



CBC awards Reward top teachers

Are the contenders for this year's Children's Book Council of Australia Awards on your library's shelves? The winners will be announced on 15 August.

Contenders for Book of the Year for Older Readers are: Jackie French's *Pharaoh*, Angus and Robertson (A&R); Sonya Hartnett's *The Ghost's Child*, Viking; John Heffernan's *Marty's Shadow*, Omnibus; Meme McDonald's *Love like Water*, Allen and Unwin (A&U); David Metzthen's *Black Water*, Penguin; and Leonie Norrington's *Leaving Barrumbi*, Omnibus.

Contenders for Book of the Year for Younger Readers are: Sherryl Clark's *Sixth Grade Style Queen (not!)*, illustrated by Elissa Christian, Puffin; Jackie French's *The Shaggy Gully Times*, illustrated by Bruce Whatley, A&R; Odo Hirsch's *Amelia Dee and the Peacock Lamp*, A&U; David Metzthen's *Winning the World Cup*, illustrated by Stephen Axelsen, Puffin; Emily Rodda's *The Key to Rondo*, Omnibus; and Carole Wilkinson's *Dragon Moon*, Black Dog Books.

Early Childhood award contenders are: Pamela Allen's *Shhh! Little Mouse*, Viking; Aaron Blabey's *Pearl Barley and Charlie Parsley*, Viking; Mike Dumbleton's *Cat*, illustrated by Craig Smith, Working Title Press; Bob Graham's *The Trouble with Dogs!* Walker Books; Elise Hurst's *The Night Garden*, ABC Books; and Margaret Wild's *Lucy Goosey*, with illustrations by Ann James, Little Hare Books.

Picture Book of the Year contenders are: Li Cunxin's *The Peasant Prince*, illustrated by Anne Spudvilas, Viking; Armin Greder's *The Island*, A&U; Liz Lofthouse's *Ziba came on a Boat*, illustrated by Robert Ingpen, Viking; Leonie Norrington's *You and Me: Our Place*, illustrated by Dee Huxley, Working Title Press; Matt Ottley's *Requiem for a Beast*, Lothian; and Colin Thompson and colleagues' *Dust*, ABC Books.

A new voluntary scheme in New South Wales now allows outstanding classroom teachers to apply for accreditation at two higher levels – professional accomplishment and professional leadership. The voluntary scheme builds on the mandatory requirement for all new teachers in NSW to be accredited at the level of professional competence.

While the standards, laid down by the NSW Institute of Teachers, aim to recognise teaching excellence across the state, they are not currently articulated to salary scales. It's no surprise, however, that the two new higher-level standards have led to speculation that the teachers who achieve them may negotiate higher pay with their employers. It's no surprise, either, that teacher unions were cautiously supportive.

Speaking of pay, the Business Council of Australia (BCA) proposed in May to pay teachers up to \$130,000 a year if they reach 'leading teacher' status. The BCA also proposed fixing the minimum entry score for

all teacher training courses at 75 per cent or above. Reaction to the proposals, outlined in *Teaching Talent: The best teachers for Australia's classrooms*, which incorporates *Investing in Teacher Quality: Doing what matters most*, written for the BCA by the Australian Council for Educational Research, was generally underwhelming.

The NSW Premier, Morris Iemma, responded coolly. 'The BCA is calling for a doubling,' the Premier said. 'I point towards the cost of implementing that and make the point that the BCA is often calling on the government to reduce taxes.'

Writing in an opinion piece for the *Newcastle Herald*, Terry Lovat, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and the Arts at the University of Newcastle said the recommendations had merit, although the Australian Council of Deans of Education warned that the proposal to fix minimum entry scores could worsen the teacher shortage, if fewer people were to enter teacher training as a consequence.

Teen drinking

Tasmanian research has shown that teenagers over estimate how much and how frequently their peers drink alcohol and – significantly – base their own drinking behaviour on that over estimation. The study, called the Social Norms Analysis Project or SNAP, was led by Dr Clarissa Hughes from the University of Tasmania Department of Rural Health, with the Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies and Tasmania Police.

'Our strategy was to get accurate information about drinking behaviour in specific schools and then communicate the truth with the goal of reducing the pressure on students to conform to a false perception,' Hughes told the *Hobart Mercury*. 'We discovered 73 per cent of Huonville

High School students rarely or never drank alcohol; 83 per cent of Geeveston District High School students chose non-alcoholic drinks when with friends; 77.7 per cent of Queenstown's Mountain Heights students chose non-alcoholic drinks; and 63.8 per cent of Rosebery District High School students rarely or never went to parties where students were drinking alcohol.'

The first stage of the SNAP study is now being followed by feedback for students before a follow-up study to determine whether the program has led to a decline in alcohol consumption.

For a full report on the study in *Youth Studies Australia*, visit www.acys.info/journal