



CBCA ACT NEWS

Issue 3 / August 2009

PO BOX 5548 HUGHES ACT 2605

Hello All and welcome to our third newsletter for 2009! We are now gearing up for Book Week in a big way – remember if you haven't done so already, get your Merchandise orders in very soon to avoid disappointment! August is the busiest month in the CBCA year, so thank you to all the committee members for organising things so efficiently.

I am very pleased to say we have two new Christmas Book Appeal Coordinators. They are Jill Howard and Elena Battye. I'd like to thank them for taking on this position. Jill and Elena will be doing a handover this year with the current Christmas Book Appeal Coordinator, Mollie Bialkowski, and will take over the position next year. I would like to thank Mollie for all her hard work in organising the Christmas Book Appeal for the last 10 years - fund raising, purchasing, gift wrapping and distributing books to underprivileged kids in the ACT. We were very lucky to have her for so long.

Our Judge's Talk was both successful and well attended. Thank you everyone for coming along, and thanks especially to our judge Michael Janssen-Gibson for all his hard work over the last two years – reading over 800 books, commenting on all of them, attending the judge's conferences and for presenting several Judge's Talks - in places as far away as the Far South Coast. For more information about the ACT Branch Judge's Talk, please see our Report on page 3. The next events we have coming up is the Awards Announcement and the Children's Seminar- for more information about these please see page 2

In this issue of the newsletter, we have a Report from our new ACT judge, Rosemary Thomas. Please have a look and see how Rosemary has been going in her first few months of reading. We also have some photos of the flowerbed display in Kambah. The display went up in late May and will stay until October. Please have a look if you are passing that way! That's all from me at this stage – have a very happy Book Week everyone and I hope to see many of you at the Awards Announcement at Belconnen Library!

Rebecca Kemble
President, CBCA ACT Branch

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CHILDREN'S BOOK COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA (ACT BRANCH) Executive Committee 2008-9

President: Rebecca Kemble **Vice President:** Belle Alderman
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Newsletter: Kimberley Gaal **Archives:** Pat Smith **Merchandise:** Kathleen Kinsella

Children's Book Week Seminar: Julie Long

Christmas Book Appeal: Mollie Bialkowski (handing over to Jill Howard and Elena Battye)

2008/2009 ACT Judge: Michael Janssen-Gibson

2010/2011 ACT Judge: Rosemary Thomas

UPCOMING EVENTS

Announcement of the Winners of the CBCA Book of the Year Awards, Friday 21st of August

This year the Awards Announcement will be held at the Belconnen Public Library from 11:30am. Two classes from Canberra Girls Grammar Junior School will be performing shortlisted books and kids in attendance could be chosen to represent the winning authors and illustrators, and accept an "award" on their behalf. Please see the flyer on page 12 for more information.

Children's Seminar, Thursday 27th of August

Visiting Book Week Authors and Illustrators will be talking with kids and answering questions at this Seminar. Children are encouraged to bring along books by those authors and illustrators for signing and to ask any questions they may have. Please see page 13 for more information and for the booking slip.

ACT Branch Annual General Meeting, October

Our AGM is coming up in a few months, so please come along and get involved. All positions will be declared vacant and elections held. If you would like to volunteer for a position – President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Officer etc the AGM is the time to do it! Also if you have any issues or motions you would like to raise at the CBCA National AGM, the Branch AGM is the place to let us know. Details re time/place will be forthcoming.

ACT Branch Christmas Shopping Night, November/December

Dymocks Belconnen regularly holds a Christmas Shopping Night for us at the end of the year. There is 20% off books purchased on the night and they provide complimentary drinks and nibbles. Details closer to the time.

Recent Award Winners

The Guardian Children's Fiction Prize

Morris Gleitzman's book *Then* has been shortlisted for the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize.

Here's the hyperlink to the article about this which highlights the nature of what they describe as 'hard-hitting novels': <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/may/22/guardian-childrens-fiction-prize-longlist/print>

The award will be announced on 8 October 2009. Here's the short list which they call the 'longlist':

Genesis by Bernard Beckett

Solace of the Road by Siobhan Dowd

The Silver Blade by Sally Gardner

Then by Morris Gleitzman

Rowan the Strange by Julie Hearn

Exposure by Mal Peet

Nation by Terry Pratchett

Revolver by Marcus Sedgwick



Morris Gleitzman

The Children's Book Council of Australia Awards Foundation

Proudly Funding Prizes for the Children's Book of the Year Awards

Benefactors:

Scholastic Australia

Allen & Unwin

Laurie Copping OAM (in memoriam)

Thyne Reid Trust No. 1.

Major Donors:

Australia Post

Era Publications

Five Mile Press

Libby Gleeson AM

Hachette Children's Books Australia

Hardie Grant Egmont

HarperCollins Publishers Australia

Ipswich District Teacher-Librarians' Network

The James N Kirby Foundation

Kinross-Wolaroi School

Koala Books

The Library Board of Queensland

Beryl Moncrieff Matthews (in memoriam)

Angela Namoi

The Northern Territory Government

Parents and Boys of Sydney Grammar Edgecliff Prep School

Penguin Books Australia

Random House Australia

Emily Rodda (Jennifer Rowe)

Gillian Rubinstein

Maurice Saxby AM

SA Dept of the Arts & Cultural Development

Julie Vivas

Walker Books Australia

Cassandra Weddell, Qld (in memoriam)

Maisie Williams, Garah, NSW (in memoriam)

Sue Williams

Donations to the CBCA Awards Foundation are tax deductible and can be sent to:

PO Box 172, Blackheath NSW 2785

Ph: 02 4787 8492 or 9630 2424

Fax: 02 9630 2594

Or donate on line:

<http://cbca.org.au/foundation.htm>

- EVENT REPORTS -

2010 JUDGE'S REPORT

ROSEMARY THOMAS, ACT JUDGE 2010-2011

I have been waiting for many months to receive my first reading box. This was delayed this year so the first box was rather big and a challenge. A case of being thrown in at the deep end!

The first box of books finally arrived mid June and reports were due in 16 days later. The box of 32 books contained a variety of reading categories with 11 hefty books amongst them. I am pleased to say that I managed to read and report on them all in 11 days. My reward to myself for reading all the box was to save my favourite author until last to read, but I couldn't hold out and read the Gabrielle Wang book leaving four other boy books to read (I won't do this again as it was a struggle with the last 4 books). I can see why our branch seeks people who have the time to read as judges. The second box is due today and reports have to be back early July. This box only has 15 entries so more time to explore the contents of all the books so far.

If anyone wishes to give me input to books on the list I would be very happy. Just send me an email and the year level you teach or are interested in and I will give you a couple of titles to read and give me feedback on. There is a large quantity of Early Childhood books in the first box so if you have grandchildren or access to preschoolers feel free to ask about titles. I know you are all busy reading this year's Shortlist but the wider the views of readers, the better for me to make a measured judgement on entries.

JUDGE'S TALK REPORT

REBECCA KEMBLE, PRESIDENT, CBCA ACT BRANCH

Our Judge's Talk was held on Thursday the 28th of May at Orana School in Weston. There were 22 people in attendance as our 2008/2009 ACT judge Michael Janssen-Gibson discussed the judging process, the shortlisted books, the Notable Books and trends in each category.

A light supper was served and people had the chance to network and catch up with other CBCA members. After the supper the Christmas Book Appeal raffle was drawn by Michael and the winner was Jan Sismey! Congratulations Jan – we were very pleased that she was there on the night to receive her prize!

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Michael again for two years of hard work and lots of reading – we were very lucky to have such a hard working and dedicated judge passionate about quality children's literature. Thanks Michael!

**REPORT ON THE CHILDREN'S BOOK COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA (CBCA)
NATIONAL TELECONFERENCE HELD ON 26 JULY 2009**

BELLE ALDERMAN

The CBCA holds teleconference two or three times a year between Annual General Meetings held in November each year. Each of the eight branches is represented, as well as Reading Time, the Awards Foundation and the National Archivist. The highlights of the July teleconference were as follows:

CBCA National Patron

Her Excellency, Ms Quentin Bryce AC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, has accepted an appointment as the national patron of the CBCA.

Awards Foundation

The fund contains over a million dollars and the interest funds the annual CBCA awards. There will be the usual \$50,000 available this year for the award prizes.

The investments are recovering, after some loss due to the international financial crisis.

Registration of CBCA as a Tax Deductible Charity

It is likely that the CBCA as a national body will achieve this status which means donors can receive a deduction on their income taxes for donations made. The process is underway. The Lu Rees Archives and the Awards Foundation both hold this classification already.

CBCA Conference Cancellation

The proposed CBCA national conference, which was to be held in Brisbane in 2010, was cancelled due to the economic climate. Unfortunately, the conference organisers required approximately \$50,000 as a cancellation fee.

CBCA Book Week Merchandise

Sales are a little down compared to last year, and Branches are encouraged to order material. This money is an important source of income for the CBCA.

CBCA Awards

The number of books entered for the 2010 awards is about the same as 2009, except that fewer Eve Pownall entries have been received. Contacts are being made with publishers and educational book suppliers to identify possible books which might be entered.

CBCA on Facebook

We have a presence on Facebook, with 250 'friends' so far. Check it out at <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=91641366798&ref=mf> Each Branch is being asked to identify a member who'd like to be involved in blogging activity as another way to reach people interested in children's books. If you are interested, let Rebecca Kemble know.

Reading Time New Format

Reading Time will be offering a pdf version, as well as its usual print version, of the journal for a cheaper annual subscription. A form will be sent out with the journal.

Newly Appointed National Archivist for the CBCA

The National Archives of the CBCA are held at the National Library of Australia. After the resignation of the former archivist, a new archivist, Judith Russell, from Queensland, has been appointed.

Australian Children's Literature Alliance

A national body of representatives of organisations spread across Australia and interested in children's literature has been set up with the primary aim of organising and funding a Children's Laureate, similar to the position in the UK, presently held by Anthony Browne. This author or illustrator, to be appointed in 2010, will travel Australia promoting children's literature with children and adults.

National Literacy Week Joins CBCA in Promoting Children's Books

National Literacy Week, run by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations, is joining with the CBCA in promoting their week around Children's Book Week, and using the slogan, 'The Story Sharing Safari'. Their National Reading Day is 2 September 2009, and their website with various activities is <http://www.nlnw.edu.au/>

Did you know?

The list of Notables is included on the national CBCA website at <http://cbca.org.au/> at 9am on the day of the announcement of the winners and honour books which takes place on Friday 21 August 2009 at noon EST. when the Short List was placed on the CBCA website this year, there were 20,000 hits on that page that day!

And did you know this?

Publishers have given copyright permission for images to be made of all jacket covers of books entered for the CBCA Awards for publicity purposes.

NEW WORKSHOP AT THE ACT WRITERS CENTRE
FAMILY FICTION: A WORKSHOP FOR CHILDREN'S WRITERS
WITH DIANNE WOLFER

1-4pm on Saturday 29 August

Every family has its ghosts, heroes and mad aunts. Bring along your favourite family anecdotes or stories of your own exploits and transform them into picture books or chapter books. They may even take on novel proportions!

Dianne Wolfer is author of 12 books for teenagers and younger readers. Her latest title *Lighthouse Girl*, set in Albany in 1914, began with a family story. It combines archival photographs and articles with evocative charcoal illustrations.

Cost: \$45 members, \$36 conc members, \$95 non-members (includes 12 month membership).

Bookings on 6262 9191 or <http://www.actwriters.org.au/workshops09.html>

WHAT'S UP AT THE LU REES ARCHIVES?

BY BELLE ALDERMAN, COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, LU REES ARCHIVES

Teenage Passion continues

In the previous two newsletters, I mentioned we were working hard to acquire all 52 issues of Rippa Reading which ran from 1986 to 1995. Jonathan Appleton, a teenager, started this newsletter of reviews and interviews, and has now gone on to be a Children's Editor at Orion Publisher in the UK. We have tried several sources, and had terrific luck. We are now down to only nine missing issues!

Lu Rees Exhibition and Public Opening 26-27 August 2009

We will be holding an exhibition during Children's Book Week. The Archives is also featuring the exhibition materials in a professional development session for ACT teacher librarians from 3.30pm-5.30pm on Thursday 27 August. This was arranged with Lori Korodaj, President of the ACT Australian School Library Association. We thought there might be a number of people who haven't seen the Archives and it is one of our strategic goals to publicise the Archives to those who'd be especially interested. Our exhibition theme is 'In Collaboration' and we've selected six picture books where we have the original artwork plus the papers and manuscripts. On display will be early drafts, rough sketches, storyboards, dummies, original artwork and much more. Just a teaser—*My Dog* by John Heffernan and Andrew McLean will feature with stunning material, as will Colin Thiele's *Farmer Schultz's Ducks*, among others.

We also invite you to attend our formal opening of the exhibition on Wednesday 26 August from 4pm-5.30pm. Come along and meet the children's authors and illustrators visiting Canberra schools during Children's Book Week—Pauline Deeves, Christine Aldred, Ingrid Jonach, Laura Peterson and Dianne Wolfer, who will be at the opening. RSVP: lu.rees@canberra.edu.au or phone 6201 5075 for catering purposes. Official invitations will follow soon.

The exhibition will be open Wednesday 26 August, from 9am-4pm (followed by the opening from 4pm-6pm. and Thursday 27 August, from 9am-3.30pm. Both the exhibition and opening will be held in Library Training Room 1, University of Canberra Library, Level A, Bruce, Belconnen.

If you can volunteer one or two hours on Wednesday or Thursday, this would be terrific, as we must supervise the material at all times. Contact Belle.Alderman@canberra.edu.au or phone 6161 2809. All further inquiries to Belle Alderman on Belle.Alderman@canberra.edu.au

Art Project

We are progressing on the Archives' artwork project, where we are listing and describing our artwork collection. So far we have finished Graeme Base, Elizabeth Honey, Peter Gouldthorpe and Kim Gamble. We have finished some artworks by Andrew McLean, Wayne Harris, Judith Crabtree and Steven Woolman. If you are interested in artists and their artwork for children's books, you might enjoy volunteering your time for this project. We have a creative writing student who has given generously of her time in between her studies, and thoroughly enjoyed it. Occasionally we can't decide the media used – is it coloured pencil? Maybe it's acrylic? Fortunately, a friend of the Archives is a practicing artist and she drops by to identify the media for us.

Brian Caswell—more papers

In early June, Brian Caswell and his wife, Marlene, drove down from Tumby Umbi to the Archives with the third donation of his works. These were all neatly packed in a knee-high large plastic tub with wheels. Unfortunately, just as we were about to wheel it into the Archives, the wheels went splat! We did manage – just – now everything is in folders and boxes and safely stored.

Work experience student

In early July the Archives hosted work experience for Catherine Rosenberg, teacher librarian at Giralang Primary School, who is finishing her teacher librarianship course at Charles Sturt University. We were very happy to have her.

National President of the CBCA visits Lu Rees Archives on 11 August

Marj Kirkland, our national president from Brisbane, has never seen the Archives, so we booked a cheap flight and she'll be with us for our 11 August Management Committee meeting. Afterwards, we'll be going out to dinner, and you're invited!

When & where: Bella Vista (Italian), Emu Bank, Belconnen, 6.30pm (each person pays for their own dinner & drinks)

Bookings: contact Belle.Alderman@canberra.edu.au or phone 6161 2809 by Friday 7 August

Endless treasure trove of new books

Working in the Archives is an enormous treat – almost every Australian children's book published is donated to the collection, sometimes well before the books reach the shops. How lucky to have these to savour.

CHILDREN'S BOOK COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA (QUEENSLAND BRANCH) INC. CONCEPT FOR A NATIONAL READERS CUP COMPETITION

PREPARED BY JENNY STUBBS – FEBRUARY 2009

Why have a Readers Cup Competition?

The Readers Cup Competition is a highly visible form of promoting and recognising the importance of reading. As a reading incentive program it is an excellent way to promote literature and libraries. As a competition with a focus on the Arts rather than sport, it encourages team building. At a school and regional level it is good for school spirit building. Running a Readers Cup Competition also helps to keep teacher librarians and public librarians up to date with new books. It is a lot of fun.

What Benefit will be gained from the project?

- Promotion of literature and libraries
- Promotion of CBCA
- Increased literacy skills
- Development of team building
- Development of school spirit
- Links between schools and public libraries
- Increase in book sales

How many people benefit from the project in Qld?

We had thirteen regions taking part in the 2008 Year 6/7 State Finals competition and ten in the Year 8/9 competition. Prior to the state finals a total of 340 teams each comprising four students (sometimes five counting a reserve) took part in regional finals. That is between 1 360 and 1 700 students participating. With each team reading up to 6 novels, the estimated number of books read in 2008 Readers Cup competitions in Qld could have been as high as 8700 books and that does not include the books read at school level in Term 1 when choosing teams.

Where it all began

In 1987, Judy Styles, teacher librarian at Aberfoyle Park High School, in Adelaide, brought back an idea to promote books and reading called the Readers Cup Competition, from Boulder, USA. She introduced it to Year 8 students at her school, and word of its success in encouraging young people to read slowly spread. Teacher librarians from neighbouring schools started it in their schools. A committee of interested teacher librarians south of Adelaide got together and organised a state competition.

The Qld Experience

In 2004 CBCA Qld obtained a grant to fund the establishment of a state-wide Readers Cup Competition. It catered for students in Year 6-8 and about 200 schools participating. Perpetual trophies were purchased with the grant and the following year a registration fee was introduced to help fund regional and state competitions. In 2006 the competition split into Year 6/7 and 8/9 categories. The twenty years of its continued growth is proof of the popularity and success of this competition.

Qld Timeline

- Information about the Readers Cup is disseminated to all schools in February, originally via Australian Standing Orders, then a direct mail out to schools and now via email and website.
- Term 1 – Schools register online and conduct their own competitions if required. They pay a registration fee of \$25.00.
- Term 2 – Regional finals held at the end of the term coordinated by CBCA Qld Regional Coordinators – Funding for regions comes from the central registration fees.
- Term 3 – State Finals to be held end of term as part of Brisbane Writers Festival. Funding of state finals comes from registration fee. Additional Branch funds are used to offer regional teams a contribution towards their travel and accommodation.
- Throughout the year some Regions have raised additional funds to help send teams to Brisbane for the State Finals.

More Information on Readers Cup

What is the Readers Cup Competition?

The Readers Cup Competition rewards students who do well at reading. Just as good sports people receive rewards, then good readers receive prizes and certificates for competing at reading. In Qld, The

Readers Cup Competition consists of teams of four students reading six books that have been selected by committee members at a regional and state level. These teams compete against each other by providing written answers to questions about each book. Teams with the highest scores go into the school, regional or state finals. Each student participating at regional level receives a certificate. Members of winning teams each receive a medallion stating they were state finalists. Members of winning teams at both regional and state level also receive a small cup while the winning team holds a perpetual cup for a year. In some regions and at state level book prizes are also given to the top team members.

Selection criteria for the books

The aim is to get kids reading. It is important to consider the reading level and the interest level of the books that are selected. At school, and to a lesser extent at regional competitions there needs to be levels of difficulty ranging from the very easy for the less able or reluctant reader, to very challenging for the gifted reader. Books are also selected from a range of genres such as fantasy, adventure, mystery, historical etc. This not only caters for all tastes but gives students the opportunity to read types of books that they haven't tried before.

Award winning books can also be incorporated into the selection. We try to include the first book of a series to encourage students to read more after the competition. The sex and ethnic background of the main characters need to be checked to ensure that there is a gender balance and range of ethnicity. It is also important to be aware of the readers' religious and racial backgrounds and incorporate good quality literature that will not offend the school community.

Once the Readers Cup Competition has been established in a school, only some titles will be replaced each year. Books are often used for a number of years so it is important to carefully select ones that will not date too much and will have appeal to future students. The aim is to choose a group of well-written, popular books that will appeal to the majority of the students.

Budget

The Readers Cup Competition must have a budget allocated to it. Provision has to be made to purchase multiple copies of the books. Although students can purchase their own copies or borrow the books from a public library, it is important to have two to three copies of each novel depending on their length. If the books have been popular they rarely stay on the shelves, even after the competition, so it is money well spent.

The Competition

During the heat, the quizmaster asks the questions and gives a certain time limit for the team to confer and write down their answer. Spelling is not checked. Have the books available to show as you ask the question, and to refer to if there are any doubts about the correct answers. When the time limit is up, answers are checked. The teams with the highest scores go into the regional/state finals.

Regional Finals

These are held at a central point within the region and open for public viewing. Depending on the number of schools, some regions may have to hold heats in the same way as larger schools do.

State Finals

Each region can send one team to the finals. In previous years, an author of one of the competition books is invited to be Quizmaster for the Competition.

Where to from here?

Hold a national competition. To achieve this, committees would need to be set up by branches to coordinate their own state or territory final. A national committee would be formed with representation from other branches included. This committee would consult about a national timeline, sponsorships, location, books and conduct of the national finals. NOTE: Victoria already runs a state final coordinated by SLAV. CBCA Vic might need to have a dialogue with SLAV about their options.

How it could work

Branches

- By Book Week 2009 nominate a Readers Cup Coordinator to establish a committee and liaise with the national committee.

The State/Territory Committee

- Promotes the concept in their own state/territory, define regions and identify regional coordinators.
- Provides regional coordinator information to the CBCA webmaster to add to the Readers Cup database for online registrations.

- Organises and run a state-wide Readers Cup
- Contributes suggestions and questions for state and national competitions.

National

- Establish a Readers Cup Coordinator and committee

The national committee

- Communicates via email
- Works to identify national sponsors for transport and accommodation of teams.
- Identifies a suitable venue and date
- Selects titles for state and national competitions
- Organises and runs the National Readers Cup
- Provides trophies at the National Finals
- Supports and advises the States/Territories committees
- Ensures that central registration of teams is managed online
- Promotes and publicise the National Readers Cup

Three Possible Options for a National Final 2011/2012

Option 1 - (For this to work all states must use the same set of books for both state and national finals.)

Term 1 - Local Readers Cup held in schools (optional)

By 20th June - Regional Finals held in all states and territories participating

By 27th August (end of Book Week) - State Finals are held in all states and territories participating

At the Brisbane Writers Festival 8th September – National Finals are held in Brisbane

(Disadvantages – too short a timeline to book flights and accommodation between 27th August and 8th September. Tasmania is on holidays at that time. Advantages – Fewer books to read. Qld could run finals 7th September a day before nationals and save travel costs.)

Option 2 - (All states may still use the same set of books for both state and national finals if they wish.)

Term 1 - Local Readers Cup held in schools (optional)

By 20th June - Regional Finals held in all state and territories participating

By 11th September - State Finals are held in all state and territories participating

By the 30th November – National Finals are held in any state or territory

Option 3

Term 1 - Local Readers Cup held in schools (optional)

By 20th June - Regional Finals held in all state and territories participating

By 25th September - State Finals are held in all state and territories participating

At the CBCA National Conference (if they still exist) – National Finals are held (possibly May 2012)

Questions to be answered

Would there be two sections as in Qld, one for Year 6/7 (ages 10 -12) and one for Year 8/9 (ages 12 – 14) or do we focus just on the one age group maybe Year 8/9 as it would be easier for them to travel and for us to obtain sponsorship?

Costs

Income

Registration would provide some revenue to run regional and state finals. Initially it may be best to set a fee equivalent to Qld until we see how many teams take part. The current fee is \$25.00. Other funds could be obtained through a grant for the initial year.

If we run competitions for the 2 categories

Number of schools primary and secondary likely to participate:

Qld has 1751 primary and secondary. From these 340 teams or about 20% of number of schools took part in the Readers Cup in 2008. Considering that in our first year we had about 200 teams or about 11½

% then we could estimate for other states roughly a 10% participation rate.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics in August 2002, there were 9,632 schools in Australia.

A rough estimate might therefore be 1000 school participating in the first year. This would provide a budget of \$25 000 to fund national, state and regional competitions. This would not cover all costs so we would need to apply for an initial grant to purchase state/territory cups as perpetual trophies as Qld did when they began. Sponsorship of airfares and accommodation would also be critical but may be harder to obtain for two teams from each state/territory.

If we run a competition for only the Year 8/9 category

Number of schools if just secondary likely to participate:

Qld has 789 secondary schools. From these 120 teams or about 15% of the number of schools took part in the Readers Cup in 2008. We could estimate for other states roughly a 10 % participation rate.

I have not been able to ascertain how many secondary schools there are in Australia but if we estimate that there are 3000 secondary schools with a 10 % participation rate then approximately 300 teams could take part. This would provide a budget of \$7 500 to fund national, state and regional competitions. This would not cover all costs so we would need to apply for an initial grant to purchase state/territory cups as perpetual trophies as Qld did when they began. Sponsorship of airfares and accommodation would still be critical.

More information at <http://readerscup.cbca.org.au>

AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE ALLIANCE (ACLAR) – INTERIM BOARD MEMBERS

The composition of the Board represents peak bodies involved in Australian children's literature as well as involving a geographic cross-section of Australia.

The first action of ACLAR will be to appoint a Children's Laureate for Australia in 2010. This person will travel Australia and advocate and promote Australian children's literature.

Bronwen Bennett (VIC). Previous National President of CBCA, now Chair of the Board

Lesley Reece (WA) Director, Fremantle Children's Literature Centre

Malcolm Neil (VIC) CEO – Australian Booksellers Association

Damian Morgan (TAS) Independent Bookseller, Stories Bookshop, Launceston

Dyan Blacklock (SA) Convenor, Children's Publishing Committee, Australian Publishers' Association

Libby O'Donnell (NSW) Australian Publishers' Association

Fiona Lange (SA) The Little Big Book Club

Ann James (VIC) Australian Society of Authors

Marj Kirkland (QLD) National President, The Children's Book Council of Australia

Val Noake (NSW) e:lit (formerly PETA)

Paula Kelly (VIC) State Library of Victoria, representing the Centre for Youth Literature

Susan Hayes (NSW) Director of Literature – Australia Council (Susan has since resigned from the Board)

Tina Lehnert (Project Officer, ACLA)

** Current as of July 2009

FLOWERBED DISPLAY IN KAMBAH

From May to October 2009, the CBCA ACT Branch has a display in the flowerbed at the intersection of Drakeford Drive and Marconi Crescent in Kambah. There is only space for five characters, so we chose 'CBCA' and the logo. We sent the design to Andrew Forster at the Territory and Municipal Services, and he and his team worked out the layout and the materials used to create the display.

The letters are made up of purple pansies, with white daisies as the background. The logo is made of white pebbles and what looks just like blue astro-turf. If you are passing that way please have a look!



THE INFAMOUS AFFAIR OF THE PICTURE BOOK WINNER OF 2008

BY JO GOODMAN

FIRST PUBLISHED CVCA VICTORIAN BRANCH NEWSLETTER APRIL 2009

When Matt Ottley's amazing book *Requiem for a Beast* won Picture Book of the Year in 2008 there was a huge public outcry. Of course this was not the first time CBCA Award books stirred up a public response, past controversies include *Kojuro and the Bears* (Kojuro kills bears), *The Nativity* (Mary is depicted as pregnant), *Taronga* (dystopic version of the future), *Beyond the Labyrinth* (swearing), *Suffer Dogs* (children address parents by their given names), *The ... Life of Riley* (rat behaviour is inauthentic), *The Rabbits* (anti-colonial propaganda), *Deadly Unna* (race relations), *Sleeping Dogs* (incest), and numerous titles tagged as 'too depressing'. Matt's was not the only book that raised readers' ire in 2008, we had complaints about *The Peasant Prince* (too dark -???), *The Island* (too depressing plus it shows a naked man), *Dust* (too confronting), *Sixth Grade Style Queen* (not!) (unsuitable subject: parental break-up) and *Girl Stuff* (too explicit and non-judgemental). At least the CBCA is being noticed!

The judges had no reservations about selecting it as the winner. In the Judges' Report they wrote,

'Ottley's picture book is an artistic masterpiece for an older audience. In his own words, this picture book is 'a work for image, word and music', and the combination of word and image is powerful. Visually it is stunning, from the opening panorama of the book, to the different techniques Ottley has utilised. These include panelling and using graphic novel conventions. There are large blocks of text in sections, but the clever use of white space breaks them up, and allows the reader to enter easily in and out of these pieces. Ottley's understanding of the human condition is palpable, as is the connection he creates between people and the land. He has worked his knowledge of musical form into this book in a subtle and meaningful way. This book is neither a comfortable nor a happy reading experience, but it must be appreciated for its artistic excellence and brilliance of meaning.'

As one of the 2008 Awards Coordinators I expected to receive complaints, but was shocked by the number sent to both the web site and the National Executive, and how very unpleasant and abusive many were. We do realise how hard it is for many people to get their heads around the concept of picture books not intended for little children, and I wrote reassuring replies to all the 'anxious grandparents',

'*Requiem for a Beast* has just been shown on a Currnet Affair and as a grandmother of 12 I am appalled at what the Council have deemed suitable for 8-12 yr olds. What on earth has come over the Council that they should sanction such a book. No, I have not, AND WILL NOT, be reading it thank you. What little I saw tonight was enough to make me shudder at what our grandchildren are going to soon accept as "the norm". Strong enough words cannot condemn you as a body of critics sufficiently, or would be "politically correct". Having said that, SHAME on you all.' [Tricia]

'Congratulations you have successfully contributed to the ever erosion of our future generation's morals.' [Brian]

'All members of your Council who voted to give an award to the author should resign.' [John]

I explained the criteria for the PB category to all complainants,

'The CBCA Picture Book of the Year awards will be made to outstanding books of the Picture Book genre in which the author and illustrator achieve artistic and literary unity, or, in wordless picture books, where the story, theme or concept is unified through illustrations. As a general guideline, the judges may consider the relative success of a picture book in balancing and harmonising the following elements:

- artistic style and graphic excellence (including typography and its suitability for the implied readership);
- effective use of media and technique;
- colour, line, shape, texture;
- relationship between illustration and text;
- consistency of style, characterisation, information and setting;
- clarity, appropriateness and aesthetic appeal of illustrations;
- quality of book design, production, printing and binding;
- to an implied readership under the age of eighteen.'

And suggested grandparents might like to use the Early Childhood Short List, and to consult booksellers and librarians, as well as actually opening books and reading at least sample pages, before buying/borrowing for their grandchildren.

Mind you, some of the complaints were very odd, such as '[The book] glorifies suicide, the occult, drug taking ... and insulting religious beliefs.' [Maureen] and 'I find it deeply offensive that you allowed the derogative comments on Jesus to appear.' [Graham] At times I wondered if we'd been reading the same book!

In *Requiem* adult Australian stockmen swear: in 10 000 words, the 'f' word appears five times! Apparently if children read this it will legitimise swearing under all circumstances. I do not advocate swearing, but to believe school children have never encountered such a thing seems very naïve indeed – have these kids never watched TV or listened to adults? What power books have!

Open any page of *Requiem*, and the style of illustration and the density of the text should surely cause anyone to question whether the intended audience is young children!

More upsetting than the grandparents were the primary (and some secondary) teachers, teacher librarians and principals who bought the Short List without consulting reviews, annotations or their book suppliers. In my replies I not only gave the PB criteria, I explained how to find out about books before buying them, explained the value of Notable Books, and I also quoted (with permission) the response to the book by a year 9 student:

'The book holds three intertwining stories about a young boy and a wild bull, an aboriginal woman of the stolen generation, and a man with recurring memories of a terrible wrong.

The words scream out to you from the page, hammering their message of love and home lost. With pictures that flow from the brush and pen of a master, the swirls and colours speak to your soul, showing you the joy of the land and the pain of loss. The book explores the dark side of history taken from a people, despair and pain suffered by thousands.

These stories mix to create a fascinating tapestry of light and sound.'

We did receive other positive responses, and some of the writers actually acknowledged that they had bought the book automatically, and thanked me for clarifying the Awards criteria. In addition, some of the angry complainants replied to my emails, thanking me for taking the trouble to explain the criteria and, in one case, admitting that "I might have been too hasty" (that was the man who found *The Peasant Prince* 'too dark').

In my replies to the more reasoned correspondents, I suggested that they establish a relationship with a regular bookseller, access review journals, attend a judge's talk, consult Notable Books, and maybe join the CBCA.

A number of complaints arose from radio talkback that began when a woman found the book in the section for young children in a Brisbane bookshop. Eventually A Current Affair did a segment on it, and it was obvious that a number of the writers had not actually looked at the book. They had also clearly not browsed the fiction shelves in any secondary school library. More disturbing was a letter from one primary teacher who was so incensed that she used the 'f' word more than once in each line of her letter – hardly a good example for her students, especially as she explicitly swore at us (the CBCA).

What do I think about all this? I am very disappointed at the number of professionals in the children's literature field who have still not realised that picture books are not just for little children, who have a very narrow view of what is acceptable, and who obviously do not read reviews and selection guides. I am dubious about the common assumption that the CBCA 'must attract media interest', since so often the media is only interested if they sense controversy. In 1987 when *Kojuro and the Bears* won the PB Award I was rung at work by the Melbourne Herald and asked whether the judges were 'concerned' that Kojuro kills bears. I reassured the interviewer that this had been discussed by the judges (of which I was one), and the consensus was that the subject was treated with due regard for the intended audience. The next day on the front page (!) they ran an article headed 'Judge slams animals liberationists!'

Over the centuries it appears that all ground-breaking work in the arts is greeted with outraged criticism and personal attacks on those who created the music, books, paintings, plays, etc., as well as on those who made these works available to the public. As Matt Ottley said in a speech in Fremantle, it is as if this is a completely alien language at which people take fright, and so they attack creators and providers. It is not until other artists take up the dialogue and create other works that reference the affronting stuff that the public can gradually become familiar with the language and recognise the beauty/value/appeal of the new and 'outrageous' work.

If the CBCA stuck to safe and predictable choices for its Awards, it would be seriously letting down not only Australian creators, and the publishers who support them and take risks with innovative works, but also the audience of readers who ought to be exposed to exciting and imaginative responses to the society in which we live.



Book Week 2009!

The ACT Branch of the Children's Book Council of Australia is pleased to invite you to attend the **Announcement of the Winners and Honour Books in the 2009 Book of the Year Awards.**

When: Friday the 21st of August at 11:30am

Where: Belconnen Public Library - Chandler St Belconnen

What: Schools will perform some of the shortlisted works, the Winners and Honour Books will be announced at 12 noon, and children in attendance may be chosen to represent the shortlisted authors and accept and "award" on their behalf as the announcements are made.

Admission is free of charge and refreshments will be served afterwards .

Please RSVP to Rebecca Kemble act@cbca.org.au by Monday the 17th of August.



**MEET AUSTRALIAN AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS
IN BOOK WEEK 2009**

The Children's Book Council of Australia, ACT Branch, aims to bring children and quality children's books together. We invite children to attend an afternoon where Australian authors and illustrators will speak and answer questions. The children are encouraged to bring with them any copies of books by the speakers, to have signed or to use as reference for discussion. Afternoon tea will be provided and the children who attend will be presented with a certificate.

Students from Year 4 to Year 10 are welcome to attend.

The event will be held from 4.30pm until 6.00pm on Thursday 27 August at Farrer Primary, Longerenong Street, FARRER, 62057918 (Library) or 62057911 (school).

Guest speakers will be Tania McCartney (author), Laura Peterson (illustrator), Pauline Deeves (author), Ingrid Jonach (author), Dianne Wolfer (author) and Christine Aldred (author).

Please complete the form below and send it WITH PAYMENT by Monday 24 August to
Julie Long, 8 Fiske Crescent
KAMBAH ACT 2902 Telephone 6231 7531

The cost is \$6.00 per student (for members) or \$7.00 per student (for non-members). Schools are welcome to send up to 6 students. Please make cheques payable to The Children's Book Council of Australia, ACT Branch. Receipts may be collected at the seminar.

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**PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN THIS PORTION WITH PAYMENT
TAX INVOICE - ABN 20 024 451 638**

Your School _____

Number of students _____

Total \$ _____

Contact teacher _____

Telephone _____

Is your school interested in hosting the seminar next year (2010)? Yes No



The Children's Book Council of Australia

ACT Branch Inc.
PO Box 5548 HUGHES 2605

MEMBERSHIP

Are you passionate about encouraging children to read? Do you care about quality children's literature? Do you want to see Australia's best books for children and teenagers recognised and their creators rewarded? Then why not join The Children's Book Council of Australia!

For \$44 (inc GST) you will receive the following benefits:

- Free copies of the annual *Notable Australian Children's Books* (which lists and describes the best children's books published in Australia) and issues of the journal of the Lu Rees Archives
- Discounted rates on the purchase of Book Week merchandise such as bookmarks, badges, book bags, posters and Short List information
- Special members' rates for CBCA activities such as author and illustrator visits, the biennial national CBCA conference and local CBCA events. (Attendance at CBCA events can be attributed towards professional development obligations.)
- The opportunity to meet and network with other people committed to the same objectives, including some of Australia's leading authors and illustrators
- Substantial discounts on purchases at our annual Christmas shopping night
- A regular newsletter and email updates

Student membership of \$11 pa is also available. This includes everything above except the *Notables* list and the Lu Rees Archives journal. Please provide a current student ID number and name of institution.

To join or renew, please complete the form below and mail it with a cheque or money order made payable to The Children's Book Council of Australia - ACT Branch or you may join/renew in person at any CBCA event.

CBCA ACT Branch
PO Box 5548 HUGHES 2605
ABN 20 024 451 638

Tax Invoice

Please tick: **\$44.00 Full membership** (inc.GST \$4.00) or **\$11.00 student** (inc.GST \$1.00)

Name: _____ School Personal

Address: _____

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Phone: (H) _____ (w) _____ (M) _____

Fax: _____ Email: _____

Student ID number: _____ Institution: _____

Online Banking: BSB 062 905, Account No. 10101547. Receipt No. _____

If making an online payment, please note online that it is for membership and your surname. Complete this form (incl. receipt number) and send to amanda_dejongh@spandp.cg.catholic.edu.au or post. Please tick if you do not want your membership details included in the CBCA national members database