



SYMPHONY OF STORIES

Save the Dates

16 September

An Evening with CBCA SA &
Sean Avery
Burnside Library
6.30-8.15pm

3 October

Children's Book Launch
Bodder Finch at the Edge of the
World
- Phil Cummings
Burnside Library
1.30-3pm

November (TBC)
Mix and Mingle



Our September newsletter is a bumper one so ensure you have set aside some time to enjoy all our news from the last two months.

Enclosed in this edition

- Our amazing dinner to celebrate the 80th year of the Children's Book Awards. The night was well attended with many of our creatives, partners and members who showed how to have a good time. The change in venue was spectacular and the Kent Town really pulled out the stops to make us feel welcome. Thanks go to Kathryn Bielby and Janeen Brian and others who made this night super special.
- The ASLA/DANZ (Diversity in Australia and New Zealand) event was a great session that highlighted the many books that are now being created for children and young adults with diverse needs. We are grateful to the founder and author Kate Foster for her knowledge in this field and for Sonja Brownridge from ASLA who was able to give us a short history of the awards and their importance to students today. We thank Sarah Roberts from Burnside Library for hosting our event.
- We were fortunate to again work with Patrick and Claire at the State Library who enabled us to plan and run a highly successful Festival event. This is our second year for this collaboration with our partners, and we had part of our event in the new Little Library Space, which is just amazing. Try to make time to visit soon if you can. Thanks to Anna Angelakis and her team for organising this triumphant session where we were able to come face to face with our public.
- We were fortunate enough to be the first to have the 80 years of the Book Awards Display travel around the metro area over the last few months. This is a great reflection on many of the titles that have received one of our prestigious awards. Thanks to Jane Moore and her husband Geoff for trucking the display to various libraries in the metro area.

As you can see, we have had a busy couple of months and I am grateful to all of the committee who have contributed in many ways to ensure we are meeting our vision of organising professional development and community outreach activities supporting children's literature and its creators.

2026 Book Week Dinner

We enjoyed our annual Book Week Dinner on Friday 14th August where we were delighted to award Katrina Germein with Honorary Membership of the CBCA SA. Katrina's vast body of fabulous stories have made an enormous contribution to the children's literature community for the last 27 years. Katrina is a well-deserved recipient of this Honorary Membership! Following Katrina's moving acceptance speech, we were treated to a reading of her latest picture book, *What's the Time, Mighty Wolf?* (due out 1 September) along with a guest appearance by Mighty Wolf herself, our CBCA SA President Wendy Rutten.

During the Book Week Dinner we were delighted to host Bridget Farmer as our special guest, with thanks to the May Gibbs Children's Literature Trust. Bridget is an amazing printmaker creating original etchings of Australia's native birdlife. Her book '*I am a Magpie, I am a Currawong*' was shortlisted for the CBCA 2025 Book of the Year in the Eve Pownall Award category. Bridget started by showing a fascinating video of her printmaking process, including scratching directly into metal and rubbing in paint by hand. We were then treated to Bridget in conversation with Rebecca Bird.

Our dinner entertainment was provided Phil Cummings and Mike Lucas. Phil performed his original *Symphony of Stories* song, and Mike read the latest of his annual Book Week poems. Our volunteer committee members sold raffle tickets for 11 fabulous book prizes, including some generously donated by Pat Pledger of ReadPlus, as well as giving away a lucky door prize of books by each of our presenters on the night: Phil Cummings, Mike Lucas, Katrina Germein and Bridget Farmer.

The night ended on a high, with everyone on their feet singing and clapping to a Queen-inspired 'We will read books' chant.

Delicious food, excellent company, brilliant entertainment and so many talented and passionate kid-lit supporters all in one place - what a great night! Thanks to everyone who joined us. We hope to see you at our upcoming events!



Celebrating 80 Years of Stories: The CBCA Travelling Exhibition in South Australia



Librarian Sarah Roberts at the CBCA Travelling Exhibition at Burnside Library



What better way to celebrate 80 years of the CBCA Book of the Year Awards than by bringing some of Australia's most treasured children's books together in one exhibition? In 2026, the CBCA South Australian Branch had the privilege of being the first branch to trial the Celebrating Stories – 80 Years of CBCA Book of the Year Winners travelling exhibition, created by the CBCA ACT Branch. The exhibition has been displayed at four public libraries: Unley Library, Tea Tree Gully Library, Mawson Lakes Library and Burnside Library.

The exhibition provides a wonderful snapshot of Australian children's literature across eight decades. From the very first award in 1946 through to more recent favourites, the exhibition demonstrates how Australian children's literature has evolved while continuing to capture the experiences, imagination and interests of young Australians.

But perhaps the most special part of the exhibition has been seeing the memories it evokes.

There are the enduring classics that have remained part of our reading lives, alongside books that introduced generations of children to new ideas, different experiences and unforgettable characters. Together, they tell the story not only of the CBCA Book of the Year Awards, but also of the changing face of Australian childhood and Australian literature.

The exhibition has provided an opportunity for communities to pause and celebrate the extraordinary contribution of Australian authors, illustrators and publishers over the past 80 years. It is a reminder of the important role books play in our lives — shaping our imaginations, helping us understand ourselves and others, and creating memories that can last a lifetime.

CBCA SA is delighted to have partnered with CBCA ACT to trial this special travelling exhibition and to share this remarkable collection with South Australian communities. CBCASA gives special thanks to Justine Power (CBCA ACT) and her husband Matthew for creating the display and transporting it personally to SA.

After 80 years, the stories continue to resonate — and many of the books we loved as children are still finding their way into the hands of new generations of readers.



Celebrating 80 years of The Children's Book Council of Australia Awards



As a fitting end to 2026 Book Week, the South Australian Branch of the CBCA, celebrated 80 years of the CBCA Book of the Year awards at the State Library of South Australia. On Saturday 29th August, from 10.00am to midday, the morning was filled with storytelling, families met with South Australian creatives and organisations, book give aways, talks with a graphic novelist, and facepainting.

On Friday night and Saturday morning and with the help of State Library staff, the CBCA Committee members setup the Market Place, prepared the story telling area in the new Little Library, placed signs, prepared the books we were to giveaway etc.



An official opening was held on Saturday at 9.30am. Speeches were given by CBCA SA Branch President, Wendy Rutten and SLSA Public Programs Coordinator, Patrick Bugeja. This was followed by Mike Lucas reading out his Book Week poem. We then had the privilege of listening to the Animato String Quartet with their director, Martin Butler, from Concordia College. Located in the glass foyer of the State Library, the music was amazing and perfectly fitted in with the 2026 Book Week theme Symphony of Stories.

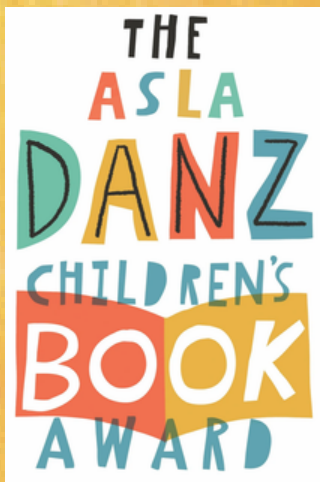


Four amazing storytellers, Janeen Brian, Kristin Martin, Katrina Germein, and Larissa Ferenchuk, then performed their magic in the newly opened Little Library. Upstairs, in the Market Place we had another 16 SA creatives, Charlie Archbold, Janeen Brian, Carolyn Cockburn, Phil Cummings, Ali Durham, Helen Edwards, Larissa Ferenchuk, Mandy Foot, Katherine Goode, Rosanne Hawke, Don Henderson, Ben Kitchin, Mike Lucas, Kristin Martin, Beverley McWilliams, and Sylvia Morris talking to families, selling and or signing their books.

We also had 5 other organisations, Greenlight Comics, May Gibbs Children's Literature Trust, Premier's Reading Challenge, Raising Literacy and The School Library Association of South Australia. Each provided activities or information related children's literature or literacy.

In the Hetzel Lecture Theatre, graphic novel author, Georgina Chadderton, provided two talks on the nature of graphic novels and her experience about writing and illustrating such a book.





Several children, and dare I say some adults, walked around displaying the wonderful work of face painters, Jo and Kirsti from FizzBubble.

Finally, a dedicated group of CBCA SA Branch volunteers staffed our two stalls. Every child received a picture book or novel and 2 activity or word game books. We sold CBCA totes and lanyards, at a great discount, and sold raffle tickets. Thank you to all who donated some of the books, including Axiom Publishing, Scholastic Australia, and ReadPlus.

It was a great event, and the entire celebration was abuzz with activity and excitement from start to finish! Thank you to all who helped out, attended, engaged and supported this event!



The ASLA DANZ Children's Book Awards Discussion

A passionate and curious audience thoroughly enjoyed tonight's ASLA DANZ Children's Book Award discussion at *Burnside Library*, co-hosted by CBCA SA and *Australian School Library Association*, where guest speakers Kate Foster and Sonja Brownridge spoke of the importance of diverse representation in youth literature.

Kate is an award-winning author as well as the founder of the DANZ Award, while Sonja is ASLA Secretary and a DANZ committee member.

Attendees had a valuable chance to learn more about the DANZ Award (launched in 2024) and the aim of encouraging inclusivity and allowing all children to see themselves portrayed authentically in a book. Following book-talks from both Kate and Sonja, we were able to browse longlisted and shortlisted books from 2025 and 2026.

More information on the ASLA DANZ Children's Book Award can be found via the link below.

<https://www.thedanzchildrensbookaward.com/>



Shadow Judging in the Spotlight at Ardtornish Primary School

Ardtornish Primary School's Shadow Judges recently found themselves in the spotlight when ABC's Behind the News (BTN) visited the school to film students participating in the CBCA Shadow Judging program.

The BTN segment, which aired as part of the 2026 Book Week Special, featured Ardtornish students discussing what it means to be a Shadow Judge and sharing their thoughts about the shortlisted books. Students from across the school had been reading and judging books from categories including Early Childhood, Picture Book, Younger Readers and Eve Pownall Award.

Shadow Judging is much more than simply choosing a favourite book. Students read the CBCA Book of the Year Shortlist, discuss the stories and characters, consider themes and illustrations, evaluate the books and ultimately vote for their own winners. It gives children a genuine opportunity to become literary critics and to have their voices heard.

At Ardtornish, students embraced this role enthusiastically. They learnt to look beyond whether they simply 'liked' a book, considering what made a book successful and how it made them think and feel. Through discussion and debate, students listened to different perspectives, justified their opinions and sometimes reconsidered their own responses.

This is where the real power of Shadow Judging lies. Reading becomes an active process of questioning, analysing, comparing and communicating. Students develop critical thinking skills as they learn that two readers can respond very differently to the same book — and that each perspective can be valuable. As one Ardtornish Shadow Judge told BTN, "Kids can get the turn to judge and put their opinions on a book."

The opportunity to have their voices heard by BTN was a wonderful affirmation of the importance of giving children a genuine voice in conversations about literature. It also highlighted the vital role that school libraries and teacher librarians can play in creating rich opportunities for students to engage deeply with Australian children's literature.

Be part of Shadow Judging in 2027!

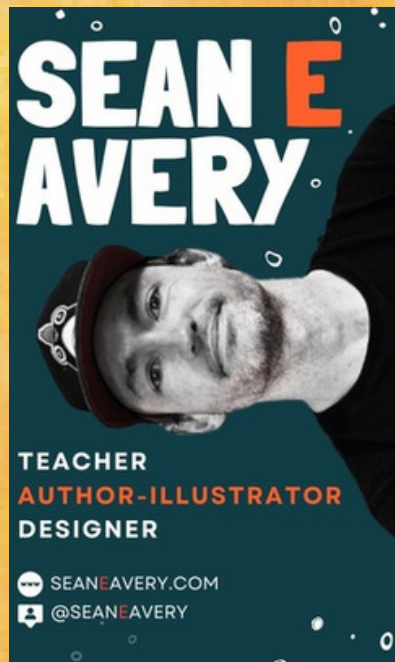
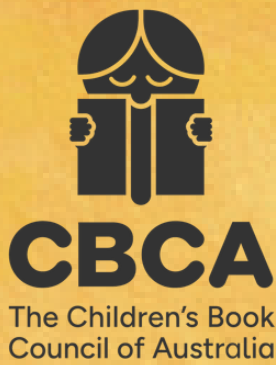
Give your students the opportunity to become literary critics, explore outstanding Australian books, develop critical thinking skills and, most importantly, have their voices heard.

Whether you are a teacher, teacher librarian or librarian, join Shadow Judging in 2027 and put young voices at the heart of the conversation about Australian children's literature.

Watch the Shadow Judging Episode here

<https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/shadow-judges/107073428>





CBCA Book of the Year Awards Judge Applications

Applications are now open for CBCA Book of the Year Awards JUDGES!

Successful judges will commence a 2-year tenure in February 2027, judging for the 2028 and 2029 Book of the Year Awards.

Note you must be a CBCA member to apply - please don't hesitate to join up if needed!

Full details and online application form available at the link below.

Applications close Friday 30 October 2026.

Judge Application

An Evening with CBCA SA & Sean E Avery

Sean E. Avery is a Perth-based primary school art teacher, author-illustrator and graphic designer. He is a CBCA Notable and Shortlisted creator. His funny, heartwarming picture books and graphic novels have captured the imaginations of children across Australia.

Best known for titles such as Ducky the Spy and Frank's Red Hat— winner of the 2023 CBCA Shadow Judges and WAYRBA Picture Book of the Year awards — Sean brings stories to life with warmth and humour. Most recently, his picture book Bob and Dob was Shortlisted in the 2026 Book of the Year Awards.

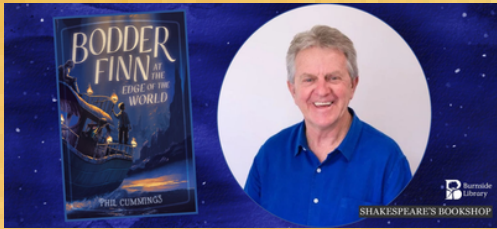
We are excited to host an evening with Sean as he shares the story behind his work, his creative process, and his passion for inspiring young readers.

Wednesday 16th September, 6.30-8.15pm
Burnside Library

Book Here

Children's Book Launch Bodder Finn the Edge of the World - Phil Cummings

Burnside Library is excited to host the highly anticipated launch of Phil Cummings' latest magical adventure, Bodder Finn at the Edge of the World.



When the sky falls apart and plunges the land of Alibon into darkness, Bodder Finn must journey to the edge of his world to find his way home.

Bodder Finn, of Middle Spot Village in Alibon, is a very curious child. When his father travels to the remote coastal village of Light's Edge, Bodder jumps at the chance to join him, along with his sister Ailie and his best friend Olo. Bodder is keen to see the Shadow Rim: the band of grey surrounding Alibon at the edge of the orb's light, before it disappears into the terrifying darkness of the Forever Night.

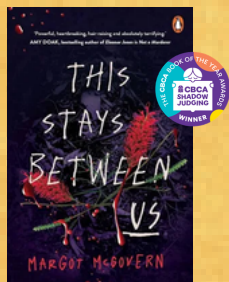
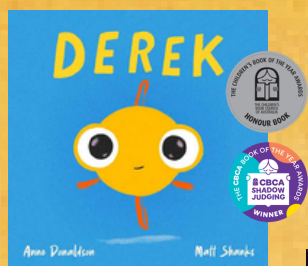
But Bodder gets more adventure than he bargained for when thunderous rocks fall from the sky, creating waves that sweep Bodder, Ailie and Olo out to sea in their small boat—and plunge all of Alibon into darkness. With no light to guide them, the trio must survive the perils of the Forever Night and find their way home, without falling over the waterfall at the edge of the world...

Phil Cummings is the award-winning author of more than 100 books for children, spanning picture books, poetry and novels. His much-loved titles include ANZAC Biscuits, Boy, Crumbs, Footprint, Feathers and Danny Allen Was Here. His work has received numerous accolades, including Children's Book Council of Australia honours and recognition in the Prime Minister's Literary Awards and Adelaide Festival Awards for Literature. His books have also received international recognition, with Boy winning the 2017 Children's Peace Literature Award and Newspaper Hats receiving the Chronos Literature Prize in France.

Years in the making, this magical story of adventure, courage and a hidden world is very close to Phil's heart. Hear how the extraordinary land of Alibon came to be as Phil chats with award-winning author Charlie Archbold.

[Book Here](#)





2026 Book of the Year Awards

Huge congratulations to our two South Australian creatives who have been recognised in the 2026 CBCA Book of the Year Awards!

In the Early Childhood category, Anne Donaldson's 'Derek' won an Honours Award as well as being named Shadow Judging Winner.

The Shadow Judges also selected 'This stays between us' by Margot McGovern, as their Winner in the Older Readers category.

And our 2027 CBCA Book Week theme is...

Catch the Reading Bug!

Illustrated by our very own award-winning creative Danny Snell, from SA, this theme asks us what do you think would happen if you caught the reading bug?

This is the kind of extremely contagious bug you actually want to catch. Well, if you catch the reading bug you develop a healthy fascination with books and reading.

But surprisingly (and this is a little-known fact), you may also grow wings, just like the mysterious Reading Bug. So, pick up a book and see if you can catch the reading bug. You never know ... you might also grow a beautiful set of wings to transport you somewhere special!

We're looking forward to celebrating CBCA Book Week with you again in 2027! And congratulations to Danny!!!!



CBCA SA MEMBERSHIP 2026

We appreciate and thank you for your ongoing support of the CBCA SA Branch.

Membership [LINK](#)

CBCA Symphony of Stories Merchandise

The Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) has released its latest merchandise collection—featuring the 2026 "Symphony of Stories" theme—and it is all available now through the official CBCA online store.

[Children's Book Council of Australia online store](#)

The range includes posters, decals, character sets, banners, stickers, and more, perfect for schools, libraries, and Book Week celebrations. Bookmarks and posters are now available





There has been a lot of media attention about the role of teacher librarians over the past 3 weeks. This has included numerous TV news segments, print media, radio and social media. Over the past week this has focused on the decision of Catholic Schools Maitland-Newcastle to make many of their teacher librarians redundant. This has been happening for several years in South Australia. SLASA firmly stands behind its position that the role of all school library staff is essential. That library assistants, library technicians, librarians and teacher librarians all have important, but different roles within school libraries and education. The crisis in South Australia is that less than 15% of all schools in South Australia have a dual qualified teacher librarian. This role focuses largely on teaching students about literature, reading engagement, information literacy, research skills, media literacy and digital literacy. It is a teaching role.

Linked below is a petition shared by our colleagues at SLASA highlighting the essential role teacher librarians play in literacy. Please follow the link to show your support.

[Petition Mandate qualified teacher-librarians in schools! - Australia](#)

