

The 2017 Leila St John Award
for distinguished services to children's literature
in Victoria
is presented to
Geraldine Woolnough

This teacher and literacy advocate has been involved with the CBCA (Vic Branch) for more than twenty years. Whether preparing for an upcoming event, sharing the benefits of a book with parents or standing in an auditorium with members of the community of all ages, her passion for books is always evident.

The CBCA is just one part of Geraldine's well-honed ability to spread the importance of books for children and the secret to opening up the joy of great stories for families. As a lecturer, Geraldine has regularly gone beyond the designated curriculum when teaching future educators. Organising visits to Oldmeadows, Books Illustrated and other treasures of Australian Literature, she understands the importance of creating meaningful connections of place, people and story that will fuel a love of books and encourage educators to share this joy. Geraldine has also been known to utilise her connections while lecturing to ensure a ready supply of volunteers at CBCA events (even making it part of the assessment process at one stage...)

As a teacher, at primary and then later at kindergarten, Geraldine conjured the magic of books in every lesson, whether by reading *'I'm a Dirty Dinosaur'* while jumping in mud during a bush kindergarten session, or a sharing *'In Flanders Fields'* with a group of children in front of a local RSL.

Geraldine also understands that sharing with the children is only half of the process. Parents lucky enough to have their children educated by Geraldine are given the necessary tools of our stories. By sharing information about how books are crafted, so parents feel a part of the story, Geraldine imbues the love of special books, so parents are encouraged to purchase the same book for their home library (another initiative she actively encourages).

By introducing families to the local library and the great events and opportunities of the CBCA she brings the world of literature into people's everyday lives.

Over the years Geraldine has run literary events, both under the auspice of the CBCA and just for the chance to share the stories at her kindergarten and in the local community. She has been Treasurer for the Victorian Branch for the past four years and was a Convenor for the esteemed Crichton Award, she has organised countless judges talks and organised the Night of Notables evenings for the last two years.

Geraldine doesn't just talk of her love of books - she is an active participant and leader from the initial set-up, to pack-up. She puts in the hard work to make lifelong stories of loving literature happen.

