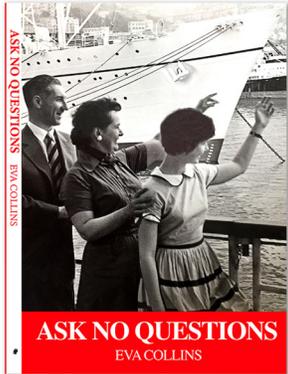


# The CBCA 2023 Book of the Year Shortlist Books



## Older Readers Category



### Ask No Questions

Eva Collins

Published by Puncher & Wattman - ISBN 9781922571342

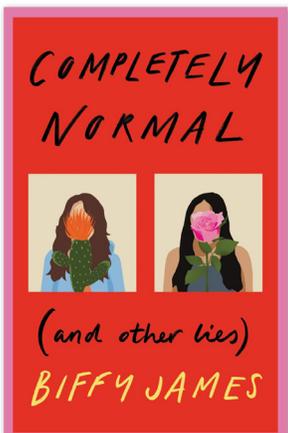
Ask No Questions is an excellent example of less being more and a true instance of 'don't judge a book by its cover'. The story is complex and anxious, dealing with seriously distressing themes but rendered so accessible through the gentle and simple blank verse poetry. The description of being a stranger in a strange land is strongly accurate and evokes an extra layer of emotion. The final return is a fitting rounding off for this journey that so many Australians will have experienced.

### Completely Normal (and Other Lies)

Biffy James

Published by Hardie Grant Children's Publishing - ISBN 9781760508746

An authentic, sensitive story of love and grief in all types of relationships, and the power of true friendship. This story feels utterly real in so many ways, whether it's the cavalier and off-the-cuff humour in the face of despair, or the genuine friendship and family interactions in their swings and roundabouts. The conceit of the situation is unusual but authentically explored, and the characters are presented through their thoughts and actions, not coarse language or extreme behaviours - they are all very normal and believable. The inclusion of social media as a plot element provides a realistic atmosphere without overshadowing the main themes. The positive representation of counseling for not just major issues but just general "life" is extremely valuable, and not something often seen in young adult fiction. It was gratifying to see characters come to understand how the behaviour of themselves and others has an impact, even in the face of such strong emotions (which are never dismissed).



### The Greatest Thing

Sarah Winifred Searle

Published by Allen & Unwin - ISBN 9781761067655

This gorgeous graphic novel depicts a semi-biographical retelling of the creator's own journey in high school, dealing with sexuality, gender, eating disorders and body image, mental health and self-harm. While it sounds overwhelming and dark, it somehow maintains a sense of joy throughout, with the engaging art style leavening the themes that underpin the story. The characters leap off the page and the book somehow manages to be both entirely realistic while still dealing with big issues with sensitivity and hope.



SINCE 1945 — YOUR CONNECTION TO STORY

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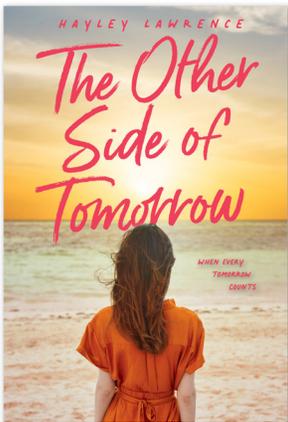
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### Neverlanders

Tom Taylor (text), Jon Sommariva (illustrations)  
Published by Penguin Random House Australia - ISBN 9781761049071

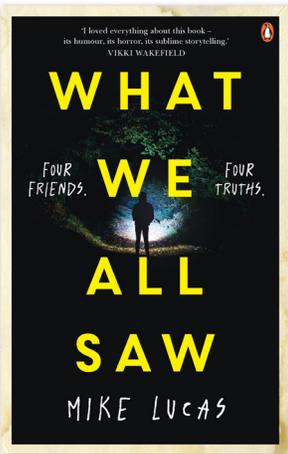
A beautifully presented work, with dark, funny, insightful writing supported by dynamic and powerful images. The story is well-paced, chronicling the journey of a contemporary “found family” tale embedded within the metatextuality of a fantastical Peter Pan narrative. Readers of all ages will appreciate the clever, action-oriented storyline and gloriously rich illustrations, while discerning readers will unpack the hints of the adults’ destruction of the world, parental failure, gun violence and domestic violence to add a more serious dimension to the fantasy plot. The characters are believable, and thematic elements of belonging and forgiveness are presented authentically and skillfully. A stunning book with a potent message wrapped up in a ripping good yarn package.



### The Other Side of Tomorrow

Hayley Lawrence  
Published by Scholastic Australia - ISBN 9781760976453

This beautifully written novel manages to perfectly balance ongoing grief and sadness with the ordinary everyday-ness of life in a positive way. Authentic characters and character development support a storyline that feels genuine and realistic in its arc, with its rapid pace mirroring the onset of the disease and deterioration of the main character. The themes of family, love, loss, grief, death, and life after death are gently explored without preaching, and these serious elements are set against the aspects of first love, adventure and friendship. The author handles the intense emotions of the story deftly and without artifice - every laugh and tear the reader experiences is earned. While the story is told almost entirely through Abby’s eyes, voice and feelings, it is flagged quite early on that the outcome of the book is inevitable. Absolutely heartbreaking and real.



### What We All Saw

Mike Lucas  
Published by Penguin Random House Australia - ISBN 9781761045936

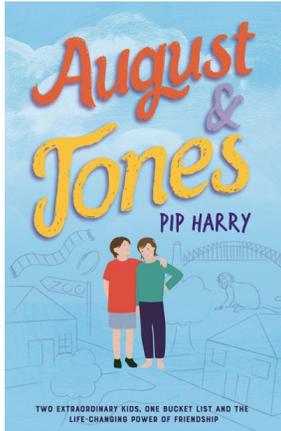
This thrilling, gripping and tense story holds attention from the very beginning. It discreetly but clearly examines several themes; the persecution of women, the power of class, the futility of war, the value of strong family values and the disadvantages of being poor. These themes are deftly woven together and taken to a logical and believable conclusion. Narrated from the omniscient perspective of an adult, the story is retold through the eyes of the younger characters adding depth and credibility to the dialogue and actions. The description of the main setting is eerily convincing and the characters are authentic neighbourhood kids. This is a haunting but fun story which interlaces a multi-layered historical record over several generations and ends with a startling finale.



# The CBCA 2023 Book of the Year Shortlist Books



## Younger Readers Category



### August & Jones

Pip Harry

Published by Hachette Australia - ISBN 9780734420350

August and Jones explores complex and challenging concepts such as parental expectations, drought, unemployment, changing homes and schools, anxiety, depression and childhood cancer. The characterisation is strong, with adults and children presented in an authentic and believable way. Contrasts in family life are highlighted with Jones's supportive family juxtaposed with August's angry father, depressed mother and sibling ties. The book is written expertly and sensitively, balanced with humour, showing how friendship, love, personal strength and belief in oneself and others can help overcome difficulties, change and loss. Jones' cancer is never used for sympathy, and she remains positive despite the hardships she faces.



### Evie and Rhino

Neridah McMullin

Published by Walker Books Australia - ISBN 9781760654207

Inspired by true events, Evie and Rhino is a moving and entertaining story about love, friendship, grief and how making connections can bring about change and healing. The characterisation is strong and builds as the story is told from the interchanging perspectives of Evie and Rhino. The small illustrations that indicated a change in perspective were subtle and refined, matching the style of the prose perfectly. A real strength in the book is how the plot develops, and the story grows seamlessly across the characters. The author's notes and historical details included provide background knowledge of the events.



### The Raven's Song

Zana Fraillon & Bren MacDibble

Published by Allen & Unwin - ISBN - 9781761065798

A stunning novel set in both the near and distant futures linked by the ancient motifs of the raven, the land and bog bodies preservation being the theme that ties everything together but never overshadows the characters' emotional journeys: Phoenix's loss and world in pieces, and Shel's discovery challenging everything she ever knew. Masterfully written and engaging, each object, action and word choice is purposeful. Pandemics, climate change and conservation, are the backdrop for this story, told in a way that never intrudes on the reader's journey and desire to explore the world. It provides parallels between our own reality and the resulting in an engaging and thought-provoking read.

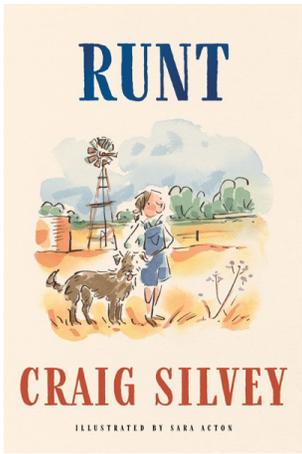


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Merchandise enquiries: [merchandise@cbca.org.au](mailto:merchandise@cbca.org.au)

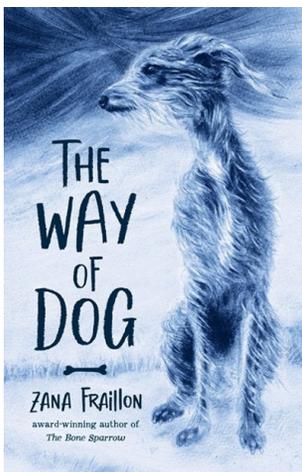


### Runt

Craig Silvey

Published by Allen & Unwin - ISBN 9781761067846

The plot and characters are presented simply, yet they are complex, strong, witty, and evoke a reflection on life's meaning, purpose and what is truly important. This book is about the struggles of country life but also about community and how it rallies around a girl and her dog. Annie's attempts to fix everything are good natured and her eventual realization that not everything needs to be fixed is heartfelt and well earned. The use of language and humorously named villains have the reader cheering for Annie and Runt's success. This delightful story of human spirit, family love and communal support is perfect for the Younger Readers age group. The beautiful hard-cover, dust jacket, endpapers and delightful illustrations make this an instant favourite

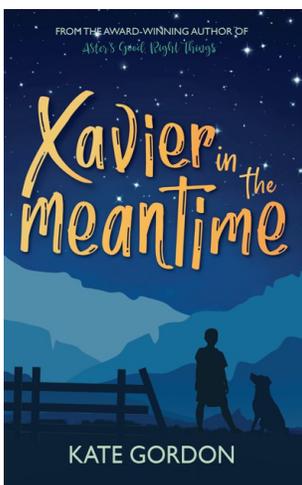


### The Way of Dog

Zana Fraillon

Published by University of Queensland Press - ISBN 9780702265563

This beautifully written novel manages to perfectly balance ongoing grief and sadness with the ordinary everyday-ness of life in a positive way. Authentic characters and character development support a storyline that feels genuine and realistic in its arc, with its rapid pace mirroring the onset of the disease and deterioration of the main character. The themes of family, love, loss, grief, death, and life after death are gently explored without preaching, and these serious elements are set against the aspects of first love, adventure and friendship. The author handles the intense emotions of the story deftly and without artifice - every laugh and tear the reader experiences is earned. While the story is told almost entirely through Abby's eyes, voice and feelings, it is flagged quite early on that the outcome of the book is inevitable. Absolutely heartbreaking and real.



### Xavier in the Meantime

Kate Gordon

Published by Riveted Press - ISBN 9780645218091

This book enables readers to delve into the impact of mental health issues in an authentic and age-appropriate way without being too explicit and confrontational. The characters are realistic in their struggles and the thought patterns are immersive and relatable. The link to the black dog and how it is described is true to life and offers hope without a cure. It also shows the importance of a supportive community and how it may work. Despite the heaviness that permeates the text, the plot leaves the reader with a sense of conclusion and hope for the characters.



# The CBCA 2023 Book of the Year Shortlist Books

## Early Childhood Category

### **Bev and Kev**

Katrina Germein (text), Mandy Foot (illustrations)  
Published by Little Book Press - ISBN 9780645027051

Themes of friendship, acceptance and finding one's place and tribe are explored as Bev the giraffe moves through the African landscape, experiencing social rejection from animals that cannot relate to her due to her size. Using the theme 'opposites attract', readers may empathise with Bev's loneliness and her joy at finding a non-judgmental companion. Interesting synonyms for 'big' provide rich language, while important messages are imparted, such as body image, the comfort found in companionship and how our words may affect others. The pencil and watercolour illustrations shift in perspectives, emphasising Bev's great height and perfectly matching her mood as seen in the bird's eye view of her solitary walk. The southern African setting is clearly defined in these outstanding watercolour and pencil illustrations which are placed onto digitally rendered backgrounds, capturing the mood of the story to perfection. Illustrations and text harmonise well, and the spectacularly eye-catching final fold-out page creates a lovely resolution, told wordlessly.

### **Jigsaw: A Puzzle in the Post**

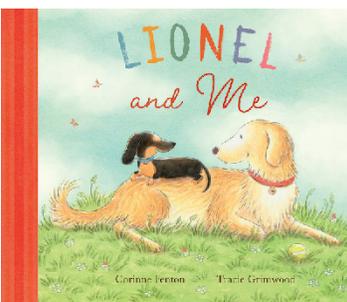
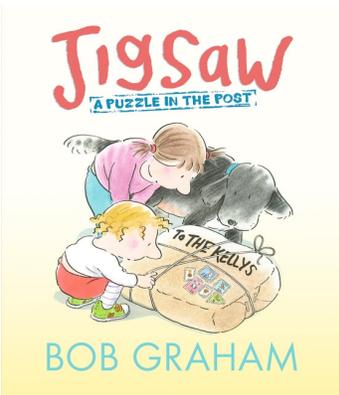
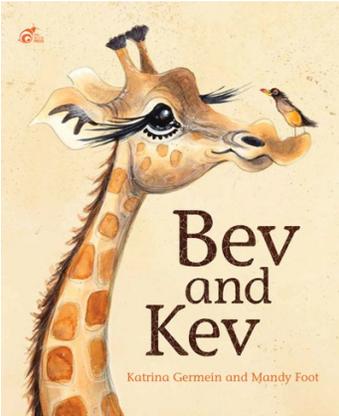
Bob Graham  
Published by Walker Books Australia - ISBN 9781529503319

The Kelly family embraces a mysterious puzzle anonymously sent to them in the post. The subplot narrates how a puzzle piece falls to the ground and goes missing while the family undertakes the long project of completing the puzzle. These parallel storylines continue throughout the book. Serendipitously, their threads do cross paths, and the reader is privy to this, while the characters are not. Themes of family, the generosity of strangers, persistence, hope, determination and serendipity are explored. Beautiful illustrations vary from small vignettes, time-lapse, and full-page double spreads. The use of framing and white backgrounds help to focus attention and are used to effect, while the language is simple and economical, yet magical. The mystery of time, and the slowness of its passage, are beautifully mirrored through the almost tragic journey that the puzzle piece takes to 'the end of the world', as it were. Without being didactic, Bob Graham shows that we may discover lost things, and enable things of value to return to consciousness when we

### **Lionel and Me**

Corinne Fenton (text), Tracie Grimwood (illustrations)  
Published by New Frontier Publishing - ISBN 9781922326607

The theme of the younger/new addition to the family is highly relatable to the age level of this audience, adding the themes of an animal protagonist/antagonist and animal angst. The title and imprint pages cleverly set up the conflict and tension before the narrative begins. Narrated by the dog Maverick, the language is simple and clear, with lovely pauses and bold words for directed emphasis and expression. Many young children may be able to identify with Maverick's emotions, allowing them to self-reflect and connect. Whilst this book is about a pet dog learning to accept a new puppy into the household, it would also provide a very useful tool in supporting discussions about a new family member, and the mixed feelings that come with this. The narrative arch is well-sustained and draws the reader in, leading to a perfectly pitched and delightfully surprising resolution. The pencil and watercolour illustrations are beautiful, full of movement, and perfectly convey the mood and emotions.





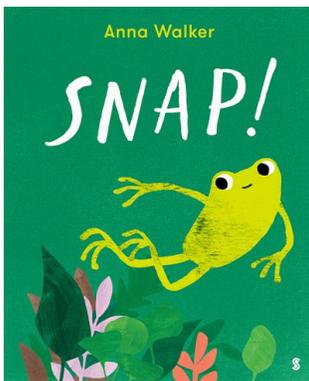
### Market Day

Carrie Gallasch (text), Hannah Sommerville (illustrations)  
Published by Hardie Grant Children's Publishing - ISBN 9781761049071

Market Day narrates the story of a little girl that arrives at a market with one coin she can spend in any way. Several themes are explored, including community, generosity, the power of music, kindness, transience and appreciation. The evocative, detailed digital illustrations depict a bustling produce market and invite further investigation on each read. The language is simple as the girl narrates, yet also, at times, quite beautiful, matching the mood of the outing. It is punctuated by metaphor, analogy, alliteration and an interesting range of verbs. A busker is seen intermittently, and he turns out to be the girl's most interesting and worthwhile encounter at the market.

### Snap!

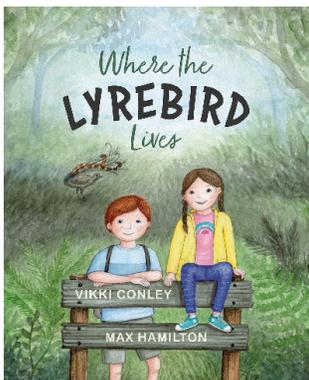
Anna Walker Lawrence  
Published by Scribble Kids' Books - ISBN 9781922585387



Anna Walker has cleverly created a humorous, energetic, and playful tale of a frog's adventure through the jungle and the unexpected creatures it meets along the way. It is immediately relatable to young children, with its minimal, simple and direct language that perfectly evokes the sensory world of the frog and the other creatures in it. The tactile front cover is bright and engaging, with the little frog literally leaping off the front and into the narrative. The endpapers extend the storyline, and the text is creatively positioned on the page, like the movement of text mirroring the animals' actions, which adds interest and catches the eye. The story's pace is maintained by the illustrations and humour introduced by the near misses of the frog as it narrowly escapes the dangers around it. While the predominantly green pages immerse the reader into the setting of a jungle, the illustrations are varied in design and colour and are offset by a clever use of texture using collage techniques on such things as tree trunks, water, and birds' feathers. This is a picture book that will bring joy and de-

### Where the Lyrebird Lives

Vikki Conley (text), Max Hamilton (illustrations)  
Published by Windy Hollow Books - ISBN 9780645323566

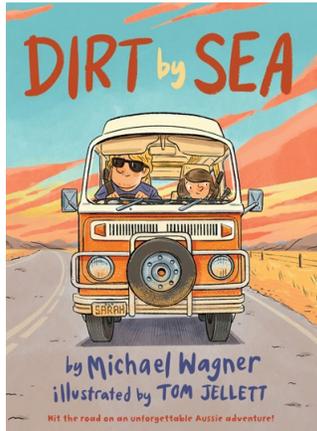


This book delights and entices the reader from beginning to end. Lush green spreads fill the pages, beautifully capturing the setting of cool climate forests in watercolour and pencil. The sparse descriptive narrative sets a gentle pace and reads aloud well, drawing the audience in with questions and facts. Readers are encouraged to slow down, listen and look, for every now and then there is a sign of the hidden lyrebird. Metaphors and similes add richness, and the enlarged text for action words and onomatopoeia will increase participation and engagement. A well-crafted narrative that will encourage children to read aloud themselves.



# The CBCA 2023 Book of the Year Shortlist Books

## Picture Book Category



### **Dirt by Sea**

Michael Wagner (text), Tom Jellett (illustrations)

Published by Penguin Random House Australia - ISBN 9781760894061

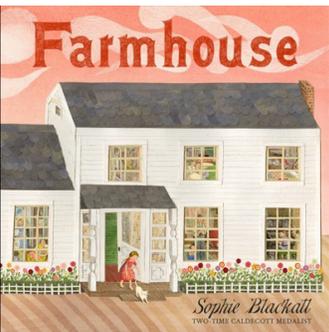
Daisy lives in inland Australia with her dad and her grandparents. It's home, and she loves the red dirt land around her. But when her dad realises that she's never seen the beach and thinks the Australian anthem is about a country 'dirt by sea', he sets off to show her the ocean in a once-in-a-lifetime father-daughter trip along the Australian coast, inspired by the first holiday he took with Daisy's mum. Along the way they will learn about Australia and much, much more . . .

### **Farmhouse**

Sophie Blackall

Published by Hachette - ISBN 9780734421654

This book is a lyrical love letter to the past. There is a gentle rhythm in the text which adds to the overall lullaby quality. There is a sense of completion when the old lady takes her last look around her childhood home before leaving it to nature and tempest. The structure might be gone, but its spirit will live on. Delights abound with the view of the inside of the house found under the dust jacket. The illustrations feel like a patchwork quilt – with pieces of history and experience stitched together to make a beautiful and complete whole. It almost feels like the reader is invited to take a “visual” breath in the spreads where we see the surrounding farm land. Every page can be revisited over and over again.

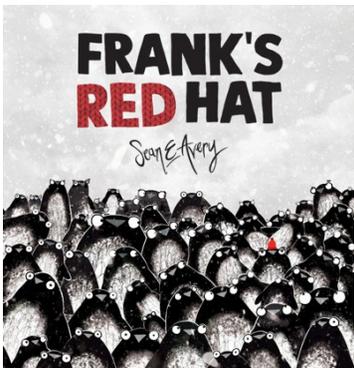


### **Frank's Red Hat**

Sean E Avery

Published by Walker Books Australia - ISBN 9781760654283

There is a deeper message here that is subtle and not forced. This book will open up conversations about risk taking, difference and perseverance. The story pace is perfect, and the illustrations delightfully extend the text, with expertly crafted details like the eyes of the walrus, which are so expressive. There are rich word choices for the colour names. The page filled with hats in every colour of the rainbow is wonderful and visually represents Frank's independence, creativity and determination against the backdrop of his monotone environment. This book can be shared with younger children, but it will also generate deeper discussions and enjoyment for older students. Ultimately, it is the characters and the way the illustrations enhance their interactions that make this story shine.





## My Strange Shrinking Parents

Zeno Sworder

Published by Thames & Hudson Australia - ISBN 9781760761233

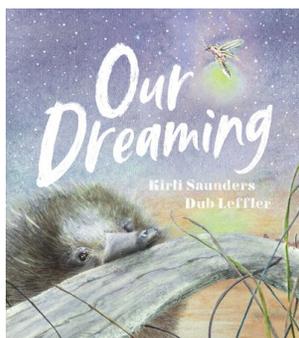


This book is a celebration and fresh perspective on love and self-denial, which many children of immigrant families may recognise, and for other children should help build empathy. Every part of this book design has been crafted with enormous care. The portrait shaped cover is tactile and contains an intriguing image. The end papers, filled with teapots, help to set the mood. There are muted backgrounds which imply hazy or slightly unreliable memories. Small objects appear extra-large helping the reader see the world from both perspectives. The sublime artwork situates itself within an Eastern aesthetic, making nods to the Willow Pattern story, while still giving voice to a surreal reality of immigrant life. The illustrations use light and shadow to great effect and the metaphor of size is repeated in the images beautifully reflecting the sacrifices the parents have made so that their child can grow in a new place, with new opportunities.

## Our Dreaming

Kirlie Saunders (text), Dub Leffler (illustrations)

Published by Scholastic Australia - ISBN 9781742995113



Indigenous words are integrated seamlessly into the English text to create this bilingual cultural celebration. The glossary and pronunciation guide provide non-Indigenous readers the opportunity to learn some Gundungurra. Echidnas are a perfect choice for this slow and contemplative journey of discovery. The Australian life depicted visually is wonderfully realistic, and images provide a range of views to create a strong sense of place. The muted earthy tones of the delicate illustrations reflect the colours of the land and create a gentle mood of wisdom. This book will enrich readers' understanding and respect of Indigenous culture, history, language and Dreaming.

## Paradise Sands: A Story of Enchantment

Levi Pinfold

Published by Walker Books Australia - ISBN 9781406383942



Right from the beginning, the young girl, in her pale blue dress, shows she has a higher level of responsibility. The characters have clearly heard the opening six-line rhyme many times, but instead of recognising they are a warning, the words have become a jingle they sing along to in their car. This is a story of enchantment, entrapment, courage, wisdom, patience, belief, temptation and, above all, love. The young girl will rescue her brothers no matter what the personal cost. An almost unbearable sense of bleakness is created through the dry barren landscapes and even the starkness of the house and hospital room. The landscape in this book becomes a character. Older readers will be eager to revisit the story and the exquisite, masterful illustrations. This book has the look and feel of a classic.



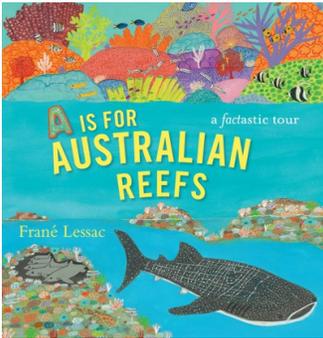
# The CBCA 2023 Book of the Year Shortlist Books

## Eve Pownall Category

### **A Is for Australian Reefs**

Frané Lessac

Published by Walker Books Australia - ISBN 9781760652258

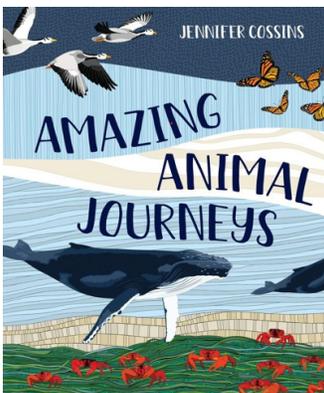


This stunningly beautiful, hardback A-Z reference book is mesmerising from the front cover. Alphabetically organised, with a uniform layout, each 'letter' includes an introductory snapshot about the particular species or aspect of reef life. Related facts are presented in short, information-rich paragraphs, and topics of biodiversity, ecosystems, marine animals and climate change are compelling and clearly described. An opening map sets the reef context and setting, which is sustained throughout. A full colour palette across full-page detailed, glossy illustrations are well integrated with the text. A 'Spot the Fish' final page is a fun addition, encouraging readers to explore further.

### **Amazing Animal Journeys**

Jennifer Cossins

Published by Hachette - ISBN 9780734421432



Another beautifully illustrated, researched and presented book of the standard we have come to expect from Jennifer Cossins. Commencing with the stylish stencilled endpapers and with contextual information provided by the introduction, the readers are taken on a migratory journey of the trials and tribulations of 25 animal movements around the globe. The introduction provides excellent context, and the conclusion highlights the importance of conservation and the impact of climate change on migration journeys. The design and layout are consistent, with a double-page spread dedicated to each animal's journey and variety provided in style and colour palette of the exquisite accompanying illustrations.

### **Come Together: Things Every Aussie Kid Should Know about the First Peoples**

Isaiah Firebrace (text), Jaelyn Biumaiwai (illustrations)

Published by Hardie Grant Explore - ISBN 9781741178166

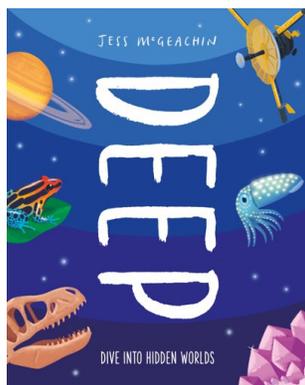


This strikingly gorgeous book by pop artist Isaiah Firebrace, introduces the basics of First Nations customs, beliefs and history. From the attractive cover showing hands coming together, and simple endpapers, the reader is drawn into learning about the oldest continuous civilization on earth. Isaiah shares important insight into aspects of Indigenous culture that all people, not just the young, should know – from caring for Country and Dreaming stories to the importance of Elders and even the Indigenous origins of AFL. Language is easily accessible to the younger reader, and while it does not delve into some of the more complex aspects of First Peoples culture, there is sufficient information to provide an overview and the knowledge to inspire the reader to look further. The accompanying colourful illustrations by Jaelyn Biumaiwai dominate each double-page spread, enhancing the written text and having maximum impact. This is a powerful book that would appeal to a wide ranging audience and holds significant enduring value.

## DEEP: Delve Into Hidden Worlds

Jess McGeachin

Published by Welbeck Publishing - ISBN 9781913519483



This imaginatively presented hardback reference book seamlessly brings together a large variety of information about the unseen elements of Earth's sea and land life, outer space and the human body. Contemporary issues are also included making the information very relatable to readers. The integration of text and illustrations is very cleverly managed, and the layout of the content works both as a dip-in-dip-out resource, as well as a read-through narrative. The information is interesting and the language is clear and presented in accessible small chunks, with a bit of humour. The full colour, detailed illustrations are gracefully accompanied by descriptive labels (including some scientific names). The final couple of pages around connection and survival bring together all the information in an accessible flowchart and draw on the topic of adaptability that readers can explore further. The inclusion of contents, index and glossary are very useful; and a timeline titled 'Deep Time' is great for providing context. The front cover is incredibly appealing, and overall, this non-stereotypical information book is of a very high quality that will sustain readers' interest throughout.

## Opal and Dart

Vianne Brain (text), Clare Bradley (illustrations)

Published by Forty South Publishing - ISBN 9780645510119



A visually stunning, high quality, imaginatively presented information picture book. The front cover and eye-catching endpapers capture immediate attention. Readers will be fully gripped in the suspenseful 'goodies vs baddies' narrative about the migration journey and breeding of swallows. Layout and design achieve maximum impact, from the clever placement of the imagery and text to the tactile appeal of the heavier paper. Evocative, descriptive language draws attention to vivid, non-stereotypical illustrations. The black and white pencil sketches and coloured paintings on canvas effectively integrate with the text. Bird facts and referencing, including a migration map, are useful sources encouraging further reading.

## Wild Australian Life

Leonard Cronin (text), Chris Nixon (illustrations)

Published by Allen and Unwin - ISBN 9781760637224



From the appealing cover and bright contents page, this compendium of fascinating facts about various species of the Australian animal kingdom ensures maximum engagement. Shadowed endpapers work well with this production of high-quality paper printing, using colours and highly engaging, visually vibrant animals to connect with different aspects of the Australian ecosystem. Providing clear and detailed information about the Australian animal kingdom, it explores its diversity in a creative manner. Layout and format are varied throughout, and the non-stereotypical illustrations in a muted full-colour palette genuinely integrate with the text, enhancing the reading experience. Young readers will enjoy looking, exploring and following the 'paths' that are being described. The variety of species and ecosystems is impressive, and the language and labels are clear and detailed. The pages related to navigating by sound and night animals are particularly captivating.



# The CBCA 2023 Book of the Year Shortlist Books

## New Illustrator Category

### Australia: From Dawn to Dusk

Brentos

Published by Affirm Press - ISBN 9781922806321

Readers are taken on a gentle journey throughout a single day but across many different Australian landscapes and the soft colour palette perfectly captures distinctions between different places and times of day. There is a consistency in design and layout; images and text are well balanced and fully entwined throughout. The 'pop' quality of the artistic style is quirky and the tactile front cover instantly appealing. Lighthouses are used to bookend the journey and the surfing koalas we first meet on the endpapers create a sense of character and narrative thread.

### The Best Hiding Place

Sylvia Morris

Published by Affirm Press - ISBN 9781922848086

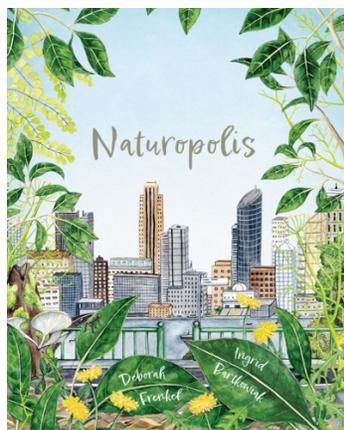
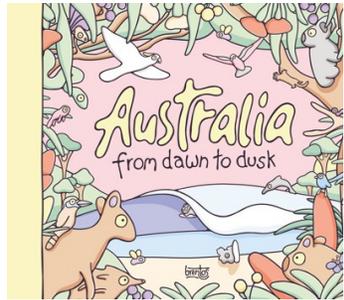
The colour palette in *The Best Hiding Place* creates a lovely retro and nostalgic quality. Each and every image allows the reader to peek inside different parts of the house, often showing multiple points of action on one page. Archie's claustrophobia in his hiding spot is conveyed effectively to create a sustained moment of tension that readers will identify with. Distinct characters and relationships are shown, and some humorous details invite readers to re-visit and examine earlier illustrations. The illustrations perfectly capture those mixed feelings of playing hide and seek as a child, which will appeal to readers of all ages.

### Naturopolis

Ingrid Bartkowiak

Published by Storytorch Press - ISBN 9780645191530

Bartkowiak brings to life the title of this book in a very assured style with high-quality, hand-painted fine art illustrations. The tactile front cover and endpapers are incredibly appealing and tempt the reader to peer into the world described in the written text. The whimsical illustrations and confident use of design convey convincing scenes of the human world juxtaposed effectively with the often-unseen natural world. The reader is invited to zoom into the tiny details of the natural environment with plenty to explore on each page, including hunting for the tiny ant in each setting which keeps the reader engaged. Bartkowiak uses a sublime repeating technique of three rectangles which illustrate close, closer, closest. There is also a pleasing consistency in the use of colour with tiny glimpses of pink on the gum blossoms, the gum nuts and later on a leaf tip.

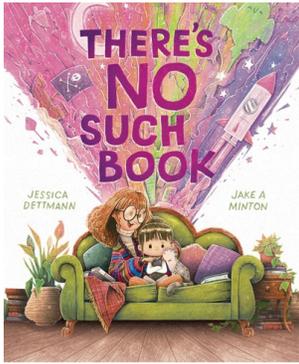


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### There's No Such Book

Jake A. Minton

Published by Hardie Grant Children's Publishing - ISBN 9781760509743

Wide eyes and expressive faces and bodies stand out creating distinct characters with a gentle connection between the mother and daughter depicted. An engaging cover and endpapers gracefully anticipate aspects of the story, while the setting is an appealing space, and the lighting gives the pages a soft glow. The colours vary on each page creating shifts in mood from the earthy reality of home to the vibrancy of the imaginative worlds; also, the use of broken white outlines lends a sgraffito element artistically, which lifts the colours. Minton has an assured illustrative style with an authentic and individual use of Procreate; he understands point-of-view, layout, colour and design.



### Tiny Wonders

Sally Soweol Han

Published by University of Queensland Press - ISBN 9780702263477

The choice of artistic medium is perfect for the topic and intended audience and demonstrates skilful illustrative technique. The visible pencil lines create a sense of life, and the opening page is instantly engaging. Colour is used purposefully and symbolically throughout to portray character, setting, mood and themes of life, vibrancy and nature. There are many different layouts and framings used and images are fully entwined with text. There are life-like depictions of flowers in the information pages at the back and the beautiful endpapers reveal the central message of spreading wishes, joy and hope to the world through nature.



### We Are Australians

Jandamarra Cadd

Published by Wild Dog Books - ISBN 9781742036328

This front cover is instantly arresting. Fantastic use of a close shot and gaze to entice readers in. The colour of the eyes is replicated in the end papers. The plastic trinkets shown on two palms take the words "we have responsibilities" to a whole new level. The white, sans serif text printed on black adds to the gravitas of the message. There's a wonderful sense of connection and emotion between people created in each image through gaze, proximity and touch. The juxtaposition of the hyper-realistic images against the saturated black of the pages, and the dot painting depictions of the figurative and abstract landscapes is so engaging. The design quickens and slows the pace as we read. Many of the images and words will lead to deeper discussions with students.

