

THE MURIEL BARWELL AWARD
FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
AUGUST 2013
AWARDED TO
JENNI WOODROFFE

Jenni Woodroffe is passionate about Australian children's literature. She has worked tirelessly to promote, engage with and foster reading and writing across a wide range of forums over a long career. Jenni's professional contribution as a teacher and a librarian at the State library, at John XXIII College and at Curtin University underscores the depth and breadth of her knowledge. But it is her commitment to and enthusiasm for voluntary work where she has really made her mark. She has been a member and past President of the Storytelling Guild of WA for many years, making a significant contribution locally but also conducting workshops at many international forums. Jenni's long term interest in local history is reflected in her many years of service as a supporter and member of the South Perth Historical Society.

In 1997 Jenni joined the West Australian Branch of the CBCA and over the next 17 years worked enthusiastically to engage the community in Australian children's literature. In 1998 she was elected Convenor of the Sixth National CBCA Conference, 2002: *Write, Right, Rite at the Edge*, held in Perth. It was her dedication to this role which ensured the success of the event nationally. She held the position of CBCA Newsletter editor from 2002-2010 and expanded the publication from a few mimeographed pages to a lively and professional document of 6 issues a year. As was Jenni's practice she expanded the readers' horizons by giving space to information about international conferences and children's literature awards.

Jenni has since made a significant contribution internationally with her work for *The International Board of Books for Young People (IBBY)*. In 2009 she was elected to the dual role of Vice-President and Secretary of IBBY Australia and is also the newsletter editor. Jenni has presented papers at International congresses in Copenhagen, Santiago de Compostela and London but it is her energy and wisdom on the national committee which has delivered it to a position where it can now feel confident about showcasing Australian children's literature at world forums.

However it is Jenni's ability to come up with inspired and workable ideas that sets her apart, culminating in *A Night With Our Stars (ANWOS)* initiated in 2004. This event was an immediate success and has become a highlight on the literary calendar in WA. More importantly it showcases new works and especially emerging writers and illustrators, the life blood of a vibrant children's literature scene for the State. The success of this event in bringing the writers and illustrators, their work and their audience together is a fine testament to Jenni's wider vision, but also her ability to bring people together at a grass roots level. Jenni's tireless and often inspired advocacy for children's literature internationally and locally, her careful nurturing of children's writing and storytelling and her generosity in sharing her passion for literature with students makes her a most deserving recipient of the Muriel Barwell Award for 2014.