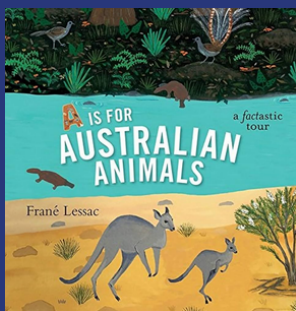


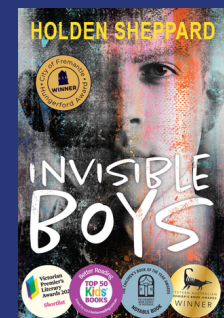
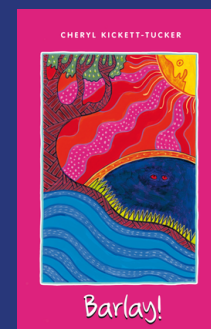
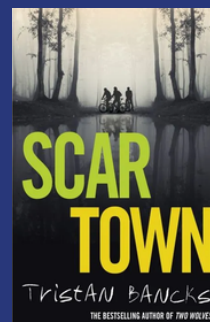
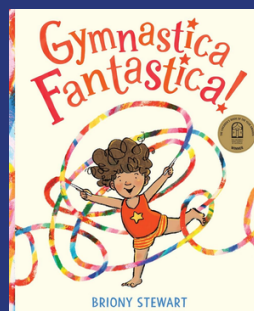
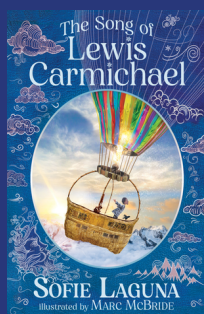
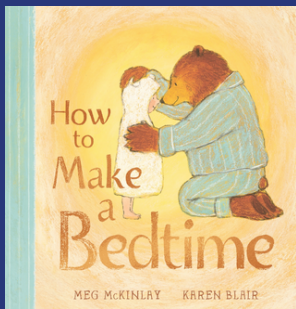
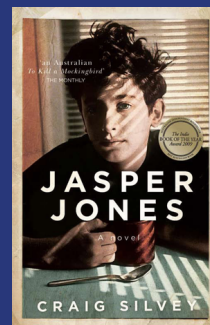
Celebrate Reading Conference

AUG 23 & 24

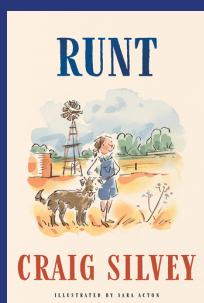
STATE LIBRARY OF WA



"But there
was a lot
of happiness
discovering
so many..."



"...small
things in
unexpected
places."



Acknowledgment of Country

The Literature Centre acknowledges the traditional owners and storytellers of Country throughout this land. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. It is a privilege to live and work in Walyalup on Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar.

My love of books started young. I was always at the library, reading whatever I could get my hands on. I remember seeing the CBCA Award sticker on some of those books. I might not have understood all the details but I knew even then, as I ran my finger over that little illustrated reading child, that I was holding an Australian book of quality.

The CBCA is celebrating 80 years this year. That's 80 years of amazing Australian books. Celebrate Reading 2025 celebrates this outstanding legacy and examines some of the challenges children's books and publishing are facing. With recent data revealing alarming drops in reading engagement, what's at stake is more than literacy: it's empathy, imagination, and critical thinking.

We need places like the CBCA and The Literature Centre now more than ever to ignite a love of reading in young people. We need events like Celebrate Reading to share knowledge, confront these challenges, and inspire action. I hope this program leaves you energised, connected, and reminded of the power stories have to shape minds and hearts - for the next 80 years and beyond.

Bianca Breen, Guest Curator

Food and Drinks

Opening hours

The SLWA, Ground + Co

State Library Ground Floor

Saturday 8:30am-2:00pm

Sunday 9:30am-2:00pm

The WA Museum Boola Bardip, Epoch Cafe

Perth Cultural Centre

7:00am-3:30pm

The AGWA Cafe and Bar

The Art Gallery of WA

10:00am-5:00pm

Picabar

51 James St

12:00pm-12:00am

Saturday - Day One

9:00 – 9:15

Welcome to Country
and CEO Address

9:15 – 10:00

Sharing Stories
Transforming Lives

Sally Rippin opens the conference with a call to action to join us on her mission to ensure that all children can be supported to access reading and stories in the way that suits them most.



10:00 - 10:45

Words and
Pictures

Briony Stewart, Karen Blair and **Peter Cheong** are joined by oral storyteller **Esther Marriott** in an interactive and live multi-modal session bringing together oral storytelling, words and visuals.

10:45 - 11:00

Break

11:00 - 12:00

Reluctant Readers

How can writers and teachers appeal to reluctant readers?
Sally Rippin, Sofie Laguna, Cheryl Kickett-Tucker, Briony Stewart, Frané Lessac and **Mark Greenwood**.
Moderated by TLC Chair **Sally Murphy**.

12:00 - 13:00

Lunch Break and
Book Signing

12:30 - 12:55

Join Sally Rippin for
cake to celebrate 80
Years of the CBCA

13:00 - 14:00

The Underdog

Craig Silvey, in conversation with **Kathryn Lefroy** about his prolific body of work for young people. Take a trip down memory lane with Craig as he reflects on his wonderful career.



14:00 - 15:00

Where History
Happened

Mark Greenwood and **Frané Lessac** talk about their collaboration and the transformation of history into story and pictures. Moderated by CBCA WA President **Kris Williams**.

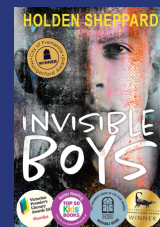
15:00 - 15:15

Break

15:15 - 16:15

From Page to Screen

Authors **Holden Sheppard, Sofie Laguna** and **Tristan Bancks** talk about the joys and challenges of adapting their work for the stage and screen. Moderated by author and screenwriter **Kathryn Lefroy**.



16:15

Day 1 Close and
Book Signing

Sunday - Day Two

10:00 - 11:00

Perilous
Adventures;
Infinite Wonder

Sofie Laguna, opens Day Two of Celebrate with an inspiring address on the heart of storytelling: exploring how voice, structure, and emotional truth shape powerful narratives for every age.



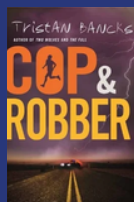
11:00 - 11:15

Break and Book
Signing

11:15 - 12:00

Life and Other
Experiments
(virtual delivery)

Tristan Bancks, talks to us about the world of writing thrillers for younger readers, and how to make drama out of the unexpected.



12:00 - 13:00

Who Gets to Tell My
Story?

Authors **Shirley Marr**, **Seth Malacari**, **Chemutai Glasheen**, **Dr Cheryl Kickett-Tucker**, **Mabel Gibson** and **Sarah Winifred Searle** are joined by editor **Casey Mulder** to discuss the place of personal and lived cultural experience in stories.

13:00 - 14:00

Lunch Break and
Book Signing

14:00 - 15:00

Embracing the Dark

Murder mysteries, horror, and darker tales are on the rise. What is it that draws young readers to these thrilling tales? Join authors **Kate Emery**, **Ash Harrier** and **Fionna Cosgrove** for a thrilling time discussing a popular genre. Moderated by YA Fantasy writer and conference curator **Bianca Breen**.



15:00 - 16:00

The Books We Read As
Children

A panel of artists discuss the books they read or were read to them as children, how they shaped their own writing lives and what they hope to inspire in the younger generation with their own words. With **Mark Greenwood**, **Frané Lessac**, **Sofie Laguna**, **Fionna Cosgrove**, **Kate Emery**, **Sarah Winifred Searle**, **Dr Cheryl Kickett-Tucker**, **Casey Mulder**, **Mabel Gibson** and **Shirley Marr**. Moderated by TLC CEO **Elizabeth Spencer**.



Presenter Bios



Tristan Bancks

Tristan Bancks tells stories for the page and screen. His latest suspense-thriller, *Scar Town*, for ages 10+ won the CBCA Book of the Year for Younger Readers in 2024. His other books for kids and teens include *Two Wolves*, *The Fall*, *Detention*, *Cop & Robber*, *Ginger Meggs* and the *Tom Weekly* series. His books have won and been shortlisted for many awards, including a Children's Book Council of Australia Honour Book, the Prime Minister's Literary Awards, and the YABBA children's choice book awards. Tristan is an author-advocate for literacy non-profit [Room to Read](#). He is currently working with producers to develop a number of his books for the screen.



Karen Blair

Karen Blair has always adored picture books and as a child would make her own at school. She was very excited when she was awarded third place in the CBCA's Make Your Own Book Competition in Year 8 and even more excited when the first book she illustrated, *With Nan* (by Tania Cox) was awarded Honour Book in the CBCA Book of the Year Awards in 2013. Since then her picture book output has been prolific and she has won multiple awards and mentions. Most recently *Shadow Catchers* with Kirsty Murray was shortlisted for the Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year Awards (3-5) and her own picture book, *When I am Big* was published by Penguin Random House.



Bianca Breen

Bianca Breen is a professional book nerd. Bianca is passionate about the book community, founding YA for WA in 2021 and previously holding the position of Communications Director at the Australian Young Adult Literature Alliance (#LoveOzYA) and co-host of The YA Room. In 2021 she was the winner of the ASA Award Mentorship, and has won several residencies, including with KSP Writers' Centre, Vancouver Arts Centre, and the City of Swan. Her short works have been published with Dragon Soul Press, Night Parrot Press, and her debut novel *Made of Steam and Stardust* was released in 2025. She holds a Bachelor of Creative Arts in Writing from La Trobe University.



Peter Cheong

Peter Cheong feels that books have always been a vital part of his life. After spending several years in the Australian Army, Peter finally decided to pursue his dream of a career in books. Peter Cheong is the illustrator of, *I'm a Hero Too*, *Nothing Alike* and the *Pow Pow Pig* series. *Every Night at Midnight* is his first book as both author and illustrator, which won the Shadow Judges category in the 2024 CBCA Picture book of the Year. Peter unfortunately cannot turn into a wolf himself, but is still trying. Peter lives in Perth (Whadjuk Region), Western Australia, with his very understanding wife and son, and less understanding cat.



Fiona Cosgrove

Fiona Cosgrove is the writer of the spooky four book middle grade interactive series, *Twisted Tales* as well as the spooky mystery *Sadie and the Secret of the Swamp*. She grew up with the TV always on *The Twilight Zone* and *Are You Afraid of the Dark*, and devoured books with supernatural twists and paranormal settings; a favourite genre still to this day.



Kate Emery

Kate Emery is a YA author (and journalist) from Perth, Western Australia. She likes to write books with banter where people either die or are in serious danger of dying. She has written two cosy murder mysteries about teenage detectives and a YA fantasy novel, *The Not So Chosen One*. Her first murder mystery, *My Family and Other Suspects* won the 2025 ABIA for 13+ readers, the YA category at the Indie Book Awards and was a CBCA notable book. Her next murder mystery book, *A Murder is going Down* will be published in 2025.



Mabel Gibson

Mabel Gibson is a Yamatji woman living and writing in Boorloo. Her work has been published with Magabala books, Night Parrot Press and Centre for Stories and she has spoken at writers festivals across Australia. Her debut book *Crybaby* charts her growth and identity growing up First Nations in 21st century Australia.



Chemutai Glasheen

Chemutai Glasheen lives in Western Australia. She is a teacher and a sessional academic at Curtin University. She writes fiction for young people and her work is influenced by her interest and experience in human rights and education. She has written a collection of short stories which are set in east Africa, *I Am the Mau and Other Stories*. Her work has been published in ACE: Arresting Contemporary stories by Emerging Writers and in the Museum of Freedom and Tolerance website. She holds a PhD in Creative Writing from Curtin University.



Mark Greenwood

Mark Greenwood is a history hunter. His award-winning books examining history have been honoured internationally. Mark often teams with his wife, illustrator Frané Lessac, to produce books that promote an understanding of multicultural issues. Mark's recent books include the *History Mysteries* and *History Hunter* chapter book series. His picture books, *Our Country: Where History Happened*, *The Happiness Box* and *Simpson and His Donkey* were CBCA Honour books. *The Legend of Moondyne Joe* and *The Legend of Lasseter's Reef* won the West Australian Premier's Award.



Ash Harrier

Ash Harrier is an author of dark academia and mystery novels. Ever since she was a child, she's been wondering what lies beneath ... behind the veil, beyond the grave and beneath the ordinary. She also writes general fiction as Sasha Wasley and holds a PhD in feminist literature. Her books have been shortlisted for the Readings, WAYBRA and Davitt Awards. She lives in Western Australia and is the proud fur-parent to a dog, a cat, 3 hens, a frog, a rabbit and a wild quenda.



Cheryl Kickett-Tucker

Dr Cheryl Kickett-Tucker AM is a respected Whadjuk Noongar Traditional Owner, academic, community leader, and award-winning author. Her life's work has focused on empowering Aboriginal children and families through education, sport, health, and storytelling. Cheryl is the author of *Ninni Yabini*—a bilingual Noongar/English picture book shortlisted for the 2023 Karajia Award for Children's Literature—as well as *Lucky Thamu*, *Barlay*, and *Bush and Beyond: Stories from Country*. Her poetry appears in *Right Way Down*, with a companion edition forthcoming, and she is a contributor to the upcoming *Archie Roach anthology* celebrating First Nations voices. She also served as Chief Editor of *Mia Mia: Aboriginal Community Development* (Cambridge University Press), which won the Educational Publishing Award for Best Tertiary Scholarly Resource. Cheryl's work is grounded in cultural pride, identity, and a deep commitment to Aboriginal children's wellbeing and success.



Sofie Laguna

Sofie Laguna has had many books for young people published in the US, the UK and in translation throughout Europe and Asia. She has been shortlisted for the Queensland Premier's Award, and her books have been named Honour Books and Notable Books by the Children's Book Council of Australia. Her fiction for adults has been shortlisted for and won a number of awards including the Miles Franklin in 2015, for *The Eye of the Sheep*. Recently Sofie has again released a number of books for children, including the novels, *The Song of Lewis Carmichael*, *The Glow*, and picture books, *The House on Pleasant Street*, and *A Friend for Ruby*, all illustrated by her husband, Marc McBride.



Kathryn Lefroy

Kathryn Lefroy is an author, screenwriter, and champion house-packer — she's lived everywhere from San Francisco to Dublin to Melbourne. Her debut novel, *Alex and The Alpacas Save The World*, was shortlisted for the 2019 Premier's Award. It was followed by *Alex and the Alpacas Ride Again* in 2022, then *The Secret of the Stone* in 2024. Another book is coming in 2026 but she's keeping that under wraps for now. Her feature film *Whale Shark Jack* dives onto screens in early 2026, and she's currently developing more screen projects with producers around the world. With a BA in Art History from Melbourne Uni, a PhD in Business from Monash Uni, and a screenwriting qualification from UCLA, Kathryn still can't decide what she wants to be when she grows up — though ideally it involves living in a dance movie.



Frané Lessac

Frané Lessac is a West Australian author-illustrator with over 50 award-winning children's books, having sold more than 1 million copies worldwide. She grew up in a small town outside New York City, lived on the Caribbean Island of Montserrat, and later in London before moving to Australia in 1990. She is married to children's author Mark Greenwood, and together they have collaborated on *Simpson and his Donkey*, *Midnight – the story of a light horse*, *Ned Kelly and the Green Sash*, and *The Legend of Moondyne Joe*. Her author-illustrator titles include, *A Is for Australia*, *Australian Baby Animals*, *Under the Southern Cross*, and *A is for Australian Reefs*.



Seth Malacari

Seth Malacari (he/they) is a nonbinary trans masculine author and editor. His first book, *An Unexpected Party* (2023) was published by Fremantle Press. Their work has been published in various anthologies, including *Head Under Water*, *Ourselves: 100 Micro Memoirs* and *Emergence: SBS Emerging Writers' Competition*. He was shortlisted for the 2025 Fogarty Literary Award.



Shirley Marr

Shirley Marr is a first generation Chinese-Australian and a child migrant. Shirley's authentic experiences informed her middle grade novel *A Glasshouse of Stars*, which won the CBCA Book of the Year for Younger Readers in 2022 and the WA Premier's Book Awards for Writing for Children in 2021. It was also nominated for the CILIP Carnegie Medal in 2022 and shortlisted for the Queensland Literary Award Children's Book 2022. The follow up *All Four Quarters of the Moon* was a CBCA Notable Book in 2023. Her most recent work *Countdown to Yesterday* has been published in Australia, NZ, UK and USA.



Esther Marriott

Esther Marriott is a Perth-based Teacher and a PhD scholarship student at Curtin University, exploring how to promote inclusion and diversity within literature for young people. She is First-generation Australian born to parents with a CaLD background. She has a BA (Hons) in Literary Cultural Studies and a BEd(Sec) from Curtin University and has taught English in West Australian Secondary schools for sixteen years. Her work features in Insight Publications, Centre for Stories Saga Sisterhood, The Blue Room Theatre and The Literature Centre for the 2024 Youth Storytelling Holiday Program. She is honoured to be working with fellow storytellers who empower our young communities.



Casey Mulder

Casey Mulder is a Ballardong Noongar woman from Western Australia. She has a keen interest in First Nations storytelling in all its forms. She is First Nations Editor for Westerly Magazine and Fremantle Press in addition to recipient of a Creative Development Scholarship from Magabala Books (with Night Parrot Press) and a Writing Fellowship from the Centre for Stories. She recently taught at the School of Indigenous Studies (UWA) where she was also Coordinator of Teaching and Learning, and holds a Master of Leadership and Management in Education from the University of Newcastle.



Sally Murphy

Sally Murphy's life had been shaped by reading, writing and story. An award-winning author of verse novels, historical fiction, poetry and more, she is also an academic in teacher education at Curtin University, a proud mother, grandmother and pet companion. She strives to spread joy however she can. Sally has been The Chair of The Literature Centre Board since June 2024.



Sally Rippin

Sally Rippin is the Australian Children's Laureate for 2024 and 2025 and is Australia's highest-selling female author. She has written over 100 books for children and young adults, many of them award-winning, including the popular *Billie B Brown* and *Hey Jack!* series, and the *Polly and Buster* trilogy. More recently, Sally has collaborated with Chris Kennett to create the *School of Monsters* series for beginning readers and Eliza Hull to co-write *Come Over To My House*, illustrated by Daniel Gray-Barnett, exploring the lives of families who live with disabilities. Her widely popular books are beloved across the globe and have sold more than ten million copies in eighteen countries.



Sarah Winifred Searle

Sarah Winifred Searle writes and illustrates award-winning comics, telling stories across many genres that explore themes of identity, health, relationships, and history. Their graphic novels include *Sincerely Harriet*, *The Greatest Thing*, and *The Sweetness Between Us*. *The Greatest Thing* was shortlisted as a CBCA Book of the Year Notable, was a Lambda Lammy Award finalist, and won a Prime Minister's Literary Award.



Holden Sheppard

Holden Sheppard is a West Australian author who found literary acclaim with the raw, blokey honesty of his contemporary fiction. His debut novel *Invisible Boys* won multiple awards, including the WA Premier's Prize for an Emerging Writer and the Hungerford Award. *Invisible Boys* was adapted as a celebrated ten-episode television series with Stan Australia which premiered in 2025. Holden's second book *The Brink* won several accolades including the 2024 Ena Noel Award. His new 2025 release *King of Dirt* is his first book for adults. Holden's writing has been widely published in books, journals and the media. A country boy from Geraldton, Holden now lives in Perth's far north with his husband and his V8 ute.



Craig Silvey

Craig Silvey has twice been named one of the Best Young Australian Novelists by The Sydney Morning Herald and has been shortlisted for the International Dublin Literary Award. His 2009 second novel was selected by the American Library Association as Best Fiction for Young Adults in their 2012 list, and was made into the movie *Jasper Jones* in 2017. Craig's most recent work *Runt* won the 2023 Younger Reader's Award, and has been adapted into a feature film that was released in 2024.



Briony Stewart

Briony Stewart is the internationally published author and illustrator of several award-winning books for children. Her first book, *Kumiko and the Dragon*, won an Aurealis award for Children's short fiction. In 2012, Briony completed a 9-month creative development fellowship in the U.K. after being selected by the British Council as one of five young, Australian artists excelling in their creative field. Since then, Briony Stewart has published numerous successful titles. Most notably her book *We Love You Magoo* was selected as a CBCA Early Childhood Honour Book for 2020 and her most recent publication *Gymnastica Fantastica* won the 2024 Book of the Year for early childhood.



Kris Williams

Kris Williams was the Director of the All Saints' College Literature Festival for 10 years, building lasting ties with the WA writing community. She has been on the Board of Writing WA, worked with the Perth Writer's Festival, Scribblers Festival and been a judge for the Premier's Book Awards. In her current role as WA Branch President and National Director for the Children's Book Council of Australia Kris continues to promote the value of Australian stories for children and advocate for those who create them.