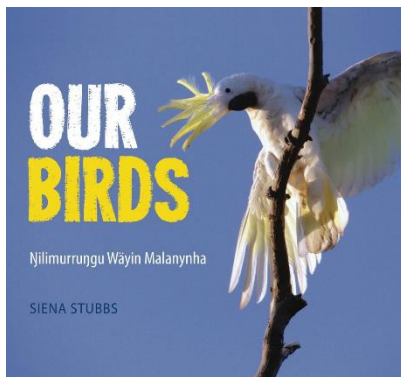
Illus: Mark Jackson & Heather Potter

Walker Books Australia

ISBN: 9781925381641

A powerful historical fiction picture book providing an accessible history of Australia in a snapshot/timeline format. The endpapers introduce readers to the names of the fifteen child protagonists and the dates their boats would have set sail for Australia. Readers are then led into double-page spreads that explain the situations, from the character's viewpoint, that have led these children to leaving their homes bound for

an unknown land. Each story illustrates the experience of migrants 'who have come across the seas' to make Australia their homeland. The format works well and this book would be one where readers could read one story and then refer to the extra information in the 'About the characters' in the back to flesh out that story before going on to read another one. The cover illustrations, endpapers and internal artwork reflect the colour of the waves and keep the reader connected to the theme of sea journeys.



Our Birds: Njilimurrungu Wäyin Malanyinha

Siena Stubbs

Magabala Books

ISBN: 9781925360981

A well designed, sturdy, photographic book. The colourful photos are of very high quality and there is variety of presentation and placement on each double page spread. All twenty-one birds are found in Arnhem Land and each is given its indigenous Yolnu name (which includes sounds unknown in English but explained in a pre-text guide), common English name and its moiety. According to the author, the

native birds name themselves in Yolnu by the sounds they make. The description accompanying each bird gives the author's personal relationship to it as well as where and how the photo was captured. There are many interesting facts about each bird and the text is presented in manageable chunks in simple descriptive language for young readers as well. This is not an information book about birds, but rather how the birds depicted tie into cultural beliefs, stories and the lifestyle of the author/photographer in Yirrkala in North-East Arnhem Land.



CBCA Award for New Illustrator Judges' Report

This year there were 31 entries for the CBCA Award for New Illustrator. Despite the name change of the award from The Crichton Award, previously administered by the CBCA Victorian Branch, and the increase in the prize money, the entries did not increase.

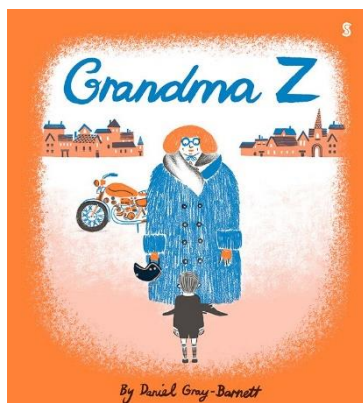
Once again, the quality of entries this year was very high and generated a great discussion amongst the judges: Marc Martin, Kathy Kozlowski and Ngaire Brown. Each judge spent a considerable amount of time reading and looking at the illustrations of individual entries. In the middle of January, the judges met face to face, each bringing with them a longlist of eight to ten books from which the judges chose their draft Short List. A number of follow up emails refined the list to six. When choosing books for the Short List the Winner was a unanimous decision.

Each of the three judges for the Award this year brings with them a different perspective to how the entries are viewed. Marc, as a former winner of The Crichton Award and illustrator of children's books and commercial design work, had a keen eye for the detail in each of the entries. He was able to assist both Kathy and Ngaire in deciphering if an illustration was hand drawn or computer generated. Kathy brought the perspective of a bookseller and was able to share with Marc and Ngaire what books were being bought by both parents and children. Ngaire, as a teacher librarian, was able to look at the illustrations from how engaging they were to readers and their suitability in a school. When discussing the Short List there were a number of books that each judge had on their own list but did not appear on the other judge's lists. This led the judges to go back and have a second or third look at some of the books to see why the other judge thought the book was worthy of being on the Short List.

In terms of meeting the criteria set, all the books met the criteria for being judged. The illustrators came from a variety of backgrounds — some having worked in the commercial design industry, others writing and illustrating books themselves. The major publishing houses and a number of small publishers were represented. It is good to see new illustrators working with previous CBCA Book of the Year winners and the larger publishers. A portion of the entries were also self-published.

A number of books were illustrated using simple refined drawings. A large number were illustrated digitally. Some illustrators used broad colour palettes while others used simple colour palettes with repetition of a limited number of colours. In terms of how the illustrations worked with the text, some worked better than others, but all illustrations reflected or enhanced the text. It is clear that in the larger publishers there are more resources available in terms of how the book is designed and the refinements that can be made.

Winner



Grandma Z

Daniel Gray-Barnett

Scribble Kids' Books

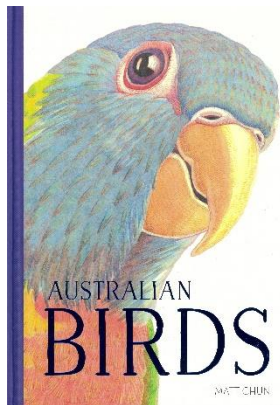
ISBN: 9781925322156

In this book, written and illustrated by Gray-Barnett, the reader meets the endearing Grandma Z. The colour palette matches the text perfectly and shows that not only is the illustrator able to excel in illustration but also compose a text that is from the heart, entertaining and easy for readers to see how hanging out with your grandmother can be a lot of fun. As the story progresses, Gray-Barnett introduces more colour into the palette which matches the personality of Grandma Z. The use of



bright orange and blue enhances the hand-drawn illustrations. If the illustrations were in more colours, the impact they have would be lost. Although the illustrations are quite simple, they still provide impact and match the text. As the story progresses, more whimsy is added to the illustrations adding to the overall impact.

Other Shortlisted Books



Australian Birds

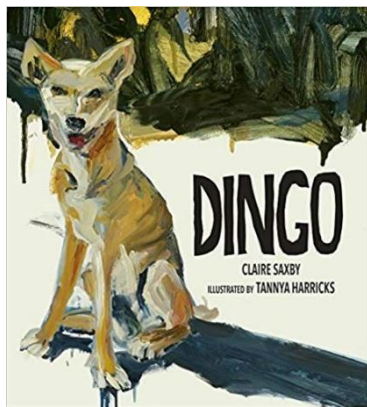
Matt Chun

Hardie Grant Egmont

ISBN: 9781760502003

Chun's detailed illustrations of key Australian birds that are commonly found in different parts of the country are striking, detailed and larger than life. They take up a considerable amount of the page but yet do not appear too big for this large format book. Opposite the illustrations is key information about the bird that is also detailed, but easy enough for younger readers to understand. The book is one that the reader wants to pick up and look at. At the top of the information page, is a very small but yet animated full-sized version of the bird.

In his illustrations, Chun brings the birds he has described to life, as if seeing them in their natural environment. This book sits as comfortably on a coffee table being viewed by adults as it does in a school library being viewed by children.



Dingo

Illus: Tannya Harricks

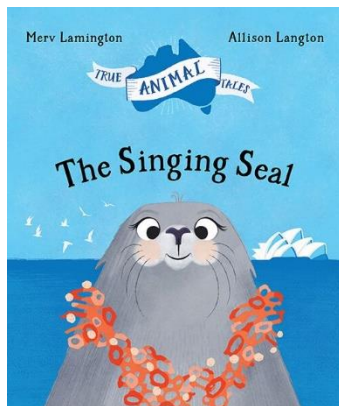
Claire Saxby

Walker Books Australia

ISBN: 9781925381283

The dingo is an iconic Australian animal that is often mysterious as they are rarely seen in the wild and normally only in zoos and wildlife parks. Adding illustrations to Saxby's delightful text, Harricks has been able to bring to life the natural environment in which a dingo lives and give moment to the dingoes themselves. Through her illustrations, Harricks shows the extremes of the Australian landscape while carefully detailing

the dingo and ensuring it stands out from its diverse landscape. Harricks has been able to clearly match the text and use colours that show how diverse the environment in which a dingo lives can be. Each brush stroke provides extra detail and meaning. The style of the illustrations is interesting and appealing to readers young and old and match not only the story but the information.



The Singing Seal

Illus: Alison Langton

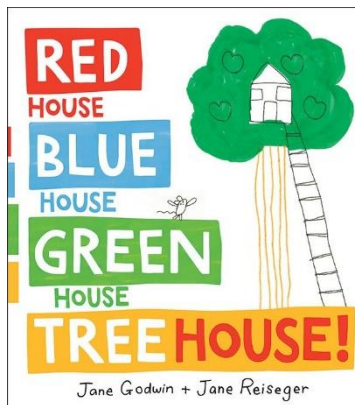
Merv Lamington

Affirm Press

ISBN: 9781925584868

This is the delightful story of Florence the Fur Seal who lives on the steps of the Sydney Opera House and has grand plans to be more than just a humble seal. Langton brings to life Florence in a fantastic whimsical manner with simple illustrations that match the text perfectly. The bright colour palette enhances Florence's personality and makes the reader want to delve further into the story. Langton's illustrations are detailed and make

Florence look relaxed in her adopted home at the steps of the Sydney Opera House. Consideration has been taken when matching the words to the illustrations allowing Florence to shine on each page. The additional detail of the Florence illustrations in the front and back endpapers make the reader fall in love with Florence even more.



Red House, Blue House, Green House, Tree House!

Illus: Jane Reiseger

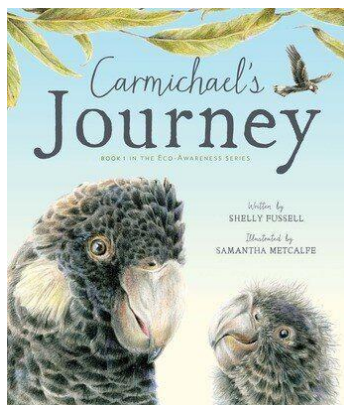
Jane Godwin

Affirm Press

ISBN: 9781925584691

Reiseger's work can be found all through the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne. It makes visiting the hospital a bit less stressful for patients and families. She has also painted a number of murals in children's bedrooms around Australia, so it is great to see her illustrating a children's book. This partnership with the talented Jane Godwin makes for a delightful book. Reiseger's bright and colourful illustrations are appealing

as they look like drawings created by young budding artists. Illustrations are clean, simple and colourful. The bright colours work well and make you want to create your own drawings. The illustrations clearly match Godwin's simple rhyming text, whose story is great for young readers. In a story designed to help identify colours, Reiseger has been able to bring the story to life and assist readers to learn their colours.



Carmichael's Journey

Illus: Samantha Metcalfe

Shelly Fussell

Little Steps Publishing

ISBN: 9781925545692

Book 1 in the Eco-Awareness Series, this is the beautiful story written by Shelley Fussell about a Carnaby's Black Cockatoo named Carmichael. Carnaby's Black Cockatoos are endangered species and Fussell wants to raise awareness of their plight. Carmichael learns to fly and leaves his coup with his parents on their flight to their coastal feeding ground. On his return from migration, Carmichael discovers that his coup is destroyed.

Metcalfe uses great detail to draw Carmichael and his surrounds from the natural to the urban. Each illustration matches Fussell's text perfectly and conveys meaning that assists the reader to understand the plight of native birdlife. This is one of the key messages Fussell wants the reader to take away from the book. It is easy to see why Metcalfe was chosen to illustrate Carmichael's Journey.



Statistics 2019 Entries

First time creators: 111

Indigenous creators: 14

Self-published: 43

Creators by State: ACT: 21. NSW: 156. NT: 5. QLD: 56. SA: 26. TAS: 9. VIC: 120. WA: 26.

Number of creators: Over 415

Category breakdown: OR: 78. YR: 121. EC: 121. PB: 149. EP: 51. NI: 31.

Publishing Houses: 65 (not including self-published entries)

Themes: Mental health, animals, survival, identity, asylum seekers, consumerism, Australian history, futuristic worlds, friendship, fairy tales, art, conservation, family, friendships, relationships, fantasy, humour.

Entry figures:

Category	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
OR	61	77	63	64	71	78
YR	152	128	130	117	128	121
EC	95	59	94	89	101	121
PB	122	122	131	115	130	149
EP	46	48	52	54	41	51
NI	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	31
Total	476	434	470	439	471	551

*Please note that the 488 entries stated in the Judges' Report Introduction refers to unique titles entered for the 2019 CBCA Book of the Year Awards. The total of the above entries 551 includes those titles entered in multiple categories.