



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

Annual Report 2023

FOR THE YEAR 1 JULY 2022 – 30 JUNE 2023

Prepared by Dr Belle Alderman AM, Director

For members, friends and supporters
and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission

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.


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 National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc.

 @NatCentAusChLit

www.ncacl.org.au



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ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023

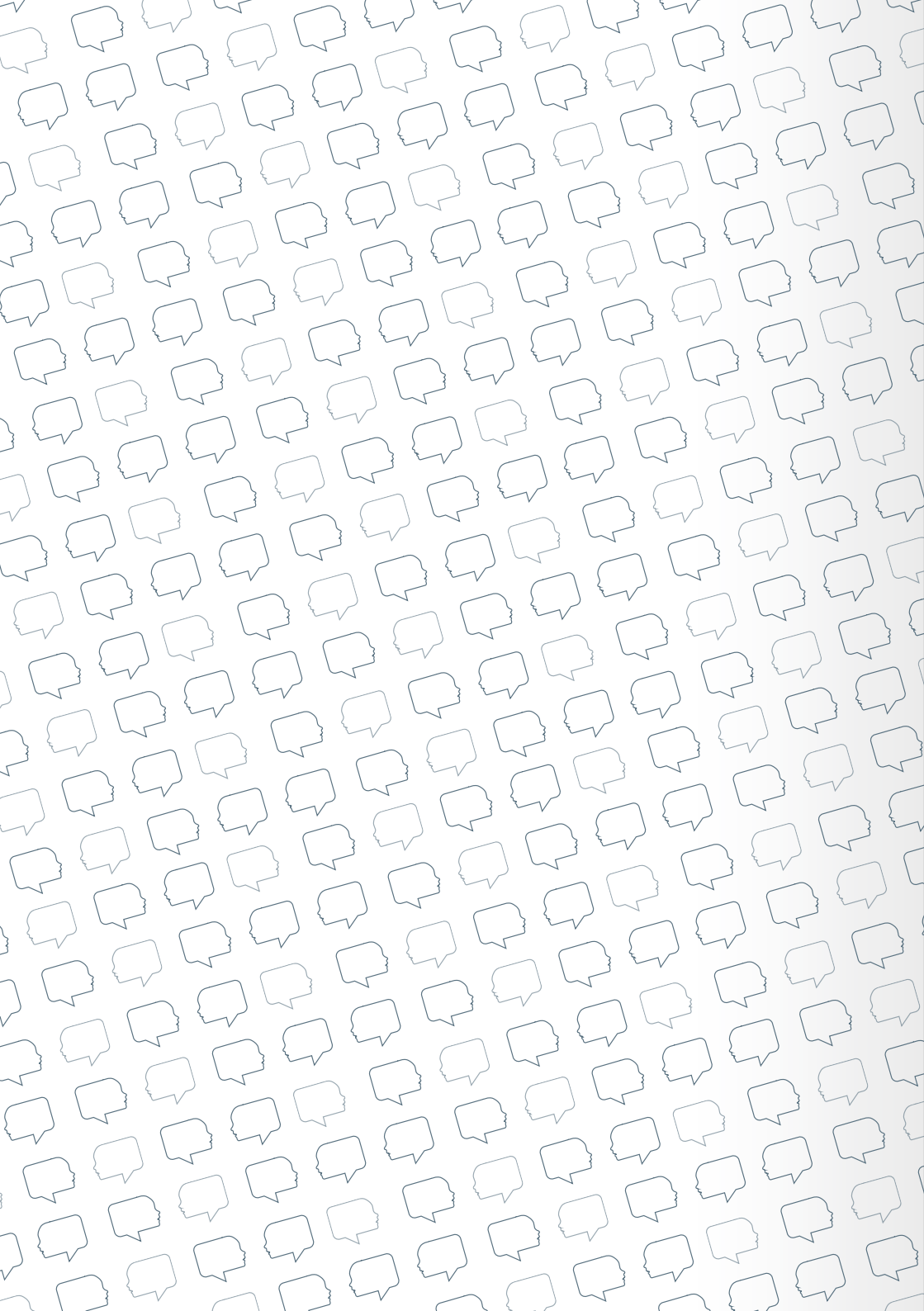


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Dinosaurs
Love
CHINESE
The Official Chinese Museum of the Year

THE ULTIMATE ANIMAL
COUNTING BOOK
JENNIFER COSSINS

JENNIFER COSSINS
AMAZING ANIMAL
JOURNEYS

THE ULTIMATE ANIMAL
ALPHABET BOOK
JENNIFER COSSINS

EMERGED ANIMALS
A-Z

101
WILD ANIMALS
AND PLANTS

100
WILD ANIMALS
AND PLANTS

COOK
CURRICULAR
BIRDS

COMPENDIUM OF
ANIMALS

101
COLLECTIVE NOUNS
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
BY JENNIFER COSSINS

Jennifer Cossins artist and author visit

Executive Summary

This year we continued to erase physical barriers to our Centre by using online communication in new and expanded ways. The Centre's website has greatly enhanced our interaction and promotion of Australian children's literature worldwide. The Centre's collections, products and services are on offer 24/7. Since its inception, the Centre's website has moved beyond its Australian audience. We now have over 50,000 active users annually in the US, Japan, India, China, Brazil, UK, Bangladesh, Germany, Russia, South Korea, Mexico, Nigeria, Spain, France, Indonesia, Thailand, Canada, Vietnam, Philippines, Poland, South Africa, Netherlands, Ukraine, Argentina, Algeria and Egypt.

The Centre's well-established social media presence on Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) continues to expand with over 10,000 followers. This year the Centre began offering a new monthly blog to increase our involvement with creators, partners and friends. Other online offerings include our Annual Report, *Behind the Imagined* journal and our newsletter. Our website continues to offer access to documentation about the Centre's collections—its books, artworks, authors' papers and manuscripts, and publishers' and organisations' papers. This has resulted in an increase in researchers, academics and others visiting the Centre to access these resources.

The ongoing growth and use of the Centre's three online databases continues. Databases include the Cultural Diversity, Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Resource, Picture Books for Older Readers plus its Verse Novels Resource. Over 1,200 books and related online resources feature in these databases. In 2022-2023 the Centre's most frequently visited webpages related to our latest database, Picture Books for Older Readers. In excess of 40,000 Australian and international viewers visited this new database on 1 July, the day after its launch. Each of these resources continues to grow with assistance from creators and publishers who generously donate their books. These databases feed the international strong interest in Australian children's literature worldwide evidenced in another way through its many books in translation. The Centre continues building its collection of translations and now offers one of Australia's largest such collections with close to 5,800 books translated into 79 different languages.

The last two years mark a continuing diversification of promotional ventures. These consist of published articles, interviews in national associations' journals, blogs and online symposiums. This year the Centre created its first website educational resource. The resource relates to The Barrumbi Kids television series produced by the Australian Children's Television Foundation in association with Screen Australia and NITV. The Centre's Barrumbi Kids Resource includes a guide to two picture book stories by Leonie Norrington and illustrated by Dee Huxley. The artwork has been reproduced with the kind permission of the illustrator and publishers HarperCollins and Allen & Unwin.

As an Affiliate of the University of Canberra, the Centre's resources are valued for insurance purposes every three years. The Centre's collection was last valued at \$12,824,100 as of the end of June 2022.

Overview of achievements

- Increased recognition as an authority and expert practitioner of Australian children's literature
- Enhanced online presence through databases and educational resources
- Offered events, exhibitions and educational engagements through the Centre's Facebook, X, online newsletter, e-journal, blog and website
- Provided professional practice for Charles Sturt University Masters students and work-integrated learning for University of Canberra's Cultural Heritage students
- Enhanced the book collection through donations from publishers, individuals, organisations and Centre purchases
- Continued building collections of artworks, papers and manuscripts donated under the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program plus outright donations
- Created new and enhanced existing relationships with related organisations
- Expanded online access to the Centre's collections

OBJECTIVE 1: BUILDING THE CENTRE AS A NATIONAL INSTITUTION

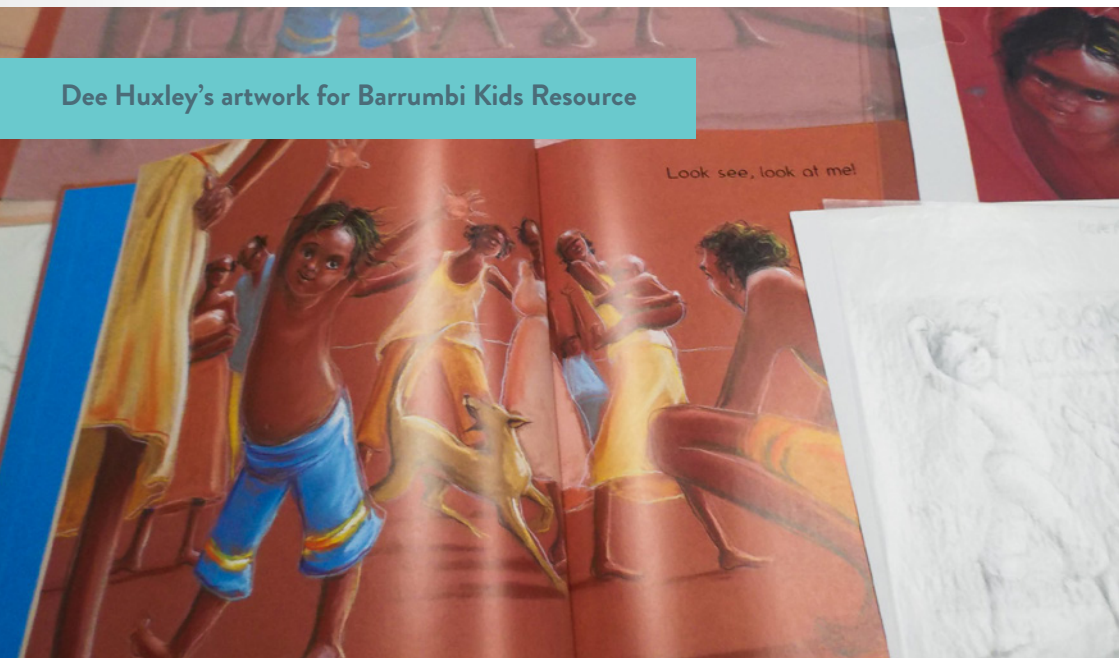
EXHIBITING, EDUCATING AND ENGAGING ALL AGES

The Centre loaned a selection of Freya Blackwood's artwork for [My Two Blankets](#) which was exhibited at the NSW State Library from 9 July 2022 – 9 July 2023 for an exhibition entitled [Imagine: the Wonder of Picture Books](#)

Material from the Centre's collection of Hazel Edwards' papers was loaned for the Juvenilia Exhibition: Early Works of Children's Authors & Illustrators, a travelling exhibition of Australian authors' and illustrators' works created when they were children.

At the Centre, changing book displays feature. Bibliographies of these displayed books are available from the Centre's website to provide wide distribution. Such [bibliographies](#) include Children and War, NAIDOC Week 'For Our Elders', IDAHOBIT Day and Starting School and School Days. The Centre also loans its artworks to enhance the University of Canberra Library's collection of books and story time sessions for children.

Dee Huxley's artwork for Barrumbi Kids Resource



IDAHOBIT Day readings



CREATING AND LAUNCHING THE PICTURE BOOK FOR OLDER READERS DATABASE

The Centre created its third database, developed over a year by 15 individuals including Centre staff contribution and guidance of the project. The database launched with 240 titles on 30 June 2023. This database received high interest during its campaign and development stage and successfully raised funds for its creation. The Picture Books for Older Readers [database](#) continues to grow and gain followers.

ENHANCING THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY DATABASE

The [Cultural Diversity Database](#) featured over 400 titles by year's end. Searches are possible by author, title, publisher, publication date, audience, key concepts, annotations, Australian Curriculum and Early Years Learning Frameworks with a capacity to share 'favourites' with colleagues and on social media. [Reviews and media coverage](#) offer positive comments.

ENHANCING THE ABORIGINAL AND OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES RESOURCE

Funded by the Australian Government's Department of Education, Skills and Employment in 2019, the [NCAACL Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Resource](#) features books by and about Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Peoples. On its launch date on 22 July 2020, 327 titles featured for children aged from birth through secondary years. This database now offers close to 600 books for young people of all ages and continues to grow. [Comments and testimonials](#) demonstrate a very positive response.

DOCUMENTING AND PRESERVING THE EPHEMERA COLLECTION

Publishers and organisations may choose to promote authors' and illustrators' books by creating ephemera related to the story. These may be toys, puzzles, games, maps and other items. Ephemera is part of the marketing and promotion of children's books and is an important part of a book's history. The Centre's largest collection of ephemera relates to the work of May Gibbs. This year UC's Cultural Heritage students have researched ways to document and promote this particular collection. [A blog](#) by Tania McCartney provides highlights of this collection. A UC Cultural Heritage student undertook a [preservation project](#) to preserve two 1940s Sydney newspaper comic strips about May Gibbs' characters, Bib and Bub.

OBJECTIVE 2: EXPANDING THE CENTRE'S REACH

BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH LIKE-MINDED ORGANISATIONS

The Centre has a continuing, long-standing relationship with The Children's Book Council of Australia and holds its artwork created for Children's Book Week. This year, the Centre continued to foster its formal relationship with the International Board on Books for Young People – IBBY Australia, the Australian Children's Television Foundation, the Australian Children's Laureate Foundation, the Story Box Library and the May Gibbs Children's Literature Trust. Such relationships offer opportunities to build and extend common interests. Members of the Canberra Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, the CBCA ACT Branch and Australian Library and Information Association visited the Centre for talks and displays revealing the creative process.

PROMOTING ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS THROUGH COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The Australian Schools Cataloguing Information Service (SCIS) provides cataloguing records and services to all schools across Australia. This year SCIS created cataloguing records for books in the Centre's [Picture Books for Older Readers](#) database, thus promoting this Centre's resource. The [Story Box Library](#) which offers readings and resources related to Australian children's picture books promoted the Picture Books for Older Readers database where both our organisations featured the same books.

PROMOTING THE CENTRE THROUGH ITS AMBASSADORS

Jackie French AM and Christopher Cheng continue their Ambassadorship roles and advocacy in various ways through their public voice of strong support, valuable networks, participation in events, publicising the Centre, donations and assisting with marketing initiatives.

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 AND PROVIDING ACCESS

GROWING THE BOOK COLLECTION

The Centre added 2,546 books including 1,227 books from 23 publishers and their imprints. There were 110 donations from 23 authors & illustrators, and 1,209 books from 28 individuals & organisations. Donations included 587 translations in 51 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 Centre's expert volunteer, Angela Brown, finds unique books for our Centre to purchase at the Canberra Lifeline Bookfair. In her blog, 'Thrilling Finds for NCACL', she describes her work. Graphs showing the growth of book donations are presented at the conclusion of this report. The [list of donations](#) for the year is available from the Centre website. All figures show a marked increase.

ATTRACTING SPECIALIST DONATIONS

In addition to donations through the Cultural Gifts Program, the Centre is grateful for monetary donations which enable the Centre to pursue its goals. A number of significant items were donated to the Centre. These are listed under sections titled 'Authors and Illustrators', 'Publishers' and 'Personal and Organisations' sections of the [Donations list](#). Authors and illustrators Tania McCartney, Matt Ottley and Lian Tanner donated collections of their books in English and translations. Emma Mactaggart from Boogie Books donated 384 books written and illustrated by children over many years, thus adding to the Centre's existing strengths in this area. Jane Brummitt donated her lifetime's dedication to documenting the life and work of May Gibbs and the story of Nutcote in a large collection without equal. The Centre is grateful for the continuing donation of journals *The School Magazine*, *Magpies: Talking about Books for Children* and *Good Reading Magazine* which are well used..

CATALOGUING AND DOCUMENTING OUR RESOURCES

There were 2,188 books catalogued this year providing freely available and worldwide online access to the Centre's book collection. [Our catalogue](#) provides details of our 57,000 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 the website.

PROVIDING ACCESS TO AUTHORS' PAPERS AND MANUSCRIPTS THROUGH FINDING AIDS

The following finding aids were produced as a guide to these authors' papers and manuscripts.

[Graeme Base](#) (published September 2022)

[Ruth Starke](#) (published January 2023)

[Lilith Norman](#) (updated and published 2023)

ENHANCING TRANSLATIONS COLLECTION

Translations demonstrate that stories have universal appeal around the world. Australian children's literature has a strong record of translations. The Centre began collecting translations to mark the International Year of the Child in 1979 and now holds 5,577 books in 79 languages or country of origin. This year books in 14 Aboriginal languages were added. This year's translations, or English editions other than Australian, numbered 587. The largest number of translations or country of origin, included, in order of numbers American, Chinese, Korean, German, Dutch, British, Italian, French and Spanish.

Details of the Centre's translations are available in the document [Translations and Overseas Editions 1979-2023](#)



Handwritten notes and printed text related to the project. One note says: "Add to this page with Maggie on her back every day. Through attention through time." Another note says: "After the study, when the operators are operating up to the limit." There are also several pages of printed text, some of which appear to be translations or descriptions of the fox's behavior.



Handwritten letters and notes. One letter starts with "Dear" and discusses children who were "rejoiced" and "rejoiced" (likely a typo for "rejoiced"). Another note says "Kind Regards, Julie Bidd, Year 5 Classroom Teacher, Yupa Valley Anglican School, Kalinda Rd, Kingwood, 3134".

'Fox' creative process and translations

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

Cultural Gifts Program (CGP) donations remaining under consideration include artworks by Bob Graham (*Ellie's Dragon*; *Maxine*; and *The Underhills: a Tooth Fairy Story*); Alison Lester (*Sing Me the Summer*) and Liz Anelli (*Desert Lake* by Pamela Freeman). Bob Graham donated artwork for *Jigsaw: a Puzzle in the Post* as a future CGP donation. Collections documented include works by Bob Graham, Elizabeth Honey, Lisa Kennedy, David Kennett, Fran  Lessac, Alison Lester, Deborah Niland, Kilmeny Niland, Tania McCartney and Shaun Tan. Additional donations are anticipated in the near future.

CURATING RESEARCH MATERIAL ABOUT AUTHORS' AND ILLUSTRATORS' WORKS

The Centre creates new and updates existing [research files](#) about creators' works, as time permits, where their body of work offers research potential. By year's end, 21 new research files were listed on the website while five existing files were updated. NEW FILES CREATED: S Bayly, SE Bound, JW Boyle, MB Clarke, Karen Comer, J Cossins, S DeGenarro, G Evans, R Ghosh, A Goodes, K Gordon, E Lang, P Lesnie, R Lim, L Marwood, Aunty F Stewart-Muir, O Phommavanh, J Racklyeft, B Simmons, R A Spratt and L Tanner. EXISTING FILES UPDATED: F Blackwood, L Hall, D Huxley, T McCartney and L Norrington

'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

OBJECTIVE 4: PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT AND ATTRACTING WIDER AUDIENCES

PROMOTING THE CENTRE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Currently the Centre's Facebook site has around 5,500 followers and the Centre's X site has around 5,200 followers. Both began in 2014. The Centre's website, launched in October 2018, expands the Centre's reach and communicates with followers worldwide. The Centre is actively promoted through social media, a newsletter, journal and blog on its website [Newsletter](#), [website](#), [Facebook](#) and [X](#) and <https://www.ncacl.org.au/blog/blogspace/>

The Centre's monthly blog began in February 2023 to communicate its specialist activities and collections and to promote involvement by creators, partners and friends.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day display



REACHING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES THROUGH PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

- Presentation by Dr Belle Alderman, AM Director including children from the Wiradjuri Childcare Centre for Children with educators Rowan Simpkin, Sally Allen and Jodie Dawson featuring in a five-minute film produced by the University of Canberra plus an accompanying PowerPoint presentation ‘Sharing Treasures’, for the nation-wide [Foundation for Learning and Literacy Symposium 23 Nov 2022](#)
- ‘Venturing Virtually’ by Dr Belle Alderman [Venturing Virtually NSW Government](#), *Scan: the Journal for Educators*, vol 41, no 7, 2022, pp38-40
- ‘Guest Review : Dr Belle Alderman on ‘The Storyteller’s Handbook’ ‘[The Storyteller’s Handbook](#)’ in Kids’ Book Review 10 Oct 2022
- ‘Update on Collaboration with National Centre for Australian Children’s Literature’ produced for the On-Campus Collaboration Governance Group, 28 Nov 2022
- ‘Finding just the Right Resource’ by Dr Belle Alderman AM [School Cataloguing Information Service \(SCIS\)](#), Issue 125, term 2, 2023
- The Centre’s monthly Blogs [NCAACL blogs](#) began 3 February 2023 with five appearing by end June 2023
- Australian Children’s Television Foundation [ACTF News](#) promotes NCAACL’s ‘Barrumbi Kids Resource’, 21 February 2023
- Cherie Gilmour ‘Once Upon a Time’ article about the NCAACL, published in *Magpies: Talking about Books for Children* vol 38 no 2 Mar 2023, pp8-9
- Ashleigh Meikle The Book Muse reviews ‘[NCAACL Cultural Diversity Database](#)’ 30 April 2023
- Ashleigh Meikle The Book Muse reviews ‘[NCAACL Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Resource](#)’ 10 May 2023

- ‘One Loud Voice: Working Together’ NCAACL Director participated in an online symposium organised by the Australian Children’s Laureate Foundation to foster collaboration between children’s literature organisations, 11 May 2023
- Kidlit Classics Episode : A Podcast about the [Children’s Literature That Made Us’ Episode S2](#) interview 14 with NCAACL volunteer, Rowan Simpkin, 25 May 2023
- Story Box Library ‘Q&A with Belle Alderman from the Centre of Australian’s Children’s Literature. <https://storyboxlibrary.com.au/blog/qa-with-belle-alderman-from-the-national-centre-of-australian-childrens-literature> 6 June 2023
- Ashleigh Meikle The Book Muse reviews ‘[NCAACL Australian Verse Novels’](#) 7 June 2023
- Story Box Library creates a link to [56 books](#) that also appear in the Centre’s *Picture Books for Older Readers* database

PROVIDING SERVICES FOR STUDY, RESEARCH, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION

The Centre served 279 clients for a total of 523 hours during the year, including University of Canberra students and staff, external researchers, publishers, educators and academics across Australia. These activities are documented in the [Client Services report](#) available from the website which identifies types of clients served and resources used.

DESIGNING AND PROVIDING INTERNSHIPS AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Professional internships are offered to university students from across Australia. Gaye McDermott, studying Cultural Heritage at UC, [preserved the Centre's 1940s newspaper comic strips](#) featuring Bib and Bub characters. Sally Allen, studying her Master of Teacher Librarianship at Charles Sturt University, engaged in a 10-day professional work experience at the Center. Paige Eping Teng, a UC Cultural Heritage student, undertook a 100-hour internship which involved documenting an artist's original artworks, plus creating and discussing a display of original artworks with external visitors.

CREATING AN ORIGINAL EDUCATION RESOURCE IN COLLABORATION WITH THE ACTF AND NITV

Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF) with Screen Australia and NITV created a 10-part children's television series based on *The Barrumbi Kids*, three middle grade books by Leonie Norrington. The series screened Nov-Dec 2022 on NITV with availability continuing. NCACL developed a related [educational program](#) for its website, as a new venture. A gallery of original artwork by Dee Huxley was added to the website along with a related teaching resource created by Rowan Simpkin with contributions by Sally Allen, CSU professional work experience student. This was a successful enterprise for the Centre which gained over 20,000 views worldwide.

REACHING FOLLOWERS THROUGH THE CENTRE'S E-NEWSLETTER AND BEHIND THE IMAGINED

During the year the Centre published three newsletters including Volume 9 Issue 3, 2022 and Volume 9 Issues 1 & 2, 2023 plus a call for funding to catalogue the Centre's recent translations. The [Centre's gratis newsletters](#) publicise events, provide news about the Centre's activities and promote funding campaigns. Those wishing to receive the Centre's free e-newsletter should contact ncacl@canberra.edu.au

The Centre's free current journal *Behind the Imagined* features an overview essay by Dr Stephanie Owen Reeder which discusses how books about Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Peoples reflect their time, an article about our Spanish books for playgroups, and researchers' use of the Centre's collection.

OBJECTIVE 5: USING OUR WORKFORCE

The Centre has well-qualified, skilled and committed volunteers. The Centre was awarded an Australian Government Grant to enhance the work of the Centre's volunteers. Wide-ranging items were chosen which have enhanced our valued volunteers' work. During this year, 38 volunteers donated 6,023 hours, the equivalent of 860 days or 3.4 full time staff. Volunteers assisted 523 clients and provided 280 hours of service. The volunteers' activities are documented in the [Volunteers' Contribution report](#). Since the Centre's establishment in 1974, volunteers have made a major contribution to its growth and development. The [Client Services 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023](#) report documents these activities.



University students with Freya Blackwood's art

Conclusion

The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature is committed to serving the needs of adults working and researching in this field, providing educational experiences for university students and also introducing future generations of young people to the creative process through the Centre's extensive collections.

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 and Centre Ambassador

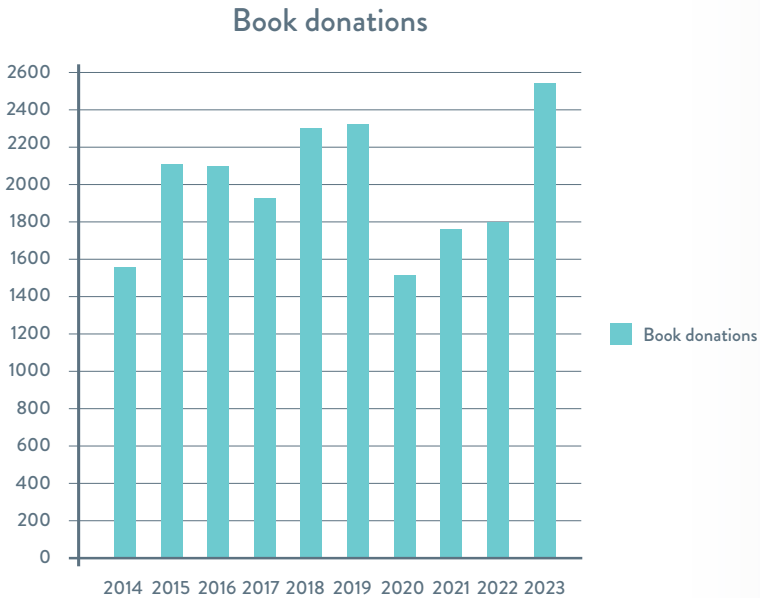


May Gibbs ephemera

Graphs

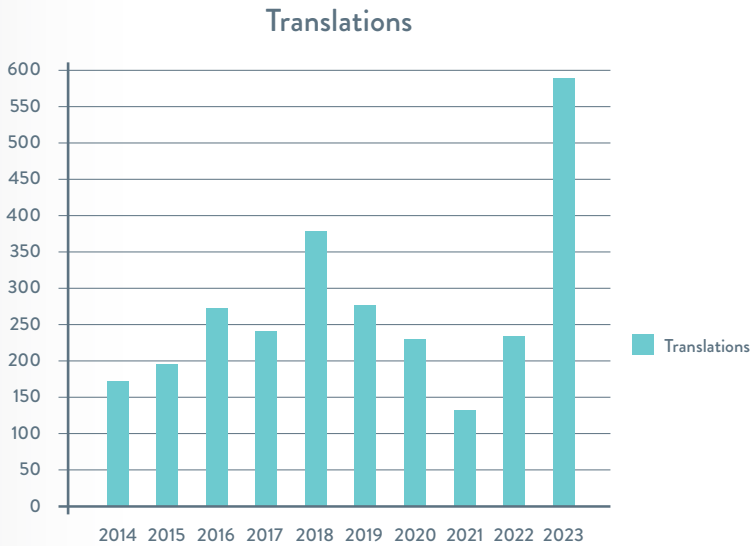
Graph 1 Book donations

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



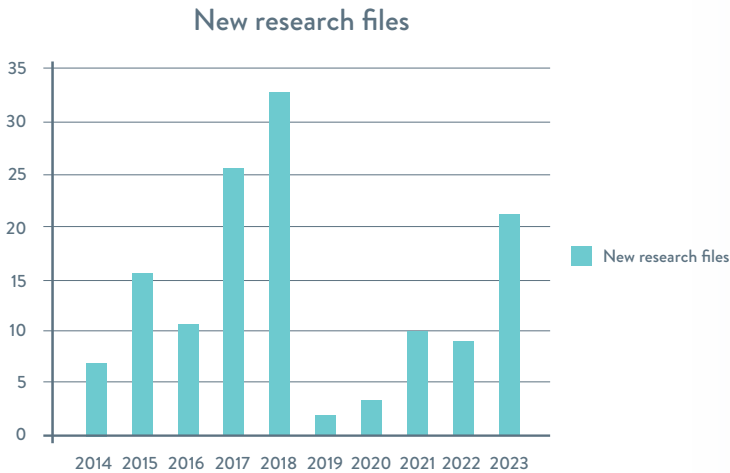
Graph 2 Translations

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



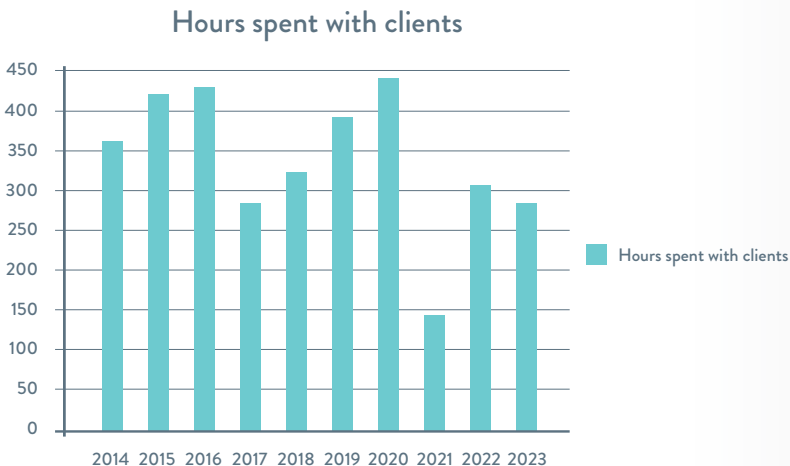
Graph 3 New research files

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. COVID-19 severely restricted clients.



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.





Sharing Our Nation's Heritage

