

# Books Alive!

The Minister for the Arts and Sport, Senator Rod Kemp, has announced the seven titles for Books Alive 2004 — a co-operative approach between the Australian government and the book industry to promote books and reading for all Australians.

'These seven great Australian books by gifted Australian writers, telling uniquely-Australian stories, will allow literally thousands of Australians of all ages to delve into the pleasure of reading,' Senator Kemp said.

'I encourage all Australians to lose themselves in a book and find themselves in a book store during *Books Alive* 2004.'

Six books will be available for \$5 with the purchase of any other book from participating retailers from 31 July to 15 August 2004. They are:

- *Shiver* by Nikki Gemmell;
- *White gardenia* by Belinda Alexandra;
- *The shark net* by Robert Drewe;
- *Selby the wonder dog* — containing two Selby favourites, *Selby splits* and *Selby surfs*, by Duncan Ball;
- *Blacktown* by Shane Weaver; and
- *Au revoir* by Mary Moody.

Also, an exclusive specially-branded Books Alive 'buy one

get one free' package available at discount department stores will include a new title, *Spiking the girl* by Gabrielle Lord.

A recent survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on cultural and leisure activities of children found that reading for pleasure was the second-most-popular activity at seventy-five per cent — exceeding the participation rate for playing electronic and computer games which is seventy-one per cent.

Books Alive is an Australian Government initiative administered through the Australia Council for the Arts. ■



From L-R: Robert Drewe; Senator Kemp, Belinda Alexandra; Gabrielle Lord; and Duncan Ball at the launch of Books Alive 2004

## Author Ivan Southall Wins 2003 Dromkeen Medal

Author and contributor to Australian children's literature for over half a century, Ivan Southall is the winner of the 2003 Dromkeen Medal.

The Dromkeen Medal is awarded annually to an Australian citizen for work that 'makes a significant contribution to the appreciation and development of children's literature'.

On receiving news of his win, Ivan said, 'The Dromkeen Medal has acquired a unique mystique. I have never

expected this particular recognition. I'm honoured and charmed.'

Ivan's books have touched generations of children both in Australia and overseas; they not only reflect the Australian story but also have contributed to creating it.

The nine volumes of the Simon Black series, produced between 1950 and 1962, were RAAF adventure stories. These, as well as *The long night watch*, and other books such as *They shall not pass unseen* (1956), were based on

Ivan's own wartime experiences. *Hills End* (1962) marked the beginning of a new sort of life-and-death adventure story, in which the emphasis shifts from the actual adventure to the depiction of the way children respond, interact and grow through challenge and experience.

Ivan continued his interest in realism and real-life problems with such books as *Ash Road*

(1965), *The Foxhole* (1967), *To the wild sky* (1967), *Sly old wardrobe* (1968), *Let the balloon go* (1968), *Finn's folly* (1969), and *Chinaman's Reef is ours* (1970). *Let the balloon go* and *Bread and honey* (1970) marked another, more reflective, change of writing direction that was to find its most-powerful reflective voice in *Josh* (1971) and, later, *Rachel* (1986).

Ivan Southall has won many awards in an extremely distinguished literary career; the most notable of these include Children's Book of the Year awards (1966, 1968, 1971, and 1976); Picture Book of the Year Award (1969); British Library Association Carnegie Medal (1971) for *Josh* (to date, the only Australian recipient of this prestigious award); the Zilver Griffel of Holland (1972); the Australian Writers' Award (1974); and the USA Child Study Committee Book of the Year for *Rachel* (1988). In 2003 he received the Phoenix Award from The Children's Literature Association, for *The long night watch*.

The Dromkeen Medal will be presented to Ivan Southall at the Courtney Oldmeadow Memorial Lecture and dinner, to be held at Dromkeen on Saturday, 13 March 2004. ■

### Congratulations!

Australia Day honours for ALIA members

**Dagmar Schmidmaier, Sydney, NSW** — Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the general division, for service to librarianship, particularly through the application of new technology and information systems and in the areas of administration and education.

**Irene Meeuwissen, Mount Waverley, Vic** — Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the general division, for service to the community, particularly through Cystic Fibrosis Victoria.

If you know of other ALIA members who received honours in the awards, please let us know. E-mail [incite@alia.org.au](mailto:incite@alia.org.au), or write to the editor at PO Box 6335, Kinston 2604.