



## Children's Book Council of Australia WA Branch

The Muriel Barwell Award 2008 is presented to Mary Gimondo.

Mary has had a long standing commitment to promoting children's literature in Western Australia. In her capacity as a children's librarian, she arranged the Inaugural meeting of the Children's Book Council (WA) in 1975 accepting the role of Secretary, a position she held for many years. During the early years Mary enthusiastically promoted the cause of children's literature, being a key player in the first Children's Book Week celebrations. She initiated the Make Your Own Story Book competition and its success and longevity is a testament to her vision and organisational skills. In those establishment years, Mary adopted a strong 'hands on' approach, engaging well known writers to present prizes, organising public displays of the entries and gaining media attention for the winners. Now in its 31st year this competition, open to children around the state, must rank as one of the oldest, continuously active writing competitions in the country.

Since 1988, Mary has been Grants Officer for the Branch and in that role has ensured an ever expanding flow of funds for Book Week programs which now include some 24 metropolitan and 12 regional centres. Her expertise in understanding the requirements of funding bodies and government protocols has ensured that children across the state have been inspired to read and write through access to authors and illustrators. Mary is passionate that country children especially those in remote areas have access to visiting authors and illustrators and she has worked tirelessly to promote touring programs.

Mary's administrative and fundraising skills have been integral to the ongoing success of the WA Branch in bringing books and children together and it is her passion, integrity, warmth and capacity to see new possibilities that have contributed significantly to the healthy state of children's literature in this state. She was made a life member of the WA Branch of the Children's Book Council in 2004.