



THE CHILDREN'S BOOK COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA
**Book of the Year Awards
Shortlist**



2024



A useful guide including all critiques
from our panel of 2024 CBCA expert
judges, arranged by category.



We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the various lands on which we work.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and recognise and celebrate the diversity of First Nation people and their ongoing culture and connection to Country.

We particularly honour, celebrate and support the first storytellers of this great continent.



2024 CBCA BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARDS SHORTLIST

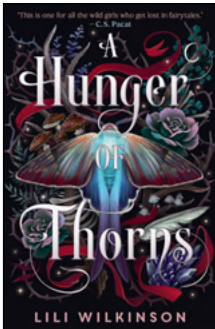
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BOOK OF THE YEAR:

OLDER READERS

Entries in this category may be fiction, drama or poetry and should be appropriate in style and content for readers in their secondary years of schooling. **Ages 13-18 years.**

Note: books in this category are for mature readers and some may deal with particularly challenging themes including violence and suicide. Parental guidance is recommended.



A HUNGER OF THORNS

Lili Wilkinson

A & U Children (Allen and Unwin imprint)

ISBN: 9781760526948

This darkly atmospheric book draws the reader into a metaphorical exploration of the challenges of living in a highly industrialised world, told through the lens of an interrogation of female power and persecution in the historical and contemporary context. While utilising a magical realism setting to present highly contemporary themes, the clearly drawn characters allow the reader a deep understanding of the psyche of young people, and the novel is firmly grounded in family and peer group dynamics. Though building on the recognisable young adult trope of the “strong female protagonist”, Wilkinson has cleverly subverted this tradition through world-building and interesting characterisation, making this immersive story a powerful and original novel for the upper end of the readership.



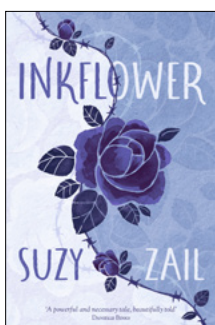
GRACE NOTES

Karen Comer

Lothian Children's Books (Hachette Australia imprint)

ISBN: 9780734421722

This beautifully written debut captures all the light and shade of COVID lockdowns, exploring the wider impact of the pandemic and how it affected different age groups. As one would expect from a verse novel, the prose is spectacularly lyrical in a manner so deeply authentic to the story it is impossible to put down. Well-constructed family dynamics are cleverly revealed through the sparse writing, but it is the authentic coming-of-age portrayal of protagonists Grace and Crux that is the selling point of the story. They are adorable and delightful and almost too good to be real, yet still inherently teen in their worldviews. This book is a gorgeous exploration of art and creativity from the perspective of central characters who are searching to discover meaning and purpose through both, opening thoughtful, original discussion around street art and the meaning of music that is highly suitable for the readership.



INKFLOWER

Suzy Zail

Walker Books Australia

ISBN: 9781760653736

The dual timeline narrative is deftly handed by the author, using simple chapter headings to clearly delineate Emil's experience as a young boy sent to Auschwitz and his teenage daughter Lisa's life in the 1980s in Australia. The two timelines work together to explore themes of survival, secrets, and the transformative power of truth and storytelling. The historical setting is brought to life with incredibly vivid descriptions - the horror and

violence of the Holocaust is balanced with small acts of kindness and a heartbreaking hyperfocus on food. The characterisation of Lisa felt authentic and relatable - her response to her father's story and diagnosis of Motor Neuron Disease was to initially turn away from her friends and escape into the arms of her boyfriend. This book would appeal to mature readers keen to learn about the Holocaust and take on a devastating, powerful story with the potential to make you cry.



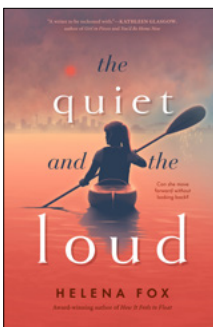
LET'S NEVER SPEAK OF THIS AGAIN

Megan Williams

Text Publishing

ISBN: 9781922790392

A highly readable coming-of-age debut novel that captures some of the traditional hardships teens experience. The narrative follows the central character Abby, over a year as she navigates change and her own insecurities. Told in a modern diary-esque style, the novel explores the challenges of relationships and dealing with tragedy and loss. The themes of friendship and growing up are conveyed in a realistic and relatable manner through the character's relationships; and family plays a central part of the story, exploring intergenerational connections and sibling dynamics. The use of humour to balance out some of the serious themes, makes it a compelling read with a lot of warmth that will resonate with a broad young adult readership.



THE QUIET AND THE LOUD

Helena Fox

Pan Macmillan

ISBN: 9781760983024

A multi-layered coming of age story that explores big themes, grounded with some solid characters and a realistic setting. There is a lot to unpack in this story with issues of climate change and trauma impact sitting at the fore. Elements of mental health, alcoholism, friendship and first love also form a large part of the storyline with a solid LGBTQI+ focus. These elements are all masterfully weaved into the plot and are given space and relevance. The use of art throughout the story is significant as it counters some of the big issues discussed by offering healing and empowerment. The story is balanced with well-drawn primary and secondary characters, exploring the dynamics of friendship and family. The language is rich, making this a vivid and real read that will resonate with the upper end of the young adult readership.



TWO CAN PLAY THAT GAME

Leanne Yong

A & U Children (Allen and Unwin imprint)

ISBN: 9781761063374

A charming "enemies to first love" story that targets the readership beautifully in a thoroughly PG style, despite being about slightly older teens. Although gaming is central to the premise, which in itself is wonderful for the intended audience, the reader needs no knowledge of the field to delight in this character-focused book. The rapid-fire dialogue and humour complement well-drawn family dynamics that consider what it can mean to grow up Australian-Malaysian, the responsibility inherent in being the eldest sibling, and the issues of living up to parental expectations. With captivating pop culture nerdery sprinkled liberally throughout, this debut novel is primarily driven by internal conflict, examining the little-discussed theme of how challenging it can be to "peak" in high school and framed by the gentle romance.

BOOK OF THE YEAR:

YOUNGER READERS

Entries in this category may be fiction, drama or poetry and should be appropriate in style and content for readers from the middle to upper primary years. **Ages 7-12 years.**

Note: some of the titles in this category may only be suitable for readers who are in the upper primary years as they contain mature themes, including violence. Parental guidance is recommended.



BEING JIMMY BAXTER

Fiona Lloyd

Puffin Books AU (Penguin Random House Australia imprint)

ISBN: 9781760148515

A cleverly crafted, powerful and engaging read, this book expertly juxtaposes the protagonist Jimmy's perception of life with the understanding offered by its adult characters. Like many child carers, Jimmy is old beyond his years, his narratorial voice is evocative of rural Australia. The plot provides Jimmy and the reader with the opportunity to learn and grow. His strength of character, vulnerability, love and determination empower him and simultaneously enable the reader to find joy and hope even in the darkest of experiences. This text delicately integrates and balances humour in a way that engages the reader without compromising its authenticity. An arresting read that sensitively addresses challenging themes, including, domestic violence, mental health, life on the run and death, in a hope filled way



HUDA WAS HERE

H. Hayek

A & U Children (Allen and Unwin imprint)

ISBN: 9781761068430

A layered and engaging novel that captivates the reader from its intriguing prologue through to its positive, heartwarming conclusion. Centred on Lebanese Australians, Akeal and his younger sister Huda, it is a fast-paced, stand-alone sequel, told from the perspective of Akeal, through clearly labelled dual narratives. Huda's strong-willed determination respectively combines with Akeal's sensitive loyalty to deliver wondrous episodes of suspense, humour and misbehaviour, revealing their love for each other and for their family. This novel creatively and simultaneously explores multicultural Australia, family life, corruption, community, hardship and determination in the context of living as part of a minority group. Humour pervades this delightful story, lifting it to deliver a relatable, skilfully crafted, age-appropriate and engaging mystery adventure.



REAL PIGEONS FLAP OUT

Andrew McDonald

Illustrated by Ben Wood

Hardie Grant's Children's Publishing

ISBN: 9781761211546

This book blends the best features of graphic novels and conventional narrative and has multiple entry points, making it one of the most accessible novels for younger readers. It is very well put together with strong characterisation, backed by hilarious illustrations. The design is less constrained than that of a graphic novel, and the language shows a similar quality approach. The action keeps coming, even though it appears the real

pigeons are just flapping about and fighting crime. Disguised as lighthearted and silly fun, this book offers deep themes such as sticking together, good /evil, and selflessness. The illustrations are cleverly crafted and integrated with the text adding much meaning and context to the plot.



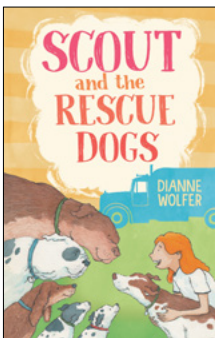
SCAR TOWN

Tristan Bancks

Puffin Books AU (Penguin Random House Australia imprint)

ISBN: 9780143791812

This book tells a classic story in a thrilling and accessible way for readers aged 10-14. It commands the reader's attention from its enthralling beginning, throughout an action-packed plot development and a dramatic conclusion. The setting of the drowned town is evocatively described, creating a foreboding mood that enhances the plot of the novel. The young protagonists are well-developed and have authentic responses to events, while the flaws of the adult characters are realistic, allowing readers to explore and extend their thinking about difficult relationships and situations. The mystery and thriller conventions are expertly balanced with Will's character development as he navigates loss, criminal activity, corruption, and loyalty to family and friends.



SCOUT AND THE RESCUE DOGS

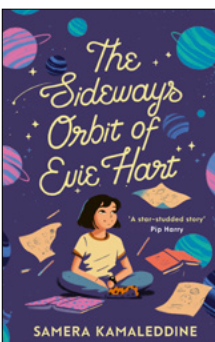
Dianne Wolfer

Illustrated by Tony Flowers

Walker Books Australia

ISBN: 9781760655860

Realistically set during the 2019/20 bushfires, this book journeys with Scout and her dad as they deliver donations of dog food to animal shelters throughout southeastern Australia. The bushfires and the geographical details related to their travels are accurately presented. Grieving the loss of her mum, sparked by their travels, the people they meet and a school friendship project, Scout develops a website to connect shelter dogs with truck drivers needing company. Responsible internet use, described throughout the text is commendable and age appropriate. Including creative design features, this fictional narrative is heartwarming and uplifting, dealing sensitively with topics of parental loss, environmental threat, bullying and separation balanced by optimism and the love Scout shares with her father and with animals.



THE SIDEWAYS ORBIT OF EVIE HART

Samera Kamaledine

HarperCollins Publishers

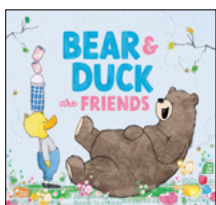
ISBN: 9781460762653

This book expertly intertwines Evie's study of space with the plot of the novel, enabling Evie to learn more about herself as she learns about Earth and the universe. Fond of rules and prone to anxiety, she is challenged by changing friendship dynamics, changing circumstances of her family and transition to high school set against the background of the everchanging night sky. Evie has a strong voice and secondary characters are well-realised, with their voices, hopes and fears challenging Evie and the reader to think deeply about themselves and others. With a visually inviting cover featuring Evie amongst the planets, this is a quality book that will appeal to many readers in the Younger Reader category.

BOOK OF THE YEAR:

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Entries in this category may be fiction, drama or poetry and should be appropriate in style and content for children who are at pre-reading or early stages of reading. **Ages 0-6 years.**



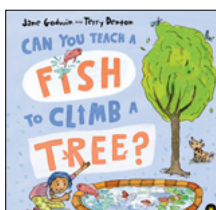
BEAR & DUCK ARE FRIENDS

Sue deGennaro

Little Hare (Hardie Grant Children's Publishing imprint)

ISBN: 9781761210327

Perfectly pitched to young readers, this gentle story about friendship creates opportunities to discuss fears, challenges and being open to new experiences. The highly accessible text is thoughtfully presented in different ways, with changing size and direction adding interest. The delightful illustrations show movement of the characters and perfectly reflect the text, offering sequences of action and moments to pause and reflect. Rhyming phrases and simple sentences blend seamlessly, with occasional alliteration and a smattering of more complex vocabulary. There is a lovely role reversal in that the bigger, stronger animal is fearful, thus opening the door to important conversations about stereotypes. The satisfying resolution reveals the two friends readying themselves for the next challenge.



CAN YOU TEACH A FISH TO CLIMB A TREE?

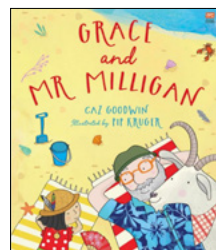
Jane Godwin

Illustrated by Terry Denton

Bright Light (Hardie Grant Children's Publishing imprint)

ISBN: 9781760508661

Children will initially find the series of posed questions in this imaginative book, both preposterous and comical, a great device to engage them in reflections and discussions about self-acceptance, diversity and understanding others. Quirky, loose ink and watercolour illustrations, abounding in small humorous details, enhance the succinct narrative inviting children to follow the unfolding visual stories and create their own. The pace builds with the increasing silliness in the first half, which is followed by a more considered, thoughtful second half, cleverly incorporating fascinating facts about remarkable attributes of various animals (and human babies). Powerful yet with a light touch that feels fresh and unique, this interactive picture book will sit well in homes, libraries and educational settings.



GRACE AND MR MILLIGAN

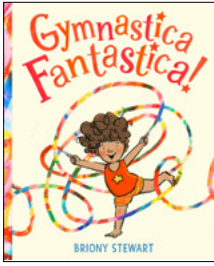
Caz Goodwin

Illustrated by Pip Kruger

Marshall Cavendish International

ISBN: 9789815009811

This gentle, beautifully told story explores themes of friendship, loss, grief and healing. The carefully crafted text reveals genuine friendship between the two main characters, their shared joys and their love for constant companion, Charlie, the goat. There is use of repeated phrases, humour, alliteration and rich, descriptive language. The narrative transitions sensitively, allowing readers to realise the passing of Charlie in their own time. A gentle pace offers opportunities to pause and reflect, whilst the use of the progression of the days of the week effectively conveys the passing of time. The pairing of the text and dynamic, sensitive illustrations is faultless and deftly edited throughout. The final double spread is wordless, depicting the cycle of life.



GYMNASTICA FANTASTICA!

Briony Stewart

Lothian Children's Books (Hachette Australia imprint)

ISBN: 9780734421852

An enticing invitation opens this vibrant picture book, as a vivacious young child confidently demonstrates their gymnastic prowess, bouncing, cartwheeling and flipping their way across the pages. Their dog, a silent but invested observer throughout, provides a lovely contrast. This book conveys so much energy and life which children will connect with immediately. The young child's voice permeates the tight, joyful rhyming text which includes a rich assortment of verbs, nouns and adjectives. Pencil, ink, crayon, gouache, and digital illustrations are filled with zoom in action and movement matching the equally energetic text. The endpapers are perfect bookends, as twirling ribbons, held in the child's left at the start and right hand at the end, appear to capture the story. .



ONE LITTLE DUCK

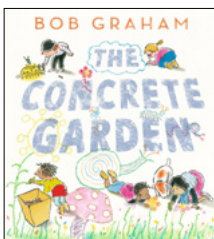
Katrina Germein

Illustrated by Danny Snell

HarperCollins Publishers

ISBN: 9781460761649

Children acquainted with the traditional rhyme, Five Little Ducks, will be delighted with this inventive and surprising picture book about a mother duck who has forgotten how to quack! The familiarity of a farmyard setting is used throughout and the amusing farm animals are the heroes of this story. Page design and an engaging illustration layout together with the endpapers subtly connecting to wallpaper inside the duckhouse, combine with the lively, humorous text to create a cohesive and enjoyable reading (or singing!) experience. Every element of this book has been carefully considered, from the narrative pace to the visual humour, providing countless opportunities to revisit and retell stories, and to discuss and explore concepts such as sequencing and counting.



THE CONCRETE GARDEN

Bob Graham

Walker Books Australia

ISBN: 9781529512649

An exuberant group of children spill out from the confines of a grey apartment block, finding joy in a simple box of chalk. The power of creativity and strength in community shine. Every aspect of the book is utilised, the narrative is extending to all elements of the peritext. Each character is named, creating a personal and connected feel for the reader. Language is simple and succinct, yet at times rich in imagery. Gentle, sensitive illustrations in watercolour, pencil and pastel capture moments of connection, artistry and occasional upsets with warmth and humour. A diverse range of characters are represented, living and playing together in a microcosm - a hopeful and much-needed view of how the world should be.

PICTURE BOOK OF THE YEAR

Entries in this category should be 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. **Ages 0-18 years.**

Note: some of these books may be for mature readers.

The illustrator is listed first in this category.



BOWERBIRD BLUES

Aura Parker

Scholastic Australia

ISBN: 9781760269609

This lyrical story follows the journey of a bowerbird on his quest for all things blue, all the while feeling that something is amiss in his life. The bowerbird's collection dominated by plastic caps, straws and tags invites reflection on environmental pollution and its challenges. The story's language is ornate, expressive and rhythmically appealing. Striking illustrations masterfully integrate with the text, significantly enhancing the narrative. The layout and design, including 'Can you find these?' sections at the front and back, engage readers and maintain interest throughout. The endpapers are marvellous, introducing the bowerbird in an urban setting before he discovers what's missing in his life and closing with the bird reclaiming its harmonic existence in a lush forest with a soulmate by its side, illustrating how his life was meant to be.



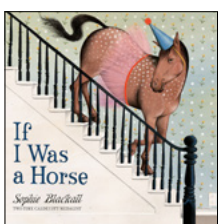
EVERY NIGHT AT MIDNIGHT

Peter Cheong

Affirm Press

ISBN: 9781922992383

This highly original and engaging book about staying true to one's identity and finding friendship in an unlikely place would be very appealing for the younger reader. Evocative language is used effectively, setting the tone for this whimsical story and maintaining mood throughout. Soft rhythm and effective repetition of phrasing reinforce elements of the narrative with a minimalistic approach used in placement of written text between each double page spread. Illustrative style is creative with colour palette perfectly matched to the written text. Design and layout are imaginative and creative in reinforcing and expanding on the narrative. Visuals provide added elements to the written text e.g. the subtle shadows in some windows towards the end of the book hint at another layer to the narrative.



IF I WAS A HORSE

Sophie Blackall

Lothian Children's Books (Hachette Australia imprint)

ISBN: 9780734422712

Attention is demanded right from the appealing dust jacket and clever endpaper illustrations that communicate the context of childhood growth beautifully. Full of imagination and gentle humour, the main character leads the reader through highly relatable aspects of family life through the perspective of a horse. The delightful illustrations provide outstanding detail and invite the reader to pore over the images. The simple plot is expressed through scarce but rhythmic text, with the exquisite illustrations

doing most of the storytelling. The clever representation of home and school settings effectively contributes to the storyline of playful rebellion against the ‘constraints’ of childhood.



PAPER-FLOWER GIRL

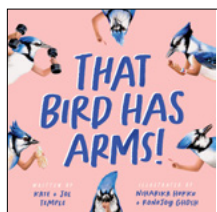
Mateja Jager

Written by Margrete Lamond

Dirt Lane Pres (WestWords imprint)

ISBN: 9780645352399

This exquisite, high-quality picture book captivates from the soft, detailed cover and beautiful endpapers through to the very end. Language is poetic and evocative, successfully using a range of literary devices (repetition, rhythm, rhyme) to create mood and atmosphere. Vocabulary is sophisticated taking the reader on a journey with the unfurling story of the girl, her creativity and the giant and his demands. Bolding and changes in size and positioning of the text is utilised effectively, enhancing the message. Artwork is exceptional, at times almost creating an additional narrative thread, at others extending the feelings and actions of the characters. Variations in colour palette reflect the changing mood, emotions and dialogue between the girl and the giant. Use of changes in perspective and positioning is creative and original.



THAT BIRD HAS ARMS

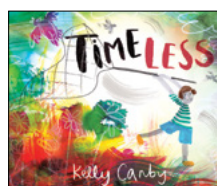
Niharika Hukku and Ronojoy Ghosh

Written by Kate and Jol Temple

Little Hare (Hardie Grant Children's Publishing imprint)

ISBN: 9781761210310

This quirky story oozes originality. It embraces popular culture, such as social media and popularity contests and cleverly explores themes of identity and accepting difference through the main character, Roy, a bird with human-like arms. The use of language is sophisticated and engaging, featuring direct speech of the avian characters alongside more traditional narration. The high-quality, colourful and engaging illustrations represent characters effectively and provide a clever sub-text to the narrative, including gentle humour appropriate for a dual audience. There is pleasing symmetry between the text and visual elements that embodies the mood and enhances the narrative. The plot that follows Roy coming to terms with his difference, as well as others' eventual acceptance of him includes a joy-filled resolution.



TIMELESS

Kelly Canby

Fremantle Press

ISBN: 9781760992323

Witty, entertaining and visually delightful, this book delves into time and time constraints through young Emit's eyes, whose family always craves more hours in its day. Minimal but sophisticated, the well-thought-out text distils the complexity of the abstract concept it explores, cleverly playing with time related idioms and word puns. Bright, engaging illustrations, as if hand-drawn by a child, seamlessly integrate with the printed text demonstrating excellence in design. Varied layouts and perspectives enrich the visual experience, with key ideas highlighted through vibrantly colourful large text that sometimes becomes part of the composition. The masterfully crafted endpapers, in a league of their own, entertain and encourage further reflection about time and our relationship with it, while echoing a satisfying resolution to Emit's own search for time.

BOOK OF THE YEAR:

EVE POWNALL AWARD

Entries in this category should be books which have the prime intention of documenting factual material with consideration given to imaginative presentation, interpretation and variation of style.

Ages 0-18 years.

Note: some books in this category are for mature readers and may deal with particularly challenging themes including violence and suicide. Parental guidance is recommended.



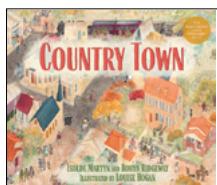
AUSTRALIA: COUNTRY OF COLOUR

Jess Racklyeft

Affirm Press

ISBN: 9781922863881

Presented through the lens of the colour wheel, this magnificent book takes your breath away with its visually stunning exploration of Australian landscapes, flora and fauna. The colours of Australia are magnificently celebrated as the vivid red dirt, endless blue skies, golden sandy beaches and magical green bush land are beautifully recreated. With the turning of each page the reader is presented with new delights as landscapes, animals and plants are organised in colour categories of varying hues. The text draws on scientific knowledge and research which works in harmony with the illustrations to build visual literacy and animal and plant recognition. Strong links between colour and emotion, and of the feelings associated with particular colours are explained as is the importance of caring for Country.



COUNTRY TOWN

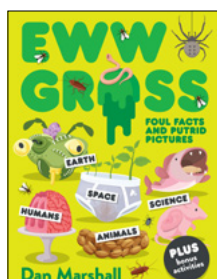
Isolde Martyn and Robyn Ridgeway

Illustrated by Louise Hogan

Ford Street Publishing

ISBN: 9781922696342

An absolutely invaluable resource this decade-by-decade history of a fictional Australian country town is extensively researched and beautifully illustrated. The story of the town is very real and child focused. The colour palette is varied and reflects each decade, with intricate detail in every scene. The fascinating changes shown in the town through each decade reflects the changes happening in Australian society. Both text and illustrations encourage interaction, with readers being asked to find particular details in the intricate illustrations and to consider issues raised. We are taken on a fascinating journey which begins in the camp of a First Nations clan and concludes in the present day. Major themes and significant issues including land rights, immigration and climate change are woven into the narrative. Primary sources, including first-hand accounts, bring history to life and stimulate further research. A Timeline provides a useful history of major developments in the town.



EWW GROSS: FOUL FACTS AND PUTRID PICTURES

Dan Marshall

Lost the Plot (Pantera Press imprint)

ISBN: 9780645624564

With such an enticing title and colourful cover, the promise of foul facts and putrid pictures would invite any child who loves 'things that are grim, gross, odious, offensive and horrid' to delve into the pages. The book is divided into five sections, with the

contents page outlining the wide range of topics covered with a heavy emphasis on well researched science foul facts from around the world and outer space. Our guide, Slimon, makes the book highly interactive as he invites us to use the grossometer to rate the most disgusting facts and asks questions throughout and suggests activities and experiments. The text and brightly coloured digital illustrations work beautifully together. Loaded with filthy bite-sized facts making learning fun and interactive.



OUR COUNTRY: WHERE HISTORY HAPPENED

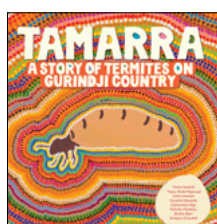
Mark Greenwood

Illustrated by Franè Lessac

Walker Books Australia

ISBN: 9781760653576

Another outstanding contribution to the story of our country by this prolific and brilliant duo. Beautifully and comprehensively told in distinctive style and incorporating much significant historical information, this is a colourful feast for the eyes. The front and back endpapers illustrate a timeline of noteworthy historical events, with each location also including the names of the traditional owners of the land. It includes a strong focus on First Nations history and wider aspects of Australian culture, identity and history, including reference to the Dutch (Dirk Hartog), Chinese history, and female history. With three types of side-by-side story it cleverly provides readers with different levels of language and accessibility. The artistic style is very appealing and child-friendly and the reader is invited to visit the many corners of Australia where history is calling.



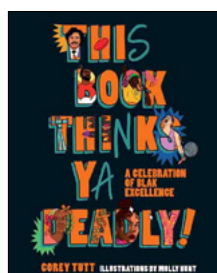
TAMARRA: A STORY OF TERMITES ON GURINDJI COUNTRY

Violet Wadrill, Topsy Dodd Ngarnjal, Leah Leaman, Cecelia Edwards, Cassandra Algy, Felicity Meakins, Briony Barr, Gregory Crocetti

Hardie Grant Explore

ISBN: 9781741178302

A collaboration between Ngumpin (First Nations) and Kartiya (non-Indigenous) cultures resulted in the creation of this glorious book. The Tamarra Project involved over 30 Gurindji Elders, artists, storytellers, scientists and linguists. From the visually stunning front cover to each glorious page after page of magnificent culturally significant paintings, the reader is drawn into the text. The visual organisation of the text, with the three languages featured colour coded, makes the information easily digestible. The glossary provides a guide to pronunciation, with each word featured in colour in the story also listed in the Glossary. A QR code allows the reader to hear the story read in language. The interweaving of culture and detailed information of termites is cleverly done and 'Did You Know?' sections throughout encourage engagement. Truly a labour of love.



THIS BOOK THINKS YA DEADLY!

Corey Tutt

Illustrated by Molly Hunt

Hardie Grant Explore

ISBN: 9781741178159

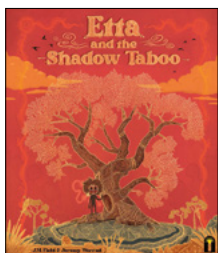
A comprehensive book of short-form biographies of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. Highly detailed, and researched the book is divided into chapters of cultural and societal significance and goes beyond simply featuring the usual sporting heroes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background. It includes an introduction from the author, an AIATSIS map, acknowledgements and also a section for the reader to fill in about themselves and their 'deadly' attributes. This book is on a level rarely seen before in compilation of heroes and important people. Each person featured has a large portrait set beside a page detailing the person's attributes, significance and contribution to society. The Aboriginal lands they come from are also clearly listed next to their names. A true celebration of 'blak' excellence, this book has been produced with the highest production values.

THE CBCA AWARD FOR

NEW ILLUSTRATOR

Entries in this category are for books where the illustrator is emerging or new to the field of children's book illustration. The entry must be the illustrator's first children's illustrated book published where illustrations form a significant part of the book's narrative or information content.

Ages 0-18 years.



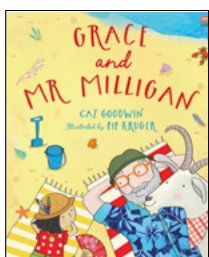
ETTA AND THE SHADOW TABOO

Jeremy Worrall

Bright Light (Hardie Grant Children's Publishing imprint)

ISBN: 9781760509798

A well-designed, high-quality hardcover with an interesting story about the First Nations (Gamilaraay) tradition of respecting personal space by not stepping on another's shadow. Visually, this book is captivating. From the beautiful and quite detailed cover, the illustrator takes us on Etta's journey of discovery. Using an earthy palette consistently throughout, illustrations enhance and expand on the narrative and mood. The intricacy of some pages is exquisite and beautifully executed. In contrast, other pages use simplicity of style and composition for impact. Using silhouette for the central characters and shadows emphasises their role on the page, dominating when written text specifically relates to character and diminishing when narrative relates more to environment.



GRACE AND MR MILLIGAN

Pip Kruger

Marshall Cavendish International

ISBN: 9789815009811

Pip Kruger is an accomplished freelance illustrator who lives on the coast of South Australia. She employs a lovely, folksy style that beautifully captures the essence of whimsy and love in this book. The cleverly executed endpapers hint at the importance and value of memories. Colour, framing and a variety of shot types and angles are executed in a highly engaging way and the characters' emotions and personality are shown beautifully through gesture, body language and the inclusion of unique details. The illustrations are colourful, joyful and lively and sensitively depict the grief and joy in the story and provide substance to the relationship of Grace, Mr Milligan and his ageing goat, Charlie.



HOPE IS THE THING

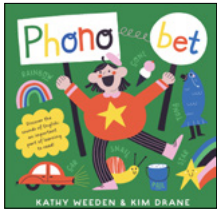
Erica Wagner

A & U Children (Allen and Unwin imprint)

ISBN: 9781761180026

Initiated in 2019 following the devastating fires on Australia's east coast, this book is a celebration of hope and renewal. Inspired by Emily Dickinson's poem, depicting hope as 'the thing with feathers and wings', it explores this theme through the metaphor of the glory of birds, captured in beautiful mixed media collages. Backgrounds blend watercolour, acrylic, gouache, and ink, while collages combine fragments of old artwork, paper, monoprints from leaves and cutouts from a book of maps and an old encyclopedia. This medium provides the opportunity for the artist to explore a sense of childlike possibility through selection, playful arrangement and layering of elements, resulting in a visually

stunning picture book. Each spread immerses the reader in a bird's journey—from soaring over sunlit beaches to nestling in grassy plains or scavenging in city bins—making every page an artwork in its own right. Together, they form a unified sequence that gives the poetic narrative wings, elevating the text to new heights.



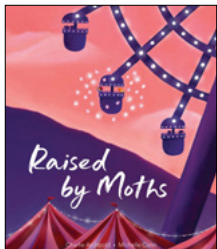
PHONOBET

Kim Drane

NLA Publishing

ISBN: 9781922507471

The highly original Illustrations are joyful and humorous with a particularly whimsical feel. The use of geometric shapes to build the figures of characters, animals and plants will help develop visual literacy in even the youngest readers. There is variation in size, perspective and composition to maintain interest and engagement throughout. Illustrations are well-matched to the written text, enhancing yet leaving a lot for further exploration. Flat primary colours are joyous and appealing. Textual elements (words and phrases) are organically woven into compositions and design. Varied layouts and compositions are conceived with the right dose of humour that would delight young audiences. Overall, the illustrations enliven the text, illustrating and making a dry subject of phonetics fun to engage with.



RAISED BY MOTHS

Michelle Conn

MidnightSun Publishing

ISBN: 9781922858184

Two children on a Ferris wheel witness magic unfolding as the boy reminisces about being raised by moths before his human family adopted him. Digitally enhanced illustrations executed in pencil and watercolour are dominated by muted purples and pinks, transforming the fairground and sky into an enchanting backdrop for the tale of animals raising human babies. Colour is used suggestively, with pink and purple clothing signaling the boy's connection to the magical realm, while his auburn-haired companion dressed in green signifies her grounding in the real world. Alternating close-ups with wide views, the illustrations enhance the book's visual appeal and narrative flow. They also expand the story beyond the text, revealing additional scenes such as other children boarding the Ferris wheel and exploring a world where animals care for human babies, extending the tale beyond its central characters. This well-designed hardcover boasts an alluring cover and endpapers evocative of night skies crossed by a string of silvery night moths.



WHEN YOU'RE A BOY

Blake Nuto

Affirm Press

ISBN: 9781922863652

Blake Nuto lives in Tasmania and shows a desire to integrate philosophy and mindfulness into education. This is exemplified through his powerful illustrative style which enhances this book immensely. The illustrations show vast, expressive movement and each stands alone as an impressive artwork. It is filled with highly emotive illustrations and particularly effective depictions of the sweeping settings to capture the mood and accompany the lyrical text. The representation of the deep relationship between father and son is expertly executed and the use of light and shade is particularly impressive. Overall, the variation in layout, perspective and design effectively depicts the mood and results in this highly accomplished work.

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In memoriam

Jean Chapman • Max Fatchen • Beryl Moncrieff Matthews • Christobel Mattingley • Jill Midolo • Narelle Oliver • Jan Ormerod • Eve Pownall • Marion E Robertson • Gregory Rogers • Sebastian Walker • Cassandra Weddell • Maisie Williams, Garah, NSW

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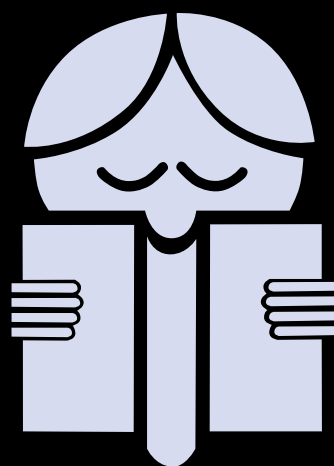
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