

NYR PROJECT WINS INTERNATIONAL AWARD

An interactive story developed as an Australian National Year of Reading project has collected the digital world's version of an Emmy at the 2014 Digital Book Awards in New York.

Cowzat! is a story about an Australian herd of cows inventing the game of cricket, written by Melbourne author Bruce Atherton and illustrated by Brisbane artist Ben Redlich. It was published by Windy Hollow Books. The international award-winning app was created by film company Colour Me Play in collaboration with the author, illustrator and publisher.

Emily Owens, Director of Colour Me Films, approached the National Year of Reading's Partnership Manager in 2012. She had been searching for the right book to realise a vision for something that would "push the boundaries in storytelling to produce a breakout app that straddles the line between games and storybook". The National Year of Reading was the perfect partner for her idea.

"Our mission from the outset was to engage the audience by combining game play, narrative and film," Emily said.

Author Bruce Atherton said the *Cowzat!* app was a genuine collaboration. "For starters you had cows and cricket – some might say an unlikely combination – then Ben brought them to life with his genius and after that it was truly organic," Bruce says.

"Being a small production meant that when Australian comedian Tim Ferguson arrived to do the narration, everyone involved was in the sound studio; apart from their usual brilliance, we had coders and animators lining up in the studio to make farmyard noises for the soundtrack."

The Digital Book Awards recognise innovation, creativity and excellence in all aspects of digital publishing and having such a quintessentially Australian project win the award is an especially delightful result for the National Year of Reading campaign. Chair of the National Year of Reading and State Librarian of Western Australia, Margaret Allen said this was just the kind of project they had hoped for.

Harley Stachan is a big fan of the Cowzat! app. He and his brother checked it out, then they showed their Dad how to use it.



"All involved gave 1000% of their time and talent to create a wonderful legacy project for the National Year of Reading. We are thrilled that this small Australian team won in a field that includes international publishing giants," she said.

Left: Colour Me Films' Emily Owens with the Digital Book Award in New York.