



NATIONAL CENTRE for
AUSTRALIAN
CHILDREN'S
LITERATURE Inc

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

For the year

1 JULY 2024 - 30 JUNE 2025

Prepared by Dr Belle Alderman AM, Director

For Members, Friends and Supporters and the
Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission



National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc

Annual Report 2025

For the year 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

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 National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc.
 @NatCentAusChLit

www.ncacl.org.au

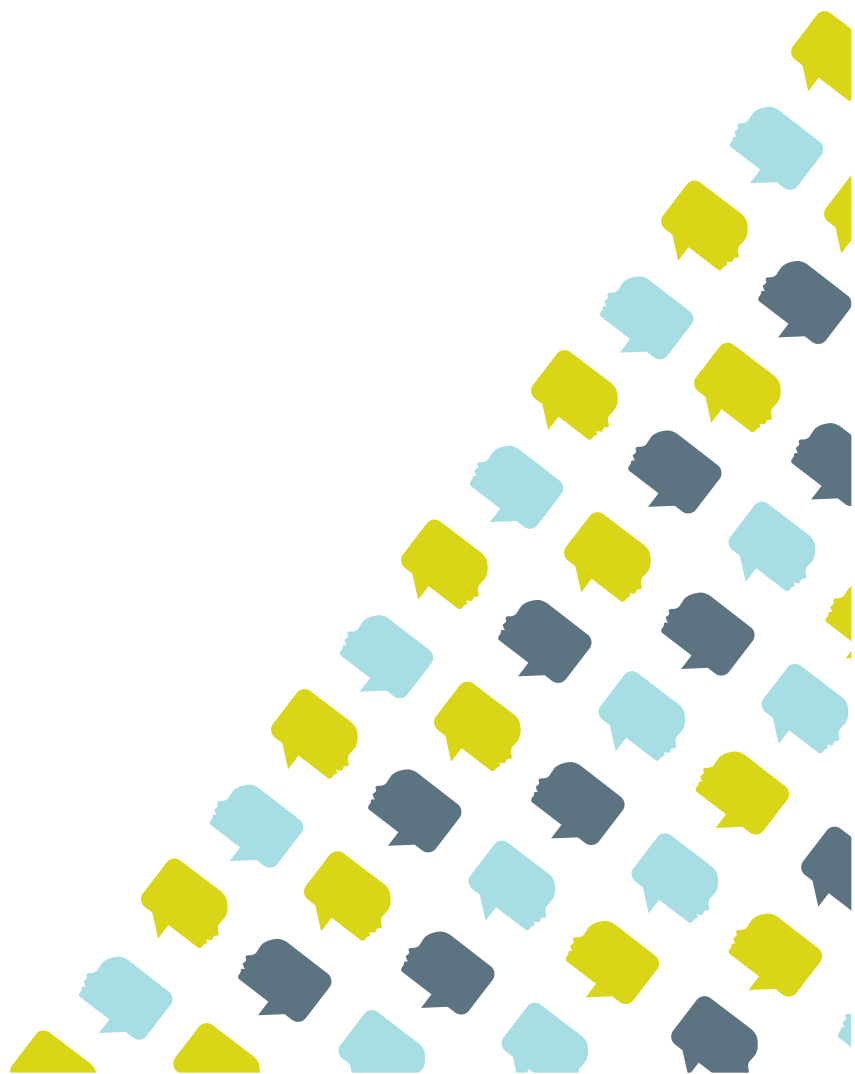
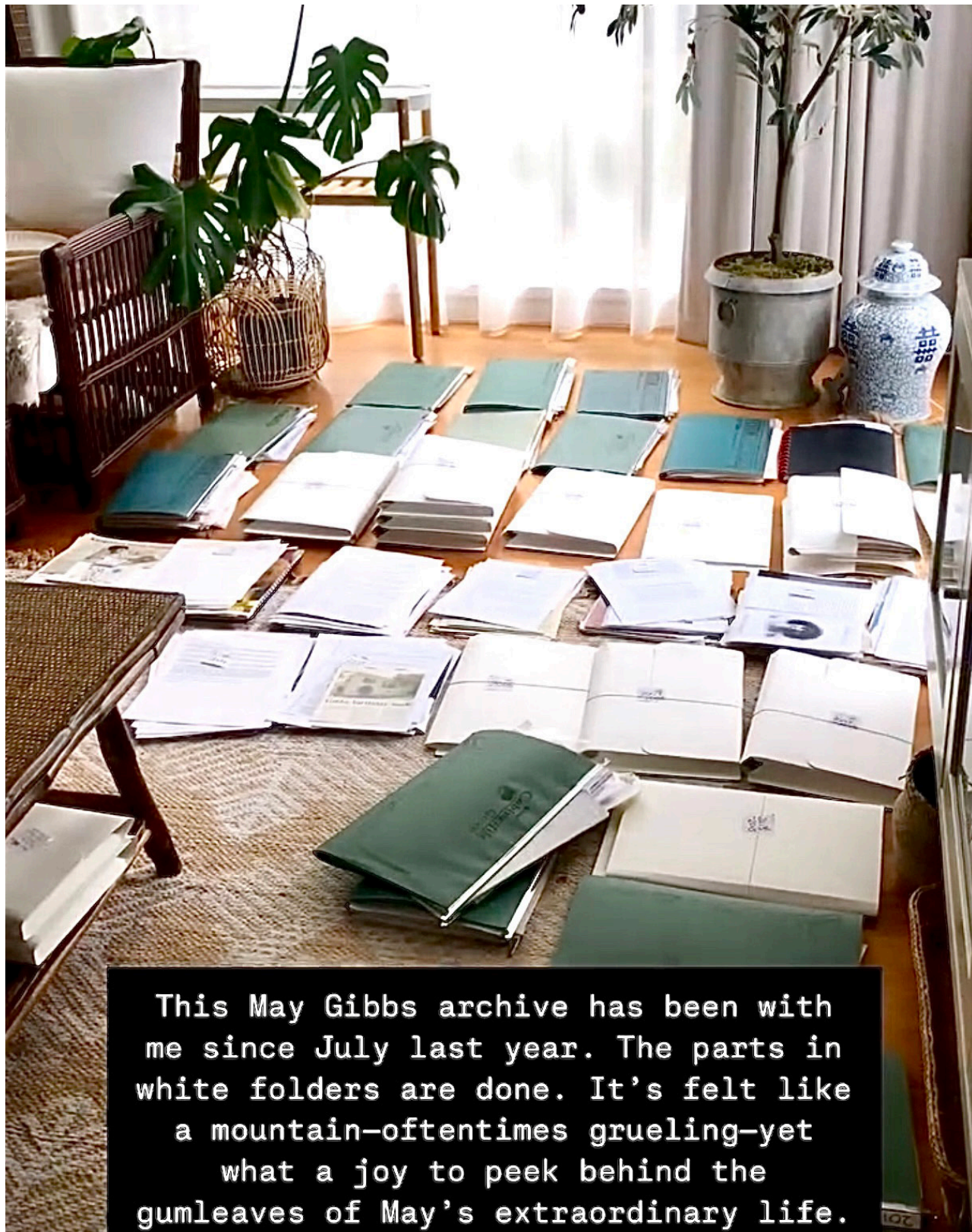


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This May Gibbs archive has been with me since July last year. The parts in white folders are done. It's felt like a mountain—oftentimes grueling—yet what a joy to peek behind the gumleaves of May's extraordinary life.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Centre is registered with the [Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission](#) (ACNC) which recognises the Centre's official charity status, valuable tax concessions (such as income tax exemption and GST concessions) and Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status. This registration increases public trust in our Centre. With this designation, the Centre has accepted 72 collections of works by Australian children's authors and illustrators, and related others in this industry. The Centre has thus become an important collection of both contemporary and historical material for researchers while documenting the development and long-term posterity of Australian children's literature.

The Centre's website has an international following. There are over 50,000 users from 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. Repeat users number approximately 20,000. All Australian State & Territory Departments of Education are registered users. Independent and private schools are also engaged in using the Centre's free resources. The Centre's resources are available 24/7.

The Centre's social media presence, established in 2014 on Facebook and X (formerly Twitter), engages with over 11,000 followers. This year marks three years of monthly blogs – short pieces describing how people the world over are using gems in the collection. Other online offerings, available through our website, include our Annual Reports, annual Behind the Imagined journal and newsletter. Our website provides online access to our Centre's collections. Our [online catalogue](#) includes books in English and in translation as well as other story formats, such as film and audio. We provide online descriptions of Australian artists' artworks ([Artwork Frameworks](#)) that we hold, as well as guides to authors', publishers' and organisations' papers and records. Our [various collections](#) are listed on our website.

University of Canberra students and staff are regular users. Children from the Wiradjuri Preschool and Childcare Centre and the Kirinari Early Childhood Centre on the UC campus also visit. The total number of clients served over the year was 745 with NCACL volunteers providing 789 hours to assist with their queries. We continue to experience an increase in external researchers, academics and the community accessing the Centre's resources. Most recently there has been increased usage of the Centre's translations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples resources. The Centre's four online databases/resource are widely known, continuously updated and used 24/7 around the world. These include the Cultural Diversity database, Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Resource, Picture Books for Older Readers Database and our Verse Novels Resource. There users find annotations about 1,600 Australian books for young people and multiple online teaching resources for each book. These databases grow continuously and promote national and international interest in Australian children's literature.

From 1979 the Centre added translations to its collection. We now offer one of Australia's largest such collections with close to 6,100 books translated into 115 different languages. Of special note this year is our ever-growing Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander children's books now available in 42 Aboriginal languages.

Communicating about the Centre's resources continues through published articles, online presentations, interviews in national associations' journals, blogs and online symposiums.

OVERVIEW OF ANNUAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Significant acquisitions, showcasing and use of specialist collections

- Acquired original artworks from the SRA series of 20 books featuring Australian legends and stories published in the 1970s-1980s. These artworks are historically and culturally significant in demonstrating attitudes of the time. A selection of these was exhibited at UC's Faculty of Arts and Design annual open house. The Black Swan title was chosen as a student Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Project. This WIL project engaged UC undergraduate student Maia Vincent for 100 hours of conservation work resulting in the presentation of her project at a cultural heritage regional symposium. Maia Vincent recorded these experiences in her blog, ['My NCACL Internship'](#) for the Centre.
- Assisted over 300 Faculty of Education students who each chose 10 books in the Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander database. For each book, they then created teaching resources. For many this was their first exposure to contemporary resources resulting in their forming new attitudes towards these resources for young people.
- Annotated and promoted the significant growth of books published by Magabala Books, Australia's publisher of books by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creators. Mainstream publishers also produced quality books in this area. This growth is evident in the Centre's database, [Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander resource](#).
- Created an online presentation, ['Living Lives: Autobiographies, Biographies and Memoirs in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Database'](#) as part of the Foundation for Learning and Literacy Symposium available worldwide. The accompanying bibliography of 47 books for this presentation is available here: [Living Lives : Autobiographies, Biographies and Memoirs](#).



OBJECTIVE 1

BUILDING THE CENTRE AS A NATIONAL INSTITUTION

National Funding Campaign

The NCACL ran its first online funding campaign in June 2024 using its social media platforms—Facebook, X, e-newsletter and website. The Director also communicated personally by email with over 400 individuals and organisations featuring an infographic which showcased the collection's strengths. Previously the Centre sought funding for special projects to purchase storage for its framed artworks, digitise its photographs and audio recordings, and create guides to illustrators', authors' and publishers' collections.

External Support Group – the WiP (Work in Progress)

In mid-2024, a self-formed WiP group of authors, illustrators, former children's publisher and children's literature advocates formed to support, promote and foster the growth and development of the NCACL. Their aim was to consider NCACL's present and future directions and propose new initiatives. A valuable report documented this group's recommendations and offered new ideas and support for future directions.

The group met virtually over six months culminating in a face-to-face workshop in Canberra led by Penny Miles, Senior Associate, Tony Grybowski & Assoc and attended by the WiP and NCACL board members. A report recorded this group's deliberations to guide the NCACL's future development.



NCACL Ephemera

OBJECTIVE 2

EXPANDING THE CENTRE'S REACH

Building collaborative relationships

The NCACL is a member of a group of 16 Australian children's literature advocates and organisations. We work collaboratively with the founding body, the Foundation for Learning and Literacy, based at the University of Sydney. In its third year of collaboration its overarching theme is We all like a good story ...

The NCACL contributed the PowerPoint presentation in 2024 entitled '[Living Lives : Autobiographies, Biographies & Memoirs in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Database](#)'.

The NCACL is a supporting member of the Tasmanian CBCA Parliamentary Friends Group led by Steve Martin, President of the Tasmanian CBCA Branch. 'Read Aloud to Your Child Every Day' is the slogan for this promotional campaign that seeks Australian government funding.

Supporting the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Program

A teenager, Celeste Alderson-Fletcher, and student at the Canberra Girls Grammar School, engaged in a program of 52 hours completed at the NCACL to earn her Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. Her program included creating NCACL website galleries for the [Blue Gum school exhibition](#), two blogs—one was preparing for the [presentation of life membership](#) Awards to the NCACL's inaugural life members. A second blog, '[Setting the Scene](#)' was about the preparations for events surrounding the exhibition of [artwork for The Midnight Gang](#) picture book by Margaret Wild and Ann James. Celeste also worked on the Centre's newsletter and added information into the Centre's databases.

OBJECTIVE 3

ENHANCING OUR COLLECTION AND PROVIDING ACCESS

Growing the book collection

The Centre added [2,105 books](#) including 650 books from 20 publishers and their imprints. There were 290 donations from 24 authors and illustrators and 1,165 donations from 29 individuals & organisations. Total books in the collection for the year ending 30 June 2025 was 61,215.

Enhancing NCACL's unique collection of books in English and in translation

The Centre's collection of translations of Australian children's books continues to grow. The Centre may hold the only available copy in Australia. Added this year were [290 translations](#) in 54 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. Of these translations this year, [28 were in 20 different Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander languages](#).

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 (end June 2025) 6,001 books in 115 languages or countries of origin. This includes books in 42 Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander languages.

The year ending 30 June 2025 recorded 290 translations in 54 different languages added to the collection. The largest number of translations or country of origin, include, in order of numbers, French, Dutch, Chinese and British.

PROVIDING ACCESS TO AUSTRALIAN ORGANISATIONS' RECORDS

May Gibbs Archive

Volunteers continue to provide invaluable service to the NCACL. This year, a NCACL volunteer, Tania McCartney documented the contents of a four-drawer filing cabinet filled with material about May Gibbs spanning the years 1877-2021. This collection of research papers and photographs engaged Jane Brummitt, their collector, over her lifetime. The guide to these papers [May Gibbs – Her Life, Work and Nutcote](#) is available from the NCACL website. Already an external researcher, Virginia Sandell, has visited this collection and easily found articles about May Gibbs as a suffragette. A NCACL Facebook post about Virginia Sandell's research is available [here](#).

Working Title Press Archive

Australian children's publishers' records provide invaluable insights into cultural achievements over time. Working Title Press published 105 titles for children over the years 1997-2017. Jane Covernton, its publisher, donated this collection to the Centre. In [Covernton's blog](#) about this collection, she said, 'I believe that the Working Title Press archive complements the Omnibus archive held by the NCACL. Together they represent a significant and highly productive period in the history of Australian children's literature.' In 2017, Jane Covernton sold this imprint to HarperCollins which continues to publish select titles. The Centre's [Working Title Press Archive](#) offers an in-depth insight into the reception of Working Title Press books through reviews, articles and clippings from various sources worldwide. Of special note is an extensive series of talks presented by Jane Covernton, founder of the Omnibus Books Publisher (of Possum Magic fame), about the publishing process of children's books in Australia. The Working Title Press papers relating to authors' and illustrators' works are located at HarperCollins where a number of these books continue to be published.

IBBY Australia Archive

The Centre holds the [IBBY Australia Archive](#). The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) is a non-profit organisation which aims to bring books and children together. In 1966, IBBY Australia, as one of related groups around the world, was established. IBBY Australia exists to promote Australian authors and illustrators and their books at an international level. It also promotes international understanding through quality literature for young readers.

Australian Children's Laureate Foundation Archive

The NCACL holds the Australian Children's Laureate Foundation Archive. A guide to this collection is currently under development. The following information is taken from the [Australian Children's Laureate website](#).

The Australian Children's Laureate is appointed on a biennial basis and must be an Australian author and/or illustrator of children's and/or youth literature, who is making a significant contribution to the children's literature canon of this country. The role of the Australian Children's Laureate is to promote the transformational power of reading, creativity and story in the lives of young Australians. The Laureate also acts as a national and international ambassador for Australian children's literature, championing important issues affecting the entire industry, including educators, librarians, booksellers and publishers.

The Laureate's records feature the profiles, programs and publicity for each of the Australian Children's Laureates. The Laureates from its beginning in 2012 include: Boori Monty Pryor and Alison Lester, Jackie French, Leigh Hobbs, Morris Gleitzman, Ursula Dubosarsky, Gabrielle Wang, Sally Rippin and Andy Griffiths.

BUILDING COLLECTIONS OF CREATORS' WORKS

The NCACL received its first Cultural Gifts Donation in 1992. This Australian Government initiative promotes and provides access to the cultural products of Australian creators. Since that date, the Centre has accepted and made available 72 such donations. Well known donors have included their artwork, papers and manuscripts or their specialist collections such as Australian alphabet and counting books. Well known donors include Graeme Base, Alison Lester, Gary Crew, Jackie French and Bob Graham. Several publishers have donated their business papers including the Walter McVitty Archive and others. These guides, known as '[Finding Aids](#)', are available from the Centre's website. Different volunteers have been involved in creating these guides. With many authors' papers covering an extensive career, creating these guides is a time-consuming but rewarding volunteer activity. The latest such guides to writers' papers include May Gibbs, Sophie Masson, Nan Chauncy, Patricia Gray and Hazel Edwards.

Enhancing Translations Collection

Translations demonstrate that stories have worldwide universal appeal. Australian children's literature has a strong record of translations. [Creative Australia reported](#) the high volume of Australian children's books in translation. Australian publishers' presence at the Bologna Children's Book Fair, Frankfurt and New York book fairs, ensure Australian children's books are widely translated. The Centre began collecting translations to mark the International Year of the Child in 1979 and now holds 6,001 books in 115 languages or country of origin. This includes books in 42 Aboriginal languages.

This year the Centre acquired 290 translations in 54 different languages. The largest number of translations include French, Dutch and Chinese. All translations appear in the Centre's online catalogue. Widely translated Australian children's authors include [Andy Griffiths](#) whose books appear in 19 translations, [Aaron Blabey](#) whose books appear in 19 translations and [Emily Rodda](#) with 20 translations. Our [Facebook story](#) 'Australian Children's Literature Reaches the World' explains the beginning of our translations collection. Translating humour can be culturally challenging. Dr Lara Cain Gray wrote a blog in June 2025 for the Centre on this topic, titled '[Turning our giggles into global gags: Translating humorous Australian kids' books](#)'. She considered the challenges of translating humour, with particular reference to the Centre's large collection of Andy Griffiths' books in translation.

Documenting the Ephemera Collection

The National Centre holds a collection of items related to published books, including such items as mugs, toys, jigsaw puzzles, plates, cards, tea towels, calendars, card games, maps, anime products, drawing pads and book plates. The collective term for these objects is 'ephemera'. UC's Cultural Heritage students designed a template to document the ephemera collection. In 2024, a NCACL volunteer patiently described each item of ephemera using the template.

It was and continues to be a mammoth task to document the Centre's holdings of [Ephemera](#). Documenting the ephemera collection was initially undertaken by a NCACL volunteer who produced the list currently 95 pages in length. The ephemera collection is a never ending story. A future enhancement of this document will be to add an image of each item of ephemera.

Visit by Wiradjuri Preschool and Childcare Centre



Building Collections of Creators' Artwork

The NCACL is eligible to receive cultural gifts under the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program. Since its first donation of Cultural Gifts in 1992, 72 such donations have been added to the collection. These include artworks, books, business papers, publisher's archives, subject collections (counting and abc books) and others. Such collections are essential to preserve and share with future generations. These cultural collections are a permanent record of the creative process over time and document the relationships between creators and the children's book industry.

Donations finalised and accepted under the Cultural Gifts Program over the period of this Annual Report include collections of artworks by Liz Anelli, Deborah Niland, Bob Graham and Alison Lester. Donations still under consideration by the Cultural Gifts Program include: another donation by Bob Graham and a collection of artworks by Leigh Hobbs for several of his children's books.

Research Files on Authors and Illustrators

This collection is extensive and unique. Since the 1960s, wide-ranging paper-based material about Australian children's authors and illustrators has been collected. 'Clippers' located across Australia collect material about Australian children's creators and send these to the Centre. At the year's end, 606 author and illustrator research files existed, with many of these files holding extensive material. When a creator ends their publishing career, their file is retained. There are also 'pending' files on creators where material is collected from around Australia. When the creator's file holds material for around 10 of their books, their pending file becomes an 'established' file. An authority on such collections determined these author and illustrator files as invaluable for researchers and unique in their collection scope and depth.

New research files created between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025 include the following: Sean E Avery, Sophie Beer, Johanna Bell, Sophie Blackall, Samantha Campbell, Brenton Cullen, Mandy Foot, Lesley Gibbs, Suzanne Houghton, Graeme Jessup, Zanni Louise, Jess McGeachin, Heide McKinnon, Nerida McMullin, Carl Merrison, Christopher Nielsen, Chris Nixon, Raewyn Paisley, Pip Harry, Shivaun Plozza, Heather Potter, Sher Rill Ng, Paul Seden, Allison Tait, Corey Tutt and Nova Weetman. The unique Research File collection held 606 files by 30 June 2025. The material dates from the 1950s. The Centre is grateful for knowledgeable individuals across Australia who collect 30 different types of material for these files and send them to the Centre for our research files.

OBJECTIVE 4

PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT AND ATTRACTING WIDER AUDIENCES

Opportunities arise to engage with wider audiences. Examples include:

- **Commemorative 50th Anniversary Issue of NCACL'S journal, *Behind The Imagined* issue 7, 2024** created by Jane Carstens, Editor
- **'A look inside the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc (NCACL)'** by Belle Alderman, pp30-33 vol 45 Issue 2, 2024 in INCITE the magazine for the Library and Information sector, the Australian Library & Information Assoc e-journal (subscriber access only)
- **Webinar in collaboration with Dr Lara Cain Gray** promoting the book, *The Power of Picture Books for Readers of ALL Ages* 4 Sept 2024, 7.30-8.30pm + NCACL's Picture Books for Older Readers database, live webinar attended by 58 persons in a range of professions Australia-wide with NCACL earning \$1,500 as a share of attendance fees
- **'Seeing the big picture—why illustrated picture books are essential reading at any age'** [article](#) by Lara Cain Gray in Griffith Review promotes NCACL's Picture Books for Older Readers Database
- **Monthly blogs** on the NCACL website written by people interacting with the Centre in a range of ways
- Interview about NCACL, its history and future vision by Belle Alderman in *Magpies: Talking about Books for Children* Australia's leading children's literature journal Vol 40, Nov 2025

Reaching diverse communities through presentations and publications

- Australasian Children's Literature Association for Research [ACLAR](#) describes the Centre as 'the premier national institution'
- 'Lifting the Lid on a Literary Treasure' Eduwebinar with Dr Belle Alderman AM and Dr Jennie Bales, 15 Nov 2023
- [Commemorative 50th Anniversary Issue](#) of *Behind the Imagined* journal Issue 7, 2024 created by Jane Carstens, Editor
- 'A look inside the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc (NCACL)' by Belle Alderman, pp30-33 vol 45 Issue 2, 2024 in INCITE, the Australian Library & Information Assoc e-journal
- ['50 Years of the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature'](#) 11 Feb 2024 by Ashleigh Meikle
- Canberra Times [tour of the Centre](#) 14 Mar 2024 (2 min 42 sec)
- 'The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Celebrates 50 Years' by [Natalia Bragaru](#) in March 2024
- 'NCACL Celebrates 50 years of championing Australian Children's Stories' 26 Mar 2024 by Jason Roberts in [The Sector](#) Mar 2024
- *Behind Secret, Sealed Doors* by Emma Janssen, hardback book featuring the author's two children visiting NCACL; copies presented to attendees of NCACL's 50-year birthday celebrations
- 'Celebrating 50 years' CBCA Tasmania [Blogspot](#) 5 Apr 2024
- The Centre's monthly [Blogs](#) began 3 February 2022 with 28 published by the end June 2024
- Story Box Library links books in NCACL's *Picture Books for Older Readers* database that also appear in [Story Box Library](#)
- Images from the Centre's 50th [birthday celebrations](#)
- Picture Books for Older Readers: Exploring Visual Literacy – [National online presentation](#) as part of the Foundation for Learning and Literacy Symposium, September 2023

Delivering public exhibitions

- Juvenilia exhibition, travelled works created by Australian authors of children's books when they were children, including works loaned by the Centre, held at [Civic Library](#) August 2023
- Exhibition of the Centre's 22 Shaun Tan framed giclee prints in UC's [Mura Gadi Gallery](#) held from 19 February – 14 March 2024
- Shaun Tan Gallery 'Never be late for a parade' and the Shaun Tan [virtual exhibition](#)
- Enthusiastic public response to the Shaun Tan exhibition [recorded here](#)

Providing services for study, research, professional development and promotion

The Centre served 558 clients for a total of 375 hours during the year, including University of Canberra students and staff, external researchers, writers, illustrators, publishers, educators and academics across Australia. These activities are documented in the [Client Services report](#) which identifies types of clients served and resources used.

Designing and providing internships and work experience

Charles Sturt University Masters student, Christina Bowman (TL at Hawker College) completed 70-hour professional work experience at NCACL as part of her Masters of Teacher Librarianship course; her placement featured valuable contributions to the Centre's database projects.

Reaching followers through the Centre's e-newsletter & Beyond the Imagined journal

During the year the Centre published [two newsletters](#) which publicised events, provided news about the Centre's activities and promoted funding campaigns. Those wishing to receive the Centre's free e-newsletter should contact <mailto:ncacl@canberra.edu.au>

OBJECTIVE 5

USING OUR WORKFORCE

The Centre's volunteer workforce is highly skilled and committed to high standards in their work and satisfying clients' interests.

Over the year 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025, there were 38 volunteers with 10 of these coming into the Centre for their work. Our onsite volunteers performed such tasks as cataloguing books, documenting artworks, researching material to add to NCACL's databases, adding items to research files, acknowledging donations, supporting university students' course work and work experience, researchers and the community. Collectively, volunteers gave the equivalent of 3.6 full time staff over the year.

The Centre's volunteers are also spread across Australia. Remote tasks include editing NCACL's monthly blogs and sourcing print and online resources to amplify the Centre's research files on over 600 authors and illustrators. The NCACL's volunteers have individually described their particular work contribution in the document [Volunteers' Contributions](#) available from our website. The [Client Services](#) table, also available from our website, details the 745 clients' queries, their affiliation, resources used and time spent by NCACL in assisting these clients which totalled 789 hours over the year.

For many years, the Centre has provided professional work experience for students undertaking the Master of Teacher Librarianship at the Charles Sturt University. Each student chooses their learning objectives which guide the Centre in designing their work experiences at the Centre for their 10 days onsite. This past year, two such students worked at the Centre and published blogs about their experience. These include Vlotina Souflias who described her experience in 'Behind the Shelves' and Christina Bowman who reviewed her placement in 'A Placement to Remember'.

There is never a shortage of important tasks at the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature. Over its 50-year existence, the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc has become a thriving and ever-growing enterprise. It equals and rivals some of the world's well-known centres for children's literature. As each year passes, the Centre continues to grow and champion Australian children's stories in all forms. It has earned its title but will not be resting on its laurels as the future offers endless possibilities.



Realia inspired by books

2016 - 2025

GRAPHS

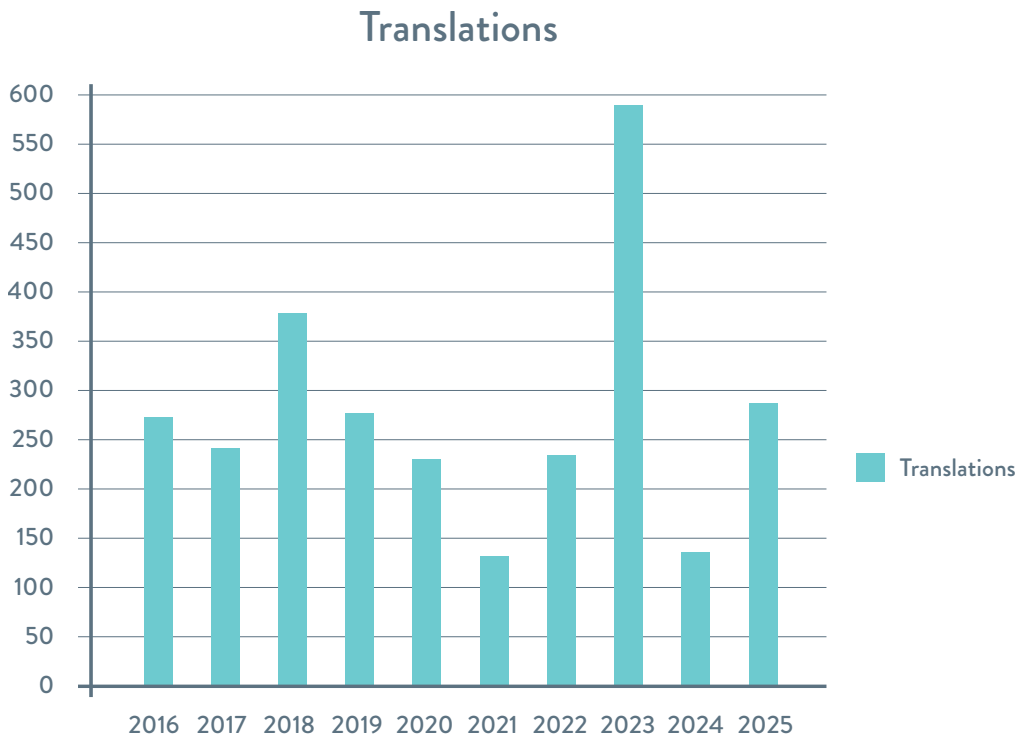
Graph 1 Book donations

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



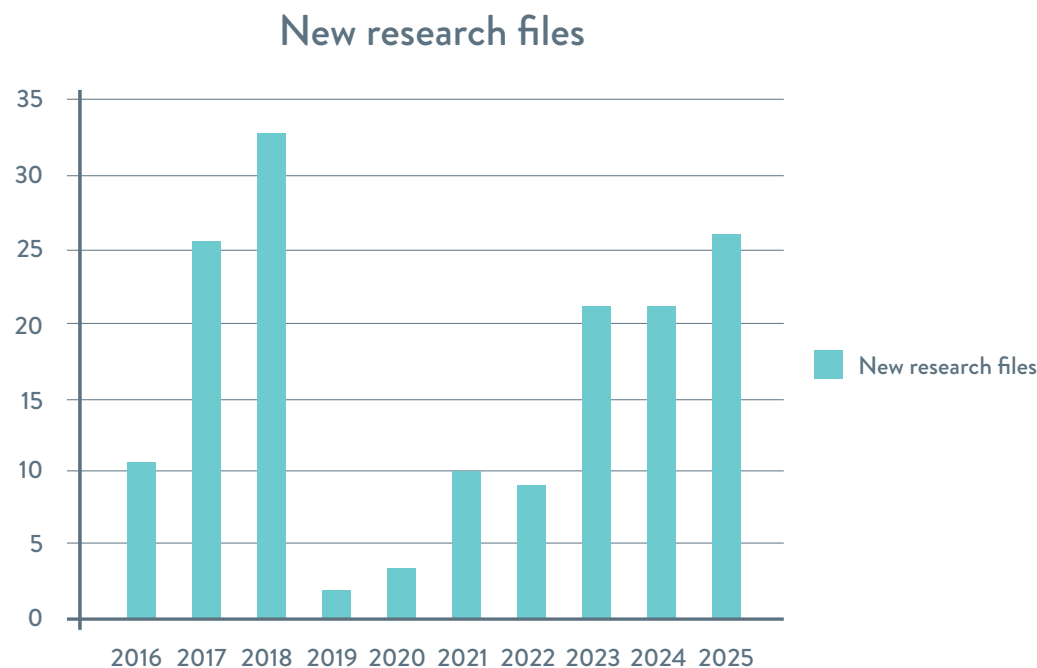
Graph 2 Translations

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



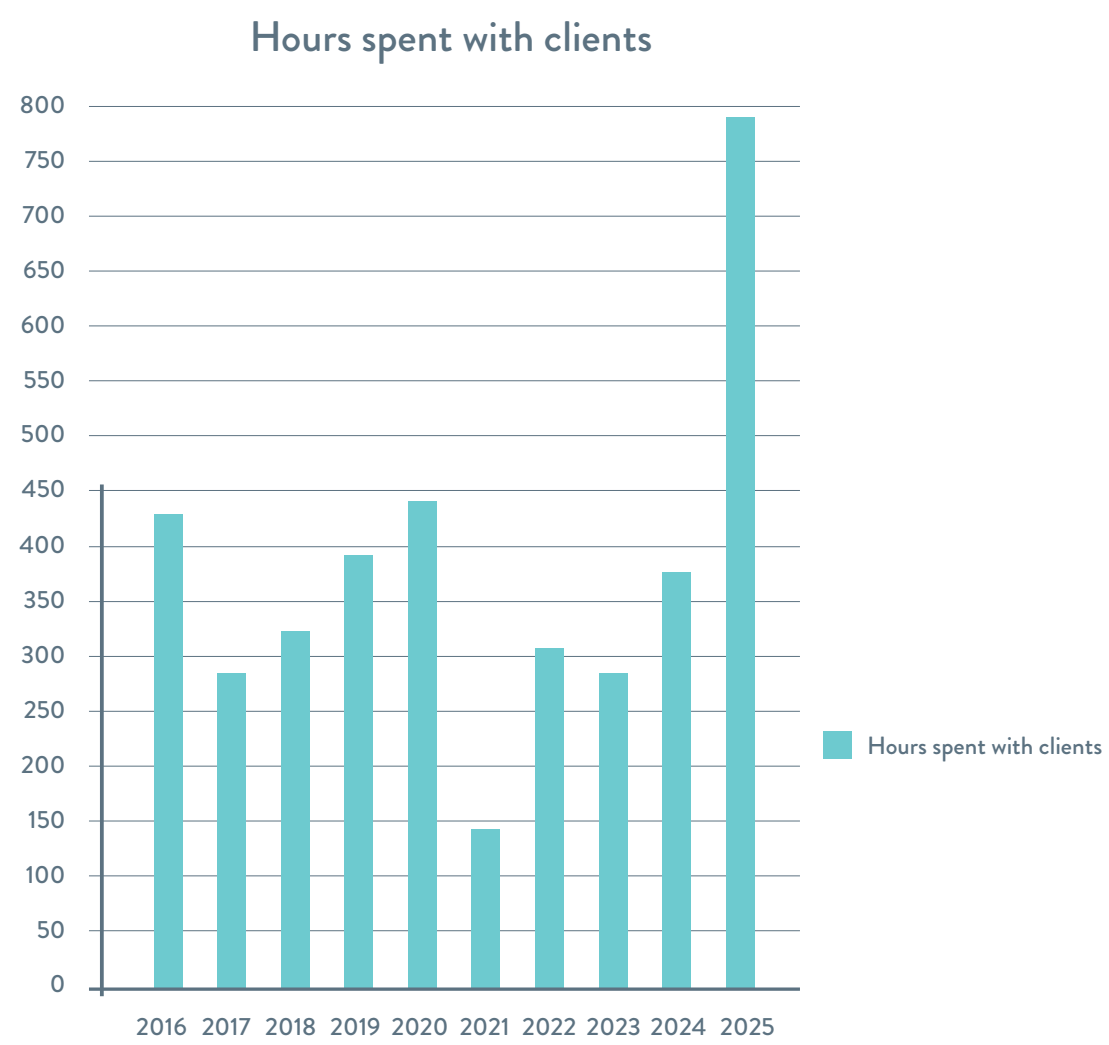
Graph 3 New research files

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.

