



CBCA Tasmania Newsletter

April 2026

The Children's Book Council of Australia (Tasmania Branch) Inc.,
PO Box 113, Moonah, TAS 7009 (tas@cbca.org.au)

From the Desk:

Steve Martin, President Tasmanian Branch

READ ALOUD TO YOUR CHILD EVERY DAY

The nationwide initiative READ ALOUD TO YOUR CHILD EVERY DAY by Toast for Kids Charity Inc. with TAS Branch Children's Book Council, was officially launched on Sunday 15th March by Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania, marking a significant national commitment to strengthening early literacy, family connection, and Australia's long-term social and economic wellbeing.

The launch took place at Home Hill in Devonport, the former residence of Prime Minister Joseph Lyons and Dame Enid Lyons, a fitting location steeped in Australia's political and social history. The event also featured a video message from Her Excellency Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of Australia, underscoring the national importance of the campaign and the shared belief that reading aloud is a simple, powerful act that can shape a child's future.



The launch also aligns with International Read to Me Day on 19th March, a global reminder that every child has the right to be read to. By launching the campaign in the same week, we signal our intention to play a leading role in the worldwide effort to ensure every child experiences the joy and developmental benefits of daily shared reading.



Across Australia, many organisations, charities, educators, and literacy advocates are already doing exceptional work to support children's reading. However, each carries its own message, focus, and approach. The READ ALOUD TO YOUR CHILD EVERY DAY campaign was created in recognition of this landscape, asking a simple question: *what if we all shared one clear, universal message that every organisation could incorporate into its own programs and priorities?* The campaign seeks to unite existing efforts with a single, memorable call to action, creating a national culture where reading aloud becomes a daily habit in every home.

Parents and carers are encouraged to read aloud to their children for at least ten minutes each day, especially from birth, promoting early literacy, strengthening family bonds, and fostering a lifelong love of reading. An annual national week, aligned with International Read to Me Day, will anchor the initiative and bring together families, schools, libraries, early learning centres, and community organisations in a coordinated celebration of the transformative power of reading aloud.

Decades of research consistently show that reading aloud is one of the most effective ways to support a child's early development. Children who are read to regularly develop stronger vocabularies, improved comprehension, enhanced cognitive abilities, and greater empathy and emotional intelligence. Early reading experiences are also recognised as key predictors of long-term academic success. Despite these benefits, many children, particularly those in disadvantaged communities, do not experience daily read-aloud moments at home. Families may lack access to books, guidance, or confidence, and communities need coordinated support to elevate reading aloud as a national priority.



The launch event at Home Hill brought these goals to life. Young families were invited to picnic on the lawn and enjoy being read to by Governor Baker and Emeritus Professor Don Chalmers AO, creating a warm, inclusive atmosphere that reflected the heart of the campaign: connection, engagement, and shared stories. Their participation along with Senator Tammy Tyrrell & Jess Teesdale MP (Co-Chairs of Parliamentary Friends of Children's Literacy), demonstrated how simple and meaningful daily reading can be, and how easily it can become part of family routines.



The campaign's primary goal is to establish a national culture where reading aloud to children every day becomes the norm. The initiative aims to provide practical resources and support to families nationwide. As the campaign is in its early stages, it will seek federal funding and national partnerships to help make these resources widely accessible. It also intends to build strong collaborations with schools, libraries, early learning centres, local businesses, and media organisations to amplify its reach. Over time, it will develop a network of champions, including organisations, educators, authors, and public figures, who can promote the cause and help embed daily reading aloud as a national priority.



Steve Martin
President

Membership Renewals

Purchase your 2026 [Personal or Institutional Membership](#).

These subscriptions not only support CBCA Tasmania Branch but also help to keep you informed about what is happening in CBCA Tasmania and in Australia.

<https://cbcatas.org.au/membership/>



Membership Benefits

- Join before April 30 2026 to be entered in the random draw: \$50 Voucher from a local bookseller (2 available for Personal Members); \$100 voucher from a local bookseller (2 available for Institutional Members)
- Discounted entry at ticketed events for Personal/Concession members. Institutional membership covers all staff at the institution for the discounted member rate determined for each event.
- Free e-merchandise available from the [eStore](#). A discount code will be sent to you once your membership has been processed.
- Access to quality [merchandise](#) available via the [eStore](#).
- Eligibility for schools and home-school teams to participate in the annual Southern Tasmanian Primary Readers' Cup competition.
- Professional Development events such as the Book of the Year Award Judge's Talks.
- Information about author and illustrator tours, speakers and other events.
- Advance access to our regular newsletter.
- Providing financial support to the CBCA Tasmania, which is a volunteer organisation, to meet its ongoing costs and fund activities to benefit its members.

2026 Children's Book Week Merchandise Free for all members!



Visit the [eStore](#) to download your [FREE 2026 Planner](#) , purchase [back to school items](#) and to purchase your 2026 Book Week Merchandise and [Member Products](#)

Code provided once membership payment has been received

Nan Tien Temple (NSW) Writers and Illustrators Residency

Exciting news! Nan Tien Temple has opened applications for the Nan Tien Temple (NSW) Writers and Illustrators Residency. This is to take place from 29 September – 10 October 2026.

Applications close on 30 April at 11:59pm, with applicants to be notified by 12 May.

Following the success of their inaugural Children's writers and illustrators residency last year, featuring an extraordinary group of creatives, they are delighted to offer this unique opportunity once again. Last year's residents loved having a residency dedicated to just children's authors and illustrators.

You can access the [Residency Handbook and application form via the temple's website on this link](#).

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out by email to community@nantien.org.au

2026 Book of the Year Judges

Kym Diprose, Anna Davidson and Dr Mark Macleod are representing Tasmania in the judging process this year. A short biography of all the judges can be found [here](#).

Without their dedicated passion and attention to excellence in children's literature, our annual Book of the Year Awards would not be the success they are today. The CBCA would like to thank the current incoming panel sitting for the 2025–2026 Awards term, and the many judges who have served before them.



Kym Diprose will be judging in the younger readers category. Kym has just retired from her position as the Head of Library at Darwin's Haileybury Rendall School. She found her time in this role reinforced her perception of the power of Book Week and the importance of the CBCA in promoting quality literature for an increasingly diverse yet increasingly diverted reading population.

Prior to this she held positions as a librarian, teacher and Head of English at secondary schools within the Northern Territory and Victoria. She holds degrees in Arts and Primary Teaching and a Masters in Librarianship. She is grateful for this opportunity to indulge her lifelong love of reading in the joyful creativity of books written for Younger Readers.



Anna Davidson will be judging in the Early childhood category. Anna has been an educator for over 20 years, teaching in Australia, China, and Canada. With a strong background in primary education, she later transitioned into the role of teacher librarian, allowing her to merge her passion for pedagogy, critical thinking, and literature while working with a diverse range of students.

Currently serving as Head of Library at The Hutchins School in nipaluna/Hobart, Anna engages students across all year levels, delivering dynamic library lessons for Pre-Kindergarten to Year 5 and fostering a love of reading among older students through informal interactions. She is particularly passionate about the annual CBCA Book Week, where she leads a shadow judging program for Junior School students, culminating in the much-anticipated School Choice Award ceremony.

A dedicated lifelong learner, Anna holds master's degrees in Gifted Education, Teacher Librarianship, and Indigenous Education. She is honoured to serve as a judge for the Early Childhood category, firmly believing that there is a picture book for every reader, every learning moment, and every occasion.



Dr Mark Macleod will be judging in the Picture Book/ New illustrator category.

Mark designed courses in Children's Literature for Macquarie University and Charles Sturt University and has taught Children's Literature at universities and writers' centres around the world. For many years he was a regular presenter on national television and radio and he has mentored many developing writers and illustrators.

As Publishing Director at Random House Australia and Publisher, Mark Macleod Books at Hachette Australia, he published and edited over 500 books for young readers, many of them award-winning, and has been National President of the Children's Book Council of Australia, President of the NSW Branch and a judge for the NSW Premier's Literary Awards, the Prime Minister's Literary Awards, the Norman Lindsay Festival Award, and the Henry Lawson Award, among other prizes. His services to Children's Literature were recognised with the Lady Cutler Award and the Pixie O'Harris Award. A writer for both young people and adults, Mark's next book is a collection of poems for adults, *City of Rainbows*.

It is 2026 and Shadow Judging is back!

It is time to get excited! Shadow judging Book of the Year Awards is back and registrations are open. The program starts with the Shortlist released on 31 March.

The Shadow Judging Book of the Year Awards are an exciting part of our annual calendar. We invite young voices from groups across Australia to join the conversation about our annual Book of the Year Shortlist and judge the books themselves.

Registrations are already open and close 19 June 2026. To ensure you don't miss out, head over to the [website](#) to register now.

Shadow Judging Podcast

Join your hosts, Poppy and Mia as they take us through the shortlisted books and their creators. [The podcast](#) will celebrate young voices who are responding to their reading of one of the shortlisted titles every 2 weeks starting from 4 May 2026. Explore more stories together and share in the joy of reading.

Tasmania Reads 2026



Tasmania Reads 2026 was celebrated across the state from 22–28 March.

Guided by the theme ***Reading Connects Us All: Be Part of the Story***, the week highlighted the many ways Tasmanians engage with reading – from books and poetry to podcasts, zines and visual storytelling.

Libraries and partner organisations delivered a vibrant statewide program that welcomed readers of all ages and interests, including those discovering or rediscovering reading in new ways.

Throughout the week, audiences took part in

- storytelling events
- creative workshops
- youth and community activities
- story walks
- and panel discussions that amplified diverse voices and local stories.

Tasmania Reads 2026 continued to build momentum toward a stronger reading culture, encouraging Tasmanians to connect, participate and see themselves as part of the story.

CBCA Blog

Don't miss out! The [CBCA Tasmania Blog](#) offers curated insights into local events, highlights new book reviews and local author content. Explore all the latest news and keep up with many literary events around the state by following along on the CBCA Tasmania Blog.

What were your favourite reads in 2025?

Libraries Tasmania's Top 10 lists have been released!

Find out what Tasmanians loved to read and borrow in 2025.

Tasmanians proved once again to be passionate readers, borrowing more than 3.2 million physical and digital items last year.

Digital resources continue to soar in popularity, with eBook and eAudiobook loans increasing by 6 per cent to nearly 1.2 million in 2025.

Leanne Pelikan took out spot number 1 in Tasmanian children's books with *We love country*. Can you guess which series was number 1 in Junior fiction? Head to the [Libraries Tasmania website](#) to see if you are right!



CBCA Tasmania Short List Talks

CBCA Tasmania is pleased to offer several events that celebrate the CBCA Book of the Year Awards including Judges' Talks and Short List discussions.

COST: \$5 entry fee. Free to current members,

Bookings are essential. Visit the Events page on the CBCA Tasmania website to register.
<https://cbcatas.org.au/>

Queries to tas@cbca.org.au Subject line: Book talks + location

***** Be aware that there is an error on the Ulverstone and Launceston ticket descriptions. The name of the ticket is Hobart Talks. Ignore this and continue your transaction - you will receive the correct ticket booking. Apologies for this error, correction has not been possible**

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| <p>CBCA Tasmania Judges Session SANDY BAY JUDGES: Anna Davidson: Early Childhood & Dr Mark Macleod: Picture Book and New Illustrator DATE: 13 May 4-6 pm VENUE: Hutchins. Nettlefold Library (Senior School) 71 Nelson Rd. https://www.trybooking.com/DKVZR</p> | <p>CBCA Tasmania Judge Session ULVERSTONE JUDGE: Kym Diprose: Younger Readers & Dr Mark Macleod: Picture Book and New Illustrator DATE: 20 May 4-6 pm VENUE: Leighland Christian School. Library, 45a Leighlands Ave https://www.trybooking.com/DLAKB</p> |
| <p>Secondary Short List Book Discussions - LAUNCESTON Led by: Carol Fuller and Jennie Bales Categories: Young Adult and relevant titles from Picture Books, Eve Pownall and Younger Readers, New Illustrator DATE: 10 June 4-6 pm VENUE: Scotch Oakburn College, John Morris Library (Senior School). 85 Penquite Rd. https://www.trybooking.com/DLAKI</p> | <p>Primary Short List Book Discussions - LAUNCESTON Led by: Jennie Bales, Nella Pickup, Laura Beaumont , Jessica Marston and Jessica Cross Categories: Younger Reader, Picture Books, Early Childhood, Eve Pownall New Illustrator DATE: TBA (early Term 2) VENUE: Scotch Oakburn College, Library (Junior School). 74 Elphin Rd. https://www.trybooking.com/DLAKP (Note: Link will go live early Term 2 once date is confirmed)</p> |

Southern Readers' Cup – August 2026

Start getting your teams ready as the Southern Readers' Cup will kick off in August. The date is to be advised. Make sure you keep an eye on the [events section of the webpage](#) as more details are announced. To register your interest in participating email tas@cbca.org.au. This is a great way for all children – not just 'good readers' to read, and to enjoy what they read.

Book of the Year Awards

The CBCA presents annual awards to Australian books of literary merit for outstanding contribution to Australian children's literature.

Celebrate 80 years of the Book of the Year Awards with us in 2026.

Congratulations to the Tasmanian creators who have been recognised in the CBCA Notable lists for the 2026 Book of the Year Awards <https://cbca.org.au/>



Young Adult

[Sophie Clark](#), *Cruel is the Light*. Penguin Random House Australia.

This mature fantasy is Sophie's first book that is set in an historical past focusing with Rome and the Vatican, besieged by demons, at the centre. Selene, a high ranking exorcist with dark secrets in her family's past, and Jules, a foot soldier with exceptional fighting capabilities provide two alternate narrations to this action packed and at times sizzling fantasy where no one can be trusted, the seemingly good can be evil and allegiances are fluid. Clark has built a complex alternative world and the story line is mature and complex. Not for the fainthearted.

Early Childhood

[Joanna Bell](#), *What is a Dot*. Thames and Hudson Australia.

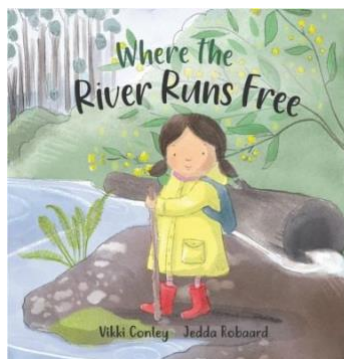
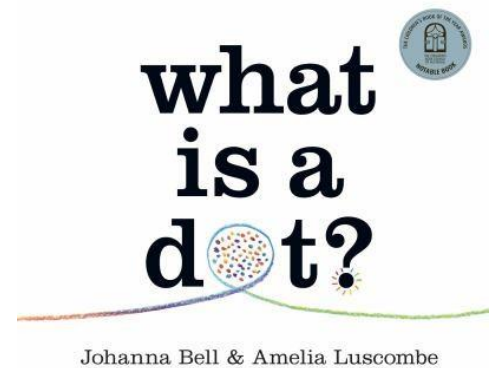
Illustrated by Amelia Luscombe.

Joanna has created a delightful, fun-filled examination of mark-making that will encourage young readers to explore with pen, pencil, brush or even their fingers to make marks.

Through a series of questions we discover many different ways to make marks that are, and are not, dots. These illustrations are colourfully presented in a rainbow of line images across glossy white boards. "Is it a swish? A sweep? Or a swirl?"

The images vary to represent shapes, movements and object - the swish of a horse's tail and a broom for sweeping.

The open ending encourages youngsters to grab a pencil and make their own marks and decide what they are. Simple concepts, cleverly constructed and superbly illustrated will engage young readers and lead to lots of exploratory art work.



Early Childhood

[Jemma Robaard](#) (illustrator). *Where the River Runs Free*. Windy Hollow Books. Written by Vikki Conley.

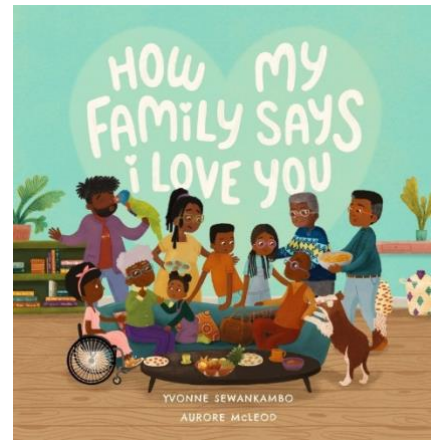
A delightful and happy recount of mum and the kids going for a nature walk along the banks of the river. Fun, laughter and awe exude from the pages as the children explore and observe different things on their walk, culminating in the discovery of a secret and hard to see river creature – a very satisfying conclusion that ties off the opening question at the start of the book. The soft water colour illustrations extend the simple text which is carefully situated to maintain a steady rhythm if reading aloud.

Picture Book

Aurore McLeod (illustrator). *How My Family Says I Love You*.

Walker Books Australia. Written by Yvonne Sewankambo.

A gentle story about an African family and the many ways they express their love for each other through the caring and sharing actions of each member of the family. Bold type encourages young readers to read aloud, and the language is straight forward and direct. The digital illustrations add enormously to the story with bold colours and numerous details to depict the lifestyle, hobbies and interests of various family members. They effectively illustrate and support the text to show how each person demonstrates the repeated refrain "I love you." A gently story that celebrates diversity and difference and communication beyond words. Worth consideration as an Early Childhood addition.



This lovely celebration of family life and togetherness will resonate with young readers as they recount their own family members and gatherings. Preschool and early childhood readers.



Eve Pownall: STOP PRESS: ON THE SHORTLIST!

[First Dog on the Moon](#) (illustrator). *There's a Prawn in Parliament House: The Kid's Guide to Australia's Amazing Democracy*. A&U Books for Children and Young Adults. Written by Annabel Crabb.

Andrew Marlton, better known as First Dog on the Moon with his witty cartoon additions to *The Guardian Weekly*, has added his lively and satirical sense of humour to Annabel Crabb's funny and informative coverage on how democracy works in Australia. Broader topics are also covered including historical perspectives, the constitution, voting, law making and referendums. This is a perfect introduction to our parliamentary system with extra commentary from

Shawn the Prawn. Also supported with fact boxes and black and white illustrations that add a playful dig at numerous Australianisms such as the democracy sausage, this non-fiction book will engage and satisfy middle school readers.



INTERNATIONAL BOARD ON BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



[IBBY Australia](#) has a unique role, promoting Australian authors and illustrators and their books at an international level; and also working towards international understanding through quality literature for young readers. Activities include celebrating International Children's Book Day; nominating authors and illustrators for the Hans Christian Andersen Awards and for Honour Books; supporting the Children in Crisis Appeal; nominating books for the IBBY Disabilities List and the Lampedusa Silent Books List, and awarding IBBY Australia's biennial Ena Noël Award to encourage emerging authors and illustrators. Members receive a quarterly electronic newsletter.

PUT YOUR LOGO IN THIS SPOT - email your logo to tas@cbca.org.au and we will personalise the logo and provide it as a signature panel and a high resolution banner for printing.



The [ACLF](#)'s vision is to enrich the lives of young Australians through the power of story.

The ACLF's mission is:

- to promote the value and importance of reading
- to raise the profile of books in the lives of Australian children and young adults
- to respond to identified needs and issues in the children's & youth literature national landscape
- to champion the cause of young Australians' reading in a consultative, collegial and inclusive way within a cultural framework that showcases the best of Australian Literature for young people, and
- to undertake selected national projects that will promote these objects nationally.

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| 13 May 2026 | CBCA Tasmania Judges Session – Sandy Bay |
| 20 May 2026 | CBCA Tasmania Judges Session - Ulverstone |
| 10 June 2026 | Secondary Short List Book Discussions - Launceston |
| Early Term 2 (Date TBA) | Primary Short List Book Discussions - Launceston |
| 21 August 2026 | 2026 Book of the Year and Shadow Judges Winners Announced |
| 22 – 28 August 2026 | Children's Book Week Symphony of Stories |

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| August 2026 (Date TBA) | 80th Anniversary of the CBCA Book of the Year Awards Celebration events TBA |
| Term 2 August (Date TBA) | Southern Readers' Cup (Primary) |

Calendar of Events

If you have any dates suitable for inclusion, please send them to tas@cbca.org.au

The CBCA Tasmania Blog



Are you ready to write?

Jennie is always looking for new contributors and expanding ideas and experiences around children's literature. If you have:

- a story to tell about your engagement with kids' books
- a writing or illustrating process to share
- reviews of some great books shared with the kids or
- the magic of access to a room of books

why not share it on the blog?

Check out examples on the blog itself — <http://cbcatas.blogspot.com/> — and be inspired.

Contact Jennie via tas@cbca.org.au with "EOI: CBCA Blog Post" in the subject line.

All expressions of interest will be forwarded to Jennie and she will get back with some guidelines (200 to 300 words is a good baseline) and discuss a date.



Reading Time is a great source of information and reviews <http://readingtime.com.au/>

Donate to the CBCA

Help us grow a national culture of celebration of story.
Donations of \$2.00 or more are tax deductible.

[DONATE HERE](#)



Gift Fund Donation
From \$0.00 AUD



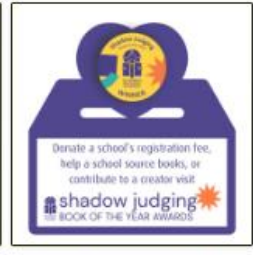
Donate to the CBCA Awards Foundation
From \$5.00 AUD



Donate to the CBCA Gift Fund
From \$5.00 AUD



Awards Foundation Donation
\$0.00 AUD



Donate to the CBCA Gift Fund: Shadow Judging 2024 Program
From \$5.00 AUD

Find out about Benefactors [here](#).

History of the CBCA Awards Foundation

The original prize for the Children's Book of the Year Awards was a camellia if the winner was female or a handshake if male.

Government funding supported the Awards for some time (1966–1988). This was followed by commercial sponsorship (Angus & Robertson, Penguin Books Australia, Collins Dove and Franklin Watts in 1988; Myer-Grace Bros. 1989–1993; Angus & Robertson 1994; Reed Books Australia, Australia Post and Social Book Clubs 1995) which made it possible to offer substantial monetary prizes of up to \$10,000 per category to the authors and illustrators of winning and honour books.

The challenge to secure commercial sponsorship for the Awards prize money led to a decision at the end of 1995 to set up the Awards Foundation with the aim of raising \$1,000,000 to enable the CBCA to support the Awards prizes in perpetuity.



The CBCA Awards Foundation

Proudly Funding Prizes for the CBCA Book of the Year Awards

Benefactors

Allen & Unwin
CBCA NSW Branch Inc
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In memoriam

Jean Chapman • Max Fatchen • Beryl Moncrieff Matthews • Christobel Mattingley • Jill Midolo • John Moffat • Narelle Oliver • Jan Ormerod • Eve Pownall • Marion E Robertson • Gregory Rogers • Sebastian Walker • Cassandra Weddell • Maisie Williams, Garah, NSW

Donations to the CBCA Awards Foundation are tax deductible and can be sent to:
PO Box 1163, Fyshwick ACT 2609. <http://www.awardsfoundation.org.au/>

(Dec 2025)