



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

Annual Report 2020

FOR THE YEAR 1 JULY 2019 – 30 JUNE 2020

Prepared by Dr Belle Alderman AM, Director

For members, friends and supporters of

The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc

The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of white speech bubble outlines on a light grey background. The speech bubbles are arranged in a grid-like fashion, slightly offset from each other, creating a textured, conversational feel.

National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc

Annual Report 2020

for the year 1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020

Prepared by Dr Belle Alderman AM, Director

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

 National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc.

 @NatCentAusChLit

www.ncacl.org.au



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

ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020

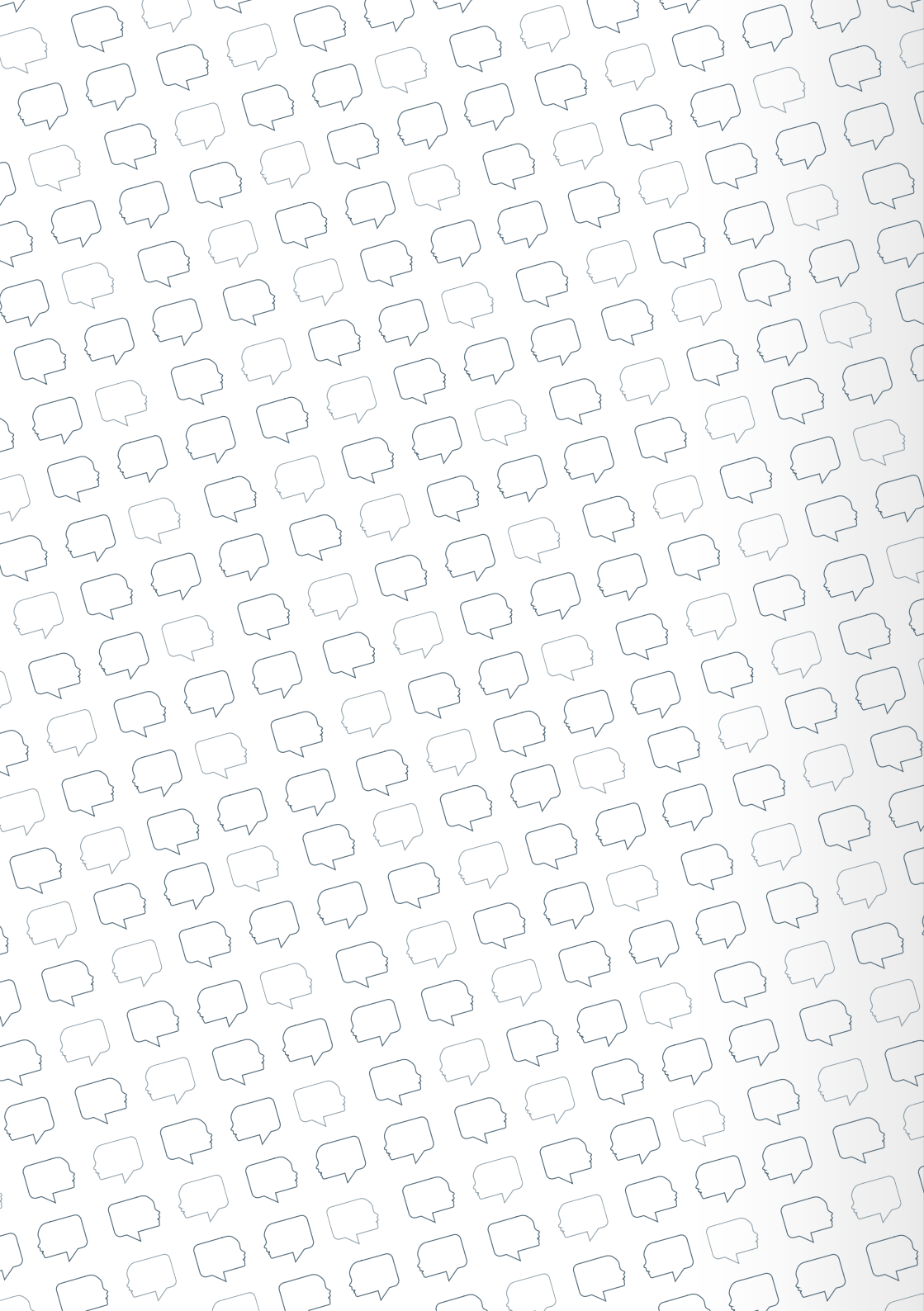


Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
<i>OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS</i>	1
Objective 1: Building The centre as a national institution	2
Objective 2: Expanding the centre’s reach	5
Objective 3: Enhancing our collection & providing access	6
Objective 4: Promoting engagement and attracting wider audiences	10
Objective 5: Building our workforce	14
Conclusion	14
Graphs	17
<i>GRAPH 1 BOOK DONATIONS</i>	17
<i>GRAPH 2 TRANSLATIONS</i>	17
<i>GRAPH 3 NEW RESEARCH FILES</i>	18
<i>GRAPH 4 HOURS SPENT WITH CLIENTS</i>	18
<i>GRAPH 5 NUMBER OF CLIENTS SERVED</i>	19
<i>GRAPH 6 VOLUNTEER HOURS</i>	19



Mike Botham and staff from the *School Magazine* view NCACL artwork
Pictured L to R: Rowan Simpkin talks about the creative process of
Elizabeth Honey and Alison Lester with Claire Catacouzinos,
Cheryl Bullock, Mike Botham, and Karen Jameyson



Executive Summary

This was a difficult year for the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc (the 'Centre') and the world. There were destructive bushfires in December and January. We closed for three months from March through June 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Important work on the collections ceased. In spite of these challenges, we worked online with colleagues across Australia, and created a unique database delivered on time and on budget.

The Centre remains committed to our wider activities of collecting, preserving, documenting and sharing the stories that touched our hearts and stirred our imaginations as children. Guided by our [objectives](#) we have delivered.

Overview of achievements

- Renewed Agreement with the University of Canberra for five years from May 2020, which covers collaborative services, space, expertise and in-kind resources. The collection is valued and insured for \$10.5 million dollars.
- Created a freely available database of children's books by and about Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Peoples with a grant of \$100,000 from the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment.
- Captured Australians' imagination with *Story Time: Australian Children's Literature*, a national exhibition undertaken in collaboration with the National Library of Australia.
- Continued collection growth of books through donations from publishers, individuals and organisations and Centre purchases and, as well, artworks, papers and manuscripts donated under the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program.
- Expanded online, free access to the Centre's book collection, artworks and guides to authors' papers and manuscripts.
- Demonstrated strengths in cultural diversity through the enhancement of our Cultural Diversity database.
- Enhanced access to translations through an externally funded cataloguing project.
- Toured translations of children's books from countries around the world in collaboration with the International Board on Books for Young People's (IBBY).
- Increased recognition as an authority and expert practitioner of Australian children's literature through providing professional practice and internships, events and podcasts, and social engagement across Facebook, Twitter, online newsletter, ejournal and website.

OBJECTIVE 1: BUILDING THE CENTRE AS A NATIONAL INSTITUTION

COLLABORATING WITH THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA ON THE STORY TIME EXHIBITION

The Centre and the National Library of Australia (NLA) collaborated over three years to create the national exhibition *Story Time: Australian Children's Literature* which ran from 22 August 2019 –16 February 2020. Over 50 of the 250 items came from the Centre's collection. Over 42,000 people attended with 64 per cent reporting they attended the NLA specifically for this exhibition while 34 per cent had previously never visited the NLA. These demonstrated widespread public interest in Australian children's literature and showcased the Centre's collection.

- [‘National Library Celebrates children's books in new exhibition Story Time’](#), The Canberra Times, 18 August 2019
- [‘10 Reasons to Visit Story Time: Australian Children's Literature Exhibition’](#), Kids' Book Review, 19 August 2019
- [‘Discovering Australian Children's Literature’](#), ACCESS, September 2019
- [‘National Treasures’](#), Reading Time, 19 December 2019

STORY TIME: AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE EXHIBITION LINKED WITH CENTRE PROGRAMS

Two programs were presented in connection with the *Story Time* exhibition. These featured original artwork and other unique material created by Bob Graham and Leigh Hobbs from the Centre's collection.

Dr Belle Alderman facilitated the National Library Panel session, ‘The Art of Storybook Illustration’ featuring Alison Lester, Leigh Hobbs and Freya Blackwood. An [hour-long video recording](#) is available.

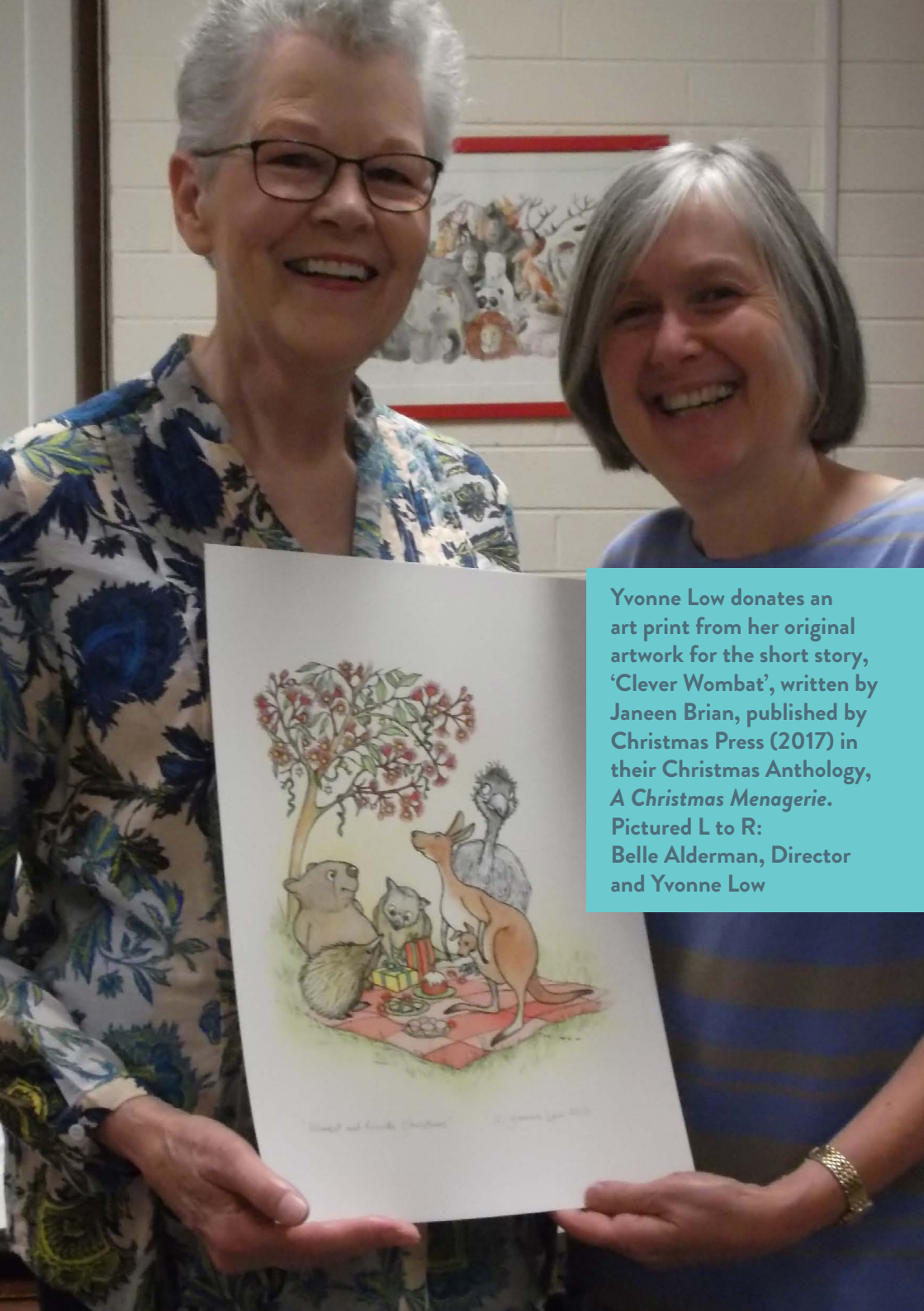
COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRES

The Centre previously displayed its artworks at the Belconnen Arts Centre. Plans to create an exhibition of Graeme Base's original artwork for *The Worst Band in the Universe* began, featuring school and community programs. COVID-19 delayed the planning, now resumed for 2021.

CREATING THE DATABASE OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS BY AND ABOUT ABORIGINAL AND OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

Creating the database of children's books by and about Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Peoples

The Australian Government's Department of Education, Skills & Employment funded the Centre \$100,000 in July 2019 to create a database of children's books by and about Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Achievements include the creation of a free database of 327 titles on this topic for children aged from birth through 12 years. Books were annotated and teaching resources selected by 20 Contributors across Australia while QA moderation of content and the addition of the Australian Curriculum and the Early Years Learning Framework were undertaken by four Centre specialists. The Centre's web manager built the database, and two Centre Board members managed the project. The database was designed by 372 Digital. A marketing/communication plan promoted the database after its launch on 22 July 2020. The Centre's Facebook and Twitter sites continue to promote the database. [Comments and testimonials](#) demonstrate a very positive response.



Yvonne Low donates an art print from her original artwork for the short story, 'Clever Wombat', written by Janeen Brian, published by Christmas Press (2017) in their Christmas Anthology, *A Christmas Menagerie*. Pictured L to R: Belle Alderman, Director and Yvonne Low

OBJECTIVE 2: EXPANDING THE CENTRE'S REACH

PURSING LINKS AND PARTNERSHIPS

NCACL's 18-month Sharing Stories project touring 191 books in 50 languages from 61 countries concluded. Our purpose was to share children's books in translation with Australia's culturally diverse society. Partners included the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) in Basel, Switzerland and IBBY Australia. Tour locations in South Australia included Thebarton Community College in Adelaide and the School and Community Library in Coober Pedy. In the previous year, this exhibition featured at Lost in Books Bookshop in Fairfield, Sydney, the Woden Public Library in the ACT and at the Children's Book Council of Australia National Conference at the Lakeside Hotel, Canberra. Articles exploring the reception of this project include ['Sharing Stories' Exhibition Report](#) by Judy Griffiths (Coober Pedy) and Amelia Beatty (Adelaide) and IBBY [Honour List 2018 visits Australia](#) by Liz Page (Switzerland).

PROMOTING THE CENTRE THROUGH ITS AMBASSADORS

[Jackie French](#) and [Christopher Cheng](#) continue their Ambassadorship roles and advocacy for the Centre in various ways through their public voice of strong support and valuable networks.

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

—*Christopher Cheng, author & Centre Ambassador.*

OBJECTIVE 3: ENHANCING OUR COLLECTION & PROVIDING ACCESS

GROWING THE BOOK COLLECTION

The Centre added 1,559 books including 552 books from 29 publishers and their imprints. For details, see the [List of Donations](#). There were 19 donations from 13 authors & illustrators and 988 donations from 26 individuals & organisations. Donations included 231 translations in 34 languages, ephemera, including toys related to children's books, early and rare books as well as new works and different editions thus strengthening and/or completing the Centre's holdings for particular creators. Our expert volunteer at the Canberra Lifeline Bookfair continued to find unique books for our Centre. Graphs showing the growth of book donations and translations are presented at the conclusion of this report.

ATTRACTING SPECIALIST DONATIONS

Three specialist donations were received this year. The Children's Book Council of Australia donated small press and self-published books entered into their awards. Translations of works by Lian Hearn aka Gillian Rubinstein came through Jenny Darling & Associates, Literary Agent. Dr Peter Williams continues to donate signed editions of Australian authors' books. These special donors are listed in our [List of Donations](#).

CATALOGUING TRANSLATIONS

The Centre raised funds from Embassies, language institutes and private donors over two years so that 572 books in 26 languages could be professionally catalogued. The full [story is recorded](#) on our website. Translations are a unique strength of the Centre.

ENHANCING TRANSLATIONS COLLECTION

Translations highlight the universal appeal that Australian children's stories have worldwide. The Centre began collecting translations to mark the International Year of the Child in 1979. The translations collection now holds 4,625 books in 66 languages or country of origin. This year 231 translations in 34 different languages were added to the collection. The largest number of translations or country of origin, in order of highest numbers, include American, British, Spanish, Chinese, German, French, Canadian and Dutch. The growth of this collection is documented in [Translations of Australian children's books 1979-2020](#)

BUILDING COLLECTIONS OF ILLUSTRATORS' ARTWORK AND AUTHORS' PAPERS AND MANUSCRIPTS

Collections of artworks and authors' papers and manuscripts continue to be donated to the Centre, professionally documented and available from NCACL's website. Generally these are donated under the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program. Included this year are the papers and manuscripts of Graeme Base and Pamela Freeman (presently unsorted), artwork for [Where's Jessie?](#) by [Anne Spudvilas](#), [The Underhills: A Tooth Fairy Story](#); [The Poesy Ring](#) and [Want to Play Trucks?](#) these three donations by [Bob Graham](#), [Tricky's Bad Day](#) by Alison Lester, and [My Two Blankets](#) and [Waltzing Matilda](#) by Freya Blackwood. A selection of artwork by [Gaye Chapman](#) has also been acquired. Details of these are available from our website.

CREATING BIBLIOGRAPHIES TO PROMOTE AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

NCACL produced bibliographies on topics with high user interest and/or research potential. This year 'Why representation matters: the importance of family diversity in Australian children's picture books' was produced. This and [earlier bibliographies on graphic novels and ANZAC books](#) are available from the website.

DIGITISING THE JOHN BARROW ARTWORK COLLECTION FOR POSTERITY

The University of Canberra Art Collection Manager digitised the Centre's [John Barrow Artwork Collection](#) of 136-framed artworks by Australian children's picture book artists whose work spanned the years from 1978-2004. This collection documents then emerging and now established Australian children's book creators' seminal works and favourite characters. The collection was donated under the Cultural Gifts Program. The Centre first exhibited this collection in 2016 which featured in the following article, [Original framed artworks from Australian children's literature go on display in Canberra](#), *The Canberra Times*, 28 April 2016.

CURATING RESEARCH MATERIAL ABOUT AUTHORS' & ILLUSTRATORS' WORKS

The Centre created three new & updated one existing research file. The 522 (as of 30 June 2020) [Author and Illustrator Research Files](#) continuously grow as volunteers across Australia send material to the Centre. An independent assessor of the Centre's significance describes these as 'unique' and 'invaluable' material for research. New files were created for Ros Moriarty, Mark Jackson and Danielle McDonald. Sally Morgan's file was updated.

CATALOGUING AND DOCUMENTING OUR RESOURCES

There were 1,821 items catalogued this year providing freely available and worldwide online access to the Centre's book collection. [Our catalogue](#) provides the complete holdings of our 47,000 strong book collection as well other Centre resources. Details of the Centre's [artworks](#) and [authors' papers and manuscripts](#) (finding aids) are also available from our website. A [Guide to the Wendy Orr Papers](#) was created this year.

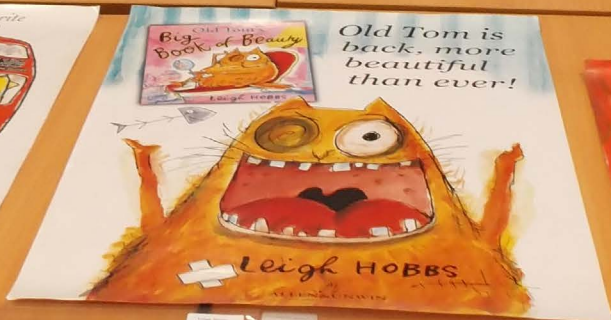
'A book can change a child's life. A children's book can change the world'

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



The Art of Leigh Hobbs

Ruth Nitschke presents Leigh Hobbs' artworks at NCACL, held in association with the *Story Time* exhibition



OBJECTIVE 4: PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT AND ATTRACTING WIDER AUDIENCES

SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT THE CENTRE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

By the end of June 2020, the Centre recorded 2,409 followers on Facebook and 4,701 followers on Twitter. Our website, launched in October 2018, continues to expand its reach and communicates with followers worldwide. Contributions and reports appear in our [eNewsletter](#), annual journal [Behind the Imagined No 4, 2020](#), and on our [Website](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#) sites.

PARTICIPATING IN WUNDERKAMMER: ANCIENT CURIOS AND CONTEMPORARY ARTEFACTS EXHIBITION

The Centre collaborated on an exhibition featuring the University's special collections located around the campus. Among the 105 items on display, Centre items included the artworks of Steven Woolman, Alison Lester, Andrew McLean, Graeme Base and Patricia Mullins. The University of Canberra published an [Article about UC's Wunderkammer](#) exhibit in August 2019.

DEMONSTRATING KNOWLEDGE: FAMILY DIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOKS

The Centre promoted its expertise and book collection through the ABC Radio Canberra interview with Sarah Jayne Mokrzycki about 'why representation matters in children's books' and this researcher's recorded talk, 'Why Representation Matters' presented at the University of Canberra, Ann Harding Centre.. Both presented on 17 September 2019 and available [here](#).

PROMOTING THE CENTRE'S DATABASES

The Centre's databases were presented at the Australian Catholic University Education Conference, October 2019.

SHARING THE WORLD'S THIRD CULTURAL DIVERSITY DATABASE

The Centre launched its first database [NCACL Cultural Diversity Database in March 2019](#), the world's third on this topic. It continues to be updated, accessed and publicised, for example, '[Culturally Diverse Children's Books](#)' in Australia Council for Educational Research, Teacher Magazine, 4 September 2019.

PROVIDING SERVICES FOR STUDY, RESEARCH, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & PROMOTION

The Centre served over 540 clients during the year, including University of Canberra students and staff, researchers and academics across Australia, professional organisations, National Library of Australia volunteers, the *School Magazine*, staff, students from the Australian Catholic University and members of the external community. Over 300 UC students attended as groups and individuals. The [Client Services](#) report identifies types of clients served and resources used.

DESIGNING AND PROVIDING WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING

Professional internships are offered to university students across Australia. Danielle Abbott, a Master's student in the Charles Sturt University's Teacher Librarianship program, spent her 70 hours of professional practice at the Centre in January 2020. In addition to other projects, she annotated books for the Centre's database of children's books relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, including [The Shack That Dad Built](#), [The Arguing Edibles](#), [Kangaroos Hop](#), [Tucker's Mob](#)

REVIEWING AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S BOOKS ON RADIO ABC 666 CANBERRA

Expert Centre volunteers discussed Australian children's literature in 20 programs running from February 2019-October 2020. These [ABC radio podcasts](#) are available from the Centre's website.

PROMOTING THE CENTRE THROUGH PUBLISHED ARTICLES

A range of articles about achievements are published in organisations' newsletters, professional journals and newspapers. A sample is included below.

- [‘Heroes of Children’s Book Week’](#), UNCOVER, by Suzanne Lazaroo, University of Canberra, 21 August 2019
- [“Celebrating the ‘IBBY Australia Honour Books List 1962-2018’”](#), by Robin Morrow in NSW Government, Scan 38(1), September 2020
- [‘The National Centre for Australian Children’s Literature’](#), by Yvonne Low, Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators, 23 March 2020

REACHING FOLLOWERS THROUGH THE CENTRE E-NEWSLETTER

During the year the Centre published the [Newsletter Vol 6 Issue 1](#) and [Newsletter Vol 6 Issue 2](#) for friends and supporters. These publicise events, provide news about the Centre’s activities and feature funding campaigns.

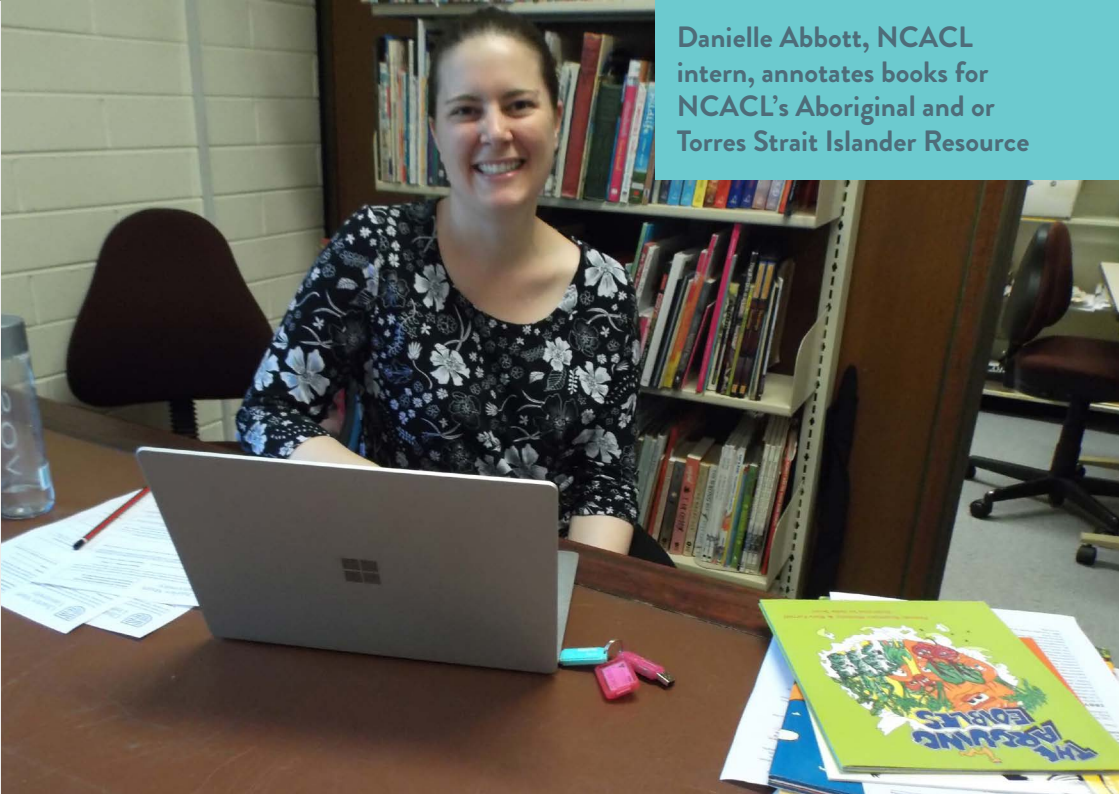
PUBLISHING THE CENTRE’S ONLINE JOURNAL, BEHIND THE IMAGINED

The fourth issue of the Centre’s e-journal, [Behind the Imaged journal no 4, 2020](#) shared events and the writing craft featured below.

- IBBY translations exhibit at Lost in Books Bookshop in Sydney, Thebarton College in Adelaide, SA and Coober Pedy, SA
- Overview of the IBBY travelling books by Liz Page, Director of IBBY International in Basel, Switzerland
- Emily Rodda’s opening address at the National Library of Australia *Story Time* exhibition
- Art of writing for young people by well-known Australian authors, Libby Hathorn and Hazel Edwards.



Belconnen Arts Centre plans exhibition and community programs featuring Graeme Base's, 'The Worst Band in the Universe'
Pictured L to R: Rowan Simpkin, Belle Alderman, Monique McInerney and Ann McMahon (Belconnen Arts Centre) and Max Brown



Danielle Abbott, NCACL intern, annotates books for NCACL's Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Resource

OBJECTIVE 5: BUILDING OUR WORKFORCE

The Centre has well-qualified, skilled and committed volunteers. During this year, 28 volunteers donated 8,034 hours, the equivalent of 4.5 full time staff. From our establishment in 1974, volunteers continue to contribute to our growth and development. The [Volunteers' Contribution report](#) outlines the roles, responsibilities and tasks performed.

Conclusion

The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature is committed to serving the needs of adults working in this field and also to future generations of young people who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the collection and its endeavours.

We reaffirm 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.

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

ward ... and took his first step.
like he was going somewhere.
Bob Graham

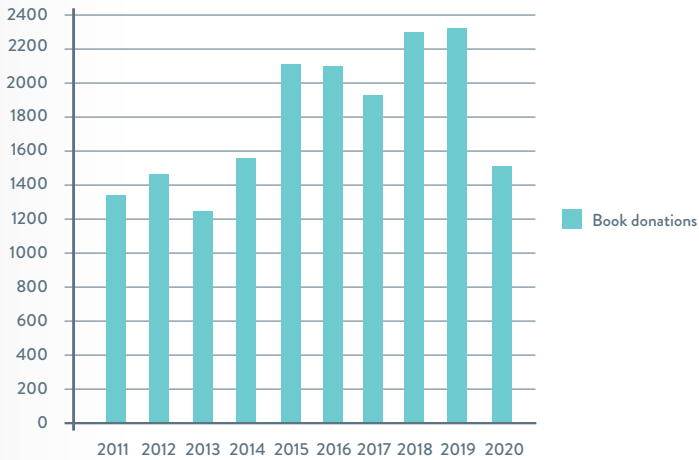
Bob Graham's artwork for 'Max',
housed at NCACL and here displayed
at the *Story Time* exhibition



Graphs

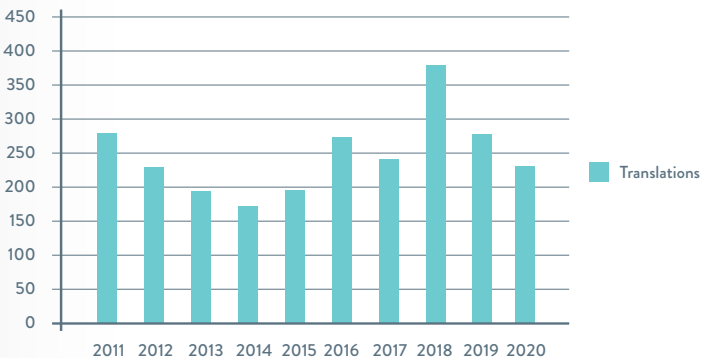
Graph 1 Book donations

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



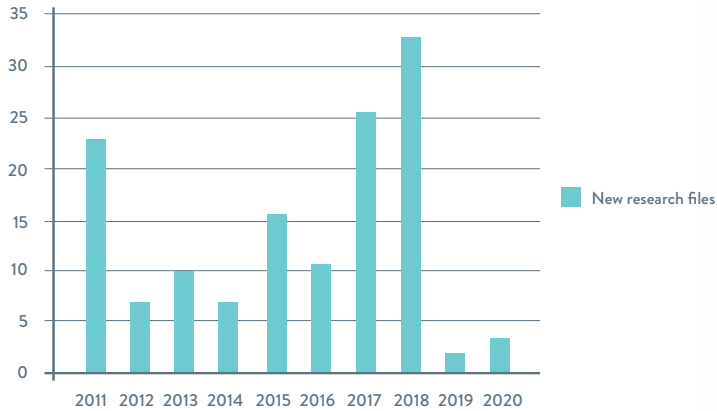
Graph 2 Translations

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



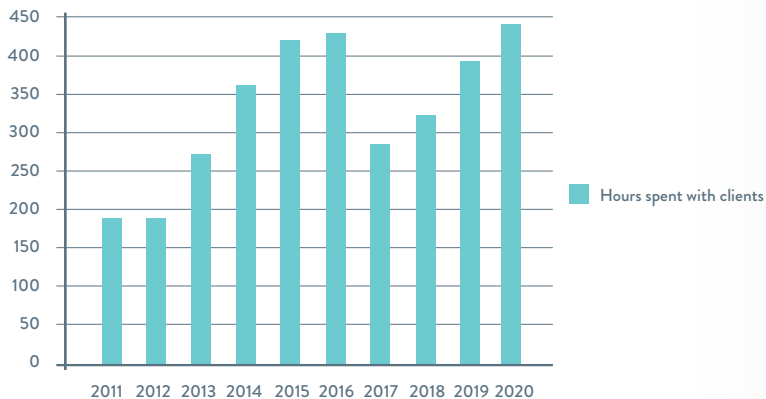
Graph 3 New research files

File growth reflects priorities set by the Centre.



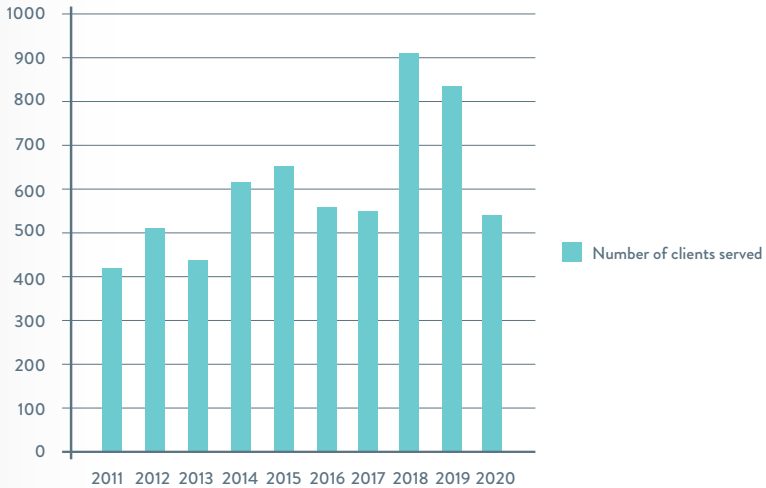
Graph 4 Hours spent with clients

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



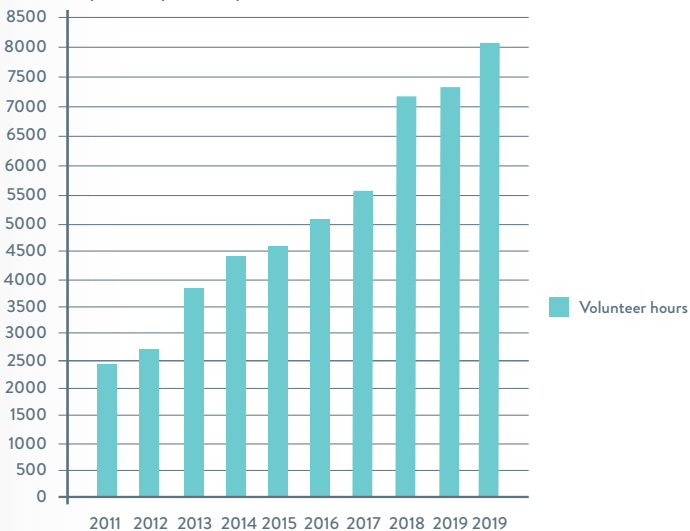
Graph 5 Number of clients served

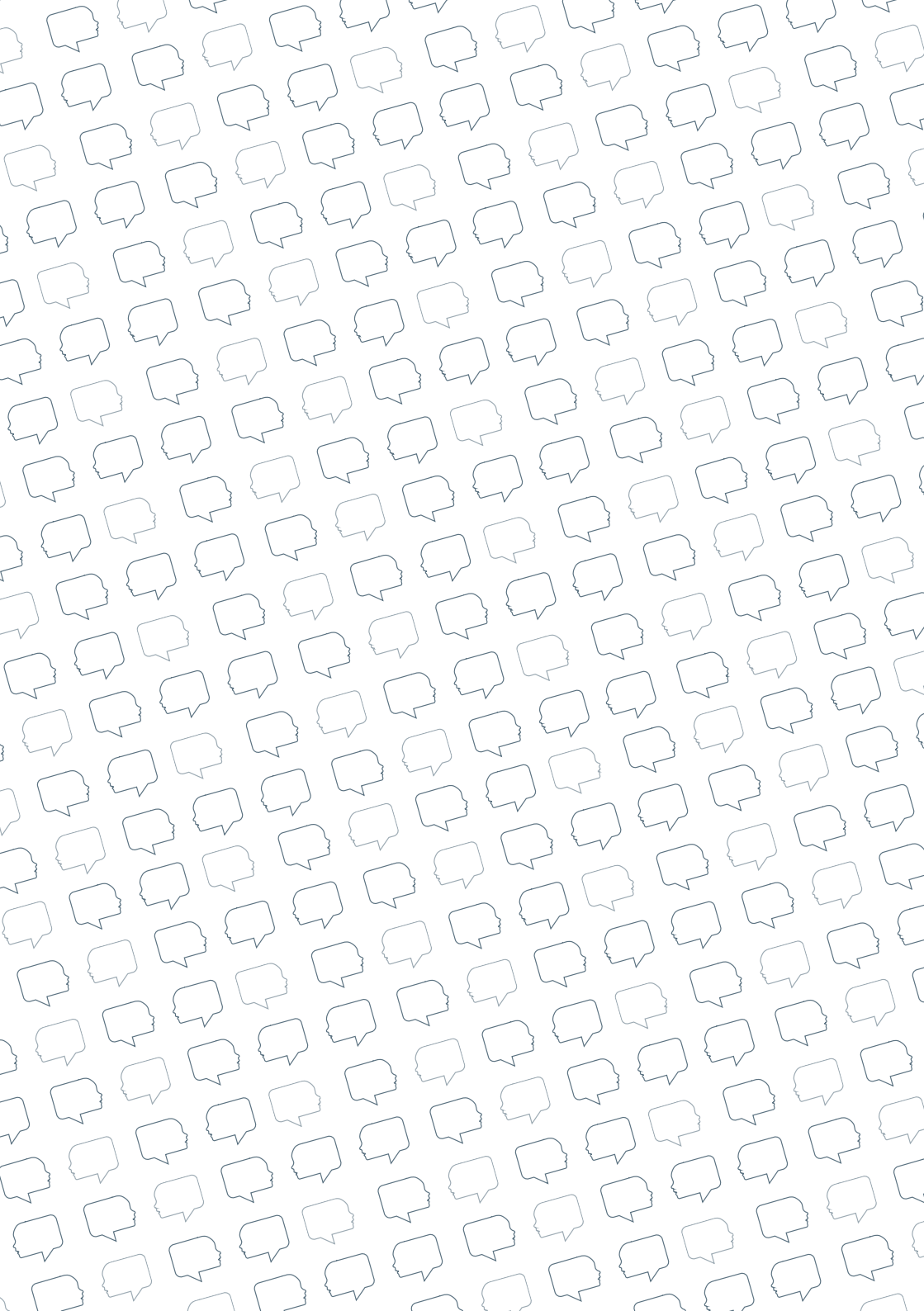
Numbers of clients served reflect academic programs and external engagement. Access is provided through face-to-face and electronic means.



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, white speech bubble icons. Each icon is a simple outline of a speech bubble with a tail pointing towards the bottom-left. These icons are arranged in a grid-like pattern across the entire page. In the center of the page, there is a large, solid teal circle. Inside this circle, the text "Sharing Our Nation's Heritage" is written in a dark teal, serif font. The text is centered both horizontally and vertically within the circle.

Sharing Our Nation's Heritage

