

THE MURIEL BARWELL AWARD
FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
AUGUST 2012
AWARDED TO ELAINE FORRESTAL.

Elaine's contribution to writing for young people is well known. Her books have won major awards, including the CBCA Book of the Year for Younger Readers in 1998 and they find favour with children and adult readers alike. It is her advocacy for children's literature and her mentoring of children and their writing, which is perhaps not so well publicised and which is being honoured particularly by the Muriel Barwell Award for 2012.

After many years teaching firstly at pre-school and later at tertiary levels Elaine became a full time author in 1999 and has spent much of her time over the past two decades presenting workshops and working as a writer-in-residence in WA, interstate and overseas. She has regularly toured the state including many remote areas sharing her love of story with young people. She has been a wonderful friend of the CBCA with her numerous Book Week presentations in schools and libraries in most parts of the state. She has been in demand for workshops in areas as far afield as the Cocos Keeling Islands, Banbridge in Northern Ireland and has even given a workshop in French and English at an international school in France in 2007.

Elaine has contributed at many writers' festivals and educational conferences. Her message is one of encouraging what she terms 'vital creativity' in young people so that they not only retain it but enhance it, expand it and communicate it to others through their writing. Since 1986 Elaine has been a judge for the West Australian Young Writers' Competition and is a judge for the Tim Winton Award for Young Writers run by the City of Subiaco. In this capacity Elaine brings a wealth of experience and is always ready to meet with the winners and discuss their writing at the presentation ceremonies, which she attends whenever possible.

Elaine's contribution is very much a 'hands on' approach. Her success in her own writing and her experience as a teacher and mentor and her willingness to travel far and wide igniting and fostering the creative process in young people makes Elaine a worthy recipient of the Muriel Barwell Award.