Welcome to our first ACT Branch newsletter for the year.

Since the end of January the committee have been very busy preparing of our first events for 2014. In February we held a Special General Meeting presenting the Annual Report July to December 2013 and the Financial Report for the same period. This was the final step of implementing the amended 2013 constitution. Now our financial year is the same as our membership period and the calendar year. In February 2015 we will hold our next AGM.

Over the past twelve months we have been asking that people who attend events pay in advance. This decision was made as it is general knowledge that 15%-20% of people are 'no shows' to most Canberra events where they have made bookings for either free or paid events. Statistics have shown that we are still getting the same number of people to these prepaid events. Payments and the new events booking form do not need to be done electronically; you can still send payments and forms to us through the post.

Membership subscriptions are now due. The membership period for our organisation is from 1 January to 31 December, no matter when in the calendar year that you join or renew.

Summer school holidays often bring about staff changes in schools. We hope that all school teachers and teacher librarians have now begun to settle into the new school...
year. At the end of these holidays we have seen the move of the Green Family to Yass and subsequently the resignation of Jaclyn Green as an Ordinary Committee Member. We wish Michael, Jaclyn and their family the best of luck with the new chapter of their life in Yass.

I would like to welcome our new Ordinary Committee Member and Professional Learning Coordinator, Margot Firth. Margot has over 30 years’ experience teaching in Primary Schools and is currently the Reading Recovery teacher St Francis of Assisi Primary School, Calwell, ACT. Margot has already made a significant contribution to CBCA ACT Branch by gaining approval for our organisation to be a recognised provider with the Teacher Quality Institute. We will now begin to work towards gaining TQI accreditation for some of our events or creating new events that can be registered with TQI.

At the end of the year Jill Howard retired from her position as the Christmas Book Appeal Coordinator. The CBCA ACT Branch wish to thank Jill for her work contributing to our branch’s successful program of giving underprivileged children books as Christmas presents. The position of Christmas Book Appeal Coordinator is currently vacant, if you or anyone you know who are interested in working closely with the Branch Committee to deliver this program then please contact me via email.

The next three months are shaping up to be busy with several events that you will have the opportunity to participate in. Keep an eye out for more information in the eNews emails and the website about these upcoming events:

- Playgroup Expo
- Pinerolo Trip
- Short List Announcement Dinner
- 11th National Conference of the Children’s Book Council of Australia: Discovering National Treasures here in Canberra 16-18 May

I look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming events.

Leanne Barrett
CBCA ACT Branch – President
Email: act@cbca.org.au
Last night was my kind of night—a bunch of children's book-addicts gathering together to natter, nibble and talk books, writing, illustrating, literacy and the brand new ACT Chapter of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators.

Let's just say, it's about time! The group may be small (so far) but it's already dynamic, with real movers and shakers [read: people impassioned by books and know their stuff!].

Attended by author and assistant regional advisor for SCBWI NSW and the ACT, Deborah Abela (who is in town for her May Gibbs Fellowship), the meeting was opened by local SCBWI coordinator Tracey Hawkins, who spoke about her hopes for the local chapter, and the exciting SCBWI Sydney Conference in July.

Deb updated everyone on the brilliant new SCBWI site and also spoke of the LA and New York SCBWI Conferences. We then discussed our hopes and dreams for our local chapter, which was incredibly inspiring. Oh—and we did a lot of laughing.

SCWBI is definitely a warm, inclusive, level playing field of both big industry players and newbies. It's an amazing way to network, share, learn and hone your craft. You can learn more about SCWBI Australia/NZ right here. We like to have a lot of fun - it's worth joining!

Tania McCartney
This program has been running in Canberra since the 1950s, giving underprivileged children books as gifts for Christmas. Jill Howard, her team, and those before her, have done an amazing job in providing for the agencies that give the books to the children.

In 2013 funds were again given to the appeal coordinator to buy books and the committee began to look at other ways to increase the number of donations. The committee decided that in August 2013 we would focus our efforts for one month, to coincide with Book Week, to raise the number of donations and/or funds to meet the demands for this program. In addition to this a competition began in June to win a box of books - with the winner being drawn at the 2013 AGM. Box of Books Winner: Gai Dennett

In 2013 collection partnerships were formed with Libraries ACT and some schools.

Libraries ACT partnered with us to collect books for the month of August 2013, spotlighting the program in the Canberra community. Libraries ACT also hosted a launch of the program on 1 August 2013, with guest speakers Shane Rattenbury (Minister for Territory and Municipal Services) and Melanie Thompson (CanFaCS).

During the appeal many libraries decorated the donations box and visitors to Tuggeranong Library were greeted with a delightful Christmas tree made from books by Gerry Rozdarz. Thank you to Director Vanessa Little, Sarah Steed, the staff of Libraries ACT and the Canberra community for donating 624 books.

This year two schools collected books during Book Week, donating 254 books. Thank you to Sacred Heart Primary School and Merici College for collecting books on behalf of CBCA ACT Branch.

We would also like to acknowledge all the branch volunteers who contributed to the collection of the books and those who helped with the packing working bee.

At the end of 2013 Jill Howard our Christmas Book Appeal Coordinator decided to retire from her position. We would like to thank Jill for all the books she has been able to buy and collect on behalf of our branch. We wish to acknowledge the dedication Jill has given CBCA ACT Branch to allow us to give underprivileged children a Christmas gift of their very own book.

In 2013 over 960 books (840 books in 2012) were distributed through the appeal to 11 organisations, demonstrating the importance of this long running activity to children within the Canberra and Queanbeyan region.

Donation Recipients:
Beryl Women’s
CanFaCS
Care & Protection Services
Care Orders Team
Doris Women’s Refuge
Gungahlin Children & Family Centre
Innana
Marymead
Ronald McDonald House
Tuggeranong Child & Family Centre
West Belconnen Child & Family Centre

If you or someone you know is interested in being our next Christmas Book Appeal Coordinator please contact Leanne Barrett at act@cbca.org.au

Leanne Barrett
President CBCA ACT
How lucky we were to have children’s author Deborah Abela attend our special AGM last month.

Deb took time out from researching her new book to speak to a capacity crowd at ALIA House in Deakin. She spoke passionately about her father’s family in Malta and the island’s decimation by World War II bombing raids. The stories she told were quite heart wrenching.

She also spoke of the difficulty of drawing on family history when writing a novel. What is interesting to the author might be dreadfully dull to others. Judging from the audience’s reaction to her stories of Malta I don’t think she has anything to worry about.

There were plenty of questions from the audience about her research methods and even some suggestions for things she could include in her novel which Deb graciously took on board.

I look forward to reading her new novel when it is published later this year.

As one of this year’s recipients of a May Gibbs Fellowship Deb was in Canberra taking advantage of the wealth of resources the national capital has to offer. We are all a little richer for her visit.

Jaz Beer
Showcase, the second annual festival of Australian children's literature was a massive celebration encompassing more than 10 events over a 6 week period last spring.

The festival kicked off in fine style at the University of Canberra with a mix and mingle event followed by a panel discussion with authors Garth Nix and Morris Gleitzman. Both men were thoroughly engaging. One of the highlights of the night was hearing from the panel of young adult readers. It was interesting to hear what they like to read which certainly challenged gender stereotypes of teenagers.

Jackie French and Nina Rycroft visited not one, but two public libraries to talk about their book Dinosaurs Love Cheese. It was wonderful to see a sea of kids enjoying Jackie’s reading of the book. Nina had the kids help her draw a dinosaur which was a lot of fun. There were plenty of takers for the cheese give aways proving that kids love cheese too. Jackie's 'dinosaurs love cheese' chant will be forever imprinted on my brain!

Views on Picture Book Apps a panel discussion of picture book apps. The panel was moderated by Mark Macleod and included publisher Dyan Blacklock and author and app creator Nick Bland. We heard about the state of play, limitations, and possible future for picture book apps. I look forward to seeing where technology will take us next in the realm of books and reading.

And this is just a sample of the fabulous events that made up the festival. Congratulations and a huge thank you to Showcase organiser Dr Belle Alderman.
The Chief Minster’s Reading Challenge Awards were held at the National Gallery of Australia on Thursday 13 November 2013; Leanne Barrett attended the ceremony as the CBCA ACT Branch representative.

It was a wonderful to support an event where schools are awarded for students reading more than 12 books in a school year. Children from Macquarie Primary School Choir were our pre-ceremony entertainment and Madeleine Jiang from Rosary Primary School played a few bookish movie themes on her violin.

Virginia Haussegger interviewed the two Challenge Ambassadors, one of the ambassadors is our very own CBCA ACT Branch member Anthony Hill.

Our Gold Kindred Organisation, Paperchain Bookstore is the award’s sponsor. Roger and Maxeme Tall presented gift vouchers to each school who achieved outstanding participation. Congratulations to our member’s schools who were recognised for their participation.

To find out more about the 2014 Challenge visit the ACT DET website http://www.det.act.gov.au/teaching_and_learning/chief_ministers_reading_challenge
Congratulations to Jackie French the new Australian Children’s Laureate for 2014-2015.

A number of CBCA ACT members attended the Australian Children’s Laureate announcement at the National Library of Australia on Wednesday 27 November 2013. A small group of students from Canberra Girls Grammar Junior School, St Jude’s Primary School and Turner Primary School were also in attendance. After the announcement these children experienced an interactive Create a Story event.

Rhys Muldoon, actor, director and former Play School presenter, engaged the whole audience. The NLA foyer was filled with laughter and Rhys had the children cheering at the top of their lungs 'I love books!'

Jackie’s acceptance speech was inspiring, imploring everyone to 'Share a book with a child today'. Jackie passionately believes that 'every child in Australia should have a book to go to bed with' and that 'every child has the right to be guided to books they need by teacher librarians and children’s librarians'.

The Laureate initiative is run by of the Australian Children’s Literature Alliance (ACLA). CBCA is a supporter of ACLA; the alliance aims to promote the transformational power of reading, creativity and story in the lives of all young Australians.
### Diary Dates

#### March
- **Worlds Biggest Playgroup Expo**
  - Date: 26 March 2014
  - Time: 10 am – 12 noon
  - Venue: Cook Community Hub, 41 Templeton St, Cook

- **Trip to Pinerolo in Blackheath NSW**
  - Date: 22 – 23 March 2014
  - Time & location: leave Saturday morning and return Sunday lunch, Pinerolo, Blackheath

#### April
- **ACT Short List & Notables Announcement Dinner**
  - Date: Tuesday 8 April 2014
  - Time & venue: TBA

#### May
- **11th National Conference of the Children’s Book Council of Australia**
  - 16-18 May 2014
  - Rex Hotel
  - Northbourne Ave, Canberra

- **Bob Graham Exhibition**
  - by Lu Rees Archives & CMAG
  - Dates: 16 May to 24 August 2014
  - Venue: CMAG

- **National Simultaneous Story time**
  - Date: 21 May 2014
  - Too Many Elephants by Ursula Dubosarsky & Andrew Joyner
  - Time & venue: 11am (venue TBC)

- **Library and Information Week**
  - Date: 19 to 25 May 2014
  - Time & venue: TBC

#### July
- **Judges Talk**
  - Date: Thursday 3 July 2014
  - Time & venue: TBA

#### August
- **Christmas Book Appeal Drive**
  - Date: Friday 1 to Sunday 31 August 2014
  - Launch Date: Friday 1 August
  - Time & venue: TBA

- **ACT Awards Announcement Dinner**
  - Date: Friday 15 August 2014
  - Time & venue: TBA

- **Book Week: Connect to reading**
  - Date: 16 - 22 August 2014

- **National Literacy and Numeracy Week**
  - Date: 23 – 30 August 2014 (TBC)

- **Author and Illustrator School Visits**
  - Date: 18 to 22 August and 25 to 29 August 2014

- **Children’s Seminar**
  - Date: Wednesday 20 August 2014
  - Time: 4.30 pm to 6 pm
  - Venue: St Monica’s, Evatt

- **Author/Illustrators Dinner**
  - Date: Wednesday 20 August 2014
  - Time & venue: TBA

#### September
- **Children’s Week: A Caring World Shares**
  - Date: 18 - 26 October 2014

- **PlayFEST**
  - Date: 21 October 2014 (TBC)

#### December
- **Christmas Book Appeal Packing and Distribution**
  - Date: 1st Saturday of December 2014
  - Time & venue: TBC

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### Book Review by Jaz Beer

#### Fairytales for Wilde Girls by Allyse Near

*Random House Books Australia 2013
ISBN: 9781742758510
$19.99*

Fairytales for Wilde Girls is a gothic adventure by first time novelist Allyse Near. Isola Wilde discovers a dead girl in a birdcage in the woods. When she is subsequently haunted by the dead girl's ghost things start to get a little creepy.

This book is a giant bubbling cauldron of ideas. It contains a bit of almost everything including faeries, ghosts, unicorns, jokes about nuns and a gargoyle that resembles a rabbit (or is it a rabbit that resembles a gargoyle, I’m not sure). It’s equal parts dark, creepy and quirky with nods to Edgar Allan Poe, The Little Mermaid and Pulp Fiction. The mood of the book cleverly varies from sombre to lighthearted to threatening.

Although I had some trouble keeping track of the multitude of minor characters, overall I thoroughly enjoyed reading Fairytales for Wilde Girls and would recommend it to those teens who like their fiction served with generous helpings of magic and madness.
DISCOVERING NATIONAL TREASURES

THEN . . .
The impetus for a CBCA National Conference came from a cultural exchange with China. In 1987 five CBCA representatives – Alf Mappin, Allan Baillie, Maurice Saxby (accompanied by his wife Norma), Julie Vivas and Margaret Hamilton – spent three weeks in China talking to publishers and groups about Australian children’s books. Following this, the CBCA was expected to host a return delegation of Chinese to Australia, so a fund-raising campaign was set up, with the ‘China Committee’ working very hard.

Authors and illustrators in particular were very generous donating items for sale and a total of around $26,000.00 was realised. The visit by the Chinese delegation was a great success. They visited Sydney, Brisbane and Canberra and hopefully learnt a great deal about Australian children’s books. After their departure and a debriefing from the China Committee, it was realised that there was a surplus of $6000.00. The incoming National Executive suggested at the 1990 CBCA AGM in Melbourne that this money be used to seed a national conference. The reaction to this suggestion was lukewarm, but it was decided to go ahead with the first conference and to assess the situation after the event.

The First National Conference AT LEAST THEY’RE READING was held at the Manly Pacific Hotel in May 1992. The mood was one of excitement and expectation and delegates were obviously thrilled to have a forum in which to discuss children’s books and to listen to high-profile speakers from Australia and overseas. It was a resounding success and realised a substantial profit.

Thus began a series of biennial CBCA National Conferences held in the state or territory capital where the national executive was based. With the exception of the 10th National Conference in Brisbane, which was cancelled, the conferences have been held every second year since 1992.

. . . AND NOW!
So the 11th National Conference of the CBCA will be held in Canberra on 16 – 18 May this year. Planning began over eighteen months ago, the program was released late last year and places are already filling fast. DISCOVERING NATIONAL TREASURES aims to showcase Australia’s national literary treasures — well-known, award-winning authors and illustrators, new and exciting creators and local ACT treasures. The program is rich with treasures from all over Australia. It will be entertaining, stimulating and informative. The conference begins with
an official opening reception at the National Library and an optional preview viewing of the
Bob Graham retrospective exhibition. Saturday is packed with inspiring sessions, culminating
with the conference dinner at the Australian War Memorial, with dinner speaker Jackie French,
Australian Children’s Laureate, followed by a moving and powerful presentation of Morris
Gleitzman’s Loyal Creatures. Sunday begins at the spectacular breakfast with the authors and
illustrators at the Canberra Yacht Club, followed by another full day, culminating with a session
shared by Andy Griffiths and Terry Denton, which promises to be hilarious. Even breaks will be
busy, as a program of book launches, signing sessions will keep everyone busy. All presenters
have been invited to stay for the entire conference, so they will be there to mingle with
delegates, chat and to sign books.

The Trade Display will feature many of Australia’s publishing treasures, so visit them often to
see their newest releases and talk about their books. Paperchain Canberra has taken on the
mammoth task of being the Conference bookshop. Here you will be able to pick up the latest
books by our treasured children’s books creators — and have them signed.

LAUNCHES AT THE CONFERENCE
Saturday lunch: THE TEXT $10,000 PRIZE FOR THE BEST MANUSCRIPT (Text Publishing)
Saturday afternoon tea: THE SEQUIN STAR by Belinda Murrell (Random House)
Sunday tea: SHOWCASING TREASURES by Bele Alderman & Trish Mine (Lu Rees Archives)
Sunday morning tea: A HOUSE FOR DONFINKLE by Choe Brereton & Wayne Harris (Walker)

The CBCA is grateful to publishers for their support of the conference, to the Literature Board
of the Australia Council and to the Copyright Agency Cultural Fund. What will make the
conference a real success is YOU, so please register soon.

The full program is available on the conference website: cbcaconference.org.au and please
like us on Facebook: National Conference of the Children’s Book Council of Australia. There
you will see profiles and photos of many of the presenters. See you in Canberra!

Margaret Hamilton AM
for the Conference Committee
Short List Showcase Night: Connect to Reading
by Margot Firth

Once again the CBCA ACT Branch held a very successful showcase night thanks to the committee led by Leanne Barrett. On 12 March a panel of experienced teachers and librarians share their nominated short list to an audience of 35. Our gold partner Paperchain Bookstore had a display of the selected books for the audience to look at and order. Following is a review of just a selection of their books.

Sue Short spoke about Picture Books that show where 'the author and illustrator achieved artistic and literary unity'. Her highlight would be *The Fearsome, Frightening, Ferocious Box* by Frances Watts and David Legge. The reader is sent on an amazing adventure using intriguing dialogue and illustrations of animals hidden away behind outrageous expressions. Close behind this choice was *Parachute* by Danny Parker and Matt Ottley, *The Windy Farm* by Doug MacLeod and Craig Smith.

Jaclyn Green looked at Early Childhood Books. Her selection of text showed how 'illustrations play a substantial part in the storytelling or concept development' in a variety of forms for pre-reading or early stages of reading. Jaclyn's highlight would have to be *I’m a Dirty Dinosaur* by Janeen Brian and Ann James, a delightful romp through some playful dinosaur stuff accompanied by lots of rhymes and jolly ditties to recite. *Mud is My Medium*, a YouTube video showing how Ann James made her artwork using genuine mud from her dam, really topped the book off. Other choices included *Starting School* by Jane Godwin and Anna Walker.

Norma John spoke about her choice for the Young Reader category. These books are chosen for readers who have 'developed independent reading skills but are still developing in literary appreciation'. They must also stand alone. Some books were part of a series such as *The Last Elephant: The Lost World Circus Book 1* by Justin D’Ath, for the more sophisticated reader. Another is *Eric Vale, Super Male* by Michael Gerard Bauer, a great book for the struggling reader. But the highlight might be *Caesar the War Dog: Operation Blue Dragon* by Stephen Dando-Collins, a work of fiction but has many supportive references to war terminology and Australian combat battles fields.

Christian West couldn’t assure the audience that his choices for the Older Reader would be in the running for an award but his track record shows we should take note. Outstanding books in this section require the reader to have ‘a degree of maturity to appreciate the topics, themes and scope of emotional involvement’ and are generally for secondary school. There was a theme of gloom and doom with a world of war prevailing such as *The Sky so Heavy* by Claire Zorn and *Chasing the Valley* by Skye Melki-Wegner. Thankfully Christian linked these books to movies such as James Bond and a Hollywood Blockbuster so we get the idea. In complete contrast was the romantic *New Guinea Moon* by Kate Constable, an interesting view of life in 1970s from our near neighbours.

Finally I looked at the Eve Pownall non-fiction books. All choices had the 'prime intention of documenting factual material with variety in presentation, format and style'. My
highlight was *Ice, Wind, Rock* by Peter Gouldthorpe, a very colourful, beautifully illustrated recount of Douglas Mawson’s adventures to the Antarctic, including maps and time lines. A close second was *Jeremy* by Chris Faille and Danny Snell, a recount on the care of an orphaned kookaburra with the most delightful illustrations.

All in all, a very informative night with many people interacting, sharing literary experiences, good book stories over a tasty sandwich and a cuppa. Whether the panel’s choices make the short list remains to be seen but none the less an opportunity to hear about outstanding Australian literature for children is not an opportunity to miss.
The Children's Book Council of Australia
ACT Branch Inc.
PO Box 5548 HUGHES 2605

MEMBERSHIP

Are you passionate about encouraging children to read? Do you care about quality children's literature? Do you want to see Australia’s best books for children and teenagers recognised and their creators rewarded? Then why not join The Children’s Book Council of Australia!

Individual $50 (inc. GST)  Institution $100 (inc. GST)  Student $30 (inc. GST)
You will receive the following benefits:

- Free copies of the annual *Notable Australian Children’s Books* (which lists and describes the best children’s books published in Australia) and the Lu Rees Archives journal and annual report (hardcopy or electronic)
- Membership to the Lu Rees Archives Association
- Discounted rates on the purchase of Book Week merchandise such as bookmarks, badges, book bags, posters and Short List information
- Special members’ rates for CBCA activities such as author and illustrator visits, the biennial national CBCA conference and local CBCA events.
  (Attendance at CBCA events can be attributed towards professional development obligations.)
- The opportunity to meet and network with other people committed to the same objectives, including some of Australia’s leading authors and illustrators
- Substantial discounts on purchases at our annual Christmas shopping night
- A regular newsletter and email updates

To join or renew, please complete the form below and mail it with a cheque or money order made payable to The Children’s Book Council of Australia - ACT Branch or you may join/renew in person at any CBCA event.

CBCA ACT Branch
PO Box 5548 HUGHES 2605
ABN 20 024 451 638

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