

The CBCA 2022 Notable Books



ARTWORK BY JASMINE SEYMOUR | © THE CHILDREN'S BOOK COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

Older Readers Category



The Boy from the Mish

Gary Lonesborough

Published by Allen & Unwin | ISBN: 9781760525880

A tender, contemporary First Nation's coming of age book that speaks of the slow realisation of identity and one's place in the world. An important book in this category. Love fills its pages — family love, friendship love and romantic love, as well as love of culture. Set in an Indigenous mission, the story gives a realistic and positive insight into happy Indigenous family life. The language includes poetic descriptions of bush and countryside, and sensitive descriptions of emotions. The clash of Indigenous culture with modern Australia and the loss of culture and its impact is explored in depth.



Can the Real JR Stand Up, Please?

Nadia L. King

Dixi Books Publishing | ISBN 9781913680176

This is a tight, compact and cleverly realistic story. It includes many themes such as family violence, friendship/love, insecurity, creativity and survival. Family violence is described very realistically and demonstrates the frustrating powerlessness of bystanders. The main character is authentic and sympathetic. The writing is economical, dispensing with unnecessary detail thus producing a succinct and easily accessible, albeit confronting story which packs power. Despite the seriousness of the problems explored, the characters ultimately embark on their adult life with a feeling of hope, making this a story of optimism and courage.



Dark Rise

C. S. Pacat

Published by Allen & Unwin | ISBN 9781760875749

A fantastic example of world building, the number of settings were limited but offer a sense of the wider world. Fully developed characters with internal and external struggles evolve with frequent surprises and twists. This is an epic multi-layered historical fantasy of good and evil and all the grey of in-between. The historical backdrop is clever and credible, with vivid descriptions of costume, city landscape, activities and social etiquette. The constant action is breathtaking and gruesome. There is tension and suspense on several levels and the story is tightly woven. The prose was well crafted, with refined, yet relatable language. A fabulous example of the fantasy genre.

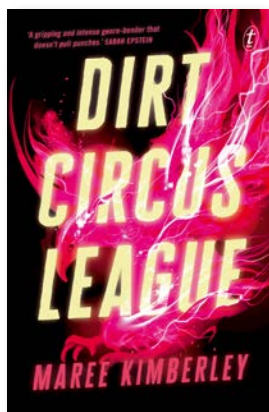


THE CHILDREN'S
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SINCE 1945 — YOUR CONNECTION TO STORY

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Stanley Place, South Brisbane 4101

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Merchandise enquiries: -merchandise@cbca.org.au
General enquiries: -admin@cbca.org.au



Dirt Circus League

Maree Kimberley

Published by Text Publishing | ISBN 9781922330253

An action packed, fast-paced story which defies usual genre definitions. An interesting female lead who also defies stereotypes, and several other supporting characters some of whom are more authentically drawn than others. A mature story with quite a lot of 'fight' violence, the story is ultimately about the environment and living with nature. Indigenous methods and approaches are also explored. The theme of humanity living beside and with nature rather than 'on top of' as an apex predator is deeply felt.



Evacuation Road

H. M. Waugh

Published by Rhiza Press | ISBN 9781761110351

Action packed adventure/survival story dealing with a world and society close to collapse. Realistic and clever dialogues, authentic representation of the different characters and a tense building of suspense. If something can go wrong, it does. But there is still room for lightness among the despair. The developing relationships unfold naturally. The teen characters are resourceful, resilient, flawed and all learning and developing fast in a chaotic South America where society, systems and safety have disintegrated. A sensitive exploration of drug use, addiction and withdrawal, a sweet exploration of first love and flirtations along with the power of friendship and unity. Strong themes were developed and yet no one theme over ran any others.



The Gaps

Leanne Hall

Published by Text Publishing | ISBN 9781922330482

A well-told and topical story which will appeal to its target audience. Many of the usual teenage themes are explored (body image, grief, belonging, friendships etc.) However, added to this are a few others, such as adult mental health, art and school censorship, concern for parental wellbeing and women's safety in general. Despite the usual themes and teenage characters, there is individuality in the storyline and the outcome. It encompasses many of the current 'hot topics' and manages to do this without feeling 'orchestrated' or contrived. A strong novel, which is sure to be popular with readers in this category.

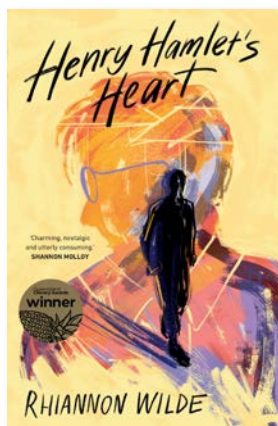


Girls in Boys' Cars

Felicity Castagna

Published by Pan Macmillan Australia | ISBN 9781760982980

This is a sophisticated story written in the first person. It delves into cultural and sexual expectations, how these change people's perception of you, and how wearing all these burdens can push you to break. The characters' search for escape and visibility demonstrates the consequences of the experienced injustices and degradation. The metafictional structure is not linear, reflecting the haphazard way we remember events, an effective and unusual method of revealing the characters' circumstances. The emotional journey each of the main characters experience feels authentic and the development of their characters is strong. The author has accurately captured the female anger towards a society which is still failing them.



Henry Hamlet's Heart

Rhiannon Wilde

Published by University of Queensland Press | ISBN 9780702263149

This is a beautifully sensitive and romantic story. The characters are strongly and realistically written with the four main characters representing varied types of young men who are bound by a close school friendship and camaraderie. The main characters' feelings are described delicately and sensually without being over sensationalised. The references to current music and teen culture make an authentic back drop for the story as does the descriptive language and conversations. Other common issues of year 12 exams, social aptitude, self esteem and future paths are incorporated without detracting from the main love story. This story captures all the tentative, diffident emotions and actions of young people discovering themselves.

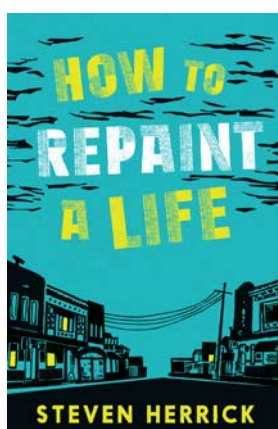


House of Hollow

Krystal Sutherland

Published by Penguin Random House Australia | ISBN 9780143796992

This story is weird, macabre, horrifying but in a suspenseful, exciting, vivid and compelling manner. It is an unsettling urban fantasy, horror cum mystery story that maintains the pace and the pages turning. The characters are diverse, attractive and interesting and will appeal to the older end of this reading category as will the setting of haute couture, music and celebrity fetish. The language is beautifully descriptive with wonderful imagery even in the most horrifyingly squeamish scenes. The cover design is outstanding and cleverly conveys the combination of beauty and horror encapsulated in the story.

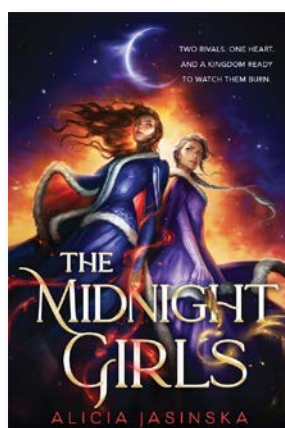


How to Repaint a Life

Steven Herrick

Published by University of Queensland Press | ISBN 9780702263156

A gentle exploration of difficult things, some universal, some specific to coming of age. Homelessness, domestic violence, misogyny and privilege are all unpacked in a way that is genuine, real and tense without ever being too overwhelming. A dramatic opening moves the story quickly along engaging readers in the outcome and the main characters lives. This is a beautiful story of contrasts; contrasting hopelessness with optimism, homelessness with family security and privilege, moral courage with revenge, old fashioned homeliness with modern chic and overall builds a picture of kindness and resourcefulness. The stunning prose captures a vivid picture of life in this small town without ever feeling overwritten. The characters are authentically written. It's compelling, honest, and heartfelt.



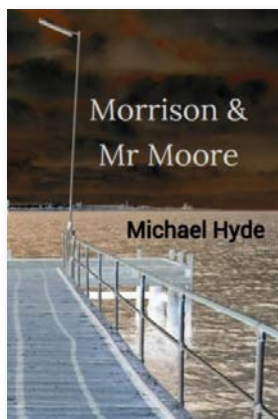
The Midnight Girls

Alicia Jasinska

Published by Penguin Random House Australia | ISBN 9781760894733

A vibrant and visceral fantasy which is a great example of the genre. The 18th century European setting is authentic and draws on a mix of Polish/Russian mythical history and witchcraft stories. A gripping and sumptuous story of anti-heroes, it is at its heart a teenage quest for autonomy, which is highly relatable. It sensitively explores ideas of exploitation by parents and developing one's own sense of right and wrong. Politics, parental loyalty, and magic are mixed up in this skilfully crafted world. Friendship and rivalry play out in a pacey, entertaining, adventure that wastes no time jumping into the action. The romance is quite lovely and genuine. It's unflinchingly queer in a way that feels entirely realistic of its setting and affirming for readers.



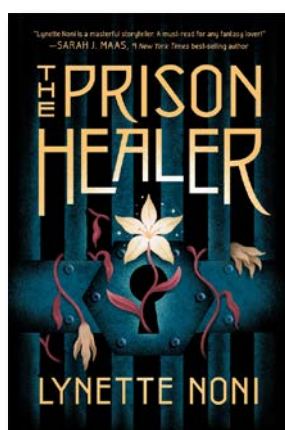


Morrison & Mr Moore

Michael Hyde,

Published by in case of emergency press | ISBN 9780645128024

An impressively touching story of a troubled teen with a short fuse and an endless supply of sarcasm. Written in the first person with astounding authenticity. The thoughts, actions, humour and wit of this character seem spot on, to the extent that the reader might think this story is semi-autobiographical. It shows how a connection with someone (in this case a teacher) can turn a life around. Deep problems are explored; abandonment, neglect, relationships, (especially those between students and teacher, children and parents), Alzheimer's, bullying and individuality are dealt with sensitively, realistically, and with wit and humour. The author clearly understands teenagers and effective and ineffective teaching. The ending is a really beautiful and fitting denouement for this story of development and hope.



The Prison Healer

Lynette Noni

Published by Penguin Random House Australia | ISBN 9781760897512

An intriguing fantasy story set in a meticulously constructed quasi medieval world, with detailed accompanying maps and plans. The strong female main character is intelligent, resilient and resourceful. From the start there is a subtle hint that she is something more. Similarly there is an extra, undisclosed aspect to the male character, a thread that develops unpredictably and adds interest. The plot is political; rebels against an oppressive regime with themes of family connections, misuse of power and human cruelty. The romantic sub plot is not over laboured and does not detract from the more serious themes. The twist at the end does herald that this is the first book in a series but The Prison Healer does stand alone.

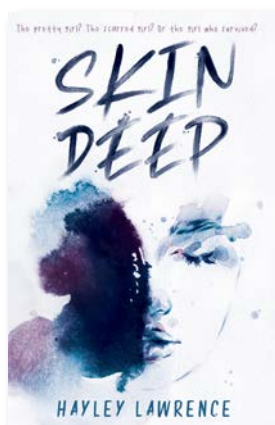


Road Tripping with Pearl Nash

Poppy Nwosu

Published by Wakefield Press | ISBN 9781743058435

This is an original take on the road - trip trope combined with a teen drama. The story of older teens covers the themes of belonging, friendship and love along with learning to stand up for yourself. It has action and the story moves at a good pace with realistic friend to friend and parent to teen dynamics and dialogue. Whilst physical beauty is explored it is done in a subtle way and underlines the main themes. Set against a little explored part of Australia's landscape this is a fine story expressed well with interesting characters.



Skin Deep

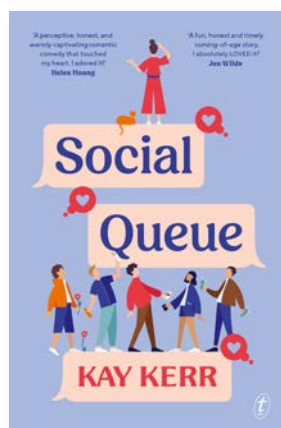
Hayley Lawrence

Published by Scholastic Australia | ISBN 9781760976446

A well-written book which tackles the age old question of beauty and it's perceived importance in our society. Told through the character of a 14 year old who was physically beautiful but is now badly scarred in a fire, it is an interesting view of the theme. Highly relatable, through the depiction of the friendship group at school, readers see clearly into the mind of the 14 year old. The main character deals with teen issues as well as PTSD and major health issues. The novel has suspense, a sense of adventure and conquering adversity. Realistic depiction of family dynamics and relationships alongside how these have changed and also suffered due to the fire.

The 'before' and 'after' structure of the chapters add interest and show development of character. A good YA novel which will appeal to a wide readership.





Social Queue

Kay Kerr

Published by Text Publishing | ISBN 9781922458018

A well-executed romance with an interesting take on the world of dating through the eyes of an autistic teen. The author is autistic, drawing from her own experience adds authenticity. Set in the first year of uni, at an internship where high school and its issues are still so fresh and the level of confidence in 'grown up' life is not high. It gives a lovely snippet of life just out of high school. The narrative device of having Zoe engage in 'dating' as part of her writing assignment cleverly combines elements of her life. The plot is well structured, and larger social issues are explored in ways that feel very realistic. The writing is crafted nicely, and flows with conversations and description working well together. Dealing with the usual dramas of young adults - exploring their world - social media, online dating, misogyny, family dramas, friendships and work relationships it will have wide appeal.

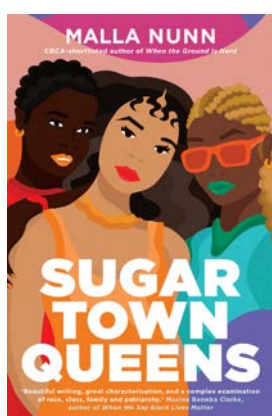


Stars in Their Eyes

Jessica Walton and Aśka

Published by Fremantle Press | ISBN 9781760990718

This is an incredibly relatable novel that not only reads as an adorably nerdy pop culture convention story, but also weaves lived experiences of being disabled by society and how that affects a person's experiences in life. The writing is strong, with a protagonist who simultaneously knows who they are while also discovering themselves in a new scenario. The relationships between the mother/daughter and father/child characters are beautifully portrayed with love and humour. It is strong in its depiction of disabilities in our society and how people perceive disabilities. The whole story has an appealing quality, well supported by the illustrations which are full of life and movement expressive. They create a definite atmosphere and clearly convey the character's emotions who are swept up in sci-fi and fantasy stories and storytelling, while being firmly grounded in everyday experience. This will be well loved by teens.



Sugar Town Queens

Malla Nunn

Published by Allen & Unwin | ISBN 9781760526832

An engaging, well-written socio-economic/family drama, exploring racism, poverty and wealth in Durban, South Africa. Well-developed and authentic with tangible differences between the city and the township. The entire cast of characters felt nuanced, with their own stories happening, and were fleshed out and full of life, each with unique reactions to the drama and for the most part managed to avoid being stereotypes. The setting was rich and well described. Despite being a setting far removed from a typical Australian teen's experience, there were enough elements in the story to relate to, while simultaneously giving insight into another way of life. The story unfolds gently and is well-paced, maintaining tension. Each twist/dramatic event happening in a realistic manner, sparking emotion, drama, and humour, creating an entirely enjoyable read. An up-lifting story of 'Ubuntu', the Zulu idea of compassion and humanity.



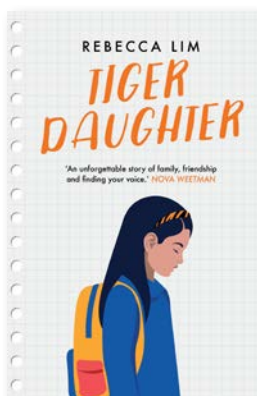


Terciell and Elinor

Garth Nix

Published by Allen & Unwin | ISBN 9781760878818

A great story in the fantasy genre. Written with lovely language, the story builds and the tension is created as the background to the two main characters is filled in. The world they live in is realistically created with vividly imagined details. The story manages to avoid stereotypes which are common in this genre.

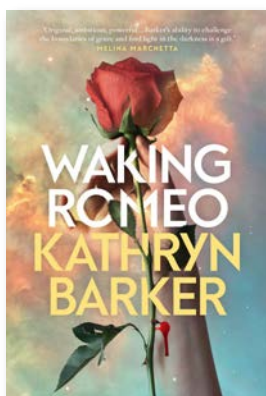


Tiger Daughter

Rebecca Lim

Published by Allen & Unwin | ISBN 9781760877644

Written with the palpable anger of being kept silenced in a cage of patriarchal injustice. A beautifully written story of the challenges and injustices of culturally based domestic violence and the injustices and effects of migrant discrimination. The strength of love, and the importance of connection to community are clear themes throughout. The book also explores, grief, cultural clash, patriarchy, racism and friendship. Youth wins out over adult indoctrination, disappointment and pessimism.



Waking Romeo

Kathryn Barker

Published by Allen & Unwin | ISBN 9781760297152

This is an ambitious and original mixture of genres and themes with all blending together into a well executed, compelling story of time-travel. The story includes elements of science fiction, teen romance and angst, apocalypse, environmental sustainability, mental health, feminism and classic literature. The characters are diverse and strongly developed, the dialogue is sharp and witty, making many humorous and easily recognisable references to 'Wuthering Heights' and 'Romeo and Juliet'. There is nothing predictable in this story and the reader must concentrate to unravel the resolution. This is for sophisticated older readers.



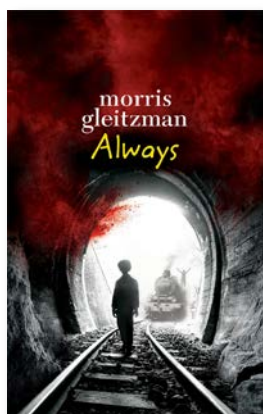
CBCA Book Awards 2022 Notables List: Older Reader Category

The CBCA 2022 Notable Books



ARTWORK BY JASMINE SEYMOUR | © THE CHILDREN'S BOOK COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

Younger Readers Category

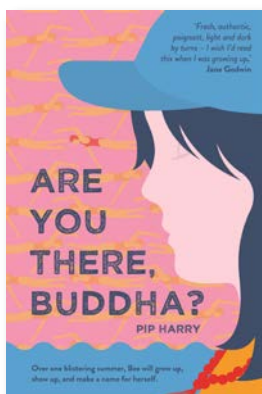


Always

Morris Gleitzman

Published by Penguin Random House Australia | ISBN 9780143793243

Through the introduction of the character Wassim and his plight, the final book in the Once series stands alone. Serious themes are covered with real danger to the characters including arson, WWII explosives and gang warfare. Despite this, the violence is never explicit or horrifying, portrayed as obstacles to be overcome with compassion and forgiveness. Each chapter begins with the same word: Always and inextricably links the alternating perspectives of Wassim and Felix, transporting readers into the hearts and minds of the characters. Best suited for the mature upper primary reader, this book is cleverly written and has emotional staying power.

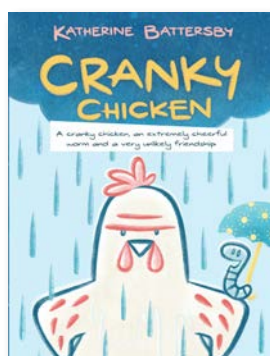


Are You There, Buddha?

Pip Harry

Published by Hachette Australia | ISBN 9780734420305

A verse novel about a girl struggling with friends, family, puberty and growing up, reminiscent of Judy Blume's *Are you There God? It's me, Margaret*. Bridget, the protagonist in this book, provides the reader with the opportunity to explore friendship, trust, bullying, relationships, and competition in a positive and sometimes light-hearted way. Bridget's concerns accurately portray the hopes and fears of the target audience, including sustainability and global warming. The verse novel format works well and supports the smooth, well-paced development of the plot. This novel is inclusive and would appeal to the younger reader audience.



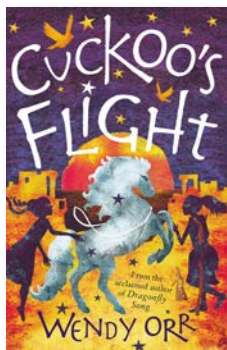
Cranky Chicken

Katherine Battersby

Published by Hachette Australia | ISBN 9780734420954

The focus of this comic style novel is the endearing duo formed by a cranky chicken and an optimistic worm. The text is created in such a way that the characters cleverly reveal themselves through their unique and easily distinguishable voice, style and wit. This well-crafted text enables the younger reader to examine difference, friendship and acceptance of others through its delightful and humorous approach. It capitalises on a consistent palette, simple lines, and a diversity in the size of illustrations and style of text boxes. This text utilises well-paced, episodic chapters to effectively enable the reader to enjoy and interpret the text.



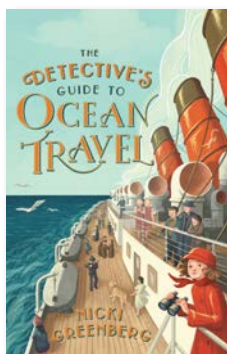


Cuckoo's Flight

Wendy Orr

Published by Allen & Unwin | ISBN 9781760524913

A story of faith, trust and belonging set in Ancient Crete around two outcasts — one outcast by society and one with a physical disability. Both girls find their place through the other outsiders of the story — horses. The story was incredibly well written and researched and the historical accuracy did not overshadow the characters development. The free verse sections lent an epic quality to the story and the setting and voice remained constant throughout. The themes of kindness, acceptance and belonging shone through the characters, variation in setting and language choices.



The Detective's Guide to Ocean Travel

Nicki Greenberg

Published by Affirm Press | ISBN 9781922400673

This beautifully crafted historical novel powerfully transports readers back to a 1920s adventure via a group of young children. Each character is creatively brought to life and the author's style and red herrings ensure that the reader remains glued to each page. The actions, interactions and the relationships developed within the narrative explore social class, gender roles, parent / child roles, mystery and deception. The opulent extravagance of the first class setting is consistent throughout and the reader is ushered through it seamlessly by the protagonist's sense of wonder.



Dragon Skin

Karen Foxlee

Published by Allen & Unwin | ISBN 9781760526108

This exceptionally well-crafted novel supports the reader to grow with 10-year-old Pip and her friends. Slowly but surely as part of the development of the characters and plot they are able to free themselves from manipulative, controlling and abusive situations in a sensitive and age-appropriate way. This book cleverly deals with themes of loneliness, emotional vulnerability, neglect, verbal and physical abuse and neglect in a calm, hopeful and dignified way and never detracts from the magic found by Pip, Laura and Archie. The parallel between Pip's needs and the needs of the baby dragon is cleverly written.

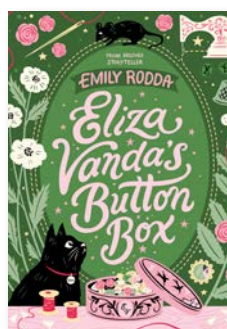


The Edge of Thirteen

Nova Weetman

Published by University of Queensland Press | ISBN 9780702263125

A skilfully nuanced coming-of-age story of thirteen-year-old Clem navigating friendship, parents, belonging, puberty and identity. The first-person style is engaging and suits the story's immersive and engaging settings of school and nature. It is clearly evident that the characters and narrative have been carefully crafted as each character, whether major or minor, deals with their own problems, motivations, wants and fears. Home-lives for each character were thoughtfully considered when offering a realistic portrayal of family life but did not become the defining characteristic of each depiction. This is a well-crafted novel with superb characterisation and themes that will resonate with readers in upper-primary.



Eliza Vanda's Button Box

Emily Rodda

Published by HarperCollins Publishers | ISBN 9781460759608

The events of this magical story make it apparent that in life it is best not to judge based on appearance. Its characters develop authentically and imaginatively to explore relationships, resilience, belonging and optimism. The design elements of the hardback cover, end papers, page numbers and chapter headings are exquisite and are creatively included to symbolically emphasise the act of 'sewing' or 'mending'. Intrigue and romanticism are delicately balanced across the characters and the sense of place that evolves make this novel entertaining and appealing for the younger reader.



Elsewhere Girls

Emily Gale & Nova Weetman

Published by Text Publishing | ISBN 9781922330451

A time-slip novel that tells of two young girls living over a hundred of years apart who switch bodies and lives. The reader experiences life in 1908 and 2021 through the eyes and experiences of Cat and Fanny, the protagonists inspired by the first female Olympic gold medallist in swimming. The characters are convincing and are developed in such a way that the reader explores the impact that time, place, and family have on one's life. It explores the differences of each era through the themes of family, history, freedom, feminism, responsibility and determination.



Exit Through the Gift Shop

Maryam Master (text), Astred Hicks (illustrator)

Published by Pan Macmillan Australia | ISBN 9781760983512

An amusing, sensitive and at times heart-breaking look at life through the eyes of a 12-year-old. Supported by her best friend AI, Ana openly faces her terminal cancer diagnosis and treatment, her relationship with her parents' and their new partners, whilst also coping with bullying. The characters and plot are enhanced by strategically placed illustrations, changes in font, and cleverly inserted word definitions which enable the reader to access the content in a non-confronting way. Without offering a happily ever after ending, the difficulties Ana encounters are authentically portrayed with hope, humour and positivity.

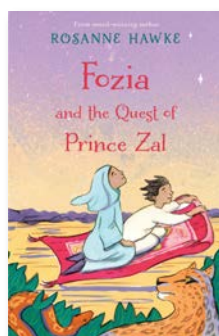


Footprints on the Moon

Lorraine Marwood

Published by University of Queensland Press | ISBN 9780702262838

This sophisticated verse novel is set in 1960s Australia against the backdrop of the Vietnam War, conscription and the Apollo 11 space mission. Through the protagonist Sharnie, the reader explores war, peace, conflict, courage, grief, family and relationships. Parallel stories within the text effectively develop characters, challenging the reader to explore their own feelings and make connections beyond the historical context. The cover is provocative and the headings within the text expertly capture the content. The efficient use of language in skilfully crafted free form verse make this an age appropriate, compelling read.

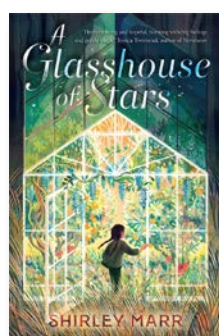


Fozia and the Quest of Prince Zal

Rosanne Hawke

Published by University of Queensland Press | ISBN 9780702263071

Although it is a companion novel in the Quest novels this story successfully stands alone. It is set in Pakistan and encompasses cultural diversity as it deals with world issues and complex themes of resilience, courage and survival. It explores Pakistani culture and includes some Urdu language. This creates empathy between the reader and the characters through their relatability and sense of 'same-ness'. The uniqueness of the characters and cultural norms are used to show that despite difference there are many things in life that make us similar despite our culture and background.



A Glasshouse of Stars

Shirley Marr

Published by Penguin Random House Australia | ISBN 9781760899547

Using the rarely seen second person point of view, Marr addresses both the reader and the protagonist in a tale of identity, belonging, social exclusion, cultural diversity and adaptation. This challenges the reader and makes the protagonist's emotions and fears direct and personal. The subtle magic of both the house and the glasshouse serves as an extension of the protagonist's emotions and provide her with hope. The story asks the reader to look beyond tragic and difficult events to a resilience that enables one to dream and addresses cultural biases, customs and expectations.



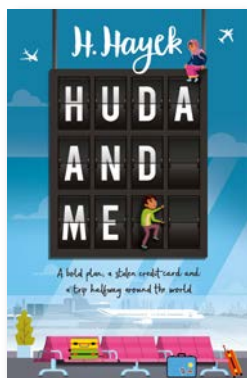


The Good Times of Pelican Rise: Save the Joeys

Samone Amba

Published by Affirm Press | ISBN 9781922419217

Set in the aftermath of the Victorian bushfires, themes of friendship, community and environmental conservation are brought to the fore through the practical project of knitting pouches for orphaned joeys and bringing joy to the community. The book has short, easy to read chapters interspersed with fact sheets and memes making it fast paced and engaging. For readers in this age group the authenticity of the characters and realistic context provide an opportunity to explore the value of making small contributions to community and the positive impact this can have on what might otherwise appear to be an insurmountable problem.

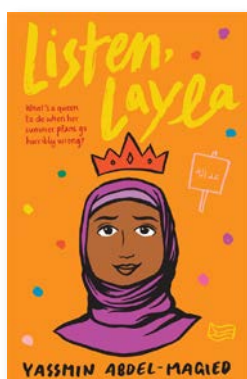


Huda and Me

H. Hayek

Published by Allen & Unwin | ISBN 9781760526023

Offering a fresh perspective of Australian life with two children from a Lebanese-Australian family running away from home, the author uses an accessible and lighthearted style even when dealing with complex topics such as racism and cultural identity. Huda and Akael were a delight to read and their family's bond was portrayed realistically: at times humorous and other times duty-bound. The alternating chapters depicting their adventures create an engaging and fast-paced tale of family, mischief and adventure perfect for this age group where problems are best faced together.



Listen, Layla

Yassmin Abdel-Magied

Published by Penguin Random House Australia | ISBN 9781760896065

The powerfully expressed, own voices novel, tells of Layla, a head-strong, enthusiastic, teenage girl of Sudanese heritage growing up in Australia. Layla's plans for the summer holidays are disrupted when her family is forced to return to Sudan to care for her sick grandmother. In Sudan, Layla questions her own values, as she is confronted by changes to her personal freedoms, differences in gender roles, family expectations and political unrest. Set in a disturbing historical context, the story presents life realistically and sensitively. It will resonate with readers from similar cultural backgrounds and provide insight to those from a different cultural heritage.



Little Gem

Anna Zobel

Published by Penguin Random House Australia | ISBN 9781760896089

Little Gem finds herself 100 years into the future when her spell goes wrong in this lighthearted mystery for younger readers. Filled with quirky characters and excellent pacing, the illustrations, font and language choices perfectly suit the target audience of 7-9 year olds with a charming cartoon style and simple vocabulary. This work skilfully plays with self-doubt and the power of others to recognise what can't always be seen, without belittling the reader or their ability to comprehend the narrative. Little Gem's character and confidence grow beautifully over the course of the novel through the friendship and assurance of the other characters and her belief in herself.



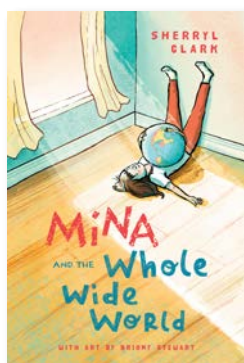


Mim and the Baffling Bully

Katrina Nannestad (text), Cheryl Orsini (illustrator)

Published by ABC: An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers | ISBN 9780733341656

With her father, brother, and numerous animals, Mim travels in a horse drawn caravan bookshop. The bookshop magically helps them spread happiness and wisdom by providing everyone who enters with just the right book to enable them to put in place actions that turn their life around. Chance encounters with unexpected books bring joy and create connections between characters - especially between the bully Gerda and her family. This book explores bullying, self-actualisation, family relationships and happiness. The plot and characters develop and grow throughout the text and the gentle style utilises varied sentence structure and an extensive vocabulary.

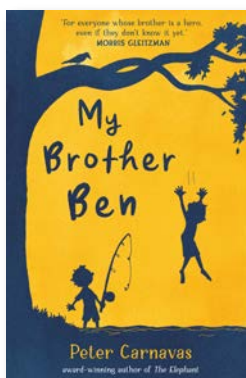


Mina and the Whole Wide World

Sherryl Clark (text), Briony Stewart (illustrator)

Published by University of Queensland Press | ISBN 9780702263231

Each word of this verse novel has been chosen for effectiveness and it is through this expressive economy of words that the novel encourages understanding between the character of Mina and her unexpected houseguest Azzami, a refugee boy. The story explores complex themes of refugees, family and friendship in a gentle way that allows young readers to understand and empathise with others who have different experiences to their own. The expressive illustrations perfectly enhance the poems, highlighting that everyone tells their story differently. The verse novel format makes the story easily accessible with each page acting as a chapter. The characters are developed quickly, with Mina being especially relatable to a young audience.



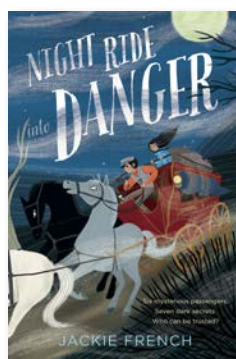
My Brother Ben

Peter Carnavas

Published by University of Queensland Press | ISBN 9780702263330

A heart-warming story portraying a summer spent on the banks of the local creek enables the reader to explore the evolving and complicated bond of brothers Luke and Ben. This timeless story uses hobbies, friendship challenges and changes in family circumstances to investigate themes of belonging, identity, trust and difference, sensitively and authentically.

This eloquent text captures the natural environment of Cabbage Tree Creek, providing a rich setting to beautifully incorporate native birds and bird watching. The realistic bird illustrations throughout the text cleverly echo Luke's thoughts and actions and metaphorically amplify how Luke finds solace and meaning in his life.



Night Ride into Danger

Jackie French

Published by HarperCollins Publishers | ISBN 9781460758939

In this carefully crafted and well researched historical fiction an experience that transports readers to regional NSW in the late 19th Century is created. Cobb and Co travel and bushrangers come to life through the diverse and realistic characters. Historical facts are skilfully explored and enable readers to learn about early Australian life. Through the characters the reader is able to consider the themes of family, cultural prejudice, racism, honesty, resilience, courage, deception. This was done without overwhelming the reader, highlighting the skill of the author. The novel closes with a section that provides detailed notes that context the events and characters.





Pawcasso

Remy Lai

Published by Allen & Unwin | ISBN 9781760526771

This skilfully created graphic novel, engages readers through a sophisticated integration of wit, vocabulary, emotion, and vibrant illustrations, resulting in a credible, action-packed plot. The characters hook the reader through the realistic way the stakes escalate as the protagonist's lie becomes more entrenched. The author/illustrator uses the actions of the dog character to provide readers with an opportunity to develop empathy, allowing them to explore why people think and act the way they do. All design elements combine with flair and expertise, using text and space in an uncomplicated and appropriate way for the younger reader.

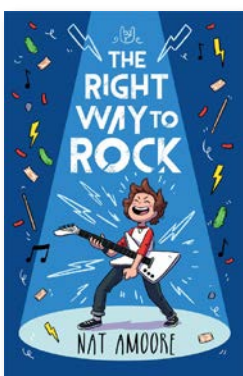


Rabbit, Soldier, Angel, Thief

Katrina Nannestad

Published by ABC: An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers | ISBN 9780733341465

Inspired by a true story this book sensitively deals with the horrors, friendships, hardships and ingenuity that are the products of wartime. The four parts of the story are each foreshadowed by the motifs that Sasha collects, adding meaning to the telling. The parts are also reflected in the title enhancing the meaning-laden story full of sadness, tragedy, hope and joy. Sasha's innocence is conveyed beautifully, bringing light and joy to what could have been a very dark story. The characters are heart warming and engaging for the readers and a highlight of the story.



The Right Way to Rock

Nat Amore

Published by Penguin Random House Australia | ISBN 9781760897703

A humorous story about being true to yourself but also sensitively handling bigger themes of identity, disability, friendship and arts funding in schools. Mac's best friend Flynn's Tourette's syndrome is handled appropriately and his infectious enthusiasm and determination are one of the book's highlights, with Amore using it to inform and dismiss stereotypes associated with the condition. The novel itself is structured as a three-act musical with each chapter (scene) opening in script form with lyrics to the tune of a well-known Broadway number. This structure created great pacing with high-points perfectly placed at the end of each act.



Seven Wherewithal Way

Samantha-Ellen Bound

Published by Affirm Press | ISBN 9781922419224

An adventure of two sisters, their cousin and their assistant who embark on a quest through the realms of Slavic folktales and monsters, building themes of courage, loyalty, self-worth and resilience throughout. The setting varies from comforting to oppressive as the scene required, with moments of quiet and introspection after exciting action scenes, giving both readers and the characters room to breathe. The character of Celeste offers a new perspective on a heroine as she struggles with the realities of the adventure she's always wanted. Best suited to upper primary readers.



Wednesday Weeks and the Tower of Shadows

Denis Knight & Cristy Burne

Published by Hachette Australia | ISBN 9780734420190

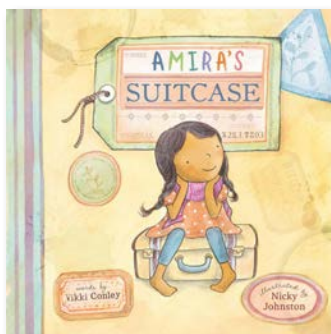
A fun, humorous fantasy adventure with quirky characters and fantastically out-of-the-box settings with a side of science and logical thinking. Each character has their own unique voice and is skilfully brought to life. They each add to the story and never feel superfluous in their quirky charm. The plot of the novel is magical in its realm-travelling adventure, interactions with fairy cleaning services and talking skulls but grounded in maths, science and logic in an engaging way. Never does this feel forced or didactic. Readers are transported though the nine-realms and even learn a little science along the way.

The CBCA 2022 Notable Books



ARTWORK BY JASMINE SEYMOUR | © THE CHILDREN'S BOOK COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

Early Childhood Category



Amira's Suitcase

Vikki Conley (text), Nicky Johnston (illustrations)

Published by New Frontier Publishing | ISBN 9781922326133

New beginnings, simple pleasures and hope symbolised in a growing plant and a blossoming girl are themes in this book. When Amira arrives with her suitcase to a new home she is timid, but through play she nurtures herself and heals, showing bravery, resourcefulness and kindness. Readers are invited to make connections whilst also exploring lives that may be different to their own. Colour, line, shape and texture harmonise in an expert application of watercolours. A high-quality production and symmetry between text and illustrations provides a heart-warming story. Intertextual connections may also be made to Jack and the Beanstalk.



Big Love

Megan Jacobson (text), Beck Feiner (illustrator)

Published by Walker Books Australia | ISBN 9781760652890

A strong sense of place expands outward from the family home to the neighbourhood and to the universe as a whole, celebrating a parent's love for a child in different cultural contexts. Vibrant, childlike illustrations, using solid pigmented inks, harmonise perfectly with the text. The descriptive language is light, humorous and playful, with metaphors that add a delicate poetic touch and subtle use of alliteration, similes, and personification. The repeated refrain "But it's not as big as my love for you" invites participation. The design has been carefully considered in terms of size; words and images are delicately connected, and the cover invites touch. This is a happy, warm, big hug of a book.



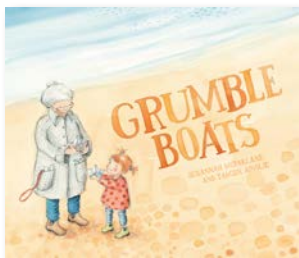
Florence & Fox

Zanni Louise (text), Anna Pignataro (illustrations)

Published by Walker Books Australia | ISBN 9781760651350

Text and illustrations harmonise beautifully, pairing the authentic voices of two characters pair perfectly with naïve, soft artwork. A satisfying resolution extends the thinking of the reader to understand other perspectives: with no adults hovering above, two youngsters learn how to navigate social interactions and understand the rules of play and readers are invited to observe. The appeal and stylishness of the book also rest on its clear and direct language. Illustrations are rough and loose, yet the design of characters show sincere emotions and consistency, contributing to story progression. The message that more can be accomplished if we share is gently woven into both story and illustrations without being didactic.





Grumble Boats

Susannah McFarlane (text), Tamsin Ainslie (illustrations)

Published by Affirm Press | ISBN 9781925712919

Readers of this book are directed through meaningful reflections and dramatic play to discover metaphors that are then 'released' as boats, to be reimagined as tools of language, thought and emotion. The gentle watercolour illustrations suit the mood and pace of the story and changes in perspective and small, framed transitions both draw the reader in and relieve the double spreads. Themes of patience, care, kindness, particularly with self, emerge. The theme of developing inner dialogue while creating art is perfectly pitched at the young reader and ties into the paper boat-making activity at the end.



Hello World

Lisa Shanahan (text), Leila Rudge (illustrations)

Published by ABC: An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers | ISBN 9780733340826

An exploration of all the small wonders a toddler may encounter from morning to night, effectively evoking multiple aspects of family life, in an organic, textured and integrated way. There is a focus on the father in the family, and joy, marvel and creativity are to be found in nature and in ordinary happenings. The pencil and watercolour illustrations reflect the mood of the text to perfection and possibly depict a blended family, as well as different nationalities. The design is a hand-drawn tapestry that is stylistically consistent and the simple and under-written language creates space for an adult reader's interpretation in a read-aloud context, creating potential for repeated readings.

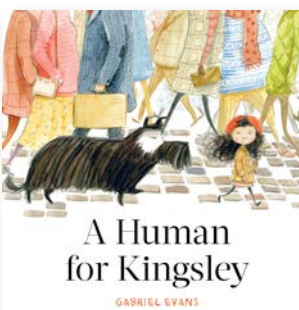


How to Make Friends: A Bear's Guide

Cat Rabbit

Published by Berbay Publishing | ISBN 9780645069600

This is a humorous and refreshing story that explores the age-old problem of how to make friends, told from Bear's perspective. The book has a delightfully retro feel, created by the plush, sculptural handmade characters, vintage clothing and the use of strong pastel-coloured backgrounds. The cut-out front cover acts like a window to the story, inviting the reader inside. Shifts in perspective provide visual relief from the stage-like settings and text is incorporated in varied and interesting ways. Bear is characterised as a leader who teaches others while teaching herself. The book taps into the magic and importance of play in early childhood and its role in negotiating social relationships and acceptance of ourselves and others. The message that friends can do many things together and other activities alone is a valuable lesson for young children.



A Human for Kingsley

Gabriel Evans

Published by Hardie Grant Children's Publishing | ISBN 9781760506919

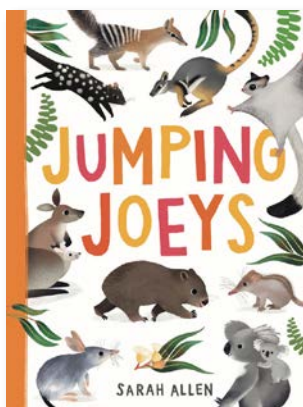
This is a wonderful twist on the familiar notion that human beings are the ones who choose pets or rescue animals. Told from the perspective of the dog, Kingsley is presented with charming and whimsical humour, as he looks for a suitable human to call his own. Seeing the world through the eyes of the dog is a shift in perspective for young readers, which will prompt discussion around perceptions and viewpoints. In keeping with a dog's perspective, most of the illustrations are from ground level and in a dog's line of sight. The text sits separately from the illustrations in a clear, simple font but speech is placed next to the characters in a different font. The detailed watercolour and pencil illustrations harmonise perfectly with the text and there is a lovely repeating motif of autumn leaves and bricks. An engaging and thought-provoking book with two strong and delightful characters.



Jetty Jumping

Andrea Rowe (text), Hannah Sommerville (illustrations)
Published by Hardie Grant Children's Publishing |
ISBN 9781760500658

A beautifully written and highly relatable book about overcoming fears. Time and place have been carefully created to depict an Australian beach town in summer. The language is rich and descriptive, using apt vocabulary and alliteration. The eye-catching, swirling text depicts movement to mirror themes of water and the action it describes. Mood is gently constructed. The joy of the jumping girls contrasts with Milla's trepidation as she sits apart, afraid to participate in their fun yet wanting to join them. A lovely twist of plot adds momentum and motivation to the main character's actions, who overcomes her fears to finally enter the water.



Jumping Joeys

Sarah Allen
Published by Affirm Press | ISBN 9781922626004

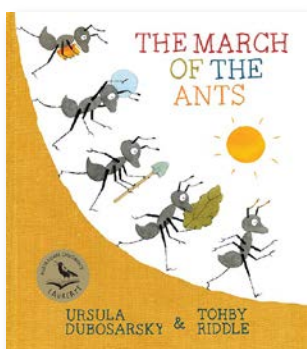
With a delightful balance between narrative and information, this book explores the nocturnal world of Australian marsupials. The story spans from sunset to sunrise to reveal what occurs in the animal world while children are sleeping. The rhyming, descriptive text, which marries beautifully with the illustrations, is concise and achieves a well-balanced tone engaging the younger reader while also maintaining a sense of realism. The stunning, vibrant illustrations are detailed, accurate, and attractive and also include an insight into the habitats of each animal. They vary in terms of layout, framing, and perspective, and there is always a sense of movement which effectively draws the reader into their imagined landscapes. The included field guide expands the zoological information and beautiful endpapers depict the flora associated with each animal.



Little One

Jane Godwin (text), Gabriel Evans (illustrations)
Published by Affirm Press | ISBN 9781922400826

A story set firmly in a child's world, with themes of loss and letting go. Written as a first-person narrative, the relationship between Pippi and her doll Little One is tenderly revealed as both intimate and familiar. She tells of losing her precious doll and how she reconciles herself with its loss. The detail in the watercolour, gouache and pencil illustrations matches the mood perfectly. The design conveys a sense of richness and harmony in childhood that is so easily disrupted by the loss of an imaginary friend. Expressed through precise and effective text with illustrations that harmonise perfectly, this book will engage children of many ages.

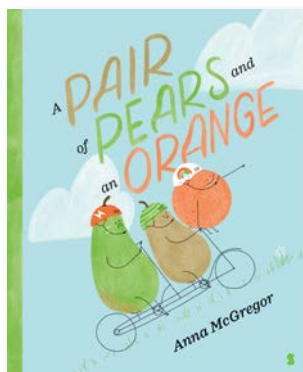


The March of the Ants

Ursula Dubosarsky (text), Tohby Riddle (illustrations)
Published by Book Trail Press | ISBN 9780648498919

This inspiring story is simple in its plot and theme and is a timeless tale of the power of storytelling to unite and give hope and purpose. Themes of hope, dreams and imagination, resilience and courage are explored, delivering wonderful messages with subtly and humour. The whimsical illustrations pair perfectly with the text. The use of collage, white space and line combines expertly to create setting and movement. The setting changes across different terrains, and the mood and sense of time passing is well conveyed by the night-time scenes.



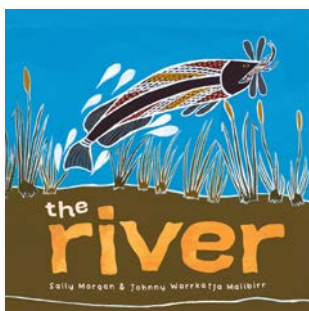


A Pair of Pears and an Orange

Anna McGregor

Published by Scribble | ISBN 9781922310750

Themes of friendship, resilience and inclusivity are explored in this book. Word play, quirky humour and anthropomorphised fruit characters lighten the mood of some big ideas for small people. Bright, pastel illustrations are engaging and emotions are captured well with simple pen lines. The characters are well developed through the story, each one distinctive in colour and shape. The plot is well-paced with rising tension and the resolution is satisfying and positive. This story demonstrates in simple yet powerful ways that including new friends is possible when creative solutions are utilised.

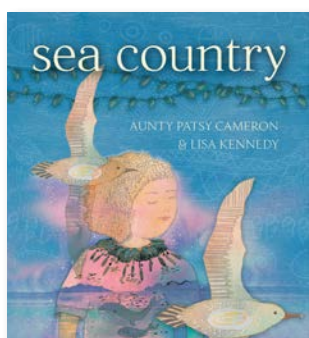


The River

Sally Morgan (text), Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr (illustrations)

Published by Magabala Books | ISBN 9781922613028

This story, set near the narrator's home, celebrates the life that speaks to us within the ecology of a river system. The use of cross-hatching (or Rarrk paintings) in the illustrations reinforces the setting and are notable as First Nation art. The colour palette is restrained, limited to earthy tones and a vibrant blue, the latter used both for the expansive sky and the river, reflecting the vibrancy of life found there. The illustrations feature double-page spreads, a horizon line running through the book and a sense of movement as each animal winds its way through the story and along the river. The book successfully uses a section of simple, repeated text that encourages children's participation with words appropriate for young, independent readers.

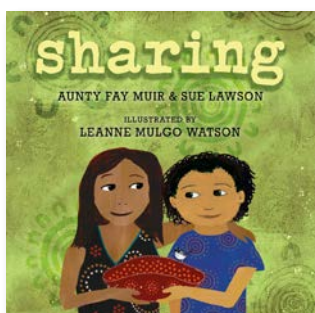


Sea Country

Aunty Patsy Cameron (text), Lisa Kennedy (illustrations)

Published by Magabala Books | ISBN 9781925936032

Reminiscing about a childhood spent on pre-colonial Flinders Island, this book gently immerses readers into the daily life of a young child of the Pairebeene/Trawlwoolway clan. Weather, seasons, cycles of nature and food are richly depicted and interwoven alongside representations of contemporary mixing of cultures. The watercolour illustrations are expertly rendered – blending, bleeding, and evoking the fluidity of time, feelings layered within memories and the hidden depths within the cycles of the seasons. The inclusion of maps, portraits, historical photos and biological information add greater depth, but the main body of text would suit younger readers, with the assistance of differing font styles and sizes. The narrator emerges in the final two pages, reinforcing connection between past and present.



Sharing

Aunty Fay Muir & Sue Lawson (text), Leanne Mulgo Watson (illustrations)

Published by Magabala Books | ISBN 9781925768749

This third book in the series 'Our Place – Welcoming Children to our Culture' does just that with precise, effective words that flow and fully engage the reader. Unlike other picture books on this theme which may focus on toys or food, the concept of sharing is expanded to explore the impact of our needs and wants on a country and global scale. The illustrations show artistic expertise through their combination of different mediums and techniques on each double-page spread, and the book stands out as fresh, vibrant and original. Text sits within each illustration yet is distinct from the image, and is in a strong, large font. This is a powerful yet gentle lesson on how we all might learn to respect the land by learning from First Nation culture.



Tomorrow is a Brand-New Day

Davina Bell (text), Allison Colpoys (illustrations)
Published by Scribble | ISBN 9781925849462

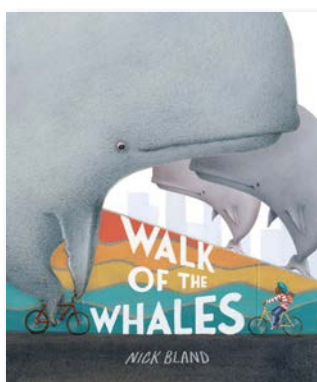
This is a warm-hearted picture book with messages of growth, forgiveness and making amends that will resonate with many children. The tone is one of love and reassurance. Positive messages of reconciliation will assist the reader to realise everyone makes mistakes and suggest ways to right the wrongs. The text consists of rhyming couplets complement the illustrations perfectly, creating a seamless balance and momentum that leads the narrative forward, maintaining interest. It is a joy to read aloud. The humorous, vibrant illustrations are energetic and uplifting and the dynamic endpapers represent the rainbow, a symbol of hope, forgiveness and new beginnings, reflecting the theme of the book.



Train Party

Karen Blair
Published by Penguin Random House Australia | ISBN 9781760899578

A family birthday celebration at the miniature steam engine track is obviously a dream come true for the protagonist of this picture book. The illustrations are superbly rendered with rough brush strokes and vibrant colours. The text is minimal, using simple vocabulary and it sits comfortably and distinctly within each page. The rhythm of the text perfectly echoes the clickety clacks of the train as it trundles along its track. It is possible that this book could be even more fun for children than the hypothetical park itself, with the range and angles of perspectives on the park's experiences that the book so masterfully enables.



Walk of the Whales

Nick Bland
Published by Hardie Grant Children's Publishing | ISBN 9781760509026

The magic and mystery of childhood imaginings are combined with the grand possibilities of illustrations, and a profound message about humanity's interconnection with the planet. This weighty message is handled with a delicate touch, rhythmic text and a balance of imagination, humour and truth. There is a touching moment when a child queries the situation and the emotion in the whale's blunt reply is beautifully framed by the tear in its eye. Less about pollution, this is a book about possibilities: the exchange of rubbish for the whales foregrounds the principle that for every action in nature, there is a consequence and there is always a fresh story and connection to discover.

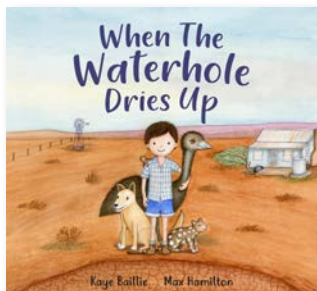


What Do You Call Your Grandma?

Ashleigh Barton (text), Martina Heiduczek (illustrations)
Published by ABC: An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers | ISBN 9780733340840

This high-production picture book is a heart-warming trip around the globe, celebrating the wonderful relationships between children and their grandmothers. Themes of family, love, culture and diversity are explored, and the mood is one of joy and celebration. Written in rhyming couplets, the illustrations marry beautifully with the text, and reveal further details about family life in homes around the world, offering opportunities to discuss cultures other than the readers' own. Each grandmother is unique, but all are portrayed as vibrant women interacting with their grandchildren in a delightful array of different activities. The appendix connecting each word for 'grandmother' to the corresponding language is well-researched and something to relish.



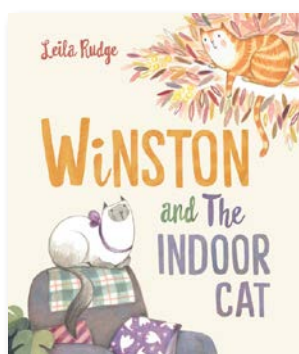


When the Waterhole Dries Up

Kaye Baillie (text), Max Hamilton (illustrations)

Published by Windy Hollow Books | ISBN 9781922081971

Boisterous fun, chaotic bush animals and waterplay feature in this cumulative tale about a very dusty boy who needs a bath. The setting of the dry, red Aussie outback is clearly established, and the bath time routine will be familiar to young readers and the adults too! Watercolour double-page spreads in landscape format fill each page, inviting the reader in. There is a wonderful escalation of pace throughout the book firstly as the boy begins to undress, then the drama as each animal arrives, until bath time erupts into delightful chaos. The bath emptying of water in the ruckus, the arrival of rain and the ensuing dip in the newly filled dam combine for a satisfying conclusion. Interesting endpapers suit the theme of the book. Font styling is excellent. Young readers will fully engage with this form of nursery rhyme which encourages participation.



Winston and the Indoor Cat

Leila Rudge

Published by Walker Books Australia | ISBN 9781760652609

Friendship and individuality are explored in this gently told story of two very different cats. Winston, the outdoor cat, tries to entice the indoor cat outside, while the indoor cat, who is comfortable with its leisurely life, tempts Winston into its world inside the house. Characterisation is developed through subtle expressions of the cats when they find themselves outside their respective normal environments. With short sentences and concise phrases, young children will delight in listening to the words while being captivated by the illustrations. Beautiful, soft watercolour and pencil illustrations vary from full-page spreads to small vignettes and the final sequence where the cats agree to disagree and find common ground is a satisfying and humorous resolution.



Wonderful Shoes

Emma Bowd (text), Tania McCartney (illustrations)

Published by Windy Hollow Books | ISBN 9781922081988

Bright, engaging illustrations along with a minimalist text combine to create a playful atmosphere in this fun book. Shoes in all shapes and sizes are explored and worn by a diverse range of children. The focus remains on the children and their play, as adults are only seen from the neck or waist down. Text flows in a simple rhyming style and the well placed fonts are presented in lively and varying colours and styles, encouraging reader participation. The noises that accompany each shoe cover the whole of the facing page, inviting enthusiastic interaction when read aloud. The anticipation of the page turn is an effective feature that is well-structured and paced. This is a highly relatable book for many implied readers.



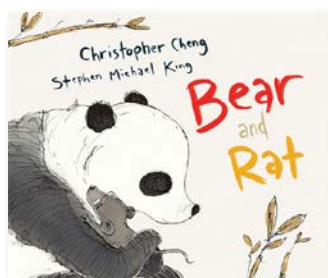
CBCA Book Awards 2022 Notables List: Early Childhood Category

The CBCA 2022 Notable Books



ARTWORK BY JASMINE SEYMOUR | © THE CHILDREN'S BOOK COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

Picture Book Category



Bear and Rat

Christopher Cheng (text), Stephen Michael King (illustrations)

Published by Penguin Random House Australia | ISBN 9781760896287

In this book we are invited to listen to an important conversation between two old friends. The love, patience and respect they have for each other is something to aspire to in all relationships. Although adults will read this as a story about parting and grieving, children will not necessarily see this. The illustrations are delicate and sparse, with just a few lines to show this poignant friendship. The story has a fable-like quality with layers upon layers of meaning. It is also sure to provide stimulating and thought-provoking discussions in the classroom.



Blue Flower

Sonya Hartnett (text), Gabriel Evans (illustrations)

Published by Penguin Random House Australia | ISBN 9781760894450

A beautiful book exploring important themes of disliking school, self-love and being proud to be different. The book is filled with genuine emotion and has a strong central character revealed through convincing inner dialogue. Perfect pace and positioning of page turns make this an excellent read aloud. The illustrations offer delicate and nuanced explorations of character and setting; the colour palette is restrained, and colours are used in a symbolic way. This character and situation will resonate with many young readers and the overall message is inspiring. A thought-provoking book which will generate lots of discussions with children.



The Boy and the Elephant

Freya Blackwood

Published by HarperCollins Publishers | ISBN 9781460759998

This wordless book is a deeply emotional, tender, poignant and quietly affecting story which sings on so many levels. Rereading will reward the reader. There is the need to stop destruction of the natural environment alongside themes of friendship, loneliness and displacement in a world where people are too busy to see beauty in the world. The characters, settings and transitions in time are engaging, emotive and worthwhile. There are many elements in this book; young and wistful protagonist, peacock and orange colour palette used to represent home life, delicately drawn figures and sensitive use of lighting.



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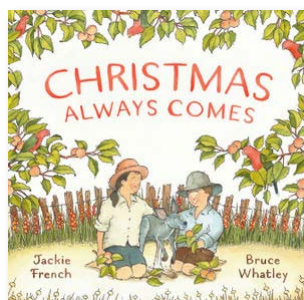


The Boy Who Tried to Shrink His Name

Sandhya Parappukkaran (text), Michelle Pereira (illustrations)

Published by Hardie Grant Children's Publishing | ISBN 9781760509361

This book celebrates cultural differences and also perfectly captures the awkwardness and embarrassment of feeling 'different'. Readers will relate to the analogy of practising with a skateboard and learning to say their name. As we read, we all gain confidence with how to say his name too. The limited retro colour palette, reminiscent of the Indian flag, is very appealing. There are effective visual metaphors such as the images of wool and paper as he tries to shrink and fold the name; the puffer fish as it explodes to its full size; and finally, the bird as it takes flight. There is an energy and playfulness which will engage readers young and old.

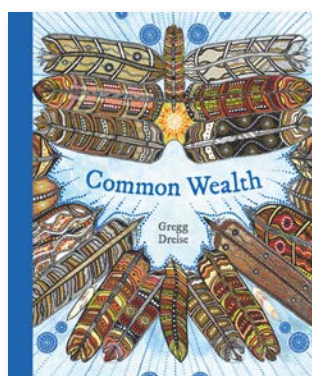


Christmas Always Comes

Jackie French (text), Bruce Whatley (illustrator)

Published by HarperCollins Publishers | ISBN 9781460757895

This is a nostalgic and quintessentially Australian Christmas story by two masters of the picture book genre. The deft use of acrylic wash strengthens the outback atmosphere. The characters are believable and engaging and the story concludes in a satisfying way without being overly sentimental. Joey's character and voice is perfect: an innocent and true believer in the magic of Christmas. The addition of Mr Darcy is an important one: a man who has loved but has now lost his faith and compassion. This book offers readers a fresh historical perspective whilst still capturing the true spirit of Christmas.

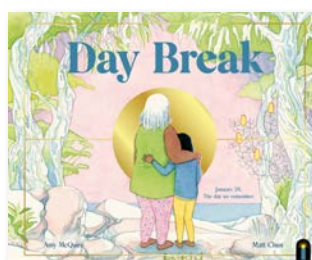


Common Wealth

Gregg Dreise

Published by Scholastic Australia | ISBN 9781760975166

There is a strong political statement in this book conveyed through slam poetry and dramatic illustrations. Readers are presented with a positive set of arguments supporting change. This is not a them versus us book, but rather one that emphasises unity and togetherness. The striking covers are very appealing. The deconstruction and critique of each phrase and stanza — through word, illustration and textual design is powerful. This text repays rereading. It is a thought-provoking book that teachers of older students will want to use. The judges all commented that they would love to hear the author read this work aloud!



Day Break

Amy McQuire (text), Matt Chun (illustrator)

Published by Hardie Grant Children's Publishing | ISBN 9781760508159

This book offers important perspectives about how a multi-generational Aboriginal family marks 26 January, tackling an important, hotly-contested current debate in a quiet and considered way. From the thought-provoking title, to the visually symbolic design of the cover, readers are challenged to think about Australia Day in different ways. An atypical colour palette, pink, green and blue, provides a different visual lens. The teacher and her outdated explanations about Australian 'history' are jarring. Dad's militance is balanced with Gran's sage patience and quiet resistance to loud celebrations. The visual reference to Charles Meer's iconic painting The Australian Beach pattern (1940) and the indigo tones of the double-page spread depicting first contact and Nan's experience of the Stolen Generation confront and move readers.



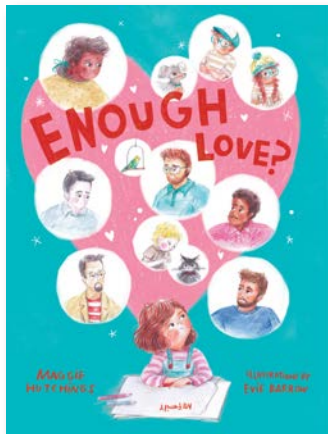


Don't Forget

Jane Godwin (text), Anna Walker (illustrator)

Published by Penguin Random House Australia | ISBN 9781761040955

This uplifting book for our times can be read on many levels and is sure to delight readers. The repeated motif of 'Don't forget' works well in this philosophical tale. Godwin's text gradually shifts from concrete, practical tasks such as brushing teeth to more abstract concepts that are central to the human experience such as hope, love, compassion, memory, and belonging. Walker's subtle colours and textures illustrating each scene provide much to engage with. Her use of gouache and pencil in her collage pieces builds up subtle layers which lends a sense of calm. Although the protagonists are young children, the themes and literary structure can be explored by many different ages.



Enough Love?

Maggie Hutchings (text), Evie Barrow (illustrator)

Published by Affirm Press | ISBN 9781922400833

Reflecting the reality and diversity of family life for many young readers, this story acknowledges the complexities of adult relationships and how these might often seem confusing to the children involved and impacted by them. There's a genuine truth and honesty in the child's emotions; her sadness, anger and betrayal are gut-wrenching at times. There's also a wonderful optimism and sense of love at the heart of this story. The illustrations suit the subject matter well and help to create the 'messiness' of family relationships. The endpapers perfectly reflect the overall message of the book- that love (and families) can grow; there's always room for more.



The Flying Angel

Vicki Bennett (text), Tull Suwannakit (illustrations)

Published by Scholastic Australia | ISBN 9781743835517

The use of a first-person narrator gives a truth, intimacy and immediacy to the story allowing young readers to connect with events well beyond their experience. This book focuses on a small fragment of a larger and more complex story from a female perspective. The sepia tones evoke a sense of the past and echo the old photographs in the end papers. Shades of light and dark and subtle glimpses of colour create meaning and shifts in mood. The spread where Sister Marie is haloed in light inside the plane is beautiful, powerful and reaffirms the notion of the flying 'angel'.



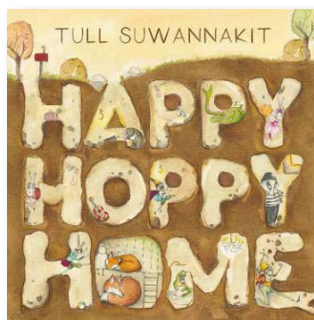
Frankie and Fossil

Jess McGeachin

Published by Penguin Random House Australia | ISBN 9781760898847

There is a sweet charm to this story which explores themes of friendship, imagination and belonging. The illustrator gives the inanimate fossil so much life and personality. The use of dots for eyes and the puppy's mannerisms have been created with skill. There are the humorous background details in the images and subtle changes in tone and mood. Frankie's voice is convincing. The inclusion of the wordless page adds a layer of poignancy to the story and allows the reader to slow down. There are also references to inclusivity in the illustrations. It is good to see a book about a girl who loves dinosaurs.



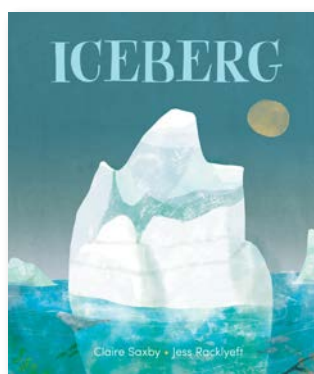


Happy Hoppy Home

Tull Suwannakit

Published by Scholastic Australia | ISBN 9781742999937

The grass is greener is an oft-used trope of picture books as is the message there's no place like home. This book explores these themes with an engaging and relatable story about family life. The different characters all have distinct personalities and there are humorous details in the illustrations. The cross-section perspective allows readers to view all the action, peeping into the different compartments of this busy burrow. The tactile cover is very appealing and good use has been made of the title page to introduce the story. The illustrations are presented in burrow shaped frames and the brown palette gives this family story a warm glow. Young children will find this book enjoyable and reassuring.

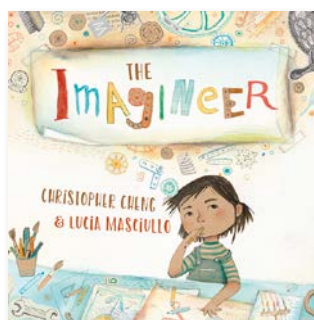


Iceberg

Claire Saxby (text), Jess Racklyeft (illustrations)

Published by Allen & Unwin | ISBN 9781760526047

The writing is sophisticated; facts and technical vocabulary are lyrically combined with beautiful description. The sentences are perfectly balanced, and verbs are used precisely to describe the vivid life of this icy place. The choice of artistic medium offers a perfect complement to the text; the illustrations are subtle at times and commanding at others. The use of many shades of blue beautifully reflects this icy environment and immerses readers in the Antarctic. A sense of wonder is created through transparent layers of water allowing readers to spot life above and the mysteries below the surface.

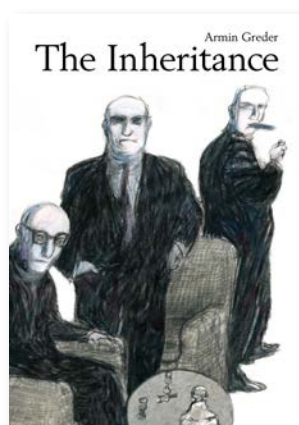


The Imagineer

Christopher Cheng (text), Lucia Masciullo (illustrations)

Published by National Library of Australia | ISBN 9780642279682

From the cover readers can anticipate the design and main focus of this story. The title is just perfect and really encapsulates the ideas. The endpapers give insights into Penny's mind, imagination and past inventions. There are themes of perseverance, imagination, problem solving, curiosity and inter-generational relationships. The judges appreciated the rich vocabulary and the eclectic collection of treasures. Young readers will gain even more when they read about each of the real objects on the final pages. Penny is imbued with an enquiring personality through the naive illustrations.



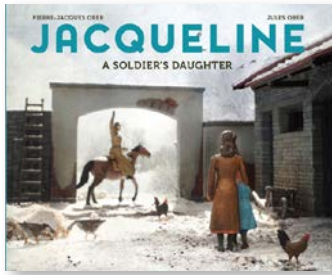
The Inheritance

Armin Greder

Published by Allen & Unwin | ISBN 9781760526788

A challenging and unsettling picture book expressing the deep connection between capitalism and the state of our planet within the setting of an uber wealthy family. Bleak but beautiful compressed charcoal and pastel illustrations evoke a visceral response. In this picture book for older readers the reader is invited to sit with the metaphorical and literal darkness of this chilling tale. Many older readers will be engaged with and energised by the haunting nature of the wordless pages that don't give in to a 'happy ending' temptation. The bold use of negative space and ironic title will provoke much discussion.



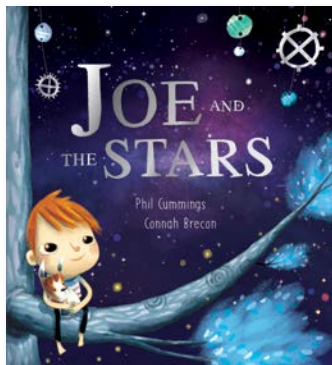


Jacqueline, A Soldier's Daughter

Pierre Jacques-Ober (text), Jules Ober (illustrations)

Published by Ford Street Publishing | ISBN 9781925804911

This photographic picture book is a powerful memoir of events from the childhood of the author's mother during WWII. The emotional highs and lows are well described and detailed through the authentic perspective of a child who is confused by the terrifying events unfolding. The visuals are wonderfully realised through the integration of intricate and detailed models and skilful photography. There are many convincing shifts in atmosphere and some striking and thought-provoking images. The mother-daughter relationship is compelling and the final family scenes uplifting. The rich artwork and often confronting visual scenes make this real-life story of war an engaging read for older readers.



Joe and the Stars

Phil Cummings (text), Connah Brecon (illustrations)

Published by Scholastic Australia | ISBN 9781742995045

The theme of remembering loved ones in the stars is relevant and reassuring with lots of opportunities to discuss loss, resilience and friendship. The death of the grandfather is understated yet powerful and readers have to work to fill in the gaps in the story. The language is carefully crafted with whimsical, poetic and lyrical elements. The digital illustrative style is quirky and original with different angles, colour and distances used to effectively convey Joe's changing situation and emotion. The words and images work beautifully together to signal shifts in the narrative and tone.

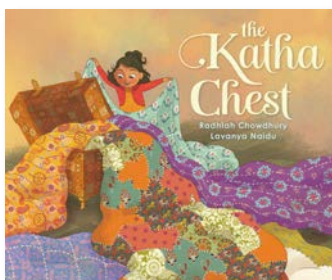


Just One Bee

Margrete Lamond and Anthony Bertini (text), Christopher Nielsen (illustrations)

Published by Dirt Lane Press | ISBN 9780648023890

The language here is poetic and balanced, and the illustrations use a limited palette and stark design to create an arid effect in this flower-less dystopia. There is a strong sense of place with the environment itself developed as a key character. On the surface, this is the story of three bees who question their own power and place in creating a more sustainable future. But these characters are rich representations of climate deniers and activists in the real world and the book helps readers to consider their own role in climate change and the importance of resilience and working together to make a positive impact. The shifts in tone, from bleak and barren to vibrant fields of flowers, are affective and create a sense of hope and optimism.



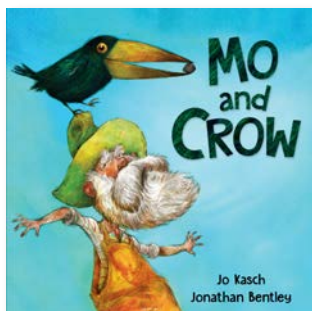
The Katha Chest

Radhiah Chowdhury (text), Lavanya Naidu (illustrations)

Published by Allen & Unwin | ISBN 9781760524326

This book makes an important contribution to the collection of books published last year, providing a glimpse into the Bengali cultural background of the characters. The layered story takes readers on a highly emotional journey, much of it conveyed through the four-panel wordless pages. This is a good example of how a picture book can tell a story from many different points of view. The use of 'traditional' Pattachitra Bengali folk art is a clever introduction to the history of Aysia's family within the context of Bangladesh's history. The wordless pages demand careful reading in order to piece together the story of this family. Nanu's house is very Australian and so the story also works well to reflect the very multicultural nature of this country.



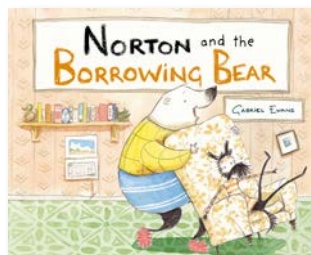


Mo and Crow

Jo Kasch (text), Jonathan Bentley (illustrations)

Published by Allen & Unwin | ISBN 9781760631758

The slightly absurdist plot of this book makes this story funny but there is also a deeper theme. Younger readers will enjoy the comic dynamic between the stubborn, curmudgeonly hermit Mo and the equally stubborn Crow. The wall itself is symbolic. Older readers could explore the idea of building barriers (literal and metaphorical) to keep self in and others out. The illustrations extend the text for example we discover in the past Mo must have been adventurous and happy. This is ultimately a story about acceptance and the power of friendship.

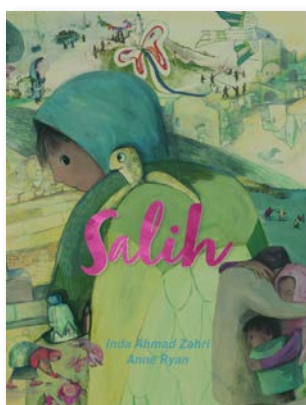


Norton and the Borrowing Bear

Gabriel Evans

Published by Berbay Publishing | ISBN 9780645069655

This story explores the experiences of lending things, balancing generosity and boundaries with friends. With a wonderfully unique illustration and design style, there is life and movement in the pencil, gouache and watercolour illustrations. Although Bear is 3 or 4 times bigger than Norton, and at times larger than life in his apparent inability to 'read' situations around him, his vulnerability is also revealed. Norton's frustration and anxiety are depicted very well — there's an energy that jumps off the page. The choice of quirky type matches the story and characters perfectly; and even when the text is very loud (in size and emotion) the type does not overpower the story.

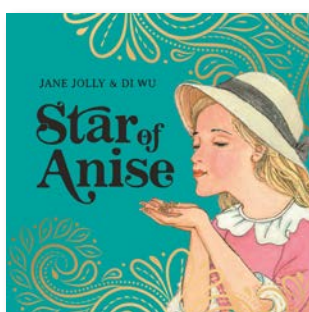


Salih

Inda Ahmad Zahri (text), Anne Ryan (illustrations)

Published by Ford Street Publishing | ISBN 9781925804638

This first-person child's perspective enriches readers' understanding of the refugee experience. Salih's world is reflected in the words and pictures and the juxtaposition of childlike experience/imagination alongside realistic devastation give the illustrations power and create shifts in tone. The metaphor of the turtle is used as a motif throughout and provokes thought and discussion. The ocean scenes are particularly effective with visual perspective and personification used to reveal the dangers and horrors of the journey, and the safety found in love, prayers and family. A beautiful and worthwhile addition to the refugee canon of literature.



Star of Anise

Jane Jolly (text), Di Wu (illustrations)

Published by National Library of Australia | ISBN 9780642279538

This story introduces a largely untold and unfamiliar aspect of Australian history and has the potential to enrich readers' understanding of the world. The non-fiction notes and photos add historical detail and effectively complement this gentle story of friendship between people of different ages, religions and cultures. There is a lot of positive cultural respect for Sikh traditions and a celebration of diversity depicted through the story, character interactions and illustrations. The illustrations and language are perfectly balanced to show an Australian landscape and way of life, and glimpses into Bhagwan's home country.



Stellarphant

James Foley

Published by Fremantle Press | ISBN 9781760990732

This story about an anthropomorphised, larger than life elephant can be read either as an ironic comment on privilege and diversity or the power of persistence. Readers will admire Stella's resilience and problem solving as she challenges the status quo of Space Command's space programme. Foley's use of humour and playfulness outweigh any dogma. Stella and her gang jump off the page with gumption and determination. The endpapers are fascinatingly informative. So much emotion is conveyed on Stella's face, through her eyes, tongue and forehead wrinkles. The fold-out page at the end is also a delightful addition. This book has the potential for lots of rich discussion around who become powerful, educated, and celebrated and who doesn't.



We Found a Cat

Heidi McKinnon

Published by Scholastic Australia | ISBN 9781761121005

Using two voices is a delightful way to tell this warm, funny, and playful story. This is a great example of a picture book where the illustrations add a different dimension. The end papers, which bracket the book's timeline, will give astute readers enough of a hint about the shared joke. The beige coloured paper used in this book provides a perfect background to the art alongside the restrained, retro palette. Using the younger child character as the 'voice of reason' is very affirming for all younger siblings. In this book so few words can say SO much.



CBCA Book Awards 2022 Notables List: Picture Book Category



The CBCA 2022 Notable Books



ARTWORK BY JASMINE SEYMOUR | © THE CHILDREN'S BOOK COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

Eve Pownall Category

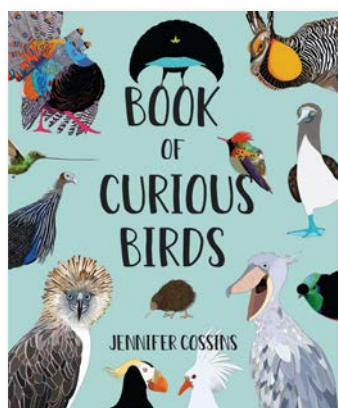


The Amazing Meals of Martha Maloney

Margaret Wild and Dan Wild (text), Donna Rawlins (illustrations)

Published by Walker Books Australia | ISBN 9781921529238

An amusing, well-researched and quirky insight into the dietary habits and foibles of significant historical figures. Set around a school excursion to a museum, the text is engaging, humorous and fast paced. The juxtaposition of the teacher's frustration with her students and Martha's imagination is authentic and creative. There are obscure and quirky facts relating to significant leaders while giving historical context. The 'End Notes' after each section provide additional facts and personal anecdotes which further engage the reader. The language is appropriate to the intent of the text with technical terms being explained in asides and comments. The illustrations are detailed and non-stereotypical, with those related to the meals detailed and colourful, enhancing and complementing the text. Additional 'Fun Facts' pages are useful and interesting providing further insight into the eccentricities of historical characters. A multi-layered and creative text brings together interesting facts, not easily accessed on Google, and combines them in a very accessible text.

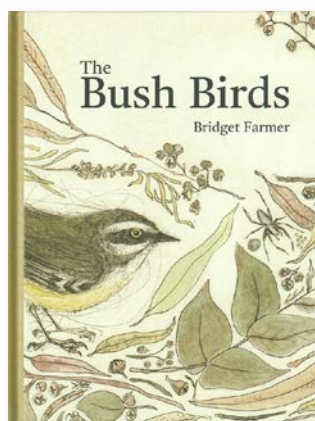


Book of Curious Birds

Jennifer Cossins

Published by Hachette Australia | ISBN 9780734420473

Lifecycles, behaviours and the conservation status of birds are presented in this high-quality reference book. The author helpfully cites the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) as her reference, which readers can then explore for themselves. Inclusion of a contents page and glossary are useful. Beautiful illustrations dominate each well-organised double-page spread including eye catching endpapers. The facts vary for each species, relating mainly to individual peculiarities. The language is clear and a variety of different fonts and colours are used to present sections of the text, which not only helps in dividing the different types of information, maintaining rhythm and flow, but will also impact how a reader relates to the text. The imaginative presentation of this topic will engage all readers, young and old.



The Bush Birds

Bridget Farmer

Published by Black Cockatoo Books | ISBN 9780646843025

Australian birds are creatively and whimsically presented through a lyrical narrative. Each bird's essence is captured using playful, simple language and clever placement. The exquisite illustrations created from dry point etchings and hand coloured with watercolour paints, subtly conveying detail and the muted colour palette enhances aesthetic appeal. A novelty element that will sustain younger readers' attention is the small, camouflaged lift-the-flaps that, when raised, reveal each bird's name. Explicit factual text at the end provides additional information and enhances understanding. The inclusion of a 'how to go birding' guide, is engaging. Cleverly considered endpapers will involve readers from start to finish in this excellent production.

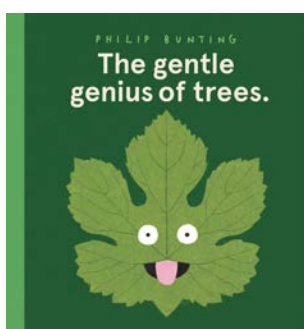


The First Scientists: Deadly Inventions and Innovations from Australia's First Peoples

Corey Tutt (text), Blak Douglas (illustrations)

Published by Hardie Grant Publishing | ISBN 9781741177527

This well produced book introduces readers to scientific contributions of Indigenous scientists and engineers, both prior to, and since, European occupation. Engagingly presented, it opens with the AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia, reinforced by topic maps within each section, providing useful reference for the scientific contributions described. The text is fascinating, and draws on aspects of science across a broad range of disciplines. Indigenous language and the inclusion of stories of Indigenous scientists provides a contemporary narrative, reinforcing authenticity and relevancy to modern life. Vibrant illustrations are appealing, and the creative layout is imaginative.



The Gentle Genius of Trees

Philip Bunting

Published by Scholastic Australia | ISBN 9781760975173

This high quality book uses a variety of visuals and designs to present a diverse range of factual information about trees and their context in the world. Definitions are cleverly included, enhancing easy accessibility and understanding. The quirky green cover hints to the often funny, anthropomorphic illustrative characterisation within. The use of 'eyeballs' and 'speech bubbles' brings a sense of fun to what can be complex scientific information to learn in primary school; and will sustain reader engagement. The message of 'community' —be that nature or human — is cleverly conveyed.



Heroes, Rebels and Innovators

Karen Wyld (text), Jaelyn Biunaiwai (illustrations)

Published by Hachette Australia | ISBN 9780734419835

This excellently produced, highly engaging book presents Indigenous historical information about significant First Nations people that has been omitted, or is less known in traditional storytelling. Authenticity and authority of voice are established in the opening pages. Creatively, two narratives per person are provided. One is a poetic and lyrical story; the captivating language lending itself to the 'adventure' genre. This non-stereotypical information book is imaginatively presented with a striking cover; minimalist illustrations; and a high gloss, rich and earthy ochre palette, which will interest readers beyond the final page.

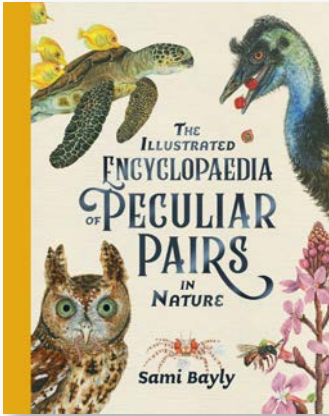


Iceberg

Claire Saxby (text), Jess Racklyeft (illustrations)

Published by Allen & Unwin | ISBN 9781760526047

Pitched for middle primary, with universal relevance, this information picture book will engage all readers. With high quality production and thoughtful detail including the subtle imagery included in the endpapers, the Antarctic setting shows the seasonal changes (summer-to-summer) for icebergs and the cooler physical environment, a motif that is maintained consistently throughout. The writing is lyrical and poetic, with a special feature in the way readers are invited to interact with the illustrations and explore them further. The descriptive and evocative language includes a range of literary devices including metaphor, simile and personification. Beautifully illustrated, with varied techniques, utilising a cool palette to enhance the sense of place and the atmosphere of the environment. The invitation for the reader to visually explore the hidden Antarctic environment flows throughout the messaging. The book ends with a thought provoking personal handwritten note relating to global warming.

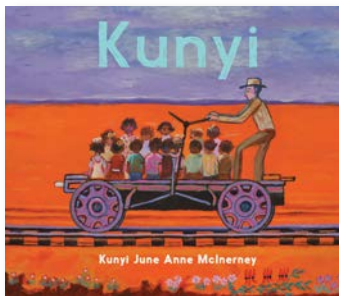


The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Peculiar Pairs in Nature

Sami Bayly

Published by Hachette Australia | ISBN 9780734420046

An exquisitely illustrated and informative encyclopaedia of curious pairings and interdependencies. Text is thoroughly researched and well organised. Each 'pair' double page includes: scientific names, a full page detailed illustration, and the 'fact' information on the other (description, peculiar pairing, conservation status, diet, location/habitat, fun facts). The language is clear, with humour in parts, and explains factual and anecdotal information effectively. High visual impact enhances engagement and appeal: including large hardback, colourful, detailed illustrations and an attached ribbon bookmark, encouraging readers to return, explore further and personalise their reading progress.

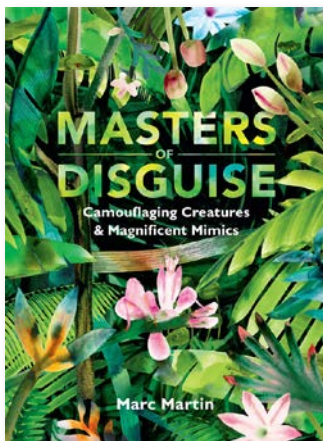


Kunyi

Kunyi June Anne McInerney

Published by Magabala Books | ISBN 9781925936575

This debut autobiographical work is dense with information and rich, matching artwork. The author details her childhood experiences as a child of the Stolen Generation, living in the Oodnadatta Children's Home in the 1950s, sensitively told. Despite the trauma of family separation, the style is quite unemotive, with facts conveying the reality of being taken from family. The information is detailed and vivid, with personal anecdotes providing relief from the harshness and a balance and gentle humour to the life portrayed. The author's voice is clear and strong. The accompanying detailed illustrations are well placed beautifully complementing the narrative. The palette is vivid and colourful, effectively capturing the dry Australian landscape. The endpapers are a clever collage of the internal images. Photos in the final double-page spread 'bring home' the truth behind some stories. A beautiful and engaging yet haunting text.



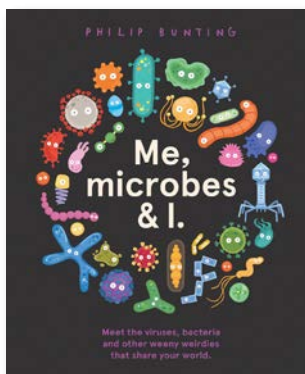
Masters of Disguise

Marc Martin

Published by Penguin Random House Australia | ISBN 9781760895891

An exquisitely produced book with engaging facts and beautiful illustrations. The endpapers are effective, almost references in themselves, as the creatures are displayed on a world map, overlaid on their countries of origin. Highly engaging and visually stunning, the species' facts are presented across a double-page spread, followed by another spread in which the animals are 'hiding' in their habitats — in direct reference to the book's title. There is enough information to engage the reader in language that is easily understood but would also inspire curiosity to investigate further. Illustrations and labelling are clear, with magnified sections to highlight key facts. The watercolour palette is attractive and varied, using light and shade for effect. The author's note about the impact of climate change on habitats gives good contextual background and offers the reader the opportunity to reflect.



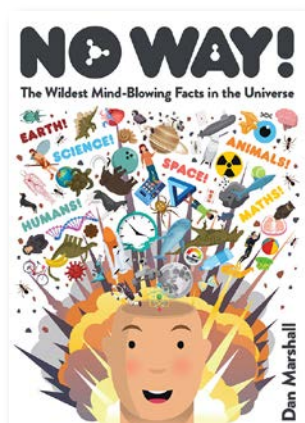


Me, Microbes & I

Philip Bunting

Published by Hardie Grant Children's Publishing | ISBN 9781760507923

Humour and clear language are effective in this well-produced book about microbes, cells and organisms, the anthropomorphic 'eyeballs' adding to reader engagement. The bright endpapers provide an overview of content within. The text, often humorous, details the diversity of the microbiotic world, using bite-sized information chunks. Illustrations are colourful and appealing, engaging readers and encouraging further investigation for the curious. The 'Snotty trail of the common cold' provides a humorous, informative and personal interlude. There is great relevance to contemporary society alluded to both explicitly through Coronavirus as well as more implicit connections such as everyday illnesses and experiences. The final pages relate to hygiene and staying healthy, providing a course of action for individuals to take responsibility in reducing risk to self and others.

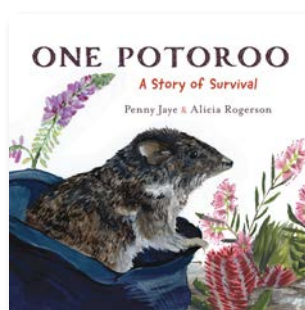


No Way! The Wildest Mind-Blowing Facts in the Universe

Dan Marshall

Published by Pantera Press | ISBN 9780648677024

Bold, bright words and images literally explode out of the top of a head on the front cover of this excellently produced reference book, and the imaginative and creative presentation continues throughout. An avatar named KLAUS (Knowledge Learning and Understanding System) introduces, concludes and in parts narrates, taking readers on an engaging voyage of discovery. Illustrations, infographics and diagrams are visually appealing; labelling and language are clear; and small chunks of information all help to separate and highlight the content, and how readers obtain information. An extremely diverse subject range, crammed with facts, figures and curiosities, overall targeting STEM interests.



One Potoroo: A Story of Survival

Penny Jaye (text), Alicia Rogerson (illustrations)

CSIRO Publishing | ISBN 9781486314645

An excellently produced and well-researched story about the survival of a potoroo following a devastating bushfire. The opening blackened landscape setting puts the young reader into the injured potoroo's world. They will engage, empathise and understand through the simple language that evokes feelings and thoughts. Atmosphere and mood are effectively presented through word shape and spacing, and varying sentence styles and length. Detailed, muted watercolour illustrations, with pops of colour, reinforce the setting and enhance how information is gathered from the page. Useful factual information is supplemented by the inclusion of the 'real' story on which the narrative is based.



Rachel's War

Mark Wilson

Published by Hachette Australia | ISBN 9780734420114

Primary readers will turn the pages wanting to know 'what happens next' in this exquisite, but simply told, well-researched personal story that depicts the role of a nurse on the battlefields of WW1. Beautifully executed illustrations, varied in style, all reflect the mood of the information and narrative. The artwork and text are well integrated; and combined with the clear language, the multi-layered perspectives are effectively revealed. The double-page spread at the end makes a big impact as it not only details the WW1 'nursing facts', it also provides biographical context to the overall 'human' story.

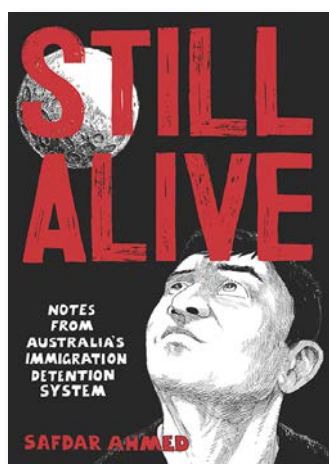


Saving Seal: The Plastic Predicament

Diane Jackson Hill (text), Craig Smith (illustrations)

Published by Museums Victoria | ISBN 9781921833540

This engaging narrative relates to ocean pollution and the impact on a particular seal. The seal is cleverly used as a driving visual symbol to heighten the efforts of a young girl and her grandfather to make a positive change to their environment. The clear emphasis on sustainability combines well with the overall emotive and thoughtful tone of the text. As the story progresses, activism comes to the fore. The rich colour palette is used in different ways, with bright splashes of colour reflecting the warmth of the close inter-generational family bond. The language is authentic, with a brief factual section at the conclusion which provides context and purpose. The layout and design are varied in placement, size and style, adding to meaning and maintaining reader interest. Also worthy of mention is the high standard of production, particularly the exquisite endpapers.



Still Alive, Notes from Australia's Immigration Detention System

Safdar Ahmed

Published by Twelve Panels Press | ISBN 9780980593730

A confronting, raw and graphic account of the history and treatment of asylum seekers and refugees under successive Australian governments. Challenging, detailed and well-researched, powerfully produced from a personal perspective — journeys from their homelands and lived experiences are interspersed with history, news events, government policy and international human rights reports and reactions. The black and white drawings, well-integrated with the text, are detailed and the inclusion of artwork by the detainees is powerful. The language is direct, occasionally didactic, and emotive at times. Metaphors (written and drawn) such as monsters, knots and chess pieces are effective in representing the detainees' stresses and traumas. There is mature content such as self-harm, executions, sexual intimacy and assault, both in written and drawn examples. The inclusion of further reading and actions will engage readers in exploring further.

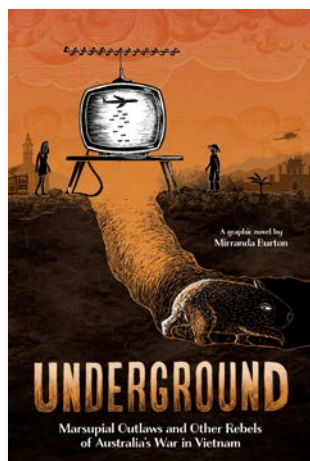


Superpower

Philip Bunting

Published by Hardie Grant Children's Publishing | ISBN 9781760507930

An appealing, comprehensive look at the complex and broad subject of 'renewable energy', from energy through the ages, its uses and future. Anthropomorphic 'eyeballs' assist in providing a fun element throughout this well produced information book. Content rich, containing lots of scientific and power concepts which are distilled into engaging images and an almost conversational narrative. Format, layout and text in varying 'bite sized' portions, include enough technical language to engage readers and inspire curiosity. Illustrations and diagrams are clear, and effectively demonstrate and enhance the text. Hints at personal activism are cleverly integrated.



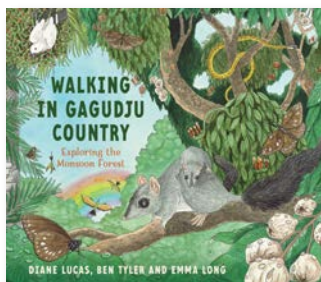
Underground

Miranda Burton

Published by Allen & Unwin | ISBN 9781760631475

These stories of three people who lived through the period of the Vietnam War — an activist, a soldier and a refugee — are highly engaging. As the narrative progresses, readers see their overlapping and intersecting stories. Exceptionally produced in graphic novel format, with the title and cover image both intriguing and captivating. The 'underground' title serves as a clever motif throughout and gives a good sense of the time periods. The 'current day' interviews and conversations with the three main help to bring the historical story into context. The book's purpose is clear, and new perspectives on this period of history are shown with authentic voice. The language is direct, emotive and even humorous, and integrates well with the imagery. The inclusion of detailed referencing notes and 'character' biographies are useful for further reading.



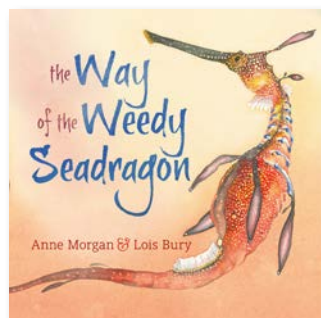


Walking in Gagudju Country: Exploring the Monsoon Forest

Diane Lucas and Ben Tyler (text), Emma Long (illustrations)

Published by Allen & Unwin | ISBN 9781760525958

Kakadu National Park is vividly presented and the setting is strongly maintained. Avatars representing the author's rambling through the forest with young friends, telling stories and imparting information are clever. The exploration is fun, the stopping, observing and listening feel genuine, all enriching reader experience. Text and dialogue are clear and detailed. The inclusion of illustrations and labels to highlight/define Indigenous terminology (lore, animal species and bush tucker) are very effective; as is the glossary, which includes useful drawings, scientific names and page references. High level production quality; visually appealing overall.



The Way of the Weedy Seadragon

Anne Morgan (text), Lois Bury (illustrations)

Published by CSIRO Publishing | ISBN 9781486313952

Storytelling narrative hooks such as rhetorical questions and metaphors are effective tools that will captivate younger readers of this book, and will involve them, while learning about the Weedy Seadragon's habitat and lifecycle. Illustrations and diagrams are detailed and well-integrated with the text. The language and layout are clear, varied and appealing. The glossary and two 'more about' pages are informative and assist comprehension. Well-produced with an inviting cover, effective endpapers and an intriguing, fairytale-esque back cover blurb. This creatively presented topic will sustain reader engagement and interest.

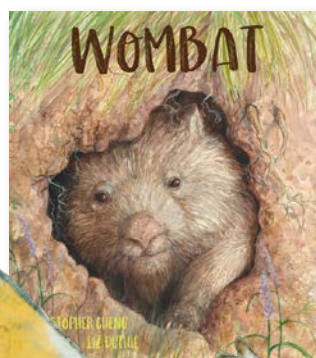


Wiradjuri Country

Larry Brandy

Published by National Library of Australia | ISBN 9780642279866

With a clear purpose and attitude throughout, this book aims to inform readers about the richness of language and culture of Wiradjuri Country (NSW). Animals and plants are detailed and described in context, organised by geographical aspects (rivers, woodlands, grasslands, rocky outcrops and sky). Interspersed are Dreamtime stories, 'deadly facts' and importantly, language. Vocabulary is highlighted in bold throughout, and the final pages include a Wiradjuri-English/English-Wiradjuri index of words (and scientific names). The illustrations are colourful and appealing, and include many photographs and references. Well produced, this is an excellent introduction to Country. The way in which this text so comprehensively explores the flora, fauna and features of this region make this a stand out text on its own accord.



Wombat

Christopher Cheng (text), Liz Duthie (illustrations)

Published by Walker Books Australia | ISBN 9781760651374

This comprehensive text about wombats, has a sensitivity and softness that captures the reader's attention. It tells, concurrently, 'a day in the life' of a wombat; and alongside, integrated seamlessly, the 'information' story of wombats as a species. There is variety in the presentation of the narrative with the imaginative typography. Iconic Australian symbols, images, and connections pepper the book alongside information to educate and inform. Beautifully illustrated with the watercolour palette perfectly matching the text. The design and layout effectively connect text and illustrations, with sufficient variety to maintain reader interest, with effective shifts of focus. Additional information, together with the index page, assist the reader to locate specific facts.

