



NATIONAL CENTRE for
AUSTRALIAN
CHILDREN'S
LITERATURE^{Inc}

Annual Report 2019

FOR THE YEAR 1 JULY 2018 – 30 JUNE 2019

Prepared by Dr Belle Alderman AM, Director

For members, friends and supporters of
The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc



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 @NatCentAusChLit

www.ncacl.org.au



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ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019



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Christopher Cheng and Jackie French, NCACL Ambassadors (foreground) with Craig Sloan, Chair of the Board, 7 April 2019



Executive Summary

This year the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc (NCACL) pursued a range of activities to deliver our aim to be home to our childhood stories and our vision —

Our literary past, present and future are preserved in the Centre, through the stories that touched our hearts and stirred our imaginations as children. It documents and shares the creative process and inspires the next generation of readers with research collections, exhibitions and outreach activities.

These are our objectives which guide us in achieving this vision —

1. to collect, preserve and document developments in Australian children's literature;
2. to make the collection available to the people of Australia, including all ages and all communities, in recognition of our cultural heritage in children's literature;
3. to make the collection available to students, researchers and others interested and to assist them in their study and research;
4. to provide encouragement and inspiration for current and future authors and illustrators of children's literature; and
5. to assist in the recognition and contribution of Australian children's authors and illustrators to children's literature around the world.

In connection with these objectives the NCACL aims to:

- preserve the creators' works;
- nurture the children's literature industry;
- support future professionals in the children's literature industry;
- support the research community in Australia and particularly those engaged in researching children's literature;
- encourage reading in children; and
- celebrate children's literature.

The NCACL Annual Report outlines achievements and continuing pursuits to achieve our vision and objectives.

Our collections continue to grow through strong publisher, author, illustrator and private donor support throughout Australia and overseas. Our graphs at the

conclusion of this report show record increases for the year in several areas. These include 2,321 books, the highest number of books added annually, highest number of volunteer hours at 7,345, and the highest number of clients served at 842.

As we have expanded our social media, we have also experienced increased communication with creators and donors. We received our largest number of books and authors' papers and illustrators' artworks in a single year. We accepted the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) Australia Archive, an important related organisation and one valuable for researchers. Existing research files continue to grow, both new and existing ones through efforts of Australia-wide volunteers sending material to the Centre. An independent assessment of the NCACL's significance highlighted these research files as 'unique' and 'significant'.

Through increased donations under the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, the Centre continues to collect, preserve and document developments in Australian children's literature. Such donations strengthen the Centre's unique research capacity, potential for exhibitions and outreach programs. These collections are documented and available through our website, thus promoting the work of Australian creators of children's literature throughout the world.

Our continuing exhibitions achieve our objective to make the collection available to the people of Australia, including all ages and all communities. Over the last three years, the NCACL has worked closely with the National Library of Australia to create *Story Time: Australian Children's Literature*. Opening on 22 August 2019 and running through 9 February 2020, this five-month exhibition is one of Australia's largest exhibitions of Australian children's literature. The NCACL has contributed some 50 items from its collection to *Story Time*. Several NCACL events are planned to coincide with *Story Time*. These will be reported in next year's Annual Report.

The NCACL designed and delivered its most ambitious undertaking to date. *Sharing Stories* was a series of events, talks, exhibitions and a symposium which ran between 3 October and 23 November 2018. *Sharing Stories* celebrated UNESCO's 'International Translation Day' to be celebrated henceforth each year on 30 September. The NCACL borrowed the International Board on Books for Young People collection of 191 books in 50 different languages chosen as their 'best children's books' by 61 member countries around the world.

The Australian IBBY section annotated for the first time their Honour Books from 1962-2018. A NCACL volunteer added several features to this annotated list and produced a catalogue for downloading from the NCACL and IBBY websites. These combined IBBY book exhibitions featured at three venues during this Annual Report period with two more before these books return to Kuala Lumpur. Next year's Annual Report will provide an overview of this venture celebrating children's books in translation.

Following the lead of *Sharing Stories* with its emphasis on translations, the NCACL embraced a worldwide interest in cultural diversity, especially evidenced in the #WeNeedDiverseBooks movement. The movement, which began in 2015, identified the lack of books representing diverse cultures especially in relation to literature for young people. Embracing that movement, the NCACL launched the world's third such database (after the US and Canada) on 31 March 2019.

The NCACL's strong engagement through social media continues to position the Centre as a respected and valued source of information about Australian children's literature both nationally and internationally. Our followers continue to build on Facebook, Twitter, e-newsletter and website.

The NCACL launched its new website on 29 October 2018 at NCACL's AGM. Achievements relating to the website included an inviting fresh look, branding and navigation, transfer of documents to the new website, enhancement of documentation relating to artworks, wide-ranging new pages, for example, those relating to fortnightly children's book review programs on radio ABC 666, Australian children's literature bibliographies and the Cultural Diversity Database. These initiatives position NCACL as an authority on Australian children's literature and ensure the NCACL resources are easily accessible and widely known.

We aim for the NCACL to be one of Australia's leading organisations that collects our creative products, shares our stories and explores our cultural identity. Our audience is broad including all people from birth through adulthood. These creative products are available for exploration and inspiration, now and in the future.

Building the Centre as a National Institution

Continuing two broad objectives in our Strategic Plan NCACL is pursuing two broad aims:

1. to achieve financial sustainability, and
2. to grow the reputation and reach of NCACL so that a wider range of individuals and groups can access its services and products.

The Board progressed these objectives by pursuing the following activities:

- *achieving financial sustainability;*
This remains an objective but one without substantial progress this year.
- *securing income to pursue the NCACL objectives;*
Campaigns raised funds to create a guide to an author's papers and manuscripts and to partially fund cataloguing of 562 Australian children's books in translation.
- *promoting NCACL as a national institution;*
The NCACL published an Opinion Paper highlighting its position as a national collection requiring a place (building) to achieve its long range goals;
- *building relationships with individuals and organisations to 'grow' the NCACL's potential as a national institution;*
Relationships with targeted groups and individuals continued with the following groups in particular: the National Library of Australia; the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) international and IBBY Australia; the Primary English Teachers Association of Australia (PETAA); Australian School Library Association (ASLA) and The Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA);
- *meeting the educational needs of professional associations through collaboratively planned programs;*
Professional programs and mini-exhibitions were developed for the national conferences and professional development programs of The Children's Book Council of Australia, the national and NSW Australian School Library Association and the Primary English Teachers Association of Australia;
- *creating NCACL's standalone website to ensure greater visibility, promote its resources and reach wider audiences; and*
- *developing the world's third Cultural Diversity Database to promote Australia's contribution to a world concern to promote diversity in children's literature.*

Expanding the Centre's Reach

The NCACL continues to form links and partnerships with like-minded organisations across Australia and overseas. These are designed to support further development and to secure the future of the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature. The NCACL is actively pursuing its goal to be Australia's national centre for Australian children's literature with recurrent funding and a dedicated purpose-built space to achieve our long-term vision. That vision is to document and share the creative process and so involve the next generation of readers with inspirational collections, interactive exhibitions and outreach activities. Young people are the future generation. Their creative efforts and the stories written for them are building Australia's future.

EXPANDING THE CENTRE'S REACH

Pursuing goal to be Australia's National Centre for Australian Children's Literature

NCACL published its Opinion Piece, 'A Place for Australian Stories for Young People', which describes the groundwork laid for achieving its goal to be the national centre for Australian children's literature recognised across Australia and around the world.

[A Place for Australian Stories for Young People](#)

Pursuing links, partnerships and consortia

The NCACL liaised with the Board of the National Capital Authority; ACT Education Directorate; Muse Literary Salon; Australia Copyright Agency; embassies; International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) Basel, Switzerland and IBBY Australia, Primary English Teachers Association of Australia, Belconnen Arts Centre, Museum of Australian Democracy, Australian National Museum of Education, Story Box Library, CBCA National and CBCA Victoria, Lost in Books Bookshop (Sydney) and SBS television.

SEE [Database connects kids with culturally diverse children's books](#)

Promoting the NCACL through its Ambassadors

Jackie French and Christopher Cheng continue their Ambassadorship roles and advocacy for the NCACL in various ways through their public voice of strong support and valuable networks.

EXPANDING THE CENTRE'S REACH

Sharing Stories celebrates translations & understanding cultures

UNESCO announced that annually from 30 Sept 2018 nations around the world should celebrate translations as a means of 'bringing nations together, facilitating dialogue, understanding and cooperation, contributing to development and strengthening world peace and security'. The NCACL, in association with Libraries ACT, IBBY Australia, IBBY in Basel, Switzerland and Muse, created 'Sharing Stories', a series of events, programs and exhibitions running from 3 October - 23 November 2018.

SEE [Sharing Stories Program](#)

[Catalogue of IBBY Australia's Honour Books from 1962-2018](#) created by IBBY Australia and NCACL volunteers

Showcasing the NCACL to national organisations

The NCACL showcased its collection and held interactive sessions for conference attendees of the Primary English Teachers of Australia Association (19-20 October 2018), the Australian School Library Association (15 April 2019) and The Children's Book Council of Australia (31 May & 2 June 2019)

Collaborating with the National Library of Australia on the Story Time exhibition

The NCACL and the National Library of Australia collaborated over the last three years to create a national exhibition *Story Time: Australian Children's Literature* which features over 250 objects to celebrate Australian children's literature. The exhibition at the National Library of Australia from 22 August 2019 – 9 February 2020 will be reported in the 2020 Annual Report.

Every Australian literary creation for young people requires a place to call home. The NCACL is that HOME

—Christopher Cheng, author & NCACL Ambassador

Enhancing our Collection & Providing Access

We aim to:

- collect, preserve and document developments in Australian children's literature,
- make the collection available,
- enable research,
- inspire current and future creators,
- promote the recognition and contribution of Australian children's creators to the international field of children's literature, and
- recognise our cultural heritage.

Below are the strategies we have used to achieve these objectives.

ENHANCING OUR COLLECTION & PROVIDING ACCESS

Growing the book collection

The NCACL added 2,321 books including 711 books from 35 publishers and their imprints. There were 78 donations from 24 authors & illustrators and 1,530 donations from 27 individuals & organisations. Donations included 274 translations in 39 languages, early and rare books as well as new works and different editions thus strengthening and/or completing the Centre's holdings for particular creators.

The NCACL continues to benefit from the efforts of Angela Brown, a volunteer with the Canberra Lifeline Book Fair. Over the last eight years she has found 5,985 books which the NCACL did not hold.

SEE [Graph 1 Donations](#) | [Graph 2 Translations](#) | [List of Donations](#)

ENHANCING OUR COLLECTION & PROVIDING ACCESS

Adding formed book collections

The Centre proudly accepted valuable private individuals' donations this year. These included a collection from Books Illustrated (Melbourne) which donated 628 picture books, many of which included inscriptions and sketches by the creators. Jane Covernton donated 91 picture books, including translations, from her publishing company, Working Title Press. This collection is valuable for its high quality picture books produced for children between the ages of 0 and 12. The published books had been annually donated since 1997 with this final donation completing a collection of picture books of exceptional quality. In 2017 Working Title Press was acquired by HarperCollins Publishers. Both donations are listed in the NCACL'S donations 1 July 2018-30 June 2019 under the donors' names.

SEE [Donations under donors' names](#)

Receiving donations from NCACL's wish lists

The NCACL's wish lists for Colin Thiele, Hesba Brinsmead and Noela Young continue to attract books from private and institutional donors. These creators are deemed significant in the development of Australian children's literature.

SEE [Wishlists](#)

Enhancing translations collection

Translations demonstrate that Australian children's stories have universal appeal around the world. Children's books are more widely translated than any other category of Australian books published. The NCACL began collecting these to mark the International Year of the Child in 1979 and now holds 4,394 books in 64 languages or country of origin. This year 274 translations in 39 different languages were added to the collection. The largest number of translations or country of origin across our entire collection, include, in order of numbers, American, British, German, French, Japanese, Chinese, Swedish, Portuguese, Danish and Spanish.

SEE [Translations of Australian children's books 1979-2019 held in NCACL](#)

ENHANCING OUR COLLECTION & PROVIDING ACCESS

Attracting donations of artwork and authors' papers and manuscripts

Large collections of artworks and authors' papers and manuscripts continue to be donated to the NCACL. Several donations under the Cultural Gifts Program have been finalised over the last 18 months. These include collections from Peter Gouldthorpe, Alison Lester, Emily Rodda (aka Jennifer Rowe), Wendy Orr, Libby Hathorn and Shaun Tan. Donations still in process include those of Narelle Oliver, Deborah Niland, another collection from Alison Lester, Elizabeth Honey and Freya Blackwood. Descriptions of these are available through the Donations list for last year and this year. Details of these are available on our Artwork Frameworks located on the NCACL website.

SEE [Freya Blackwood](#) | [A Guide to the Libby Hathorn Papers](#) | [Peter Gouldthorpe](#) [The White Mouse](#) | [Elizabeth Honey](#) | [Alison Lester](#) | [Narelle Oliver](#) | [Deborah Niland](#) | [Shaun Tan](#)

Creating bibliographies to promote Australian children's literature

The NCACL produced bibliographies based on topics with high reader and/or research interest. These bibliographies include ones on graphic novels and ANZAC books.

SEE [Bibliographies available from our website.](#)

Cataloguing and providing access to NCACL's resources

There were 1,330 items catalogued by the NCACL volunteers, with support from the Library. Expert cataloguing provides freely available, worldwide online access to the Centre's book collection.

SEE [NCACL's catalogue](#)

THE NCACL inventory for insurance purposes

The NCACL undertook an extensive inventory of its entire collection for insurance purposes. An external professional valued the collection at \$10.5 million dollars.



May Gibbs, preliminary study for *Lovers of Music for Gum-Blossom Babies*, 1915, © The Northcott Society and the Cerebral Palsy Alliance. Original artwork donated by Jane Brummitt to the NCACL and chosen for exhibition at *Story Time: Australian Children's Literature Exhibition*

Promoting Engagement and Attracting Wider Audiences

We aim to:

- make the collection available to the people of Australia, including all ages and all communities, in recognition of our cultural heritage in children's literature,
- make the collection available to students, researchers and others interested and to assist them in their study and research, and
- engage a wider range of individuals and groups and enable access to the Centre's services and products.

'A book can change a child's life. A children's book can change the world'

– Jackie French, author-winning children's author and NCACL Ambassador

PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT AND ATTRACTING WIDER AUDIENCES

Ways of Communicating - 18 August 2018

88 Radford kindergarten children and four teachers explored communicating through stories, art and illustration using the NCACL's collection.

Sharing Stories Opening - 8 October 2018

ACT Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Chris Steele, and Jackie French, author, opened the Sharing Stories series of events in Canberra running from 3 Oct – 23 Nov 2018.

Sharing Stories – International Board on Books for Young People book exhibit at the Woden Public Library 3 - 20 October 2018

The NCACL arranged the exhibition of 191 IBBY books from 61 countries in 50 languages representing each country's best recent children's books plus 48 IBBY Australia Honour Books from 1962-2018 at the Woden Public Library.

PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT AND ATTRACTING WIDER AUDIENCES

Libraries ACT Sharing Stories sessions 3 - 20 October 2018

Libraries ACT offered 10 sessions related to the IBBY books, including bilingual storytime, bilingual play activities, raising your child bilingually, international story time and travelling the world in picture books.

Creative art of picture books - mini-exhibitions 3 - 20 October 2018

The NCACL exhibited the creative art of children's books at Woden Public Library, Dickson Public Library and Tuggeranong Public Library featuring the work of Bob Graham, Leigh Hobbs, Elizabeth Honey, Narelle Oliver, Emily Rodda, Margaret Wild and Wayne Harris.

Symposium on translation of children's books 11 October 2018

Speakers included Libby Gleeson (author), Freya Blackwood (author-illustrator), Mathew Callaghan (translator) and Angela Namoi (translation rights), at the Inspire Centre, University of Canberra. Freya Blackwood's artwork for *Waltzing Matilda* and *My Two Blankets*, donated to the NCACL, were displayed.

SEE [*Behind the Imagined issue no 3, 2019*](#) includes speaker's talks in NCACL's online journal.

Words & Pictures for 3 year-olds & parents 12 October 2018

Libby Gleeson and Freya Blackwood presented an interactive program for families at Muse, East Hotel as part of Sharing Stories events.

Mirrors and windows 14 Oct 2018

Dr Belle Alderman AM spoke on 'Cultural Diversity in Australian Picture Books' at Woden Public Library.

The creative process - 22 October - 23 November 2018

The NCACL exhibited framed artworks and displays about the creative process for *The Worst Band in the Universe* (Graeme Base), *Silver Buttons* (Bob Graham), *The White Mouse* (Peter Gouldthorpe), *That's not a daffodil!* (Elizabeth Honey) and *Dinosaurs Love Cheese* (Jackie French and Nina Rycroft) created for the Primary English Teachers Association of Australia conference opening with the exhibition extending for the ACT community.



University education students compare English, Japanese, Chinese and Korean translations of *Possum Magic*

PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT AND ATTRACTING WIDER AUDIENCES

Promoting the Cultural Diversity Database

An extensive, successful campaign promoted the Cultural Diversity Database (CDD) from the end of March for two succeeding months. A range of responses both Australia-wide and overseas are available on the NCACL website, including a preview program by SBS television, and an article published in ACCESS journal for teacher librarians and others.

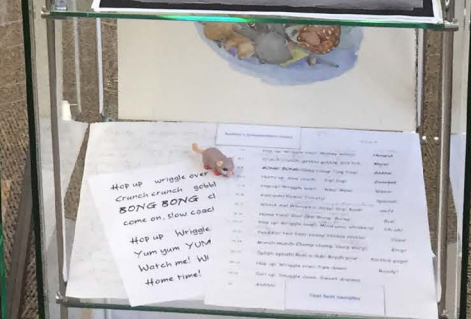
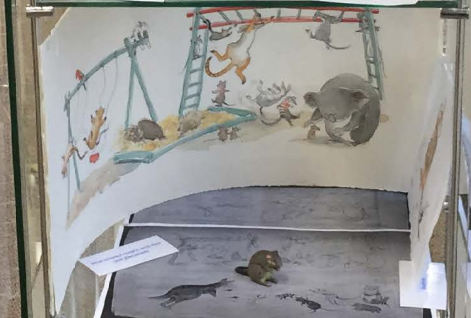
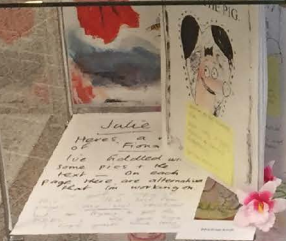
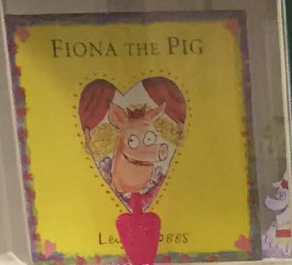
SEE The NCACL website at [Reviews and Media Comments](#)

SEE The [NCACL article in ACCESS](#), June 2019

SEE [SBS television program: Database connects kids with culturally diverse children's books](#)

Engaging with children through picture books 20 October 2018

Rowan Simpkin and Sharon van Baalen presented 'Hop up! Wriggle over!' program for children and their families at the Woden Public Library.



Original artwork by Elizabeth Honey for *Hop up! Wriggle Over* and by Leigh Hobbs for *Fiona the Pig* exhibited at Woden Public Library for Sharing Stories program, October 2018

PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT AND ATTRACTING WIDER AUDIENCES

Offering work-integrated learning

The NCACL has a long history of offering professional internships for students in various university disciplines. Emma Cox, a Master's student in Charles Sturt University's Teacher Librarianship program, spent her professional practice at the NCACL. She participated in the NCACL's programs by creating new and updating research files, documenting artwork, creating publicity stories for social media and other tasks.

SEE Emma Cox, [Research Files at the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature and Artwork at the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature](#), 21 July 2018

Providing services for study, research, professional development & promotion

University of Canberra students, researchers, academics across Australia, professional organisations and members of the external community continue to use the Centre's resources. Sessions provided for over 300 UC students introduced them to the NCACL resources, followed by individual or small group visits.

SEE [Client Services](#)

Reviewing Australian children's books on radio ABC 666

Beginning February 2019, the NCACL is providing reviews of Australian children's books fortnightly by Belle Alderman and Rowan Simpkin.

SEE [ABC Radio Interviews](#)

PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT AND ATTRACTING WIDER AUDIENCES

Curating & categorising research material about authors' & illustrators' works

The NCACL created 2 new & updated one existing research files. Meanwhile, existing files continued to grow through volunteers across Australia collecting material for the NCACL. By year's end, 522 research files are available extending over 34 linear metres. Resource material is continuously added to many research files over the year. An independent assessor describes these as 'unique' and 'invaluable' material for research into Australian children's literature.

Created: Mark Jackson, Danielle McDonald **Updated:** Pamela Freeman

SEE [Author and Illustrator Research Files](#)

Promoting NCACL through published articles

A blog for the Tasmania Children's Book Council of Australia, and a NCACL profile for the forthcoming book, *Story Time Stars*, were written as part of *Story Time: Australian Children's Literature* exhibition.

SEE '[Previewing Story Time: Australian Children's Literature Exhibition](#)', CBCA Tasmania Blog, 5 May 2019

Reaching our audience through the Centre e-newsletter

The Centre published several e-newsletters over the last year. These promoted events, provided news about the Centre's activities and promoted campaigns for funding to over 1,000 people with each publication. These enable us to keep in touch with our friends and supporters.

SEE [NCACL Newsletters](#)

PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT AND ATTRACTING WIDER AUDIENCES

Publishing the Centre's online journal, Behind the Imagined

The third issue of the NCACL's e-journal, *Behind the Imagined*, contains seven articles. The journal showcases the NCACL, its activities and provides informative articles about Australian children's literature. In celebration of the International Year of Translations 2018, three articles by Libby Gleeson, Angela Namoi and Matthew Callahan cover this topic, with additional articles about children's books given as school prizes between the 1880s-1940s, an article about the provenance of a painting by May Gibbs, plus two articles by Margot Hillel OAM and Bob Graham both arising from the *Imagine if ...* NCACL exhibition.

SEE [Behind the Imagined journal no 3, 2019](#)

Promoting the NCACL through the Story Box Library 30 May 2019

The Story Box Library produced a promotional film about the NCACL available from the Story Box Library's website and through the NCACL website.

SEE [Promotional film about the NCACL](#)



Rowan Simpkin talks with children about original artwork by Elizabeth Honey for *That's not a daffodil!* at Sharing Stories story time, October 2018



IBBY International book exhibition at Lost in Books Bookshop, Fairfield, Sydney, May 2019

Building Our Workforce

Our long term goal is to achieve a mix of paid staff, professional experts and volunteers, which is coordinated, skilled and adaptable over time.

Presently the NCACL relies on well-qualified, skilled and committed volunteers. Since its establishment in 1974, volunteers have contributed to our growth and development. Their contribution continues to contribute high-level skills and knowledge to the Centre. We gain our volunteers through direct recruitment for specific tasks, through NCACL's website call for [volunteers](#), through word of mouth and through promotions in selected publications. The Centre acquires additional expertise upon request to targeted organisations or where grants provide funds for specific purposes.

Over this year 35 volunteers donated 7,345 hours, the equivalent of 1,049 days or 4.16 full-time staff. The [Volunteers' Contribution](#) outlines the roles, responsibilities and tasks performed by the NCACL volunteers.

Conclusion

We believe that Australian children's literature occupies a place on the world stage. Our vision is to be a major Centre that continues to build and promote Australian children's literature, both within Australia and around the world. Our vision requires significant and widespread support from committed individuals and organisations as well as philanthropic and government bodies. We continue to pursue this vision and invite all interested to join with us.

This is a Centre that preserves the past, enriches the present and helps create the future of Australian children's literature

— Jackie French, author & NCACL Ambassador



Original artwork by Leigh Hobbs for *Fiona the Pig* with accompanying tea set exhibited at Woden Public Library for Sharing Stories program, October 2018

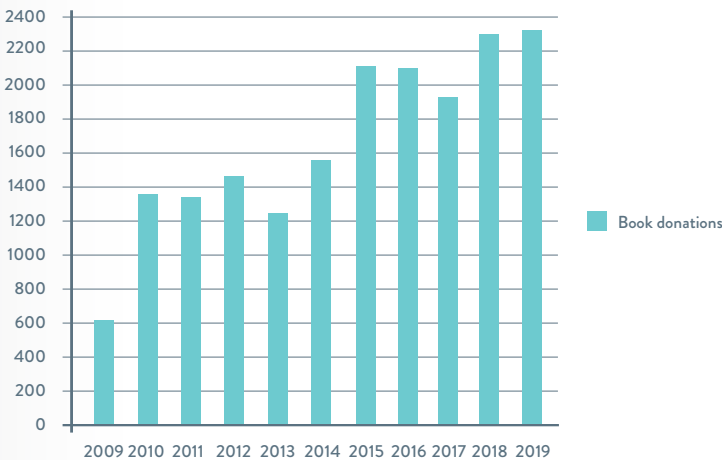


Creative writing and illustrating process by Bob Graham for *Silver Buttons* exhibited at the Primary English Teachers of Australia Conference, October 2018

Graphs

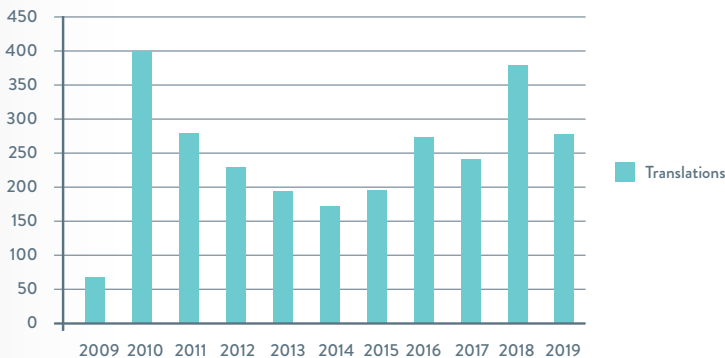
Graph 1 Book donations

Book donations reflect Cultural Gifts, Australian publishing output, efforts to fill collection gaps, and solicited and unsolicited material.



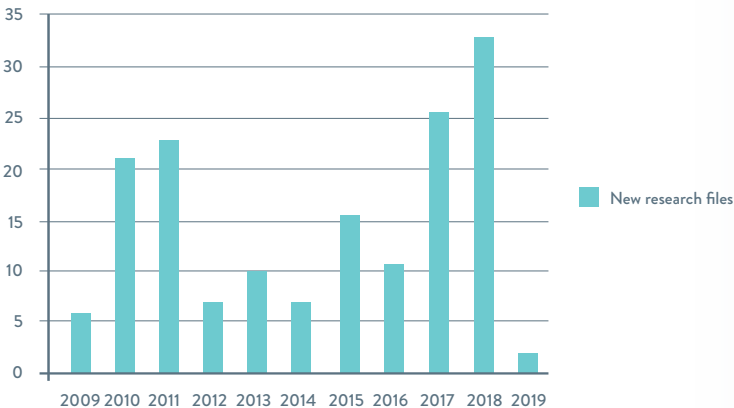
Graph 2 Translations

Translations reflect donations by publishers, authors and illustrators with Cultural Gifts in particular years producing large numbers of translations.



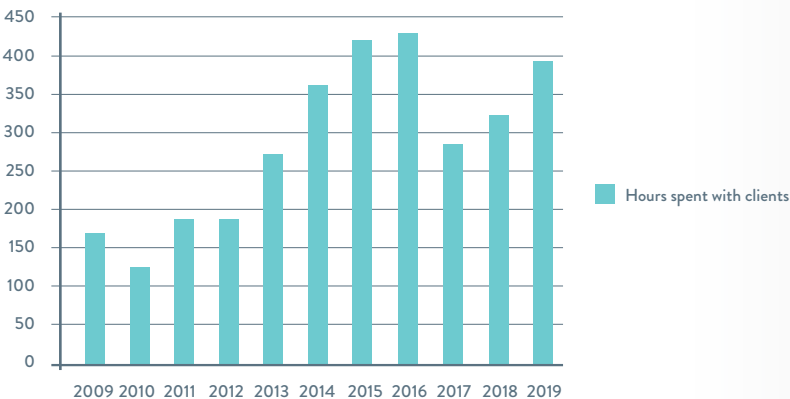
Graph 3 New research files

File growth reflects priorities set by the Centre.



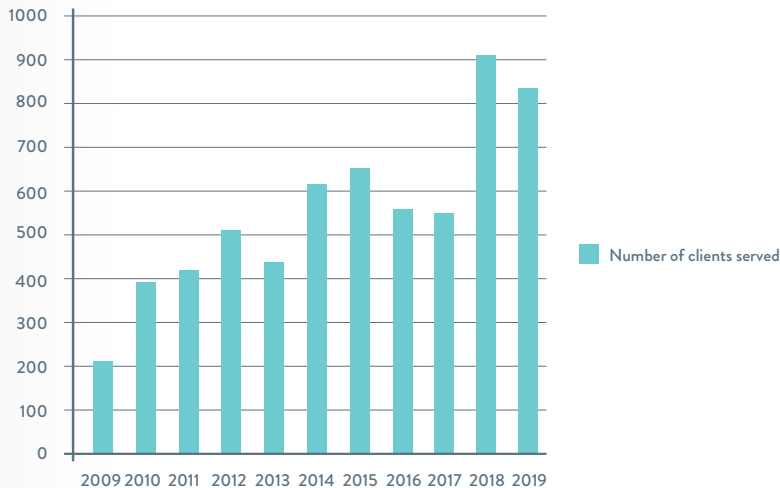
Graph 4 Hours spent with clients

Hours spent with clients reflect enhanced access to Centre’s resources, greater diversity of resources and more sophisticated queries.



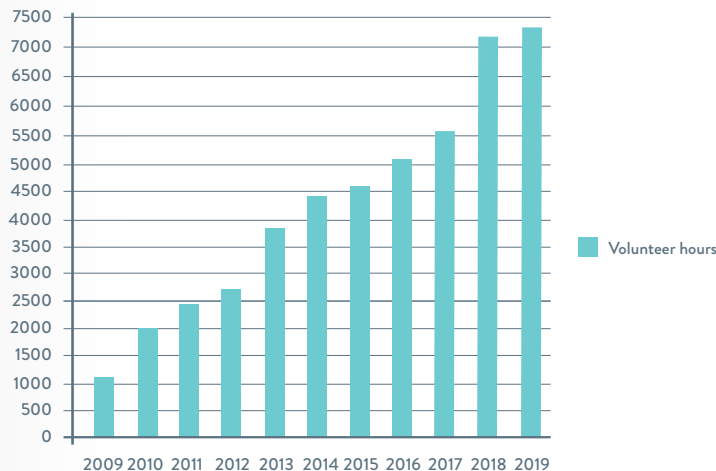
Graph 5 Number of clients served

Numbers of clients served reflect academic programs and external engagement. Access is provided through face-to-face and electronic means.



Graph 6 Volunteer hours

Volunteer hours reflect recurring activities as well as specific projects and tasks which vary from year to year.



The background of the image is a repeating pattern of small, light gray speech bubbles, each containing a silhouette of a person's head. A large, teal-colored circle is centered on the page, framing the text.

Sharing Our Nation's Heritage

