



ONCE UPON A TIME

It was with great anticipation that CLAIRE STUCKEY attended ONCE UPON A TIME: A Celebration of 50 Years of IBBY Australia on International Children's Book Day in April 2016. She tells us more.

The president of IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People) Australia, Dr Robin Morrow AM, welcomed the large group of children's literature professionals at the start of day of inspiring presentations.

Dr Mark MacLeod started the proceeding by addressing the topic of IBBY in the Age of Globalisation. Mark's anecdotes about his interaction with refugee families highlighted how he realigned his own cultural perceptions and enabled a greater understanding of the educational and language wants and needs of families, especially those with children. Mark's overview of the issues affecting displaced people in children's literature, including the Australian Indigenous community, was thought provoking. As professionals we should continue to seek out and support the development of quality children's literature and promote these works – both fiction and non-fiction – to local and international markets so that they can be enjoyed everywhere.

Australia's nominees for the 2016 Hans Christian Andersen Awards provided stimulating presentations. Bronwyn Bancroft, in conversation with Libby Gleeson, shared amazing career highlights. Bronwyn researches and supports Indigenous culture through her beautiful and meaningful picture books for children. She noted how important a strong relationship with her publisher is. Bronwyn respects and promotes the ancient cultural heritage that permeates her wonderful design work, her installations and her published books. Libby encouraged further discussion on her involvement with AIME (Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience). This is a dynamic, educational program that has been proven to support Indigenous students through high school and into employment or further education at the same rate

as other Australian students. We were all excited to hear toward the end that Bronwyn will be creating more books in 2016.

Ursula Dubosarsky, in conversation with Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright, gave us an insight into the ruthless editor within the writer. Focusing on Ursula's large body of work, Robyn drilled down into the major themes that permeate this award-winning author's writing. The diversity of her work was examined, as were the fables and myths embedded in her wide range of fiction for children and young adults. Ursula has shared her love of words in the fabulous non-fiction resource *The Word Spy*. Her ability to capture a child's character in many environments, including historical settings, is a testament to her writing ability. We considered the idea that many mysteries have been revealed in her novels, but they haven't always been resolved.

A special session with Owen Belling provided a stimulating account of the classroom application of many fabulous Australian novels and media. As a dedicated and enthusiastic secondary-level educator, Owen has a great deal of experience in engaging high-school readers with both international and Australian texts, including those by Indigenous authors. This analysis also provided another insight into the depth and quality of Australian literature. This event was a great way to celebrate the golden anniversary of the Australian division of this wonderful international children's literature organisation. Find out more at ibbyaustralia.wordpress.com.

New members are always welcome. 

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More info about IBBY

IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People) has a vibrant Australian executive that has representatives in most states. Events focus on the primary purpose and goals of the organisation:

- To promote international understanding through children's books
- To give children everywhere the opportunity to access books with high literary and artistic standards
- To encourage the publication and distribution of quality children's books, including those in the children's own languages (for example, in Indigenous languages across Australia)
- To provide support and training for those involved with children and children's literature
- To stimulate research and scholarly works in the field of children's literature