



**CHILDREN'S BOOK COUNCIL OF
AUSTRALIA
WA BRANCH (INCORPORATED)**

ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR END DECEMBER 2023





Our Purpose

To enrich young lives through Australian stories.

Our Vision

To see a thriving creative world embracing the transformational power of stories, across generations.

Our Mission

To connect, communicate, celebrate, and advocate for the value of stories.

Our Core Values

EQUITY DIVERSITY QUALITY INTEGRITY RESPECT

The Children's Book Council of Australia; (CBCA) is a not for profit, volunteer run organisation which aims to engage the community with literature for young Australians.

Members

It is my pleasure to present this Annual Report for the year ending December 2023 to our membership.

The WA Branch welcomed new committee member Ted Slater as Website Manager. During the year we farewelled Sarah Klass, Website Manager, and Louise Moore as Secretary. We thank them for their work and contribution to the Branch. Tracey Willis was appointed Secretary upon the resignation of Louise Moore.

During 2023 the committee held a Planning Day to discuss our way forward and re-assess our priorities for the coming year. We presented our Children's Book Week® activities designed to reach many of the WA Regional centres.

We were saddened to lose Margaret Hamilton AM, a stalwart of CBCA, at the end of 2022. She was an Australian children's literature publisher and author who served as the National President of the Children's Book Council of Australia from 1991 to 1992 and as a National Board Member until April 2017. In honour of her commitment to CBCA, plans are underway to host a Children's Literature Lecture in October 2024.

The new e-Store continues to go from strength to strength and we were happy to have a growth in the number of groups taking part in 2023 Shadow Judging.

The WA Branch continues to actively support, promote and advocate for creatives through promotion on social media, letters of support and assistance with grant applications. Many hours are spent organising and attending WA Branch events, book launches and supporting our partner organisations.

CBCA held a national planning weekend in Melbourne. The weekend brought together all Board Members and Branch Presidents to define CBCA's Purpose, Vision, Mission and Values statements. Work also commenced on a Strategic Plan to see CBCA through the next five years setting achievable goals. While there were challenges throughout the year, the Board worked diligently to make the organisation visible and relevant.

We thank our supporting book shops, WA creatives and SCWBI for being part of our journey.

Thank you to all committee members for their time and support. Whether behind the scenes or up front, you went above and beyond to ensure the success of our events as well as contributing to the successful running of the WA Branch. Thanks also to the wider CBCA WA membership for the many ways in which they supported the WA Branch throughout 2023.



Kris Williams

LIFE MEMBERS

Muriel Barwell OAM
Mary Gimondo
Grant Stone

HONORARY MEMBERS

Catherine Clark
Elizabeth Spencer
Carolyn Logan
Stephen Carley

2023 COMMITTEE

Executive Committee:

President:	Kris Williams	Treasurer:	Sheena Matthews
Vice President:	Kirsty Lightfoot	Secretary:	Louise Moore
Past President:	vacant	Ex Officio:	Tracey Willis, Jan Nicholls

****N.B.** There was no immediate past President

CBCA National Board Representative:

Kris Williams was appointed to the National Board. The decision was ratified on 15 May 2023.

WA Judge 2022-2023:

Claire Kierath (Younger Readers)

Committee Members: *Denotes new member**

Liz Allen, Nola Allen, Jenny Botje, Sharon Coppin, Sharon Giltrow, Mary Gimondo, Felicia Harris, Lorraine Horsley, Chloe Mauger, Trish Montgomery, Louise Moore, Julie Muir, Denise Robins, Wendy Rudge, Ted Slater*, Gail Spiers, Jane Stanton, Tracey Willis and Sally Woffenden.

Subcommittees:

A Night with our Stars (ANWOS)
Archives
Book Discussion Group
CBCA Children's Book Week® Dinner & Opening
Facebook
Funding & Regional Centres
Instagram
Judges Talks
Membership
Merchandise / eStore
Make Your Own Story Book (MYOSB)
Muriel Barwell Award (Biennial)
Newsletter
Oasis House
Penny Hutchens Memorial Fund (Biennial - 2023)
Shadow Judging
Website

Jan Nicholls
Trish Montgomery
Gail Speirs
Denise Robins
Jan Nicholls
Mary Gimondo / Nola Allen
Audrey McSevich
Tracey Willis
Sharon Coppin
Kris Williams / Julie Muir
Denise Robins
Gail Speirs
Wendy Rudge
Chloe Mauger
Jenny Botje
Kris Williams
Ted Slater

FINANCE

The financial position at the end of the 2023 year was a surplus of \$29,773.82. This was a 59 per cent improved position on the surplus in the 2022 financial year of \$16,218.03. Expenses were managed prudently, and surpluses were achieved for our major events.

There were 301 members, an increase of 10 members on the previous financial year. Income from membership was marginally up by two per cent on the previous year. The marketing service fee percentage distribution of WA merchandise sales from the CBCA e-Store sales was reduced from 20 per cent to 10 per cent, resulting in a 34 per cent drop in income from merchandise sales.

The expenses for the Book Week Grant Online Project relate to the 2022 grant allocated to the online Kids Book Buzz Project in 2023. This project comprised of video interviews where children interviewed authors/illustrators. An allocation of approximately \$8,700 from the 2023 grant will be allocated to an online project in 2024 that will involve the creation of a podcast and videos with short list creatives.

ANWOS continued to be a well-supported and successful annual event for the Branch. The event celebrated the 20 year anniversary with a silent auction of original artworks from 33 WA illustrators. The sales from the auction and the re-introduction of a raffle contributed significantly to the surplus of \$6,787.02, a 127% increase over the previous year.

The Children's Book Week® dinner was an equally popular and well attended event and achieved a surplus of \$1,778.73, a significant increase of 33 per cent on the previous year.

The 5.5 per cent increase in rent for the 2023 financial year reflects a full financial year of the 12 per cent rent increase introduced in July 2022. The increase in sundry expenses is due to expenses for the bi-annual Penny Hutchens award. A \$1,000 donation was made to the CBCA Awards Foundation, for the fund to have Christobel Mattingley's name listed as a Major Donor in memoriam.

As a voluntary organisation, the balance of providing our members with benefits of membership and achieving surpluses to run events and grow our financial position is a constant challenge. The committee, however, is fiscally responsible and prudent in managing expenses.

The cash position at the bank, which includes the trading account, the cash management account and term deposit accounts is strong. The CBCA WA Branch is in a sound financial position and able to currently meet all financial responsibilities. The audited accounts are provided as a separate document.

MEMBERSHIP

At the end of 2023, there were 297 fully paid members, a small increase on the previous year. There was no increase in membership fees for 2023.

During 2023, the membership email list was continually updated; and overall changes to include institution names, membership number and tagging have made it easier to edit member details.

Members are reminded to advise the membership officer of any changes to membership records, including contact details. Reminders will continue to be sent via newsletters, mailing lists and Facebook.

OASIS HOUSE

Oasis House underwent major refurbishment in 2023. As a consequence, the infrequent Oasis House management meetings were held via Zoom.

During the refurbishments CBCA WA Branch was unable to use the facilities for our monthly meetings, although access to storage was still available. We thank South Perth Library for use of their meeting room during this time.

Property Manager Ghylene Palmer resigned during the year, and the following people were elected to the Oasis House Management Committee at their AGM.

Chair: Michaela Nicolescu (Linkwest)
Treasurer: Stephen Trustcott (Fullness of Life)
Secretary: Kerry Harper (Kiind)
Business Manager: Adrian Young

Oasis House continues to search for more tenants.

A reopening celebration was held in December 2023 attended by tenants and invited guests.

BRANCH SUB-COMMITTEES

Grants and Regional Centres

CBCA WA Branch secured funding of \$88,650 from the State Government of Western Australia through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries and Healthway and, together with the Branch's own fundraising contributions, provided financial assistance to thirty-four metropolitan and country local governments and communities to celebrate Children's Book Week® 2023.

Around 24,500 children, parents, teachers, librarians and the general public embraced the theme attending 348 writing and illustration workshops, artist talks, drama and storytelling events in 79 libraries and community resource centres across WA from Port Hedland in the Pilbara to Carnarvon in the Gascoyne to Kojonup in the Great Southern.

Forty-five high calibre WA children's authors, illustrators, graphic novelists, performers and storytellers engaged young people as they shared their passion for words, images and stories. These sessions included graphic novelist and science educator Aśka who invited young audiences in Broome and Bidyadanga to explore the world of visual literacy, Deborah Gregorio's Manga workshops with budding comic artists in Gosnells and storyteller extraordinaire, Stig Wemyss, who introduced children across the Great Southern to the delights of audiobooks.

Many libraries toured artists to local schools or funded the cost of school buses to enable students to attend sessions and visit their local library for the first time. Eight author and illustrator tours throughout country WA brought the magic of Children's Book Week® to children living in remote or isolated communities such as Kalumburu and Wyndham in the East Kimberley, Roebourne in the Pilbara, and Ongerup in the Great Southern.

Audiences across the state will also be able to access new online content on the CBCA WA website with the commencement of a new podcast project in early 2024 featuring WA children's literature creatives.

e-Store / Merchandise

The national CBCA e-Store was launched in March 2022. Previously, merchandise had been purchased through the Branches. An e-Store committee, made up of representatives from each State and Territory, was formed to work with the National committee on all aspects of the running of the e-Store.

In late 2023, a new system on the National e-Store website commenced an update to make it easier to access. Using the e-Store for merchandise sales has dramatically reduced the workload of the WA branch members.

In 2023, 10 per cent of final sales from WA branch members were passed on to the National Office for their continuing work and development of the online store. WA's 2023 final sales figures were \$4,357.69.

CBCA WA Branch retained the merchandise email for 2022 to handle any local enquiries. This was reviewed in 2023. There were very few queries, so a decision was made to discontinue the dedicated email address and have the Secretary answer questions or pass on to the e-Store representative to respond.

Penny Hutchens Memorial Fund

Zephyr Education was the recipient of the 2023 CBCA WA Penny Hutchens Memorial Fund. This organisation, which is 100 per cent run by volunteers, was founded in 2013 to assist children living at domestic violence shelters. Its aim is to minimise any disruption to the children's education by providing the resources and materials needed to continue their learning journey at a new school.

Books to the value of \$1000 were presented to WA Coordinator of Zephyr Education, Nicola Henderson. Added to the collection were books donated by committee members. These books were distributed between two domestic violence refuges, one of these having four separate sites. These will be used in a variety of ways, including:

- use in 'Buddy Bags' for children when they first arrive at the refuge in a time of crisis with very few personal possessions. They may be the first new items the children own after arriving in the refuge.
- book packs to be kept in the accommodation units to encourage the clients to bond with their young children through reading.
- addition of the books to an onsite library which children can use.

In her letter of thanks, Nicola Henderson said, *“On behalf of Zephyr Education, I would like to sincerely thank you for your donation of the wonderful books that we received recently. At Zephyr Education we strive to ensure that disadvantaged and vulnerable children affected by domestic violence have every opportunity to continue their education with minimal disruption. We believe that books are at the heart of education and learning, so it was an honour to be gifted these beautiful books.”*

Website

No major projects were undertaken for 2023, however, market research was undertaken by Practera to advise about the strengths and weaknesses of CBCA WA's website and how well the organisation's social media drives traffic to it. No recommendations from the report have been accepted or voted on. Google Analytics was applied to the CBCA WA website to provide data about web traffic for forwarding to grant providers. The website was maintained and updated throughout the year.

Social Media – Facebook / Instagram

The WA Branch Facebook Group started the year with close to 2000 members. By July that had expanded to 2238 members, 2521 in November and the year ended with a total of 2595.

We easily exceeded the number of social media posts required by our contract obligations to Healthway and DLGSCI around Children's Book Week® and our sponsors were very happy with our commitment. Statistics were supplied to our Grants Officers for funding acquittal purposes.

By far the biggest response in the history of the group was the post on 22 October looking forward to the film adaptation of RUNT by Craig Silvey. This post attracted 194,380 views, multiple shares and many positive comments.

After a call-out for volunteers, Audrey McSevich, based in Busselton, took over the Instagram account in February 2023 and mainly reposts important information from our Facebook page. The page is followed by 994 people.

Newsletter

Five issues of the newsletter were published during 2023. On average 58.1 per cent of members are opening the e-mailed newsletter. This represents an increase in engagement of 1.8 per cent on the 2022 figures. Along with the newsletters, three other communications were also sent to members via mailchimp including Shadow Judging, Spotlight on Events and National Wrap up. Engagement for these emails was down slightly to 57.5 per cent opening.

During 2023 we introduced a new 'flip book' styled newsletter to share large amounts of visual content with the membership. A flip book was distributed after Children's Book Week® and just prior to Christmas. These new mediums were well received and averaged 61.8 per cent opening.

Archives

The process of sorting and processing records prior to accessioning continued in 2023.

Focus was placed on a large volume of documents and photographs relating to the Grants and Regional Centres. Part of this process was separating the Children's Book Week® component of the Grants into the

Children's Book Week® series. Both these sections have yet to be accessioned formally but is a work in progress and inroads have been made.

After preliminary sorting, the publicity material and Newspaper clippings have been collated and placed into A3 archival display folders which will provide easier access, reference, and more suited to display when required. This is also a work in progress.

The situation of co-opting committee members for a specific task rather than a formal Sub Committee has worked well.

The WA Collection of the Book of the Year Award Winners collection continues to be updated.

Make Your Own Story Book (MYOSB)

Electronic flyers were distributed to schools and libraries through committee member contacts and Westbooks and hardcopy flyers were printed by Dr Katrina Stratton MLA's office for the ANWOS audience, with spares collected and given to presenting and attending authors to hand out when on school/library visits.

Westbooks was the MYOSB entry collection point.

There were 696 entries received in 2023:

108 individual entries:

- 96 Primary (81 metropolitan and 15 regional)
- 12 Secondary (8 metropolitan and 4 regional)

372 government school entries:

- 17 Primary (13 metropolitan and 4 regional)
- 6 Secondary (5 metropolitan and 1 regional)

216 private school entries:

- 20 Primary (18 metropolitan and 2 regional)
- 2 Secondary (1 metro and 1 regional)

Sorting and judging was finalised by Friday 14 July and winners were contacted through schools or (individual entries) parents.

An Awards ceremony was organised for Sunday 20 August at AH Bracks Library and Creative Space in Melville. Guest speaker was Dr Sally Murphy OAM held a masterclass with the winners.

- 23 winners attended. Some entries had two authors, some were winners from previous years and one winner was overseas.
- 132 guests including committee members, 3 judges and 3 authors (Dr Sally Murphy OAM, Sean E Avery, and Elaine Forrestal) plus library staff.

Typeface Bookstore in Applecross created a pop-up book sale table, stocking Dr Sally Murphy's books and some from the CBCA WA Book Of the Year Awards shortlist plus other Western Australian authors.

Photographs were sent to all winners via WeTransfer.

Booklinks Jackie French Travelling Suitcase

The Committee voted to discontinue the Booklinks Travelling Suitcase Program in 2023.

CBCA BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARDS AND EVENTS

Several activities revolve around the announcement of the Shortlist and winners of the CBCA Book of the Year Awards.

Judges Talks

Two Judges Talks were held in 2023, one in May, and one in June. The talks were hosted by member schools Cottesloe PS and Tranby College. A total of 32 tickets were sold to members and non-members.

Participants listened to a very interesting and enjoyable talk by Younger Readers Judge Claire Kierath. They were provided with a printout of the Shortlisted books to take notes. Copies of all the Shortlisted books were available for viewing.

Professional Learning certificates were available on request.

Shadow Judging

In 2022 CBCA received seed funding for the Sun Project: Shadow Judging program which had groups of young voices from around Australia shadowing our main judges as part of the Book of the Year awards. In 2023 there was very limited funding available which was divided between the Branches for groups that met certain criteria set out by National Office.

CBCA member schools, libraries and community groups applied to be part of the project to judge one or more categories of the CBCA Book of the Year (BOTY) shortlist. Using the same judging criteria as BOTY judges, these young voices deep read and discussed the books in their selected category, made a creative response and voted for their favourite books.

WA had 18 groups that received a \$50 voucher from the Branch to use towards the purchase of the shortlist books. Three schools that were in either in a rural area or had a high percentage of ethnic populations were recipients of a funding package offered by National Office. Feedback from all groups was that so much was gained from the process.

At the end of CBCA Book Week, the Shadower's Choice winners were announced. Sean E Avery and *Frank's Red Hat* was awarded the Picture Book of the Year 2023.

CBCA CHILDREN'S BOOK WEEK®

In 2023 the term CBCA Book Week was changed to Children's Book Week® to reflect the existing copyright held by National Office.

CBCA Children's Book Week® Opening and Dinner

The Children's Book Week® Opening and Dinner was held on 18 August 2023 at Ambrose Estate, Wembley. The theme *Read, Grow, Inspire* was interpreted in many different ways including the wonderful table centre pieces created by Year 5/6 Carlisle Primary School visual arts students again this year.

President Kris Williams announced the Book of the Year winners, congratulating our WA winner Craig Silvey (Winner Younger Readers *Runt*) and honour book awardees Bren MacDibble (Honour Book Younger Readers *The Raven's Song*), and Chris Nixon (Honour Book Eve Pownall *Wild Australian Life*), as well as Sarah Winifred Searle, Sean E Avery and Frané Lessac for their shortlisting.

2022/23 WA Book of the Year Judge Claire Keirath and past judges including Jan Pocock, who was in the audience, were acknowledged and thanked for their hard work, and incoming judges Nola Allen and Maria Alessandrino were welcomed.

Frané Lessac, CBCA shortlisted and awarded author and illustrator, was guest speaker for the evening, and took the audience on an A-Z journey of her creative and entertaining career.

2023 Penny Hutchens Memorial Award was presented to Zephyr Education which supports children affected by domestic violence, enabling them to return to school with the necessary equipment, clothing and materials. WA Coordinator of Zephyr Education, Nicola Henderson attended the dinner and spoke about her work when accepting the award.

The 2024 Children's Book Week® Opening and Dinner will be held on Friday 16 August.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

A Night with our Stars (ANWOS)

On Friday, 10 March 2023, ANWOS celebrated 20 years of introducing new authors/illustrators to WA teachers and Librarians.

Held at the Bendat Parent and Community Centre, attendance was back to full capacity of 200 seated guests. A commemorative booklet with statistics on the history of ANWOS was distributed to attendees, together with the program and traditional booklist of titles published in the preceding 12 months.

Sponsors Fremantle Press and Westbooks – official ANWOS book supplier, who have been with us from the beginning, covered venue costs and donated prizes for the raffles. Fremantle Press was well represented on the night with six of the 20 presenters on the program published by them. Two presenters on the program, Julia Lawrinson and Dianne Wolfer, presented at the inaugural ANWOS on 4 March 2004. 16 WA creatives featured in the CBCA Notables list published on 28 February and eight appeared on the 2023 program, including Craig Silvey 2023 Book of the Year winner.

Special guests Jenni Woodroffe and Joanna Andrew were acknowledged as were Life Members Mary Gimondo and Grant Stone. Stalwart WA Branch supporter Dr Peter Williams travelled from NSW for the occasion and many authors and illustrators attended to support their peers.

In celebration of 20 years of ANWOS, 26 WA illustrators generously donated a total of 33 original, signed, postcard-sized pieces of art for a Silent Auction. Bidding was fierce and a total of \$3565 was raised.

Book Discussion Group

The Book Discussion Group met 10 times during 2023 at the UWA University Club Café, the Hampden Hotel and at committee member Gail Spiers' home to discuss Australian Young Adult (YA) fiction books, six of which were written by female authors and four by male authors.

There were two special events held at Iona Presentation College. The first was the CBCA Book of the Year Shortlist reviews given by CBCA WA members. The second event was a night with shortlisted author, Craig Silvey, whose book *Runt* went on to win the Book of the Year: Younger Readers award. This event took place during *Love to Read Local Week* in June and was partly funded by Writing WA and the Copyright Agency Cultural Fund.

The Book Discussion Group provides opportunities for members to read and discuss the latest Australian YA books, many of which go on to take their place on the CBCA Book of the Year Notable Lists.

Kris Williams
WA Branch President

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

CBCA WA Branch acknowledges our sponsors and supporters and thank them for their continued support of programs and events throughout 2023.

Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

Healthway

Fremantle Press

Westbooks

CBCA Sun Project: Shadow Judging

WA Creatives – for donated art

Marc McBride – for donated art

Gail Spiers

AH Bracks Library and Creative Space

South Perth Library

Cottesloe Primary School

Tranby College

Iona Presentation College

Sean E Avery

Dr Katrina Stratton MLA

Dr Jags Krishnan MLA