



**VIC BRANCH**  
**THE CHILDREN'S**  
**BOOK COUNCIL**  
**OF AUSTRALIA**

SINCE 1945 — YOUR CONNECTION TO STORY

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023/2024

### **Executive Committee:**

President: Jo Panckridge  
Vice Presidents: Karys McEwen & Leanne Rands  
Treasurer: Geraldine Woolnough  
Secretary: Ruth Woolven

### **Committee Members:**

Robyn Burke, Angela Crocombe (representing Readings Kids, resigned March 2024), Anne-Louise O'Donoghue (representing The Geelong College), Erin Wamala (representing The Kids Bookshop), Annette Wright, Julia Petricevic, Ruth Thatcher, Ngaire Brown, Sarah Mayor Cox, Jo Pentony (from September 2023)

**BCA Board Victorian Branch Representative:** Jo Panckridge

### **Regional Directors:**

Ballarat: Loretta Kaval & Ruth Oppenheim  
Bendigo: Sarah Mayor Cox  
Geelong: Vacant  
Gippsland: Susan O'Malley

### **Life Members:**

Emeritus Prof. Margot Hillel OAM, Alan Jager, Stella Lees, Dr. Virginia Lowe, Debbie Marshall, Christine Oughtred, Kay Sagar, Geraldine Woolnough, Ann James & Anne Haddon

**THE CHILDREN'S BOOK COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA (VICTORIAN BRANCH) INC.**

ABN 46 659 828 173; Registered Association A0014226Y



## CBCA VIC – AGM 2024 PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2023

2023-24 has been a very productive and busy year at the VIC Branch.

The committee have continued to meet online, a more inclusive and flexible option for communicating and collaborating. There have been challenges in generating robust discussions over Zoom and a sense of isolation by some members but, as a voluntary organization, Zoom meetings have allowed committee members to join regularly, without the challenges of travel.

We have welcomed two new members to our committee, Ngaire Brown and Jo Pentony and valued their contributions.

Our online judges' talks also proved popular for our members, with the addition of pre-recorded talks available to watch on demand. Regions adopted hybrid models where members were able to network with other interested adults whilst enjoying online judges' presentations.

### Events

We held several very successful in-person events including our Night of Notables Event at our newly partnered Yarra Libraries North Fitzroy Library venue with Claire Halifax from Walker Books Australia providing a panel of speakers to share their perspectives on the children's literature industry.

### Bob Graham Print Offer

Celebrated and multi-award-winning author/illustrator Bob Graham kindly donated to the VIC Branch a beautiful print he created especially for our Night of Notables celebration.

We were given permission to release the print for sale to members and interested people. This was a highly successful fund-raiser for the VIC Branch and prompted the committee to consider this idea for 2024 with another VIC Branch illustrator.



Committee member and Readings Bookshop Senior Buyer and Children's Book Specialist, Angela Crocombe, ran a wonderful event at Readings Bookshop in Carlton with Shortlisted authors in a **Q&A Discussion** with Angela. Zeon Sworder (winner of the Picture Book of the Year 2023) and Michael Wagner (Honour Book in the Picture Book of the Year 2023) discussed the appeal to a wide age range of both picture books and graphic novels.

The night also provided an opportunity for teachers to hear from VIC Branch members Jo Panckridge and Anne-Louise O’Donoghue on the Younger Readers titles in the 2023 Shortlist and how these books might be used in the classroom.

The success of the night highlighted the value of this type of event.

Geraldine Woolnough planned a day in partnership with the State Library in Melbourne featuring Corinne Fenton in August to coincide with the commencement of **Children’s Book Week**. Corinne shared her Early Childhood Shortlisted picture book *Lionel and Me* with children and was followed up with a craft activity run by VIC Branch volunteers.

Our **Celebration of Creatives**, again held at the North Fitzroy Library saw many of our Victorian creatives enjoying the networking this type of event supported. This has become an annual event and one highly anticipated by our VIC Branch creatives.

We were delighted to have 40+ attendees at our partnered CBCA VIC Branch and Wheelers Centre **From Page to Published: A Children’s and YA Writers Masterclass** on Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> November.

This was a unique opportunity for emerging and practicing authors to hear from experts Zeno Sworder, Maxine Beneba Clarke and Kirsty Murray shared their industry knowledge, tips on finding a publisher, polishing manuscripts and entering prizes. The event ended with a wonderful workshop on how to run an engaging school visit and audience question-time.

### **Social Media**

Our social media following has grown, as has our newsletter reach. As noted in our 2022 November survey on greater Early childhood content, 2023 saw Ruth Thatcher and others providing some excellent Early Childhood resources to support the use of the 2023 Early Childhood Notable list for members to access.

### **Membership**

CBCA VIC Branch membership is currently at 599 (as of end of 2023). A portion of the membership have taken Personal Membership, rather than Institutional Membership, due to limited budgets in schools.

Institutions	373	66.73%
Schools	299	
Kinder/ECC	5	
Publishers	10	
Booksellers	15	
Public Libraries	39	
Other	5	
Personal	77	13.77%
Professional Concessional	108	19.32%
Concessional	36	6.44%

Family	2	0.33%
Life Members	11	1.97%
Free	8	1.43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **JO PANCKRIDGE**

President



## **CBCA VIC - AGM 2024 TREASURER'S REPORT - 2023**

### **Profit/Loss Year Ending January 2024**

This financial year (ending 31st January 2024), shows CBCA VIC Branch in a net equity position of \$242,641.53 and compared to the previous year \$270,867.67. Despite ending the year with an operating loss CBCA VIC Branch are in a strong cash position with all bank accounts displaying surplus funds.

### **Term Deposit Balances**

Term Deposit 460721 maintains a balance of \$110,850. This amount is held in trust for the biennial Albert Ullin Award. These funds are part of legacy and can only be used for the purposes of this Award. At the date of writing this report this term deposit has 6 months remaining. Term Deposit maintains a balance of \$93,888.85. At the date writing this report this term deposit has 7 months remaining.

### **Membership subscriptions**

Membership subscriptions is the main source of income for CBCA VIC Branch. The income for the 2023 year was \$37,152.25. This number is slightly down from previous years with membership income for 2023 of \$39,551 and \$39,516 in 2022. Some consideration may be given to the increased cost of living and cuts to school library budgets.

### **2023 Events and Programs**

The committee considers the events and programs as part of our "core business" and they also uphold purposes in our Constitution. promote discussion, debate, talks & exhibitions in relation to children's books encourage and promote Australian authors and illustrators foster young people's enjoyment of reading.

In 2023 CBCA VIC Branch held a range of events including the Night of the Notables Book Week Shadow Judging, Judges' Talks, Childrens' Book Week at the SLV, From Page to Published masterclass, a Picture Books for Older Readers event and a wonderful evening Celebrating Creatives. Most events operate at a standard cost with all expenditure approved by the committee.

## **GERALDINE WOOLNOUGH**

Treasurer



## CBCA VIC – AGM 2024 MERCHANDISE/ESTORE REPORT – 2023

### CBCA VIC Branch eStore Purchases for 2024

During 2023 purchasing details from Victoria indicated that there were 640 orders from the eStore which generated \$59,676 of Gross income and \$47,139 of Net Sales, PLUS \$10.8K towards the shipping costs.

### Merchandise Sales

The most significant purchasing trends for Victoria included:

	Orders	Gross sales	Net sales	Shipping	Tax	Total sales
	253	\$2,295.61	\$1,765.63	\$0.00	\$176.39	\$1,942.02
2023 Children's Book Week® Digital Colouring Poster	63	\$1,438.79	\$1,356.54	\$0.00	\$135.48	\$1,492.02
2023 Student Reading Journal	5	\$227.25	\$227.25	\$0.00	\$22.75	\$250.00
2023 Digital Yearly Planner	10	\$229.57	\$181.84	\$0.00	\$18.16	\$200.00
2024 Digital Yearly Planner	161	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
2023 Digital Planner: Shortlist Posters & Poetry Supplement	16	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

### Analysis of the sales data

- As the 2023 Digital Yearly Planner was not a popular item last year across most branches, it was decided to offer it free for everyone as a marketing strategy to promote CBCA merchandise and the CBCA organization.
- In the first quarter of 2024 the Digital Yearly Planner was downloaded by 161 interested people which is a significant increase on the 10 downloads in 2023. As the 2024 Yearly Digital Planner will remain accessible throughout the year it is likely that the number of downloads will continue to increase.
- It is anticipated that the 2025 Digital Yearly Planner will be completed and available for downloading prior to the end of 2024.
- The 2023 only 5 Reading Journals were purchased perhaps because there are many varieties available from other sources.
- The most popular item in this section was the 2023 Children's Book Week Digital Coloring Poster which sold 63.

### Gift Fund Donation

- Donation to the CBCA Gift Fund: Shadow Judging 2024 Program was \$50.
- Another donation to the CBCA Gift Fund was \$35.

		Orders	Gross sales	Net sales	Shipping	Tax	Total sales
		84	\$1,915.48	\$1,781.31	\$0.00	\$178.69	\$1,960.00
CBCA Book of the Year A4 Sticker Sheet	Shortlist	65	\$780.28	\$744.15	\$0.00	\$74.55	\$818.70
CBCA Book of the Year A4 Sticker Sheet	Notable	45	\$447.82	\$415.14	\$0.00	\$41.66	\$456.80
CBCA Book of the Year A4 Sticker Sheet	Winner	54	\$399.66	\$366.98	\$0.00	\$36.82	\$403.80
CBCA Book of the Year A4 Sticker Sheet	Honour	43	\$269.53	\$236.85	\$0.00	\$23.85	\$260.70
Shadow Judging Book of the Year Winner stickers A4 sheet	N/A	3	\$18.19	\$18.19	\$0.00	\$1.81	\$20.00

- As usual the CBCA Book of the Year Stickers for the Shortlist, Notable, Winner and Honour books were popular, particularly with School Libraries and Public libraries.

- The Shadow Judging Book of the Year Winner stickers were not as popular as only 3 were purchased.

#### Edward the Emu 20c Anniversary Royal Australia Mint Coin

- In 2023 the CBCA VIC Branch used this coin for raffle prizes and gifts for presenters at branch events.
- As only 10 coins were purchased by Victorian buyers this may indicate a drop in interest for this product which could impact the long-term viability of the partnership between the Royal Australia Mint and CBCA.

#### Combination Packs for Displays

The Children's Book-Week-in-a-Tube, the Classroom Pack and the Library Pack continue to be sought after products probably due to convenience and affordability. These packs provide a range of colorful and visually engaging display materials that capture children's imagination and are popular with School Libraries and Public Libraries. In 2023 the pullup banner has also been a popular display item.

#### Marketing

- CBCA VIC Branch has been involved in marketing the merchandise through our social media platforms and newsletters. Advertising tiles that focus on specific product selections, developed by CBCA National have been featured regularly. The tiles have now been adapted to include our branch logo and used for local campaigns, programs, and events.
- The newsletter opt-in option, which is part of the eStore purchasing procedure, has given users the opportunity to link into the CBCA VIC Branch for information about events, resources, and membership benefits.
- The promotional pack from the eStore was displayed at various events throughout the year, giving attendees the opportunity to inspect the merchandise. *"There is nothing quite like holding an item in your hands to inspire ideas for using the merchandise in your schools or libraries"*.
- The reintroduction of purchase orders has increased sales, particularly amongst those schools with limited budgets and complicated purchasing procedures.
- Regular specials offering discounted products especially around Children's Book Week, Christmas, and the commencement of the school year, were successful, and significantly reduced the quantity of 'left over' merchandise.

#### Shopify

- In 2024 a new eStore software program (*Shopify*) was launched to replace the former problematic software.
- *Shopify* has been successful, making it easier for online customers to navigate and improving the shopping experience and encouraging return visits.

#### 2023 eStore Purchasing Changes

- In 2022 the Purchase Order payment option was withdrawn and only Credit Card payments were accepted. However, in response to user requests this option was reinstated with the introduction of the new eStore software (*Shopify*).

## Gift Cards

- eStore gift vouchers of various values were popular for event prizes and gifts for family, friends, and colleagues.

## Partner Products

### 1. *Stencil Products*

The range of Stencil stationery particularly for primary school students continues to be popular.

### 2. *Merchandising Libraries*

Artisan Range: These custom-made display products, especially the wall decals, the Children's Book Week social media frame, the foam cutouts, and the acrylic design have been well received.

## **LEANNE RANDS**

EStore/Merchandise Subcommittee Representative for CBCA VIC Branch



## **VICTORIAN JUDGES TALKS REPORT - 2023**

Our 2023-24 Victorian Judges were:

Older Reader category	Julia Petricevic
Younger Reader category	Ilona Urquhart
Early Childhood category	Bronwyn Joseph
Picture Book &	
New Illustrator category	N/A
Eve Pownall category	N/A

We received fewer requests for Judges' Talks in 2023. The availability of access to online Judges' Talks through both the CBCA and other organisations was a probable reason for this, as was the availability for members of the Judges' videoed critiques, through the CBCA website.

SLAV hosted a Judges' Talk online with both Victorian and interstate judges.

Our Metro Judge's Talk saw our three Victorian judges present in-person.

The regions teamed up this year to present an online event for Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and Gippsland members. Alida Galati (EP), Sarah Mayor Cox (PB/NI), Bron Joseph (EC), Colleen Caddey (NSW YR judge) and Kate Eyre (NSW OR judge) presented. Whilst this was a successful presentation, Geelong and Bendigo members provided feedback suggesting that in 2024 they would prefer in-person events to allow for discussion and networking opportunities.

The committee wishes to thank our Judges for helping to achieve the aims of this outreach program.

## **JO PANCKRIDGE**

Judges' Talk Convenor



## **CBCA VIC – AGM 2024 EVENT REPORTS - 2023**

### **Night of the Notables**

What a great night this event was! It felt like pre-Covid, with crowds arriving and conversation with laughter surrounding the space. The event was held at Baroonga Nganjin North Fitzroy Library which was so well supported and assisted by the Library Staff and Events Co-Ordinator Natasha Knoch.

Our evening commenced with nibbles and drinks and attendees were presented with a tote bag and some gifts generously donated by Walker Books.

The attendees were welcomed by CBCA VIC Branch President Jo Panckridge who acknowledged Walker Books 30 years of Publishing within Australia along with their sponsorship of the event which was also supported by DET; Kate Thwaites Federal Member for Jaga Jaga and community supporters Camille & Shaun Campbell.

The Walker Book panel Clare Halifax, Venita Dimos and Rebecca Lim considered how they would define quality literature. The conversation was both stimulating and thought provoking.

This was followed by the announcement via video of the CBCA Notable list for 2023.

We recognised the tireless work of Chris Oughtred who returned from the CBCA VIC Branch committee after over 30 years spent as President, Vice-President and committee member and a Leila St John award recipient in 2020.

We also acknowledged the sad passing of Pam Horsey, a notable and valued VIC Branch member for over 50 years. Pam was awarded the Leila St John Award in 2010. She was a President and Secretary and a Life Member of the Victorian Branch. She coordinated the Maurice Saxby Development Fund and convened the Albert Ullin Award committee.

The evening concluded with a video on the *2023 Sun Project Shadow Judging Project*, explaining the program and encouraging our members to participate.

This inspiring and uplifting evening was made possible through the work of many volunteers, and we thank them for their involvement.





**GERALDINE WOOLNOUGH**  
Event Convenor

## Picture Books for Older Readers

This event furthered our understandings of contemporary children's and young adult Australian literature. In partnership with Readings Hawthorn, CBCA VIC Branch committee member Angela Crocombe, and senior buyer for Readings Kids, hosted a Q&A with shortlisted authors Michael Wagner and Zeno Sworder. Both shared their inspirations behind their books *Dirt y Sea* and *My Strange Shrinking Parents* respectively. There was hardly a dry eye as both shared their emotional stories.

CBCA VIC Branch President, Jo Panckridge and Committee member and senior teacher Anne-Louise O'Donoghue followed up with a conversation on the value of picture books for older readers. They highlighted ways to use picture books to support the use of the Younger Readers Shortlist in classroom settings.



## **From Page to Published: Children’s and YA Writers Masterclass**

‘From Page to Published: Children’s and YA Writers Masterclass’ was held at The Wheeler Centre on Monday, November 21. The event featured Maxine Beneba Clarke, Zeno Swords and Kirsty Murray in a session for emerging authors, moderated by CBCA Vic President, Jo Panckridge. With an audience of over 50, it was well attended, and everyone had their notebooks at the ready to gain pearls of wisdom. Jo asked the authors probing questions about their road to publication, working with publishers and when to ask for feedback on their work, amongst many other topics. The authors then also treated us to an activity that each of them might perform at a school visit. Maxine asked the audience to break down a poem, Zeno gave them a drawing exercise, and Kirsty gave them general tips about being confident onstage. There was also time for a number of audience questions, which meant the session went overtime by half an hour, but everyone left feeling very satisfied and having gained some excellent insight about the journey to publication. A recording of the first half of the event will be made available to members soon and we hope to provide more events for emerging authors in 2024.



## Corinne Fenton at the State Library

Two storytelling events were held at the State Library of Victoria on Saturday August 19 in the Pauline Gandel Children's Quarter to an audience of parents, grandparents and children.

The presenter was Corinne Fenton, author of CBCA shortlisted book *Lionel and Me* and the Shadow Judging winner, judged by students, for the Early Childhood category. Corinne worked her magic in engaging all with questions, intentional teaching and the reading of the story.

Parents and children enjoyed the creative making of some craft Lionels, supported by the committee of CBCA VIC Branch.

The event also featured a visit from Bob Graham who presented his original artwork purchased by Angus Pearson, Library Co-ordinator at Kilbreda College. Bob had kindly donated the artwork to advertise the Night of Notables earlier in the year. This fundraising project was well supported by our membership. The CBCA VIC Branch are indebted to Bob Graham for this generous gift and the assistance supplied by Ann Haddon and Ann James.

It was great to engage with an audience in such a prestigious space and we acknowledge the valuable partnership now forged with State Library of Victoria.

Thanks also go to Zart Art, Readings Books and Kate Thwaites for being valued supporters of this event.





## **CBCA VIC – AGM 2023 SHADOW JUDGING 2023**

The national rollout of the Shadow Judging program, in its second year, was again a highlight in Victoria. 89 groups registered from both regional, remote and metropolitan regions. With over 2000 young people from across Australia making up more than 250 groups, we saw great interest and enthusiasm for this program. The Victorian groups made up 36% of the national tally and an excellent response to this initiative.

The VIC Branch were able to fund 11 groups with the purchase of books and organized Creator Visits.

Mentors, volunteering from the branch committee and our membership base, supported facilitators and feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

The University of Sydney Sun Project-Illuminating Children's Literature course, as part of the CBCA Shadow Judging program, worked with Professor Alyson Simpson, who hosted this series of 4 webinars and 4 lectures with a focus on using the CBCA Shortlists in classroom settings. Over 100 participants enjoyed his very relevant and rewarding PD and feedback suggests it will be repeated in 2024.

Facilitator, student and state coordinator surveys were sent out to gather feedback to further fine-tune the program in preparation for 2024.

Shadow Judging Winning stickers, similar to the Winner stickers for the Book of the Year Awards were designed and sent to participants to add to the Shadow Judges' winning books. These will be made available to publishers in 2024.

Finally, a video was created to promote the value of the Shadow Judging program for older students. As part of the PETAA/Foundation for Learning and Literacy's online symposium *#We All Love a Good Story* Chris Oughtred and Jo Panckridge interviewed some Older Reader facilitators and four Year 9 students on their experience of Shadow Judging to explore how SJ supported increased reading for pleasure. This video was well-received, as comments suggested and reflect the interest in SJ with older students.

### **JO PANCKRIDGE**

National Shadow Judging Convenor



## **SOCIAL NETWORKING & WEBSITE REPORT**

**Instagram - @cbca\_vic has 1,836 followers**

**Facebook - 2,900 followers / 2,600 likes**

The CBCA VIC Branch social media presence is across two platforms with content that highlights our VIC Branch events and programs, as well as national initiatives including Shadow Judging, CBCA Book of the Year Awards and Children's Book Week. In 2023, we stopped actively posting on X (formerly known as Twitter). On Instagram and Facebook we have an engaged audience of members, creatives, publishers, booksellers, librarians, and other people in the children's book world. The content receives solid engagement (likes, reposts and comments) from our followers.

### **Mailchimp - 1,738 subscribers**

Our newsletter has a large number of subscribers, and each month is filled with engaging content for the children's literature community. We continue to receive much positive feedback about our monthly newsletter. It is currently available to everyone, which means non-members can also see our content. Committee members have debated this in 2023, and we may reassess in future. This year, Perform! Education, Booked Out and Creative Net Speakers' Agency have all paid for monthly ads throughout the year. The section entitled "What Committee Members Are Currently Reading" has continued to be popular, as well as our book reviews of new titles. We continue to seek new content from our creator members, including information about their new titles, book launches, awards and achievements.

### **KARYS MCEWEN**

Social Media Convenor and Newsletter Editor



## **CBCA VIC – AGM 2024 BALLARAT REGIONAL REPORT 2023**

We have had a successful year here in Ballarat. We achieved our major objective for the year which was to bring the CBCA to the more distant parts of our region.

We began with a trip to Warrnambool in March where several primary schools from the district gathered at Emmanuel College to meet us and discuss the CBCA. We spent a lot of time talking about Shadow Judging and while the schools were interested, with the exception of Emmanuel College who was already a participant, most of the schools did not have a librarian and wondered how they could get the program off the ground.

This was a recurring theme throughout the year on our visits to regional schools. Many had never heard of the CBCA or only associated it with Book Week and thought that was its only initiative. Even the book week parades featured more Marvel creations than actual book characters.



Most were flummoxed about how to deliver shadow judging, although they all agreed it was a good idea. Funding came up again and again. Most primary schools did not have a librarian. Classroom libraries are all the go now and their success depends on the enthusiasm of the classroom teacher. Interestingly, the most innovative reading programmes that we saw happened in the kinders and preschools. And they are an untapped resource. We spent Book week visiting local kindergartens and day care centres. It was actually one of the highlights of the year.

Another high point was the hybrid event for the Judges' talk. We held ours at the Sebastopol library who went out of their way to support and facilitate the event. Everyone enjoyed the judges' talks and appreciated the fact the event ran to time. Once again, the most valuable benefit came from the lively discussion afterwards.

Which brings me to Mildura, our last event of the year, although it was actually held in February of this year. Most of the planning took place very late in Term 4 as we could just not get it off the ground before then, so we have included it here.

It was held one very hot Monday at the Mildura library. Some of the teachers from outlying schools had not heard of the CBCA. There is no active SLAV group up there and booksellers and publishers never visit. As well as extolling the benefits of CBC membership, our focus was to encourage these schools to network with each other. That will also be our focus in country areas in 2024.

We look forward to the challenge!

### **LORETTA KAVAL & RUTH OPPENHEIM**

Regional Directors – Ballarat



### **CBCA VIC – AGM 2024 BENDIGO REGIONAL REPORT 2023**

The CBCA has once again been active in the Bendigo region in conjunction with the Central Victorian Local Council of ALEA (Australian Literacy Educators Association).

Participants came from near and far to attend the following wonderful events:

- Annual Bendigo Judge's Talk
- Notables evening
- Shadow Judging
- Bi-monthly book chats

### **SARAH MAYOR COX**

Regional Director - Bendigo



## **CBCA VIC. – AGM 2024 GEELONG REGIONAL REPORT 2023**

Unfortunately, with the resignation of the previous Geelong Regional Director, we were unable to find a replacement in 2023.

This left the Geelong regional members relying on Metro events to participate in.

The four regions teamed up to present an online Judges' Talk for Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and Gippsland members. Alida Galati (EP), Sarah Mayor Cox (PB/NI), Bron Joseph (EC), Colleen Caddey (NSW YR judge) and Kate Eyre (NSW OR judge) presented. Whilst this was a successful presentation, Geelong and Bendigo members provided feedback suggesting that in 2024 they would prefer in-person events to allow for discussion and networking opportunities.

We are looking for a Geelong Regional Director for 2024.

### **JO PANCKRIDGE**

For the Geelong Region



## **CBCA VIC – AGM 2024 GIPPSLAND REGIONAL REPORT 2023**

Gippsland hosted two visits from the author Jane Godwin during 2023.

In May Jane visited schools and libraries in the Traralgon and Warragul areas including:

- St Paul's Traralgon
- Latrobe Libraries, Traralgon branch
- St Paul's Warragul
- Marist Sion
- Chairo in Drouin
- Chairo in Leongatha

In August Jane visited schools and libraries in the east of Gippsland, including:

- Nagle College
- Sale Library and art gallery
- Bruthen PS
- Lucknow PS
- The Book Orchard (bookshop)



- East Gippsland Shire Library, Bairnsdale branch
- Bairnsdale SC
- West Bairnsdale PS
- Schoolworks (bookshop)
- Sale College
- Maffra College

Jane spoke engagingly and entertainingly to groups of children ranging in age from pre-school to year 10 and two adult groups. She spoke about where her stories came from, read from her books and encouraged attendees to write their own stories.

At each session I displayed the CBCA banners and spoke briefly about the role of the CBCA, handed out free bookmarks and membership flyers.

For each visit I organised a meal as a local restaurant for all adult participants where everyone met and developed networks and friendships over the common interest of quality children's literature.

While I can't access the precise numbers, I know that we gained new members from the events.

For 2024 I am planning similar visits from local author Scot Gardner in May and local illustrator James Hart in July and August as well as (yet to be confirmed) visit from George Ivanoff in Term 4.

**SUSAN O'MALLEY**

Regional Director – Gippsland Sub-Branch