



Judges' Report 2016

Judges

Fiona Mackie (Convenor)

Kathy Aloniu and Melinda Szymanik

Advisor for the Russell Clark Illustration Award, Professor Martin Salisbury

Te reo Māori (Te Kura Pounamu Award)

Riki-Lee Saua (Convenor)

Te Rangi Rangi Tangohau, Lawren Matrix and Mereana Taungapeau

Judges' Report 2016

Our winning titles this year represent the very best of the best, and we are certain that you will agree with us. Each of the winners is outstanding, providing the reader with insight into new worlds, new ways of thinking, and new voices too. These are books which will stand the test of time and contribute much to the rich history of literature for children and young adults in New Zealand.

We were especially impressed with the material created by first-time authors and illustrators, and this is reflected in the titles nominated. Smaller, niche publishers also submitted high quality publications, matching the well-established publishing companies in terms of presentation and quality production values.

There were 126 books submitted, with some books entered across more than one category. However, there was a reduction in material submitted in every category this year.

The Judging Process:

After reading, and re-reading, the 126 books that had been submitted for the awards, the judges compiled the titles they considered to be the best. This created a long list, which we used to decide upon the short list for each category. There was a lot of discussion about suitability for categories, with authors and publishers needing to be very clear in selecting the correct category for submission. There were many titles that we debated the suitability of category, and of course there are some which were suitable for two categories, especially for those that straddled the Junior Fiction and Young Adult Fiction categories.

Our decisions for each category were made after much discussion and debate, and were unanimous. We were looking for an original voice, point of view, plot or characterisation, and the finalists represented the very best of these.

Fiona Mackie, Convening Judge

Te Kura Pounamu Award

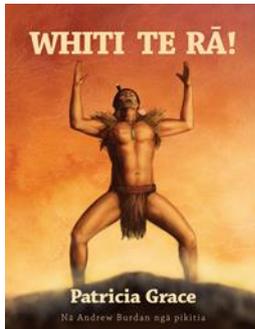
Te Kura Pounamu recognises books that are either written entirely in, or translated entirely into, te reo Māori. All books submitted in this category are judged for literary composition, relevance and quality of illustration, format and physical makeup, and – above all – excellence in te reo Māori.

All books submitted for Te Kura Pounamu this year are distinguished contributions to Māori language literature for children and young people. In 2016, Te Kura Pounamu received four entries, which touched on themes of friendship, overcoming challenges, personal identity, and more.

Judges agreed that each of these stories uplifts and enriches te reo Māori literature. Amongst the four entries, three finalists stood out for their inspiring and relevant content, stunning illustrations, and excellence in the quality of Māori language and translations.

The three finalists are:

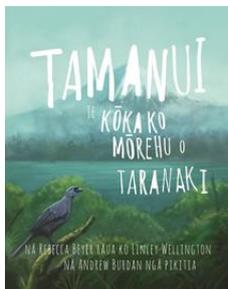
Whiti te rā!



Written by Patricia Grace
Translated by Kawata Teepa
Illustrated by Andrew Burdan
(Huia Publishers)

This book is a riveting read that will capture hearts and minds as it shares the history of the famous Ka Mate Haka. The language is simple with a clear message, allowing the story to flow easily and the stunning illustrations support the story brilliantly.

Tamanui te Kōkako Mōrehu o Taranaki



Written by Rebecca Beyer and Linley Wellington
Translated by Kawata Teepa
Illustrated by Andrew Burdan
(Huia Publishers)

A well-written in-depth tale about the journey of the kōkako, with simple and meaningful language and beautiful supporting artwork. *Tamanui te Kōkako Mōrehu o Taranaki* is a great read suitable for young children, and is particularly special given that there are not many books written for children about kōkako.

Te Hua Tuatahi a Kuwi



Written and illustrated by Kat Merewether
Translated by Pānia Papa
(Illustrated Publishing)

This is a refreshing, fun story about Kuwi who has a problem and goes through various scenarios to solve it. The pictures are bright, friendly and suited to a younger audience. The language is descriptive and flows over each page, bringing the story to life. A great read for young children.

Te Kura Pounamu Award Winner:

Whiti te rā! shares the history behind New Zealand's most famous Haka, Ka Mate. Composed by Ngāti Toa chief, Te Rauparaha, Ka Mate is a celebration of life over death drawn from the experience of escaping his enemies. In *Whiti te rā!* stunning artwork and simple language are used to convey an inspiring message of overcoming challenges. Suitable for all ages, this book is a riveting read that will capture hearts and minds. The language is simple with a clear message, allowing the story to flow easily with stunning illustrations that support the story brilliantly. Te Kura Pounamu judges agreed that *Whiti te rā* stood out for its excellence in te reo Māori, quality of illustrations, and relevance to Māori children and young adults today. *Whiti te rā* is a distinguished contribution to Māori language literature for young people.

Te Kura Pounamu Award Winner: ***Whiti te rā!***

Written by Patricia Grace
Translated by Kawata Teepa
Illustrated by Andrew Burdan

Huia Publishers



Te Kura Pounamu Award – Concluding Remarks

Each Te Kura Pounamu entry showcased excellence in Māori language literature, with well-written descriptive text and beautiful supporting artwork. Selecting a winner was not an easy task for the judges.

As the number of New Zealanders who are learning to speak Māori continues to grow, it is important to have literature to support them. With only four entries received this year, it is hoped that in subsequent years more entries for Te Kura Pounamu will be submitted.

Te Kura Pounamu Award Judges' Convenor

Riki-Lee Saua

8 August 2016

Picture Book Award

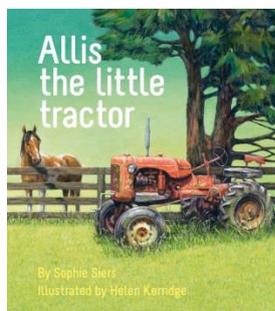
Picture books are storytellers through text and illustrations, and whether they are fun, scary, sad, or exciting, the very best ones are treasures we want to read again and share with others. This year there were 60 entries in the picture book category, for the judges to enjoy and deliberate on.

The trend for picture books to be written in rhyme continues, and we found that many such titles ended up feeling contrived, as the rhyming convention tended to force the text. However, many submissions were fresh and original, with this category having the most submissions for first-time authors and illustrators.

It is a difficult task to choose five finalists, as we could easily have chosen 10 or more. We were particularly pleased with the New Zealand flavour and the use of te reo Māori in picture books, and some of the partnerships of author and illustrator were exceptional. This year's entries are varied in style and theme, but all five finalists are a joy to read and view.

The five finalists are:

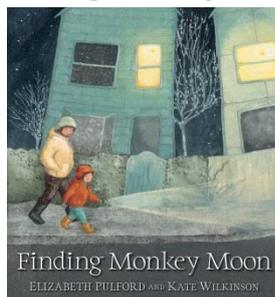
Allis the little tractor



Written by Sophie Siers
Illustrated by Helen Kerridge
Millwood-Heritage Productions

Allis has been replaced by the strong John Deere tractor, and left under the macrocarpa tree, rusty and thirsty for oil and water. Can Toby and Uncle Jack fulfil Allis's dream of being useful again? The lovely voice and gentle spirit of this story are complemented by the warmth of the illustrations.

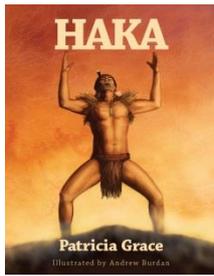
Finding Monkey Moon



Written by Elizabeth Pulford
Illustrated by Kate Wilkinson
Walker Books Australia

It's bedtime and Michael's beloved Monkey Moon is missing. Michael and his Dad take the reader along on a chilly night-time search. "Their breath fluttered like moths in the cold air." Thankfully all is well in the blink of a shiny Monkey Moon eye. A delightful familiar story.

Haka



Written by Patricia Grace
Illustrated by Andrew Burdan
Huia Publishers

As Te Rauparaha hides from his ever-so-close enemies he whispers to himself, “Will I die? Will I live?” Fearing for his life, Te Rauparaha prays the wisdom and mana of his allies will keep him safe. When danger passes he praises his protectors. Although simply told, *Haka* effectively captures and honours the cultural framework of the origins of what is now considered a traditional war dance or challenge.

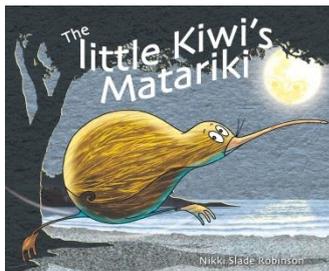
The House on the Hill



Written by Kyle Mewburn
Illustrated by Sarah Davis
Scholastic New Zealand

Scary enough to have the reader on the edge of their seat, but not the stuff of nightmares. The poetic and suspenseful text combined with the dark and eerie illustrations make for a truly spooky read, with a great little twist and sigh of relief at the end.

The Little Kiwi's Matariki



Written and illustrated by Nikki Slade Robinson
David Ling Publishing (Duck Creek Press)

English and te reo Māori are seamlessly woven together as Little Kiwi wakes her forest friends for Matariki. The night is black against the glow of the moon, and the urgency is evident as the creatures follow. Aue! Suddenly Little Kiwi's Matariki makes a wonderful, glittering show for all.

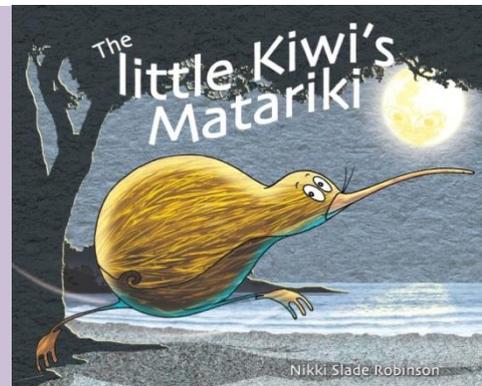
Picture Book Award Winner:

The skilfully woven story of Little Kiwi, snug in her burrow, woken by the glow of the moon on a special night. Little Kiwi takes the reader on a rapid journey, rousing the forest creatures from their slumber as she urges them to come and see the most wonderful sight. English and te reo Māori are blended together naturally, and comfortably. There is tension and excitement in both text and illustration, which work in unison expressing urgency and anticipation, and revealing the distinct personalities of Kiwi's friends. The landscapes are superb, from the utter black of the forest night, to the deepest green of native plants, to the pink-streaked sky and pebbled foreshore. There are extra details and layers — the face of the moon illuminating the pathway for Little Kiwi, the shadows of small creatures and the textures and movement of the text echoing the creatures as they hurry towards the light. The finale, of course, is the glittering appearance of Matariki, followed by useful information on the celebration and the constellation itself. This is a marvellous introduction to Matariki, a picture book to be enjoyed by young readers, or to share at story time.

Picture Book Award Winner: *The Little Kiwi's Matariki*

Written and illustrated by Nikki Slade
Robinson

David Ling Publishing (Duck Creek Press)



Esther Glen Award (Junior Fiction)

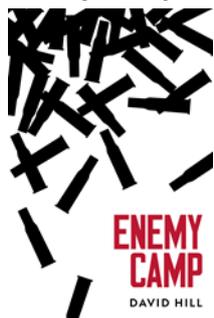
The quality and range of titles in this junior fiction category continue to be excellent. We were impressed too with the improving quality of self-published, co-published and small press titles, demonstrating the growing understanding of the need for expert advice in editing, cover art, production, and so on. Two of the five finalists in this category were self-published or small press publications.

The submitted books covered the fantastic, the historical, the humorous, the scientific, the sobering and the adventurous, (and sometimes all of those at once) and we spent many enjoyable hours traversing the pages. While there were many well-told stories, there wasn't a great deal of ethnic diversity, and we hope more books with a wider range of voices will come through in future. It is also interesting to note many of the stories were set outside of New Zealand, and even outside of this world. We do note that there were significantly fewer (28%) submissions in this category in 2016. We hope that next year more publishers will submit books for this readership group.

The shortlisted titles brought something fresh to the category and all were told with strong, distinctive voices and had heart.

The five finalists are:

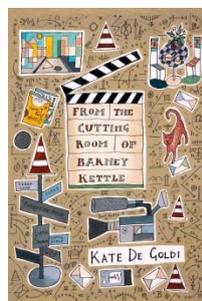
Enemy Camp



Written by David Hill
Penguin Random House (Puffin)

In this novel about the Featherston prisoner of war camp during World War 2, David Hill skilfully depicts the mood of small town New Zealand. He paints a realistic picture of wartime life and the cultural divide between local Kiwis and their Japanese prisoners as the story marches inexorably to an explosive conclusion.

From the Cutting Room of Barney Kettle

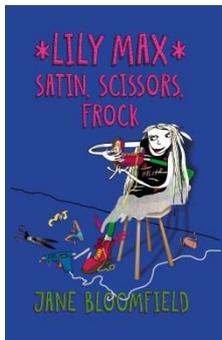


Written by Kate De Goldi
Penguin Random House (Longacre)

Helped by his patient sister, Ren, young filmmaker Barney interviews the local community while trying to figure out who is sending them cryptic secret messages. Kate De Goldi's poignant

examination of the ties that bind a community together in the face of tragedy packs a powerful punch.

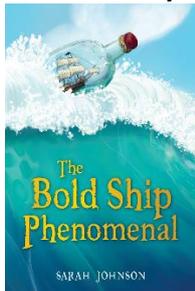
Lily Max: Satin, Scissors, Frock



Written by Jane Bloomfield
Luncheon Sausage Books

Young fashionista Lily Max has an original outlook on life. As Lily works to make her fashion ambitions a reality, her creativity, spunk and can-do attitude make her a shining example of girl power. With conspiratorial asides and plenty of humour, new author Jane Bloomfield is a fresh voice.

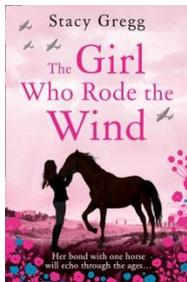
The Bold Ship Phenomenal



Written by Sarah Johnson
Flat Bed Press

Malachi wishes for an exciting life but gets more than he bargained for. With an unexpected twist of magic, a bottle discovered on the beach provides him with intrigue, portents and parallels to his stowaway journey on a truck. Sarah Johnson's fresh approach to Malachi's familiar dilemmas proves a satisfying read.

The Girl Who Rode the Wind



Written by Stacy Gregg
Harper Collins

Threads of history, war, tradition, love and family are deftly woven through this thrilling, action-packed story about young horse rider, Lola, who risks everything to ride in the most dangerous horse race in the world – the Palio. Richly detailed, Stacy Gregg's narrative explores multiple themes while building to a satisfying ending.

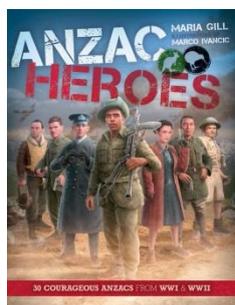
Elsie Locke Award (Non-Fiction)

Non-Fiction works are hugely important not only in supporting learning and the school curriculum, but also in providing vibrant and interesting leisure reading for children. This year there were 19 entries in this category, covering a wide variety of subject material from sport, to depression, history, photography, wildlife, and biography.

The judges were impressed with the writing of several first-time authors, but felt for some, the standard of production and design needed to be raised. After much discussion and debate, the judges were satisfied that the finalists chosen present young people with an outstanding selection of information that is well-researched, comprehensive and visually appealing.

The five finalists are:

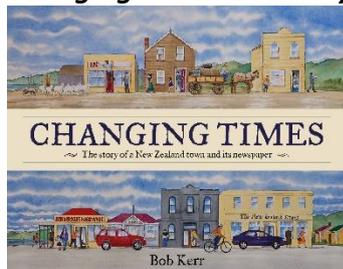
ANZAC Heroes



Written by Maria Gill
Illustrated by Marco Ivancic
Scholastic New Zealand

Collaboration between writer and illustrator at its best. From nurse and pilot to soldier and spy, this book offers a beautifully arranged cast of ANZAC heroes from WWI and WWII, and includes life-like illustrations with maps, a medal room, fact boxes, index and a glossary. Each hero has a personal story and timeline. Impossible to put down.

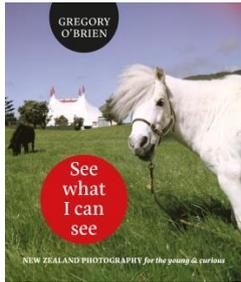
Changing Times: the story of a New Zealand town and its newspaper



Written by Bob Kerr
Potton & Burton

Produced in inimitable Bob Kerr style, this is a hugely engaging story of the *New Zealand Times*. Young and old will enjoy learning about the events and social history of the times through snapshots of newspaper headlines and illustrations. Looking for Mary's tartan shawl is an added bit of fun.

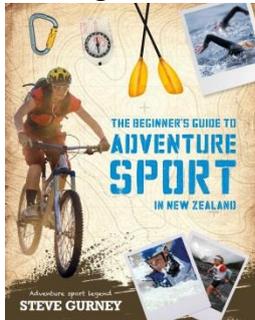
See what I can see



**Written by Gregory O'Brien
Auckland University Press**

A comprehensive introduction to photography which explains how the camera works, from the early models to the cell phone. The huge range of examples from New Zealand photographers, capturing technique, creativity, the quirky, the social history of New Zealand, and how through the lens, “The ho hum becomes great photography.”

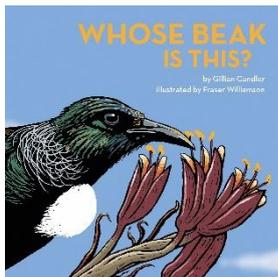
The Beginner's Guide to Adventure Sport in New Zealand



**Written by Steve Gurney
Penguin Random House (Random House New Zealand)**

A really useful guide for beginners of all ages, covering a wide variety of adventure sports and with an easy-to-follow layout with on-point photographs to illustrate. There's great advice on planning, safety, first aid, start-up gear, tips and events. Links to video clips are an added feature.

Whose Beak is This?



**Written by Gillian Candler
Illustrated by Fraser Williamson
Potton & Burton**

Young readers will enjoy guessing who the beak belongs to. Beautifully illustrated New Zealand birds, named in te reo Māori and with well-chosen text, make this a really great junior non-fiction resource. The illustrated index is a simple but brilliant idea. The inclusion of a webpage address for additional notes is useful.

Elsie Locke Award Winner (Non-Fiction):

An incredibly well-researched, written, and illustrated portrayal of ANZAC heroes from WWI and WWII. The quality of the production and design is of the highest standard, and the collaboration between author and illustrator is outstanding. The author brings us 30 ANZAC heroes — from spy and soldier to nurse, fighter pilot, mine disarmer and stretcher bearer — and covers the various forces including the Māori Battalion. Each hero has a double-page account detailing their background, service and actions during their war, the medals they received and personal timeline. In addition, information about the unit or service to which they belonged, or the battle in which they fought, are included.

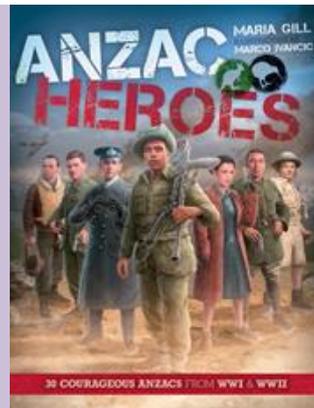
The stories are not fact sheets; rather they are personal, engaging, inspiring and sad, and they follow each person through to their lives after the war and their deaths. Together, author and illustrator have created a totally absorbing work of non-fiction that is impossible to put down. The inclusion of the contents page, glossary, maps, timelines, the medal room, a bibliography, comprehensive index, and the overall professional layout, makes this book the standard to aspire to in a non-fiction work for children and young adults.

Elsie Locke Award Winner (Non-Fiction): ***ANZAC Heroes***

Written by Maria Gill

Illustrated by Marco Ivancic

Scholastic New Zealand



Young Adult Fiction Award

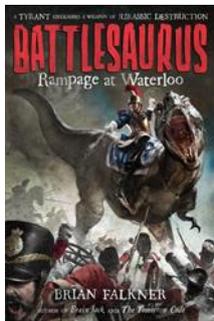
Only 17 books were submitted for the Young Adult award this year. This is fewer in numbers than in 2015, but there was no diminishing in quality! Readers of young adult fiction are so fortunate to have the calibre of writers that we have in New Zealand, who consistently create fascinating worlds and characters that you come to care about.

Contemporary or historical fiction was the flavour of the day, with the majority of the titles fitting into those categories. We were pleased to see material with an adventurous flavour also submitted, as this is often in short supply.

Young adults need material that will speak to them, give them experiences without having the actual consequences in the real world, provide them with other points of view, and the finalist titles certainly do that.

The five finalists are:

Battlesaurus: Rampage at Waterloo



Written by Brian Falkner
Pan Macmillan Australia (Farrar Strauss Giroux)

Napoleon Bonaparte will do anything to defeat the British and Prussian forces at Waterloo, unleashing a devastating weapon – dinosaurs! Willem Verheyen can predict dinosaurs' movements and defeat them, but will he get this knowledge to the British in time? This deftly woven alternative history will have readers breathless for more.

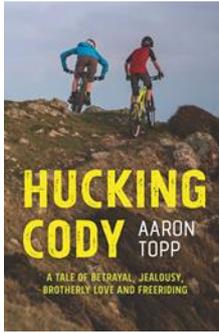
Being Magdalene



Written by Fleur Beale
Penguin Random House (Random House New Zealand)

As a member of the Children of Faith, Magdalene is expected to obey the Elders and her parents without question. This has become increasingly difficult, especially as her strong-willed younger sister Zillah keeps drawing attention. Magdalene desperately wants them to be safe, but where does that safety lie?

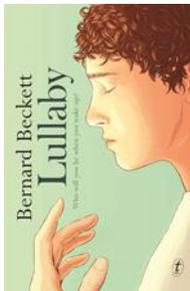
Hucking Cody



**Written by Aaron Topp
Mary Egan Publishing**

Cody's life isn't much fun – blamed for a burglary at his bike shop job, no girlfriend, and an older brother causing concern. The only thing he looks forward to is mountain biking hard, doing stunts and hucking the bush tracks. Fast-paced and adrenaline-filled, Cody's risk-taking will engross teens.

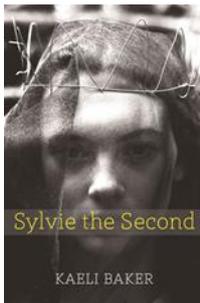
Lullaby



**Written by Bernard Beckett
Text Publishing**

Rene's twin brother Theo is in hospital with a life-threatening brain injury. There is a chance that an experimental procedure could save him, but is Rene truly capable of making such a decision? What will he risk to save Theo, knowing it could cost him everything?

Sylvie the Second



**Written by Kaeli Baker
Mākarō Press**

Sylvie's family is in turmoil, with her older sister Cate being re-admitted into a psychiatric ward. With her parents focussed on Cate, Sylvie is left to look after – and re-invent herself – with disastrous consequences. This realistic novel, aimed at mature teen readers, shows the pain resulting from date rape.

Young Adult Fiction Award Winner:

The winning book draws the reader into a world both familiar and unfamiliar – a battle between England and France, at Waterloo, with a plot-altering twist – dinosaurs as weaponry!

We knew that this cleverly constructed alternate history had everything going for it – a fresh take on an historic event, appealing and believable characters, and a plot that made this a book you could not put down.

Fifteen-year-old Willem lives with his mother in Gaillemarde, a Belgian village, after the death of his stage magician father. Willem has inherited his father's abilities, which prove to be very useful when he and friends are in the forest and are cornered by smaller 'saur'. Willem manages to control the saur long enough for them to escape, and ends up taking a very small saur to raise as a pet. When people go missing and the village comes under threat from a very large saur, Willem steps up to save everyone, unwittingly alerting the French soldiers, and eventually Napoleon, to his abilities. With his mother captured by the French, and Willem trying to escape to the British soldiers, the reader is drawn into a tense race against time.

The convincing plotting made us believe that Napoleon actually had saurs at the battle of Waterloo and the cliff-hanger ending left us desperate to find out more.

Young Adult Fiction Award Winner: *Battlesaurus: Rampage at Waterloo*

Written by Brian Falkner

Pan MacMillan Australia (Farrar Strauss
Giroux)



Russell Clark Award (Illustration)

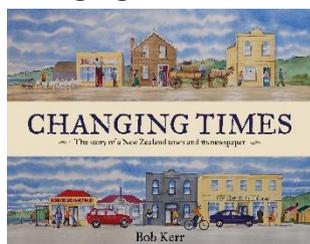
Illustrating seems to be in good heart here in New Zealand with an impressive 27 entries for this award from both established and emerging illustrators, using a wide range of techniques both traditional and modern and often a mixture of the two.

Illustrations should telegraph mood and emotion, provide cues and clues to seeing the layers within a text, and enhance a reader's experience with detail, energy, movement and aesthetics. As with good text, less is often more and those illustrations that kept their focus and got under the skin of the story they accompanied shone brightest. At its best, illustration becomes an indivisible part of the whole, subtly enhancing and illuminating without overwhelming the words on the page.

We felt our finalists best conveyed this perfect marriage of story and artwork, whether it was for a dreamy night time lullaby, a desperate search in the night, an homage to a genius playwright, the rise and fall of a local newspaper, or a scary journey into the unknown.

The five finalists are:

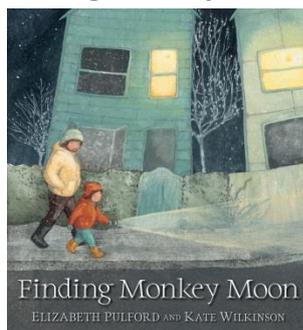
Changing Times: the story of a New Zealand town and its newspaper



**Illustrated by Bob Kerr
Potton & Burton**

Using a comic-book panel format to trace the birth and death of a small-town New Zealand newspaper, Bob Kerr skilfully tells the story mostly through his thoughtful watercolour illustrations. Well-wrought details and recurring motifs make this a book to be enjoyed again and again.

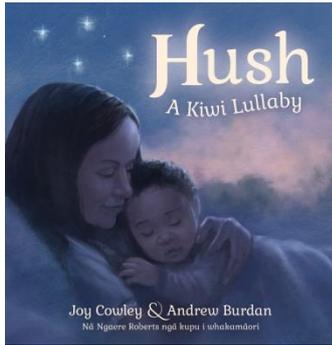
Finding Monkey Moon



**Illustrated by Kate Wilkinson
Walker Books Australia**

A story that takes place at night adds a degree of difficulty that debut illustrator Kate Wilkinson handles well, as she captures the emotion of Michael's search for a beloved toy left behind at the park. The pictures effectively conjure the mystery of the night-time park and the loving father and son bond.

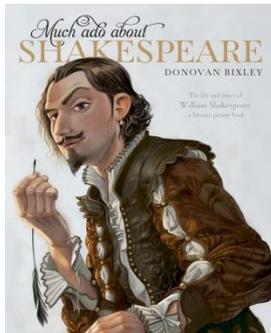
Hush, a Kiwi Lullaby



**Illustrated by Andrew Burdan
Scholastic New Zealand**

Andrew Burdan captures the strength and depth of maternal love in this New Zealand reworking of a traditional lullaby. The dreamy quality and muted tonings are a perfect match for the narrative mood. The local setting is effectively realised with familiar motifs cleverly repeated in the te reo Māori section of the book.

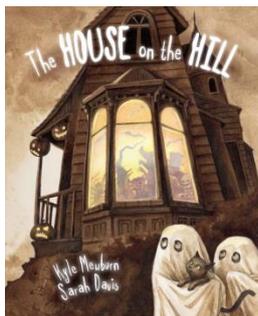
Much Ado About Shakespeare



**Illustrated by Donovan Bixley
Upstart Press**

Each picture tells its own story in this clever biopic of William Shakespeare, with fine detail, expert use of colour, abundant humour and sly commentary on the person and the era. There is much here to reward returning readers, and Donovan Bixley shows much love for his art and his subject.

The House on the Hill



**Illustrated by Sarah Davis
Scholastic New Zealand**

Sepia tones capture the autumnal, twilight setting, with Sarah Davis expertly generating an appropriately spooky mood to accompany the narrative while providing clues to the archly satisfying denouement. The grand swirl of the staircase, the grinning jack o'lanterns, and the fluttering night-time creatures all contribute dramatically to this Poe-esque tale.

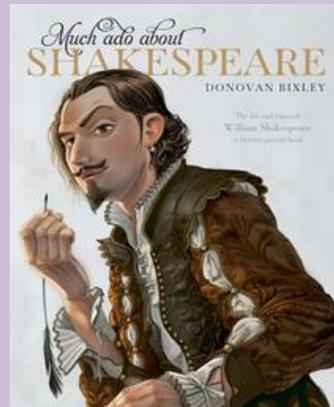
Russell Clark Award Winner (Illustration):

Donovan Bixley's expert use of light and colour and his control of his medium have resulted in dynamic, witty art that not only supports the text and provides added insights into his subject's life, but also references classic artworks and pays homage to past notable illustrators such as Norman Rockwell and JC Leyendecker. Well thought-out groupings, expressions, body language and the presence and placement of physical objects create layered, emotionally complex tableaux – such as the poignant scene that accompanies the story of the passing of Shakespeare's young son Hamnet, or the sly humour of the illustration alongside the page discussing Richard III and Shakespeare's start in the theatre. Each illustration tells a story that rewards close examination, providing a rich experience for readers and the added bonus of a lovingly curated lesson in art history. These illustrations are a technical tour de force. *Much Ado About Shakespeare* is a tremendous achievement.

Russell Clark Award Winner (Illustration): *Much Ado About Shakespeare*

Illustrated by Donovan Bixley

Upstart Press



Best First Book Award:

This year's best first book represents the perfect blend of text and illustration, and gives the reader insight into a way of life that may be unfamiliar for many. It shows us an uniquely New Zealand environment, as well as a dose of the 'number 8 wire' spirit. When the judges discussed *Allis*, we thought the story had a nostalgic feel without being old fashioned, and the personification of Allis via illustration was cleverly subtle. The illustration and text are understated, gentle, warm, and complement each other perfectly.

The author tells of Allis discarded under the trees, and we see her frame, covered in bird mess, with two sparrows nesting in her engine, and read about her lack of oil and water. Allis wants nothing more than to be useful again like the farm's big new tractor, and Toby wishes that he could help Allis achieve that dream, enlisting Uncle Jack to investigate repairing and restoring Allis. The author and illustrator have successfully created a heartfelt tale where the reader too hopes Allis and Toby's dream will become a reality. Readers will look forward to more in the series.

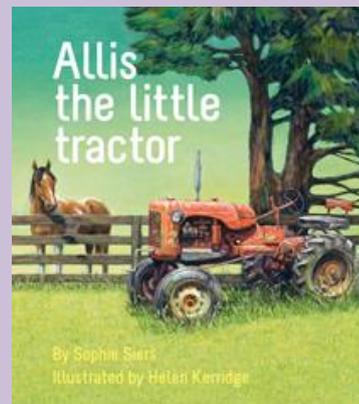
Best First Book Award Winner:

Allis the little tractor

Written by Sophie Siers

Illustrated by Helen Kerridge

Millwood-Heritage Productions



Margaret Mahy Book of the Year

The 2016 Margaret Mahy Book of the Year is simply stunning, with gold-standard production values that support the tremendous amount of care, respect and aroha imbued in the book. It is a book for readers of all ages, and incredibly important. It brings to life our people who risked everything, left everything, lost everything, as they participated in World Wars I and II, and tells their stories with carefully chosen detail, never overwhelming the reader, but not skimping on detail either. There are so many added 'extras' that give richness and fullness to the book; those extras, along with the meticulous research and the superb illustrations that brings these heroes to life create the perfect package. It can be read from start to finish, but is just as rewarding if readers choose to dip in and out. No matter how a reader chooses to approach it, they will learn an amazing amount about the people who represented, fought, and sometimes died for us.

Margaret Mahy Book of the Year

Winner:

ANZAC Heroes

Written by Maria Gill

Illustrated by Marco Ivancic

Scholastic New Zealand



Concluding Remarks

As judges, we had a big challenge - to identify the one book that was the winner for each category, and then from those, pick the winner of the Margaret Mahy Book of the Year Award.

As part of the judging process, we did remark on the lack of diversity across the categories. It is critical that all our children and young adults see themselves represented in fiction and non-fiction, and especially via illustration. New Zealand has become far more ethnically diverse, but this is often not evident, especially in picture books. We would love to see our multi-cultural New Zealand shown for all to appreciate, as we believe our books for children and young adults are equal to, or better than, any material from around the world.

We deliberated long and hard to ensure the winning titles we selected were the right ones, as all the finalist titles were of such a high quality. It's not really a hardship, to have to read, re-read and discuss fantastic books, and then choose a winner, but it's not as easy as it sounds!

The winning titles stand out for their fresh, original voices, attention to detail, and overall excellence. We would like to congratulate all the winners as we know their books will excite and encourage all lovers of superb books.

Fiona Mackie
Convenor
8 August 2016