



MEDIA RELEASE

STRICTLY EMBARGOED: 12 NOON AEDT TUESDAY MARCH 31, 2020

Children's Book Council of Australia 2020 Shortlist announced

The mysterious 'Yahoo', a compendium of weird and wonderful animals, and a day in the life of Birrarung (the Yarra River) are just some of the vivid characters and stories featured in the Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Shortlist, announced today.

The 2020 CBCA Book of the Year received a record 517 entries and CBCA National Chair Professor Margot Hillel OAM said "the Shortlist paints a vibrant picture of Australia's wildlife, history, people and Indigenous culture."

"We have acclaimed Australian children's authors Margaret Wild, Emily Rodda, Stephen Michael King, Anna Walker, Aunty Joy Murphy and Vikki Wakefield on the Shortlist, joined by first-time authors Helena Fox, Astrid Scholte and Sami Bayly," Prof. Hillel said.

"*Yahoo Creek* brings an obscure and baffling part of Australian history to life using newspaper excerpts to describe encounters by European settlers with the enigmatic 'yahoo' or 'yowie', a solitary ape-like creature said to inhabit the bush along the Great Dividing Range.

"Some of the world's most unusual and unattractive species are celebrated in *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Ugly Animals*, a carefully researched and fascinating debut by natural history illustrator Sami Bayly.

"And *Wilam: A Birrarung Story* is a breathtakingly beautiful tribute to the Yarra River. As Birrarung meanders from the bush to the urban surrounds of the bay, we are taught the Woiwurrung language for its flourishing flora and fauna, which are captured by illustrator Lisa Kennedy in lush colour and detail."

Notably, three of the six books in the CBCA Award for New Illustrator category are by Indigenous creators. The artwork within each is stunning and distinctive, depicting a smoking ceremony welcoming a baby to country, a day in the life of a little bird and a walk through Darug Country.

Prof. Hillel said: "Now, more than ever, our young people need relatable and inspiring characters and stories that uplift and entertain, bring them hope and help them to find a way through issues they face in their daily lives and in the wider world."

"Several books on this year's Shortlist explore confronting and challenging themes but the authors do so with skill and sensitivity and most importantly, with heart."

The CBCA is a not-for-profit, volunteer-run organisation whose mission is to promote and advocate for the sharing of quality literature for young people across Australia. It showcases Australian creators and collaborates widely to foster a love of reading.

Established in 1946, the CBCA Book of the Year Awards have become the most influential and highly respected in Australia and are presented in six categories: Older Readers, Younger Readers, Early Childhood, Picture Books, Eve Pownall Award and the CBCA Award for New Illustrator.

The winners of the 2020 CBCA Book of the Year Awards will be announced on August 21 – also the launch date for CBCA Book Week with this year's theme 'Curious Creatures, Wild Minds'.

For the full list of CBCA Book of the Year 2020 Shortlist please visit the CBCA website:
<https://cbca.org.au/shortlist-2020>

END

Key Dates:

CBCA Book of the Year Announcement

When: 12 noon AEST Friday 21 August

CBCA Book Week

Theme: *Curious Creatures, Wild Minds.*

Where: Australia-wide

When: 22-28 August

**TO ARRANGE AN INTERVIEW WITH CBCA NATIONAL CHAIR PROFESSOR MARGOT HILLEL OAM AND THE SHORTLISTED AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS, PLEASE CONTACT DEBBIE MCINNES AT DMCPR MEDIA T: 02 9550 9207
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