



## Judging Criteria

### General criteria – all categories

- *Appeal*: Does the book have magic, charm, impact (appeal for its intended readership)?
- *Use of Language (and illustration where appropriate)*: Does it have freshness, imagination, style? Is the language (illustration) appropriate?
- *Integrity*: Is the author writing a children's/ young adults' book (i.e. a book written that demonstrates insight into the world of the child/young person)? Is it culturally appropriate? Does it avoid condescension and stereotyping?
- *Plot/Storyline*: Is there a strong unifying story, theme or concept which holds the work together?
- *Character*: Is character established and maintained successfully?
- *Design/Production*: Considering the book as a complete package, does it have strong "pick up" appeal? Does it have a professional look? What is the overall quality of the design, production and printing of the book with regard to its published price?
- What lasting qualities does it have?

### Additional criteria

#### Picture Book

##### **1. Text and Illustration Must Complement Each Other**

- Is there a fair match between the quality of the text and the quality of the illustration?
- Does the design of the book harmonise text and illustrations?
- The match of artistic style, media and artistic elements of colour, line, shape, texture to written text or idea.
- The match of layout and design elements to written text or idea.
- The balance of amount of illustration and written text.
- The combination of illustration and written text/idea between individual pages as a progression from beginning to end.

## **2. Illustrations**

- What qualities of draughtsmanship are demonstrated?
- Is character developed and sustained successfully?
- Is the illustration credible, consistent to itself?
- Is the style of illustration appropriate to the readership?
- Does it support and complement the text - or dominate or conflict with it?
- Does it reflect the text accurately in detail where it needs to?
- Does it enhance the text, bring it to life visually?

## **3. Language**

- Is the language imaginative/appropriate?
- Does it flow well? Use rhythm effectively?
- How well does the story read aloud? Is it a successful “audio visual” experience? (Line breaks should aid meaning i.e. “chunks” of meaning).

## **Young Adult and the Esther Glen Junior Fiction Award**

### **1. Extension of Reader’s Experience/Understanding of and Insight into the World of Children/Young People**

- Is the central idea worthwhile?
- Will the story help the reader to understand more about themselves and their world?
- Will it extend the reader’s experience (or is it operating purely at a formula level)?
- Is the writing credible in terms of the author’s intention?
- Is it credible and appropriate in its use of cultural material?
- What command of the main idea/theme or content does the author demonstrate?
- Does the story have a ring of authenticity?
- Does it avoid condescension and stereotyping?
- Will the story spark imagination, provoke thought?
- How effectively does the author draw the reader into the “reality” of the story?
- What qualities of originality and imagination are demonstrated in the story?
- Are there any potentially controversial elements that you as judges should let the Awards administration know about?

### **2. Storyline/Plot and Structure**

- What command of technique does the author demonstrate?
- Is the shape and structure of the story appropriate?
- Is the story told at an appropriate pace? Is it maintained, varied appropriately?

- Does the plot have a dramatic evolution?
- How successfully is tension built and interest sustained over the length of the story?
- Is the climax, resolution of the story satisfactory? Are expectations fulfilled or convincingly overturned?
- Are episodes and characters linked successfully?
- Are transitions of pace, mood, action accomplished effectively?

### **3. Language**

- Is the language appropriate for the readership?
- Is the language appropriate to the theme and characters?
- Is the dialogue appropriate to the characters?
- Is the dialogue effective and credible (rather than merely descriptive)?
- How successfully is mood developed, varied, sustained?
- What qualities of tone are used to convey the story?

### **4. Character Development**

- How well developed are the characters?
- Are they credible? Can the reader identify the main character/s?
- Will the reader care about the characters?
- How effectively are relationships developed between characters?

For graphic novels entered in these categories, judges may draw upon points 1 and 2 in the Picture Book Additional Criteria.

### **The Elsie Locke Non-Fiction Award**

As general guidelines the judges may consider the relative success of the book in balancing and harmonising the following elements:

- Style of language and presentation
- Graphic excellence
- Clarity, appropriateness and aesthetic appeal of illustrations
- Integration of text, graphics and illustrations to engage interest and enhance understanding
- Overall design of the book to facilitate the presentation of information
- Accuracy of data and the current state of knowledge

### **Best First Book Award**

The judges may, at their discretion, award a special prize for the Best First Book from a previously unpublished author or illustrator. The Best First Book award supports new and emerging talent in authors and illustrators. The Award will be presented to an author or illustrator who demonstrates excellence in all general judging criteria and whose work stands out as exceptional amongst that from other new authors and illustrators.

### **Margaret Mahy Book of the Year Award**

The Award will go to any one of the finalists in the Picture Book, Junior Fiction, Young Adult Fiction, Non- Fiction, Te Kura Pounamu and Illustration categories which, in the opinion of the judges, achieves outstanding excellence in all general judging criteria. The judges will take account of all existing general judging criteria as well as the extent to which the book best fills its category criteria. The judges will also consider the impact of the book on young readers and the extent to which it will encourage further exploration of books and reading.