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WASLA 2020 Awards

Professional Journal of the  
WA School Library Association  
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Welcome to another jam-packed edition of *ic3*.

Well, COVID has certainly turned all aspects of life throughout the world upside down. In fact, throw in a couple of the conspiracy theories out there and this event would make for a great novel!

The isolation and social distancing regulations that encompass COVID brings to mind the 'isolation' many library staff in the education realm have been experiencing for quite some time now. This is where WASLA builds that bridge, uniting those that are passionate about all things library, literacy and learning.

I wish to thank all who have contributed to this edition of *ic3*. WASLA welcomes your feedback and if you have any suggestions for future issues please drop us a line at [ic3editor@wasla.asn.au](mailto:ic3editor@wasla.asn.au)

**Tina Russo**  
WASLA Secretary

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- Natasha Georgiou
- Lorinda Gersbach
- Rebecca Murray

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## From the President's desk

Welcome to the Term 4 edition of *ic3*. I don't know about you but last term for me was intense and I am thankful we are in our final term for the year! I think that due to COVID so many things have been packed into a shorter amount of time. Some of you celebrated CBCA Book Week in Term Three, whilst the majority will be having it during October. I always enjoy Book Week, especially since we have started our dress-up and special morning tea celebrations at my school. Even 16-18 year olds love to dress-up as book characters! However, it is a fantastic opportunity to share the love of reading and to promote the school library. In this edition, we will be showcasing a couple of CBCA Book Week events.

The focus of this edition of *ic3* is reading. We were fortunate to be able to interview a variety of authors. Holden Sheppard, a critically acclaimed local YA author, is an inspiration. He has taken his life experiences and poured it into his powerful first novel, *Invisible Boys*. I especially love what he says about school libraries. Alison Mutton, a Perth illustrator, writes about the processes involved in illustrating books and it is indeed quite a complex job! Finally, we snagged a coup with scoring an article by the grandmother of children's books herself, Mem Fox! Mem, kindly came out of retirement for a short-time to write for us about the inspiration and skill needed to write some of the most loved Australian children's literature.

Dr. Margaret Merga is our keynote speaker at our upcoming AGM. She has definitely become a serious advocate for school libraries and is a great asset in our campaign fight for appropriate resourcing. She has just recently gained a grant to research how school libraries influence student wellbeing. In this edition, she writes about how to get the most out of silent reading in schools. Influential English teacher librarian, Lucas Maxwell, writes about effective ways of promoting the school library and the work of teacher librarians. These strategies are further reflected in the school news that we have highlighted here, including the images of very cool and inventive displays created by very talented people.

Last term, we finally got to celebrate in person the WASLA Awards at the amazing Bob Hawke College. WASLA is grateful to all of you who were able to attend and congratulate the winners, the yummy catering by the school's in-house chef and for the

Principal's thoughtful keynote and tour. An article, written by one of our Lifetime Members, Jeff Herd, summarises the event. We have also included the powerful speech written by Jenny Currie, the 2020 Teacher Librarian of the Year.

This term, the WASLA Committee has continued to work on not only providing professional learning events but also actively advocating for school libraries on both state and national fronts. Our treasurer, Helen Tomazin, is now the treasurer for the School Library Coalition. WA is the first State or Territory to run a government petition asking the Legislative Council to investigate the staffing of school libraries in public schools. The aim is that we need to start the process in public schools, knowing that any flow-on effects will influence the independent and Catholic sectors. If you have not signed or started one of these petitions, please do so. A copy was sent via WASLANet and is also available on our Facebook page and website. The Committee will highlight all that we have done this year at the upcoming AGM, so there is another reason to attend on November 25. Please book for catering purposes.

WASLA is a committee run by passionate and committed volunteers. Mike Spanier, who has been on our committee for many years and has run our website, recently resigned. He will be greatly missed by us all. His calm manner in how he handled all tasks is an inspiration. If you are interested in having an active role in working to strengthen and improve our working conditions and career prospects, please seriously consider joining our committee at the AGM. With the improvement of technology, it would be easy for anyone in the regions to join too. Please keep an eye out on WASLANet next term for the call out for Committee nominations.

Have a rewarding Term Four and well-deserved summer break.

**Natasha Georgiou**  
WASLA President

## Feature Articles



### “Is that all you do?”: Self promotion and School Librarians\*

by Lucas Maxwell

I recently met a person who asked me what I do for a living.

“I’m a librarian,” I said.

“Is that all you do, then?” they asked.

I had a million responses to this but in the end I just laughed and said, “a lot happens in here.”

It made me consider how librarians are often perceived by people who don’t come into contact with libraries or maybe haven’t used one in many years. It’s frustrating because we shouldn’t have to stand in the place that we work and prove our worth but we often have to.

I’m very fortunate to have a senior leadership team who are 150% behind me and if they had heard that comment they would have reacted strongly for me, I have no doubt of this.

This interaction also made me think about the ways we as school librarians self-promote. I’ve decided to share some of the ways I’ve promoted the library to staff here at the school.

I’d also like to say that if you’d like to promote anything you do in your school that you have found effective, please share it as a case study on the [Great School Libraries Campaign](#).

#### Whole School Assemblies

This obviously introduces you to students but also to staff, especially new ones. I’m lucky in that I get asked to speak at whole school assemblies a few times a year to promote events like World Book Day or other special events that are upcoming. Standing in front of 1,600 people might not be everyone’s idea of a good time, but it’s a great way to get your voice heard and ensure everyone knows what’s going on in the Library.

#### Staff Briefings

A lot lower key than a whole school assembly, but still effective. We have two staff briefings a week and at the end of each one the floor is opened up to any staff who want to promote an activity or idea. This is a perfect opportunity to get something across and ask for assistance on a particular topic. I use briefings constantly to promote the library. I’ve also brought in our student library assistants to briefings to promote programs that staff are invited to. It’s a great attention-grabber and a good public speaking experience for the students. When cover has been an issue, I’ve asked different TA’s to watch the library while I’m out.

In addition, I asked the head teacher if I could have a space in the staff room to advertise our

events. He said it was no problem so now I have a board to promote all of our activities, provide sign-up sheets and more.

#### Bring the Library to Them

I had our student library team, known as The Bookings, create a staff room pop-up library where they wrote book reviews on postcards and attached them to books that they thought staff would like. These books were then brought to the staff room and a manual check-in /checkout sheet was provided. It was so successful that we had to restock all of the books that were provided.

We also run a pop-up library every year in the courtyard outside of the library. Anyone, staff and students alike, who borrows a book gets a homemade brownie. We bring in year eleven music students to provide a nice backdrop to a fun and hectic event.

Another successful event includes having students wrap up books before the Christmas holiday to give to staff. Staff then read them over the break and provide reviews.

#### Staff Bulletins

Our staff bulletin comes out every Friday, again, a really effective way to introduce yourselves or promote an idea. I use bulletins to augment something that I’ve spoken about in staff briefings for the most part. I use bulletins to advertise things like our staff coffee mornings where homemade brownies, doughnuts and coffee is provided for staff who come and sign up for a library card. I also use it to promote author visits, our book award and our open mics, which staff are also invited to attend and take part.

#### Subject / Middle Leader Meetings

Attending these meetings has been a huge boon to the library. At the beginning of the year I ask senior leadership if I can spend five to ten minutes



promoting the library. I explain that I can be used to provide context, digital literacy and responsible researching lessons for students of any age. This has resulted in me attending lessons for Dance, Drama, Music, History, Media and of course English to deliver these lessons.

#### Invite Staff to All Events

As mentioned above, any time I hold an event in the library, staff are invited to attend. This includes open mics, poem in our pocket days, banned books week, surprise summer reads and much more. This has resulted in being introduced to many new staff and finding library allies that will come and support you in the future.

I hope you found these ideas useful, I’d be very interested in learning how other librarians promote themselves, you can find me on Twitter @lucasjmaxwell. [i](#)

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First published on: <http://glenthorneirc.blogspot.com/>  
\*In the UK, teacher librarians are called school librarians

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Follow us and interact

Follow WASLA on Twitter at:  
<https://twitter.com/WASLApIn>  
@WASLApIn

Western Australian School Library Association (WASLA) Closed Group that can be found at the following link:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/812877622171734>



## 10 ways to get the most out of silent reading in schools

by Dr. Margaret Merga

Reading aloud can help young children learn about new words and how to sound them. There's great value too in providing opportunities for children to enjoy regular silent reading, which is sustained reading of materials they select for pleasure.

But not all schools consistently offer this opportunity for all of their students. We regularly hear from teachers and teacher librarians who are concerned about the state of silent reading in schools. They're worried students don't have enough opportunity to enjoy sustained reading in school. This is important, as many children do not read at home. For some young people, silent reading at school is the only reading for pleasure they experience.

### Silent reading silenced

Research suggests silent reading opportunities at school are often cancelled and may dwindle as students move through the years of schooling. Where silent reading opportunities still exist, we're often told that the way it is being implemented is not reflective of best practice. This can make the experience less useful for students and even unpleasant.

Yet regular reading can improve a student's reading achievement. Reading books, and fiction books in particular, can improve their reading and literacy skills. Opportunity matters too, as the amount we read determines the benefits we get from reading. Regular reading can help with other subjects, such as maths.

### So, what should silent reading look like?

Here are ten important things we need to do to make the most of silent reading in our schools.

#### 1. Enjoyment is the focus

Enjoyment of reading is associated with both reading achievement and regular reading. If we want young people to choose to read more to experience the benefits of reading, then silent reading needs to be about pleasure and not just testing.

#### 2. Students choose the books

Young people should not be prevented from choosing popular or high-interest books that are deemed too challenging. Books that are a bit too hard could motivate students to higher levels of achievement. Students have reported enjoying and even being inspired by reading books that were challenging for them, such as J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*.

Silent reading of textbooks or required course materials should not be confused with silent reading for pleasure.

#### 3. The space is right

Like adults, children may struggle to read in a noisy or uncomfortable space. Schools need to provide space that is comfortable for students to enjoy their silent reading.

#### 4. Opportunities to chat (before or after)

Discussion about books can give students recommendations about other books and even enhance reading comprehension. But silent reading should be silent so all students can focus on reading.

#### 5. Inspired by keen readers

If students see their teachers and teacher librarians as keen readers this can play a powerful role in encouraging avid and sustained reading. School principals can also be powerful reading models, with their support of silent reading shaping school culture.

#### 6. Students have access to a library

Even when schools have libraries the research shows students may be given less access to them during class time as they move through the years of schooling.

#### 7. It happens often

This is particularly important for struggling readers who may find it hard to remember what they are reading if opportunities for silent reading are infrequent. These students may also find it difficult to get absorbed in a book if time to read is too brief.



### 8. Paper books are available

Reading comprehension is typically stronger when reading on paper rather than a screen. Screen-based book reading is not preferred by most young people, and can be associated with infrequent reading. Students can find reading on devices distracting.

### 9. There is a school library and a teacher librarian

Teacher librarians can be particularly important in engaging struggling readers beyond the early years of schooling. They may find it hard to find a book that interests them but which is also not too hard to read. Librarians are also good at matching students with books based on movies they like, or computer games they enjoy.

### 10. We need to make the school culture a reading culture

Reading engagement is typically neglected in plans to foster reading achievement in Australian schools. Practices such as silent reading should feature in the literacy planning documents of all schools.

Allowing students to read for pleasure at school is a big step toward turning our school cultures into reading cultures. Students need opportunities to read, as regular reading can both build and sustain literacy skills. Not all students are given class time to select reading materials from the library. Unfortunately, literacy skills can begin to slide if reading is not maintained.

We need people to continue to read beyond the point of learning to read independently, though research suggests this message may not be received by all young people. Where children do understand reading is important, they may be nearly twice as likely to read every day. So silent reading is important enough to be a regular part of our school day.



### Dr. Margaret Merga, Senior Lecturer in Education, Edith Cowan University

This article was co-authored by Claire Gibson, a librarian who's studying a Master of Education by research at Edith Cowan University.

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## Finding the Right Word

by Mem Fox

I remember sitting in my publisher's office back in 1982 shortly after *Possum Magic* had been accepted for publication, chatting to my publisher about the book industry. She was a no-nonsense, intimidating woman whom I later grew to love, but on that occasion she seemed fierce enough to eat me alive. 'Mem,' she said, 'you may be writing stories for little kids but there's nothing fairy-story about publishing. We're all in this together, trying to make a living. It's all about the bottom line, so whenever you put pen to paper please remember writing is a business, not a hobby.'

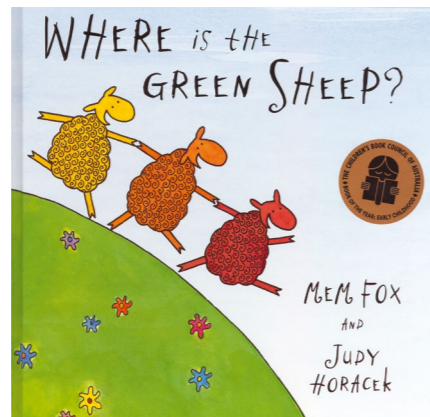
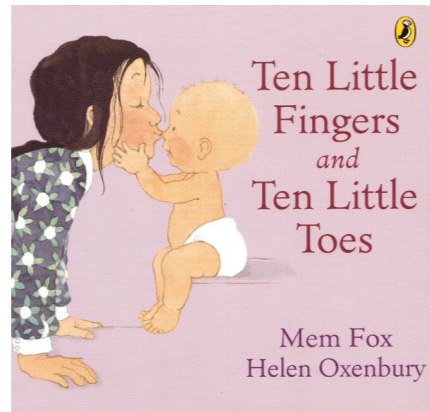
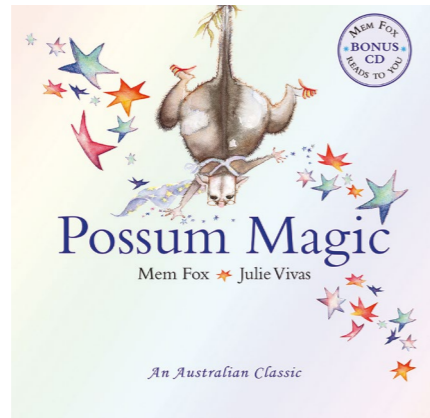
I found this naked focus on finances rather harsh. It took the gloss off my excitement. Surely, I thought, artists like 'moi' should be allowed to ignore such unpleasantness. It

was distressing and distasteful to have what I considered at the time to be my God's-own creative talent (God forgive me) dragged down to hideous considerations such as profit and loss. But I've been eternally grateful to have had that conversation. It's prevented me from being precious about my work and has concentrated my mind on writing the best books possible. In order to do that, I've had to think about a vast number of things as I'm writing. What sorts of thoughts?

The first thought, contrary to everything I've said so far, is the necessity to ignore anything to do with a book selling or not selling. My focus, and that of every other would-be writer, has to be fixed on a child. Which child? I keep at least four in mind:

a child on my lap; a child huddled up close to me on a couch; a child snuggled up in bed; and wide-eyed children gathered on the mat in a classroom, listening to a teacher as he or she reads my words aloud. This intense focus on a child means I can't write a picture book to please myself. No one can. We have to write to please other people, and hard though it is to remember, those other people are called 'children'—mostly young children. We're not writing for adults, so the last thing we want to do, although I often start by doing this, is to write a picture book that will bring adults to tears or to laughter, yet have no effect whatsoever on a child. Which is why every word I write has to pass through an imaginary child's head and heart before I'm happy with my final draft. It then goes off to a sublime and fearsome editor who points out all the words, ideas and structures that need to be deleted, added to, or changed: a co-operative, humbling editing process that may take years. Editors usually know best. New writers are often rather grand with editors, which is incredibly foolish. Such an attitude wins no friends in the ever-shrinking publishing world.

To return to the imaginary child: babies, toddlers and preschoolers have the mysterious, magical ability to make a book popular and cause its sales to soar. So, pleasing *children*, making *children* happy is essential for success, which gives me greater impetus to gladden the heart of that one child or the hearts of a whole class of children. Shortly after the publication of *Where is the Green Sheep?* which has now sold over a million and a half copies, I was browsing anonymously in a bookstore when I saw a young mother pick up the book, flick through it, dismiss it out of hand, and put it back on the shelf. I was devastated. I found myself blushing with



humiliation, even though the mother had no idea who I was or that I was hiding behind a shelf. 'Oh God,' I thought, 'it's not going to sell.' But I hadn't reckoned with the little kids! I'd forgotten their power. Sixteen years later *Green Sheep* has become so popular that children often receive several copies as birthday presents when they already had one in the first place.

A friend who was about to host a first birthday party, called me and said: 'Mem! Have you ever looked up '*Green Sheep* birthday cakes' on Google? Honestly, there are thousands!' A slight exaggeration perhaps, but even so, as you see, small children, many of whom are so young they can't even talk, somehow managed to communicate to their parents that they were crazy about the book. Parent spoke to parent, and off it went.

*Here is the blue sheep.  
And here is the red sheep.  
Here is the bath sheep.  
And here is the bed sheep.  
But where is the green sheep?  
And so on...*

If delighting a child is my basic aim, what is it that particularly delights young children? I was once in a dismal, disadvantaged school in Queensland with 250 little kids sitting on a floor in front of me. They were aged between five and seven, from many different parts of the world. I picked up *Possum Magic*, which I was about to read for the seven hundredth time and wondered how it would go—if it might be becoming dated after 35 years,

and if such a group of diverse children would understand it, let alone like it. As I read it to these ragged, blessed little children, they were so still and rapt their faces seemed almost to be in *my* face. Certainly, we were as one, drawn together by the magic of story, let alone any magic in my story. I

watched them watching me and was so moved that a lump came to my throat. The sobs were close. I could barely continue. I swallowed hard. (And *Possum Magic* isn't even sad!) Was it the nature of the quest or of the rhythm of the English that held the audience in the palm of my hand? Who can tell? Looking back, I think it was due to the fact that the right words happened to be in the right place.

I once received a message from a girl called Bridgette who appeared to love *Possum Magic*. She wrote in the scary spelling of texting, without capitals or punctuation and with homophobic overtones:

*omg i love possum magic im 14 and i love it  
it's so good*

*our class has to do an assignment on  
childrens books and i chose ur book and  
now everyones jelous cus they have gay  
books well i just wanted to say ur book is  
AWSOME!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!*

Clearly, in spite of her spelling she was a big fan of the book which set me to wondering why, exactly. At the time I put it down to the rhythm of the prose. Later I came to the conclusion it's *always* the rhythm of the prose: the right words, one after another, in any book. My own narrow focus on beats and syllables means it can take me an hour to choose between two words such as *under* and *beneath*. Each has two syllables and means the same thing, but *under* has a slow beats with the stress on the first syllable: *un-der*; and *beneath* has fast beats with the stress on the second syllable: be-neath; so if I chose the wrong one I'd spoil the rhythm of both the phrase and the sentence

Bridgette will never know that the rhythm of the beginning of *Possum Magic* matches phrase by phrase, beat for beat, the beginning of the story of Ruth, in the Bible, the King James version of course:

*'Now it came to pass, in the days that the judges ruled...' becomes: 'Once upon a time, but not very long ago...' and so on, for the entire first paragraph. It wasn't deliberate. I didn't know I'd done it myself until six years after *Possum Magic* was published. I was shocked at the similarities. I did grow up on a mission in Africa, it's true, but like many children in similar circumstances I ended up*

being not very religious. Clearly, you can take the girl out of the mission, but you can't take the mission out of the writer. Thank God.

Pleasing children, especially the 'older-younger' children aged four and above, is the same as pleasing any adult in any novel we might write. We need to create a riveting plot, and a believable setting; we need to elicit an emotional response to great characters; and to ensure that our word choice is as original and surprising and exquisite as possible. So, as I'm writing, I'm thinking first and deeply about the characters. I don't write descriptions of them—in a picture book there isn't enough word-space for that. Instead I reveal them through what they do and what they say. I've found that my three years at drama school holds me in good stead with dialogue. I struggle, but eventually succeed, to put into characters' mouths the words that make the characters come alive. I constantly speak the imagined dialogue out loud, to gauge its reality, to find out what's fake and what characters *wouldn't* say. In any book, for younger-older children or for the very young, I read aloud every phrase and sentence as I'm writing and re-writing. It's my 'maniac in the office' phase, during which I talk to myself aloud, all day.

So, the first thing I hope for is great characters. But they have to be in trouble of some sort, trouble a child can relate to. If there's no trouble, there's no story. I have a grandson. Often, when he was very young, I'd browse in bookstores looking for books that would speak to him, as it were. Time and again I'd pick up books that were vaguely cute and lovely, but whose trouble aspect was so slight I was left unmoved—and certainly unmotivated to buy. I put these books back on the shelf where I knew they would die a quick death, forgotten before they'd ever been remembered. Which is why, as I'm writing, one of the recurring, maddening thoughts I have is: 'Would a child give a damn about the trouble in this book?'

While I'm creating characters and the trouble they're in, I'm also struggling with word choice, since all three go hand in hand. Many of the children's books I put back on the shelf in bookstores have been written as if word choice weren't important, as if prose had no rhythm to it, as if syllables didn't exist on the scale of importance in capturing children's hearts.



^ Possum Magic, 1983.

Over the years I've learnt that it's the comfort of having the right words in *just* the right place, that brings children back and back and back to a favourite book. We may have the most divine illustrations in the world, and the loveliest characters in the world, who are in the deepest trouble that any child can relate to, but without the right words flowing from sentence to comforting sentence, the death of that book will be imminent, bringing new meaning to the words, The End.

Let me move my focus for the moment on to picture books for the very young: the texts that have no story, no end, no beginning, and no middle; no characters or setting, nor trouble of any kind. In my experience, one of the first essentials in this kind of book is brevity. Babies and toddlers are too young to be able to maintain interest in lots of words, so when I'm writing and re-writing, one of the thoughts I keep uppermost in my mind is the shortness of their attention span. Parents love a short book, too. Librarians in Baby Rhyme Time also love a short book. I hold on to the fact that a picture book is always thirty-two pages, in which the illustrator tells half the story. So, brevity is my goal. I aim to write under 500 words. And when I've done that, I try to shorten the text to 400, then 350 and so on, which is why my favourite tool on the computer is the word

count. The picture books I've written that still sell splendidly at least ten years later are *Time for Bed* (200 words), *Hattie and the Fox* (316 words), *Tough Boris* (71 words), *Whoever You Are* (190 words), *Where is the Green Sheep?* (also 190) and *Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes* (184 words). The shortness of these texts makes writing look easy, which is why ignorant people often say, 'I think I'll write a picture book one day, *when I have the time*'. As if time were the only problem! As if writing ability counted for nothing! Writing short texts is a daunting task, a burden even. Writing long ones much easier.

Word choice is constrained by the young age of the children I'm writing for. Word choice is also underpinned by the knowledge that children won't be reading my words—they'll be *hearing* them read. Word choice is guided by the fact that inadvertently I'll be teaching children language: how to talk it; how to read it. Word choice relies on the clarity of my own memory of rhythmic language: everything I've ever read—or more particularly everything I've heard and learnt by heart. Word choice means I have two copies of *Roget's Thesaurus* because the first one has pretty much fallen apart from overuse.

I don't water down my word choices to the level of complete comprehension. Good grief! How boring

a book that would be! TS Eliot said, 'Great art communicates, before it is understood', so in *Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes* I used the word eiderdown instead of quilt. I desperately needed the three-syllable rhythm of eiderdown, as well as its rhyme. The fact that children, and even many adults might not know the meaning of eiderdown didn't deter me for a second:

There was one little baby who was born in a town  
and another who was wrapped in an eiderdown.  
And both of these babies, as everyone knows,  
had ten little fingers and ten little toes.



In *The Magic Hat* I used *mischievous* rather than *cheeky*. 'While no one was looking, the wizard meanwhile, skipped out of town with a mischievous smile...' In *Tough Boris* I used *scruffy* instead of *untidy*. 'He was scruffy. All pirates are scruffy.' In *Baby Bedtime*, a book for newborn babies who have no language at all, I used the word *munch*:

I could eat your little ears.  
I could nibble on your toes.  
I could munch your tiny fingers.  
I could gobble up your toes...

I don't want children to understand every word I write. I want to extend them, lift them up, out of the humdrum of day-to-day language and living. I want them at first to have only a vague sort of idea of the meaning of a word in the context of the story, or the sentence, but that in due course, after repeated readings, the word will become familiar enough for understanding to occur. I'm teaching my audience how to talk. I'm teaching them how to read and love

reading. I don't choose a word that's deliberately different and interesting, for the sake of being deliberately different and interesting. I choose the right word. The right word has the right number of syllables with the right beats in the right place. And the right word has the right rhyme.

A child wrote recently:

Dear Mem Fox,  
My name is Paige. When I grow up I want to be an author. [Great name for an author!] What does it feel like to be an author? Is it fun, or tiring or cool?

When I think of 'word choice' my immediate answer to Paige is that being an author is first and foremost tiring. I feel down at the end of a writing day. My brain droops. Occasionally I become so discouraged I have to remind myself that writing is a choice: no one's forcing me to do it. I could stop. I often do, for months on end. So, dear Paige, the only time it's fun and cool to be a writer is when the word choices are done, the finished book is in my hands, and I'm reading it to someone who loves it.

I mentioned earlier that my word choices rely on all the rhythmic language I've read, heard, or learnt by heart, or can vaguely remember, such this poem by Hilaire Belloc, written in 1929, *Tarantella*. I loved it so much as a child that I learnt it by heart even though I didn't really understand it. It begins:

Do you remember an Inn,  
Miranda?  
Do you remember an Inn?  
And the tedding and the spreading  
Of the straw for a bedding,  
And the fleas that tease in the High Pyrenees,  
And the wine that tasted of tar?  
And the cheers and the jeers of the young  
muleteers  
(Under the vine of the dark veranda)?  
Do you remember an Inn, Miranda,  
Do you remember an Inn?  
And the cheers and the jeers of the young  
muleteers  
Who hadn't got a penny,  
And who weren't paying any,  
And the hammer at the doors and the din?

I doubt I could have written *Nellie Belle* had I not had the rhythms of *Tarantella* in the marrow of my bones. It begins like this:

Is it fun in the yard, Nellie Belle, Nellie Belle?  
Is it fun in the yard, Nellie Belle?  
Digging earth that's very hard, in the yard,  
in the yard—  
is it fun in the yard, Nellie Belle?  
Is it fun in the street, Nellie Belle, Nellie Belle?  
Is it fun in the street, Nellie Belle?  
Greeting all the friends you meet, in the street,  
in the street—  
is it fun in the street, Nellie Belle?

I had a last-minute fright with the text of *Nellie Belle*. The book was ready to go to press. I had been sent the pages and had raved about it to my editors and said how much I loved it. I called my husband into my office to share the joy and he said: 'Wow! It looks fantastic. Let me read it.' So I sat there beaming my head off while he read it to me. He stopped halfway down the second verse, and went back to the beginning of it:

Is it fun in the street, Nellie Belle, Nellie Belle?  
Is it fun in the street, Nellie Belle?  
Greeting all the friends you meet,  
in the street, in the street—  
is it fun in the street, Nellie Belle?

He couldn't get the rhythm right in: 'Greeting all the friends you meet, in the street, in the street....' 'Whoa!' he said. 'That doesn't work.' I said he had to put the emphasis on *all*, not *friends*.

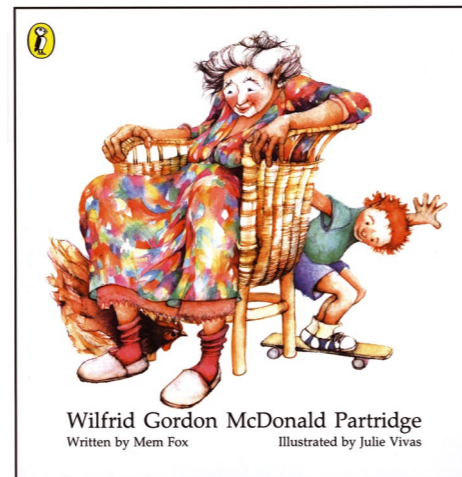
Greeting *all* the friends you meet, in the street,  
in the street...

But he pointed out that not everyone would know how to read it with that rhythmic emphasis, and anyway it seemed to him that there was a stress in the wrong place, and I'd have to find another way of saying it. Finally, my editor suggested removing *all the friends* and using *everyone* instead, like this:

Is it fun in the street, Nellie Belle, Nellie Belle?  
Is it fun in the street, Nellie Belle?  
Greeting everyone you meet,

in the street, in the street—  
is it fun in the street, Nellie Belle?

There are three syllables in all the friends; and three syllables in everyone. But in each example the stress—the beat—falls in a different place. Ah! *Word choice*: it is indeed a killer! Which is why I want to kill people who say they want to write a picture book when they have the time, as if time were the only requirement, without the nightmare of *word choice*.



How do I know when I've finished a book? I can see myself now, at the kitchen table in our old house in the Adelaide hills back in 1983, drafting and redrafting my book *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*, in pencil on a yellow notepad. I could feel, after many drafts and many months of work, that I was on the verge of finishing it. I was alone in the house. The air was still. From somewhere, as if there were an angel on my shoulder guiding me towards it, I had the idea for the ending. And when I had written it, the hairs on my arms stood up. It was done. I hardly need to alert librarians to the feeling of hairs standing up on their arms when they know they're reading a perfect picture book. The electricity such a book creates as it's read aloud, the rapt reactions of the children to the story, and the request to have the same book read the following week and please, also the week after that, all point to the fact that a wonderful children's book is in their hands—that someone, somewhere sat long enough to find the right words and put them in the right places, so everyone can live happily ever after. [i](#)

## Holden Sheppard Interview Questions

by Sarah Betteridge



**Congratulations on recently winning the 2019 Western Australian Premier's Prize for an Emerging Writer! Can you tell our readers a little about how receiving this and other awards for *Invisible Boys* has influenced your feelings about the novel and hopes for it?**

Thanks heaps! I think the most surreal thing about the awards and accolades *Invisible Boys* has received is that I spent most of my life deeply ashamed of most of the thoughts and feelings I reveal in this book. The feelings around being homosexual, around sex, around not being man enough, around my mental health issues – I never spoke about it because it seemed so shameful and I knew people would see me differently if I opened up. So, to finally share my deepest darkest with the world, and be basically applauded for it, is very peculiar – but also very welcome. I'm very proud of this book for the accolades it has picked up. My hopes are just that it continues to find the people who need it most, when they most need it. I hear from a lot of readers of all kinds of backgrounds, but hearing from gay men who say this book helped them process their own trauma is very rewarding and that's meaningful to me.

**When did you start writing and what was the main catalyst?**

I guess my love of stories started with reading. I was read to a lot as a kid, and started reading picture books at the age of three. By the time I was seven, I loved Enid Blyton books (especially the *Magic Faraway Tree* series and the *St Clare's and Malory Towers* series of boarding school stories), Emily Rodda's *Teen Power Inc* series, and some awesome books called *Usborne Puzzle Adventures*, which I devoured. After I read the *Malory Towers* series, which was about British girls in the 1940s, I remember thinking I wanted to read a boarding school story that was about boys from Australia. And one night in 1996, it just occurred to me that if I wanted to read that story, and it didn't exist, then I could write it myself. It was a real lightning bolt moment.

So, the next day I did exactly that: I got an exercise book and a four-coloured pen and started writing a story called *First Form at Clifton Towers* about a twelve-year-old boy named Jake.



It was not prodigious or poetic writing, far from it, but for a seven-year-old it was pretty solid mechanically.

I never stopped writing. That lightning bolt moment was much bigger than a boarding school story. I knew in that moment that what I wanted in life was to be a writer. It was never a kid's hobby or a passing interest. I have taken this career seriously since I was seven, and have been working hard ever since then to make it come true.

**The four characters in your book are diverse but also have similarities. Where did you get the inspiration for the creation of these boys?**

All four boys in the novel are based on me – they are all versions of my own self. The original plan was for the book to be just about one boy – Hammer – but as I wrote the first draft, these side characters of Zeke and Charlie begged to have their stories told too. The way I conceived it was to split my own personality into three parts, based on how I view the human experience being divided up. As I see it, being human involves having a mind, a heart and a body. So, I divided myself into those three parts and gave each of them a name and a character. Zeke, the nerd, would be the mind: thinking and overthinking. Charlie, the punk, was the heart and soul: he felt things deeply. And Hammer, the footy jock, was the physical body: he was rough, tactile and lustful.

Matt, the fourth gay boy in the book, doesn't narrate the chapters like the other three, but he is a big part of me too. He is the epitome of a taciturn country boy – a bit of a larrikin, easy going, rough around the edges but with a heart of gold, and a lot more feelings than he knows how to verbalise. I was once very much a Matt, as much as the other three boys. I am a geek, a punk, a jock, a country boy ... these are all facets of my personality and I wanted to represent these types of boy because so often the gay characters we see in fiction are stereotypes. None of these boys are your standard gay character. I'm deeply proud of that – because I've always felt on the outer as a homosexual man myself.

It was important for me to bring all four boys to life, front and centre, in this novel. I refused to entertain the notion of having straight characters or female characters hijack the narrative, as happens frequently in stories about gay teens. As a gay reader I always want stories to just focus on the gay characters, not shunt them into secondary position, so I aimed to make

Illustration by Lana Pecherczyk



this book all killer, no filler when it comes to having it be all about the gay boys. This story would not shy away from the light or the dark, or the awkwardness or the dirtiness, of what the teenage boy experience is really like.

**What is your favourite scene from the *Invisible Boys*?**

The rooftop scene in chapter sixteen, *Luna Piena*, is my favourite scene in the book: all four boys are together, drinking spirits on the roof of an abandoned school building and talking openly about sex and the guys they have crushes on. When I wrote the first draft, I was hanging out to reach chapter sixteen so I could write that scene, and when I finally got to it, I never wanted it to end, which is why that chapter is twice as long as I had planned.

I grew up going to my mates' houses for sleepovers and of course we would all talk about sex, and the girls we had crushes on, and the models we wanted to sleep with. I would play along and I enjoyed that talk enough, I guess – I wasn't sure if I was straight or bi or gay back then – but I always longed for the

chance to be able to have that same frank, easy, sex-positive yarn with my mates where I could talk about the guys I was into, too. So, this scene was a re-imagining of a youth where being open about my sexuality, without fear, could have been possible.

I hope that future generations of teenagers will have what me and so many others missed out on. Being able to speak frankly about sex and desire with your mates is truly important for teenagers' healthy development. It was also just a really fun scene, filled with boyish camaraderie and larrikinism. I live for that.

**What's next for you? Do you have ideas for a new book that you can share?**

I have a few projects on the go. I'm currently doing some edits on my second novel – those rewrites are due to my agent in a few weeks, so that's keeping me super busy. I also wrote a third novel in April this year while we were all in lockdown. So after my edited second book goes off to my agent, I'll be doing the second draft of that third book. And

then in 2021, I'm on track to write the first draft of my fourth book.

*Invisible Boys* has also recently been optioned for film and television by director Nick Verso and producer Tania Chambers. It's going to be a TV series which is hell exciting. I'm involved as a creative on the adaptation, so I'll be working on that, consulting in the writers' room and possibly co-writing an episode or two. I'll also be having a little cameo in there somewhere which will be fun.

And on top of that, I'm writing a short piece for a forthcoming #LoveOzYA horror fiction anthology from Wakefield Press. It's called *Hometown Haunts* and is slated for late 2021. I haven't written horror before, so I'll do my best to channel my inner Stephen King.

No rest for the wicked, ay?

**Do you have any advice for young people with an interest in writing?**

So much! I think my main advice is to start actually writing words on the page. Don't spend your teenage years just making notes, or drawing maps of fantasy lands, or brainstorming character names or doing character profiles. Those things can be really fun, and I spent all my teenage years doing them, but they also delay the process of actually writing. The best thing you can do is start writing and give yourself permission for the writing to be terrible. If you start writing thinking your first draft needs to be as good as a published novel, then you will inevitably give up after a few pages. It will be more freeing to just let yourself write, and know that your first draft is meant to be rubbish. Just keep writing through the crap and eventually some good words will come.

I also know a lot of young people who attend my talks and workshops think they have nothing interesting to write about. They don't think their life is interesting at all: a teenager in the Aussie suburbs, they think, is dull. They often aspire to write speculative fiction instead – fantasy or sci-fi or dystopian. Nothing wrong with any of that, but honestly, when I do workshops with Aussie teens, their real lives burst onto the page and they just have so much going on – emotional depth and inner worlds that are rich to write about. So I encourage young people to write from that real,

honest place first. I also think trying to write a fantasy novel as your first attempt at writing is doing the whole thing on hard mode. Fantasy requires so much lore-creation and world-building. I encourage writers to cut their teeth on writing from a place of emotional truth first and foremost, to really let their authentic voice shine through.

I have some more advice for writers on my website's FAQ section here: [www.holdensheppard.com/faq](http://www.holdensheppard.com/faq)

**What memories do you have of your school library? Do you think that school libraries are important? If so, why?**

Libraries were so important to me growing up, especially as a teenager. I was one of those geeks who would chill in the library some lunchtimes to play chess against the other boys. People often don't think I'm a nerd now because I'm more of a gym junkie these days, but in high school I was the quiet boy reading Brian Jacques' *Redwall* series, studying maps and atlases and poring over books about Ancient Rome. Libraries serve a function for nerdy and introverted kids far beyond the supply of books and information: they are a safe haven and a place for wonder and curiosity to be nurtured.

I also really liked the fact that libraries were full of all kinds of books – not just fiction, but history, politics, philosophy, sociology, psychology. I was so curious and would browse and read these books in the library without ever actually borrowing half of them. A library is a great place to soak up knowledge.

Books have always been a source of freedom for me, and what I loved as a teenager was that there was no classification system for books in terms of content ratings. Books were not seen as being as graphic as films and video games, which meant you could go looking for mature information about all kinds of things without it being censored by an MA15+ or R18+ rating. I remember borrowing John Marsden's book *Secret Men's Business* and being fascinated by it. I could never have talked about the content of that book with anyone, but having a library available where I could safely hire it out was invaluable to me learning about sex and masculinity in a healthy, unproblematised way.

School libraries are, to my view, as essential as classrooms or sports fields or computer labs. For the school experience to be truly equitable, I feel every school should have a library – with a librarian or

teacher librarian, too! Library staff are a crucial part of the library ecosystem and a library cannot function and thrive and serve its students well without the appropriate resourcing. Library staff helped me find resources and books and were integral to creating a safe and welcoming space for students at my high school. I think there is some relationship building between library staff and students, too, that often goes overlooked. The staff in a school library are in a real position to provide a kind of pastoral-care-by-osmosis to introverted and creative students. I saw this happen when I was growing up, that sense of library staff caring about their students as much as they cared about books and resources. I think the sense of community was amplified being in a small town, too – the school librarian was the mother of my sister's best friend, and the library assistant was a nun who had once taught my father at primary school!

**Do you offer any services to schools and/or school libraries?**

Yes! I've provided schools and school libraries with a wide range of services over the past couple of years, including author talks, workshops, keynote speeches, writing residencies and even judging writing competitions. I've spoken and taught writing at public schools, private schools, Catholic and Christian schools, even an Orthodox Jewish school. I love working with high-school students to get them excited about writing and expressing themselves. Teacher librarians and English teachers often feed back to me that students are more engaged because I explode their expectations of what an author is meant to be when I walk through the door all pierced and mohawked and encouraging them to let their creativity run free in a fun and unabashed way. I love it when students find their voice in a workshop.

My favourite experiences tend to be the question and answer sections at the end of my author talks, where students are encouraged to ask absolutely anything they want. I get to answer their questions around following your dreams, mental health, masculinity, sex and sexuality in a way that's safe and positive for the school environment, and students really respond to this. (Teachers do, too, because it means they don't have to field some of the curlier questions themselves!)

If you're a school or school library, I'd love to come and visit. Feel free to hit me up via my website.

[www.holdensheppard.com/contact](http://www.holdensheppard.com/contact)



Reading reduces stress by 68%. It works faster than listening to music, going for a walk or enjoying a cup of tea.



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**DID YOU KNOW?**



Reading is good for your brain. It helps keep you active as you get older.



Reading leads to self awareness. It is closely linked to increasing our understanding of our own identity.

## Illustrating Children's Picture Books

by Alison Mutton

**Before I start, a quick show of hands: How many of you think the author is in control of the illustrations in their picture book?**

If you raised your hand, you're not alone; most people *do* think this. But unless the author is self-publishing (more on this anon) it's unlikely to be the case. The trade picture book publication process, in my experience, goes something like this:

The author writes the book. We'll skip the many trials and tribulations (and edits) required to get the book accepted by a publisher; suffice to say it *is* accepted, and the author can now kick back with their beverage of choice (and start on the next story) while the book travels down the publication pipeline.

The publisher has an idea of what style of illustrations would suit the text, so they (and their team) go through illustrators until they find one who fits their vision. There will be a bit of back-and-forth, the illustrator sends along some sample sketches and bites their nails a bit, eventually an illustrator is selected, and they sign a contract.

The book now passes to the editor, who liaises with the illustrator. The illustrator's first step is to explore the characters, and plan out the book in 'thumbnail' or 'storyboard' form, where the broadest strokes of the story are considered - the basic composition of each page, the rhythm of the book and decisions over what each page will show, where the text will fit and how the 'page turn' will help

to propel the story. They read the text over and over, obsess over difficult pages, and submit a plan of the book in miniature. It's usually about this point that it will transpire that while the illustrator has been doing this, the author has been working on rewrites, and half that storyboard has to be ditched. Ce'st la vie. No time to cry- the deadline still stands!

When the plan is accepted, the illustrator starts work on the 'roughs'. It is personal preference how 'rough' these are. I like to do very tight roughs, working out everything properly, so that when I get to the finals, *no one will know* that I drew that hand 15 times - on the final, it looks effortless and spontaneous. At this stage more detailed decisions are made about the illustrations; compositions are tightened, facial expressions refined and all the little details added to flesh out the story. I also make a 'dummy book' with all the roughs in, to see how everything reads as *a book*, not a sequence of single images.

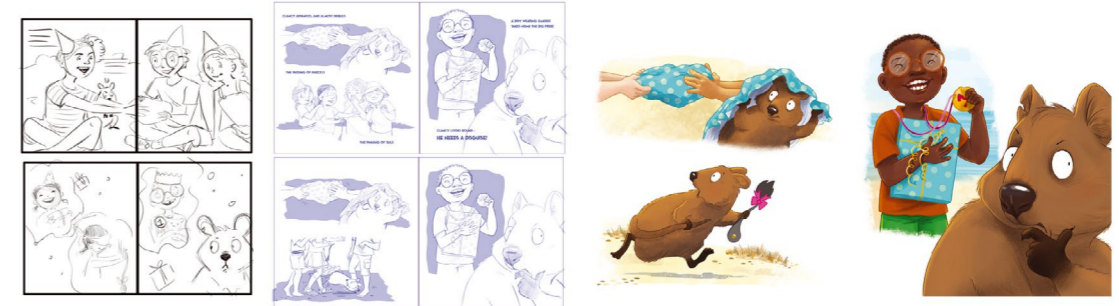
After more back-and-forth - the illustrator has been liaising with the editor but there are plenty of other people behind the scenes, all trying to make the book as good as it can be (and all with their own vision) - the roughs are accepted. The illustrator has had nightmares about having to redo the whole thing, but now they can start the finals, and swap those nightmares for new ones about the looming deadline.

The finals are done! All those final touches - the importance of line, colour, and texture to



The ideal illustration progression: one thumbnail, one rough, one final - for *Aqua Dog* by Lisa Van der Wielen, 2019

## Feature Articles



A more normal progression: two thumbnails, two (of three) roughs, one final for *Clancy the Quokka* by Lili Wilkinson, Allen & Unwin, 2019

the mood of the story, the frame and focus of each page, the magic of the page-turn - have been made. The illustrator sends them off. Does some edits, and sends them off again. (This can go on for quite some time.) The book passes to the designer, who adds in the text, and a good dollop of magic (never underestimate the power of a really amazing designer), and the book is finally sent off for print.

But it's important to note that throughout this, the illustrator has never spoken to the author. There are no stage directions on the text. The illustrator might be given some basic information, but on the whole, they are left to interpret the book as they want. (Did you know that Michael Rosen wrote *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* with a medieval court procession in mind? It was Helen Oxenbury, the illustrator, who turned it into a family of kids having an adventure in the English countryside.) A picture book is wholly a collaborative process, but the two sides who have their names on the cover don't meet up to discuss it at all. (This is why illustrators have been getting ever more vocal about being left off book reviews or best-seller lists. Half the book is down to them, but they barely rate a mention; they're an afterthought who adds 'colourful pictures', not a co-author who spent six months (yes, really) living and breathing the book, helping to turn it into something greater than the sum of its parts.)

Of course, there is a different side of publishing: self-publishing. Self-publishers are in full control of the book. That is often part of the reason they choose to self-publish: there's no publisher standing between their vision and the final product...

the only thing that *does* stand in their way is the illustrator. A trained illustrator has had years of experience presenting ideas in a visual way. An author is less likely to have this skill-set and sometimes their ideas are a little banal, a little derivative or obvious, or don't work well visually, or they have their heart set on an illustration style that doesn't gel with their text. This is not to say their ideas are without merit, but sometimes a little *tweaking* is required, hopefully with openness and sensitivity on both sides. The illustrator's job is to take their ideas and turn them into something that *is* that idea, but is a bit more fabulous. In this case, the book truly *is* a collaborative process between author and illustrator, with no go-between standing between them (this is one reason why many illustrators refuse to work with self-publishers, so if you're planning on self-publishing, remember to remain sane in your communications!)

So there you have it; a brief rundown of the process of illustrating a children's picture book. 3-6 months of work compressed into a thousand words. I do hope that knowing a little of what goes into a picture book gives you a greater appreciation for the work of an illustrator. We illustrators love illustrations (we have to: the pay is terrible!) and we love it when we can share the joy of telling a story in 32 pages, enhancing, strengthening and embellishing the amazing texts that we are sent to work on.

**Alison Mutton is a children's illustrator.**

**Her work can be found at [www.alene-art.com](http://www.alene-art.com) and on various social media platforms.**



## Library News



### WASLA 2020 Awards

By Jeff Herd

WASLA 2020 Awards Ceremony was held at the Bob Hawke College in Subiaco, Western Australia's latest secondary school. The event was held in the spacious, airy and comfortable library, with its wall to ceiling windows along three sides providing sweeping vistas of the wooded Mueller Park.

Felicia Harris commenced the evening with the recognition of the following award-winners:

**Jennifer Curry**  
Teacher Librarian of the Year

**Lesley Dorrington**  
Library Technician of the Year

**Sarah Klass**  
Library Officer of the Year

**Kennedy Baptist College  
Research and Study Centre**  
School Library of the Year



Each award was followed by a rousing and uplifting acceptance speech, with many references to the importance of the principal's support in the ongoing success of the school library and the high level of team cooperation and dedication. A full account of all winners can be found in the April 2020 issue of *ic3* and for more insights into her vision for libraries, Jennifer's acceptance speech can be read on the next page. I also draw your attention to the informative article by Jennifer in the July 2020 issue of *ic3*.

At the conclusion of the awards, the College Principal, John Burke, presented a short keynote address entitled 'Vision for a 21st Century School Library'. It continued the evening's theme of being "Extraordinary Together", through placing a priority on reading for pleasure, succeeding through an interdisciplinary team approach that acknowledged and applied the importance of reading for learning and making a connection to curriculum.

John noted that the library was physically situated in the centre of the school and was also acknowledged as the educational centre of the school. A work in progress, the college is in its embryonic stages, with additional stages to be built as the student population grows in the years ahead. Currently two hundred and fifty year seven students attend the college, with a further year group added each year till 2025. The College shares facilities such as Subiaco Oval, playing courts and the gymnasium with the local community. The night concluded with a guided tour of the facilities of the College



It was gratifying to notice that the principals of all four award-winning schools were in attendance, demonstrating the links between successful school libraries and the support of the school administration, especially the principal. A night for uplifting the spirits, mingling with colleagues and sharing in the success of the award-winners. Congratulations to all the worthy winners of their respective awards, with a special mention to the main organisers of the event, Felicia Harris, Natasha Georgiou, Rebecca Murray and Barb Lippiatt.

**Jeff Herd**  
WASLA Honorary Life Member





## WASLA Acceptance Speech

by Jennifer Currie

It is my great pleasure to accept the WASLA award for the West Australian Teacher Librarian of the Year 2020. Receiving this award is certainly an honour and even more so in such testing times. I consider this award to be a beacon of light that shines on the important and diverse roles that teacher librarians play within the school community, and a light that showcases our school library's achievements and its integral position within the school.

I thank the WASLA Committee and Award Subcommittee for providing a platform to showcase the benefits of placing qualified teacher librarians in school libraries.

I would also like to show my gratitude and appreciation to Geri Hardy, our Principal at Lynwood SHS, who recognises that our library is integral to school operations and thus, fully supports our endeavours. (I also wish to acknowledge my former Principals and line

managers Gary Anderson, Andrew Jack, Jo Willessee and Hayatti Miller who provided consistent support for our library). My teacher librarian colleagues and friends, Kylie Coten and Sorelle Miller, who are always supportive and were responsible for writing and coordinating the application for this award, gathering support from Principals, Dr Margaret Merga, HoLAs (namely Allison Taylor and Des Sawyer), and teachers.

I am so grateful to and proud of my library team who work collaboratively and consistently to deliver quality products to our clientele. Last, but not least, my husband Paul Currie. Paul inspired me to attain my Level 3 Classroom Teacher status and whilst the sheer weight of working towards this qualification was enormous, I found it invaluable in enabling me to link school processes to the library context and consequently, understand the importance of aligning to systemic directions. This is important so that our library continues to remain relevant

and viable in this era of constant change. It is incumbent upon us to grasp the opportunities that come with this, to reignite the conversations around school libraries, in order to re-think and to re-envision the future.

This means understanding current directions, and being proactive about supporting and working with all stakeholders to develop the best possible student outcomes. This is why our school library has remained intact with fully qualified and skilled teacher librarians, and why our school library has bucked national trends that, unfortunately see a devaluation and decrease in the role of teacher librarians. This is why we have the full support of our school executive team, other school leaders and teaching staff. We support the school and the school supports us. In short, it is a win-win recipe.

A couple of months ago, I was very fortunate to be one of the presenters for WASLA's "Short and Sweet Webinar". I presented on our Reading Appreciation Program, RAP as we call it, and I was asked "Did the teacher librarians in our school provide DOTT for other teachers?" In our school we do not. We are in the enviable position of team teaching with learning area teachers through our extensive reading and information skills programs.

It is my firm belief that this is the model that works best. It allows for collaboration between teachers, enhancement of the Australian Curriculum's General Capabilities and importantly, promotes positive student outcomes. It is also a perfect fit for the Western Australian Department of Education focus 2020, that advocates an education system that promotes excellence, equity and confident and creative young Western Australians who become successful lifelong learners. Qualified teacher librarians fronting school libraries can provide the vital connection between the curriculum's general capabilities, department focus areas and the classroom teacher, all with the ultimate aim of cultivating independent learners.

The placement of teacher librarians at the helm of school libraries, also requires universities to support and re-introduce teacher librarian courses, ensuring that these courses link to the current Western Australian education requirements, such as the general capabilities. We need to create the opportunity for teacher librarians to be the experts in these fields, therefore providing the foundation for cross-curricular links. It is only through making these links that we can successfully hold our market share and maintain this integral role within our schools.

Our students are growing up in the information age and information is expanding. There is not a library on earth that can hold this, there is no student on the planet who could even begin to fathom how to access, let alone use this information in print form. Teacher librarians and school libraries are so crucial in this current climate and it is imperative that we stay relevant. As my school's Literacy Coordinator, I can attest that this role marries well with my role as the Teacher in Charge of the Library. This has enabled me to successfully lead my team to embrace and apply the fundamentals of the school's business plan, model best practice in the facilitation of student reading and writing, provide feedback to learning areas and students on a range of literacy strategies and school-based data, whilst providing an inclusive environment for all students, where they can feel safe, confident and genuinely supported.

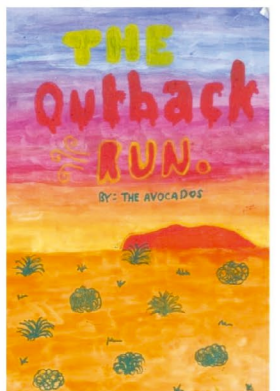
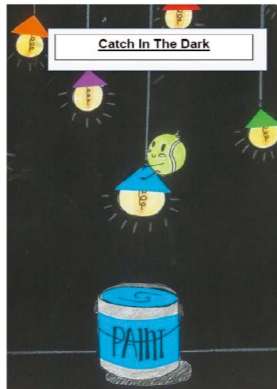
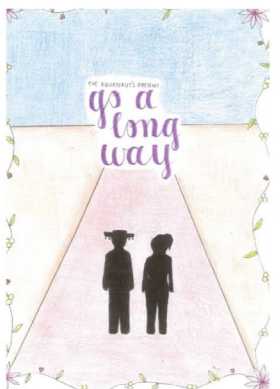
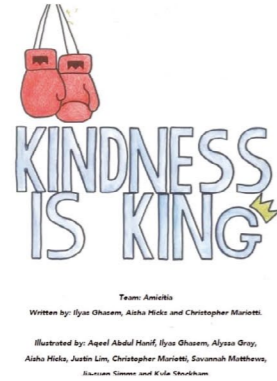
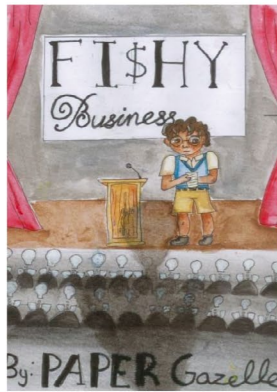


^ Virginia Yurisich, Sarah Klass, Jennifer Currie and Lesley Dorrington

Yes, our role as teacher librarians can be vast, varied and sometimes crazy-busy, but we have to ensure that we remain relevant, that we play a key role in teaching our students how to access information and work towards becoming independent learners. It is vital that we contribute to reporting to parents through supporting learning area curricula and providing valid and reliable feedback. We essentially have to treat the school library like a business, supporting our clientele and meeting their demands. We need to adapt and grow.

I accept this award on behalf of all the hard working teacher librarians in this great state of Western Australia and I urge you all to make your work known and light your own bushel.

## Write a book in a day at John Forrest Secondary College



On August 24, sixty-two John Forrest Secondary College students across eight writing teams participated in the 2020 competition “Write a Book in a Day”. This is the second time John Forrest Secondary College has competed in WABIAD, with some students returning after enjoying the experience last year so much. Each group was given the task of writing a book for children in hospitals and raising much needed funds for The Kids’ Cancer Project.

Teams arrived before 8am on the day, when randomly generated parameters were presented to them. A task in teamwork, creativity and literacy, they had to write and illustrate an Australian story of between 3500 and 5000 words and include the set parameters – three characters, a setting and an issue, as well as five specific words. They were all very different and it was a challenge to say the least – but a fun one. Participants enjoyed the day, with “helping brave kids”, “getting to know new friends” and “feeling included” among the positive feedback. Eight incredible, creative stories with beautiful illustrations were presented at the end of the day.

So far in the 2020 competition, we’ve raised nearly \$3000 for The Kids’ Cancer Project. How phenomenal is that? Thank you so much to everyone who has donated and to the amazing writers and artists!

Teams made dedications with stories and here are a few:

***For all of the kids out there doing it tough, know that you are supported.***

***This book is dedicated to Amani, the bravest person I know.***

***To all that pick up this book... “Every day may not be good but there’s something good in every day.”***  
-Author Unknown

Bernadette Nye, Librarian  
John Forrest Secondary College

## CBCA Book Week at Penrhos Junior School

At Penrhos Junior School, the displays for CBCA Book Week took on a life of their own starting with the Science Week display of “Save Our Seas” which grew into our underwater display of curious creatures. The Year 4’s added their book monsters, created in Art, and the masks our teachers wore for the dress-up parade as “Wild Things” from *Where the Wild Things Are*, were then added to the shortlisted books display. Our “Curious Creatures, Wild Minds” theme banner was also used for our class quiz as each of the designed letters represented a fiction book. A hand drawn chimera was also added. We have some talented people on staff!

CBCA Book Week is always a busy but delightful event on our school calendar and this year we also included two author visits by Cristy Burne and James Foley. On the Wednesday afternoon, we also held a community event inviting parents and their children to attend an “Afternoon Tea: Reading Hour”. This was fantastic as the P&F supplied the afternoon tea of scones, jam and cream, and James Foley shared some funny stories before parents moved with their child to a quiet spot in the library to just read together. A great opportunity where we could all relax and enjoy books and reading. After all, isn’t this what we are all about?

Gianna Richards, Teacher Librarian  
Penrhos Junior School



## Book Spine Poetry: What the book covers CAN tell

Year 7s at Kennedy Baptist College were seen recently in the Research and Study Centre (RASC) eagerly scanning shelves and selecting books based solely on their titles. To complement an English poetry unit, the teacher librarians ran a 'Book Spine Poetry Competition' exclusively for Year 7 students. The concept was derived from pictures on Pinterest and was an activity with which the students and English teachers enthusiastically engaged.

The idea was for four to six book titles to be carefully selected and books arranged in order so that each title on the book spine created a line in their poem. Students would then take a photo of their book stack, paste it into the digital template with the titles typed below, and send it through to the RASC as their competition entry.

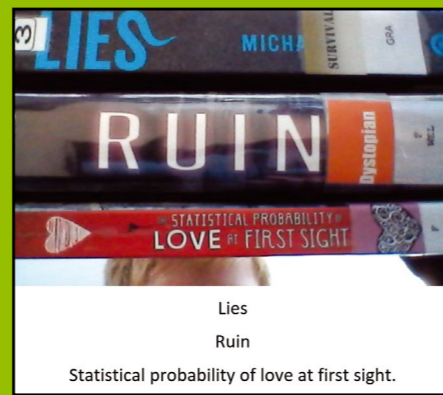
The key elements that contributed to the success of this activity were:

- Preparation
- Promotion
- Positive support from the Year 7 English teachers

The competition ran for a little over two weeks and more than 60 entries were received. These featured in the RASC on a 'Poet-Tree' display, generating much interest from the student body.

Selecting winning entries was the hardest part of the entire activity. There was an interesting array of poem topics from the pandemic to familial love and poem styles featuring the factual to the more esoteric. Winning entrants were awarded an A3 poster with suitably named chocolates attached, applauding their efforts.

Lorinda Gersbach, Teacher Librarian  
Research and Study Centre Kennedy Baptist College



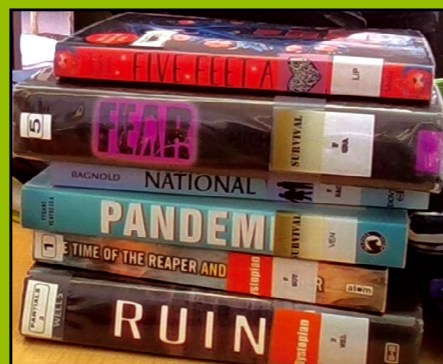
Lies  
Ruin  
Statistical probability of love at first sight.



Home  
Mother's Day  
A Straight Line to My Heart  
Snap



the lost sun  
echoes  
navigating  
past the shallows

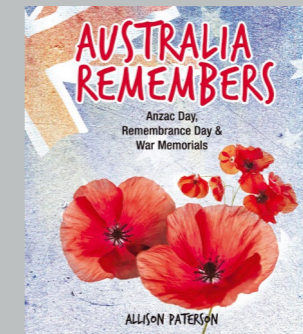


Five feet apart  
Fear  
National  
Pandemic  
Time of the reaper  
ruin

## Book Reviews

### Australia Remembers: ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day & War Memorials

By Allison Paterson  
ISBN 9781925675771  
Published by Big Sky Publishing. Sept 2018  
Ages 7-12 years  
Reviewed By Helen Tomazin



Every year we remember and commemorate all those who have fought in the past to keep Australia free and those who still fight today to keep us safe. This book explores Anzac Day (25 April), Remembrance Day (11 November) and war memorials and how these events and monuments highlight those who fought for our country, their bravery and courage.

This book is very detailed and explains the origins and traditions of Anzac Day and Remembrance Day and explores both their connections and significance to young Australians today. There

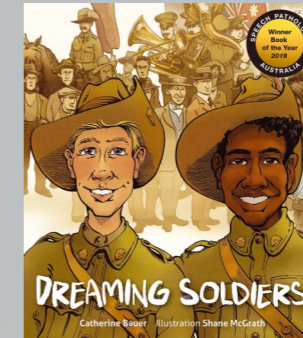
is a section on how to make "ANZAC Biscuits", "Make a Poppy" and "Create a Poppy Wreath". The traditions and symbols we use to commemorate these special days are described in language that is user-friendly to the younger readers and a glossary is provided to assist with terminology.

This is a beautiful book that will help one understand what these special days mean and how important it is to remember those Australians who have fought for their country as well as those who keep us safe today. It is designed in a way to make certain the younger readers share the history and traditions of these important occasions. It is full of colour photos (historical and current), illustrations and images that support the facts and recount. There are also questions and break out boxes to engage the reader.

This is the first book in the series, *Australia Remembers*, that will focus on Australian military history specifically written for children aged 6–12 years. Teacher Notes available [HERE](#).

### Dreaming Soldiers By Catherine Bauer

Illustrated By Shane McGrath  
ISBN 9781925675528  
Format: Paperback  
Published by Big Sky Publishing. Sep 2018  
Reviewed by Helen Tomazin



Jimmy and Johnno are best mates, sharing adventures and growing up together on an Australian outback station during the 1900s. They share a special bond and as World War I begins, they excitedly head overseas to fight on the battlefields of the Western Front. These two mates, from different cultures, share a friendship for life.

*Dreaming Soldiers* is a tale of childhood fun and adventure and the challenges of the battlefield with Dreaming themes. It also provides a historical view of the racism and discrimination that

the indigenous had to endure. A clever piece of writing, touching at times and beautifully illustrated, as shown in the depiction of mothers crying as the boys announce they are going to war.

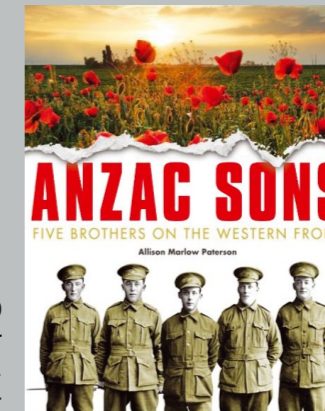
This book is written in a simple and clear way for younger readers and incorporates extraordinary illustrations that honour and respect the service of Australian veterans and the important contribution of Indigenous soldiers. It really is a beautiful story to share with readers and show what true mateship entails as well as the meaning of ANZAC Day. A

highly recommended book portraying kindness, empathy, friendship as well educational as the last page of the book explains Indigenous Australians at War. A must read for the younger readers.

**WINNER of the 2019 Australian Speech Pathology Book of the Year Awards Indigenous Children Category.**

### ANZAC Sons: Five Brothers on the Western Front.

by Allison Marlow Paterson  
Format: Paperback  
ISBN 9781925275148  
Publication Date: 1st April 2015  
Publisher: Big Sky Publishing  
Reviewed by Helen Tomazin



During World War I (1914-1918), over 330,000 Australians served their country in a war far from home and more than 60,000 of them died. Such loss brought enormous sadness and despair to families.

This true story is about five Australian brothers, the Marlows, who fought in this war. Three of them were never to return home. It's a powerful and at times heartbreaking children's book that depicts mateship, bravery and sacrifice. As you read this book you feel the

sadness for this family torn apart by a devastating war. I will emphasise this book is sad but at the same time it is an honour to read letters written by the soldiers while in the trenches, seeing their first house built by hand back in Australia and treasured photos of these beautiful brothers and their parents.

This significant children's book which was compiled by the granddaughter of a surviving brother is based on the original title *Anzac Sons: The Story of Five Brothers in the War to End All Wars*. It's the true story of the brothers' service, the impact on the family and community and provides an insight into the battles of the Great War.

A beautifully written book which will have broad appeal as readers are immersed in the story through the inclusion of a variety of primary sources. It is an incredible recount of five brothers I will never forget and a wonderful tribute to their sacrifice and bravery.

Springfield Primary School



Governor Stirling SHS

Living Waters Lutheran College



St Mary's Anglican Girls School



BOOK WEEK



LIBRARY DISPLAYS



Irrawang Public School



John Curtin College of the Arts - Once Upon A Crime -



Seton Catholic College



North Cottesloe Primary School







# WASLA AGM

WEDNESDAY, 25TH NOVEMBER 2020  
4:30PM FOR A 5PM START

Guest Speaker: Dr Margaret Merga

School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE)  
Theatrette  
164 Oxford Street, Leederville  
- Free parking available -

Please book by  
Friday, 20th November  
<https://www.trybooking.com/BLPFA>

Light refreshments provided  
\$10 for non-members  
\$10 each for more than two staff  
from Institutional Members

For further details please contact  
[Felicia.Harris@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:Felicia.Harris@education.wa.edu.au)

