

The 2016 Leila St John Award

*for distinguished services to children's literature in Victoria
is presented to*

Gerí Coughlín

Gerí Coughlín's career as an outstanding teacher librarian is a tribute to the power of a passionate advocate for children's literature.

After developing the fundamental skills of her profession at Fawkner High School Gerí was appointed Head Teacher Librarian at Mazenod College, Mulgrave. It was here that Gerí created a stimulating reading environment for boys from a wide range of socio economic and cultural backgrounds. She initiated book clubs and reading programs including RIBIT (Reading in Bed is Terrific!) and the library collection was enhanced with a rich selection of resources.

Not content with the written word Gerí provided the opportunity and encouragement for students to attend early book gigs at St Martins Theatre in South Yarra. Author's visits also became an annual event at the school and the boys were always well read and prepared to engage with the presenters. The school community was enriched by Gerí's knowledge and generosity in sharing her expertise. Students always had a wide range of personally recommended books to choose from to read for pleasure.

During Gerí's most recent employment at Trinity Grammar School, she nurtured and extended the students' knowledge and awareness of literature, through numerous visits by award winning authors from Australia and overseas. Gerí also contributed countless hours to the development of plans for the impressive Tudor centre at Trinity, helping to create a unique library experience for that school community. The legacy of her stimulating displays and engaging conversations with the boys are a testament to her talent.

Gerí has served on committees including the CBCA Victorian committee, the School Library Association of Victoria and the Eastern Region School Library Network. She has been active in a network of teacher librarians of single sex boy's schools in the Kew/Hawthorn area, significantly contributing to the role of teacher librarians in boys' education.

Gerí has always been a passionate and generous contributor to the children's literature community, sharing her limitless knowledge with students and colleagues. Her extraordinary wealth of knowledge both of literature and of current information sources has enriched the curriculum across all disciplines and age groups in her care.