Jackie French giving her acceptance speech at the Laureate Announcement Ceremony, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 27 November 2013

AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S LAUREATE

IN PICTURES 2012–15

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- Jackie French Laureateship highlights
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EVENT HIGHLIGHTS - JACKIE FRENCH (2014–2015)

ASA Colin Simpson Memorial lecture 2014 titled 'Don't call us nice'

'Laureates In Conversation' hosted by HarperCollins Publishers, July 2014

Photo: Drisana Levitzke-Gray, Jackie French, Tony Abbott, Rosie Batty and Juliette Wright (Australian of the Year Award-winners 2015)

Jackie French tweet via @OzLaureate: 'Suddenly tonight we realised we were four women, standing together. It felt incredible.' Jackie French

2014 Event highlights:

- Laureate Announcement, National Library Australia (ACT)
- 50th Anniversary of School Library Association (NSW)
- Children's Book Festival, Wheeler Centre (VIC)
- Better Beginnings at State Library (WA)
- All Saints Storylines Festival (WA)
- Snowy Mountains Writers' Festival - Jindabyne (NSW)
- Conference: "School Libraries: Engaging The Nation" (NSW)
- National Conference CBCA (ACT)
- Jackie French Open House, Araluen valley (NSW)
- National Simultaneous Storytime (ACT)
- Sydney Writers' Festival (NSW)
- ASA Colin Simpson Memorial lecture (VIC)
- CBCA Regional Tour (QLD)
- Geelong West Town Hall (VIC)
- Visit to Girraween Primary School (NT)
- Visit to Alternative Place of Detention (NT)
- ALEA Conference (NT)
- Northern Territory Library Event (NT)
- Northern Territory Writers' Centre (NT)
- Laureates In Conversation (NSW)
- Laureate Reading Area at Woodend Festival (VIC)
- Visit to Loddon Prison/Castlemaine Literature Festival (VIC)
- Bendigo Writers' Festival (VIC)
- Melbourne Writers' Festival: M.A.D.E (VIC)
- WORD Christchurch Writers' Festival (NZ)
- Storylines Festival, Auckland (NZ)
- Brisbane Writers' Festival (QLD)
- The Literature Centre Tour (WA)
- **Jackie French wins Senior Australian of the Year**

REGIONAL TARGETED EVENTS - JACKIE FRENCH 2015

Community event at regional public library in Kalgoorlie, WA.

Coolgardie CAPS student writing workshop; the group collaborated to write a wombat themed detective-love story.

'They call them CARE schools in WA, one of those constructed acronyms that tries to make a name that sounds like the words that each letter stands for... They collaborated with each other and the stories were, quite simply, brilliant, original, insightful, put together with patience and focus. I hope they create the most extraordinary futures for themselves.' Jackie French, CARE Schools blog post

2015 Event highlights:

In 2015 ACLA developed partnerships with key organisations such as AISWA Literacy to ensure regional communities and schools have access to a storyteller and author of the quality and significance of Jackie French.

Events:

- Mt Gambier Library, National Simultaneous Storytime tour
- Curriculum and Reengagement in Education (CARE) Schools tour with the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA).
- Kalgoorlie/Coolgardie CAPS Indigenous School Tour with AISWA.
- MONA 24 Carrot Carnival/Everyone Can Read Tour, Tasmania (inspired by the research in 'A Literacy Deficit', by ABC reporter, Sarah Dingle).

Inside **ABC Goldfields-Esperance** with Kirstyn March, Jackie French and Ron Gorman on our 'Grow a Story' tour to Kalgoorlie with AISWA Literacy.

Jackie French describes #Kalgoorlie Boulder on the radio as an 'extraordinary and fascinating place, the heart of Australia'.

REGIONAL TARGETED EVENTS - JACKIE FRENCH 2015

Mount Gambier, National Simultaneous Storytime, May 15

Nine schools came together for the 2015 National Simultaneous Storytime event at Tenison Woods College organised by Mt Gambier Library. This event was part of the Australian Children's Laureate 'Share a Story' calendar launched in January 2015.

Mt Gambier Library hosted French at an event for their seniors audience with a focus on 'Saving Our Stories'.

"Our children and also adults from this region are certainly richer for having Jackie's visit. Thank you again." - Robyn Williams (Teacher Librarian, McDonald Park School)

24 Carrot Carnival with special guest Jackie French, MONA festival lawns, October 2015

By working together over 12 months - Justine Alltimes/Jackie French from ACLA, Roxanne Steenbergen from Windermere Primary and Sarah Proud from MONA developed the idea of a Carnival for 1,200 kids. MONA's relationship with the twelve 24 Carrot Garden Schools gave ACLA access to schools from the surrounding area, targeted for having low literacy. The 24 Carrot Carnival was pure joy - full of dancing, stories and great fun. ACLA will continue to work with MONA on future project ideas to build on the seeds that we've sewn.

Photo credit: 936 ABC Hobart: Damien Peck

Students made nature themed masked in the lead up to the Carnival. School children were given fruit and healthy snacks throughout the carnival and loved the fruit chariot! Each student left with a skipping rope generously sponsored by Hill Street Grocers.

The MONA 24 Carrot team dressing up in custom-made vegetable costumes and MONA invited The Theatre of the Roaming Trees.

Photo credit:
936 ABC Hobart: Damien Peck

Children's Laureate and acclaimed author Jackie French was a big hit as she and friends, Elaine Harris and Chris Bedford, took to the stage to speak about how they had overcome various reading and writing challenges to achieve their dreams. For the grand finale, all came together for an all-in impromptu dance routine!

EVENT/TOUR HIGHLIGHTS - INAUGURAL LAUREATES (2012–2013)

Alison Lester with students from Ntaria School, Hermannsburg, prouldy holding up their 'This is My Place artworks' 2013 (NT)

Testimonials

Maryanne Hyde, children's and youth services coordinator, Geelong Regional Library:

'Many thanks for bringing Alison out to the regional areas where the children don't often get the opportunity to meet and hear authors of her calibre, or indeed any authors at all. I know her talk and workshop have inspired some young minds and that is what we are all here for!'

Sue van der Veer, teacher/librarian, Elizabeth South Primary School, Tasmania:

'I had a student in a recent lesson tell me that she wanted to rewrite her rough draft: "Just like Alison Lester told us that she changes the words over and over and over, until it's right".'

Boori Monty Pryor at the Geraldton Big Sky Festival: Sunlight and Shadows 2013. Spinning a Yarn Panelists: L-R Jon Doust, Clarrie Cameron, Brenton McKenna and Boori Monty Pryor (WA)

Boori Monty Pryor at the *Shake a Leg* exhibition opening at Alice Springs Library, November 2013 with the whole audience up dancing!

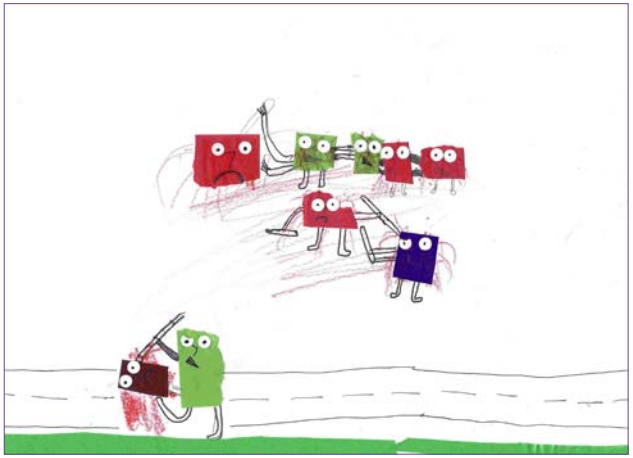
The Fighting Town

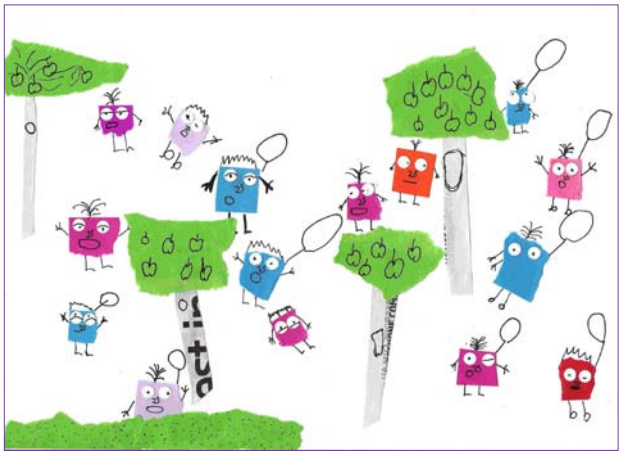
One project that really stood out from Alison Lester's regional and remote touring was her book making project in Borroloola, NT. Here is her Laureate blog post:

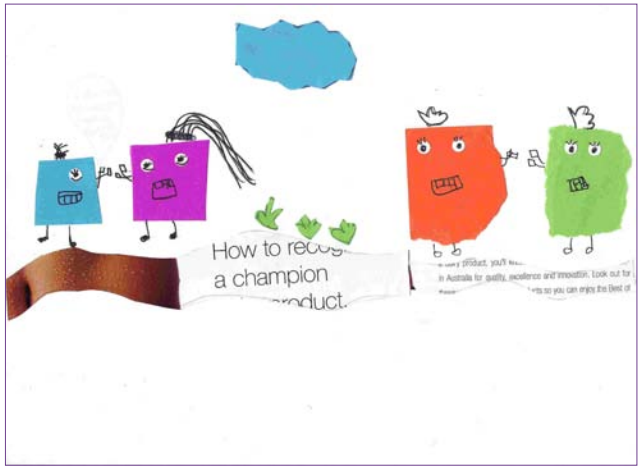
The kids were telling me that lots of people refer to Borroloola as 'the fighting town', because there was a lot of fighting going on there. This made the kids feel sad so we decided to make a book about things that cause fights. The adults thought this was a great idea too so we worked really hard and made a book called "The Fighting Town".

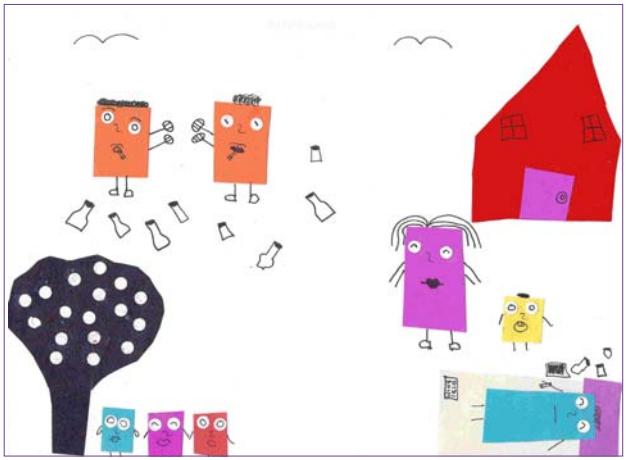
In the book there was lots of yelling and the people had been fighting for so long they actually had forgotten what they were fighting about. The Rainbow Serpent hears all this fighting and decides to visit to see what is going on. The final book we made was called 'Borroloola Stories'. - Alison Lester

Alison Lester's photo from the Borroloola Rodeo









LAUREATE PROJECTS

Jackie French (2014–2015)

As well as extensively working with the media and touring partners to advocate for:

- the right for every child to be guided to the books they'll love
- wider support, both in person and financially, of literacy and library projects for young people
- the children's literature industry to be seen as a vital part of Australia's economy

Jackie French and the ACLA team have also launched the **Share a Story Calendar 2015**. This fun calendar, with a different theme each month, encourages children to share, enjoy and create stories together. The calendar was created in collaboration with the ACLA branding team – illustrator Ann James and designer Judy Watson.

- The calendar has been distributed to 4,000 school libraries via Scholastic Book Club and the high resolution file is available as a free download on the Laureate website.
- The calendar was distributed to all regional and remote touring partners at the start of the year.
- Roxanne Steenbergen from Windermere Primary School in Tasmania (24 Carrot Carnival MONA tour) formed a teachers focus group, meeting every two months to share ideas and successful outcomes based on the SAS project.
- The Australian Booksellers Association (ABA) have shared the calendar monthly with bookstore members to help with sales ideas via the book lists promoted.
- ACLA has collaborated with the ACT Government's Community Services Directorate to extend the life of the inaugural Share a Story calendar to be part of their **On my first day project** www.children.act.gov.au.
- Due to the positive industry-wide feedback and demand for a calendar of its kind, ACLA will continue the Share a Story concept into 2016/17 as a 'Legacy' project.

I have of course already hung up several of these posters at the entrance to the Junior School Library, and will be including it in our school newsletter this week. Initiatives which promote sharing stories – amongst families, communities and peers, are an absolute winner in my books.

Megan Daley
childrensbooksdaily.com

Share a Story tote bag created for the ACT On My First Day project.

JACKIE FRENCH LAUREATE PROJECTS 2014/2015

Planting seeds I hope may grow...

"Mostly, as Laureate, I have been sowing seeds. Seeds sown as Laureate have a far greater chance of taking root."

Being Laureate is, at heart, about inspiration, enticing kids into reading programmes or to hunt books more widely, luring teachers to study literacy techniques that have proven results; tempting parents to read to their kids; arguing that kids can read books with sticky fingers because paper doesn't last, but the memory of a loved book does. Watermelon should be compulsory every Friday in libraries.

Jackie French

Finding the Magic Book

"It isn't easy finding the right book for each child. I've lost count of the emails asking for 'the' magic book. It doesn't exist. In any class some kids love books about horses, friends, pirates, zombies, history, et al. An equal number hate them, as passionately as a child who refuses broccoli.

Enter that precious endangered species, the teacher librarian, who knows both books and kids. But kids also say they'd happily clean their room if someone read to them; would read to whoever cooks their favourite dinner, and wash the car/ dog/bathroom if they're read a story in return. Some of those kids may even have taken those ideas home." Jackie French

1000 Books for 1000 Kids Project

In 2015 Jackie (with HarperCollins Publishers) launched the 1000 Books for 1000 Kids Project to enable kids or those who love them choose a 'magic book' from a diverse list including Shackleton's adventures and a cookbook. Jackie prays she can unearth the 'magic book' each child needs.

"Don't Call Us Nice"

As Laureate Jackie represented not just her books but all Australian Children's authors at events like the 2014 ASA speech where Don't Call Us Nice detailed the exploitation and clichéd expectations writers for young people put up with, because mostly we are nice. We accept the lower fees and dismissive critical regard all too often, for the sake of the children who we write for.

'My Story' project with Sydney Writers' Festival

Jackie was part of initiating programmes to bring kids from different backgrounds together, in the 'My Story' project with the Sydney Writers' Festival. 'My Story' seeks true stories about the everyday lives of children aged 5 to 18 from all across Greater Western Sydney. The project monitors the changing face of children in one of Sydney's biggest and most diverse regions.

Narwaddaken Academy

Jackie is now part of the steering committee to establish the Narwaddaken Academy, a remote indigenous school that is part of the growth of new templates for Indigenous education.

Media and advocacy

Jackie wrote at least four articles a week; responding to hundreds of emails from kids, parents and teachers; interviews on blogs, radio, TV and filmed events; appearances at Writers Festivals across Australia; luncheon talks to business groups to enthuse them to give money or time to projects for kids and literacy; urging older Australians to record their stories, to volunteer to help kids read and to follow a Canadian model: let every school have an adult reading a book each lunch time and after school, to whoever wants to listen.

Every kid must learn to read

Every kid can lean to read, even if it takes far longer and sophisticated technology to help it happen.

In the past two years we have seen a major change in how we look at how literacy can be taught, what works and why we must give it a major place in teacher training. *"I've no idea if my work helped this happen. But I am now patron of Queensland SPELD, ACT SPELD and DAGS, to add to the other roles for young people (and wombats) I held before the Laureateship began."* Jackie French.

Excerts taken from the Magpies Magazine article, Sewing the Seeds, by Jackie French, Nov 2015.

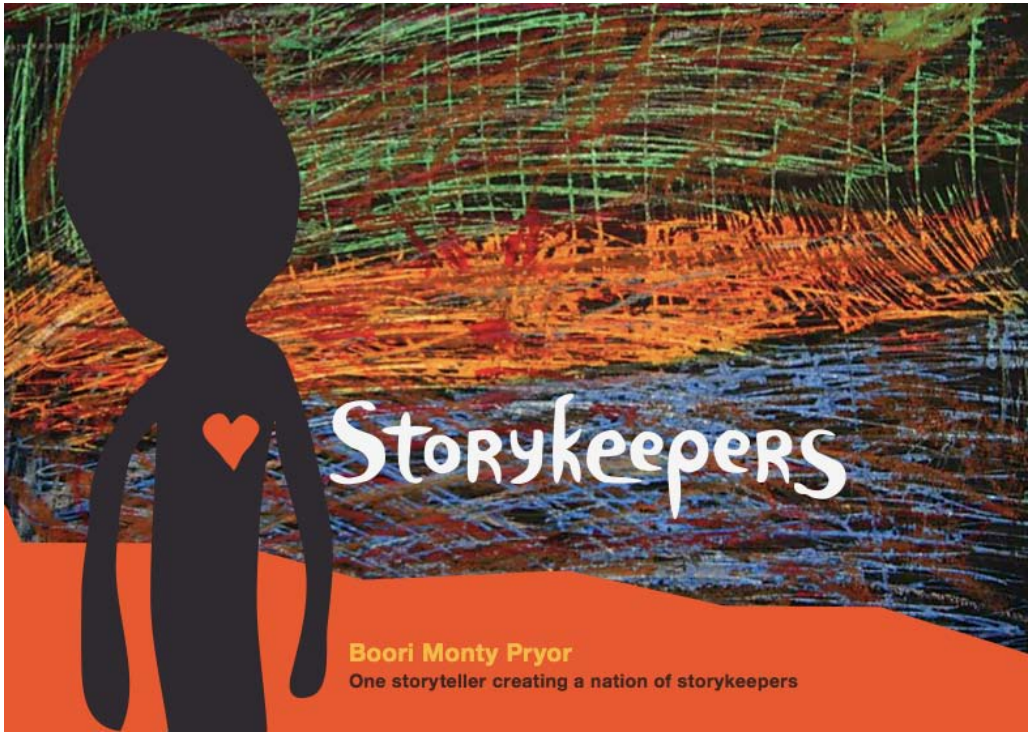
INAUGURAL LAUREATE PROJECTS

Boori Monty Pryor (2012–2013)

Boori Monty Pryor continues to collaborate with Bob Weiss, one of Australia's most highly regarded drama producers - *Women of the Sun* (1990) - to create a film to document his unique work over the last 20 years. *Storykeepers* will offer an insight into his inspirational performance workshops, and his own personal story, which led him to become such a dedicated writer and storyteller. Filming began during Boori's Laureateship and will continue as a long-term Laureate project.

Throughout his Laureateship Boori encouraged thousands of children and young adults to join him to build a 'nation of storytellers'.

*Students from The Academy of Sport, Health and Education (**ASHE**) in Shepparton with Boori Monty Pryor*

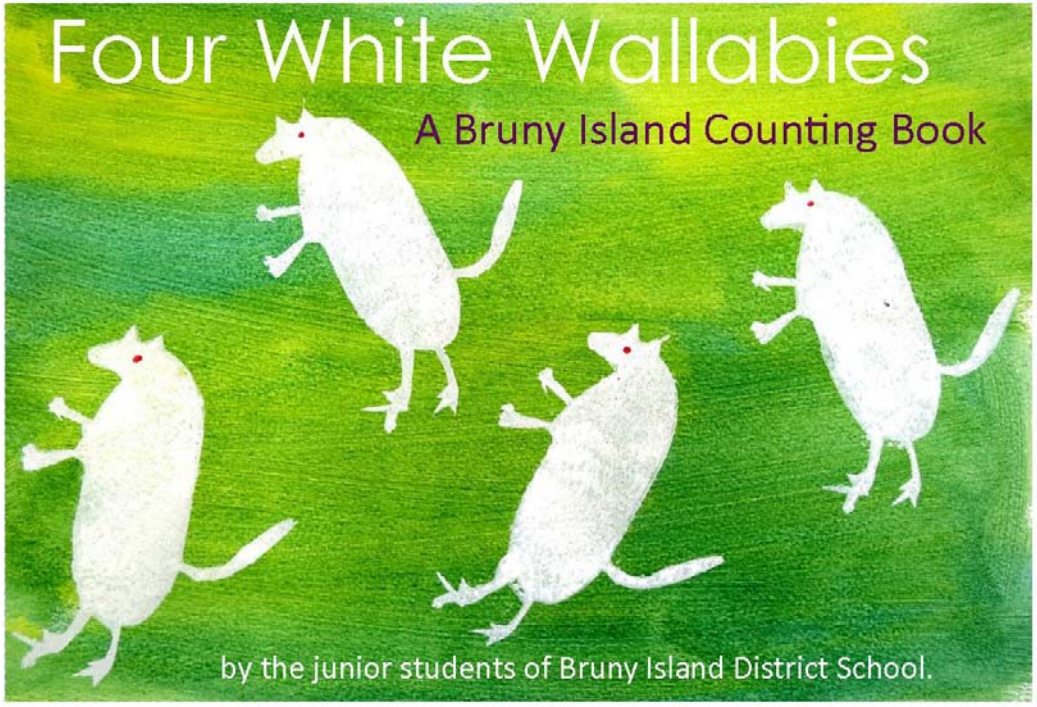


Alison Lester (2012–2013)

Alison's project was to develop a book focused on the theme of hope: 'We are Australia/This Is My Place'. The book will be a collection of works by around 60 Australian children talking, drawing, painting and photographing their lives: a book for kids by kids, inspired by her touring program around Australia during her Laureateship. Children from all over the country will be represented, from Cape Barren Island to the Cocos Islands, and everywhere in between.

Four White Wallabies (right image) is an example of one of the books Alison facilitated in communities when she visited Bruny Island District School (Tasmania) in 2012 and 2013.

Alison Lester giving watercolour workshops at Bruny Island District School 2012



INTERNATIONAL IMPACT 2015

Jackie French at the 2nd International Laureate Summit, Bologna Book Fair 2015

What did ACLA learn from the summit?

- Story events in unusual places make for unforgettable experiences (Laureate na nÓg)
- Skype and conference calling is an excellent way to reach young people in regional and remote areas, and can be used to follow up on outcomes from events.
- The Laureate is a catalyst for change.
- Inspiring children to love story will lead them to seek out books on their own.
- The Laureate empowers children to believe in themselves, their own stories and voice.
- Understanding the power of words can open up future life opportunities.
- The Laureate's role is to inspire teachers and adults working with children to show how important these educators are to young people's reading development.
- The Bologna Book Fair is an ideal place for cultural exchange between literature and arts organisations.
- Working together as an international network will help strengthen our voice on issues such as: diversity in children's books, how to support libraries and teacher-librarians.

BOLOGNA CHILDREN'S BOOK FAIR

The Laureate Summit included two private forums, chaired by the esteemed UK Journalist **Julia Eccleshare**, with Laureates and their respective arts organisations from **10 countries.** They shared strategies, creative project ideas and challenges faced to help best promote reading and support early childhood development.

Roundtable discussions between Laureates and project teams.

An international Laureate network was established to assist new countries looking to develop their own Laureate programs, and encourage continued collaboration and exchange between existing Laureates. Bologna Book Fair is committed to hosting an international summit every two years.

2015 Summit public event made history with 10 international Children's Laureates performing to Fair attendees at the Authors' Cafe:

Fransisco Honojosa (Mexico),
Jan Paul Schutten (Netherlands),
Martin Daws (Wales),
Jackie French (Australia),
Aneirin Karadog (Wales),
Henrika Andersson (Finland),
Katarina von Numers Ekman (Finnish-Swedish),
Johanna Lindbäck (Sweden),
Malorie Blackman (UK),
Eoin Colfer (Ireland).

Malorie Blackman, UK Laureate

Martin Daws, Welsh Laureate

Alison Lester at Australian Writers' Week in Beijing, 2013

Capital Library, Beijing, hosts of the 'Hello! from Australia' exhibition (Alison's art in the background)

Alison Lester interviewed by reporter Liu Wenwen on CCTV News as part of Australian Writers' Week in Beijing

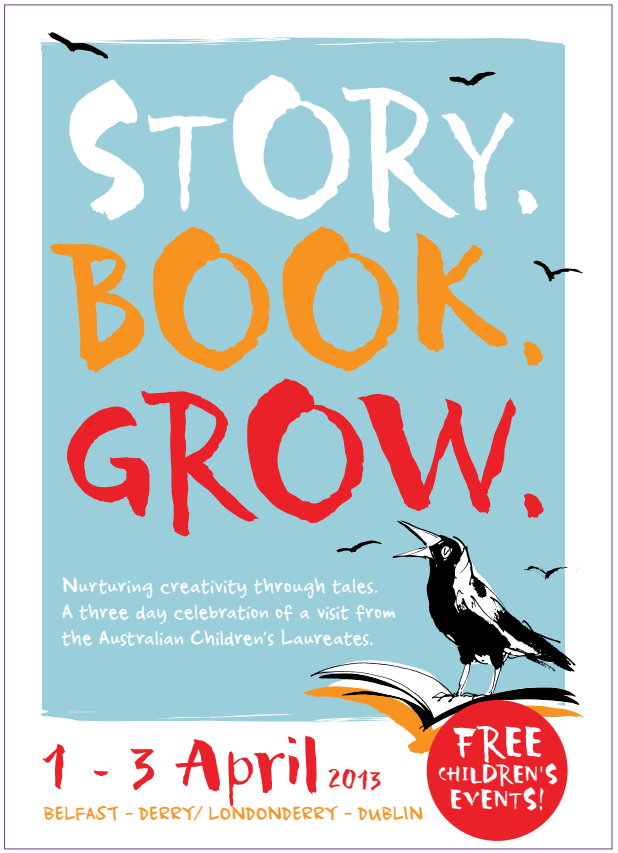
Alison Lester and Boori Monty Pryor at the Bologna Book Fair International Laureate Summit, 2013

Boori performing as a special guest at the Allen & Unwin 25th Anniversary Dinner, 2013, Bologna

International Laureate Summit.
Siobhán Parkinson (Ireland, first Laureate), Johan Unenge (Sweden), Niamh Sharkey (Current Irish Laureate), Boori Monty Pryor and Alison Lester (Australia).
Authors' Cafe, Bologna

Alison Lester and Boori Monty Pryor - Irish Tour 2013

Laureates in Converation, National Library of Dublin, Irish Tour with Niamh Sharkey (Laureate na nÓg/Ireland) and event Chair, Dr. Padraic Whyte



Beautiful program created by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland about the Australian Laureate tour to Ireland

Damian Smyth, Head of Literature & Drama, Arts Council of Northern Ireland:

'Everyone they met was bowled over by the charisma of your Laureates and how they do so well at everything that was promised by Laureateship'

2015

Malcolm Donaldson, Julia Donaldson (former UK Laureate and famous author of *The Gruffalo)* with Boori Monty Pryor, Melbourne, Feb 2015